



Dual Enrollment

A growing number of high school graduates are enrolling in college, but for far too many their high school graduation could be their last commencement ceremony. [More than half of students](#) who start college drop out within six years. Completion rates are even worse for first-generation students, who may have trouble covering costs and navigating college.

Taking college courses for dual credit [increases the likelihood](#) that high school students graduate, go to college, and attain a postsecondary credential. But the growth of dual enrollment programs in recent years will only deliver those benefits if they are designed carefully and include supports specifically for underserved students, who have the most to gain from early exposure to college. Moreover, without the right state policy framework in place, dual enrollment programs may not live up to academic standards of higher education, prove to be financially unsustainable for educational institutions, and reinforce equity gaps.

JFF recommends that states set standards to ensure that dual enrollment courses, no matter the setting, are equivalent to college courses in terms of curriculum, course materials, academic rigor, assessments, and instructor credentials. States also should ensure that dual credits count toward postsecondary programs of study.

States should work with practitioners to curate academic- and career-focused pathways that embed college courses in high school and ensure transfer of dual credits to postsecondary institutions in desired fields of study. We also call on states to make dual enrollment programs affordable and set funding standards that are fair for high schools, colleges, and taxpayers. Finally, states should provide extra incentives and supports to high schools and colleges in low-income areas to increase participation among underserved students.

Findings from 15-State Study



On average, more than half of the five recommended dual enrollment policies have been adopted per state.



Signs of progress: Close to all of the states have quality standards for dual enrollment. Two-thirds of them have set funding guidelines to ensure fair cost-sharing among parties involved. And more than half have policies supporting dual enrollment pathways and for making college courses for dual credit free for low-income students.



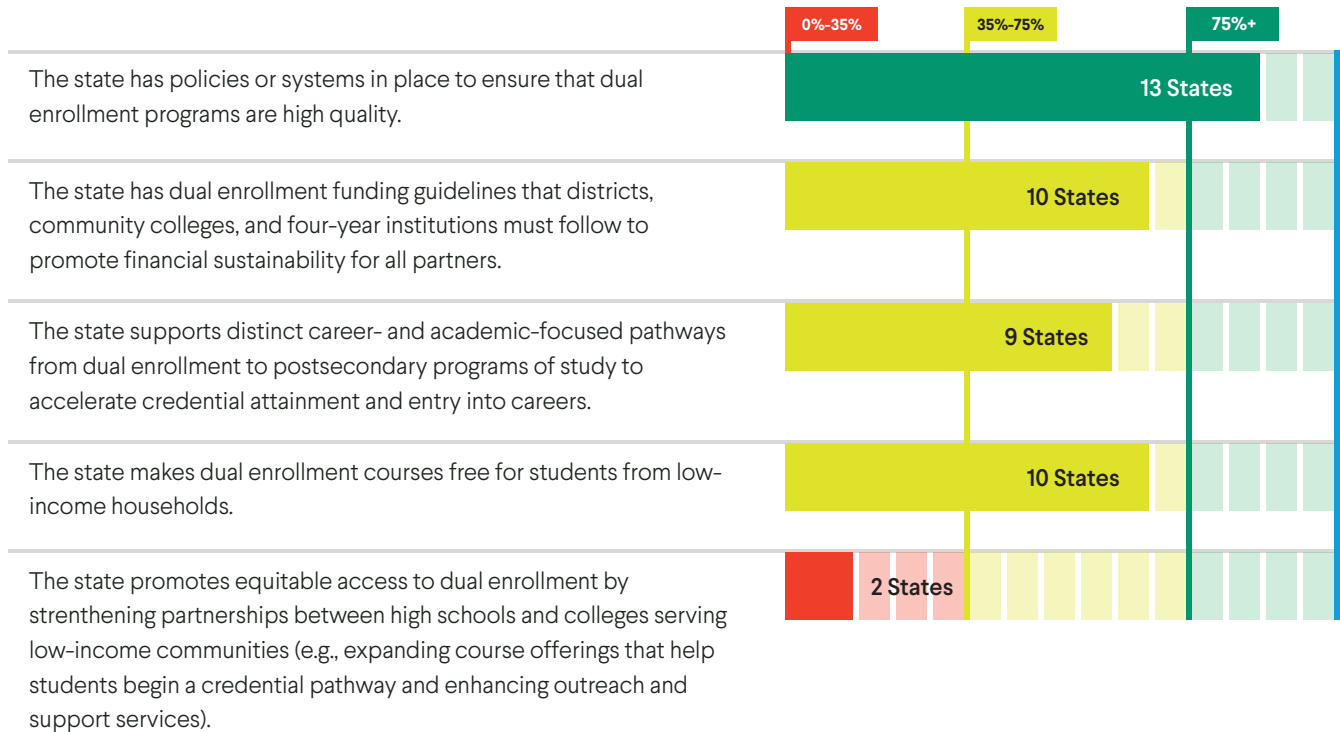
Critical gaps: Very few of the states have targeted strategies for expanding dual enrollment access in low-income communities.



Ahead of the curve: California, Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 7: DUAL ENROLLMENT

The state expands access to high-quality dual enrollment pathways designed to save students time and money in completing a postsecondary credential.



State Spotlight: Ohio

Hoping to avoid pitfalls around access, quality, funding, and pathways, Ohio has adopted a program called [College Credit Plus](#), which offers a comprehensive approach to supporting dual enrollment. The program gives youth, as early as in seventh grade, an opportunity to take college courses in “model pathways.” Credits earned in courses that are part of the Ohio Transfer Module are guaranteed to transfer to all of the state’s public colleges and universities. Ohio also has a default funding structure to ensure that dual enrollment works financially for colleges and school districts. For students and their families, the classes are free, as are textbooks and supplies.

