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Best Practices in Dual Enrollment

By Beth McMurtrie APRIL 02, 2017

The Education Commission of the States has highlighted [some best practices](#) that could increase student participation and success in dual-enrollment programs, focused on state legislation governing such programs. They include:

Access

Some states, like Ohio and Oklahoma, make clear that they expect all students to be given access to dual-enrollment opportunities. In addition, the commission recommends that states publicize such programs to families and provide counseling.

Quality

To be effective, the commission notes, dual-enrollment courses must be of the same quality whether taught at a college or by a high-school teacher. All community colleges in Iowa [have been accredited](#) by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships. Arkansas requires all teachers to hold at least a master's degree with at least 18 hours of coursework in the subject area of the course they teach. The commission also suggests that all programs undergo regular evaluations, but not all states require that.

Transferability

Programs won't become effective pathways to postsecondary education unless the credits transfer. States should ensure that dual-enrollment credits are treated in the same way as if the student took the course on the college campus. Minnesota requires state colleges to award credit for any course in a NACEP-certified program.

Finance

To reduce financial barriers, the commission says that parents should not be required to pay tuition, and participating institutions should be fully funded or reimbursed. This has been a sticking point in many states, but some are expanding financial support.

Kentucky and Nevada are two states that recently put money into dual-enrollment programs.

A few states, including Indiana and Texas, also include dual enrollment in their [performance-based funding models](#) to encourage colleges and high schools to participate. Also, while financial aid is usually not available to high-school students taking college courses, the U.S. Department of Education is [experimenting with Pell Grants](#) in [44 pilot colleges](#) to see if that encourages more low-income high-school students to participate.

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