

READY, SET, LAUNCH

Baseline Academic Outcomes for Students Participating in Dual Enrollment for Equitable Completion Partnerships Compared to Their Peers, 2015–2020

Executive Summary

October 2023

RDP Consulting¹, Dual Enrollment for Equitable Completion's (DE4EC) learning partner, examined the academic outcomes of students participating in dual enrollment programs offered by the initiative's 10 community colleges and their partner high schools in the period before its launch. RDP Consulting conducted this research to establish a baseline for identifying the impact of DE4EC over time.

Initial analyses reveal encouraging findings about the educational engagement and momentum of students who participate in equity-centered dual enrollment programming. Find below top results from our first detailed quantitative analyses comparing dual enrolled participants' high school and postsecondary outcomes to their non-dual-enrolled peers in recent years and notable highlights for priority student groups (i.e., first-generation, Black/African American, and Hispanic/Latina/o/x students).²

High School Success Outcomes

An examination of secondary outcomes for students participating in these partnerships in the period leading up to the initiative (2015–2020) found:

Dual enrollment participants graduated from high school at much higher rates than students who did not take part. Generally, dual enrollment students experienced graduation rates 20+ percentage points higher than their peers who did not participate, even in the face of COVID-19 pandemic impacts.

Dual enrollment students had consistently higher high school grade point averages (GPAs) than their peers who did not participate. Moreover, their GPAs rose steadily over time compared to their non-dual enrollment counterparts whose GPAs remained flat during the same period (2015–2020).

The average number of college units dual enrollment participants completed by high school graduation grew in recent years. The 2015–2016 graduating class earned an average of 6.61 college units compared to the 7.62 completed by those graduating in 2018–2019. The average dropped to 6.96 in 2019–2020, likely due to COVID-19 pandemic impacts during the spring 2020 term.

At the same time, first-generation students tended to have fewer college units earned by high school graduation compared to their

peers whose families have postsecondary education experience. Hispanic/Latina/o/x students show a similar trend, although the gap between them and their White and Asian peers has steadily narrowed over time.

Half of partnership colleges saw dual enrollment participants completing degrees and certificates by high school graduation. Many of the colleges that did not have dual enrollment students attaining college credentials were newer to dual enrollment programming during the period studied.

Notably, significant numbers of first-generation students were able to complete college credentials before high school graduation through their dual enrollment experience.

College Enrollment and Success Outcomes

An examination of postsecondary outcomes for students participating in these partnerships in period studied found:

The number of dual enrollment participants who matriculate to college within a year of high school graduation is on the rise — even while college enrollment overall is trending downward. At the same time that postsecondary enrollment declined for those who did not take part in dual enrollment, high school students who took

1 www.r-d-p-consulting.com

2 The analyses presented in this initial report are descriptive in nature, and due to data limitations, we are not able to determine whether dual enrollment caused differences in outcomes. In future research, we will attempt to address selection bias by incorporating high school GPAs prior to dual enrollment experience.

college coursework through a *DE4EC* partnership matriculated to higher education in greater numbers over time. Across the partnerships, first-generation students who participated in dual enrollment overwhelmingly matriculated to the California Community Colleges (CCC) and California State University (CSU) systems.

Students with dual enrollment experience succeeded in their first-year courses at significantly higher rates than other first-time freshmen. When comparing first-year course success rates at partnership colleges, students who experienced dual enrollment consistently outperformed their counterparts by about 20 percentage points. Even as the number of students participating in dual enrollment grew and participant diversity increased between 2015 and 2020, course success in the first year of college continued upward for these students.

Positively, first-generation students who previously participated in dual enrollment performed remarkably better than their first-generation peers who did not; similarly, *Hispanic/Latina/o/x and Black/African American students who took part in dual enrollment generally outperformed their freshman peers who did not participate in dual enrollment by 20 to 30 percentage points.*

Students who experienced dual enrollment also had higher rates of retention in their first year of college compared to other first-time students who enrolled in a CCC after graduating from a *DE4EC* partnership high school without participating.

Those who graduated high school in 2016 had similar rates of one-term retention, regardless of prior dual enrollment participation. However, the gap between the two groups widened over time, with one-term retention holding steady for former dual enrollment students and decreasing among those who did not have this experience. One-year retention followed a similar trend.

Dual enrollment experience helped students stay on course with their higher education goals despite the unprecedented disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic appears to have had a greater impact on students who did not participate in dual enrollment when it comes to retention, with one-term and one-year retention rates dropping for students who graduated high school in spring 2019 and matriculated in the next year. For example, one-term retention remained steady at 81% for those with prior dual enrollment experience and dropped to 73% for other first-time freshmen during that period.

Notably, first-generation, Black/African American, and Hispanic/Latina/o/x students with prior dual enrollment experience did maintain strong rates of retention through the pandemic. These findings reveal an area for further exploration of how dual enrollment has contributed to positive college-going behaviors for students historically underrepresented in higher education and whose communities have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

Conclusion

The positive secondary and postsecondary outcomes for dual enrollment students before *DE4EC*'s launch — particularly for Black/African American, Hispanic/Latina/o/x, and first-generation students — suggest these partnerships have a strong foundation on which to further develop equitable dual enrollment programs. For these partnerships' students, dual enrollment is associated with higher success among several indicators, such as high school GPA and graduation, college-going, and success and retention in the first year of college. All these outcomes are important to our ultimate goals for students: credential and degree completion, transfer, and workplace success.

In the coming months, we will explore the status of these indicators for dual and non-dual-enrolled students during *DE4EC*'s first academic year: fall 2022 through spring 2023. We will also identify students' academic standing when they enter dual enrollment to determine if historically lower performing students participate and succeed in these experiences.

A second report is planned for 2024, which will summarize secondary and postsecondary outcomes for dual and non-dual-enrolled students during the initiative's inaugural year. We anticipate continued growth in the number of historically underrepresented students who have access to college courses in high school; maintain higher GPAs; graduate high school; and enter, persist, and complete college/university.

DUAL ENROLLMENT FOR EQUITABLE COMPLETION
LEARNING AND [E]VALUATION TEAM



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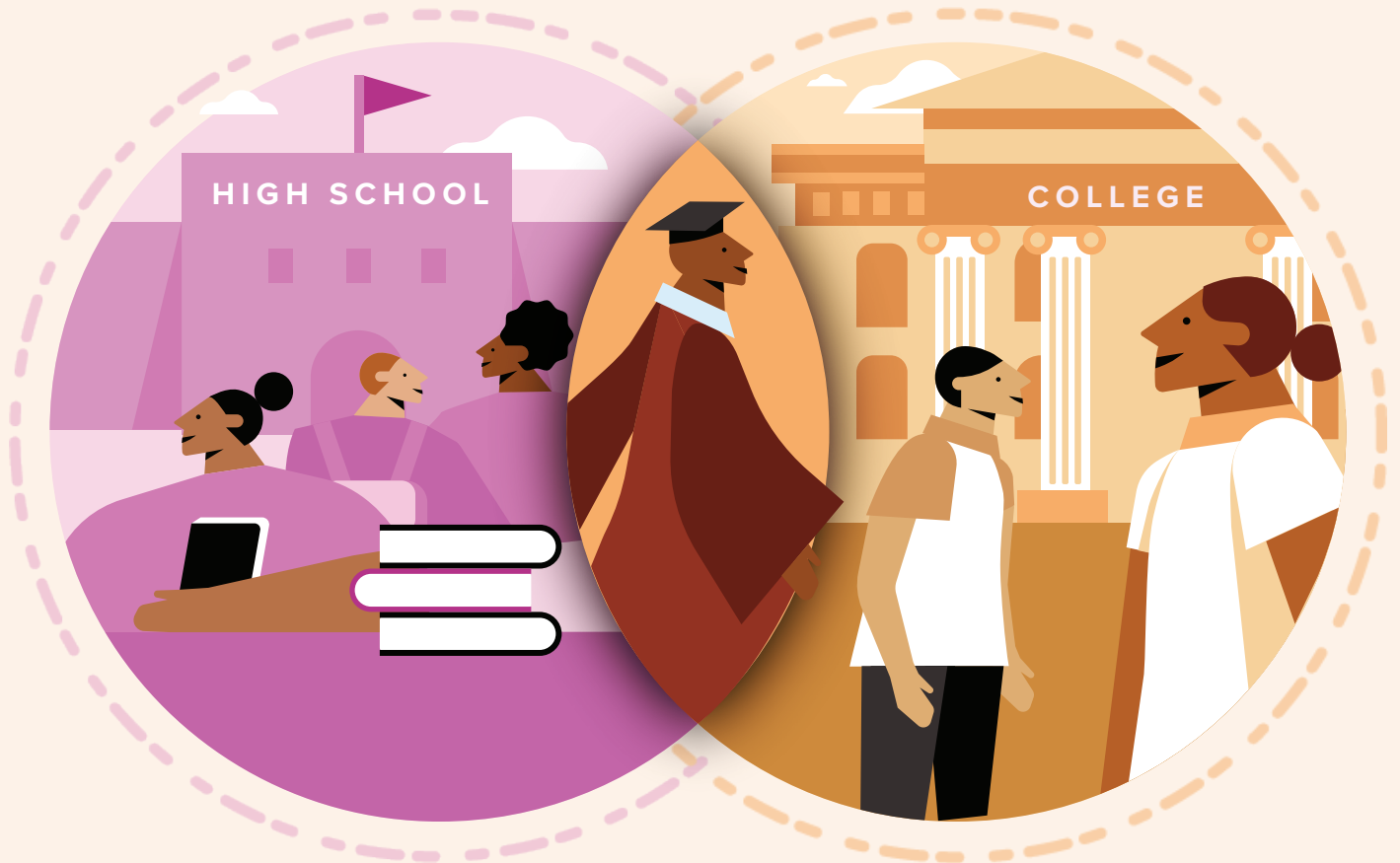


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Focus on Equity

Baseline Impact of 10 *Dual Enrollment for Equitable Completion (DE4EC)* Partnerships on Students' Outcomes



Dual enrolled students...



...graduated high school at higher rates than non-dual-enrollment peers.



...graduated high school with higher GPAs than non-dual-enrollment peers.



...on average completed an increasing number of college units by high school graduation.



...who were first gen earned more college credentials by high school graduation than their non-first-gen peers.



...enrolled in college at higher rates than their non-dual-enrollment peers.



...had higher retention in their 1st year of college, including during the height of COVID-19.



...who identify as **Black or Latinx** were more likely to stay in school during the pandemic than their non-dual-enrolled peers.



...experienced higher course success during their 1st year in college compared to other first-time freshman.

