

Dual enrollment, which allows high school students to enroll in and receive credit for college courses, is a nationally recognized opportunity for students of all academic abilities to achieve success not only in high school but at post-secondary institutions. By not permitting this option for Pennsylvania's cyber school students, policy makers are denying them the ability to acquire college credits while in high school, experience the college classroom, save on post-secondary tuition, and accelerate their time to college graduation.

Under the present interpretation of the law, cyber students – and only cyber students – are unable to access college credits in a way that is equal to their public school peers. Pennsylvania's cyber school students should be permitted to attend dual enrollment classes online as well as at college or university campuses near their homes. Again, the opportunity to attend a college course is an incredibly valuable opportunity that is proven to help define post-secondary plans and is consistent with the PDE's current mandate to provide career readiness education to students. Moreover, we know that families have asked cyber charter schools to offer dual enrollment courses for high school students.

Nearly every analysis shows positive outcomes for dual enrollment students. The Community College Research Center (CCRC), in its report *Broadening the Benefits of Dual Enrollment: Reaching Underachieving and Underrepresented Students with Career-Focused Programs (July 2012)* outlines the following positive outcomes for participating students:

- More likely to graduate high school
- More likely to transition to a four-year college (rather than a two-year college)
- Less likely to take skills courses in college
- More likely to persist in postsecondary education
- Accumulating more college credits than comparison students

A 2017 WWC Intervention Report from the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences replicates these findings, showing evidence that dual enrollment programs were found to have positive effects on completing high school and general academic success (high school) to a medium to large extent as well as staying in high school and attendance (high school) to a small extent. An October 2014 ACT Research & Policy Issue Brief *Dual-Credit/Dual-Enrollment Coursework and Long-Term College Success in Texas* reports that these students had on average a higher ACT Composite score and high school percentile ranks.

Pennsylvania's former dual enrollment program became inactive several years ago due to inadequate state funds. Recently, the Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges, Pennsylvania School Boards Association, and Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators wrote Governor Tom Wolf urging him to establish a comprehensive dual enrollment program for the Commonwealth. There is universal agreement that dual enrollment programs benefit all students in Pennsylvania and this benefit should not be allowed for some students but denied to others; similarly, these classes should count toward high school graduation credits for all students. While it is especially important that cyber school students be included if the state again funds dual enrollment, regardless of this decision, cyber students should be treated the same as other Pennsylvania public school students.

For more information or to discuss this issue further, please Contact Ana Meyers, Executive Director, at a.meyers@pacharters.org.



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