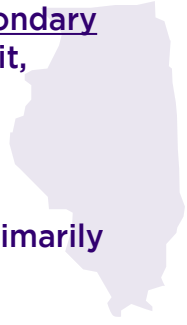


Illinois Pathway Opportunities

Pathway Opportunities: Illinois coordinates its pathways programs under the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act, emphasizing career exploration, including dual credit, competency-based education, and pathway endorsements.



In Illinois, dual credit and dual enrollment have specific, distinct meanings.

- **Dual Credit:** High school students earn both high school credit and college credit simultaneously through partnership agreements between high schools and colleges (primarily community colleges).
- **Dual Enrollment:** High school students earn only college credit.

Dual Credit



College Credit

High school students can earn college credit through dual credit courses **without credit limits**. While state law prohibits caps on the number of courses students can take, students are encouraged to take courses that are part of the Illinois Articulation Initiative because of guaranteed transferability.



Statewide Credit Transfer Policy

The **Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI)** is a statewide transfer agreement covering general education and major courses across all public colleges and universities. Completing the IAI General Education Core Curriculum (GECC) fulfills all lower-division general education requirements at any participating institution.



State Funding

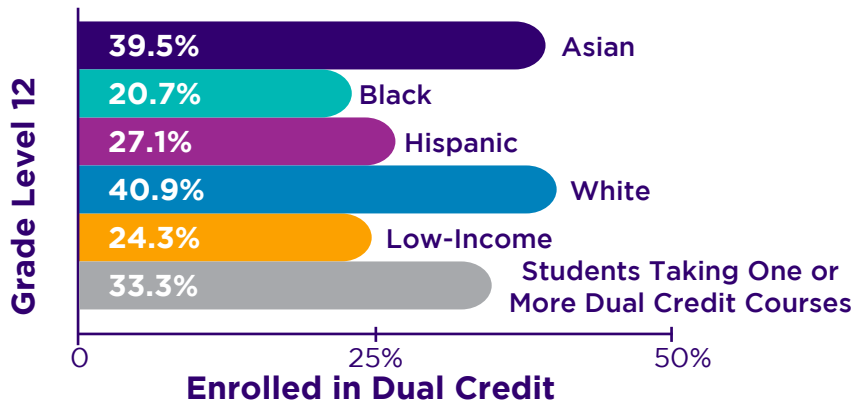
The cost of dual credit is covered through a combination of state grants, school district funding, and sometimes student and family contributions. Costs vary by local partnership agreements, with no standard statewide rates. In fiscal year 2024, Illinois made its first dual credit appropriation through the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB).



Participation

In Illinois, **15%** of high school students (**91,017 out of 595,319**) enrolled in community college dual credit courses in the 2023-24 school year.

Percentage of High School Seniors Enrolled in Dual Credit Courses



In 2023, Black (**21%**), Hispanic (**27%**), and low-income (**24%**) students participated in dual credit at lower rates than the overall student population (**33%**), suggesting inequities in access to these opportunities.

Data source: ICCB Centralized Data System-Annual Course (AC) Data

Educators

In Illinois, high school teachers must have either a master's degree in the discipline they teach or a master's degree with 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline to teach dual credit courses. Illinois created a dual credit endorsement for nine disciplines, which can be added to the Professional Educator License. While these endorsements are not required for teaching dual credit courses, they streamline recognition of qualified high school dual credit teachers across different partnerships throughout the state.

Career and Technical Education (CTE)



State Funding

In Illinois, students can participate in CTE **at no cost to the student**. The state provides dedicated CTE funding and is phasing in a new funding formula that distributes funds based on each district's evidence-based funding adequacy level and the number of CTE participants and concentrators. The formula directs **more funds to districts that are under-resourced and have greater student engagement in CTE**.



Participation

In Illinois, **48%** of high school students (**285,732 out of 590,921**) participated in CTE in the 2023-24 school year.



Top Three CTE Dual Credit

courses in the 2022-23 school year

1. Welding technology (6.8%)
2. Nursing assistant (5.4%)
3. Entrepreneurship (4.8%)

Together, these courses accounted for **17% of all CTE dual credit enrollments**.

College and Career Pathway Endorsement Spotlight

Illinois is raising the bar for what it means to be “college and career ready” and is aligning CTE pathways with labor market demand through its College and Career Pathway Endorsement program.

What Is It?

The College and Career Pathway Endorsement (CCPE) program, established under the PWR Act, allow school districts to award diploma endorsements to recognize students' readiness for both post-secondary education and career, incentivizing career exploration and acceleration in high-demand career fields.

Statewide Implementation Timeline

- 2026-27: All districts must offer **one endorsement**
- 2028-29: All districts must offer **two endorsements**
- 2030-31: Districts with **350+ students** must offer **three endorsements**

Not Either-Or, But Both-And

High schools across Illinois are integrating academic and career preparation through dual credit CTE courses. In fiscal year 2023, CTE courses accounted for 37% of all dual credit offerings statewide, with 62,884 students earning college credit while building real-world career skills.

Notably, the top five CTE dual credit courses alone represented **10%** of all dual credit enrollments across the state.