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College Course Taking, a Tool for High School Reform

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Abstract

Many terms are used to describe dual enrollment and most can be used interchangeably. They include concurrent enrollment and dual credit.

Dual enrollment is a program that allows high school students to enroll in college courses and earn college credit while still in high school. College credits earned through dual enrollment can be simultaneously applied toward high school and college graduation.

Data on student participation in dual enrollment have only recently been collected. According to two 2005 reports from the U.S. Department of Education, 71 percent of U.S. high schools and 51 percent of U.S. postsecondary institutions permitted high school students to take college courses in the 2002-03 school year. In total, 813,000 secondary school students took a college-credit course during the 2002-03.

Dual enrollment data from some states indicate that participation in dual enrollment has increased in recent years, and this growth is likely to continue.

The benefits of dual enrollment are numerous.

• Enriches the course opportunities for high school students
• Provides a positive impact on high school retention and graduation rates
• Save students time and money while promoting rigorous academics
• Shortens the time to attain a college degree
• Eases the transition from high school to college

There are some growing concerns about dual enrollment.

• Social maturity of high school students
• Quality of dual enrollment courses

After reviewing these major advantages and possible downsides of dual enrollment, the last section of this paper gives some key points to consider for the successful implementation of dual enrollment.