

# INCREASE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO DUAL CREDIT | HB5506 (STUART)

HB5506 removes barriers threatening to chill the ability of our State to meet growing demand, while supporting our educators who teach Dual Credit.

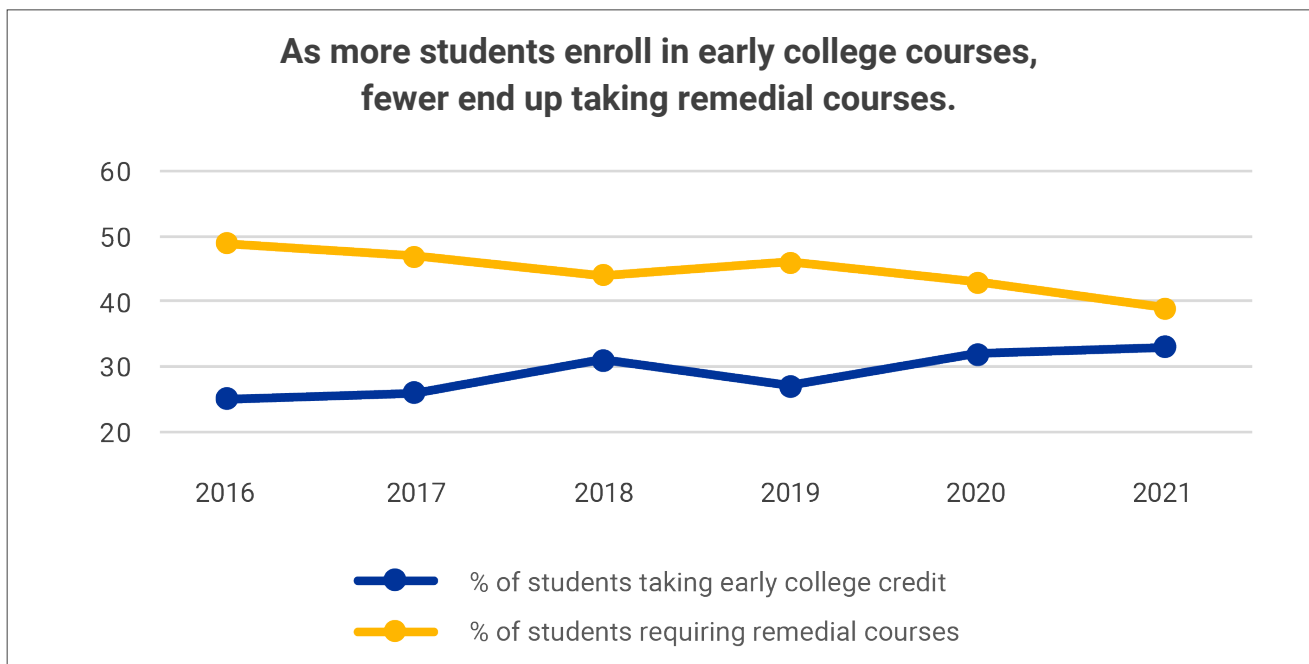
## DUAL CREDIT COURSES, AN IMPORTANT STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC ACCELERATION

Dual Credit courses provide high school students with opportunities to earn college credit while simultaneously earning high school credits. This enables students to explore career pathways or get a jump start on the general education credits required for a postsecondary degree or credential.

Students who take Dual Credit courses are more than twice as likely to enroll in college and almost twice as likely to earn a degree.<sup>1</sup> Demand is strongly on the rise and appears to be helping students better prepare for post-secondary education. The rate of

Illinois high school students enrolling in early college courses such as Dual Credit has increased over the last five year from 25% to 33%, at the same time, the percentage of community college students required to enroll in remedial coursework has decreased from 49% to 39%.<sup>2</sup>

While Illinois has steadily grown its number of students taking early college courses, many students still lack access to them and the teacher shortage is exacerbating the situation.

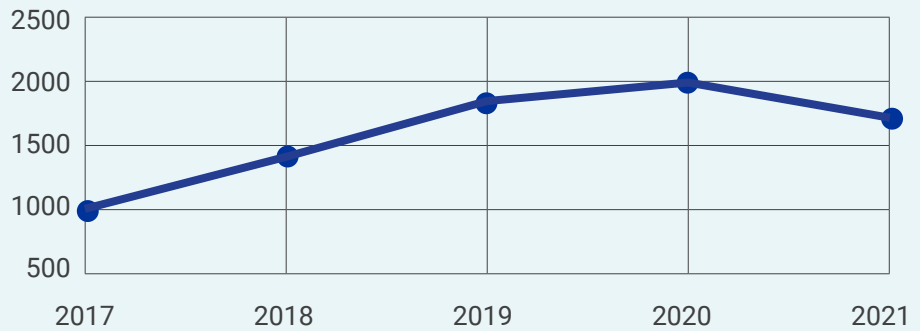


1 Ben Struhl and Joel Vargas, "Taking College Courses in High School: A Strategy for College Readiness" (Boston: Jobs for the Future, October 2012), [https://jfforg-prod-new.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/TakingCollegeCourses\\_ExSumm\\_120312.pdf](https://jfforg-prod-new.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/TakingCollegeCourses_ExSumm_120312.pdf).

2 Illinois Report Card, 2021, <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com>.

# SUPPORTING EDUCATORS WHO TEACH DUAL CREDIT

**Teacher vacancies have increased nearly 70% in 5 years**



In the 2021 school year, there were almost 2,000 unfilled teaching positions across the state, a nearly 70% increase in vacancies in the last five years.<sup>3</sup> The dire shortage of teachers means districts are left to do more with fewer teachers, and having enough qualified instructors remains a significant barrier to Dual Credit expansion. HB5506 allows districts the flexibility to launch Dual Credit programs with available teaching staff while respecting the quality standards of traditional Dual Credit coursework.

## Extending Professional Development Plans

Amended in 2018, the Dual Credit Quality Act (DCQA) authorized “professional development plans” (PDPs), an innovative solution to allow more teachers to teach Dual Credit while they pursue the necessary credentials to become fully qualified. PDPs must be approved by both the instructor’s district and the partnering higher education institution and must be completed within three years. Currently, instructors would have until the end of 2022 to enter a new plan, but as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to place extraordinary burdens on our schools and exacerbate unprecedented staff shortages, extending this deadline will provide districts the flexibility they need to grow their Dual Credit programs.

HB5506 would change the deadline for educators to enter a new PDP from January 1, 2023 to January 1, 2026.

## Allowing for Professional Development Plans for Career and Technical Education Instructors

Currently, Career and Technical Education (CTE) instructors interested in teaching Dual Credit CTE courses do not qualify for PDPs. Yet the demand for CTE instructors continues to grow; unfilled CTE positions have jumped 163% since 2017.<sup>4</sup> HB5506 extends PDPs to CTE instructors until they fulfill the necessary credentials to be fully qualified to teach Dual Credit CTE courses.

## Permitting Mixed Enrollment Classrooms

Small and rural schools sometimes struggle to offer Dual Credit courses if only a small number of students meet eligibility requirements. Their students should not be deprived of access to these high impact courses. HB5506 allows students who are not eligible for Dual Credit to enroll in the course for high school credit only, allowing districts to maximize instructors’ time while still exposing nearly qualified students to the rigor and pace of a college course. (The bill would not award Dual Credit to a student who does not meet eligibility requirements.)

3 Unfilled Positions 2021, Illinois State Board of Education, <https://www.isbe.net/unfilledpositions>.

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## SUPPORT EQUITABLE ACCESS TO DUAL CREDIT COURSES AND THEIR TEACHERS

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