

INCREASE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO DUAL CREDIT

HB5020 (Blair-Sherlock)

HB5020, developed with the input from school district and postsecondary educators through facilitation by the Illinois P-20 Network, removes barriers that prevent districts from meeting growing student demand and supports educators who teach Dual Credit.

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.

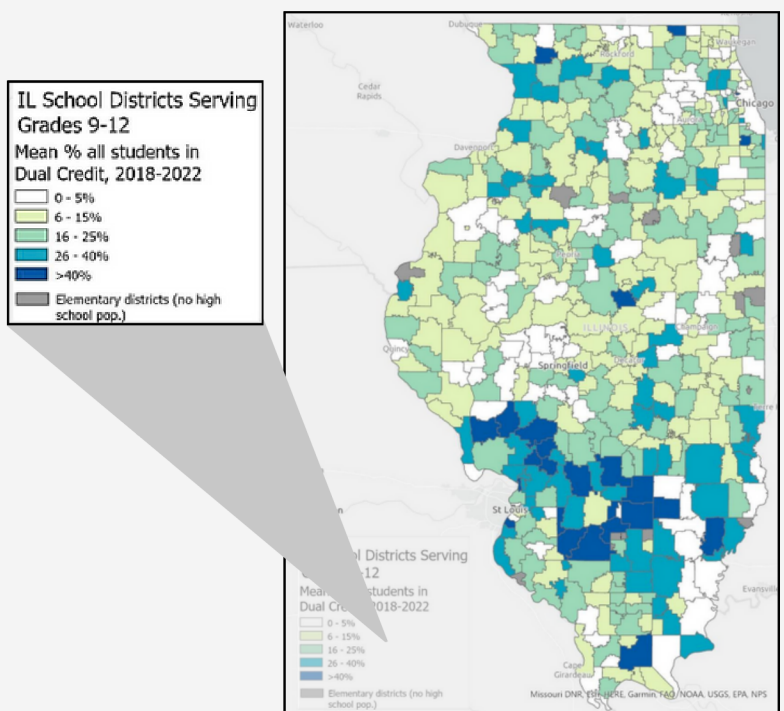
Demand for Dual Credit coursework has increased each year, and in 2022, 14% of Illinois high schoolers took at least one Dual Credit course.¹ However, inequitable access persists and the ongoing teacher shortage, felt more acutely in high-need regions of the State, continues to limit Dual Credit offerings as only educators with a Master's degree can teach Dual Credit courses.

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.² The advancement rate (the rate of students who graduated, transferred to other higher education institutions, or remained enrolled) for first-time, full-time students at Illinois Community Colleges was nearly 20% higher for students who had completed Dual Credit coursework in high school.³

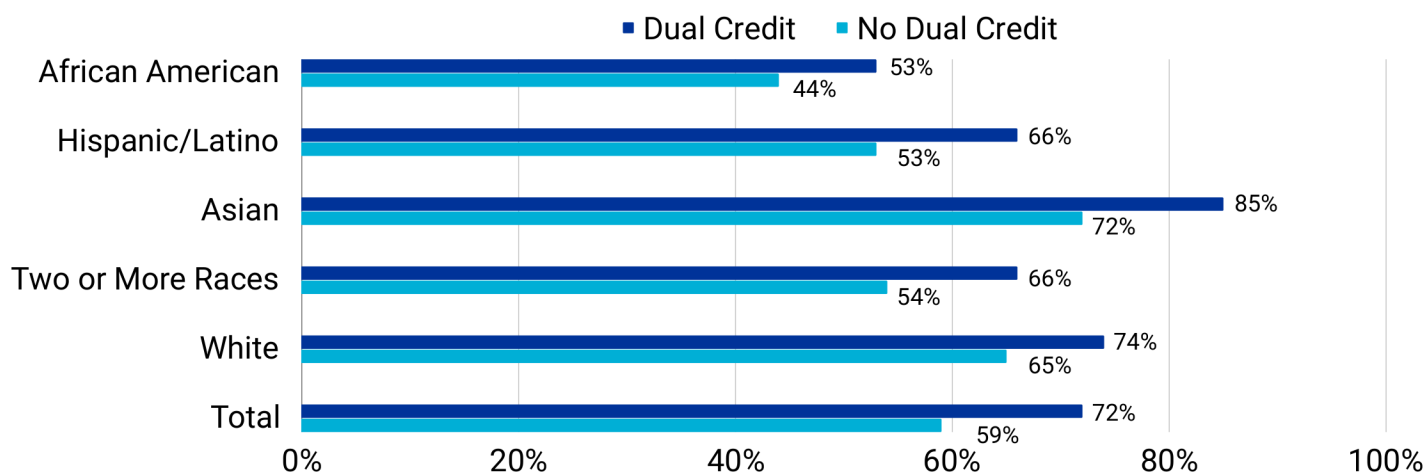
HB5020 works to close economic, geographic, and racial opportunity gaps

2022 Dual Credit Enrollment Gaps Compared to Total Enrollment (in percentage points)	
White	+14
Hispanic	-5
African American	-7
Asian	+1
IEP	-9
Non Low-Income	+15
Low-Income	-16

Mean proportion of students participating in DC, SY18-SY22, by school district¹



The advancement rate for IL community college students is 9-18% higher for Dual Credit students



HB5020 addresses inequitable access with three solutions:

1. Engage more students by providing multiple avenues for eligibility and better communication with families

HB5020 brings Dual Credit placement measures into alignment with the Developmental Education Reform Act to recognize a broader array of student achievement. Districts serving high school students will also be required to establish a communications plan for notifying students and families of the multiple measures criteria and clearly designate Dual Credit course offerings in course catalogs to ensure all students can work towards Dual Credit opportunities.

2. Help more educators become fully qualified Dual Credit instructors

New guidance required under the bill, issued jointly by ISBE and ICCB, would respond to recent policy changes from the Higher Learning Commission and incorporate updates to the Dual Credit Quality Act (DCQA) with the goal of providing uniform statewide credentialing information and direction to secondary and postsecondary districts. HB5020 eliminates the sunset for educators to enter into Professional Development Plans (PDP), an innovative solution to allow more teachers to teach Dual Credit while they pursue the necessary credentials to become fully qualified. Currently, instructors would have until the end of 2026 to enter a new plan, but teacher shortages continue to limit district efforts to expand Dual Credit offerings. Removing the deadline for educators to enter into a PDP will provide districts the flexibility they need to grow their Dual Credit programs.

3. Empower districts to use multiple higher learning partners to offer in-demand coursework while prioritizing local partnerships

Districts serving high school students will still be compelled to partner with their local community college first, but would allow secondary districts to partner with an alternative higher learning institution for a particular course if the secondary and postsecondary school cannot reach an agreement on course documentation or instructor approval for that course.

Rooted in research, the proposed DCQA amendment strives to honor the DCQA's original balance between rigor and access while elevating nationally recognized best practices.

¹ Sarah Cashdollar, Dual Credit in Illinois: Mapping Increased Participation and Persistent Participation Gaps (Chicago, IL: Illinois Workforce & Education Research Collaborative, 2023).

² Ben Struhl and Joel Vargas, "Taking College Courses in High School: A Strategy for College Readiness" (Boston: Jobs for the Future, October 2012).

³ Nathan R. Wilson et al., Dual Credit in the Illinois Community College System: Fiscal Year 2022 (Springfield, IL: Illinois Community College Board, 2023).