

# INCREASE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO DUAL CREDIT

## HB5020 (Blair-Sherlock/Castro)

**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.

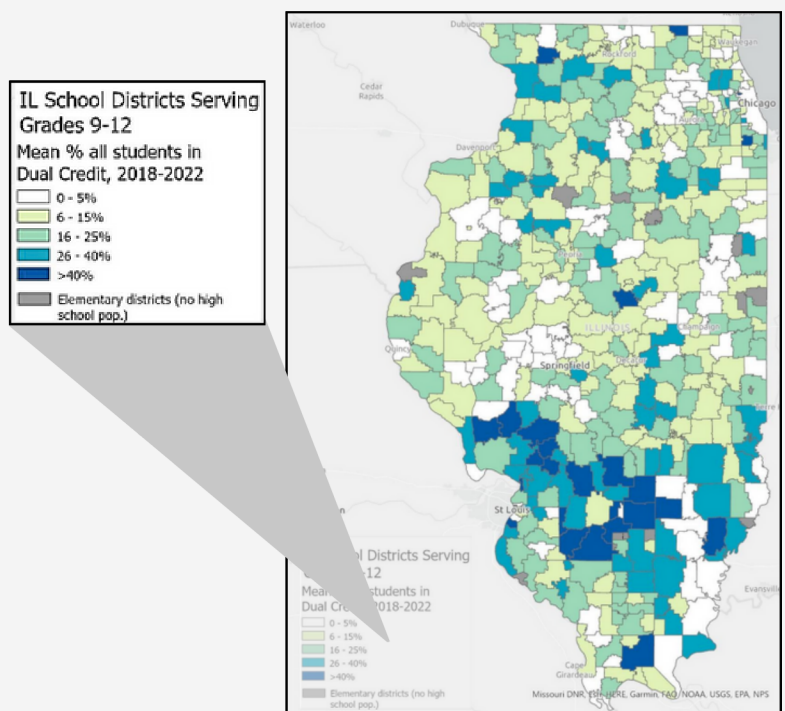
Demand for Dual Credit coursework has increased each year, and in 2022, 14% of Illinois high schoolers took at least one Dual Credit course.<sup>1</sup> However, inequitable access persists and the ongoing teacher shortage, felt more acutely in high-need regions of the State, continues to limit Dual Credit offerings as only educators with a Master's degree can teach general education 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

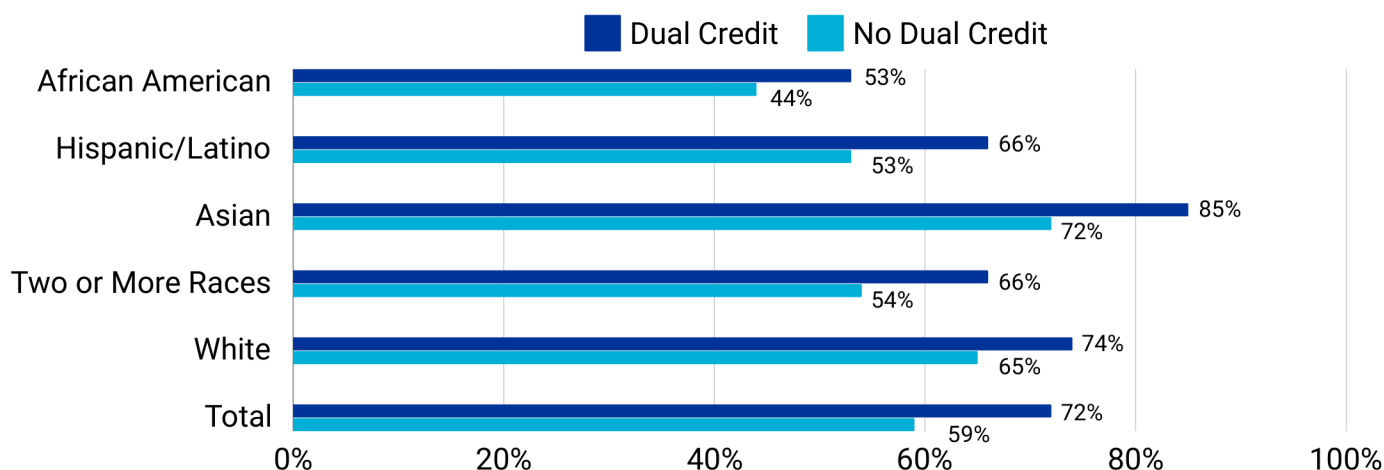
### HB5020 works to close economic, geographic, and racial opportunity gaps

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 district<sup>1</sup>



## 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 & 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

Recent policy changes from the Higher Learning Commission dismantled the State's Dual Credit instructor qualifications which has injected instability into the Dual Credit landscape as each community college seeks to define instructor credentials through their unique criteria which is subject to change without notice and differs across community college borders. The bill, as amended, codifies the previous definition of fully-qualified instructors as instructors with a master's degree or, for CTE courses, an instructor with equivalent experience that is commensurate with the achievement of academic credentials. 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.

#### 3. Prioritize local partnerships and hold alternative Dual Credit providers to the same rigorous standards

As amended, HB5020 codifies community college right of first refusal to prioritize local partnerships and requires all institutions (4-year, 2-year, public, private, in-state, out-of-state) offering Dual Credit to follow the same rigorous standards. Currently, some Dual Credit is offered with out-of-state institutions and HB5020 as amended limits the use of out-of-state providers by requiring high schools to demonstrate to the IBHE that it has taken appropriate steps to use in-state institutions and requires IBHE to publish a list of partnership agreements with both out-of-state and private institutions. Additionally, the most recent amendment charges ICCB to conduct a study to examine the long-term and short-term outcomes for differing Dual Credit hour attainment to better understand how many Credits are optimal for student success. HB5020 empowers districts serving high school students to partner with an alternative provider only for a particular course if the secondary and postsecondary districts cannot reach an agreement on course documentation or instructor approval for that course. This prioritizes student access by ensuring that any one district's policy cannot limit course access and opens doors for districts that lay with multiple community college boundaries. Finally, HB5020 prohibits partnerships with for-profit institutions.

*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.*

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

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

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