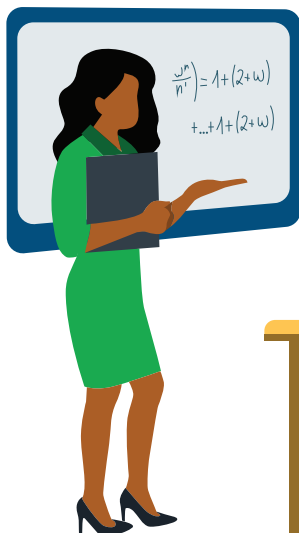


CHANGES IN

Advanced Course Enrollment and Success After Adopting an Academic Acceleration Policy



Advancing Evidence.
Improving Lives.



Washington state's academic acceleration policy

is designed to reduce barriers to participation in advanced high school courses that disproportionately affect students from historically underrepresented backgrounds (students who identify as Black, Hispanic or Latino, American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or two or more races and students eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch).

The policy uses universal screening and a behavioral nudge; all students in 11th and 12th grades whose scores on statewide standardized assessments meet the state's proficiency standard are automatically identified as qualified for advanced courses. Students are then automatically enrolled into a more advanced course in the relevant subject (e.g., Honors English instead of regular English, Advanced Placement Precalculus instead of regular precalculus), and they receive information about the benefits of advanced courses and have a chance to opt out if desired.

Between 2010–11 and 2020–21, **more than 70 Washington districts adopted an academic acceleration policy.** Beginning in 2021–22, the state required all districts to adopt the policy.

To examine whether academic acceleration increased students' access to advanced high school courses and subsequent academic performance, researchers at the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) compared changes in advanced course-taking and academic performance of Washington students in 72 districts that adopted an academic acceleration policy by 2016–17 with students in Washington districts that did not implement a policy before adoption became mandatory.



SCAN TO VIEW
THE FULL REPORT

Findings in districts that implemented an academic acceleration policy



Advanced course enrollment increased across subject areas for all students.



Advanced course enrollment for students from racial/ethnic groups underrepresented in advanced courses and students from low-income families **began to catch up** to enrollment rates for historically advantaged students.



Students' **grade point averages (GPAs)** and their chances of on-time **high school graduation remained stable** overall. **GPAs increased** slightly for students considered qualified and for students from historically underrepresented groups regardless of qualified status.

Key takeaways



- Academic acceleration** increased advanced course participation without decreasing performance.
- Qualified students** not from historically underrepresented groups benefited more from increased participation than qualified students from these groups.
- Districts implementing** an academic acceleration policy may have looked beyond standardized test scores to identify students considered qualified for automatic enrollment, which may have contributed to increased equity in advanced course enrollments.
- The study findings** demonstrate support for automatic enrollment as a lever to increase advanced course enrollment for all students with potential to succeed.

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