

How States and Systems Can Support Practitioner Efforts to Strengthen Dual Enrollment

STATE POLICYMAKER DEVELOPMENT GUIDE



State policymakers have several policy and non-policy mechanisms and associated approaches available to them that can advance the recommendations outlined in the accompanying report. Each state's political, fiscal, and governance constraints may affect what approaches will work best.

This guide is designed to help state policymakers consider which approaches will be most effective for them and develop action steps for supporting practitioners in strengthening DE programs.

Recommendations are organized by how state leaders can support DE improvement efforts in these three areas:

1. expanding access to DE,
2. strengthening DE as an on-ramp to high-opportunity postsecondary pathways, and
3. building and sustaining DE partnerships between K-12 leaders and colleges that are grounded in a shared vision emphasizing access, quality, and success.

POLICY MECHANISMS	EXAMPLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Legislation <p>Legislation can provide the clearest statewide mechanism for creating consistent program design and practice with broad legitimacy. In addition, legislation creates an accountability mechanism through which actors who are not abiding by its requirements can be brought into compliance.</p>	<p>Colorado</p> <p>The Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act (House Bill 09-1319) is the governing legislation for dual enrollment programs in the state of Colorado.¹</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Funding <p>The recommendations in this report are accomplished more easily through the provision of additional funding to dual enrollment programs for specific purposes. Funding can provide incentives for changing program practices so that they align with what the state wants to see.</p>	<p>Washington</p> <p>The Consolidated Equity and Sustainability (CES) grant was created in 2021 to help programs secure funding for efforts to eliminate equity gaps in the state's dual credit programs.²</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regulation <p>Regulation by state education agencies can provide state policymakers with a targeted tool that can often address specific challenges more quickly than a legislative solution. Regulation can drive statewide changes in practice and elevate the state's expectations for dual enrollment as a whole.</p>	<p>Ohio</p> <p>In February 2022, the Ohio Department of Higher Education finalized a regulation expanding eligibility criteria for the state's College Credit Plus program following successful experiences piloting new eligibility criteria.³</p>

¹ Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act, C.R.S. § 22-35-101–104. (2007). <https://casetext.com/statute/colorado-revised-statutes/title-22-education/school-districts/article-35-concurrent-enrollment-programs-act>

² Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (n.d.). *Dual credit programs*. <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/support-programs/dual-credit-programs> | ³ Rule 3333-1-65.14, Ohio Laws & Administrative Rules. (2022). *Student eligibility requirements*. <https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-administrative-code/rule-3333-1-65.14>

NON-POLICY MECHANISMS

EXAMPLE

- **Guidance**

Even if legislation or regulation is not an option, states can use agency-issued guidance documents to describe the kinds of practices that the state wants to see prioritized in DE programming. Guidance can also take the form of tools or other resources (see below) to help practitioners understand and achieve what the state wants prioritized.

Kentucky

The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education published in 2023 an *Early Postsecondary Opportunities Toolkit* that includes a series of resources for dual credit practitioners around programs, partnerships, advising and student supports, costs and scholarships, communication, outreach, leveraging data, and more.⁴

- **Engagement**

Beyond formal guidance, policymakers can also communicate with practitioners, students, parents, counselors, teachers, school administrators, college administrators, legislators, community organizations, and others—about their vision and goals for dual enrollment. There is also significant power in bringing DE stakeholders together for regular communication and collaboration on key issues. Whether formalized through some kind of governance structure like a dual enrollment advisory council or more practitioner facing through a community of practice, these forums allow policymakers to hear about issues and communicate goals and expectations.

Minnesota

The Minnesota P-20 Education Partnership, the state's P-20 council organized by the Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, the Office of Higher Education, and the University of Minnesota, has a dual credit working group that includes both agency and non-agency stakeholders who discuss how to advance dual enrollment access and success in the state.⁵

⁴ Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. (n.d.). *Early postsecondary opportunities toolkit*. <https://sites.google.com/view/kyepsotoolkit/home> | ⁵ Minnesota P-20 Education Partnership. (2021). *2021 Report to the legislature*. <https://assets.joycefdn.org/content/uploads/P-20-Education-Partnership-2021-Report.pdf?mtime=20210406172346&focal=none>

STEP 1**Review the Approaches****NON-POLICY MECHANISMS****EXAMPLE****● Resources**

State policymakers can empower other actors within the state to provide technical assistance to DE programs. They can work directly with programs to assess their current practices and make recommendations for improvements, offer tools and resources for programs to use on their own through self-guided technical assistance, or endorse a state or national organization with expertise to provide those services.

Indiana

The Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning (CELL) at the University of Indianapolis is the state-endorsed technical assistance provider for the state's advanced dual credit programs and early colleges. Each year, CELL hosts an annual Early College Summit that includes programming focused on professional development for Indiana early college practitioners.⁶

STEP 2**Inventory Existing Approaches****PLANNING ACTIVITY****EXAMPLE**

State policymakers should inventory their existing approaches. We recommend the following as an activity to spark discussion and planning:

- For each recommendation listed in the report, roughly gauge using a scale of 1 (“very little”) to 5 (“very much”) how much progress you have made in implementing policy or non-policy mechanisms to implement this recommendation.
- Assign each recommendation a priority for your state and work: Given your current political, governance, and fiscal contexts, is this a high-priority, medium-priority, or low-priority item?
- Based on these progress rankings and priority levels, states can develop highest priority item action plans for the lowest progress rankings.

A state rates Recommendation 9, “Diversify, expand, and support further credentialing of instructor pool,” as a 1 on the 1–5 ranking of how the state rates existing progress in using policy and non-policy mechanisms to implement the recommendation. The state also rates this recommendation as a high priority for the state. Meanwhile, the state rates Recommendation 5, “Prioritize advising and other navigational supports,” as a 1 on the 1–5 progress ranking but assigns it a low priority. Based on these ratings of progress and priority, the state should focus first on addressing dual enrollment teacher credentialing challenges.

⁶ University of Indianapolis Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning (CELL). (2023). *Indiana Early College Summit: Closing the postsecondary gap*. <https://cell.uindy.edu/our-work/early-college-high-school/early-college-summit>

State or System Inventory on Strengthening Dual Enrollment

Area 1. Expanding Access		
Recommendation	On a scale of 1–5, how do you rate your progress in implementing policy or non-policy approaches to achieve this recommendation?	What priority is this work for your state? (Low, Medium, High)
1. Set statewide goals and measure progress.		
2. Rethink eligibility requirements.		
3. Reduce tuition and non-tuition costs to students and families through state funding.		

Area 2. Strengthening On-Ramps to Postsecondary Pathways		
Recommendation	On a scale of 1–5, how do you rate your progress in implementing policy or non-policy approaches to achieve this recommendation?	What priority is this work for your state? (Low, Medium, High)
4. Align and promote transfer credit.		
5. Prioritize advising and navigational supports.		
6. Promote FAFSA completion before graduation.		
7. Provide support to strengthen the quality of instruction.		

*State or System Inventory on Strengthening Dual Enrollment***Area 3. Building and Sustaining Strong Partnerships**

Recommendation	On a scale of 1–5, how do you rate your progress in implementing policy or non-policy approaches to achieve this recommendation?	What priority is this work for your state? (Low, Medium, High)
8. Align college and K-12 incentives to promote dual enrollment access and success.		
9. Diversify, expand, and support further credentialing of the instructor pool.		
10. Maximize K-12–college partnership potential through relationships and communities of practice.		
11. Encourage a culture of equity in dual enrollment programming.		

Once state policymakers have identified the highest priority recommendations to make progress on, they must consider which approaches will yield the best results for the state given its political, governance, and fiscal contexts. Some approaches may be more feasible and have a higher potential impact than others, and policymakers should target the approaches that have the highest feasibility and the highest impact possible. Below, we provide questions to consider when determining which mechanism is most appropriate for your state given some identified challenges.

POLICY MECHANISM QUESTIONS

● Legislation

- Will the legislature support the proposed change?
- Will the stakeholder community mount opposition to the proposal? If so, will that impact the final proposal's legislative results?
- What will it take to ensure the legislative change is passed? Which entities—external and internal—need to be aligned to the proposal for it to succeed?

● Funding

- Will the legislature and governor support an annual expanded appropriation for this initiative?
- How can you estimate the amount of funding necessary to meet the expanded needs of students and schools in offering DEEP reforms?
- How can funding be leveraged to ensure that its use results in the expansion of equity of access and success in dual enrollment that you are looking for?

● Regulation

- Does the current governance structure support expanding the authority of dual enrollment oversight through regulation?
- What steps need to be taken to pursue regulation? Which stakeholders need to be consulted to ensure the regulation will result in the desired policy or program changes?

NON-POLICY MECHANISM QUESTIONS

● Guidance

- Who is engaging with guidance documents—experts, current leaders in the field, outside researchers, or others?
- What tools are most beneficial to the practitioners in your state?

● Engagement

Communication:

- Does your state engage in proactive communication with stakeholders and practitioners?
- How can your state work to prevent reactive communication with practitioners?
- Is the communication concise and easy to understand?
- Is the communication appropriately segmented for different audiences (such as parents, students, practitioners) to ensure that it is targeted appropriately and effectively to each audience?

Convening Stakeholders:

- What mechanisms (if any) currently exist to convene practitioners?
- How can the state support the convening of practitioners in a way that maximizes effectiveness without constraining agency staff's time and resources?
- How should a community of practice be structured to be action-oriented?
- What additional support can the state offer to its practitioners through convenings?

NON-POLICY MECHANISM QUESTIONS

● Resources

- What current forms of technical assistance are being offered?
- How can technical assistance be developed to support practitioners in expanding dual enrollment?
- What makes a high-quality technical assistance opportunity?
- Are there leaders in this space who can support these offerings?