

STATE POLICY CONDITIONS FOR DUAL ENROLLMENT

Iowa

AUTHORS

Megan Soetaert-Rojas
Manager, JFF

David Altstadt
Director, JFF

Dual enrollment programs, an educational partnership where high school students can earn postsecondary credits through college coursework, are a [proven strategy](#) for improving rates of high school graduation, college enrollment, and eventual degree completion. In 2026, Jobs for the Future (JFF) created a [dashboard](#) to analyze and track state adoption of 12 College in High School Alliance (CHSA) recommended policies to strengthen access to and quality of dual enrollment programs.

Terminology

States use different terms for dual enrollment, including concurrent enrollment, dual credit, and early college high school. Iowa uses the term concurrent enrollment to encompass multiple modes of delivery for earning college credit while in high school, including courses taught at a high school by a qualified instructor, at a community college, or online. Hereafter, we will use the term dual/concurrent enrollment as an umbrella term and concurrent enrollment when specifically referencing Iowa's program.

Iowa has adopted 10 out of 12 recommended policies, including the three least commonly adopted (see below), making them a leader in building the necessary statewide policy infrastructure for dual/concurrent enrollment, according to JFF's research and interviews with state education officials.



Iowa is one of **only 8 states** that has a mechanism to assess dual/concurrent enrollment quality.



Iowa is one of **only 11 states** that has disaggregated dual/concurrent enrollment data by all of the following students groups.

Race/Ethnicity, Gender, Economic Status, Disability Status, English Language Learner Status

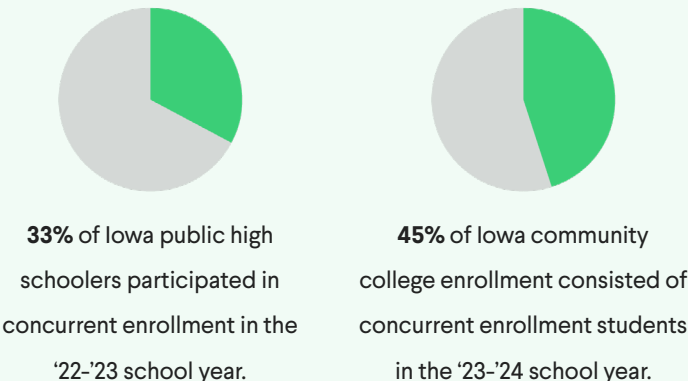


Iowa is one of **only 13 states** to require student advising on the transferability of dual/concurrent enrollment credits.

Iowa launched the [Senior Year Plus](#) initiative in 2008 to increase high schoolers' access to college credit through opportunities like Advanced Placement, concurrent enrollment, and career academies. The program attempts to bridge the divide between high school and postsecondary education while eliminating costs for students. In the years since, the state has continued to advocate for and improve Senior Year Plus opportunities, including the expansion of intentional concurrent enrollment

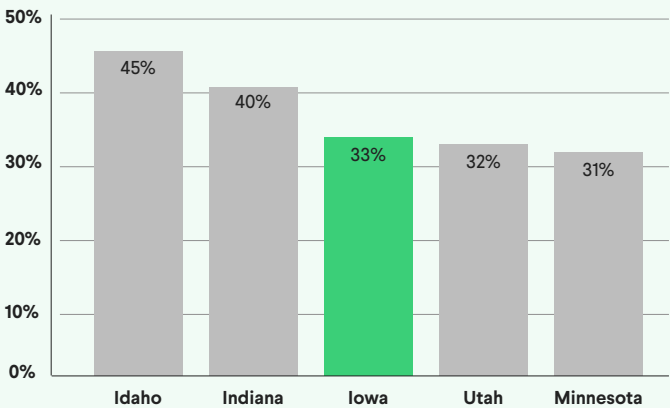
courses and directing attention to student groups underrepresented in concurrent enrollment. The state’s policy conditions governing concurrent enrollment have enabled progress toward these goals. Iowa’s actionable data systems, cross-system collaboration, advising strategies, funding model, and expansion of key courses have proven valuable and can serve as lessons for other states to consider in their dual/concurrent enrollment programs.

Iowa Concurrent Enrollment Participation



Source 1: https://media.nacep.org/docs/briefs/IPEDS_NationaDualEnrollmentNumbers_FINAL.pdf
Source 2: <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/easyblog/high-school-dual-enrollment-grows.html>

% High School Students Participating in Dual/Concurrent Enrollment
5 highest-ranking states (2022-23 school year)



Source: https://media.nacep.org/docs/briefs/IPEDS_NationaDualEnrollmentNumbers_FINAL.pdf

Standout State Policies and Implementation



Data Collection, Reporting, and Accountability

Incorporating dual/concurrent enrollment data into state and federal accountability systems is key to long-term success. When data is publicly available and easy to navigate, program providers and state actors can use this data to identify access gaps and make informed decisions to drive policy implementation and program improvements.

Representative and Actionable Data

Iowa collects and publicly reports concurrent enrollment participation data disaggregated by race, gender, economic status, disability status, and English language learner status. It also reports concurrent enrollment participation data by geography, course modality, school type, and grade level, going beyond what is required by the Every Student Succeeds Act on annual state/local report cards. Additionally, it produces [annual reports](#) on community college enrollment, including specific data on concurrent enrollment.

Per interviews with Iowa Department of Education leaders, the department is working across the state to identify gaps in concurrent enrollment participation between various student groups. While Iowa has high participation rates and strong concurrent enrollment policies, there remain areas where implementation can be improved. Through targeted discussions, the department helps community colleges and districts understand their data trends and analyze why certain student

groups are participating in concurrent enrollment at lower rates. Additionally, the department holds workshops to help community colleges and districts improve their communication and collaboration strategies to intentionally target underrepresented students.



Program Integrity, Credit Transfer, and Advising

State-level oversight and quality assurance mechanisms set the expectation that dual/concurrent enrollment courses are rigorous college-level experiences for high school students. Having a formalized structure for collaboration across K-12 and postsecondary systems is key to increasing dual/concurrent enrollment, ensuring the transferability of courses, and expanding college access. Moreover, providing dedicated advising that supports postsecondary transitions ensures that dual/concurrent enrollment coursework meaningfully contributes to students' goals for degree and credential attainment.

System Collaboration

State-level Collaboration: Iowa has a [unified K-14 state education agency](#) which creates stronger connections and collaboration between K-12 education and community colleges. One of the Iowa Department of Education's [goals](#) is to empower students with multiple pathways to postsecondary success and completion; this is easier to do when school districts, Area Education Agencies (AEAs), and community colleges are governed together. [Iowa code](#) dictates that school districts contract with community colleges to determine which concurrent enrollment courses to offer to their students, helping to ensure the continued relevance of concurrent enrollment courses to changing student needs.

Regional Collaboration: Iowa has created a resource-backed framework to encourage regional partnerships to improve college and career pathways through shared programs and services amongst school districts and colleges. This work stems from the goal of expanding access to career and technical education (CTE) pathways, including CTE concurrent enrollment courses.

The Iowa Department of Education divides the state into 15 [Regional Planning Partnerships](#) (RPPs) as a means of formalizing collaboration between secondary and postsecondary education providers, as well as industry partners, to design, support, and promote high-quality CTE programs. The state makes funding available to the RPPs to support professional development, career navigation and work-based learning activities, and CTE equipment purchases.

The state's grant-funded [Career Academies](#) are career-oriented programs that link secondary CTE to postsecondary education and training through concurrent enrollment coursework. These educational programs are built with strong partnerships between school districts, postsecondary institutions, and employers, with oversight from RPPs.

RPPs also operate [Regional Centers](#) to deliver Career Academy programming for students across multiple school districts, providing a greater number of students with the opportunity to engage in high-quality secondary and postsecondary CTE coursework. Iowa is supporting the expansion of the Career Academy model through a competitive grant, the [Career Academy Incentive Fund](#).

Student Advising

Since 2017, the Iowa Department of Education has provided grant funding to community colleges to hire [College and Career Transition Counselors](#) (CCTCs) to work with students during grades 11 and 12, the summer after graduation, and during the first year of community college "to support college transition and career exploration with students and families." These opportunities include general and CTE concurrent enrollment. These positions are funded through Iowa's [Perkins](#)

[State Plan](#), and have grown to over 60 counselors housed in 12 of Iowa's community colleges, working with students from over 100 high schools.

The state has also [worked](#) to expand the visibility and understanding of CTE concurrent enrollment courses by organizing credit-bearing secondary CTE courses, credit-bearing postsecondary courses, and noncredit CTE courses into one dashboard, the [Community College & High School Programs Dashboard](#).



Finance

State investment in dual/concurrent enrollment is critical to eliminate cost barriers for students, especially those from households with low incomes, and to adequately fund K-12 and postsecondary education partners responsible for program delivery.

State Funding

[In Iowa](#), the state directs school districts and community colleges to cover the cost of concurrent enrollment tuition. School districts and community colleges create agreements on the tuition amount that districts pay colleges. This helps to remove one of the largest barriers to participation for students—tuition costs—and expand access to these courses. There are no limits on the number of concurrent enrollment courses a student may take.

The state also [allocates additional weighted funding](#) to school districts for students taking concurrent enrollment courses, proportional to how much of the school day students were enrolled in concurrent enrollment courses. This additional weighted funding is 0.5 for general education courses and 0.7 for career and technical education (CTE) courses, reflecting the additional cost of delivery for CTE courses.



Course Access and Availability

Program eligibility requirements, such as GPA or standardized test scores, can exacerbate participation gaps across student groups. Iowa is taking steps to remove student barriers to accessing concurrent enrollment while expanding the availability of courses, particularly in relation to CTE-connected concurrent enrollment courses.

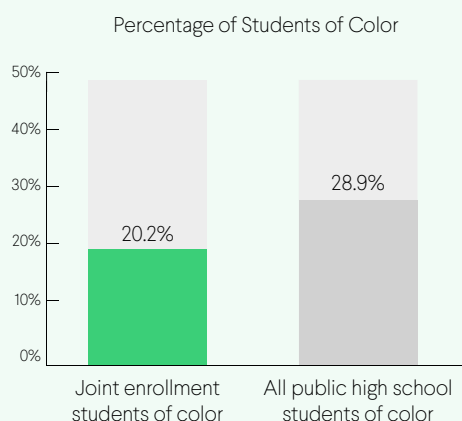
Expanding Access to CTE Concurrent Enrollment

Iowa is committed to strengthening CTE concurrent enrollment in the state and ensuring it is a viable option for students year-round. Recognizing the variety of ways students can be prepared for college-level courses, there are no eligibility requirements for CTE concurrent enrollment courses, removing barriers to participation for high school students.

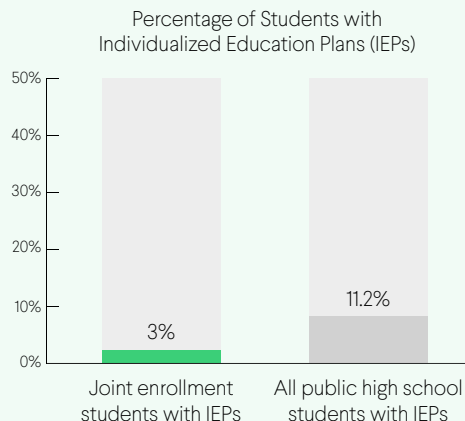
The state has also sought to expand access to concurrent enrollment courses during the summer with the [Summer College Credit Program](#) (SCCP), which has served over 7,700 students to date. This program, launched in 2018, is the only way students can take concurrent enrollment courses during the summer at no cost. Courses must be a part of an approved CTE program aligned with an in-demand occupation. Unlike concurrent enrollment during the school year, which is funded via supplementary weighting, SCCP is funded via a legislative appropriation.

What's Next for Iowa?

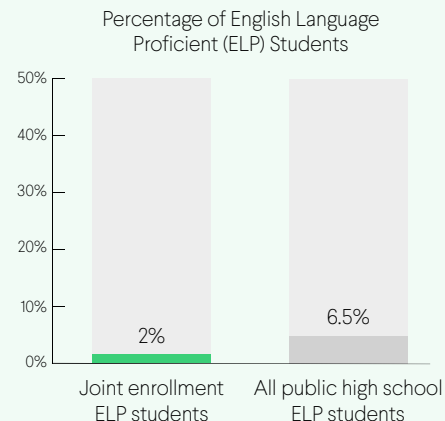
The Iowa Department of Education is using data analysis and workshops with community colleges and districts across the state to reduce participation gaps in concurrent enrollment. The [students enrolled in Iowa's concurrent enrollment courses](#) are less diverse, on average, than the student population at large, reflecting participation gaps in advanced courses in the state. In the 2024–2025 academic year:



20.2% of joint enrollment students identified as a person of color, compared to 28.9% of all Iowa public high school students.



Students with individualized education plans (IEPs) comprised **3%** of all joint enrollment students, while comprising 11.2% of all high school students.



English Language Proficient students made up **2%** of all joint enrollment students, while comprising 6.5% of all high school students.

Note: The dataset looks at “joint enrollment” in Iowa, which consists of multiple forms of college in high school opportunities. Concurrent enrollment represents over 95% of joint enrollment.

Learn More



State Policy Conditions
for Dual Enrollment
<https://qrco.de/bgwcOI>

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