



Doc H's Blog

Kentucky Education Commissioner
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The Need for College Credit for High School Students

In past blogs, I have written about the work of the Governor's Transforming Education in Kentucky ([TEK](#)) Task Force. In reviewing our progress toward implementing the recommendations from that task force, I found that the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and partners have accomplished almost every one of the recommendations.

The most recent accomplishment was the implementation of the [Executive Order](#) that merged career and technical education within KDE. One of the big recommendations left to work on is ensuring that every student has an opportunity to earn college credit while in high school.

Recently, KDE did a survey of school districts to ask about dual credit issues. Here are some of the results.

- Over 32 percent of school districts do not offer dual credit for career and technical courses.
- Over 97 percent of school districts do offer dual credit for college general education courses.
- Over 60 percent of the districts require parents/students to pay for tuition costs.
- Over 60 percent of districts require parents/students to pay for textbooks.
- Only 30 percent of districts utilize virtual learning for dual credit.

As I visit school districts across Kentucky, I find many variations in the cost of dual credit. In some locations, the postsecondary institution has funding to offer dual credit at no cost to students. In other locations, students pay the full tuition costs that a college student would pay.

The results of our survey and my personal visits reveal a number of concerns about equity of opportunity across Kentucky for students to have equal access to dual credit courses. Why is dual credit a good idea?

A recent [study](#) from Jobs for the Future – *Taking College Courses in High School: A Strategy for College Readiness* – studied the impact of dual credit courses in Texas. Texas has had a strategy around college readiness and dual credit for a number of years. Here are some of the findings

- Students who take dual credit courses were 2.2 times more likely to enroll in higher education.
- Students who took dual credit courses were two times more likely to return for a second year of college.
- Students who took dual credit courses were 1.7 times more likely to complete a college degree.

While Kentucky is making terrific progress in the number of students graduating from high school who are college/career-ready (from 34 percent in 2010 to 47 percent in 2012), and Kentucky colleges seeing significant [increases](#) in the number of students who obtain two- and four-year degrees, we have much work to do.

There is a strong correlation between economic levels of a state and individuals with the education level of the workforce and individuals. It appears that the Governor's TEK Task Force was right on target with recommending that EVERY student have access to college-level credit courses while in high school. It is time to make certain that we ensure access is equal in cost, number of courses and quality.

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