



650 W. State Street • Room 307 • Boise, ID • 83702
P.O. Box 83720 • Boise, ID • 83720-0037

For Immediate Release

January 9, 2019

Contact: Mike Keckler
208-332-1591 (office)
208-866-5734 (cell)
Mike.Keckler@osbe.idaho.gov

Idaho's Dual Credit Program Keeps Growing

By Dr. Linda Clark, president, Idaho State Board of Education

Five years ago, Idaho launched its dual credit program for high school students and it has been a resounding success. The idea behind the program is to give students a jump-start on their college education by enabling them to take college-level courses while still in high school, meaning they can earn college credit before they step on a college campus.

Nearly half of the 2017 graduating class earned dual credits compared to just under a third of the 2014 graduating class. In fact, 121 graduates in the 2017 class earned enough credits to collect an associate's degree along with their high school diploma.

To understand the rapid growth of the dual credits earned, it helps to look at how the program has changed over the years and how it is benefitting students throughout our state.

The first iteration was available only to high school students; however, it was up to students and their parents to pay the initial credit costs and receive reimbursement from the state after the course was completed.

Idaho legislators and the governor enacted the Advanced Opportunities program and appropriated funds for the 2014-15 school year to provide for payment for a three credit course for juniors and two three credit courses for seniors. Idaho

families took advantage of these options and as a result, 42 percent of the 2016 graduating class earned dual credits.

State leaders modified the Advanced Opportunities program in time for the 2016-17 school year, authorizing up to \$4,125 for each student to use to pay for dual credit courses and postsecondary credit-earning exams taken in middle through high school. In the class of 2017, 48 percent of graduating seniors earned a total of 93,551 dual credits, an increase of 158 percent compared to the 2013 graduating class. The increase is fairly consistent across our state, whether the graduates live in cities or in rural areas of Idaho.

Underserved populations are also taking more dual credit courses. For instance, just under 43 percent of Hispanic students enrolled in dual credit courses in 2016-17 school year compared to nearly 26 percent in 2013-14.

Research shows the dual credit program has a positive effect on college go-on rates. “The more dual credits accumulated in high school, the more likely a student is to immediately go on and attend college after they graduate,” State Board Principal Research Analyst Bill Laude said.

There is also a correlation between dual credits earned and first-year college retention rates. Laude found that dual credit earners who attended a four-year institution immediately after high school were three percent more likely to return for their sophomore fall term compared to students who did not earn dual credit. Students who enrolled in a community college and who earned dual credits while in high school were 15 percent more likely to return for their sophomore year compared to students who did not earn dual credits.

Idaho’s Advanced Opportunities, Direct Admissions and Apply Idaho programs are innovative approaches that provide access to affordable college opportunities beginning in the seventh grade. These programs, coupled with increased college/career advising at both the high school and at the postsecondary institutions are important tools in Idaho’s efforts to increase both “go-on” and college completion rates.

The \$3 million in additional funding included in Governor Brad Little’s budget for the Advanced Opportunities program will add important resources for Idaho students and families. The State Board appreciates the continued support of our elected leaders in this forward-thinking program.

#####