



College and Career Readiness Landscape

This brief provides information on four aspects of college and career pathways:

- Dual enrollment.
- Work-based learning.
- Career and technical education.
- Developmental education.

Dual Enrollment

Many state dual enrollment policies were first designed to provide opportunities for the most academically advanced high school students. However, in recent years, informed by research bearing out the benefits of program participation for a broader set of learners, states have retooled policies to expand program availability; reduce or eliminate participation barriers, such as student-borne tuition costs; and enhance return on investment, such as designating dual enrollment courses that transfer to all public postsecondary institutions statewide.

Education Commission of the States has identified [13 model policy components](#), based on research and state policy-making experience, that may increase the likelihood that a more diverse group of students participates in dual enrollment opportunities.

Access

- All students are eligible to participate.
- Eligibility requirements are based on demonstrated ability.
- Caps on number of courses are not overly restrictive.
- Students earn secondary and postsecondary credit.
- All students and parents are provided with program information.
- Counseling is available to students and parents.

Finance

- Responsibility for tuition does not fall to parents.
- Districts and colleges are fully funded or reimbursed for participating students.

Ensuring Course Quality

- Courses meet college-level rigor.
- Instructors meet college-level expectations and receive appropriate support and evaluation.
- Student participation and outcomes are publicly reported.
- Programs are subject to evaluation.

Transferability of Credit

- Colleges accept dual enrollment credit as transfer credit.

Further, Education Commission of the States' May 2018 report [Rethinking Dual Enrollment to Reach More Students identifies](#) state policy levers to broaden dual enrollment access and success for middle-achieving students. The report argues that increasing access to dual enrollment for middle- and lower-achieving students may encourage them to enroll in college after high school graduation.

Career Technical Education

State policymakers continue to seek ways their states can educate and train secondary and postsecondary students, so they graduate equipped to pursue postsecondary education or to meet the growing demand for a well-educated and skilled workforce. [Career technical education](#) can give students access to workplace competencies and provide academic content in a hands-on experience. Throughout the 2017 and



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2018 legislative sessions, states enacted secondary school CTE policy in one or more of the following areas:

- Awareness and support.
- Collaboration and research.
- Graduation requirements and dual credit.
- Work-based learning.
- Funding.

These trends and related legislation are explored in depth in ECS's recent [Career and Technical Education Policy Snapshot](#).

Work-Based Learning

CTE may utilize several instructional methods and learning strategies, such as apprenticeships, online learning, and career exploration, to prepare students. [Work-based learning](#) is another learning strategy meant to complement a student's academic learning and career interests.

ECS's [Work-Based Learning: Model Policy Components](#) report identifies a comprehensive set of policies to ensure high school students statewide have equitable access to high quality work-based learning experiences designed to prepare them for postsecondary and workforce success in high-demand occupations in their region or state.

The brief outlines components of a comprehensive policy approach to ensure high school students have equitable access to high-quality work-based learning experiences:

- Single, clear and statewide definition of various work-based learning experiences.
- Development of a statewide strategic plan.
- Designated entity/entities coordinating state and regional efforts.

- Establishment of state or regional intermediaries.
- Development and dissemination of effective employer outreach and support strategies.
- Clear communication on employer logistics.

Developmental Education

Improving college readiness is an important step to improving college completion rates, yet [more than two-thirds](#) of community college students are placed into a developmental education course. Developmental education courses are intended to help underprepared students gain the academic skills required to be successful in college level classes. These courses are often not covered under a student's financial aid package, nor do they carry credits that count towards graduation requirements – meaning it may be more expensive and take longer for a student to graduate. Higher education practitioners and policymakers [are reviewing the policies and practices](#) that guide students into and through developmental education courses.

ECS's [50 state review](#) of developmental education policies and accompanying brief, [Common Elements of Developmental Education Policies](#) outline how states and postsecondary systems assess and place students into either college-level or developmental courses, encourage best practices with new instructional methods, and establish accountability. Across the states, these policies address:

- College readiness assessments.
- Assessment cut scores.
- Multiple measures for course placement.
- Innovative course models.
- Reporting requirements.