

**Dual Credit Module**  
**for Texas Career and Technical Education Administrators**

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**This module is designed to assist career and technical education administrators to understand and implement dual credit programs in their districts or institutions.**

**Guiding Questions:**

- I. What is dual credit?**
- II. What are the benefits and outcomes of dual credit programs?**
- III. Do dual credit courses count for instructional time to meet the full-day or half-day attendance requirements for the Texas Foundation School Program funding purposes?**
- IV. What policies authorize dual credit in Texas secondary schools?**
  - A. Texas Education Agency (TEA) Policies**
  - B. Career and Technical Education (CTE) Policies**
  - C. Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Policies**
- V. How does a school implement a dual credit program?**
- VI. What assessment strategies are needed to determine the impact of a dual credit program?**
- VII. What are the barriers and challenges to dual credit programs?**
- VIII. Where are additional resources located?**

**I. What is dual credit?**

Dual credit programs allow high school students to enroll in college courses and simultaneously earn academic credit from the college and the high school. Such courses are most often taught on the secondary school campus, but high school students may also take dual credit courses on the college campus. The high school and/or school district administrators develop dual credit programs with local institutions of higher education (most often community colleges).

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) has guidelines for developing **institutional agreements**, which enumerate details of the dual credit program arranged between the school and the college. Section V, “**How does a school implement a dual credit program?**” contains those guidelines.

Dual credit courses are taught by postsecondary faculty of the institution offering the credit, or by high school teachers who have met the same qualifications the postsecondary institute requires of their faculty. Courses must be the same quality and rigor of the course offered at the postsecondary institution.

While the term *dual credit* is sometimes used interchangeable with *concurrent enrollment*, the THECB differentiates between the two terms. According to the THECB (n.d.), *concurrent enrollment* applies to high schools students who earn credit from a postsecondary institution through programs not affiliated with the high school and dual credit is not given.

## **II. What are the benefits and outcomes of dual credit programs?**

In addition to earning high school and college credit, and possibly completing high school early, there are other benefits of dual credit programs. According to the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) (n.d.), benefits of quality dual credit programs include the following:

- Provide rigorous postsecondary academic challenges to high school students in their own supportive high school environments.
- Provide college access to a broad range of students by placing actual college courses within high schools.
- Afford students and families savings in the overall cost of a higher education.
- Focus student learning on critical thinking and writing skills.
- Evaluate students with multiple and varied assessments, rather than on one high-stakes test.

- Provide high school instructors with ongoing, relevant professional development led by college and university faculty.
- Create spillover effects that "raise the bar" throughout partner schools -- even in non CEP [concurrent enrollment program] courses.
- Foster strong local networks among secondary and postsecondary educators that result in a seamless transition for students as they move from high school to college. (Benefits to Concurrent Enrollment section, ¶2)

**III. Do dual credit courses count for instructional time to meet the full-day or half-day attendance requirements for the Texas Foundation School Program funding purposes?**

According to TEA Deputy Associate Commissioner for School Finance and Fiscal Analysis Joe Wisnoski (2003), TEA allows any course taken for dual credit to count for instructional time to meet the full-day or half-day attendance requirements for Foundation School Program funding



purposes. This question arises because at one time, TEA disallowed this practice but the legislature removed that restriction in 2003.

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Winsnoski's full text is located at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/taa/schfin101403.html>.

**IV. What policies authorize dual credit in Texas secondary schools?**

**A. Texas Education Agency (TEA) Policies**

The Texas Education Code (2007) requires each school district to provide programs to allow students to earn at least 12 semester credit hours of college credit while they are in secondary schools. Schools must have these programs in effect not later that fall, 2008.

According to Texas Education Code (2007), local districts have the latitude to establish any of the following programs: “(1) international baccalaureate, advanced placement, or dual credit programs; (2) articulated postsecondary courses provided for local credit or articulated postsecondary advanced technical credit courses for state credit; or (3) any combination of the courses described by Subdivisions (1) and (2)” (Section 28.009, ¶ 1).

**B. Career and Technical Education (CTE) Policies**

The Texas State Plan for Career and Technical Education 2008 – 2013 (Texas Education Agency, 2007) requires each state-recognized [CTE] program of study to include: “A relevant, coherent sequence of CTE courses with college credit opportunities, including dual credit, statewide and locally articulated credit, Advanced Placement (AP) and/or International Baccalaureate (IB) credit; . . .” (p.8).

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The State Plan for Career and Technical Education 2008 – 2013 is available at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/cte/Accountability/StatePlanFinal111607.pdf#xml=http://www.tea.state.tx.us/cgi/texis/webinator/search/xml.txt?query=perkins+state+plan+&db=db&id=8809322b604874ef>

**C. Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Policies**

The THECB has guidelines for developing institutional agreements to establish dual credit programs. For those guidelines, please see the next section of this module, “**How does a school implement a dual credit program?**”

**V. How does a school implement a dual credit program?**

The following information is taken from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s Chapter 4. Rules Applying to All Public Institutions of

Higher Education in Texas. *Subchapter D. Dual Credit Partnerships between Secondary Schools and Texas Public Colleges* (2007).

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For the full text, of THECB rules, click on [http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/Rules/tac3.cfm?Chapter\\_ID=4&Subchapter=D](http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/Rules/tac3.cfm?Chapter_ID=4&Subchapter=D).

### **Institutional Agreements**<sup>1</sup>

**A. What is an institutional agreement?**

An agreement required by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) for a dual credit partnership.

**B. Who develops the institutional agreement?**

A public or private secondary school and public postsecondary institution<sup>2</sup>.

**C. Who must approve the institutional agreement?**

The governing boards or designated authorities (such as the principal and chief academic officer) of both the secondary school and the public postsecondary institution.

**D. When can the institutional agreement be implemented?**

It must be approved prior to offering high school students dual credit courses.

**E. What are the elements of the institutional agreement?**

**1. Courses Eligible for Dual Credit**<sup>3</sup>

- Courses offered by public two-year associate degree granting institutions must be identified as college-level academic courses in current edition of the *Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual* adopted by the THECB or as college-level workforce education courses in the current edition of the *Workforce Education Course Manual* adopted by THECB.
- Courses offered by public universities must be in the approved undergraduate course catalog of the university.

**2. High School Students Eligibility for Dual Credit Courses**

In addition to established eligibility requirements (below), higher education institutions may also impose additional

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<sup>1</sup> A postsecondary institution is not required to offer dual credit courses for high school students.

<sup>2</sup> Schools usually work with their local community college.

<sup>3</sup> Public postsecondary institutions may not offer remedial and developmental courses for dual credit.

requirements as long as they do not conflict with the THECB regulations.

- Students must be in the eleventh or twelfth grade. Other students who have exhibited exceptional academic performance ability may be approved by the high school principal and higher education institution's chief academic officer.
- Students are eligible who have passed all sections of the exit-level TAAS test.<sup>4</sup>
- Students are eligible who have earned ACT, SAT, and TASS qualifying scores established by the THECB are automatically eligible without further testing.
- Students are eligible who have earned PSAT/NMSQT,<sup>5</sup> SAT, or PLAN,<sup>6</sup> or TAKS<sup>7</sup> qualifying scores established by the THECB.
- Students are eligible to enroll in workforce education dual credit courses if they have achieved the minimum passing score on the Mathematics section and/or the English/Language Arts section on the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> grade TAKS. Students may enroll only in those classes for which they have demonstrated eligibility.
- Students may take no more than two dual credit classes per semester. Students who have exhibited exceptional academic performance ability may be approved to take additional dual credit courses by the high school principal and higher education institution's chief academic officer.
- To enroll in a dual credit course, students must meet all the prerequisite requirements for the course required by the higher education institution.
- Home schooled students, and those in non-accredited high schools, must meet the rules above.

### 3. Location of Class

Dual credit courses may be taught on the college campus or on the high school campus. Dual credit classes taught electronically must comply with applicable rules and regulations.

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<sup>4</sup> TASS: Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

<sup>5</sup> PSAT/NMSQT: Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test

<sup>6</sup> PLAN: Pre-ACT Exam

<sup>7</sup> TAKS: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

#### 4. Class Composition

- Dual credit courses may be composed of dual credit students only, or of dual credit and college credit students.
- Exceptions may be one of the following (THECB, 2007):
  - (1) If the course involved is required for completion under the State Board of Education Recommended or Distinguished Achievement High School Program graduation requirements, and the high school involved is otherwise unable to offer such a course.
  - (2) If the high school credit-only students are College Board Advanced Placement students.
  - (3) If the course is a career and technology/college workforce education course and the high school credit-only students are earning articulated college credit. (p.4)



## 5. Faculty Selection, Supervision, and Evaluation (THECB, 2007)

- The college will select [college] instructors who are regular faculty members of the college or who meet the same standards and requirements of faculty who teach the same courses at the college.
- The college is responsible for supervising and evaluating instructors and will use the same or comparable criteria as used for *faculty who teach the same courses at the college*. (p.4)

## 6. Course Curriculum, Instruction, and Grading

The college will ensure that dual credit courses for high school students are comparable in all ways with the same courses taught at the college, regardless of the student composition of the class.

## 7. Academic Policies and Student Support Services (THECB, 2007)

- (1) Regular academic policies applicable to courses taught at the college's main campus must also apply to dual credit courses. These policies could include the appeal process for disputed grades, drop policy, the communication of grading policy to students, when the syllabus must be distributed, etc.
- (2) Students in dual credit courses must be eligible to utilize the same or comparable support services that are afforded college students on the main campus. The college is responsible for ensuring timely and efficient access to such services (e.g., academic advising and counseling), to learning materials (e.g., library resources), and to other benefits for which the student may be eligible. (p. 4)

## 8. Transcripts

Grades will be recorded immediately upon completion of the class.

### F. Funding (THECB, 2007)

- (1) The state funding for dual credit courses will be available to both public school districts and colleges based on the current funding rules of the State Board of Education and the [THECB].
- (2) The college may claim funding for all students getting college credit in dual credit courses.
- (3) All public colleges, universities, and health-related institutions may waive all or part of tuition and fees for a Texas high school student enrolled in a course for which the student may receive dual course credit. (p. 4)

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For the full text, of THECB rules, click on [http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/Rules/tac3.cfm?Chapter\\_ID=4&Subchapter=D](http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/Rules/tac3.cfm?Chapter_ID=4&Subchapter=D).

## VI. What assessment strategies are needed to determine success of a dual credit program?

**Strategies should be developed during the planning process.** Ideally, schools and postsecondary institutions will develop assessment strategies during the planning process for dual credit programs. Among issues to discuss are the kinds of data needed to measure the program's success, when and how it will be collected, how it will be shared, how it will be recorded, etc.

**Data should be collected on all students and on subgroups of students.** To determine the program's impact on all students, data should be disaggregated by subgroups of students such as gender, race, and year in school, socio-economic level, and high school program (e.g., CTE students).

**Data collection should be ongoing.** Data to determine short-term program effects can be analyzed annually in the first years of the program. and data on long-term effects may be assessed for 3, 4, and 5 years. It is also important to assess the outcomes for each class of students enrolled (e.g., 2008-2009 enrollees, 2009-2010) to determine if the program is growing stronger or to identify problems.

**Questions should be used to guide the assessment process.** Questions about program impact (i.e., how well the program goals are being met) are useful to guide data collection and analysis. While each school may have unique questions, the following are general suggestions that may help guide data collection:

- Who is being served (gender, race, year in school, socio-economic level, CTE students, etc.)?

**Note: It is important to disaggregate student data for all subgroups of interest for all the following questions.**

- Who is being served (e.g., gender, year in school, CTE students, culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students<sup>8</sup>)?
- Are participating students more likely to graduate from high school than those who do not take dual credit classes? Are selected groups of participating students more likely to graduate (e.g., gender, year in school, CTE students, and culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students)?
- How do the first-semester grade point averages (GPA) of participating students (all and subgroups) who enter postsecondary education compare to GPAs of non-participating students who enter postsecondary education. Second semester?
- Are participating students (all and subgroups) who enter postsecondary education more likely to continue on to their second year than non-participating students? Are participating students (all and subgroups) more likely to succeed in two-year colleges than non-participating students? Four-year colleges and universities?

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<sup>8</sup> Culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students are also defined as students with special needs. The 2006 Perkins Act defines special needs students as individuals with disabilities; individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including foster children; individuals preparing for non-traditional fields; single parents, including single pregnant women; displaced Homemakers; and individuals with limited English proficiency.



## VII. What are the barriers and challenges to dual credit programs?

Educators can best confront obstacles to implementing and continuing a dual credit program by recognizing possible pitfalls in advance. Possible problems include the following:

- Students and parents lack knowledge of the program, especially those students who have been traditionally underserved by public schools. School counselors, administrators, academic advisors, and others must work to inform students and parents of program availability, including helping students in earlier grades understand the program's potential (Karp, Calcagno, Hughes, Jeong, & Bailey, 2007).
- Programs to prepare high school teachers to meet requirements for teaching college courses may need to be developed.
- Communication between the high school(s) and postsecondary institution(s) must be open and ongoing.
- Programs must be vigilant that dual credit courses are of the quality and rigor of the same course taught on a college campus.
- While research is necessary for schools and postsecondary institutions to understand program impact, there is little research available on dual credit programs (Karp et. al., 2007).
- Rigorous admissions requirements and/or mandatory prerequisites limit access to students, even those known to have academic capability similar to traditional college students (Karp et. al., 2007).
- Small schools, and schools located in rural areas, may need to investigate distance learning programs.

### VIII. Where are additional resources located?

- **AchieveTexas** (an education initiative designed to prepare students for success in secondary and postsecondary settings):  
<http://www.achievetexas.org>
- **Houston Community College Southwest's Dual Credit Handbook:**  
<http://swc2.hccs.edu/swc/handbook.html>
- **National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships:**  
<http://www.nacep.org/>
- **Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) Form E1011 Dual-Credit-Indicator-Code**, used by schools to provide TEA student data on dual credit enrollment:  
<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/peims/standards/weds/index.html?e1011>
- **Texas Education Agency:** [www.tea.state.tx.us](http://www.tea.state.tx.us)
- **Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board:**  
<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/>
- **U.S. Department of Education:** [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)
- **Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) of U.S. Department of Education:** <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/cclo/dual.html>

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