

Dual Enrollment in Hawai'i: the Current Landscape and Strategic Direction

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Dual enrollment has become a cornerstone of Hawai'i's college and career readiness strategy, providing high school students with opportunities to earn college credits alongside meeting high school graduation requirements. The state's dual enrollment system is built through a partnership between the Hawai'i State Department of Education (HI-DOE) and the University of Hawai'i system and private colleges (like Hawaii Pacific University and Chaminade University), creating pathways for exposing students to college-level coursework and as a means to accelerate post-secondary attainment. A defining feature of the state's approach has been its commitment to access and equity. Through a combination of in-person, online, and hybrid course delivery models, students have a variety of communities (urban, rural, neighboring island communities) have been able to participate in dual enrollment opportunities. State investments and partnerships have helped to reduce the financial barriers and expand access for students who have historically been underrepresented in higher education, including Native Hawaiian students (through partnerships like *Hui Ho'opili Āina*), first generation students, and economically disadvantaged students.

Hawai'i's dual enrollment model is supported by two primary programs in the state: *Early College* and *Running Start*. The *Early College* program allows students in grades 9 -12 to enroll in University of Hawai'i courses designed specifically for high school students on high school campuses. The *Running Start* program enables eligible students to take 100-level courses directly alongside college students on UH campuses. Additionally, there is also the Dual Credit Articulated Programs of Study (DCAPS) that includes the Career and Technical Education (CTE) dual credit pathways which supports students pursuing workforce-aligned routes and gaining dual credit.

Recent research and program evaluation data have shown that dual enrollment participation has been associated with higher rates of college enrollment, retention, credit accumulation, and ultimately, degree attainment. Dual enrollment remains a key strategy for increasing educational attainment and creating pathways to college and careers, as the state education system continues to strengthen the connections between K-12 education, colleges and universities, and workforce partnerships. Future efforts will continue to focus on these things, as well as expanding participation further, strengthening career pathways, and closing equity gaps that still exist.

Summary of Participation, Equity, and Strategic Priorities

Participation & Growth	Equity Outcomes	Strategic Priorities
Early College is available at 53 public high schools across Hawaii and has become the state's primary dual enrollment pathway.	Hawaii's dual enrollment strategy prioritizes Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, rural, first-generation, and low-income students.	Increase participation among underrepresented student populations and expand access statewide.
More than 25,000 students have participated in Early College since 2012.	Tuition assistance and statewide program availability help reduce financial and	Strengthen transitions from high school to college and improve

Participation & Growth	Equity Outcomes	Strategic Priorities
	geographic barriers to participation.	persistence and degree completion outcomes.
Dual credit participation among public high school graduates increased from approximately 17% (Class of 2017) to 27% (Class of 2024).	Research indicates dual enrollment participants enroll in college and persist at higher rates than non-participants.	Expand Career and Technical Education (CTE) dual credit pathways aligned with Hawaii's workforce needs.
Programs are offered through in-person, online, and hybrid formats, increasing access for students across all islands.	Positive outcomes are especially evident among historically underrepresented student groups, although participation gaps remain.	Maintain affordable or no-cost participation and ensure equitable access across all islands and communities.
Dual enrollment continues to serve as a key component of Hawaii's college and career readiness strategy.	Continued focus on advising, outreach, and student supports is needed to close remaining equity gaps.	Use data and cross-sector partnerships to guide continuous improvement and measure student outcomes.

References of Interest

- [University of Hawaii Dual Credit Programs](#)
- [Early College Program Overview](#)
- [Hawaii State Department of Education – College and Career Readiness](#)
- [Hawai'i Data eXchange Partnership – Dual Credit Data Story](#)
- [Early College Strategic Directions \(2024\)](#)
- [Hawai'i P-20 – Partnerships for Education](#)
- [Hawai'i Pacific University – Dual-Credit Programs](#)
- [Chaminade University of Honolulu – Early College Program](#)
- S. Chillingworth (2016) [Dual Credit Courses Aim to Improve Student Post-Secondary Success Rates](#), Kamehameha Schools, Hawai'i