

Increases in Dual Credit Enrollment in Texas

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A little over 25 years ago in the fall semester of 2000, total enrollment at Texas public colleges and universities was just over 862,000 students. Of that total, 17,784 were dual credit students, representing 2% of the total enrollment. In the fall of 2024, total enrollment at Texas public colleges and universities was over 1.42 million, a 65% increase. And also in the fall of 2024, there were 249,328 dual credit students representing 18% of the total enrollment. This represented a 1,302% increase from fall 2000!

In the fall of 2020 after COVID, there was a slight decrease but enrollment continues to climb since then. The public community colleges in Texas have historically enrolled 9 out of every 10 dual credit students but we are seeing increases in dual credit enrollment at public universities. In the fall of 2020, there were 10,720 students enrolled in the public universities and that number grew to 16,076 in the fall of 2024. Overall, total dual credit enrollment grew by 36% from 183,726 in the fall of 2020 to 249,328 in the fall of 2024. During that same time, the public community colleges saw an increase of 36%.

Texas passed House Bill 8 during the 2023 legislative session which significantly changed the funding model for community colleges. The old funding model awarded money based on enrollment. HB 8 created a formula that ties the money to degree and certificate completions, transfers to four-year universities and participation in dual credit courses by high school students. HB 8 also creates a path for low-income students to enroll in dual credit courses. Community colleges can participate in the Financial Aid for Swift Transfer program which gives additional funding when they allow high school students who qualify for the free and reduced-price lunch program to take classes at no cost. Research has shown that dual credit students are more likely to finish high school and enroll in college and finish their degrees.

Community colleges are working hard to see students through to completion. Some are offering free tuition and others have expanded their student advising services by working closely with the high schools. This new funding model provides incentives for student success, especially with our dual credit students.

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