

USING ESSA TO EXPAND AND SUPPORT COLLEGE IN HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

College in high school programs, such as dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and early college high school, are effective and increasingly popular models for improving student access, affordability, and completion of college, particularly for students who are low income or underrepresented in higher education.

Students who attend schools with high-quality college in high school programs are more likely to graduate high school, immediately enroll in college, and persist to completion than their peers. At the same time, these models provide students with significant flexibility in how to tailor their academic programs to their specific needs. They also meet a top priority of many families: reducing the time and cost for students to earn degrees and enter the workforce.

ESSA empowers states and local decision makers to implement the strategies they choose for improving teaching and learning, provided that they are grounded in evidence of success. ESSA encourages states and school districts to consider college in high school programs as key strategies for successfully preparing students for college, and provides increased access to federal funding for the development and implementation of these programs.



What Are College in High School Programs?

ESSA provides the very first federal definition for college in high school models, with a definition for “dual or concurrent enrollment” and a separate definition for “early college high school.”

Dual or Concurrent Enrollment

“A dual- or concurrent-enrollment program is offered by a partnership between at least one institution of higher education and at least one local educational agency through which a secondary school student who has not graduated from high school is able to enroll in one or more postsecondary courses and earn postsecondary credit that:

- Is transferable to the institutions of higher education in the partnership
- Applies toward completion of a degree or recognized educational credential as described in the Higher Education Act of 1965.”

Early College High School

“The term ‘early college high school’ means a partnership between at least one local educational agency and at least one institution of higher education that allows participants to simultaneously complete requirements toward earning a regular high school diploma and earn not less than 12 credits that are transferable to the institutions of higher education in the partnership as part of an organized course of study toward a postsecondary degree or credential at no cost to the participant or participant’s family.”

To learn more, please visit:

<https://www.collegeinhighschool.org/>

The examples below identify some of the ways in which states and school districts may use funds made available under ESSA to support these high-impact models.

TITLE I: Improving Basic Programs Operated by State and Local Education Agencies

- ▶ **Section 1003A. Direct Student Services (Local Use of Funds)** — Allows a state education authority to provide grants to local education agencies (LEAs) that have identified many schools as needing comprehensive support and improvement, or are implementing targeted support and improvement plans in order to pay for student service activities. These include advanced courses and postsecondary-level instruction.
- ▶ **Section 1114. Schoolwide Programs** — Allows secondary schools operating schoolwide programs, as allowed under ESSA, to use their funds to run dual or concurrent enrollment programs, which may include early college high schools.
- ▶ **Section 1115. Targeted Assistance Schools** — Allows secondary schools operating a targeted assistance program to use their funds to run dual or concurrent enrollment programs. Targeted assistance programs provide additional services to individual students who have been identified as low achieving or at risk of becoming low achieving.

TITLE II: Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High-Quality Teachers, Principals, and Other School Leaders

- ▶ **Section 2101. Formula Grants to States** — Includes an allowable use of state formula grant funds to provide assistance to LEAs for professional development and to support teachers in obtaining skills and credentials in order to teach as part of a dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, or early college high school program.
- ▶ **Section 2103. Local Use of Funds** — Includes an allowable use of LEA funds for professional development for identifying gifted and talented students and providing them with dual or concurrent enrollment programs.

TITLE III: Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students

- ▶ **Section 3115. Subgrants to Eligible Entities** — Allows recipients of grants issued to improve English language learning to use funds to offer dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and early college high school programs to English language learners.

TITLE IV: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants

- ▶ **Section 4104. Formula Grants to States (State Use of Funds)** — Under Title IV, Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment formula grant program allocation, dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and early college high school programs are allowable uses of state funds.
- ▶ **Section 4107. Activities to Support Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities** — Under Title IV, Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment formula grant program allocation, dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and early college high school programs are allowable uses of LEA funds.

States are Prioritizing College in High School

In addition to new incentives on the local level to use ESSA funding to support college in high school programs, states have also made significant strides in prioritizing these models in their ESSA state plans and accountability systems. Across all state plans:

47 STATES: 47 states and the District of Columbia include college in high school programs in their ESSA state plans.

37 STATES: 37 states include college in high school programs in their state accountability systems.

36 STATES: 36 states and the District of Columbia include college in high school programs in elements of their state plan beyond accountability.

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