



EXPLORING POSTSECONDARY OUTCOMES OF DUAL-ENROLLMENT PARTICIPATION IN NEW JERSEY: SUMMARY REPORT

by Jimmy Green and Muazzam Toshmatova, Ph.D.

Prepared by the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development | December 2024

Introduction

Using data from the New Jersey Statewide Data System, this study explores the postsecondary paths of New Jersey high school graduates from 2014 and 2015 who took part in dual-enrollment programs. Through a comparison between these students and their peers who did not take part in dual enrollment, the study aims to shed light on how these programs influence access and success. The primary research questions have been used to organize the main results.

Does Dual Enrollment Increase College Enrollment and Success?

Students who participate in dual enrollment are much more likely to enroll in college right after graduating from high school. They also complete bachelor's degrees at higher rates compared to their peers who did not participate in dual enrollment. Furthermore, dual-enrolled students are more likely to graduate within the standard timeframe for both associate and bachelor's degrees, suggesting that dual enrollment facilitates a seamless transition to college — a finding consistently supported by research.

- ▶ **Policy Implication:** Expanding dual-enrollment opportunities statewide should be prioritized to enhance college enrollment and retention rates, supporting broader educational attainment objectives.

How Do Socioeconomic Factors Influence Dual-Enrollment Outcomes?

The analysis reveals marked disparities in college enrollment linked to socioeconomic status. Students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds tend to enroll in four-year postsecondary institutions at a higher rate compared with their peers eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, underscoring the role of economic barriers in limiting access to higher education.

- ▶ **Policy Implication:** Expanding dual-enrollment opportunities statewide should be prioritized to enhance college enrollment and retention rates, supporting broader educational attainment objectives. Research has shown that dual enrollment benefits students across all socioeconomic backgrounds, increasing the chances of attending and graduating from college (An, 2013). However, socioeconomic factors continue to influence outcomes. While dual enrollment offers benefits, students from low-income backgrounds may face barriers that limit their ability to fully capitalize on these opportunities. Therefore, any expansion of dual enrollment should be paired with targeted financial support to ensure equitable access and success for all students.

What is the Impact of Dual Enrollment by Demographic Characteristics?

Dual-enrollment programs show higher enrollment rates at four-year colleges for female students than for male students. This pattern underscores the importance of addressing gender-specific challenges to educational advancement.

Similarly, disparities in college enrollment rates are evident when examining various racial and ethnic groups. Unequal educational opportunities persist, as evidenced by the higher rates of four-year college enrollment among white students in dual-enrollment programs, in contrast to Asian, Black, and Hispanic students.

In addition, dual-enrollment programs yield higher rates of college enrollment and completion among non-special education students when compared to their special education counterparts. The observed discrepancy underscores the necessity of providing customized assistance to special education students enrolled in these programs.



- ▶ **Policy Implication #1:** An important step toward achieving gender equity in postsecondary outcomes is the development of targeted initiatives that specifically aim to encourage male students' enrollment in higher education, particularly at four-year colleges. Mentorship programs and workshops focused on career exploration and college readiness can engage male students and support their educational advancement (Fink et al., 2023).
- ▶ **Policy Implication #2:** Targeted interventions are necessary to ensure that dual-enrollment benefits are equitably distributed across all racial and ethnic groups. Implementing mentorship and support programs tailored to the needs of underrepresented racial and ethnic groups can enhance participation and success (Fink et al., 2023).
- ▶ **Policy Implication #3:** Enhancing support and creating tailored dual-enrollment opportunities for special education students are critical. Policies should focus on providing the necessary resources, such as dedicated advisors and accessible course materials, to support these students' postsecondary success.

Conclusion

College access and success are enhanced by dual-enrollment programs. Nevertheless, substantial disparities in participation persist, wherein socioeconomic status, gender, race, and special education status emerge as prominent factors. To achieve equal access for every student to the advantages of dual enrollment, it is essential to employ targeted measures and implement specific policies to bridge these gaps. To attain a more profound understanding of the causal effects of dual enrollment, upcoming research will utilize advanced statistical methods. The findings will inform policy decisions and improve educational equity.

References

- An, B. P. (2013). The impact of dual enrollment on college degree attainment: Do low-SES students benefit? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 35(1), 57–75. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373712461933>
- Fink, J., Griffin, S., Garcia Tulloch, A., Jenkins, D., Fay, M. P., Ramirez, C., Schudde, L., & Steiger, J. (2023). *Deep insights: Redesigning dual enrollment as a purposeful pathway to college and career opportunity*. Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University. <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/deep-insights-redesigning-dual-enrollment.html>



Acknowledgements

This report was written by Heldrich Center staff members Jimmy Green, Research Project Manager, and Muazzam Toshmatova, Ph.D., former Postdoctoral Fellow.

Khudodod Khudododov, Ph.D. provided analytical support for this study. The report was reviewed by Laurie Harrington and Stephanie Walsh, Ph.D. Robb C. Sewell was the editor. Kim Deng was the graphic designer.

About the New Jersey Statewide Data System

The [New Jersey Statewide Data System](#) (NJSDS) is the State of New Jersey's centralized longitudinal data system for education and workforce data. Its mission is to safely use the state's existing administrative data for evidence-based policymaking. Developed in 2012 through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, NJSDS creates a single place where state education, postsecondary education, employment, and workforce longitudinal data are securely stored to help stakeholders make data-informed decisions to improve student learning and labor market outcomes. The data system is owned by the State of New Jersey and operated by the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. NJSDS is a collaboration between the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the New Jersey Department of Education, and the New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority.

About the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development

The [John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development](#) at Rutgers University is devoted to transforming the workforce development system at the local, state, and federal levels. The center, based at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, provides an independent source of analysis for reform and innovation in policymaking and employs cutting-edge research and evaluation methods to identify best practices in workforce development, education, and employment policy. It is also engaged in significant partnerships with the private sector, workforce organizations, and educational institutions to design effective education and training programs. It is deeply committed to assisting job seekers and workers attain the information, education, and skills training they need to move up the economic ladder.

As captured in its slogan, "Solutions at Work," the Heldrich Center is guided by a commitment to translate the strongest research and analysis into practices and programs that companies, community-based organizations, philanthropy, and government officials can use to strengthen workforce and workforce readiness programs, create jobs, and remain competitive. The center's work strives to build an efficient labor market that matches workers' skills and knowledge with the evolving demands of employers.