

ARKANSAS CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT REPORT

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS

JENNIFER ZINTH
ZINTH CONSULTING, LLC
JANUARY 2024





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WHERE IS ARKANSAS NOW?

In the 2022-23 school year, 21,286 Arkansas high school students enrolled in concurrent enrollment programs offered by public and private higher education institutions, according to Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE) data. These concurrent course enrollments provided students the opportunity to earn high school graduation credit and transcribed, transferable college credit upon successful course completion.

[Research](#) demonstrates that concurrent enrollment participants nationally are more likely than their peers who did not concurrently enroll to graduate high school, matriculate, and persist to credential completion, while experiencing lower rates of developmental/remedial placement upon matriculation. These positive outcomes

persist even when controlling for concurrent students' prior academic performance and various demographic characteristics.

ADHE data confirm these outcomes—the college-going rates of Arkansas high school graduates who completed concurrent coursework are consistently more than 20 percent higher than the general population of Arkansas high school graduates.

In spite of the advantages of concurrent enrollment participation, however, ADHE data also indicate that access to concurrent enrollment opportunities is not equal across regions of the state. The number of concurrent course sections varies considerably among the state's local workforce development areas (LWDA), even when comparing regions with similar designations (e.g., completely rural, mostly rural, or mostly urban). In addition to the sheer number of concurrent course sections provided, the number of concurrent enrollment courses by program type (e.g., career/technical education [CTE] versus general education) vastly differs statewide, even among regions with the same LWDA designation. CTE and general education courses are offered in fairly equal numbers in some LWDAs, and CTE or general education courses are far less available in others.

Arkansas policy defines three types of college in high school programs.

Term	Eligible College Courses	Course Location	Type of Credit Awarded	Citation(s)
Dual enrollment	Not specified in policy	Postsecondary institution or online	Postsecondary	A.C.A. § 6-60-202 ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy
Concurrent enrollment	Either: • Courses in ACTS or • CTE courses	Typically high school or secondary career center	• High School • Postsecondary	A.C.A. § 6-18-223 ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy
Endorsed concurrent enrollment	Two criteria: • English, math, science, social studies courses in ACTS and • Meet the requirements of A.C.A. § 6-16-1204(b)	High school or secondary career center	• High School • Postsecondary	A.C.A. § 6-16-1202(2), -1203(b), -1204(b); Ark. Admin. Code 005.28.21-5-1.00 through 4.00

This table presents the definitions of “dual enrollment,” “concurrent enrollment,” and “endorsed concurrent enrollment” as codified in state policy. For purposes of simplicity, this report uses the terms “concurrent enrollment” and “concurrent credit” interchangeably as umbrella terms for all three modes of college in high school offerings. The term “endorsed concurrent enrollment” is used only when state policy applies exclusively to endorsed concurrent enrollment coursework.



Data from the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) [K-12 State Data Warehouse](#) also indicate that some student populations are underrepresented in concurrent enrollment in proportion to their membership in the general student population.

Race	Participation in Concurrent Enrollment	Overall Representation in Grades 9-12	Underrepresentation/Overrepresentation in Concurrent Enrollment
2 or more	2.53%	3.49%	-0.95%
Asian	1.71%	1.72%	-0.01%
Black	11.70%	19.03%	-7.32%
Hispanic	10.67%	14.76%	-4.08%
Native American	0.68%	0.63%	0.05%
Native Hawaiian	0.13%	0.93%	-0.80%
White	72.57%	59.45%	13.12%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	

	Participation in Concurrent Enrollment	Overall Representation in Grades 9-12	Underrepresentation/Overrepresentation in Concurrent Enrollment
Not Economically Disadvantaged	50.44%	34.45%	15.99%
Economically Disadvantaged ¹	49.56%	65.55%	-15.99%
Total	100.00%	100%	

¹ [The ADE K-12 State Data Warehouse](#) defines “economically disadvantaged” as students who are eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch status under the National School Lunch Program.

	Participation in Concurrent Enrollment	Overall Representation in Grades 9-12	Underrepresentation/Overrepresentation in Concurrent Enrollment
Not Special Education	94.50%	86%	8.50%
Special Education	5.50%	14%	-8.50%
Total	100.00%	100%	

While just over 59 percent of Arkansas public 9th through 12th graders are white, white students account for a little over 72 percent of concurrently enrolled students. Economically disadvantaged students, who comprise two-thirds of Arkansas’ K-12 student population, represent just under half of concurrent enrollment students. Students with a special education designation, who account for 14 percent of Arkansas’ K-12 public school students, make up 5.5 percent of the concurrent enrollment student population.

Given the data on postsecondary outcomes and credential attainment for concurrent enrollment students, all of Arkansas will benefit from greater distribution of equal concurrent enrollment access and opportunity.



REPORT METHODOLOGY

To gather diverse perspectives on the policy enhancements most likely to increase equal access to concurrent enrollment to all Arkansas learners, the Arkansas Division of Higher Education convened a statewide concurrent enrollment stakeholder group for two virtual meetings in spring 2023, in partnership with [Complete College America](#) (CCA) and with the collaboration of the [College in High School Alliance](#) (CHSA) and the [National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships](#) (NACEP).

The stakeholder group included individuals (see sidebar) from each ADE division, [Arkansas Community Colleges](#), [Virtual Arkansas](#), and school districts and postsecondary institutions from across the state.

Arkansas Concurrent Enrollment Stakeholder Group Members

- **John Ashworth**, Executive Director, Virtual Arkansas
- **Mason Campbell**, Chief Academic Officer, Arkansas Division of Higher Education, ADE
- **Natalie Cline-Draper**, Director of Outreach, Director of Early College Programs, Director of Special Sessions, Arkansas State University
- **Andrea Fortner**, School Counseling Coordinator, Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, ADE
- **Crystal Halley**, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, University of Arkansas at Monticello
- **Ashley Henry-Saorrano**, Registrar, University of Arkansas Pulaski Technical College
- **Diana Johnson**, Senior Vice President for Learning, NorthWest Arkansas Community College; NACEP Accreditation Commissioner – Secretary for Accreditation
- **Gwen Leger**, Head Counselor, North Little Rock High School
- **Tina Moore**, Director of Workforce Development, Arkansas Division of Higher Education, ADE
- **Krystal Nail**, Program Director, Gifted & Talented and Advanced Placement, Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, ADE
- **Deanna Norman**, Director of Career Services and Concurrent Credit, Fayetteville High School
- **Connie Poteet**, Concurrent and Academic Resources Coordinator, National Park College; NACEP Accreditation Commissioner – Vice-Chair for Policy & Procedures
- **Julie Rhodes**, Director of High School Programs, University of Arkansas Cossatot
- **Ricky Tompkins**, Director, Center for Student Success, Arkansas Community Colleges
- **Sonja Wright-McMurray**, Senior Associate Director, Division of Career and Technical Education, ADE



CHSA's [Unlocking Potential: A State Policy Roadmap for Equity and Quality in College in High School Programs](#) served as the guiding framework for the stakeholder group discussions. *Unlocking Potential* outlines policy recommendations for states to consider in their concurrent enrollment programs. This report is framed around six policy categories.

The Six Unlocking Potential Framework Categories

- Access Goal & Public Reporting
- Program Integrity and Credit Transfer
- Finance
- Course Access & Availability
- Instructor Capacity
- Navigational Supports.

The purpose of the Arkansas stakeholder group meetings was twofold:

- To evaluate the extent to which Arkansas policies align with the policy goals identified in CHSA's [Unlocking Potential](#) report, and
- To develop a menu of potential state and local policy recommendations that might broaden access to high-quality concurrent enrollment opportunities across Arkansas.

Using these six categories as a foundation for discussions, stakeholders shared their candid perspectives on aspects of the current Arkansas policy landscape that contribute to disparities in concurrent enrollment access and participation in the state, and enhancements to state and local policy and practice that could diminish or eliminate these disparities.

The present report is intended for state and local leaders with decision-making authority for concurrent enrollment programs. These recommendations reflect stakeholders' input, drawn from the diversity of their extensive professional interactions with concurrent enrollment programs at the agency, institution, district, and school level.

The aim of this report is to propose enhancements that may put concurrent enrollment opportunities within reach of all Arkansas high school students. Specifically, it is hoped that these recommendations will inform state and local policy adoptions that will increase access, participation, and success in high-quality concurrent enrollment courses aligned with students' career and postsecondary plans, that in turn will support both students and the state in the attainment of their postsecondary attainment and workforce readiness goals.



For each [Unlocking Potential](#) policy category, this report provides:

- A description of each category and a call to action that states should be working towards to achieve access and quality for concurrent enrollment programs
- A summary of Arkansas policies' alignment with the policies in each category
- State and local policy recommendations.

A landscape and recommendations report informed by diverse stakeholders' professional insights can most effectively inform policy enhancements when the ensuing product includes the scope of *all* members' viewpoints and experiences. Challenges and recommendations presented here reflect the varied perspectives of all stakeholders who contributed to the development of this document. While stakeholder group members agreed on many of the challenges and recommendations presented here, their inclusion does not imply their unanimous endorsement by all stakeholder group members, including ADE staff.

These recommendations are intended to spark further conversations that it is hoped will lead to better alignment of concurrent enrollment policies, processes, and resources with Arkansas' goals to better serve all students.



IMPROVING STATE-LEVEL COORDINATION OF CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT

The following section offers recommendations either addressing state-level coordination issues jointly identified in 2022 by Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE), and Division of Career and Technical Education (DCTE) staff, or that surfaced during the spring 2023 concurrent enrollment stakeholder meetings.

Recommendations

- **Designate ADE concurrent enrollment point (or points) of contact:** Each of the three ADE divisions lacks a staff person whose sole or primary responsibility is concurrent enrollment. One or more ADE points of contact would enhance concurrent enrollment communications both across ADE divisions and to ADE constituents, streamline ADE processes, and allow ADE staff currently fielding concurrent enrollment questions to focus on their primary responsibilities.
 - One or more solutions would create this dedicated point of contact:
 - **Identify an ADHE concurrent enrollment point of contact:** This solution acknowledges the fact that concurrent credit is awarded by postsecondary institutions and ADHE rules establish the criteria by which concurrent enrollment programs are authorized. A protocol to relay concurrent enrollment queries from other ADE divisions to the ADHE point of contact would simplify ADE division processes and enhance constituent service. Many states designate a concurrent enrollment lead within a single agency (frequently the higher education agency) and liaise as needed with staff in other agencies that play a supporting role in concurrent enrollment oversight.
 - **Create a shared DESE/ADHE/DCTE concurrent enrollment position:** This solution would create a single point of contact for all three divisions,

thereby centralizing concurrent enrollment communications and expertise, and minimizing duplication of effort across divisions. Housed in one of the three divisions, the cost of the position could either be shared across divisions or funded by a single division.

- **Designate a concurrent enrollment point of contact at DESE and/or DCTE:** A DESE or DCTE point of contact could serve as the face of concurrent enrollment for K-12 and CTE constituents and liaise on an ongoing basis with ADHE staff whose responsibilities include concurrent enrollment.
- **Create consistency in concurrent enrollment rules across divisions:** ADE division staff reported that a 2022 joint review identified differences in concurrent enrollment policies and procedures across divisions. Actions to rectify these inconsistencies in rules and procedures would ensure consistency across divisions and facilitate the activities of one or more concurrent enrollment points of contact.
- **Explore additional state-level means to improve cross-sector communication and collaboration on concurrent enrollment:** Designation of a public forum for Arkansas concurrent enrollment, and more intentional use of statewide communication channels, would provide valuable and much-needed support to other state-level coordination efforts. A public concurrent enrollment forum and more purposeful utilization of existing communication mechanisms would facilitate regular and broad dissemination of concurrent enrollment policy and best practice



and offer a platform for local program stakeholders to elevate challenges and concerns in need of resolution, either through collective problem-solving or, as necessary, through state-level action.

Options (not mutually exclusive) include:

- **Strengthen the Arkansas NACEP chapter:** NACEP's state and regional [affiliated chapters](#) fulfill the communication and professional learning functions that stakeholders identified a need for in Arkansas. As of spring 2023, efforts are underway to reinvigorate the Arkansas Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (AACEP).
- **Explore the creation of a State Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board:** A formal body such as an advisory board could regularly convene state and local concurrent enrollment stakeholders to discuss policy and program developments and develop recommendations for state action in response to pervasive programmatic challenges. For example:
 - 2009 Colorado legislation that rewrote the state's college in high school provisions [created](#) a [Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board](#) that has been instrumental in informing state policy changes that have positively impacted program access, resources, and opportunity statewide, particularly among rural and underserved students.
- **Make consistent, intentional use of existing state-level communication channels:** [ADE Commissioner's Memos](#) are regularly sent to secondary administrators, educators, and support

staff, including counselors. DESE could ensure that updates and reminders specific to concurrent enrollment go out as ADE Commissioner Memos to the attention of these recipients. The ADHE chief academic officer (CAO) could make sure that parallel communications are sent to institution-level CAOs and chief student affairs officers (CSAOs) on an ongoing basis. The AAACEP listserv, active as of June 2023, could also be tapped to disseminate important concurrent enrollment policy communications, as well as information about best practices and professional learning opportunities.

- **Review Arkansas Course Transfer System (ACTS) courses:** [ADHE policy](#) requires general education concurrent courses to be on the ACTS course list. As a result, students use the ACTS course list in making concurrent enrollment course selections. Yet some ACTS courses are offered by a limited number of institutions or do not apply broadly to general education requirements across majors, while other courses are not listed in ACTS. An ADHE review of ACTS courses in order to add new courses or remove courses not widely available across public institutions statewide would assist students, parents, and advisors in making informed course selections.



ACCESS GOAL AND PUBLIC REPORTING

Unlocking Potential Call to Action:
States set a statewide public goal for increasing the participation and success of traditionally underserved student groups in college in high school programs, with clear, disaggregated public reporting and accountability for progress toward the goal.

Define “Access and Opportunity” for Purposes of Concurrent Enrollment Participation

To address the recommendations presented here, Arkansas should define “access and opportunity” for purposes of concurrent enrollment participation, including by first-generation college-goer status, rurality/urbanicity, and the student subgroups for which the [ADE Data Center School Report Cards](#) report disaggregated School Quality and Student Success (SQSS) performance outcomes (see callout box on page 9).

In its commitment to access and opportunity for all learners, it is recommended that Arkansas take measures to assure that the concurrent enrollment student population statewide mirrors the geographic, socioeconomic, and demographic diversity of Arkansas’ general high school population.

Setting a Statewide Access Goal

▶ How Do Arkansas Policies Measure Up?

- Although Arkansas has not established a statewide concurrent enrollment access goal, some state-level policies are intended to promote broader program participation among underserved students. One such example is A.C.A. § 6-16-1204(e)(3)(A), which requires that programs offer low-income students tuition and fee waivers for up to six credit hours of eligible endorsed concurrent coursework.





Recommendations

- **Define “access and opportunity” for purposes of concurrent enrollment participation:** Before Arkansas can establish goals to increase concurrent access and opportunity, particularly for underserved students, the state must define “access and opportunity” for these purposes (see callout box on page 8). In doing so, the state must ensure that the definition includes concurrent enrollment access and participation by students from all SQSS student subgroups..



As of June 2023, Arkansas’ SQSS data are disaggregated and publicly reported by the following student subgroups:

- African-American
- Hispanic
- Caucasian
- Economically Disadvantaged
- Non-Economically Disadvantaged
- Students with Disabilities
- Students without Disabilities
- Current English Learners (EL)
- Non-English Learners (includes Former EL Monitored 1-4 years)
- Former English Learner (Monitored 1-4 years)
- Homeless
- Children in Foster Care
- Children with Parent That Is Military Connected
- Gifted and Talented
- Female Students
- Male Students
- Migrant

- **Establish an access and opportunity statement of intent in state concurrent enrollment policy:** A statement of intent in Arkansas’ concurrent enrollment statutes and DESE, ADHE, and DCTE concurrent enrollment rules would clearly communicate to concurrent enrollment stakeholders across role groups the intended purposes and goals of concurrent enrollment programs across the state, and the student groups such programs should serve. The statement of intent should make clear that one purpose of concurrent credit is to increase

- students’ postsecondary aspirations and improve postsecondary outcomes, including credential completion for all student populations. For example:
- Kentucky’s [2023 revision](#) to its dual credit policy defines the goals of the state’s dual credit system and the target student populations, and describes from the student perspective the optimal dual credit experience that would help the state reach these stated system goals.
 - A declaration codified in Colorado [statute](#) articulates the intended purposes of concurrent enrollment offerings and the goal that programs “serve a wider range of students, particularly those with historically low college participation rates[.]”
 - Illinois [statute](#) establishes that the Dual Credit Act is intended to accomplish specified measures related to college readiness and transitions, postsecondary affordability and completion, and improved communication between high schools and institutions.
- **Set a state concurrent enrollment access and opportunity goal:** A concurrent enrollment access and opportunity goal could set a statewide participation benchmark for local programs to work towards, and designate strategies local programs can employ to support attainment of the goal. Kentucky’s [2023 dual credit policy](#) establishes the goal that by 2030, 50 percent of Kentucky high school graduates will have completed at least one dual credit course with a “C” or better, and enumerates strategies through which the dual credit attainment goal will be achieved.
 - **Communicate the access and opportunity goal to all concurrent enrollment stakeholders:** It goes without saying that local concurrent enrollment programs



can't work towards a statewide participation goal they don't know about. Kentucky has taken strides in 2023 to get the word out about its revised dual credit policy, including through a number of press releases in spring 2023 and a [webinar series](#).

- **Consider additional strategies to increase:**
 - **Underserved student completion of ≥ 6 concurrent credits:** Stakeholder group members suggested the need for targeted strategies to boost the number of underserved students completing six or more concurrent credits. While the cost waiver for low-income students is a good start, they argued, low-income students are still heavily underrepresented in concurrent courses, and are just one student population underrepresented in concurrent enrollment programs.
 - **CTE concurrent enrollment access:** The [Arkansas 2020-2024 Perkins Plan](#) designates Attained Recognized Postsecondary Credential as a secondary program accountability indicator. Public comment on the Program Quality Indicators reflects widespread concerns about using dual and concurrent enrollment as a Program Quality Indicator due to barriers to program availability and student access.

The state might also consider expanding existing strategies or creating new approaches aimed at increasing CTE concurrent enrollment access among underserved student populations. For example, in 2023, DCTE, [Arkansas Rehabilitation Services](#), and [Arkansas Transition Services](#) jointly offered a summer program for students with disabilities who are rising 9th graders at Benton High

School and Bryant High School. The program provided CTE exposure opportunities at Saline County Technical Center.

- **Establish statewide structures and tools to facilitate local efforts to identify and address concurrent enrollment opportunity gaps:** DCTE has conducted opportunity gap analysis workshops to equip local CTE program staff and administrators with the tools and skills to identify opportunities to increase the number of underrepresented students participating in concurrent enrollment. Drawing on this experience, Arkansas could:
 - **Encourage secondary and postsecondary concurrent enrollment partners to conduct opportunity gap analysis or root cause discussions:** DESE, ADHE, and DCTE could deploy a modified version of the DCTE workshops statewide to train local secondary and postsecondary administrators and program staff to pinpoint and address disparities between the makeup of the overall high school student population and the concurrent enrollment student population.
 - **Develop and broadly disseminate tools to help local secondary and postsecondary partners identify opportunities and implement solutions:** Tools presented at the DCTE workshops might inform the development of tools designed for concurrent enrollment programs generally. Kentucky has created a [worksheet](#) to guide local efforts to locate and address concurrent enrollment access and participation gaps, adapted from a [tool](#) developed for Washington State.

Data Collection, Reporting, & Accountability

How Do Arkansas Policies Measure Up?

- Arkansas' [postsecondary attainment goal](#) is that by 2030, 55 percent of adult Arkansans will have a college credential.
- The [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#) requires institutions to analyze concurrent enrollment data to assess the extent to which concurrent enrollment leads to student success.
- Arkansas' [high school & district report cards](#) publish combined concurrent enrollment participation, Advanced Placement (AP), and International Baccalaureate (IB) participation data for each of numerous student subgroups for each grade 9-12. [My School Info](#) in the ADE Data Center allows users to generate reports isolating concurrent enrollment participation data by school district.
- [Arkansas' approved ESSA plan](#) uses combined data on AP, IB, and concurrent enrollment participation as a [School Quality and Student Success indicator](#). ESSA School Index Reports reflect aggregated AP, IB, and concurrent enrollment participation data.

Recommendations

- **Publish separate data sets on concurrent enrollment, AP, and IB participation in school report cards and ESSA School Index reports:** [My School Info](#) in the ADE Data Center allows users to develop separate participation reports for AP, IB, and concurrent enrollment disaggregated by student subgroup. However, it is likely that many parents and other casual visitors to the ADE Data Center are unaware of this option or lack the skills to create these separate participation reports. Reporting participation data separately for each program type in school report cards and ESSA School Index reports would address this issue.
- **Develop a publicly-available annual report and/or dashboard:** Many states publish concurrent enrollment access, participation, and outcomes data via an annual public-facing concurrent enrollment report, a readily accessible data dashboard, or both. Reliable public-facing data of an appropriate grain size can help state and local concurrent enrollment stakeholders:
 - Set participation goals and measure progress towards achieving those goals
 - Facilitate state and local efforts to identify underserved student populations for targeted outreach and recruitment
 - Demonstrate return on the state's investment in such programming and sustain support for future investments.

The CHSA and Data Quality Campaign (DQC)'s 2021 report [College in High School Programs & Data](#) presents principles, recommendations, and exemplars for state concurrent enrollment reporting tools. There are many good examples of annual state reports for Arkansas to consider, and it should be noted that an annual concurrent enrollment report and concurrent enrollment data dashboard are not mutually exclusive, since, as the CHSA/DQC report makes clear, each resource can provide different types of valuable information.

Kentucky's [dual credit data dashboard](#), a component of the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE)'s [Interactive Data Center](#), publishes access and opportunity data that allows for comparisons across a number of variables.

Idaho requires all public postsecondary institutions to set annual goals for the number of dual credit hours offered and the number of dual credit students served. Idaho's [Postsecondary Dashboard](#) reports each public institution's annual dual credit hour and student goals against their performance on those metrics.



PROGRAM INTEGRITY & CREDIT TRANSFER

Unlocking Potential Call to Action:
States support and promote high-quality college in high school programs through effective oversight and cross-sector collaboration between the K-12 and postsecondary sectors, as well as ensuring credit articulation.

Enabling Credit Transfer

▶ How Do Arkansas Policies Measure Up?

- General education concurrent credit courses must be courses listed in [ACTS](#), A.C.A. § 6-16-1202(2); [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#)
- Students must be advised about the potential limitations concerning the transfer of concurrent credit. [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#)
- Each institution offering concurrent enrollment must have a concurrent enrollment student guide available to students and parents that includes links to ACTS. [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#)

▶ Recommendations

- **Enhance communications to students, parents, and high school counselors on concurrent credit transfer and applicability:** While some stakeholders felt that transfer of concurrent credit within Arkansas is relatively seamless, many stakeholders argued that for a number of reasons, applicability of credits is a greater concern. General education requirements can differ by major—not all courses in ACTS fulfill general education requirements for all majors. In addition, an associate degree may not transfer to all four-year institutions. As ADHE staff note, certain associate degrees are designed to be terminal—and as such do not transfer—while others are designed to transfer and institutions are required to honor transfer credit. And as in most other states, many CTE credits are not guaranteed to apply to a similar program of study at another institution.



See the Navigational Supports section on pages 31-35 for further recommendations to improve concurrent enrollment communications to students, parents, and counselors.

These stakeholders elevated the importance of enhancing communications to students, parents, and high school counselors on concurrent credit transfer and applicability. As part of a more encompassing effort to improve concurrent enrollment communications to these audiences, Arkansas might:

- **Create statewide focus groups to test messages on concurrent credit transfer and applicability:** Separate focus groups might be created for students, parents, and counselors. In light of stakeholder observations on Arkansas' high counselor turnover rate, two focus groups for counselors might be created—one for new counselors and one for veteran counselors.
- **Enhance communications to high schools and districts on the student impact of taking concurrent enrollment courses from multiple institutions:** Some students may enroll in general education courses from multiple institutions, unaware that some courses fulfill the same general education requirements and will apply as elective credits. Communications to public secondary partners through [ADE Commissioner's Memos](#) and to private high schools through organizations such as the [Arkansas Nonpublic School Accrediting Association](#) should raise awareness that students enrolling in concurrent enrollment courses through

multiple postsecondary partners run the risk of earning credits that will duplicate one another in fulfilling general education or major requirements. Before registering for concurrent courses, students should be advised to determine with the institution at which they intend to matriculate that the course they plan to enroll in does not duplicate successfully completed concurrent credits or AP or IB exam scores in fulfilling general education or other program of study requirements.

- **Develop and broadly promote enhanced communications tools on concurrent enrollment course transfer and applicability:** Although ADHE maintains a transfer webpage, many students and parents may not know it exists—and even if they locate it, stakeholders felt the information is not easily understandable to readers who are not higher education professionals. These communications should encourage students and parents to ask advising staff at the institution at which the student intends to matriculate—prior to registering for a concurrent enrollment course—whether and how the course will apply to the student's general education requirement, major, or program of study.

These enhanced communications tools tailored to students, parents, and high school counselors, using language vetted by focus groups, might be posted on the [ADHE transfer portal](#) and disseminated through ADE-developed one-pagers on transfer and applicability or other channels indicated by focus group members.

- **Clarify CTE credit transfer:** While the content and credit hours awarded for some CTE courses varies across institutions statewide, other CTE courses with similar learning outcomes could be approved to transfer more readily. A tool identifying CTE courses that apply towards a program of study at other Arkansas institutions, or across public colleges statewide, would benefit high school and adult students alike. Some states have developed designations for CTE courses that apply statewide to a program of study. For example:
 - Washington [Professional-Technical Common Courses \(P/TCCs\)](#) are [technical courses](#) that have common learning outcomes and transfer statewide to fulfill program requirements in any public two-year college offering the course and program.
 - Ohio [CTAGs \(Career-Technical Assurance Guides\)](#) identify CTE courses recognized for transfer across the state. The content of all CTE courses taught at high schools and career centers is aligned to statewide postsecondary learning outcomes, and all CTE courses have a related end-of-course exam. High school and adult students who earn a statewide minimum score on an end-of-course exam can apply that course at any public institution offering the related program of study.



Ensuring Equivalency with College Courses

How Do Arkansas Policies Measure Up?

- To offer courses delivered at a high school by a high school instructor, concurrent enrollment programs must either be NACEP-accredited or receive authorization through an Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) approval process. [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#)
- After the initial authorization period of up to seven years, institutions wishing to continue offering courses delivered at a high school by a high school instructor must either request AHECB reauthorization or submit documentation of NACEP accreditation. [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#)

Recommendations

- **Increase the rigor of ADHE's concurrent enrollment program approval process:** Some stakeholders expressed concern about the rigor of ADHE's process for approving institutions that are not NACEP-accredited and offering courses in high schools. Any of the recommendations below would address these stakeholders' concerns.
 - **Increase the rigor of ADHE concurrent enrollment standards related to curriculum alignment and program oversight:** Some stakeholders well-versed in the [NACEP accreditation standards](#) noted that ADHE's approval standards are less rigorous with regards to curriculum alignment and program oversight. In addition, the NACEP accreditation



process requires institutions to provide specific documentation demonstrating the program's adherence to each of the NACEP accreditation standards--and details the [required evidence](#) for each standard. In contrast, ADHE requires minimal documentation from institutions seeking approval. Annually ADHE requires institutions to provide a [faculty audit](#), in which institutions submit information on three concurrent instructors' professional qualifications. ADHE allows documentation to be formatted in multiple ways which makes comparisons difficult.

- **Incorporate the NACEP standards language into ADHE concurrent enrollment standards:** The program approval requirements in [ADHE's Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#) are similar to the NACEP standards; however, the subtle differences between the phrasing of the NACEP standards and the ADHE standards hold ADHE-approved programs to less rigorous expectations. States have taken varied approaches to incorporating the NACEP standards into state policy (see callout box).
- **Explore feasibility of state models that apply the NACEP standards in an ongoing, rigorous concurrent enrollment program review and approval process:**
 - Oregon requires dual credit programs to align with the state's [dual credit standards](#), which are closely modeled after the NACEP standards. Dual credit programs must provide evidence of alignment through recurring [reviews](#), including partnership approval every six years and annual submission of a program report.

- Iowa [statute](#) directs the department of education to establish a [Postsecondary Course Audit Committee](#) that randomly selects courses to evaluate "the course syllabus, teacher qualifications, examples of student products, and results of student assessments[.]" Courses found to fall short of the audit committee's standards lose eligibility for [future supplementary funding](#) unless changes to the course result in the course meeting the committee's standards.
- Until recently, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education required all institutions with dual credit programs that were not NACEP-accredited and that were delivering courses in high schools to be approved through an Indiana Dual Credit Review process using standards that very closely paralleled the NACEP standards. Due to the considerable time agency staff and volunteer reviewers were committing to the review process, and in light of the fact that most public institutions with programs were either NACEP-accredited or in the process of accreditation, CHE eliminated the agency approval option and directed all public institutions offering dual credit to be NACEP-accredited.
- **Require NACEP accreditation for all programs offering concurrent courses in high schools:** Some stakeholders strongly felt that the most efficient and effective way for ADHE to ensure programs provide appropriate oversight and curriculum alignment is to require all programs delivering courses in high schools to be NACEP-

accredited. These stakeholders observed that requiring all concurrent programs to be NACEP-accredited would allow ADHE to commit resources to other pressing issues. They added that if all institutions must be HLC-accredited, why not require all institutions to be NACEP-accredited?

Other stakeholders countered that staffing a faculty liaison in each discipline to provide course-specific training for new concurrent enrollment instructors, conduct classroom site visits, and offer annual discipline-specific professional development would pose a financial hardship for some institutions. However, stakeholders in favor of requiring all programs to be NACEP-accredited felt that institutions would find the resources to staff these positions if the state required it. In addition to freeing up agency staff time and resources,

Some states fully integrate the NACEP standards language into concurrent enrollment policy. Examples include Section 6.7 of the [Virginia Community College System Policy Manual](#), and the [student, curriculum and assessment, faculty, evaluation, and partnership standards](#) codified in Washington's [college in the high school rules](#). Through the 2026-2027 school year, Washington [regulation](#) requires institutions of higher education to provide evidence of meeting "the current NACEP student, curriculum, assessment, faculty, partnership, and evaluation standards as described in [WAC 392-725-130](#) through [392-725-170](#)." Effective the 2027-2028 academic year, [statute](#) requires institutions offering courses in a high school to be NACEP-accredited.



external accreditation also has the benefits of shifting the burden for reviewing and updating program approval criteria and assures state and local stakeholders that local concurrent credit programs meet the same quality criteria as similarly-accredited programs nationally.

Some states require concurrent enrollment programs to be NACEP-accredited or meet similar rigorous standards. As a condition of receiving concurrent enrollment state aid, [Minnesota](#) requires concurrent enrollment programs to be NACEP-accredited, in the process of being accredited, or “[be] shown by clear evidence to be of comparable standard to accredited courses[.]”

Washington State, which currently requires institutions offering college in the high school to be NACEP-accredited or meet NACEP standards, [will require](#) all concurrent enrollment programs to be NACEP-accredited by fall 2027. In the interim, [regulation](#) requires programs that are not NACEP-accredited to provide evidence that they meet the current NACEP standards as described in [WAC 392-725-130](#) through [392-725-170](#).

- **Establish a statewide concurrent enrollment funding model that includes postsecondary support to defray costs associated with NACEP accreditation:** [NACEP’s faculty standards](#) call for a faculty liaison or other faculty member (including adjuncts or retired faculty with course-specific knowledge) to deliver course-specific training to all new concurrent enrollment instructors, and for instructors to participate in annual discipline-specific

professional development. Curriculum standards also require faculty liaisons to perform site visits to make sure courses mirror their on-campus counterparts. By [statute](#), Indiana institutions, which must be NACEP-accredited, receive funds from a biennial appropriation based on reported credit hours successfully completed in priority general education and CTE courses taught at the high school by an approved instructor. These appropriations, which defray but do not fully cover lost tuition revenue, are to be used for teacher professional development and staff supporting program coordination and oversight.

- **Strengthen the Arkansas NACEP chapter to support programs in achieving and maintaining NACEP accreditation:** [NACEP Affiliated Chapters](#) offer professional development and networking opportunities that help programs attain and maintain NACEP accreditation. Once fully reinvigorated, the Arkansas Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (AA CEP) could extend such professional learning opportunities.

Cultivating Cross-System Collaboration

How Do Arkansas Policies Measure Up?

- A postsecondary institution must have a current, written memorandum of understanding (MOU) with each high school with which the institution offers or wishes to offer concurrent enrollment. The MOU must include specified information (see sidebar) and must be reviewed by the secondary and postsecondary partners annually. [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#)

Recommendations

- * Recommendations under “Improving State-Level Coordination of Concurrent Enrollment” (pages 6-7) facilitate enhanced cross-system collaboration.

The MOU must:

- Be reviewed annually, during which review the secondary or postsecondary party may modify or terminate the signed concurrent enrollment agreement
- For initial approval of concurrent enrollment programs offering courses only on the postsecondary campus: Be submitted annually to ADHE
- For all programs for concurrent enrollment re-authorization: Be submitted to AHECB, along with other concurrent enrollment program documentation

The MOU must include:

- The respective expectations, obligations, and responsibilities of all parties
- The concurrent enrollment courses offered, and for each concurrent enrollment course:
 - The amount of high school credit (and for CTE concurrent enrollment, postsecondary credit) awarded for successful completion of each concurrent enrollment course
 - The high school course the concurrent enrollment course replaces or substitutes for
 - As applicable, the list of institutions with a signed college course placement agreement
- Numerous program details demonstrating alignment with ADHE or specified NACEP accreditation standards. [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#)



FINANCE

Unlocking Potential Call to Action: States design funding mechanisms that remove financial barriers for low-income and moderate-income students to participate and excel in college level work in high school.



Arkansas Concurrent Finance Policies Generally

- Postsecondary institutions may charge reduced tuition and fees for concurrent enrollment participants. [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#)
- With the exception of courses covered by the [Concurrent Challenge Scholarship](#) or up to 6 credit hours of certain endorsed concurrent enrollment courses for low-income students, the student is responsible for all course costs, unless costs are covered by:
 - The school district or secondary career center
 - A postsecondary institution scholarship
 - Grant
 - Private foundation [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#)
- Public institutions may count concurrent enrollment students for higher education funding purposes only if institutional requirements set forth in the [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#) are met.

Remove Barriers

How Do Arkansas Policies Measure Up?

- A student eligible for the National School Lunch program may not be charged any costs for up to six credit hours of endorsed concurrent enrollment coursework taught by a high school teacher on district property. A.C.A. § 6-16-1204(e)(3)(A)
- The [Concurrent Challenge Scholarship](#) assists applicant students, regardless of family income, who meet specified criteria. A.C.A. § 6-85-401 to -406; [ADHE Concurrent Challenge Scholarship Program Rules](#)

Recommendations

EITHER

- **Create a state-level group to recommend a statewide concurrent enrollment funding model:** Stakeholders noted a lack of uniformity in local approaches to funding concurrent enrollment programs. While the state offers a [Concurrent Challenge Scholarship](#), stakeholders felt that scholarship recipients are disproportionately high-achieving students from more affluent and well-educated households or communities, who are enrolled in better-resourced high schools. These students are more likely to be supported by adults who are aware of the benefits of concurrent enrollment participation and of scholarship application deadlines, and who are equipped to shepherd students through the Concurrent Challenge Scholarship application process.

A statewide funding approach that eliminates the need for the Concurrent Challenge Scholarship could broaden access and opportunity. As noted in a [2019 report](#), many states have shifted concurrent enrollment tuition responsibility from students and families through approaches other than scholarships. The report identifies states that have adopted any of three sustainable funding models listed below.

- **State pays:** The state may cover concurrent enrollment tuition costs through an ongoing or annual appropriation, or through the state's postsecondary funding approach. State funding may cover tuition for a limited number of courses and/or specified course types (e.g., CTE or STEM); eligibility for state-funded courses may be limited to juniors and seniors.



- **Combination of state and district pay:** In this model, districts typically pay the postsecondary institution a tuition amount designated in an MOU between the partners and receive partial reimbursement from the state in the following fiscal cycle.
- **District pays:** The student's school district pays the postsecondary institution tuition at an agreed-upon rate, typically specified in the MOU. Depending on the state, the district may pay significantly reduced or no tuition for courses taught at the high school by a high school instructor during the school day.

Typically under these models, the postsecondary partner's tuition reimbursement is lower than the tuition rate the institution charges matriculated students.

OR

- **Revise the tuition waiver and the Concurrent Challenge Scholarship to address identified challenges:** Low-income students can receive a cost waiver only for endorsed concurrent enrollment courses. As such, low-income students cannot use a waiver to access CTE courses or courses in liberal arts disciplines outside English, math, science, and the social sciences. In some high schools endorsed concurrent enrollment courses are available exclusively to students in grades 11-12, meaning economically challenged 9th and 10th graders must pay full cost for endorsed concurrent enrollment courses. And while the Concurrent Challenge Scholarship is available for both endorsed concurrent enrollment and certificate courses, scholarship eligibility is limited to students in grades 11-12.

Revisions to the tuition waiver and the Concurrent Challenge Scholarship would increase low-income students' access to coursework in a broader set of disciplines at a lower grade level.

- **Identify state funds to cover the cost of concurrent enrollment transportation:** Designation of state funds would ensure that transportation costs do not become a barrier to program availability for districts or institutions. See also "Explore transportation solutions and alternatives" on page 21.
- **Build support for postsecondary use of open educational resources on campus and in concurrent enrollment offerings:** Under the [NACEP standards](#) and [ADHE approval requirements](#), college courses delivered at high schools must use the same or similar textbooks as the on-campus course. Open educational resources (OER) allow instructors to make available low- to no-cost instructional materials customized to a course's learning outcomes. Arkansas might build support for faculty adoption of OER in on-campus offerings, to allow concurrent enrollment partnerships wishing to minimize textbook costs to use these resources. The 2021 report [OER in Dual Enrollment](#) highlights efforts in multiple states, including Florida, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Texas, to increase the use of OER, including through a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches to building support.



Balancing Incentives Between K-12 & Higher Education to Further Access

How Do Arkansas Policies Measure Up?

- Districts receive the same level of state funding for concurrent enrollment students as they receive for regular high school students.
- Provided that criteria in the [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#) are met (e.g., no state aid for concurrent remedial/developmental courses, or if the institution does not receive any tuition), Arkansas' finance model offers two-year institutions the same state funding for concurrent and for regular students; the state funding model funds four-year institutions in accordance with slightly different metrics.

Recommendations

- **Create a state funding mechanism to reduce postsecondary partners' financial loss:** Institutions charging reduced concurrent enrollment tuition incur a financial burden associated with program oversight when courses are offered at a high school; institutions extending discounted tuition for concurrent enrollment courses on-campus may turn an even greater financial loss. While concurrent enrollment students who matriculate at the partnering institution can defray financial losses, Arkansas may consider a state funding model that reduces institutions' financial losses in the short term. As mentioned on page 16, Indiana institutions are allocated funds from a biennial appropriation based on reported credit hours successfully completed in approved CTE and general education courses taught

by an approved high school teacher. These funds are to be used for teacher professional development and other costs associated with program oversight.

- **Better communicate how Arkansas and institutions benefit from concurrent enrollment:** Arkansas—and postsecondary institutions—might be more willing to make a greater financial commitment to concurrent enrollment with a better understanding of the return on investment (ROI) from program participation. States have documented significant ROI from their investment in college in high school opportunities; a 2020 [Colorado study](#) estimated that a sample of concurrent enrollment completers, who experienced higher rates of matriculation and completion than non-concurrent enrollment participants, would generate an over 600 percent return on investment as a result of their higher lifetime income, and state and federal taxes and savings.

Leveraging Funding for CTE-Focused College in High School Programs

How Do Arkansas Policies Measure Up?

- The Office of Skills Development (OSD) and ADE disseminate state funds to secondary career centers through a state-appropriated allocation; these funds can support CTE concurrent enrollment programming. Secondary career centers deliver the majority of CTE concurrent enrollment courses in Arkansas.
- Postsecondary institutions receive no reimbursement from OSD, secondary career centers, or feeder school districts for the tuition of concurrent students' coursework offered through secondary career centers.

- Under the approved [2020-2024 Arkansas Perkins V Plan](#):
 - Postsecondary Perkins funds may not be used for secondary programs, including concurrent enrollment
 - Secondary Perkins funds may not be used for postsecondary programs, including concurrent enrollment
 - Secondary career centers are not permitted to use Perkins funds, including for CTE concurrent enrollment programs
 - Perkins funds cannot be used for individual students' concurrent enrollment tuition.

Recommendations

- **Create a state funding approach to defray or cover high-cost CTE concurrent enrollment equipment:** In order for students to be eligible for a Concurrent Challenge Scholarship, the partnering institution must provide a minimum 50 percent tuition reduction. After the state's Perkins V plan precluded school districts and institutions from using Perkins funds to support concurrent enrollment, offering some CTE concurrent enrollment courses with high equipment costs has become prohibitively expensive for institutions, and particularly those delivering CTE concurrent enrollment through secondary career centers. A state approach to subsidize the high equipment costs for CTE concurrent coursework in such fields as welding, health care, and graphic design would broaden access to concurrent coursework in these programs of study.



- **Consider refining state funding models to expand the availability of CTE concurrent enrollment:**

- **Refine the state funding model for secondary career centers:** Secondary career centers, which provide the majority of CTE concurrent credit in Arkansas, receive state funding through the Office of Skills Development (OSD). Secondary career centers do not receive earmarked funding to support concurrent enrollment programming and are allocated OSD funds regardless of whether they offer concurrent credit. CTE concurrent courses are more expensive to deliver than traditional secondary CTE courses due to higher instructor costs (teachers are typically certified industry professionals) and the equipment necessary to meet national certification requirements.

While most secondary career centers are affiliated with a postsecondary partner to offer concurrent courses, some centers are not. Stakeholders commented that it is unfair for students in two secondary career centers to take identical coursework, with students in the secondary center affiliated with an institution receiving both high school and college credit, and students in the secondary center lacking an institutional partner earning only high school credit.

A refinement to the state funding model for secondary career centers could provide additional tiered funding for CTE concurrent enrollment, in recognition of the greater costs associated with offering these courses. Such tiered funding could reduce the financial burden postsecondary

partners bear, and potentially incent secondary career centers not offering concurrent enrollment to create concurrent programs, broadening access to CTE coursework leading to certifications in high-wage, high-demand occupations in Arkansas. State funding models in [Florida](#) and Iowa award financial incentives for CTE concurrent enrollment course completions or industry-recognized credentials students earn before high school graduation.

- **Refine the tuition reimbursement approach for postsecondary institutions:** In contrast to concurrent courses offered at comprehensive high schools, in which postsecondary institutions receive some tuition reimbursement, postsecondary institutions receive no tuition reimbursement for concurrent enrollment courses provided at secondary career centers. These courses are subsidized by feeder district payments to the secondary career center and the secondary career center's allocation from the OSD. A refinement of the tuition reimbursement approach that recognizes the postsecondary staff time involved would increase institutions' capacity to offer courses at secondary career centers.
- **Explore regional or statewide “matchmaking” approaches for secondary career centers and postsecondary institutions:** Secondary career centers are precluded from offering concurrent coursework in a program of study if the neighboring postsecondary institution does not offer the related program of study, the secondary career center does not have instructors credentialed to teach a specific college course, or the local institution otherwise lacks the

capacity to offer its courses at the secondary career center. Arkansas might explore regional or statewide “matchmaking” approaches to pair interested secondary career centers with other public Arkansas institutions, regionally or statewide, to extend more CTE concurrent enrollment opportunities to a greater number of Arkansas learners.

- **Examine other funding approaches to enhance CTE concurrent course access:** Arkansas might convene state and local CTE thought partners from secondary and postsecondary to weigh other funding strategies aimed at increasing CTE concurrent course access and opportunity, particularly in high-wage, high-demand occupational fields. Arkansas might also explore how CTE concurrent funding models interact with other CTE concurrent enrollment policies in states such as [Indiana](#) and [Iowa](#), where CTE course enrollments comprise 44 percent and 35 percent of all public two-year college course enrollments by high school students, respectively. These reflect higher percentages of CTE concurrent enrollment as a percentage of all college course completions by high school students, compared to states nationally.



COURSE ACCESS & AVAILABILITY

Unlocking Potential Call to Action: States ensure that students are able to access college in high school courses, regardless of geography, with pathways that maximize opportunities for students to earn multiple credits and facilitate students exploring academic and career areas of interest while ensuring that those courses count toward high school graduation requirements.



Making Courses Accessible to All Students

How Do Arkansas Policies Measure Up?

- Courses may be offered by public two- and four-year institutions A.C.A. § 6-18-223(a)(1); [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#)
- Institutions may deliver concurrent enrollment courses on-campus or via distance/digital technology [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#)
- [Virtual Arkansas](#) provides online concurrent enrollment courses.

Recommendations

- **Require all high school students and parents to be annually notified about concurrent enrollment opportunities:** Annually notifying all high school students and their parents about concurrent enrollment ensures that school staff, even with the best intentions, are not selective in which learners receive key information on program availability, the benefits of participating, eligibility and placement criteria, and deadlines for course enrollments and scholarship applications. Policies in other states such as [Colorado](#), [Florida](#), and [Virginia](#) require all secondary students and their parents to receive such annual notifications.
- **Consider requiring all school districts to offer concurrent coursework:** For nearly two decades, Arkansas statute has required all districts to offer at least one AP course each in English, math, science, and social studies, and requires all high schools to offer a minimum of four AP courses total. However,

districts are not required to maintain a concurrent enrollment program, placing students who would perform better in a concurrent course—or for which no equivalent AP course is available—at a disadvantage. Some states such as [Florida](#) and Virginia require all school districts to enter into a concurrent enrollment partnership; effective December 2023, [North Carolina](#) will hold districts to a similar requirement.

- **Explore transportation solutions and alternatives:** Arkansas does not direct secondary or postsecondary partners to transport students to concurrent courses offered either at a secondary career center or on the postsecondary campus. Some districts do not provide transportation for concurrent enrollment students for various reasons, such as a shortage of bus drivers, the district's inability to cover transportation costs, or insurmountable logistical challenges. A lack of transportation to concurrent enrollment opportunities on institutional campuses and secondary career centers disparately impacts students in small or rural high schools who may be unable to staff credentialed high school teachers or persuade faculty to travel to teach on-site; low-income students who do not have their own transportation (or who risk missing their only guaranteed meal of the day by leaving their high school over the lunch hour); and students whose employment, family, or other extracurricular commitments preclude traveling to the institution to take college courses after the regular school day.



- See Instructor Capacity (pages 27-30) for more on the impact of the shortage of credentialed teachers on course access
- See Navigational Supports (pages 31-35) for more on the importance of tailoring messaging on the benefits of concurrent enrollment for undocumented students and their parents

To assure greater equality of concurrent course access across the state, Arkansas might explore one or more of the following options:

- **Develop state policy to require concurrent enrollment partnerships to offer transportation to courses not accessible at the high school or online:** Requiring secondary or postsecondary partners to provide transportation could level the playing field for students unable to access courses of interest at their high school or through online options.
- **Establish state transportation funding supports for concurrent enrollment:** Such funding supports might take the form of a state transportation assistance program for concurrent enrollment partnerships, or a program covering travel time and expenses for those faculty teaching concurrent offerings at high schools that lack credentialed instructors. This assistance might be paired with other financial or non-monetary incentives to encourage institutions to send faculty to high schools experiencing concurrent staffing and transportation issues.
- **Explore course-sharing across schools or districts:** In tandem with exploring solutions to transportation challenges, the state—or regional collaborations—might explore greater use of

course-sharing across multiple high schools or districts, as have rural communities in other states.

- **Revisit DESE policy on weighting concurrent enrollment courses:** [DESE rules](#) establish a weighting scale by which AP and IB course grades are automatically weighted; other courses, including concurrent courses, that “meet or exceed the standards of a comparable Advanced Placement class or exceed the curriculum standards for a non-weighted course” may be approved by the Division to confer weighted credit. Stakeholder group members widely agreed that automatic weighted credit for AP courses makes AP a more desirable option than concurrent credit for students seeking to be highly competitive in high school class rankings, college admissions, and scholarship applications.

A number of states, including HLC states and states in the Southern Regional Education Board’s jurisdiction, have codified measures to place AP, IB, and concurrent enrollment on an equal footing, including in grade weighting calculations. For example, Florida [statute](#) directs “[school] districts and Florida College System institutions [to] weigh dual enrollment courses the same as advanced placement, International Baccalaureate, and Advanced International Certificate of Education courses when grade point averages (GPAs) are calculated. Alternative grade calculation systems, alternative grade weighting systems, and information regarding student education options that discriminate against dual enrollment courses are prohibited.” North Carolina State Board of Education [rules](#) changed in the last decade to assign the same weights to dual enrollment, AP, IB, and Cambridge International Examination courses in high school GPA calculations.

Some stakeholder group members expressed concern that the content and rigor of a concurrent enrollment course might fall below that of an AP course. Following this logic, they argued, a concurrent college algebra course should not confer the weighted credit that AP Calculus confers, because the content and rigor of calculus exceeds the content and rigor of college algebra.

Other stakeholders countered that [HLC guidelines](#) require institutions to ensure the learning outcomes of a dual credit course are equivalent to those in the on-campus course. They contended that since the learning outcomes of a college credit-bearing math course are more rigorous than its corresponding high school course (e.g., College Algebra is more rigorous than high school Algebra II), it follows that a concurrent math course should be weighted the same as an AP math course. These stakeholders added that some students take blended AP/concurrent credit courses as a workaround to earn weighted AP credit but do not take the AP exam seriously.



Student Eligibility

How Do Arkansas Policies Measure Up?

- Students must be in grades 9-12 and meet other program eligibility requirements
- Students must have:
 - ≥ 19 on the ACT reading subtest or equivalent test **to enroll in any general education concurrent enrollment course***
 - ≥ 19 on the respective ACT subtest or equivalent test **to enroll in an English Composition or math concurrent enrollment course***

*Institutions may set higher minimum scores for general education courses and may require scores on other assessments [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#).

- A recommendation from their high school principal or designee [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#)
- High school seniors with a ≥ 17 ACT subtest score in English, reading, or math may enroll in developmental/remedial courses at a public postsecondary institution [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#)
- Students must be notified that completion of postsecondary developmental/remedial courses through concurrent enrollment does not guarantee college-level placement at another Arkansas institution unless an agreement has been signed by the two institutions [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#)

Recommendations

- **Replace ACT-only eligibility and placement policy with a multiple measures approach:** The [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#) establishes a minimum score of 19 on the ACT reading subtest for students seeking enrollment in any general education coursework, and a minimum score of 19 on the ACT English or math subtest to enroll in a concurrent English composition or math course; institutions are authorized to set higher minimum test scores. The minimum ACT score for general education course access is a rigid measure that restricts program access for students who could succeed in college coursework. In addition, a single benchmark for students to demonstrate college-readiness in math runs counter to Arkansas' recent [math pathways](#) efforts.

Stakeholders supported replacing Arkansas' concurrent enrollment eligibility and placement requirements with a multiple measures approach that takes into account other college-ready indicators such as high school cumulative GPA, grades in the highest level of high school English or math coursework completed, and/or performance on other assessments. [Research](#) bears out that using standardized tests as a single postsecondary placement measure creates an unnecessary participation barrier for underserved students who could succeed in concurrent coursework.

Some stakeholders advocated for a top-down, grassroots-up approach in which all institutions would be required to use multiple measures for program eligibility and placement, and institutions would select the measures and benchmarks.



- **Require use of the same placement criteria for concurrent enrollment students and first-time freshmen:** Stakeholders weighed in on the benefits and disadvantages of setting higher program eligibility and placement criteria for high school students than for first-time freshmen students. Some stakeholders perceived that the higher benchmarks for high school students were a well-intentioned effort to bar course access for students who might overestimate their readiness for college expectations; these stakeholders added these higher eligibility and placement criteria were likely a holdover from earlier conceptions of concurrent enrollment as an acceleration option for a few academically elite students, rather than an early postsecondary opportunity for a broader range of students, including those exploring CTE pathways.

Regardless of the reason for higher placement benchmarks for high school students, these higher placement criteria are an unnecessary barrier and a major contributing factor to concurrent enrollment students not reflecting the demographics of their feeder high school student population; students with disabilities, English learners, and students who could succeed in college coursework but do not test well are disparately impacted. Common placement criteria for high school and first-time freshmen students would enhance concurrent enrollment access and opportunity.

- **Address uneven Accuplacer access for CTE students:** Accuplacer access is uneven for secondary students statewide, creating a CTE concurrent enrollment access barrier. Some high schools focus on ACT readiness for 11th grade students,

overlooking the need for 9th and 10th grade students to take the Accuplacer to be eligible for CTE concurrent enrollment courses starting in grade 11. Some programs administer the Accuplacer only on the partnering institution's campus, posing a barrier for students who lack transportation to the college. Any of several solutions could address this challenge:

- **Explore means to ensure statewide access to the Accuplacer in grades 9-12:** Arkansas might explore offering the Accuplacer to all CTE students in grades 9-12. Statewide administration of the Accuplacer would also allow counselors, career coaches, and concurrent enrollment program coordinators to redirect the considerable time they spend communicating Accuplacer registration deadlines to students to other priorities.
- **Ensure all career coaches are aware of Accuplacer requirements and can help connect students with test sites:** Career coaches play an important role relaying key information to prospective concurrent students. Ensuring career coaches are aware of the need for prospective CTE concurrent enrollment students to submit Accuplacer scores and can connect students with Accuplacer test sites would support CTE concurrent enrollment access for students in high schools served by career coaches.

See pages 31-35 in the Navigational Supports section for additional recommendations related to career coaches.

- **Replace the paper Accuplacer with an online assessment tool:** Ivy Tech, Indiana's statewide community college system, has replaced the Accuplacer at all Ivy Tech campuses with the [Knowledge Assessment](#), a diagnostic test in English and math that offers customized supports to help students scoring below college-ready benchmarks achieve college-readiness.
- **Allow concurrent enrollment students to enroll in courses with corequisite support, and transition courses:** Although Arkansas institutions may place matriculated students into credit-bearing courses with corequisite support, the ADHE [Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#) limits academic supports to remedial and developmental coursework, limits access to this coursework to 12th graders who have earned a minimum 17 ACT subtest score in English, reading, or math, and prohibits institutions from including high school students enrolled in remedial or developmental coursework in counts for higher education funding purposes.

In acknowledgement of the [research](#) supporting corequisite support over traditional developmental education, ADHE may consider rewording its policy to permit high school students on the cusp of college-readiness to enroll in gateway English and math courses with the same corequisite supports offered to adult learners, as is allowed in some other states that encourage placement with corequisite support over developmental/remedial coursework. Similarly, extending access to transitions courses that institutions offer to matriculated students could provide a critical onramp to college coursework, particularly for students unsure of their plans after high



school or from underrepresented student populations. Placing corequisite support and transitions courses within reach of students would further promote concurrent enrollment access and opportunity for underserved students.

- **Establish or expand college-readiness onramps, particularly for underserved students:** In contrast to supports already offered to matriculated students, secondary and postsecondary concurrent enrollment partners may consider establishing or expanding programs designed to prepare high school students for college-level coursework. Such programs may include [AVID](#) or [Upward Bound](#), already utilized in the state; alternatively, Arkansas may explore models in use in other states, such as:
 - [Texas College Bridge](#)
 - Ivy Tech (Indiana)'s [LevelUp](#) tool
 - Ivy Tech's [Knowledge Assessment](#) (referenced on page 24)

Concurrent enrollment partnerships should ensure that college-readiness strategies include explicit supports for English learners.

- **Create an option for local programs to pilot approaches to enhance concurrent enrollment access and success for underserved students:** As a supplement or alternative to revisions to statewide concurrent enrollment eligibility and placement metrics, Arkansas may consider creating an option allowing local programs to test eligibility and placement innovations geared toward increasing program participation for underserved populations. [Ohio](#) allows local partnerships to apply for an exception from statutory concurrent enrollment requirements

for a dual enrollment agreement that “Includes innovative programming proposed to exclusively address the needs of underrepresented student subgroups” and meets additional criteria established in [administrative code](#). Although programs receiving a state exemption from certain statutory provisions are not required to offer alternative eligibility criteria, in practice most such programs do so.

Pathways to Areas of Student Interest

► How Do Arkansas Policies Measure Up?

- Concurrent credit courses are college-level courses that can be applied, as appropriate, to an associate degree, a CTE certificate or credential, or a bachelor's degree. A.C.A. § 6-18-223; [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#)

► Recommendations

- **Consider raising the scholarship cap OR adopting a state concurrent enrollment funding model allowing enrollment in additional courses at low to no cost:** Arkansas does not set a limit to the number of concurrent enrollment courses a student may complete during a semester, academic year, or during their high school career. However, statutes governing the Concurrent Challenge Scholarship Program (A.C.A. § 6-85-401 through -406) and the [ADHE Concurrent Challenge Scholarship Program rules](#) limit the scholarship benefits to the lesser of \$500 in an academic year, or the actual cost of tuition and fees for up to two eligible courses a semester. The waiver for low-income students covers up to six credit hours.





As such, students who exceed these limits or wish to enroll in courses other than endorsed concurrent enrollment courses under both programs—or a certificate program (for the Concurrent Challenge Scholarship Program)—must either pay out of pocket or seek alternative funding sources, which may render additional credits or other types of concurrent coursework inaccessible to low-income students. What is more, the Concurrent Challenge Scholarship Program does not cover lab fees for science courses with a required lab, which may pose a participation barrier even for low-income Scholarship recipients.

Arkansas may consider increasing the number of courses the Concurrent Challenge Scholarship will cover, or adopting a statewide funding approach that minimizes or eliminates student-borne expenses for courses beyond those covered by the low-income student waiver and the Concurrent Challenge Scholarship Program. This may take the shape of a two-phase process, in which in the short term Arkansas revisits limitations on the types of concurrent enrollment courses the low-income student waiver can cover and the eligible expenses the Concurrent Challenge Scholarship may cover (e.g., allow scholarship to cover lab fees for science courses with a required lab). In the long term, Arkansas may raise the cap on the number of credit hours or tuition amount the Concurrent Challenge Scholarship will cover.

A [2019 report](#) identifies considerations for states weighing changes to provisions governing concurrent enrollment tuition responsibility.

Graduation/Diploma Requirements

How Do Arkansas Policies Measure Up?

- Courses must count for postsecondary credit and toward high school graduation requirements A.C.A. § 6-18-223(a)(2).
- The [Course Code Management System](#) in the ADE Data Center identifies which graduation requirement(s) a concurrent course fulfills. Search results for “concurrent” bring up all concurrent courses and the state graduation and Smart Core requirement(s) each fulfills.
- Public schools and postsecondary institutions must use an electronic transcript system (Ark. Code Ann. §6-80-107). In fulfillment of this requirement, high school counselors use [Triand](#), an e-transcript platform that indicates for each student what postsecondary course code meets which Smart Core graduation requirements and shows what high school graduation requirements students have already fulfilled. Postsecondary institutions receive high school transcripts via Triand.

Recommendations

- **Better communicate the Smart Core equivalency list to local concurrent enrollment stakeholders:** Arkansas high school counselors experience a high turnover rate. As such, many counselors are new in their roles and may be unaware of DESE’s [Smart Core Course Code List](#), which identifies the concurrent credits that should fulfill students’ Smart Core graduation requirements, and not be applied as elective credits.

DESE annually sends counselors and school administrators direct communications about the Smart Core equivalency list. These efforts might be bolstered by targeting communications on the Smart Core Course Code list to students, parents, and others advising students on concurrent enrollment course selections. The current Smart Core Course Code list might be posted annually to the ADHE and DESE concurrent credit webpages, and any other standalone concurrent enrollment resource lists; communications about the Smart Core Course Code list might be integrated into enhanced communications to these audiences (more details in the Navigational Supports section on pages 31-35).



INSTRUCTOR CAPACITY

Unlocking Potential Call to Action: States develop strategies to recruit, support, and diversify the pool of instructors with the qualifications to teach college in high school while encouraging collaboration between K-12 and postsecondary partners as college in high school programs are scaled.



Arkansas Instructor Capacity Policies Generally

- Instructors of general education concurrent enrollment courses must have a minimum of a master's degree that includes at least 18 graduate hours in the subject area of the course A.C.A. § 6-16-1203(b) for endorsed CE courses; [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#) for gen ed courses generally
- Teachers of blended AP/concurrent enrollment courses must also complete, and provide documentation of completing, AP training [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#)

Identifying Qualified Instructors

▶ How Do Arkansas Policies Measure Up?

- No statewide policies identified that relate to Instructor Capacity: Identifying Qualified Instructors [policy ideas](#)

▶ Recommendations

- **Launch a state communications campaign aimed at preservice teachers on concurrent enrollment benefits and instructor credentialing requirements:** A stakeholder group member observed that increasingly, students are graduating from four-year institutions with a Master of Arts in teaching or Master's in Education rather than a master's in a discipline, diminishing the pool of high school teachers credentialed to teach concurrent general education courses. It is likely that teachers just emerging from master's programs are unaware that they must have not only a master's degree but at least 18 graduate hours in the discipline of a course in order to teach concurrent enrollment.

An ADE campaign to inform teacher candidates about concurrent enrollment, the teacher and student benefits of concurrent enrollment participation, and the need for teachers of concurrent enrollment general education courses to hold a master's or have completed 18 graduate hours in the subject of the course, could address this communications gap. DESE and ADHE might forge partnerships between education schools and discipline-specific master's programs at public four-year institutions to facilitate these communications efforts.

- **Collect and report state-level data quantifying the shortage of teachers credentialed to teach high-demand concurrent courses and disciplines:** Data quantifying the number of concurrent courses high schools would like to offer but are unable to staff in which disciplines and CTE pathways would provide helpful direction to a statewide communications campaign targeted at preservice teachers, as well as to efforts to incent veteran teachers to become credentialed, and would help four-year institutions better understand the potential market for discipline-specific graduate-level courses delivered fully online or in a hybrid modality. Such data might also be useful to grow-your-own programs seeking to recruit high school students considering education careers.
- **Encourage state and local secondary and postsecondary stakeholders to collaborate to address the shortage of credentialed concurrent enrollment teachers:** The 2022 report [Building a Concurrent Enrollment Teacher Pipeline: Opportunities, Challenges, and Lessons](#) identifies numerous collaborative approaches aimed at increasing the number of high school teachers credentialed to teach college courses.



Expanding the Pool of Qualified Instructors

How Do Arkansas Policies Measure Up?

- No statewide policies identified that relate to Instructor Capacity: Expanding the Pool of Qualified Instructors [policy ideas](#)

Recommendations

Stakeholders were unanimous that the shortage of teachers credentialed to teach college coursework is one of the biggest barriers, if not *the* biggest barrier, to greater concurrent enrollment access and opportunity in the state. **To increase the number of secondary instructors credentialed to teach concurrent courses, Arkansas should consider the following recommendations as a comprehensive set, rather than a menu of options, as each recommendation listed below builds a necessary foundation for the next recommendation in the series.**

- **Offer funds for Arkansas four-year institutions to develop online graduate courses:** In Arkansas, the graduate-level courses that teachers need to complete to teach concurrent enrollment courses are by and large offered face-to-face during the day, during the regular school year, and as such, are inaccessible to in-service high school instructors. Initiatives in other states, such as Indiana's [STEM Teach](#), have made funds available to four-year institutions to develop new graduate-level courses as well as funds to convert existing face-to-face graduate courses into online courses.



In 2015, Indiana repurposed an [existing STEM teacher fund](#) to respond to the need to offer more graduate-level courses to high school teachers of STEM disciplines. Arkansas could consider whether an existing fund might likewise be redirected or expanded to support the development of online graduate courses for high school teachers.

- **Create a directory of online graduate courses and course enrollment platform:** A single statewide directory of online and other graduate courses serves as a one-stop shop for teachers to locate courses offered by institutions statewide that could fulfill their graduate credit hour requirements. [STEM Teach](#), [Teach Dual Credit Indiana](#) (the liberal arts counterpart to STEM Teach), and Minnesota’s [Pathway to 18](#) all perform this valuable function.
- **Communicate existing state scholarships that can defray master’s coursework costs:** Arkansas teachers may not realize they can use existing [state scholarships](#) such as the State Teacher Education Program (STEP) loan repayment program and Teacher Opportunity Program (TOP) tuition reimbursement grant program to help cover graduate course expenses. Communications informing teachers that these funds may be applied toward graduate-level coursework may help persuade teachers to pursue the master’s credits needed to become credentialed as concurrent instructors.
- **Tap diverse funding sources to offer teachers online graduate-level courses at low to no cost:** Creating a separate, dedicated program for current teachers seeking to become concurrent enrollment-credentialed clearly communicates to educators that monies are available for graduate coursework; a delineated funding source can help ensure scholarship funds continue to be available to Arkansas teachers pursuing other educational goals. Indiana’s [STEM Teach](#) covers participating teachers’ tuition and textbooks through a biennial appropriation; [Teach Dual Credit Indiana](#) covers tuition, textbooks, and fees through a public-private partnership. [Pathway to 18](#) provides some [tuition assistance](#) through various sources, including a legislative appropriation.
- **Leverage the Arkansas Teacher Residency model to prepare credentialed teachers in rural areas:** The [Arkansas Teacher Residency model](#) presents an opportunity for concurrent enrollment to be leveraged to address the concurrent enrollment credentialing challenge. Under this apprenticeship approach, high school students can enroll in concurrent enrollment coursework to earn a certified teaching assistant credential. The credential permits program participants to work as teaching assistants while completing their bachelor’s degree and teacher licensure requirements, allowing them to become fully licensed teachers with no student loans.

While the program has not been marketed as a strategy to recruit and prepare concurrent enrollment teachers in rural communities, it could be positioned as such. Marketing materials could communicate to program participants that shortly after completing their residency, they could enroll in graduate coursework preparing them to serve their home communities teaching concurrent enrollment coursework. Arkansas may consider encouraging participating schools of education to create clear pathways to discipline-specific graduate degrees, or partner with master’s-awarding institutions to increase the pool of credentialed high school teachers.
- **Establish partnerships with minority-serving institutions to increase the number of diverse credentialed concurrent enrollment teachers:** A [2021 report](#) citing [2017 research](#) notes that minority-serving institutions (MSIs) prepare “more than 50 percent of the nation’s teachers of color, including more than half of the bachelor’s degrees in education earned by Latinos, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders and nearly 40 percent of the bachelor’s degrees in education earned by African Americans.” As part of broader efforts to increase the number of credentialed teachers, the state might encourage:
 - MSIs with master’s in education programs to develop or expand graduate-level, discipline-specific online or hybrid courses to help teachers meet concurrent enrollment credentialing requirements
 - Teacher candidates in undergraduate teacher education programs at MSIs—and recent graduates of those programs—to complete discipline-specific master’s, either at the MSI or another institution, to become credentialed to teach concurrent enrollment.



- **Provide state funds to allow districts to offer a salary incentive to instructors earning 18 graduate hours to qualify to teach general education concurrent classes:** Credentialed high school instructors are often drawn to better-resourced districts that can offer higher pay, including salary premiums for credentialed teachers. Arkansas might explore the creation of a state fund from which recipient rural (or less well-resourced) districts can provide a salary increase to credentialed high school teachers who commit to teaching concurrent enrollment within the district for a certain number of years.

Arkansas statute requires instructors of general education concurrent enrollment courses to have a master's degree (in any discipline) and 18 graduate credit hours in the subject of the course. Arkansas should continue to hold high school teachers to the same credentialing requirements as regular college faculty. Lowering concurrent enrollment instructor expectations may have negative implications for course quality and rigor, students' subsequent course success, credit transfer, and the status of concurrent enrollment in relation to AP.

Teacher-Faculty Collaboration and Professional Development

How Do Arkansas Policies Measure Up?

- As part of concurrent course “ownership,” institutions must:
 - Provide instructors with appropriate training and orientation in course curriculum, assessment criteria, course philosophy, and administrative requirements [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#)
 - Ensure concurrent enrollment instructors receive continuing collegial interaction with faculty via professional development, required seminars, and site visits. “These interactions will address topics such as course content, course delivery, student learning assessment, in-class evaluation, and professional development in the field of study.” [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#)
- Each institution must have a description of the
 - “[Orientation] process for new concurrent faculty and a sample of information that is provided to concurrent faculty during orientation.
 - “[Plan] to assure concurrent faculty receive appropriate professional development.” [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#)

Recommendations

- **Encourage and facilitate institutional sharing of best practices on instructor professional development:** The NACEP accreditation standards and the ADHE authorization process both require institutions to annually provide concurrent enrollment instructors with discipline-specific professional development. Rather than reinvent the wheel, institutions statewide would benefit from the designation of a forum for sharing the content concurrent instructors find most valuable in these professional learning sessions, and best practices for delivering this content.

Existing platforms such as AACEP meetings and the AACEP listserv could be leveraged for this purpose.
- **Offer discipline-specific teacher professional development opportunities at a single annual statewide event:** Institutions could pool resources to offer a single annual discipline-specific teacher professional development session that meets NACEP and ADHE requirements. This could not only provide the opportunity for collegial interaction and networking for teachers and faculty in a specific discipline but showcase best practice across institutions in professional development content development and delivery. These statewide professional development opportunities could be delivered in-person, virtually, or in a hybrid modality, depending on the audience and the host institution's preference.



NAVIGATIONAL SUPPORTS

Unlocking Potential Call to Action: States prioritize the student navigational supports and advising needed to ensure student success in college in high school courses, particularly for those students historically underserved by these programs.



Providing Student Supports

▶ How Do Arkansas Policies Measure Up?

- Districts receive Enhanced Student Achievement Funding (ESAF) for each low-income student. Some ESAF dollars must support postsecondary access, including access to career coaches, concurrent enrollment courses, and college-entrance and career-readiness support. A.C.A. § 6-20-2305
- Institutions must ensure concurrent enrollment student access to on-campus academic advising. [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#)
- All students must have a student success plan, that, among other things:
 - Addresses accelerated learning opportunities
 - Includes college and career planning A.C.A. § 6-15-2911
- The [Arkansas Career Coach Program](#) provides for coaches to serve students in grades 5-12 through partnerships between districts and an IHE, education cooperative, or nonprofit organizations. Either state grant funds or Perkins funds may be used to staff career coach positions. The Division of Career and Technical Education must develop and coordinate the career coach program, including by offering training opportunities for coaches. A.C.A. § 6-1-601 through -605
- All general education concurrent enrollment courses must be listed in the Arkansas Course Transfer System (ACTS). [ADHE Concurrent Enrollment Policy](#)

Communications Tools and Resources

Concurrent enrollment programs experience numerous challenges in communicating to various audiences about concurrent enrollment. It is unclear if parents and students read the concurrent enrollment communications secondary and postsecondary partners send out, and if the communications are written in terms that students and parents can understand. Stakeholders noted that the parents of first-generation college-goers and parents in which the home language is a language other than English might be particularly challenged in comprehending concurrent enrollment informational materials.

Many students and parents might not know about ADHE's concurrent enrollment informational webpage; those students and families who locate the page might not be able to make sense of it, as stakeholders felt the content was geared more toward professionals than laypeople.

Concurrent enrollment informational resources and professional development need to ensure students and parents are aware of—and counselors, career coaches, and others advising students on concurrent course selections are equipped to communicate—the implications of poor concurrent course performance on:

- Four-year college admissions
- Future financial aid eligibility
- Satisfactory academic progress (SAP)

Language in these resources and communications by school staff need to provide clear information but not unduly discourage program participation among eligible students.



Students, parents, counselors, and other concurrent enrollment audiences demonstrate pervasive information gaps and misperceptions about the respective features, benefits, and potential drawbacks of AP, IB, and concurrent enrollment, and about the Concurrent Challenge Scholarship and Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship.

▶ Recommendations

As with the recommendations for Expanding the Pool of Qualified Instructors, **Arkansas should consider the following recommendations as a comprehensive set, rather than a menu of options, as each recommendation listed below builds a necessary foundation for the recommendation following it.**

- **Run statewide peer focus groups to inform the development of enhanced concurrent enrollment communication efforts:** The state might convene focus groups for each of various concurrent enrollment audiences (see sidebar), to gauge their knowledge levels (and knowledge gaps) on concurrent enrollment, as well as concurrent enrollment topics on which misinformation is widespread. The focus groups would also query these audiences on their trusted sources of concurrent enrollment information, and test concurrent enrollment messages that might increase each audience's concurrent enrollment knowledge level and effectively address knowledge gaps and misinformation.

AACEP might be well-positioned to recruit focus group members, run focus groups, and debrief DESE, ADHE, and DCTE on recommendations from focus group members.

- **Develop and broadly disseminate updated concurrent enrollment resources:** Based on the information gathered during these focus groups, ADHE, DESE, and DCTE might jointly develop and broadly disseminate concurrent enrollment resources tailored to the interests and needs of various concurrent enrollment audiences. These resources would use the language and framing vetted through focus groups and would be published in languages other than English. These resources might include state templates of one-pagers for local customization and distribution, covering key concurrent enrollment questions.

To support broader participation in advanced CTE coursework through concurrent enrollment, these resources might provide information on the benefits of progressing through a program of study and earning concentrator and completer status.

- **Develop a state-level concurrent enrollment informational website:** This website would offer information geared to each of multiple concurrent enrollment audiences. Arkansas might consider examples from other states, such as Colorado, in which [statute](#) calls for the creation of a concurrent enrollment informational [webpage](#) geared to students/parents. The Ohio Department of Higher Education [webpage](#) for the state's concurrent enrollment model, College Credit Plus, has separate sections featuring content targeted to [students and families](#), [secondary teachers and secondary school and district staff](#) generally, and [secondary school counselors and program coordinators](#).

Below are suggested concurrent enrollment audiences for which focus groups could be developed. The sub-bulleted audiences are those potentially in greater need than the general population of accurate, targeted concurrent enrollment information. A separate focus group might be the most fruitful means of gathering each sub-bulleted audience's perspectives.

- Students
 - First-generation college-goers
 - Undocumented students
 - Other underserved student groups (e.g., rural, male, low-income) identified by ADE participation data
- Parents of secondary students
 - Parents new to the U.S.
 - Parents of first-generation college students
 - Parents of other underserved student groups identified by ADE participation data
- High school counselors
 - New counselors
- College advisors
- High school teachers
 - Teachers tasked with advising students on course selections
- Career coaches
- Secondary administrators

Separate focus groups for representatives of community-based organizations working with secondary-aged youth, postsecondary administrators, postsecondary faculty, and postsecondary staff who are not concurrent enrollment coordinators might also be considered.



In light of stakeholder feedback that information on state websites is not always easy to locate, a link to this website could be posted in prominent, easy-to-find locations on the DESE, ADHE, and DCTE websites. As is done in other states, local secondary and postsecondary partners might be encouraged or required to include a prominent link to the state concurrent enrollment website on their home page. The website link might be disseminated via additional means suggested by focus group members.

- **Forge strategic partnerships to broadly communicate the availability of the website and other information sources:** Intentional collaborations between ADHE, DESE, and DCTE and various state and local partners could ensure that concurrent enrollment stakeholders across role groups statewide are aware of and have ready access to the concurrent enrollment website and other resources. Focus groups could identify the professional organizations (e.g., the [Arkansas School Counselor Association](#)) and affinity groups (e.g., AACEP) to which these resources could be conveyed, and the communication channels best positioned to reach each targeted audience. Through these strategic collaborations, ADHE, DESE, and DCTE could encourage partner groups and organizations to disseminate information to their members through various means, including their email lists, newsletters, and annual meetings.

ADHE, DESE, and DCTE might further consider utilizing education cooperatives to publicize the website and distribute informational materials with concurrent enrollment stakeholders in their respective service areas.

Information and resources might answer basic questions such as, “Why take concurrent enrollment?” “What are the differences between concurrent enrollment and AP?” “Will concurrent enrollment credit transfer the same as AP?” Information and resources might also dispel common myths, including that AP credit will always transfer to out-of-state institutions and concurrent credit won’t.

Career Coach Availability, Responsibilities, and Training

Career coaches play an indispensable role advising students on options that will prepare them for the next step, including concurrent enrollment.

Recommendations

- **Explore strategies to make career coaches available in more high schools with lower rates of concurrent enrollment participation and postsecondary matriculation:** Career coaches are not present in all high schools, and it is unclear whether those high schools that do not currently have career coaches have lower rates of concurrent enrollment participation, or if those high schools’ graduates have lower matriculation rates. Arkansas might explore strategies to make career coaches more broadly available. Enhanced public reporting on concurrent enrollment participation and outcomes might assist in identifying and directing career coach funding to high schools with concurrent enrollment participation rates and college-going rates below the state median.

- **Add explicit references to concurrent enrollment in state policies and guidelines related to career coaches’ duties, training, and evaluation:** A.C.A. § 6-1-601 states that the purpose of the career coach program is “to assist students in preparing for postsecondary education or careers.” However, statute (A.C.A. § 6-1-601 through -606) governing the career coach program makes no explicit mention of concurrent enrollment, including in the duties of career coaches. The [Arkansas College and Career Coach Program Operational Guide 2022-2023](#) makes several references to concurrent enrollment but does not indicate (1) concurrent enrollment topics that all career coaches must receive training on; (2) duties related to concurrent enrollment that all career coaches must carry out, or (3) concurrent enrollment measures included in evaluations of individual career coaches or local career coach programs. Arkansas does not have a consistent and streamlined approach to training career coaches on concurrent enrollment.

To ensure that all career coaches are well-equipped to support students on concurrent enrollment topics, Arkansas might specify career coaches’ duties relative to concurrent enrollment in statute and program guidelines, as well as the content and frequency of training career coaches should receive to effectively fulfill those responsibilities. These revisions might include encouraging or requiring career coaches to participate in annual or ongoing training or professional development on concurrent enrollment topics.



Metrics related to concurrent enrollment might be included in the DCTE scoring rubric for career coach grant applications, individual career coaches' performance evaluations, and the evaluation of local career coach programs. Feedback from student, parent, and school staff focus group participants on career coaches' current roles and effectiveness—and feedback on these topics from career coaches themselves, gathered via surveys and focus groups—might inform these revisions to career coach duties, training content, and evaluation metrics.

- **Offer dedicated annual or ongoing career coach training or professional development on concurrent enrollment topics:** Regardless of whether statute or operational guidelines make participation in such training voluntary or mandatory, Arkansas might provide regular statewide training or professional development on concurrent enrollment topics. Surveys of career coaches might identify topics of interest for these sessions; these surveys and surveys of other concurrent enrollment stakeholders, including students, parents, and secondary and postsecondary staff, might identify topics on which training or professional development is needed to ensure equal student access and opportunity.

Counselor, Advisor, and Concurrent Coordinator Professional Learning

Arkansas' [2021-2022 student/counselor ratio](#) of 357:1 and the ratio of 450:1 permitted by the Arkansas [public school accreditation standards](#) well exceed the American School Counselor Association's recommended ratio of 250:1. Arkansas' high student/counselor ratio contributes to a high counselor turnover rate, meaning a large number of the state's high school counselors are new in their positions each year, and the need for counselor training is ongoing.

So as to equip all high school counselors—and particularly newer counselors—to effectively support current and prospective concurrent enrollment students, Arkansas is encouraged to consider enhancements to counselor preparation and training approaches.

Nationally, postsecondary advisors also experience a high turnover rate. Institution-embedded advisors, as well as concurrent enrollment program coordinators, could likewise benefit from structured state-level professional learning opportunities.

Recommendations

- **Require secondary counselor preparation programs to include information on concurrent credit:** State requirements for secondary school counselor certification do not require candidates to complete coursework or training specific to concurrent enrollment. Integrating content or training on concurrent enrollment would help new and newer counselors in effectively communicating to students about concurrent enrollment.

- **Enhance high school counselor and postsecondary advisor training and professional development:** High school counselors and postsecondary advisors would benefit from enhanced training and professional development. As with career coaches, focus groups and surveys might shed light on concurrent enrollment topics on which to focus professional learning, particularly to foster greater program access and opportunity to all students. ADE staff might partner with other organizations such as the [Arkansas School Counselor Association](#) (ASCA) and AACEP to publicize and deliver this professional development. An ADE/AACEP or ADE/ASCA partnership might also support a community of practice and elevate best practice in offering information and advising to students and families, through ongoing member communications, regular AACEP and ASCA meetings, and an annual AACEP or ASCA meeting.

The [Course Code Management System](#) in the ADE Data Center indicates if and how concurrent credits apply towards high school graduation requirements; however, it is unclear whether all new counselors, career coaches, and administrators are aware of this resource and know how to access it. To support secondary counselors in helping students explore advanced coursework options and select concurrent courses that fulfill high school graduation requirements, Arkansas might ensure that all secondary counselors receive training and updates on accessing and using the Course Code Management System. These trainings and updates might be extended to career coaches and secondary



school staff beyond counselors who advise students on course selections, including concurrent courses.

- **Host an annual statewide check-in for concurrent credit coordinators:** A once-a-year check-in for high school concurrent credit coordinators statewide could inform and elevate best practice on a number of topics, including effective communication tools for families.

Other Approaches Supporting Meaningful Course Selections

Recommendations

- **Consider establishing guardrails in state policy to inform concurrent course selections aligned with students' college and career goals:** Many district- and institution-embedded stakeholders shared their experiences on students selecting concurrent courses without regard to whether these courses might apply to a future program of study, or duplicate other advanced coursework that already fulfilled students' general education or major requirements. Completing random concurrent coursework may lend students and parents a false sense of how many credits will ultimately apply to general education or major requirements, including if students take concurrent courses or concurrent and AP courses and exams that both apply to the same general education or major requirements.

Those advising students on concurrent course selections have many other responsibilities; training and communications would be useful but can only go

so far in helping professionals ensure that concurrent course selections fulfill (and do not duplicate) high school graduation and program of study requirements and align with students' postsecondary and career objectives. State-defined guardrails could support school staff, students, and parents in making informed concurrent course selections.

North Carolina [transfer pathways](#) identify the courses that fulfill the general education requirements for the [associate of arts](#) (AA) and [associate of science](#) (AS), as well as the general education (and sometimes other) requirements for associate pathways in [engineering](#), [nursing](#), [music](#), [visual arts](#), [theater](#), and the [AA](#) and [AS](#) in teacher preparation. These course lists indicate that high school students in these pathways must complete the entire pathway before taking additional courses toward the related associate degree.

[Ohio](#) limits the first 15 credit hours students may complete to transferable courses, technical certificate courses, first-year college success courses, [local model pathway courses](#), internship courses, and courses in a handful of other disciplines; a few exceptions apply.

- **Enhance oversight of local implementation of Student Success Plans:** [Student Success Plans](#) are intended to guide students to select courses, including concurrent courses, aligned to their postsecondary and career goals. However, while some high schools implement Student Success Plans in keeping with the spirit of the law, stakeholders felt that Student Success Plans in other sites are a perfunctory “check-the-box” exercise that do little to inform concurrent enrollment coursetaking aligned

with students' postsecondary and career goals. Although stakeholders understood the rationale behind DESE's local control approach to Student Success Plan administration, measures to ensure local implementation with greater fidelity to the intent of the Student Success Plan requirement would support more well-considered course selections and enhance concurrent enrollment's potential to save families money while reducing time to credential completion.



CONCLUSION

Arkansas policies are a strong starting point for concurrent enrollment access and opportunity. However, data and local stakeholder observations bear out that Arkansas learners experience uneven access to concurrent enrollment opportunities by location and by student background. This report, presenting challenges and recommendations to enhance concurrent enrollment opportunity and access relayed by Arkansas secondary and postsecondary professionals and agency staff, is intended to guide state and local concurrent enrollment decisionmakers in making state and local policy enhancements.





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