EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Jennifer Zinth, Zinth Consulting, LLC
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ARKANSAS CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT REPORT
LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Concurrent Enrollment Benefits Students, but Program Access, Participation Uneven in Arkansas

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. However, Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE) data indicate that concurrent enrollment access and participation is not equal across student subgroups and regions of the state.

Concurrent Enrollment Stakeholder Group Convened to Identify Challenges, Develop Recommendations

To gather diverse perspectives on the policy enhancements most likely to increase equal access to concurrent enrollment to all Arkansas learners, ADHE convened a statewide concurrent enrollment stakeholder group 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).

Using CHSA's Unlocking Potential: A State Policy Roadmap for Equity and Quality in College in High School Programs as the guiding framework for the stakeholder group discussions, the group evaluated the extent to which Arkansas policies align with the policy goals identified in Unlocking Potential, and developed a menu of potential state and local policy recommendations that might broaden access to high-quality concurrent enrollment opportunities across Arkansas.

Stakeholder group members agreed on many of the challenges and recommendations developed. However, the inclusion of these challenges and recommendations in the report does not imply they were unanimously endorsed by all stakeholder group members, including ADE staff.

State and Local Policy Recommendations

Below are state and local policy recommendations for each of the six *Unlocking Potential* policy categories, tailored to the Arkansas policy context, as well as recommendations to improve state-level coordination of concurrent enrollment. The full report identifies Arkansas policies that correspond with the policy ideas in each of the six *Unlocking Potential* policy categories.

Improve State-Level Coordination of Concurrent Enrollment

- Designate ADE concurrent enrollment point (or points) of contact through one or more solutions:
  - Identify an ADHE concurrent enrollment point of contact
  - Create a shared DESE/ADHE/DCTE concurrent enrollment position
  - Designate a concurrent enrollment point of contact at DESE and/or DCTE
- Create consistency in concurrent enrollment rules across divisions
- Explore additional state-level means to improve cross-sector communication and collaboration on concurrent enrollment. Options (not mutually exclusive) include:
  - Strengthen the Arkansas NACEP chapter
  - Explore the creation of a State Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board
  - Make consistent, intentional use of existing state-level communication channels
- Review Arkansas Course Transfer (ACTS) courses

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Access Goal and Public Reporting

Setting a Statewide Access Goal
- Define "access and opportunity" for purposes of concurrent enrollment participation
- Establish an access and opportunity statement of intent in state concurrent enrollment policy
- Set a state concurrent enrollment access and opportunity goal
- Communicate the access and opportunity goal to all concurrent enrollment stakeholders
- Consider additional strategies to increase
  - Underserved student completion of ≥ 6 concurrent credits
  - CTE concurrent enrollment access
- Establish statewide structures and tools to facilitate local efforts to identify and address concurrent enrollment opportunity gaps. Arkansas could:
  - Encourage secondary and postsecondary concurrent enrollment partners to conduct opportunity gap analysis or root cause discussions
  - Develop and broadly disseminate tools to help local secondary and postsecondary partners identify opportunities and implement solutions

Data Collection, Reporting, and Accountability
- Publish separate data sets on concurrent enrollment, AP, and IB participation in school report cards and ESSA School Index reports
- Develop a publicly-available annual report and/or dashboard

Program Integrity and Credit Transfer

Enabling Credit Transfer
- Enhance communications to students, parents, and high school counselors on concurrent credit transfer and applicability. Arkansas might:
  - Create statewide focus groups to test messages on concurrent credit transfer and applicability
  - Enhance communications to high schools and districts on the student impact of taking concurrent enrollment courses from multiple institutions
  - Develop and broadly promote enhanced communications tools on concurrent enrollment course transfer and applicability
- Clarify CTE credit transfer

Ensuring Equivalency with College Courses
- Increase the rigor of ADHE's concurrent enrollment program approval process by any of several means:
  - Increase the rigor of ADHE concurrent enrollment standards related to curriculum alignment and program oversight
  - Incorporate the NACEP standards language into ADHE concurrent enrollment standards
  - Explore feasibility of state models that apply the NACEP standards in an ongoing, rigorous concurrent enrollment program review and approval process
  - Require NACEP accreditation for all programs offering concurrent courses in high schools
- Establish a statewide concurrent enrollment funding model that includes postsecondary support to defray costs associated with NACEP accreditation
- Strengthen the Arkansas NACEP chapter to support institutions in achieving and maintaining NACEP accreditation

Cultivating Cross-System Collaboration
The recommendations under "Improving State-Level Coordination of Concurrent Enrollment" facilitate enhanced cross-system collaboration.

Finance

Remove Barriers
Either
- Create a state-level group to recommend a statewide concurrent enrollment funding model

Or
- Revise the tuition waiver and the Concurrent Challenge Scholarship to address identified challenges

And
- Identify state funds to cover the cost of concurrent enrollment transportation
- Build support for postsecondary use of open educational resources on campus and in concurrent enrollment offerings

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

- Create a state funding mechanism to reduce postsecondary partners' financial loss
- Better communicate how Arkansas and institutions benefit from concurrent enrollment

Leveraging Funding for CTE-Focused College in High School Programs

- Create a state funding approach to defray or cover high-cost CTE concurrent enrollment equipment
- Consider refining state funding models to expand the availability of CTE concurrent enrollment:
  o Refine the state funding model for secondary career centers
  o Refine the tuition reimbursement approach for postsecondary institutions
- Explore regional or statewide "matchmaking" approaches for secondary career centers and postsecondary institutions
- Examine other funding approaches to enhance CTE concurrent course access

Course Access and Availability

Making Courses Accessible to All Students
- Require all high school students and parents to be annually notified about concurrent enrollment opportunities
- Consider requiring all school districts to offer concurrent coursework
- Explore transportation solutions and alternatives. Arkansas might:
  o Develop state policy to require concurrent enrollment partnerships to offer transportation to courses not accessible at the high school or online
  o Establish state transportation funding supports for concurrent enrollment
  o Explore course-sharing across schools or districts
- Revisit DESE policy on weighting concurrent enrollment courses

Student Eligibility
- Replace ACT-only eligibility and placement policy with a multiple measures approach
- Require use of the same placement criteria for concurrent enrollment students and first-time freshmen
- Address uneven Accuplacer access for CTE students. Any of several solutions could address this challenge:
  o Explore means to ensure statewide access to Accuplacer in grades 9-12
  o Ensure all career coaches are aware of Accuplacer requirements and can help connect students with test sites
  o Replace the paper Accuplacer with an online assessment tool

- Allow concurrent enrollment students to enroll in courses with corequisite support, and transition courses
- Establish or expand college-readiness onramps, particularly for underserved students
- Create an option for local programs to pilot approaches to enhance concurrent enrollment access and success for underserved students

Pathways to Areas of Student Interest
- Consider raising the scholarship cap OR adopting a state concurrent enrollment funding model allowing enrollment in additional courses at low to no cost

Graduation/Diploma Requirements
- Better communicate the Smart Core equivalency list to local concurrent enrollment stakeholders

Instructor Capacity

Identifying Qualified Instructors
- Launch a state communications campaign aimed at preservice teachers on concurrent enrollment benefits and instructor credentialing requirements
- Collect and report state-level data quantifying the shortage of teachers credentialed to teach high-demand concurrent courses and disciplines
- Encourage state and local secondary and postsecondary stakeholders to collaborate to address the shortage of credentialed concurrent enrollment teachers

Expanding the Pool of Qualified Instructors
- Offer funds for Arkansas four-year institutions to develop online graduate courses
- Create a directory of online graduate courses and course enrollment platform
- Communicate existing state scholarships that can defray master's coursework costs
- Tap diverse funding sources to offer teachers online graduate-level courses at low to no cost
- Leverage the Arkansas Teacher Residency model to prepare credentialed teachers in rural areas
- Establish partnerships with minority-serving institutions to increase the number of diverse credentialed concurrent enrollment teachers
- 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

Teacher-Faculty Collaboration and Professional Development

- Encourage and facilitate institutional sharing of best practices on instructor professional development
- Offer discipline-specific teacher professional development opportunities at a single annual statewide event

Navigational Supports

Communications Tools and Resources

- Run statewide peer focus groups to inform the development of enhanced concurrent enrollment communication efforts
- Develop and broadly disseminate updated concurrent enrollment resources
- Develop a state-level concurrent enrollment informational website
- Forge strategic partnerships to broadly communicate the availability of the website and other information sources

Career Coach Availability, Responsibilities, and Training

- Explore strategies to make career coaches available in more high schools with lower rates of concurrent enrollment participation and postsecondary matriculation
- Add explicit references to concurrent enrollment in state policies and guidelines related to career coaches' duties, training, and evaluation
- Offer dedicated annual or ongoing career coach training or professional development on concurrent enrollment topics

Counselor, Advisor, and Concurrent Coordinator Professional Learning

- Require secondary counselor preparation programs to include information on concurrent credit
- Enhance high school counselor and postsecondary advisor training and professional development
- Host an annual statewide check-in for concurrent credit coordinators

Other Approaches Supporting Meaningful Course Selections

- Consider establishing guardrails in state policy to inform concurrent course selections aligned with students' college and career goals
- Enhance oversight of local implementation of Student Success Plans