

Dual Enrollment: Launching Florida Students on a Postsecondary Pathway

More students participate in dual enrollment in Florida every year, taking advantage of the opportunity to save time and money by earning college credits while still in high school. This brief outlines the basics of dual enrollment in Florida, highlights some best practices across the state, and pinpoints opportunities for growth.

WHAT IS DUAL ENROLLMENT?

Each year, nearly [100,000 students](#) participate in dual enrollment. Dual enrollment (DE), sometimes referred to as concurrent enrollment, consists of taking postsecondary courses while still in high school and can allow students to earn credit that counts both towards high school graduation requirements and a later postsecondary career.

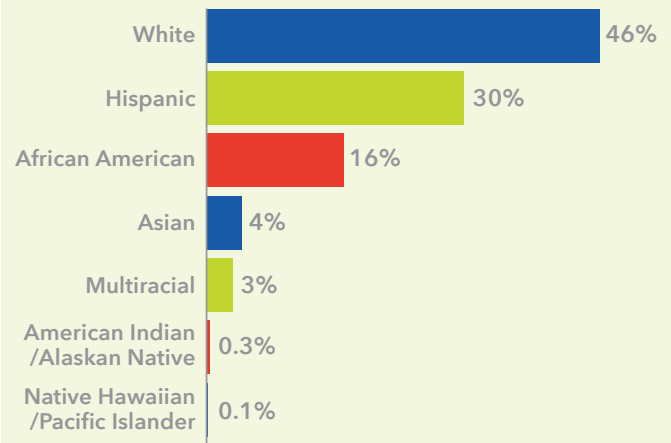
Established in 1979, Florida has one of the oldest DE programs in the nation. Delivery of DE courses varies by school and district. In some cases, students take DE classes at their high school with credentialed teachers, online, or at technical schools, community colleges, or universities. Most students take DE courses offered through the Florida College System. In general, students need to be high school juniors or seniors, and have a minimum GPA to participate (2.0 for career DE, 3.0 for college DE), as well as pass a common placement test. Once in the courses, students must earn at least a “C” grade to gain the college credit.

Students are [exempt](#) from paying for books, registration, tuition, and laboratory fees. The [student’s school district](#) pays a standard tuition rate to the appropriate postsecondary institution from funds provided in the Florida Education Finance Program if the student physically attends classes at the postsecondary institution. When DE is provided

SNAPSHOT OF PARTICIPATING PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

6 in 10 DE students identify as female

Nearly half of all DE students are White



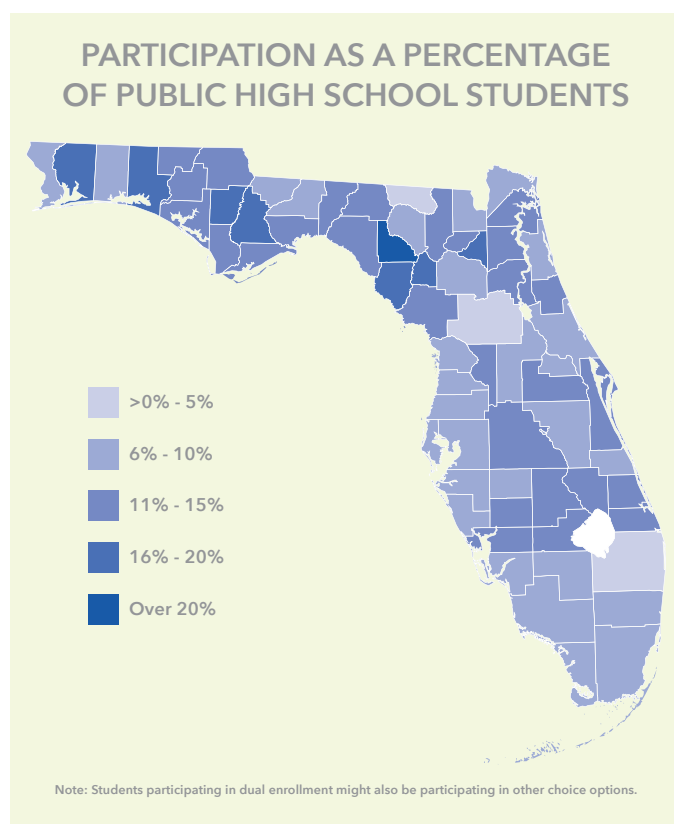
at a high school by college faculty, the district reimburses the postsecondary institution for those costs. In addition, courses can be taught at a high school by authorized school district faculty, and the school [district is not responsible](#) for payment to the postsecondary institution.

Although DE participation increases every year in Florida, it is not the only acceleration path that enables students to take advanced coursework

while earning credit towards a degree or certification. For example, while nearly 100,000 students took DE in Florida from 2019-20, [more than double](#) that number of students took Advanced Placement (AP) courses. There are also large regional differences in participation - in the panhandle, there is stronger DE enrollment, while Southeast Florida has strong AP enrollment. Districts and schools across Florida also offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program and the Advanced International Certificate of Education Program as ways to provide rigorous coursework and offer opportunities to obtain college credit in high school.

WHY IS DUAL ENROLLMENT AN IMPORTANT PATHWAY FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS IN FLORIDA?

When high school students participate in DE, they are exposed to college-level courses, and they save time and money by earning college credit before they even get their high school diploma. [Research shows students](#) who participate in DE have higher graduation rates, college attendance, and degree attainment. A 2021 study on [Florida's DE students](#) found DE enrollees were substantially more academically prepared than non-participants, and DE algebra participants were twice as likely to choose and succeed in a STEM major in college. Further, DE is a powerful tool to help students transition from high school to college. The exposure to college-level courses can help students make [better decisions](#) about their future, and students who may not have seen themselves as college material may see that a pathway to higher education is more accessible than they thought. While many students use DE to complete early general education requirements, it also gives



students a chance to try out different fields or majors before finalizing their postsecondary plans.

All Floridians need education beyond high school to meet the demands of a 21st century economy, and [9 out of 10](#) Florida voters support making education beyond high school more accessible. Further, people with at least [some college education](#) are more likely to keep their jobs during hard times. Fortunately, all students benefit from dual enrollment programs. However, there is robust research that shows DE programs can be particularly beneficial for students from [low-income](#) families, students with [disabilities](#), and students who are [underrepresented](#) in postsecondary education. Because there are significant gaps in degree attainment for Black, Latinx, and Native American Floridians, expanding DE may be a promising avenue to reduce Florida's opportunity and degree attainment gap.

RECENT CHANGES TO DUAL ENROLLMENT

The legislature has supported DE as a method to increase early exposure to college, provide a diversity of courses to high school students, as well as increase affordability. Some recent changes include that the [2020 legislative session](#) incentivized districts to ensure student success in DE courses. HB 7067 allowed school districts to earn bonus funds for students who successfully complete dual enrollment courses, with an additional bonus for students who receive an A grade.

The state expanded its support for DE in 2021. The [2021 legislative session](#) passed multiple education policy bills, including money and support for DE programs. SB 52 created a Dual Enrollment Scholarship Program Fund that will reimburse postsecondary institutions the cost of tuition and materials for private and home education DE students, and cover summer dual enrollment for all students if funds are available. Expanding access to DE eligibility, SB 366 requires the State Board of Education to develop and implement alternative methods to college placement test performance (e.g., PERT, SAT, ACT) to assess college readiness for high school students' DE eligibility.

HOW CAN FLORIDA STRENGTHEN DUAL ENROLLMENT?

Although Florida has increasingly expanded access to DE opportunities across the state, equity gaps have persisted. Based on the [most recent numbers](#) from the 2019-20 school year, out of all the students in Florida taking DE, White and Asian students are overrepresented in DE, while Black and Latinx students are underrepresented. In certain districts in Florida, the Black-White DE gap is nearly [15 percentage points](#). And a [2020 study](#) found Florida students taking dual enrollment



A STUDY ON INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE SHOWED LOCAL BLACK AND LATINX STUDENTS SUCCEEDED IN DE ONCE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY, BUT THAT TOO FEW WERE BEING MADE AWARE OF THE COLLEGE'S DE OFFERINGS OR RECEIVING THE COUNSELING THEY NEEDED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THOSE COURSES.

courses are more likely to be White, female, and from wealthier backgrounds than those not taking dual enrollment courses.

Traditionally, DE has served high-achieving students interested in jump-starting their college education, and DE often misses historically underserved students. For example, students who do not have a 3.0 GPA and/or do not pass a common placement test are ineligible for collegiate dual enrollment. However, these eligibility requirements may keep out students whose GPA does not show their ability or who do not test well, and disproportionately impacts those from underserved groups. This obstacle may be exacerbated by inequitable K-8 preparation, if some students come to high school without the building blocks to succeed in college-level courses.

Because underrepresented minorities tend to have [lower standardized test scores](#) than White students and are more likely to have lower academic preparedness than White students, **schools and districts may consider a multiple measures approach to determine eligibility for DE** and expand access to a broader group of students. For example, the [Community College Research Center](#) suggests including measures such as GPA performance over time (demonstrating improvement), teacher nomination, and regular high school attendance as alternative criteria used to predict a student's success in DE.

Florida has already adopted multiple measures as an option for eligibility, thanks to the 2020 [executive order](#) signed by the education commissioner allowing multiple assessments due to limited testing opportunities during the pandemic. To make this permanent and system-wide, the legislature passed [SB 366](#), giving the State Board of Education the authority to further implement multiple measures to assess college readiness for DE. DE may be a particularly powerful tool for students historically underrepresented in postsecondary education: several studies find DE has outsized benefits for students from [low-income families](#) and [Black and Latinx students](#).

Students also require advising and information about DE opportunities. A [study](#) on Indian River State College showed local Black and Latinx students succeeded in DE once given the opportunity, but that too few were being made aware of the college's DE offerings or receiving the counseling they needed to take advantage of those courses. Often, [access to counselors is uneven](#), and Florida counselors report spending too little time on direct services like college and career support due to their increasing [non-counseling duties](#). Higher education institutions and schools need to have **proactive, equity-based advising systems** in place, so all students are aware of their opportunities and how to succeed in college-level courses. In particular, first-generation students may need help understanding which courses lead to certain career pathways and navigating the broader higher education sphere. Further, a lack of resources at the district level compounds equity gaps. For example, when students do not have transportation to a technical school or university, they may not be able to take college-level courses.

To extend access across the state, DE programs in Florida could add more career and technical options, as well as purposefully expand access

to rural, low-income, and minority students who have historically been underrepresented in DE. Districts could reconsider eligibility requirements to enroll, so it isn't just students who are already academically advanced who can take advantage of DE. For example, [research](#) shows middle achieving students can benefit from and succeed in DE, yet their GPA may not reflect their full potential. Instead, districts could consider other measures, such as GPA performance over time demonstrating improvement, or by teacher recommendation. Finally, districts should prioritize ensuring all students in their schools are aware of their options, can access transportation to college campuses, and that advisors are available to guide students towards their academic and career goals.

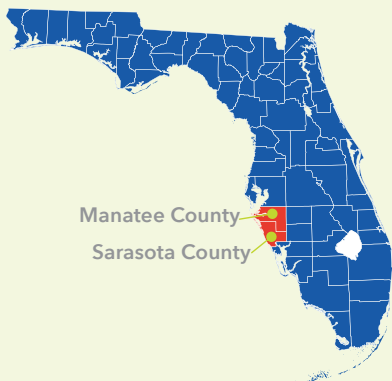
In light of equity gaps and opportunities for improvement, Florida can look to districts who are practicing successful models of structured DE. In the following pages, we highlight four districts and institutions who offer DE and give Florida students a leg up in their postsecondary journey: a Collegiate High School/Early College Program Model at the State College of Florida Collegiate High School, a Laboratory School model at A.D. Henderson University School, a Career Dual Enrollment model at George Stone Technical College, and a Workforce Dual Enrollment model in Broward County.



FOUR DISTRICTS AND INSTITUTIONS WHO OFFER DE AND GIVE FLORIDA STUDENTS A LEG UP IN THEIR POSTSECONDARY JOURNEY:

- COLLEGIATE HIGH SCHOOL/EARLY COLLEGE PROGRAM MODEL AT THE STATE COLLEGE OF FLORIDA COLLEGIATE HIGH SCHOOL
- LABORATORY SCHOOL MODEL AT A.D. HENDERSON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL
- CAREER DUAL ENROLLMENT MODEL AT GEORGE STONE TECHNICAL COLLEGE
- WORKFORCE DUAL ENROLLMENT MODEL IN BROWARD COUNTY.

COLLEGIATE HIGH SCHOOL/ EARLY COLLEGE PROGRAM DUAL ENROLLMENT



Collegiate High School/Early College Program Dual Enrollment gives current high school students the opportunity to enroll in postsecondary courses that can go toward both high school graduation and college credit, often towards an A.A. or A.S. The high school partners with a Florida College System institution to provide college-level courses to interested high school students.

In Sarasota and Manatee counties, the State College of Florida offers a promising model through the two **State College of Florida Collegiate High Schools**. A college-going mentality is built into the ethos of the State College of Florida Collegiate High Schools (SCFCS), and students typically take college courses full-time their junior and senior year.

There are two SCFCS locations: the Bradenton campus opened in 2010, and the Venice campus opened in 2019. All students can apply for grades 6-10, and students are selected through a random lottery process. To apply for grade 11, students must have a 3.0 GPA and have designated scores on either the Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (PERT), ACT, or SAT. The SCFCS model is rigorous and has high expectations, but students also are surrounded by support.

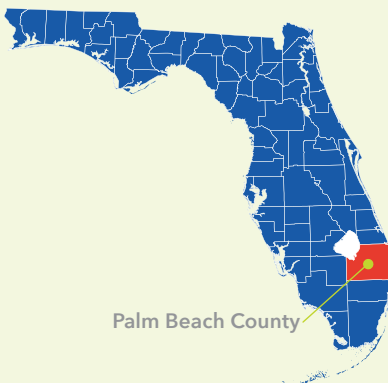
A key to the success of the SCFCS is the academic coach who supports a cohort of students from grades 6-10 and works to help to choose their academic pathways and prepare for college-level courses. When students are juniors and seniors, they are supported by both college advisors and high school guidance counselors.

SCFCS schools are small, challenging, and academic. Senior Head of Collegiate Schools Kelly Monod notes that in order to prepare high schoolers for college-level courses, students must feel safe and supported and trust their teachers. This successful program depends on its intimacy. If it were to be made bigger or scaled up, the intimacy would be difficult to maintain.

The primary benefits of attending a SCFCS is that most students graduate with their high school diploma and A.A., often with their college prerequisite

courses out of the way. They save money and time, and are also explicitly prepared for college-level coursework. Most graduates attend four-year colleges after graduation. A generous partnership with both Florida Gulf Coast University and the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee allows SCFCS students to attend after graduation tuition-free.

Collegiate Dual Enrollment is for high-achieving students who want to leave high school prepared for college-level coursework on a pathway towards a degree.



LABORATORY SCHOOLS



Laboratory Schools offer a unique opportunity for students to attend a school affiliated with a School of Education within an institution of higher education, outside of a public school district. Established in FL Statute [1002.32](#), developmental research (laboratory) schools provide a vehicle to research teaching and learning, while educating students within an exceptional environment. Lab schools operate as their own

district, and accordingly have the opportunity to practice innovative and rigorous ways of teaching and learning.

The **A.D. Henderson University School** (also called Florida Atlantic University High School, or FAU HS) stands apart as an exemplary model of the dual enrollment opportunities lab schools have to offer. The school, one of five laboratory schools associated with a state university across Florida, opened as an intensive DE school in 2004. Its challenging program offers students grades 9-12 the opportunity to earn more than 90 university credit hours, while completing their high school requirements.

The often-touted benefits of DE include access to college-level courses, the chance to save money while accumulating credits, and helping students transition to college or the workforce. By those accounts, the FAU High School excels. Students do not simply attend high school and take a few college classes - instead, students spend their freshmen year preparing for taking advanced coursework, and then in grades 10-12, take all collegiate courses.

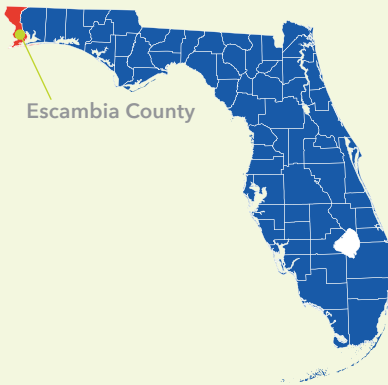
Although the school is public, the admissions are competitive, with around only 140 spots a year. The school looks for high-caliber students who will succeed in college-level courses. At the same time, the school makes an intentional effort to remain diverse and provide access to high-achieving low-income students. As of 2019, the Lab School is a Title I district with 35% of students from low SES, and 59% students of color. The experience that the FAU High School provides is life-changing for many students. At the same time students graduate from high school, many also graduate from FAU completely debt-free.

FAU HS students work closely with a high school advisor to ensure they meet graduation requirements and have social-emotional support, but they also have access to an FAU advisor who helps them choose courses and navigate college pathways. Students have an opportunity to replicate excellent college-level academics in high school – they conduct research, publish in peer-reviewed journals, and present their ideas around the world. In doing so, the FAU HS seeks to reimagine the possibilities of public education.

FAU HS graduates are uniquely prepared for multiple pathways after graduation. Most students finish their bachelor's degree at FAU and, of those, half pursue degrees in STEM fields. Many students go on to obtain advanced degrees, however, many students also go directly into the workforce. The program is designed to make every student employable and seeks to incubate the future workforce of tomorrow. The school works closely with local businesses to arrange apprenticeship, internship, and shadowing opportunities, and many local employers recruit directly from the school.

Ultimately, the FAU HS is a world-class institution, and its distinctive school experience is not for every student. However, the FAU HS hopes this model will be replicated in other cities across Florida (and nationally) with research institutes and, with the expansion of DE opportunities, believes that elements of the FAU HS can be embedded in every school in Florida.

CAREER DUAL ENROLLMENT



Career Dual Enrollment gives current high school students the opportunity to enroll in postsecondary courses that can go toward both high school graduation and an industry certificate. The high school partners with a technical college, career center, or Florida College System institution, where students can take classes towards earning an industry certification.

For students who may be interested in accelerating their path towards in-demand careers such as Automotive Service Technology, Cybersecurity, or Heating, Ventilation, and Air-Conditioning/Refrigeration, career dual enrollment can give them hands-on experience (and credits) towards those fields.

In Pensacola, **George Stone Technical College** works with its seven local high schools to give students a chance to take immersive courses in fields that they are interested in, while gaining employable skills. The program, which offers both daytime and evening options, coordinates with local high school counselors to place interested students in technical certification pathways. Not all programs at George Stone are available for career dual enrollment. For example, aviation, criminal justice, and EMT/firefighter are popular programs with adult learners. However, because they are overseen by government agencies, they are not offered to high school students.

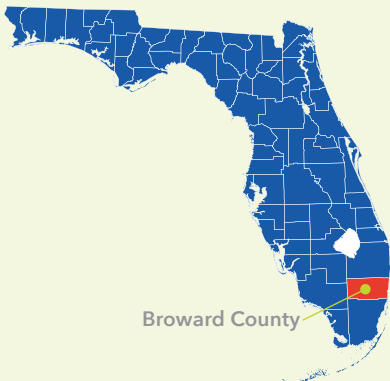
George Stone advertises to local high school students, and attempts to present its programs to all junior and senior high school English classes in the area. Often, students have little knowledge of Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways, and are surprised by the many fields of study at George Stone. Recently, George Stone has also found success bringing students in to walk around the campus and see the programs, eating lunch provided by culinary students. Accordingly, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, George Stone enjoyed increasing enrollment for the past four years.

Some of the most popular fields at George Stone include Automotive Service Technology, Welding, and Computer Systems & Information Technology. Each program is tightly connected to local businesses, and often, business

representatives present in the classroom. This career-focus can help students envision pathways through college to a future job, and [research shows](#) CTE DE can increase graduation rates and employment in the future, particularly for students from low-income backgrounds. All of the classes at George Stone are in-person and hands-on, which may offer opportunities for struggling students to experience different types of learning opportunities. Industry certifications also may be attractive to students who noticed that certain fields, such as Computer Systems & Information Technology, remained employable during the pandemic.

Many of George Stone's students have GPAs around the 2.0 eligibility borderline, but find their niche in their career-focused classes. However, George Stone has identified one barrier to further enrollment: often, students interested in career DE do not have the time due to a requirement to complete remedial coursework at their high school. Thomas Rollins, Principal of George Stone, posited that if some CTE courses could replace high school requirements, students who have a deep desire for career-based courses could attend and flourish.

WORKFORCE DUAL ENROLLMENT



Workforce Dual Enrollment is an innovation out of Broward County that offers expanded access to an on-ramp to both career preparation and college acceleration. Like Career Dual Enrollment, students in Workforce Dual Enrollment work on a pathway towards a high-quality industry certificate. However, these students take classes at a college, additionally gaining college credit with an option to complete a college degree after graduation.

The **Broward School District** offers many types of DE opportunities, including career dual enrollment. However, the district and Broward College are experimenting with a new, groundbreaking program called Workforce Dual Enrollment (WDE) that offers students the opportunity to earn industry certifications and credentials through college-level courses. The WDE program, which requires a 2.5 GPA and does not require any standardized test score, partners with several schools in the county to offer a three-year

program in both Aviation Maintenance and Marine Engineering. The program is highly structured: students leave high school after lunch and attend classes at Broward College from 1-4:30, earning 12 credits a year and nearly completing an A.S. degree.

The program is based on the idea that a 3.0 GPA cutoff for collegiate DE may leave out groups of students who could otherwise benefit from college-level courses. Although students with a 2.5-2.9 GPA are likely to graduate high school, they may not experience the benefits of accelerated courses or structured postsecondary pathways when most collegiate DE programs require a 3.0. In this way, WDE attempts to expand access to groups of students who may often be on the bubble of academic achievement, and puts them on a pathway to an in-demand career field.

When students graduate from the program, they will finish with their industry certification, their high school diploma, and are ready for employment. However, if students want a college degree, they are set up to continue at Broward College in an accelerated A.S. program. This program is highly stackable, offering multiple on-ramps depending on the students' chosen goal. Local employers who need mechanics and engineers in the area partner with the program and support more pathways to employment.

Although women are often underrepresented in Career Dual Enrollment, they represent about a third of Broward's first group of WDE students. Additionally, 100% of students are racial minorities. Although the program is just a few years old, so far it offers great promise supporting groups of students traditionally left out of DE along pathways for success in postsecondary education and the workforce.

The architects of WDE hope it expands across the state. Although the program is highly tailored to the local area, where aviation and yacht maintenance workers are in-need, it could be adapted to fit other regions and high-demand industries, particularly by partnering with colleges that offer relevant programs.


Florida College Access Network (FCAN) is Florida's first collaborative network committed to ensuring all Floridians have the opportunity to achieve an education beyond high school and a rewarding career. We envision a Florida working together where education is the pathway to economic mobility for all. As a nonpartisan organization, FCAN strives to expand knowledge of research, data, policies and practices that impact postsecondary access and attainment in Florida. This report is intended as an educational resource.

FCAN is a statewide organization hosted by the University of South Florida System (USF). The statements and findings presented are those of FCAN and are not made on behalf of the USF Board of Trustees or intended to be in any way be representative to USF.

For more research and data from FCAN, visit www.floridacollegeaccess.org/research-and-data/.

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