

Dual Credit 101

August 25, 2025

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Illinois Policy Landscape
3. Program Models and Pathways
4. Implementation Strategies and Considerations
5. Data & Accountability



Learning Objectives

This presentation will provide essential knowledge about:

1. **Illinois Dual Credit Landscape** – Overview of current dual credit policies and state initiatives
2. **Program Models** – Understanding dual credit and early college programs
3. **Implementation Strategies** – Implementation considerations for launching and expanding dual credit offerings
4. **Data & Accountability** – Tracking outcomes and program effectiveness



Vision

Helping create a world where students have clear, unambiguous paths to college and career opportunities that equip them for meaningful participation in the global economy.

Areas of Practice

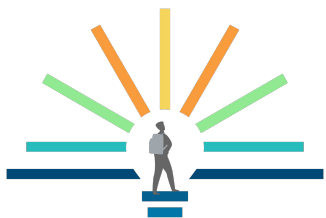
Advancing college and career readiness and success

- Secondary-to-postsecondary pathway mapping
- Work-based learning
- Transitional instruction
- Dual credit & enrollment
- Competency-based approaches
- Evaluation frameworks
- Collective impact networks

Guiding Principles

Creating lasting change

- Equity
- Systems-centric
- Evidence-based
- Bi-directional



Portfolio

*Connector, strategist,
implementer, and
intermediary*

Policy


- **Supporting state agencies:** *Transitional Instruction, Career Pathways Dictionary*
- **Convening policy tables:** *Success Network Policy Committee*
- **Leading state teams in national initiatives:** *Launch*

Practices

- **Developing statewide tools:** *Model Programs of Study Guides*
- **Co-designing regional pathway models:** *Chicago, Lake County, Northern Illinois, and Southwestern Illinois*
- **Advancing sector-based pathway programs:** *IT, Manufacturing*
- **Scaling innovations:** *Community College CBE Pilot, GPEAK*

Impact

- **Developing data solutions:** *Illinois Longitudinal Data System, Rockford Regional Education Research Collaborative*
- **Building community networks:** *Illinois Education and Career Success Network, Illinois Work-Based Learning Innovation Network*



In the chat, please
share: your **name**,
organization, **role**,
and **your childhood**
dream job.





Illinois Dual Credit Policy

Driving toward quality and scale

Why Dual Credit?



Student Benefits

- Allows students to prove to others and themselves that they are college-ready.
- Meaningful educational opportunities that close opportunity gaps.
- Reduced college costs.
- Improved transition between high school and college.
- Speed time to degree completion.
- Substantially higher community college graduation and advancement rates.

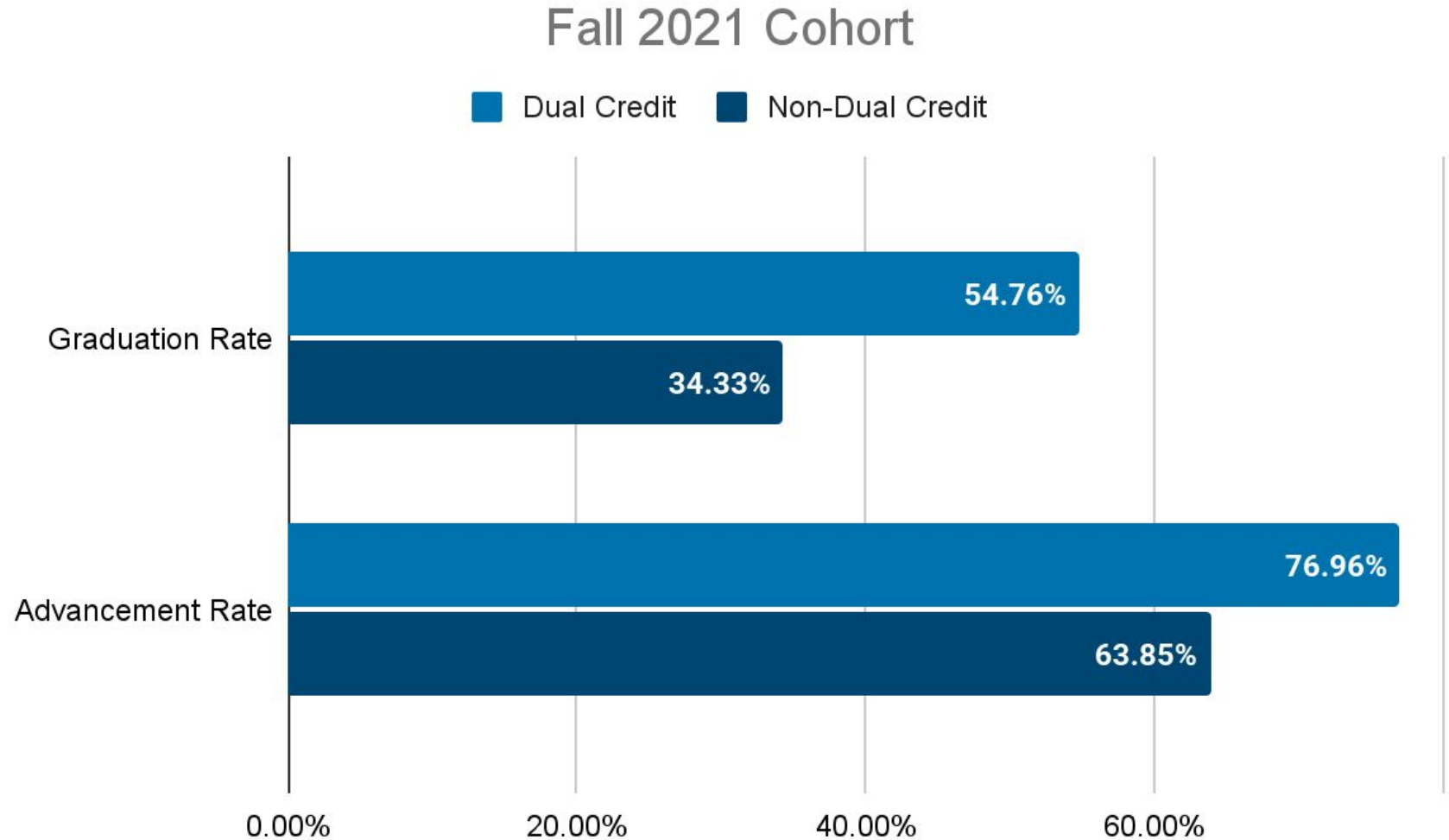
Postsecondary Institution Benefits

- Enhanced high school and college faculty dialogue that can help better align secondary and postsecondary education.
- Improved institutional outcomes in credential/degree attainment.
- An early pipeline strategy to recruit and engage future students.

Citations: [ICCB Dual Credit Report, March 2025](#),
[Dual Credit Quality Act](#) (Amended 2025)

Dual Credit

Illinois Community College Outcomes



Illinois' Dual Credit Quality Act



Overview

The DCQA codifies minimum requirements for dual credit partnerships and coursework:

- What secondary and postsecondary partners need to do to establish quality programs.
- Expectations around ensuring adequate access to different student groups (including students with disabilities).
- Communication of opportunities to stakeholders including students and educators.
- Created the [Model Partnership Agreement](#) to center students and guide local leaders in their partnership development.

June 2025 Amendment

- Emphasizes the importance of local partnerships as the first priority over non-local or out-of-state providers
- Sets a firm timeline and process for districts and community colleges to commence negotiations
- Creates a process for districts to appeal their partner college's decision to decline a course
- Creates a Dual Credit Committee composed of secondary and postsecondary representatives that will meet at least annually to improve accessibility, quality, and alignment of dual credit programs to meet the needs of students

DCQA: Model Partnership Agreement



Purpose

The DCQA and MPA work to address the realities that:

- All 48 community college districts offer dual credit, but type and quantity varies.
- Lack of consistency in how colleges and districts partner.

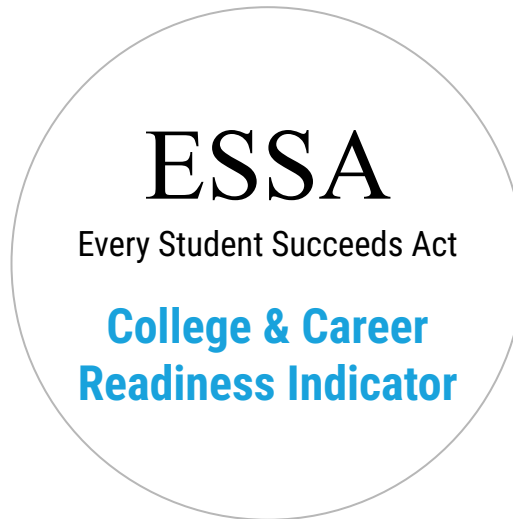
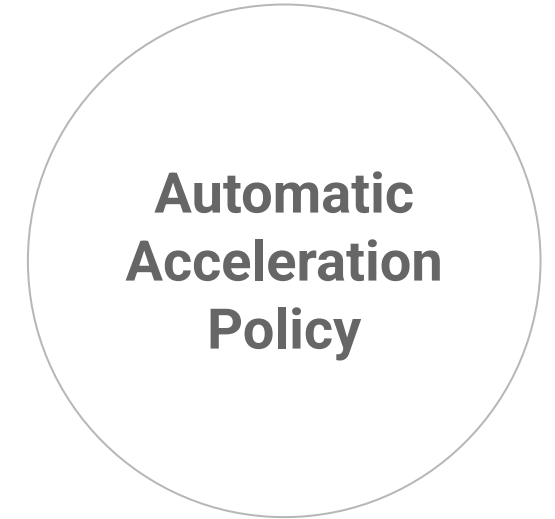
[>> Download the MPA form, exhibits, & FAQ](#)

Emphasizing Strategic Dual Credit

“Priority Course” means any course within the Illinois Articulation Initiative General Education Core Curriculum, or any Priority Career Pathway Course.

“Priority Career Pathway Course” means a career-focused course that has been identified by the District, after consultation with the College, in its submission to ISBE as an early college credit course within a career-focused instructional sequence as part of a College and Career Pathway Endorsement system under the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act (110 ILCS 148/1 et seq.).

Dual Credit in State Policy





Dual Credit Program Models and Pathways

Early College Credit Models: What They Are

Dual Credit

High school students take college-level courses earning **both high school and college credit simultaneously**; taught by college faculty or qualified high school teachers under college oversight. - *Illinois Dual Credit Quality Act*

Advanced Placement (AP)

High school courses with standardized exams; college credit depends on exam scores and college policies. Students must achieve minimum score thresholds for credit consideration.

International Baccalaureate (IB)

Rigorous international curriculum with comprehensive exams; credit awarded based on scores and institution acceptance. Offers both course-specific and diploma options.

Articulated Credit

Agreements where specific high school courses count as credit at partnering colleges, often in Career & Technical Education (CTE) areas. May require minimum grade achievement.

Illinois College and Career Pathway Models

Career Pathway

A combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that aligns both vertically and horizontally across secondary education, adult education, workforce training and development, career and technical education, and postsecondary education systems, pathways, and programs.

Program of Study

A coordinated, non-duplicative sequence of academic and technical content at the secondary and postsecondary level.

Career & Technical Education (CTE)

Career and Technical Education (CTE) prepares individuals for high-skill, high-wage, in-demand employment and provides learners with the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need to thrive in college and careers. All students benefit from career-connected learning that emphasizes real-world skills within a selected career focus.

College and Career Pathway Endorsement

A College and Career Pathway Endorsement is awarded on Illinois high school diplomas/transcripts to simultaneously demonstrate students' readiness for postsecondary programs and entry-level professional learning experiences in a selected career interest area.

Key Differentiators of Dual Credit

Guaranteed Credit Acceptance

Dual credit offers real college credit accepted by Illinois public universities under the Illinois Articulation Initiative, while AP and IB credits depend on exam performance and vary widely in acceptance.

Connecting Systems

Dual Credit fosters collaboration between high schools and colleges, ensuring curriculum alignment and academic rigor through shared oversight and quality standards.

Broader Transferability

Dual credit transfers seamlessly across institutions, whereas articulated credit is often limited to specific CTE programs and may not transfer broadly to other colleges.

Access to College Resources

Dual credit students access college resources and advising, improving college readiness and completion rates by familiarizing students with college expectations.

State of Illinois Model Programs of Study Guides
























The primary purposes and goals for the guides are to:

- Provide guidance and exemplars for local programs to adopt or customize as they develop pathways.
- Identify priority dual credit and early college courses that are foundational to the pathway area and well-situated for statewide scaling and articulation.
- Define the competencies that should be sequenced across a program of study course sequence to prepare students for the future of work in that industry area.
- Identify entry points for work-based learning and related experiences.



Model Programs of Study in Information Technology

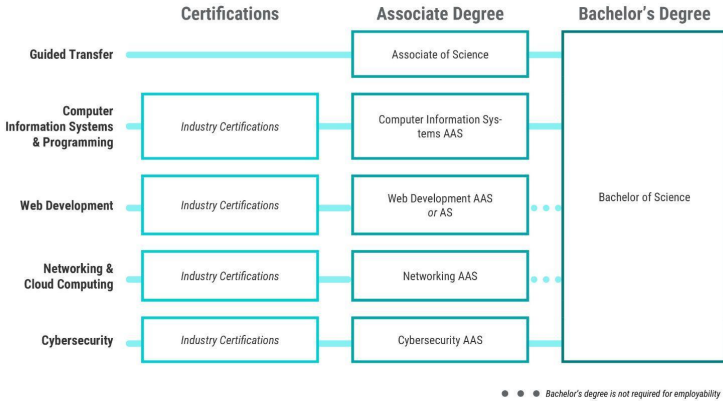
Recommended Courses

	GRADES 9–10 Orientation	GRADES 10–12 Skill Development	GRADE 12 Capstone	1ST YEAR* Postsecondary
Computer Information Systems, Programming, & Web Development		Mobile applications or web development courses  Choose 1: • Introduction to Computer Information Systems  • Computer Science Principles 	Choose 1: • Computer Science I  • Computer Science A 	Computer Science I  Computer Science II  Intro to Web Development
Networking	Computer Applications for Business 	Hardware or operating system courses  Choose 1: • Introduction to Computer Information Systems  • Computer Science Principles 	Intro to Networking  	Continue Course Sequence 
Work-Based Learning	Career Exploration (2)	Choose 1: Career Development Experience or Youth Apprenticeship		
	Team-Based Challenge (2); may be offered through Career and Technical Student Organizations			
Math	Math sequence: highest-level course possible	Math sequence: highest-level course possible	Choose 1: • College Algebra  • Pre-Calculus • Transitional Math: STEM • Calculus  • Statistics 	Choose 1: • Calculus*  • Statistics* 
English	English sequence	English sequence	Choose 1: • Transitional English • English Composition 	Choose 1: • English Composition*  • Oral Communication • Business Communications
Science	Science sequence	Science sequence	Science sequence	Science sequence
Social Science	Social science sequence	Social science sequence	Social science sequence 	Social science sequence 

KEY: AP or dual credit course Dual credit course with IAI Dual credit course Postsecondary course with IAI College & Career Pathway Endorsement Course prepares for industry credential

* If credit was already earned through an early college course, take the next requirement in the sequence or, if none, additional AAS or major courses

Postsecondary Opportunities



Selected Occupations, Wages, and Job Growth

Program	Typical Job(s)	Living Wage Potential*	Median Hourly Wage**	IL Growth: Change over 10 years ***	IL Annual Job Openings***	Typical Educational Requirements
Guided Transfer	Computer and Information Systems Managers	High	\$78.01	8.0%	1,828	Bachelor's Degree
	Software Developers or Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	High	\$52.44	18.0%	6,256	
	Database Architects	High	\$66.32	5.6%	526	
Computer Information Systems & Programming	Computer User Support Specialists	Medium	\$27.93	4.1%	1,539	Some College
	Database Administrators	High	\$49.18	5.6%	526	Bachelor's Degree
	Computer Systems Analysts	High	\$49.45	4.2%	2,306	
Web Development	Web and Digital Interface Designers	Medium	\$35.94	7.3%	548	Bachelor's Degree
Networking, Cloud Computing, & Cybersecurity	Computer Network Support Specialists	Medium	\$33.95	3.4%	999	Associate Degree
	Network and Computer Systems Administrators	High	\$42.72	3.1%	804	Bachelor's Degree
	Information Security Analysts	High	\$54.18	25.3%	428	

* Living wage potential is based on MIT's Living Calculator (livingwage.mit.edu) for Illinois in 2024. Occupations with median salaries higher than the living wage for 1 adult + 1 child (\$39.63/hour) are considered as having a "high" living wage potential. Occupations with median salaries only higher than the living wage of 1 adult, no children (\$22.86/hour) are considered as having a "medium" living wage potential, and occupations with median salaries below the living wage of 1 adult, no children (less than \$22.86/hour) are considered as having a "low" living wage potential.

** Illinois Department of Employment Security (2022). Wage Information: Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (Statewide). Retrieved April 2, 2024, from ides.illinois.gov/resources/labor-market-information/owes.html

*** Illinois Department of Employment Security. Employment Projections (Long-Term Occupational Projections 2020-2030). Retrieved April 2, 2024, from ides.illinois.gov/resources/labor-market-information/employment-projections.html

Prioritizing Dual Credit: The Strategic Advantage

A strategic emphasis on dual credit yields institutional and community-wide outcomes:

- **Policy compliance**
Meets state requirements while advancing institutional goals.
- **Data-driven results**
Prioritizing dual credit correlates with better student trajectories.
- **Access expansion**
Makes college more affordable and accessible to all students.
- **Partnership strengthening**
Deepens collaboration between high schools and colleges.

Call to Action

Invest in expanding dual credit partnerships to maximize educational equity and workforce readiness across Illinois.



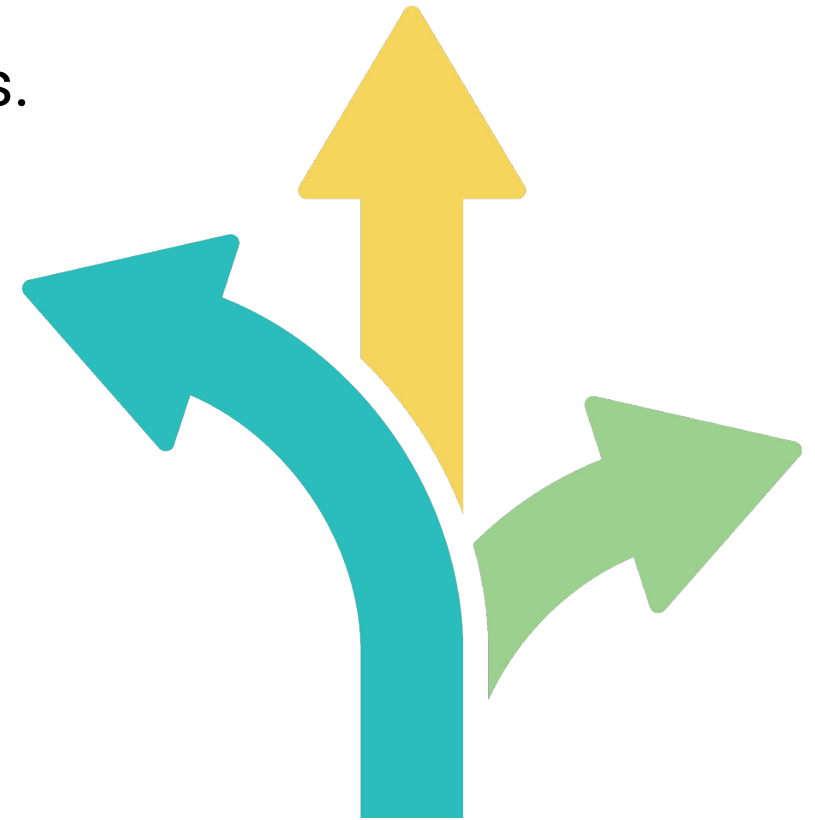
Implementation Strategies and Considerations

Course Selection & Pathway Mapping

Dual credit courses are part of a **program of study** which is embedded within college and career pathways.

High-quality pathways:

- Use data driven decisions to align course offering with student interest and labor market information.
- Are co-designed by high schools, industry and college collaborations.
- Ensure courses build towards certificates, degrees or transfer goals.
- Consider frontloading CTE courses.





Scheduling & Transportation Consideration

- Dual credit courses are offered on high school campuses, online, or at college campuses to maximize access.
- It is critical to coordinate schedules to minimize school scheduling conflicts and transportation barriers.
- Leverage technology and flexible delivery models to expand participation.



Credentialing Requirements

- **Community colleges maintain credential verification**
 - Instructors submit transcripts and verification through their hiring institution, which will evaluate qualifications and submit required documentation to the Illinois State Board of Education for endorsement.
- **High school teachers require appropriate credentials and endorsement to teach college-level courses**
 - A qualified master's degree in the discipline being taught, **or**
 - Any master's degree plus at least 18 graduate hours in the content area.

Advising & Student Supports for Success

Provide advising to help students select appropriate dual credit courses

Offer academic supports such as tutoring, mentoring, and college readiness workshops

Address equity by proactively supporting underrepresented students to close participation gaps



Case Example: Successful Dual Credit Partnership

Lake County: Regional Model Pathway Maps

Successfully created regional college and career pathway models that include strategic dual credit courses.

Key Success Factors:

- Authentic partnerships with secondary, postsecondary & workforce stakeholders.
 - Multi level buy-in and participation.
- Aligned all pathways to labor market information and includes courses that accelerate students towards a credential.
- Maps include CTE, AP, and general education dual credit course options.

Selected Occupations, Wages, and Job Growth for Health Science

Program	Typical Job(s)	Living Wage Potential (Footnote 1)	Median Hourly Wage (footnote 2)	Growth in Illinois: % Change over 10 years (footnote 3)	Illinois Annual Job Openings (footnote 3)	Educational Requirements
Guided Transfer Pre-Professional	Pharmacist	High	\$65.86	1.0%	438	Doctoral or Professional Degree
	Speech-Language Pathologists	High	\$37.53	19.7%	639	
	Physicians, All Other	High	\$93.25	0.4%	380	
	Physical Therapist	High	\$51.25	10.0%	496	
Nursing	Nursing Assistants	Low	\$19.02	2.0%	7040	Postsecondary certificate
	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	Medium	\$31.30	3.0%	1552	
	Registered Nurses	High	\$40.69	5.0%	7,870	Bachelor's Degree
	Nurse Practitioners	High	\$61.54	44.0%	902	Doctoral or Professional Degree
OTHER HEALTH PROFESSIONS & RELATED CLINICAL SERVICE	Dental Hygienists	High	\$40.34	12.3%	585	Associate Degree
	Radiologic Technologists	Medium	\$37.69	5.0%	668	
	Respiratory Therapists	Medium	\$38.47	18.7%	314	
	Physical Therapist Assistant	Medium	\$35.44	21.3%	586	
	Emergency Medical Technicians	Low	\$18.69	13.0%	1050	Some College (Certification)
	Massage Therapist	Medium	\$30.83	23.4%	868	
	Pharmacy Tech	Low	\$19.07	11.3%	1750	
	Medical Assistant	Low	\$19.61	11.5%	2955	
	Phlebotomists	Low	\$21.28	17.0%	740	

Sample Course Map

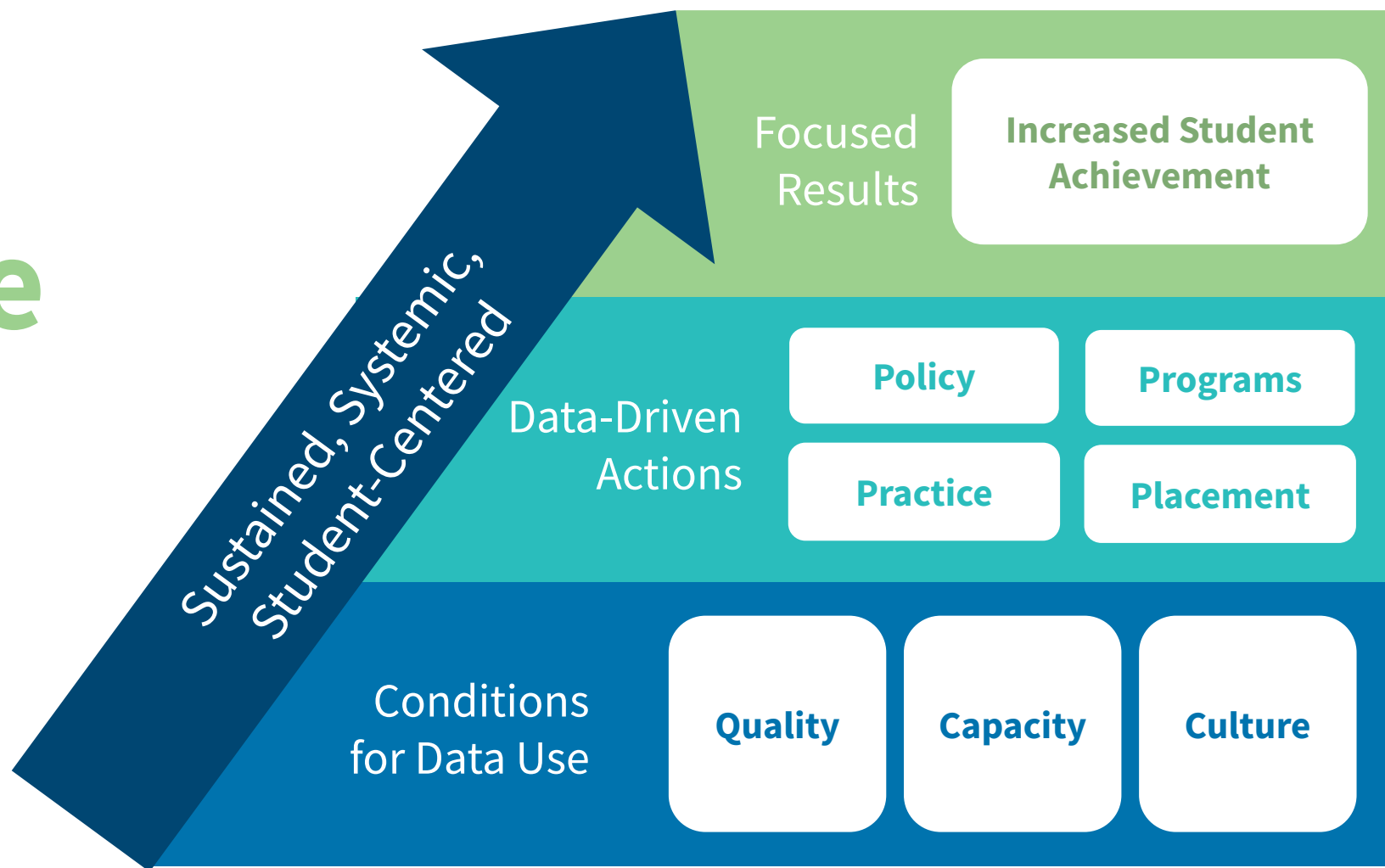
Lake County Regional Model College and Career Pathways Health Sciences: Nursing

	GRADES 9–10 Orientation	GRADES 10–12 Skill Development	GRADE 12 Capstone
Career-Focused Courses	Orientation to Diversified Health Occupations 🧠	NUR110 Nurse Assisting 🧠📖 (7)	BIO123 Principles of Biology 📖 (4)
Work-Based Learning	Career Exploration (2)	Team-Based Challenge (2)	Career Development Experience
Math	Highest-level course possible	Highest-level course possible; recommendations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transitional Math• MTH122 College Algebra 📖 (3)• AP Precalculus• Calculus	
Science	Highest-level course possible	Highest-level course possible; recommendations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CHM121 General Chemistry I 📖 (3) or AP Chemistry• BIO149 Genetics and Society 📖 (3) or AP Biology• PHY121 General Physics 📖 (3) or AP Physics	
English	Highest-level course possible	Highest-level course possible; recommendations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transitional English• ENG121 English Composition I 📖 (3) or AP English Language and Composition• ENG122 English Composition II 📖 (3) or AP English Literature and Composition• CMM121 Fundamentals of Speech 📖 (3)	
Social Science	Highest-level course possible	Highest-level course possible; recommendations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SOC121 Introduction to Sociology 📖 (3)	
KEY: 🧠 Career and Technical Education (CTE) course 📖 Dual credit (credit hours noted) 🧠 Tech campus course			



Data, Accountability, & Continuous Improvement

Why Use Data?



Using Data for Accountability & Impact

Overview

Throughout our work, we are focused on **good data use...**

- **Goal setting:** Data allows us to set ambitious but achievable goals.
- **Incremental improvement:** Focus on small improvements over time. They add up!
- **A focus on equity:** Ensuring those furthest behind and get the support they need to catch-up.

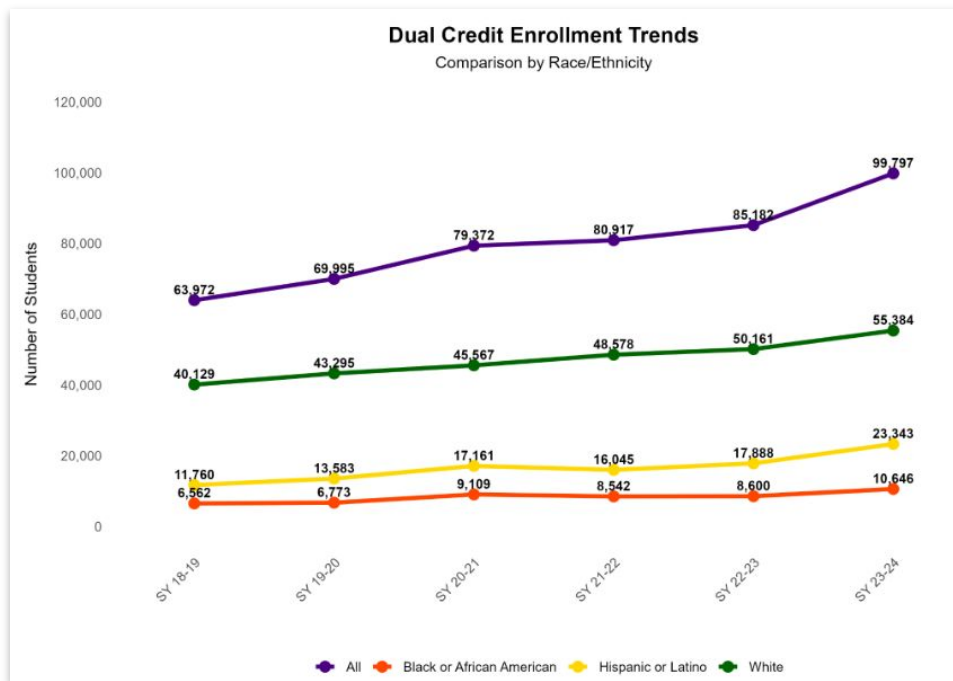
...that **keeps actors accountable and leads to student-centered impact.**

- ★ **Dual credit impact:** Assess who benefits from dual credit opportunities.
- ★ **Data points of interest:**
 - Dual credit participation
 - Dual credit course outcomes
 - Early college credit accumulation

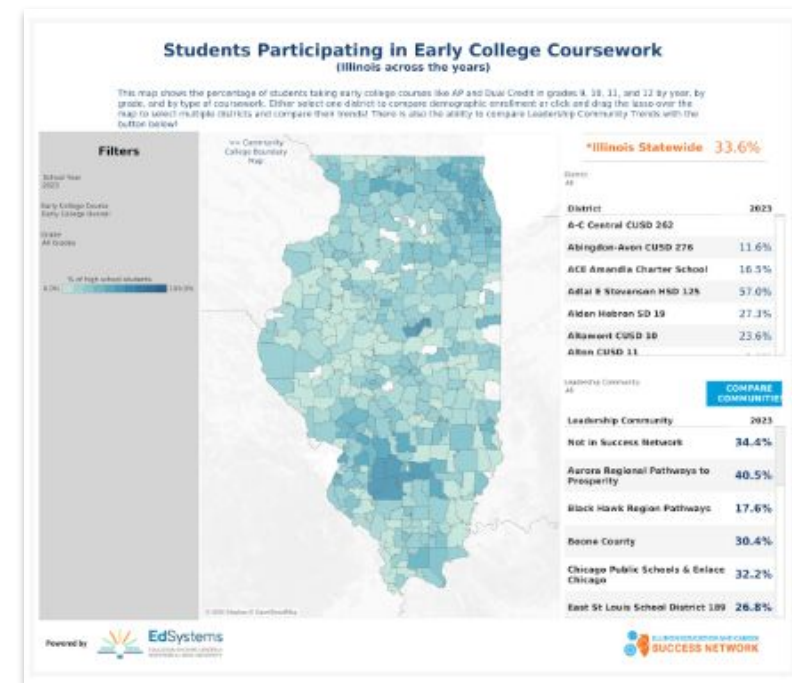
Using Data for Accountability & Impact

Ex: Illinois Report Card Data

EdSystems uses Illinois Report Card (IRC) data from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to perform trend analyses and link data longitudinally (i.e., the relationship between dual credit and high school graduation, and high school graduation to postsecondary enrollment).



Longitudinal View of Dual Credit Enrollment Trends



Snapshot of the Success Network Dashboard

Using Data for Accountability & Impact

Thoughtful and Responsible Data Use

To use data for impact in a thoughtful and responsible way, it's important to keep these considerations in mind:

- *Correlation does not equal causation.*
 - e.g., an increase in dual credit participation does not necessarily lead to an increase in graduation rate.
- *Variables interact with each other.*
 - e.g., an increase in college enrollment could lead to reductions in rates of college persistence and completion.
- *Isolating the impact of interventions can be challenging.*
 - e.g., if your district increases dual credit participation at the same time it increases college counseling, determining which one had the most impact can be difficult.




Resources

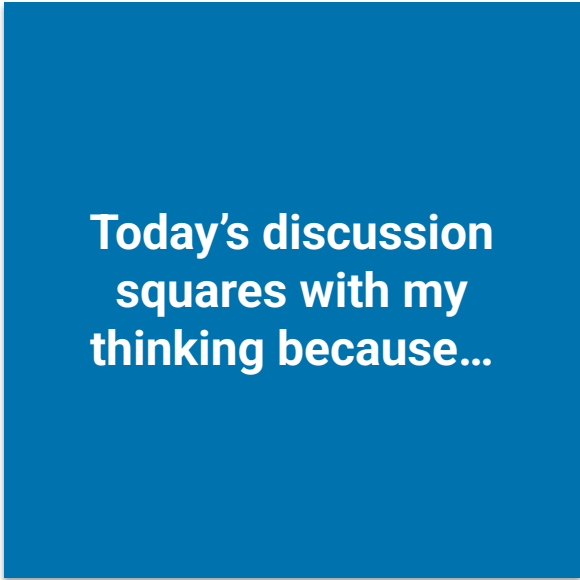
- [Illinois Career Pathway Dictionary](#)
- [Illinois Model Program of Study Guides](#)
- [Illinois Report Card](#)
- [ICCB Dual Credit Report, March 2025](#)
- [Dual Credit Quality Act](#) (Amended 2025)
- [Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act](#)
- [Model Partnership Agreement for Dual Credit](#)



Closing Reflections



Something still
circling in my
head is...



Today's discussion
squares with my
thinking because...



One
important
point from
today is...