

Purposeful Dual Credit Expanding College and Career Opportunity

John Fink, Senior Research Associate and Program Lead

October, 2026 | [LONESTARP3 Virtual Session](#)



CCRC COMMUNITY COLLEGE
RESEARCH CENTER
Teachers College, Columbia University

CCRC has been a leader in the field of community college research and reform for 30 years.

Our work provides a foundation for innovations in policy and practice that help give every community college student the best chance of success.



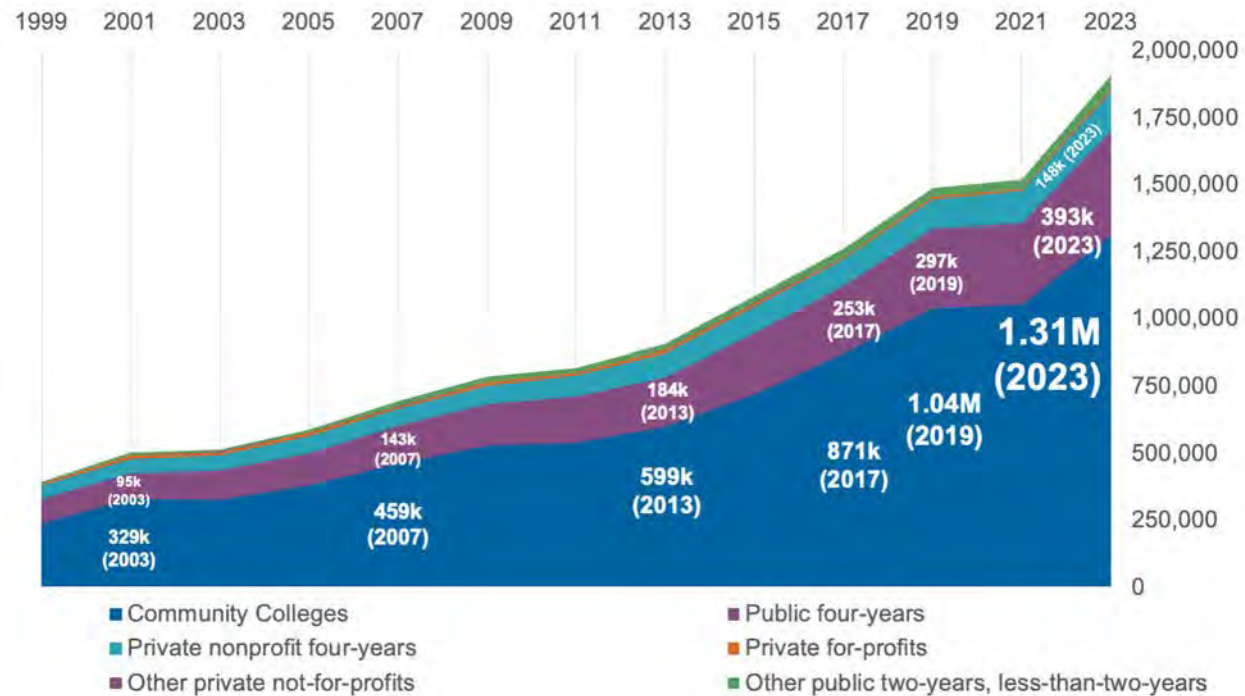
The University of Texas at Austin
College of Education

Associate Professor Lauren Schudde
Research Associate Wonsun Ryu



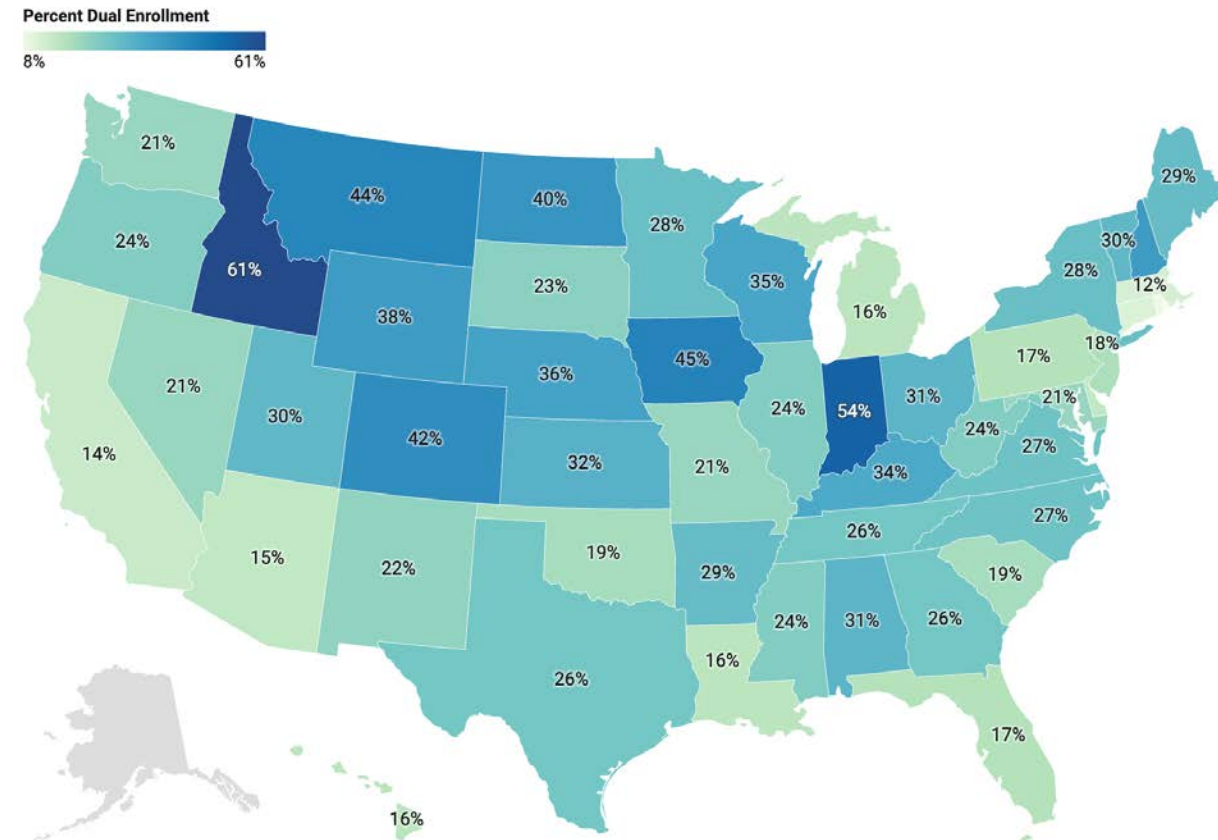
Dual enrollment has doubled in the past decade, up to 3.1M in 2024-2025

Growth of Dual Enrollment, Fall Enrollments 1999-2023



23% of community college students are in high school

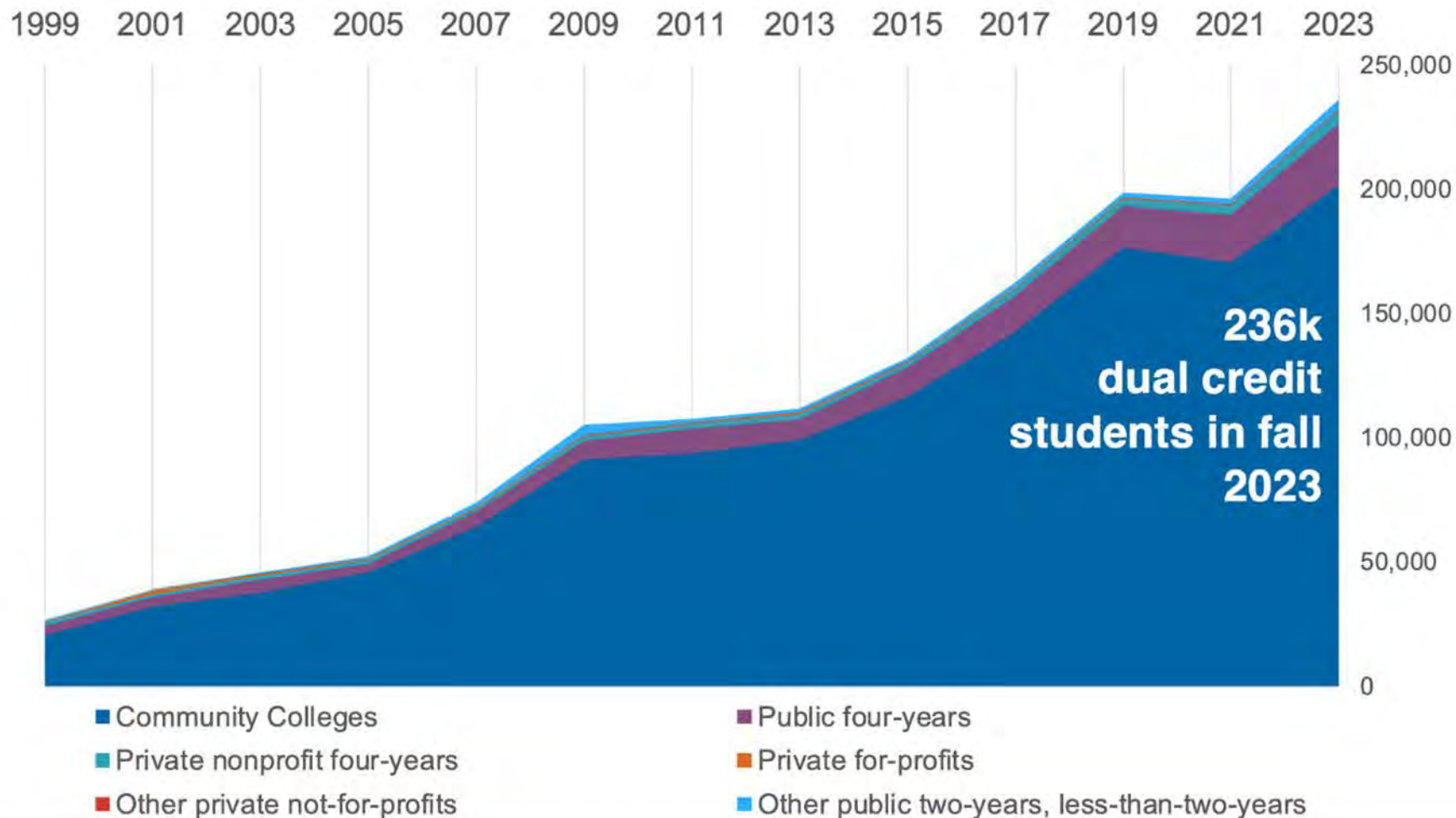
Percentage of Community College Students in High School in 2024-25



Texas Dual Credit 1999-2023

IPEDS Fall Enrollments

*Fall Undergraduate Enrollments among
Students Aged 17 or Younger*



Expansion of Dual Credit Concentrated at Community Colleges in Texas

Dual Enrollment as an Onramp to College & Career

Conventional Approach



“Programs of privilege”



“Random acts”



DEEP Approach



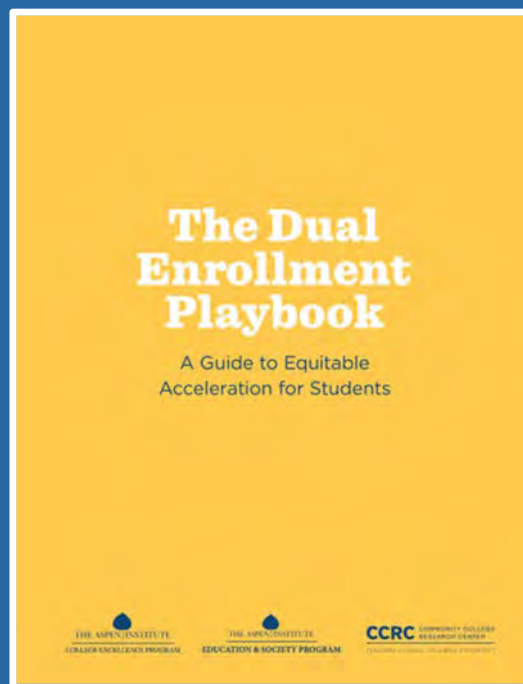
All – and especially underserved students



Designed to expand college and career opportunities

Access for Whom, Access to What?

Strengthening Dual Enrollment as an Onramp to College and Career Opportunity



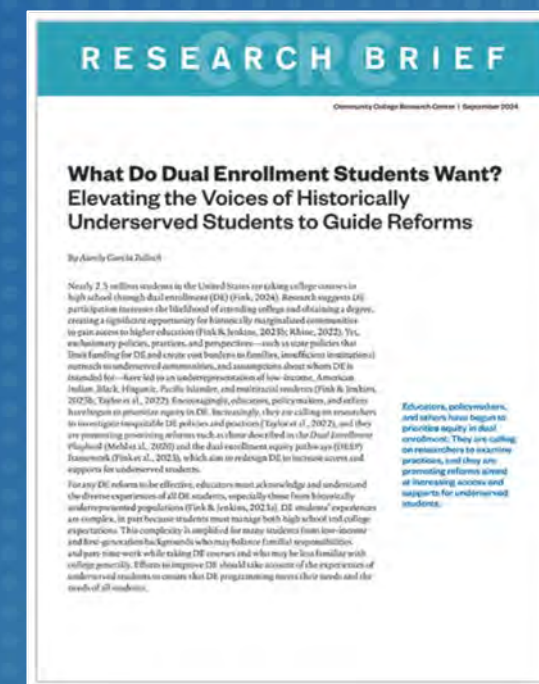
The Dual Enrollment Playbook:
A Guide to Equitable
Acceleration for Students
(October 2020)



Rethinking Dual Enrollment as
an Equitable On-Ramp to a
Career-Path College Degree
Program After High School
(October 2023)



DEEP Insights: Redesigning Dual
Enrollment as a Purposeful
Pathway to College and Career
Opportunity (October 2023)



What Do Dual Enrollment
Students Want? Elevating the
Voices of Historically
Underserved Students to
Guide Reforms (September
2024)

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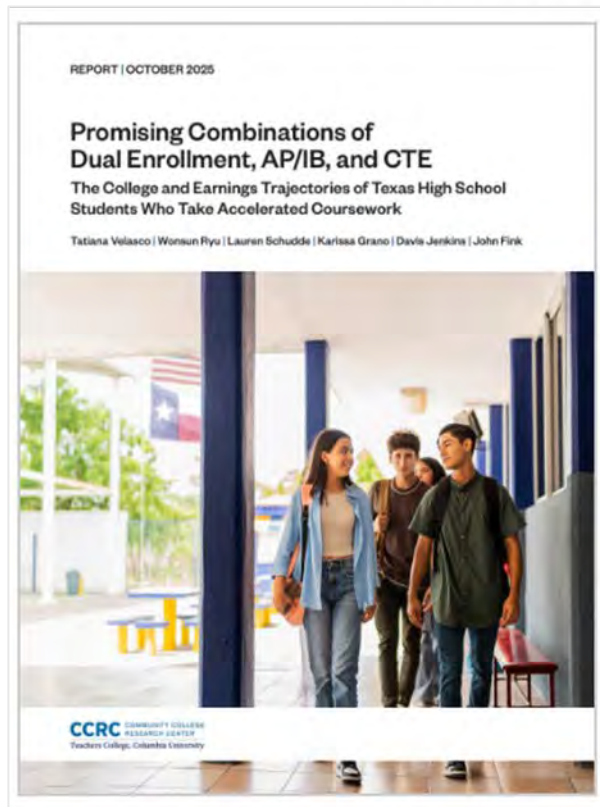
Students increasingly need education after high school to get good jobs



Connecting **dual enrollment** with **high school CTE** has enormous potential to expand college and career opportunity, putting more students on track to complete college in their 20s and secure good jobs by age 30

Promising Combination: Dual Enrollment and High School CTE

(Velasco et al., 2025)

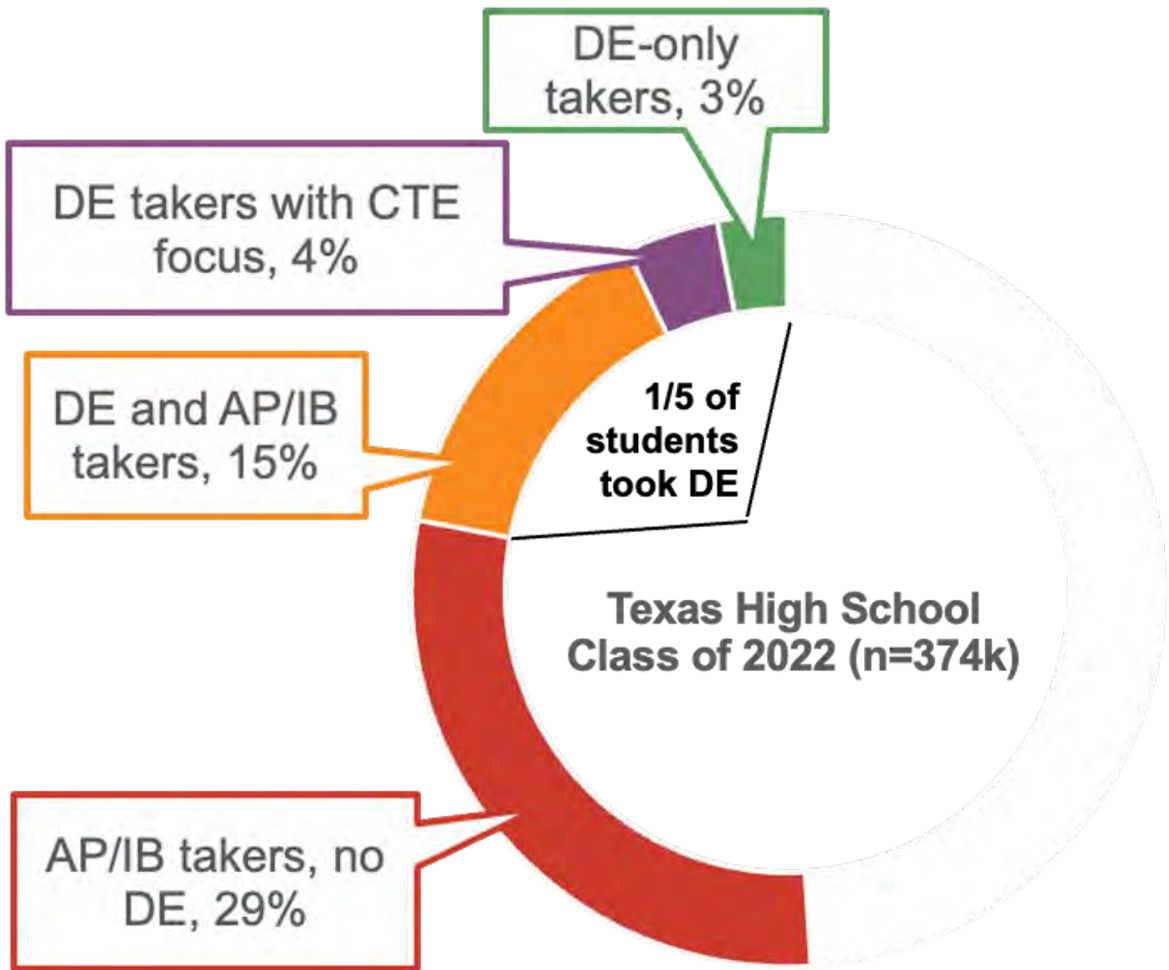


In this study, students who had a CTE focus and who took dual enrollment courses were more likely after high school:

- to enroll in college and complete a degree and
- have higher earnings (16% higher) by age 24

compared to HS CTE students with no dual enrollment.

Promising Combinations, Untapped Potential



Promising Combinations of Dual Enrollment, AP/IB, and CTE

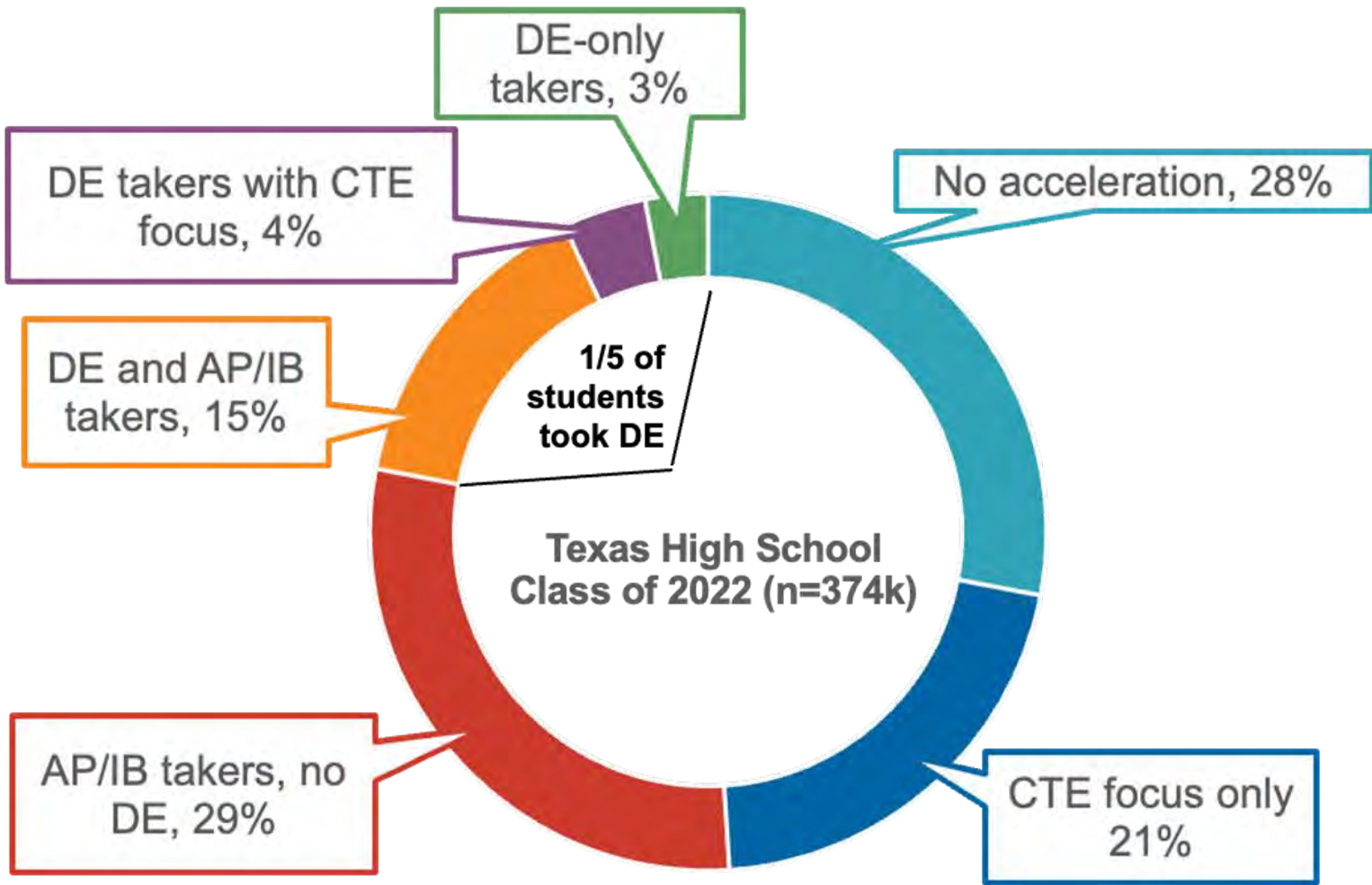
The College and Earnings Trajectories of Texas High School
Students Who Take Accelerated Coursework

Tatiana Velasco | Wonsun Ryu | Lauren Schudde | Karissa Grano | Davis Jenkins | John Fink



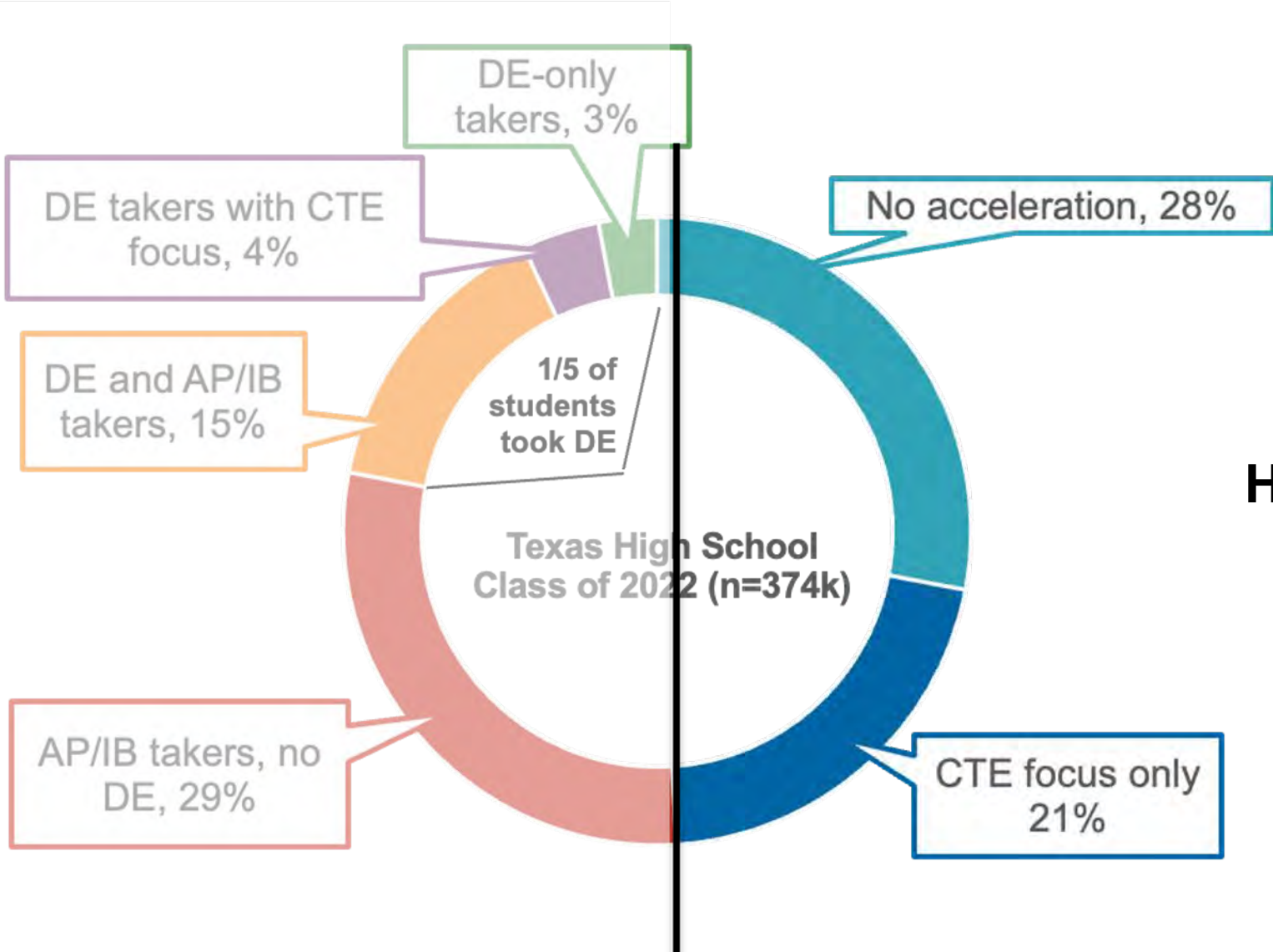
Velasco et al., 2025

Promising Combinations, Untapped Potential



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REPORT | OCTOBER 2025

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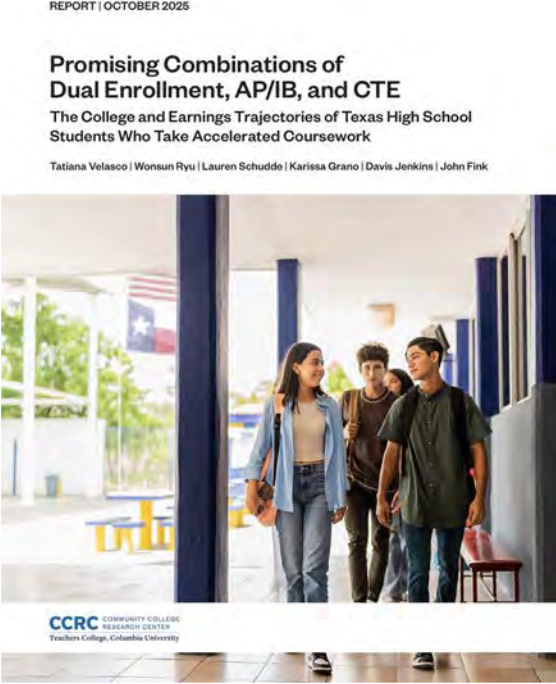
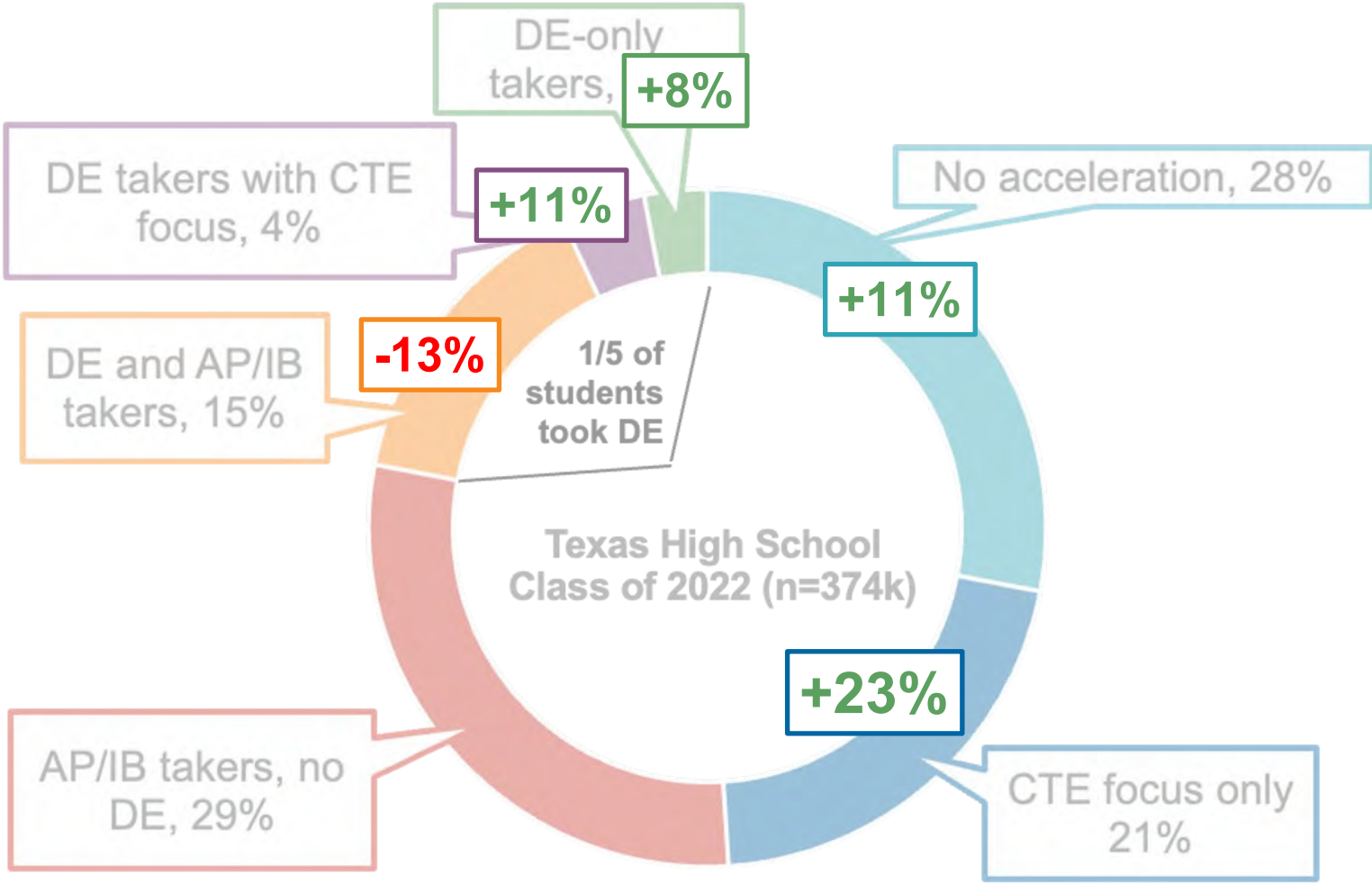


Velasco et al., 2025

Half of Texas HS Students did not take DE or AP/IB

Overrepresented:
Men, Black, & low-income students
56-57% men (51% baseline)
14-18% Black (13% baseline)
62-65% low-income (54% baseline)

Earnings advantage strongest among HS CTE students one year after HS

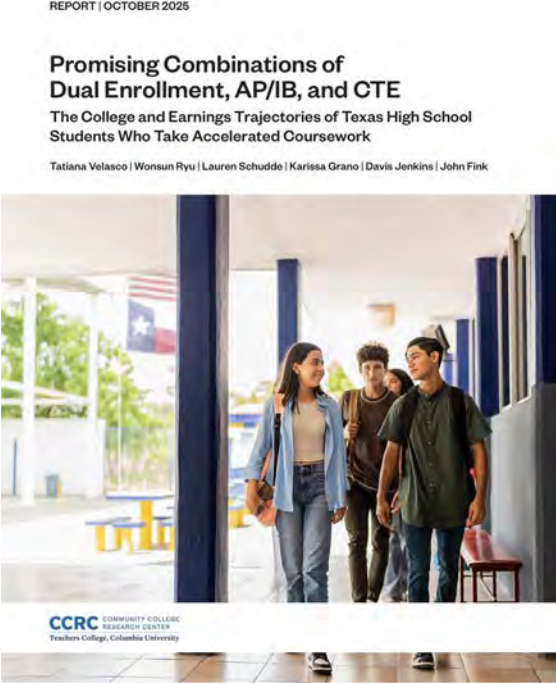
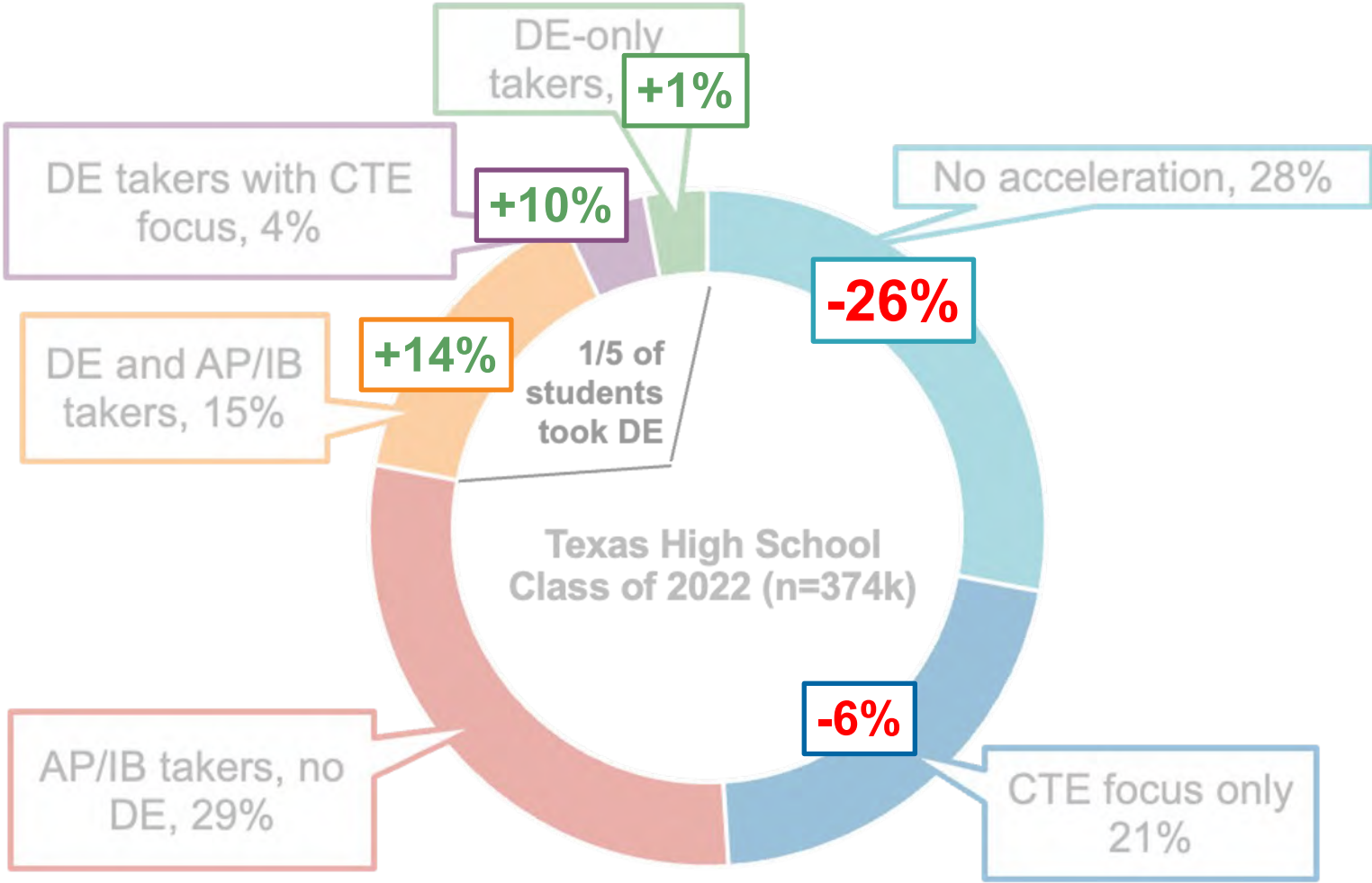


Velasco et al., 2025

Earnings at age 19
Related to AP/IB, no DE

Regression-adjusted estimates of the average quarterly earnings by each age group. All estimates are in reference to “AP/IB takers, no DE” earnings. Controls: gender, race, income background, TAKS test scores, student ranking, and high school characteristics.

Earnings advantage shifts to students with dual enrollment six years after HS

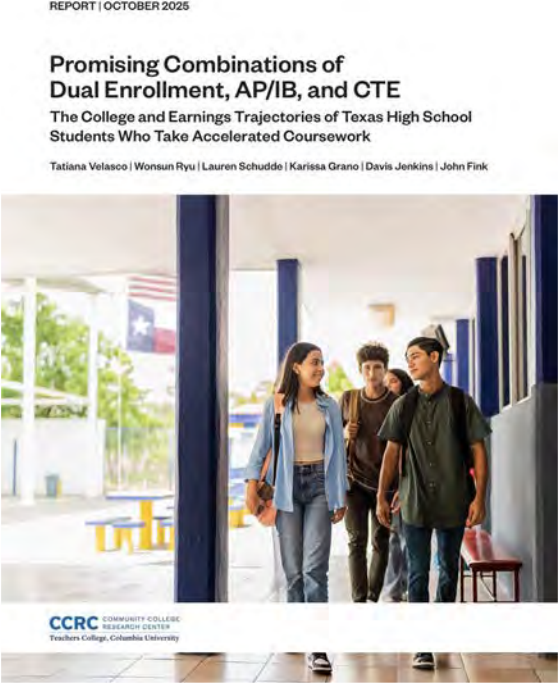
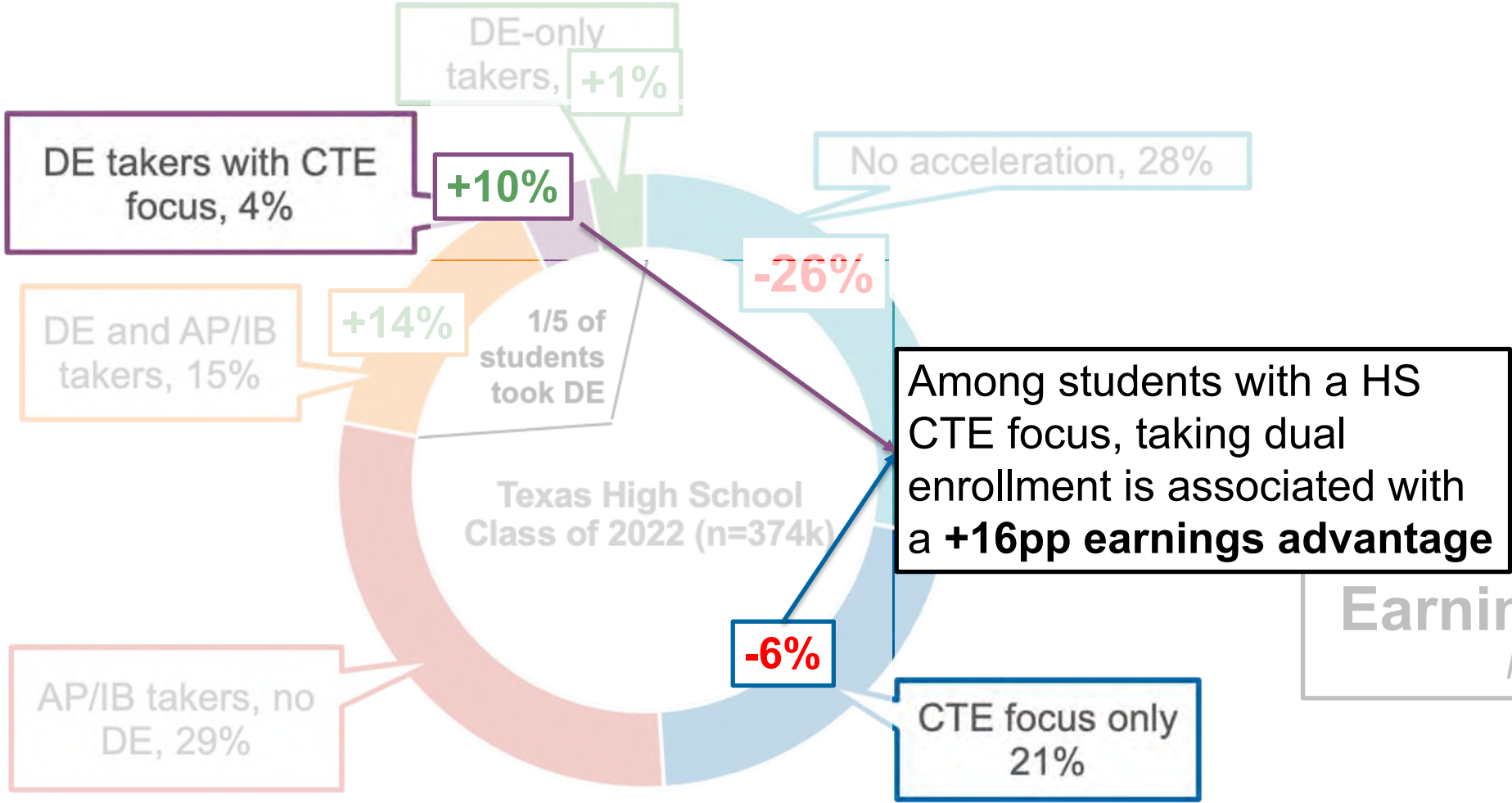


Velasco et al., 2025

Earnings at age 24
Related to AP/IB, no DE

Regression-adjusted estimates of the average quarterly earnings by each age group. All estimates are in reference to “AP/IB takers, no DE” earnings. Controls: gender, race, income background, TAKS test scores, student ranking, and high school characteristics.

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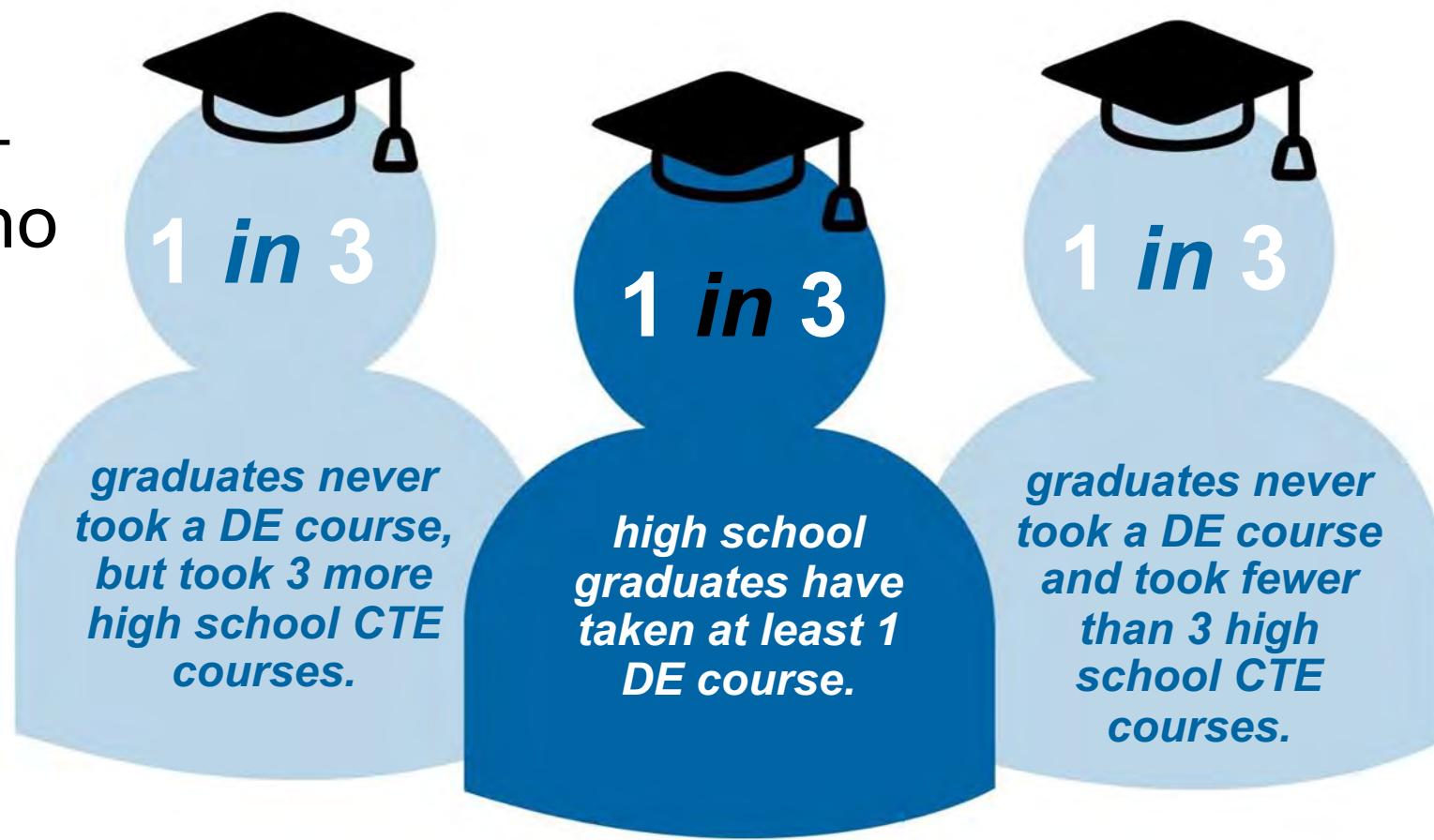
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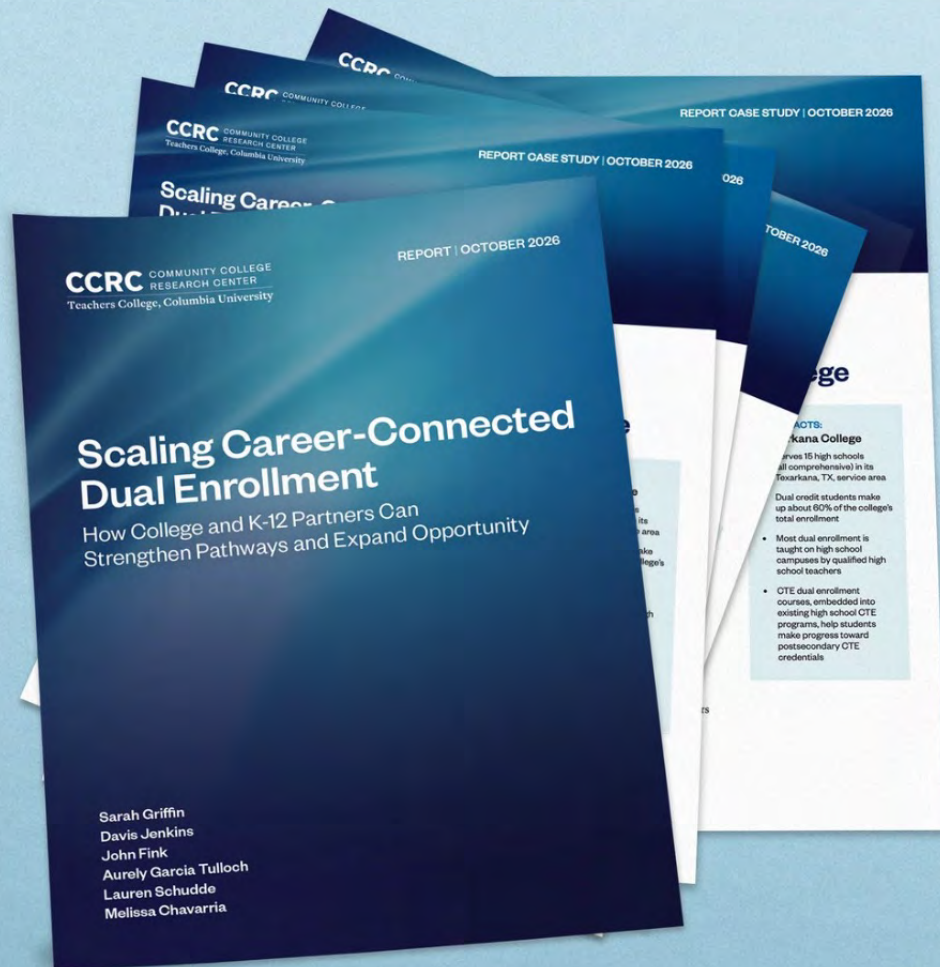
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Nationally, nearly a third of high school graduates have taken dual enrollment

Another third earned 3+ credits in HS CTE with no dual enrollment



Source: CCRC analysis of NAEP-NSTS data of 2019 high school graduates



New report |
ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications

How can dual enrollment serve as an on-ramp to college and career opportunity for high school CTE students?



Our research explored how sites are scaling career-connected dual enrollment.

Career-connected dual enrollment: the integration of dual enrollment coursework into existing high school career programs

We conducted interviews with 135 dual enrollment and CTE practitioners.

RESEARCH SITES

1. Amarillo College (TX)
2. C.E. King High School (TX)
3. Centinela Valley Union High School District (CA)
4. Eastern Iowa Community College (IA)
5. High School District 214 (IL)
6. Kilgore College (TX)
7. Kirkwood Community College (IA)
8. Oakland Unified School District (CA)
9. Odessa College (TX)
10. Patrick and Henry Community College (VA)
11. Texarkana College (TX)
12. Tri-County Technical College (SC)



Schools and colleges are using their existing educational structures to scale career-connected dual enrollment.

1

High School CTE Pathways

Build CTE dual enrollment courses into traditional high school CTE pathways

2

High School Career Academies

2a

Theme-Based Academies

Build relevant dual enrollment coursework into high school career academies aligned to broader career-related themes

2b

Career-Field Academies

Build CTE and technical foundational dual enrollment courses into high school career academies aligned to career fields

3

College CTE Programs for High School Students

Offer community college-led, postsecondary CTE programs to high school students



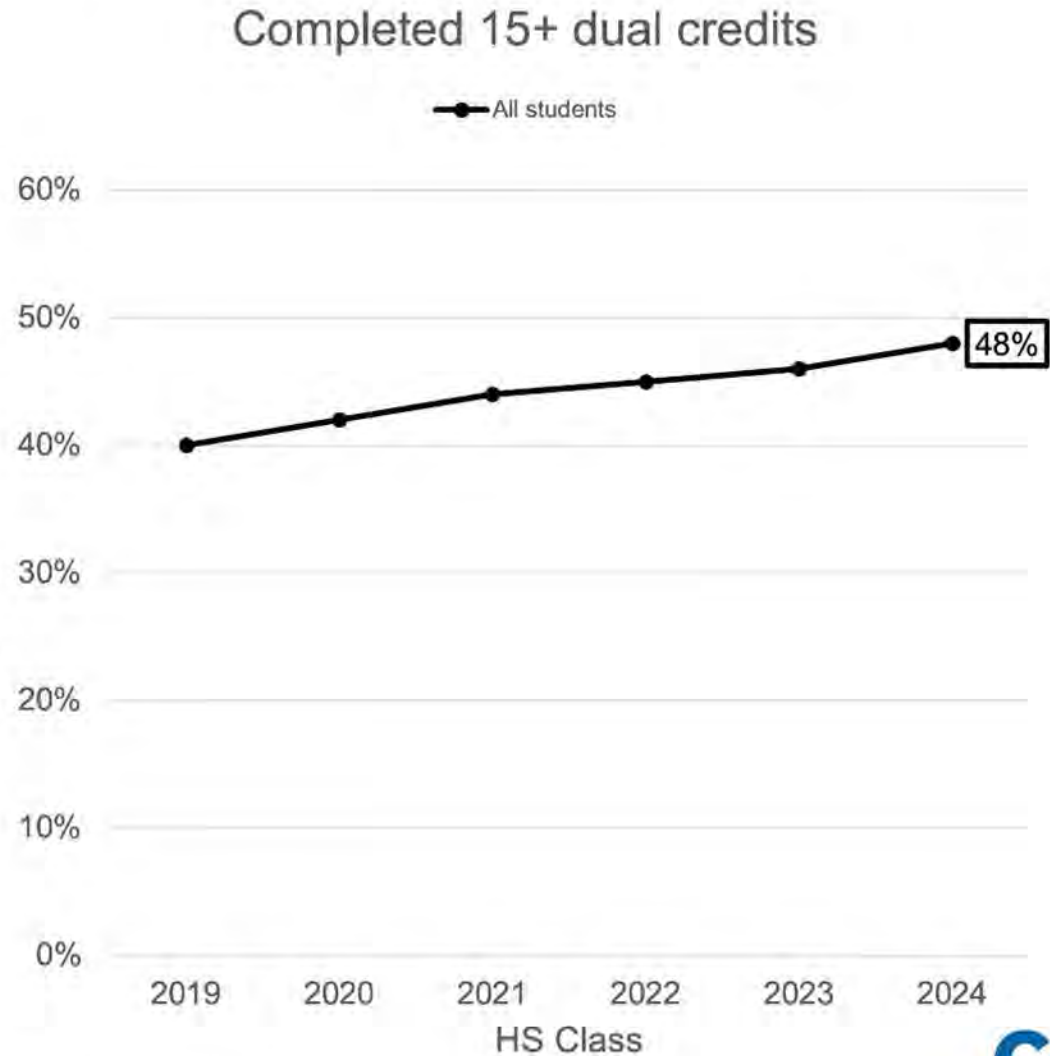
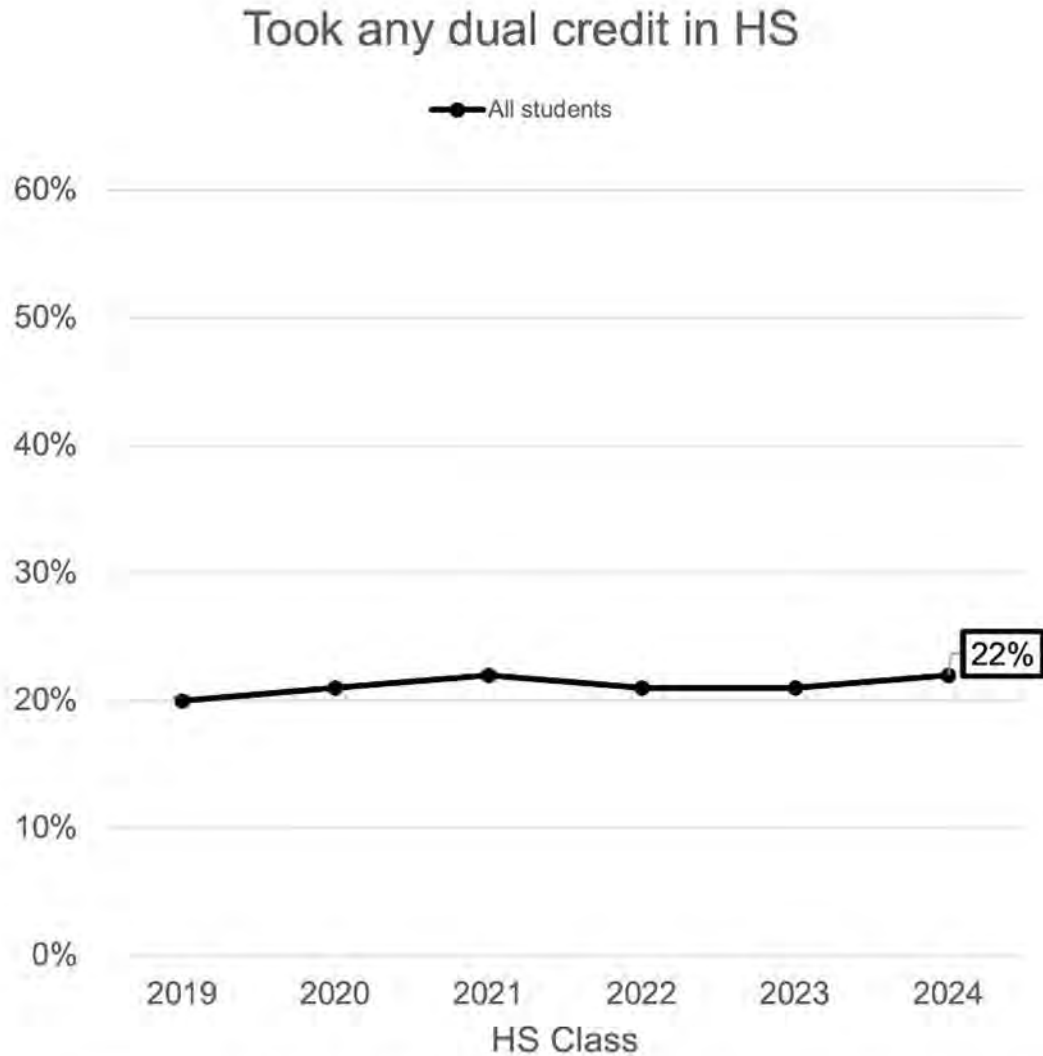
Diving DEEPer

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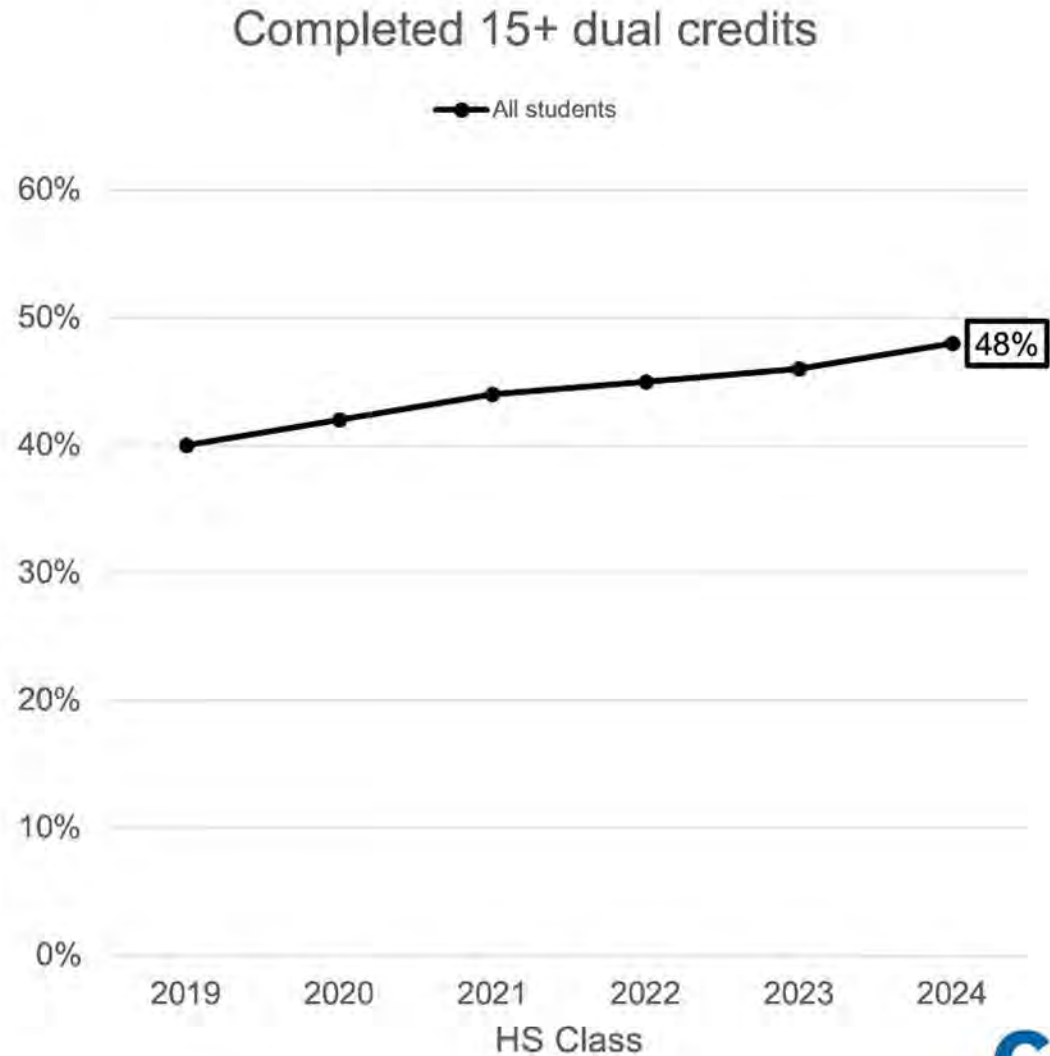
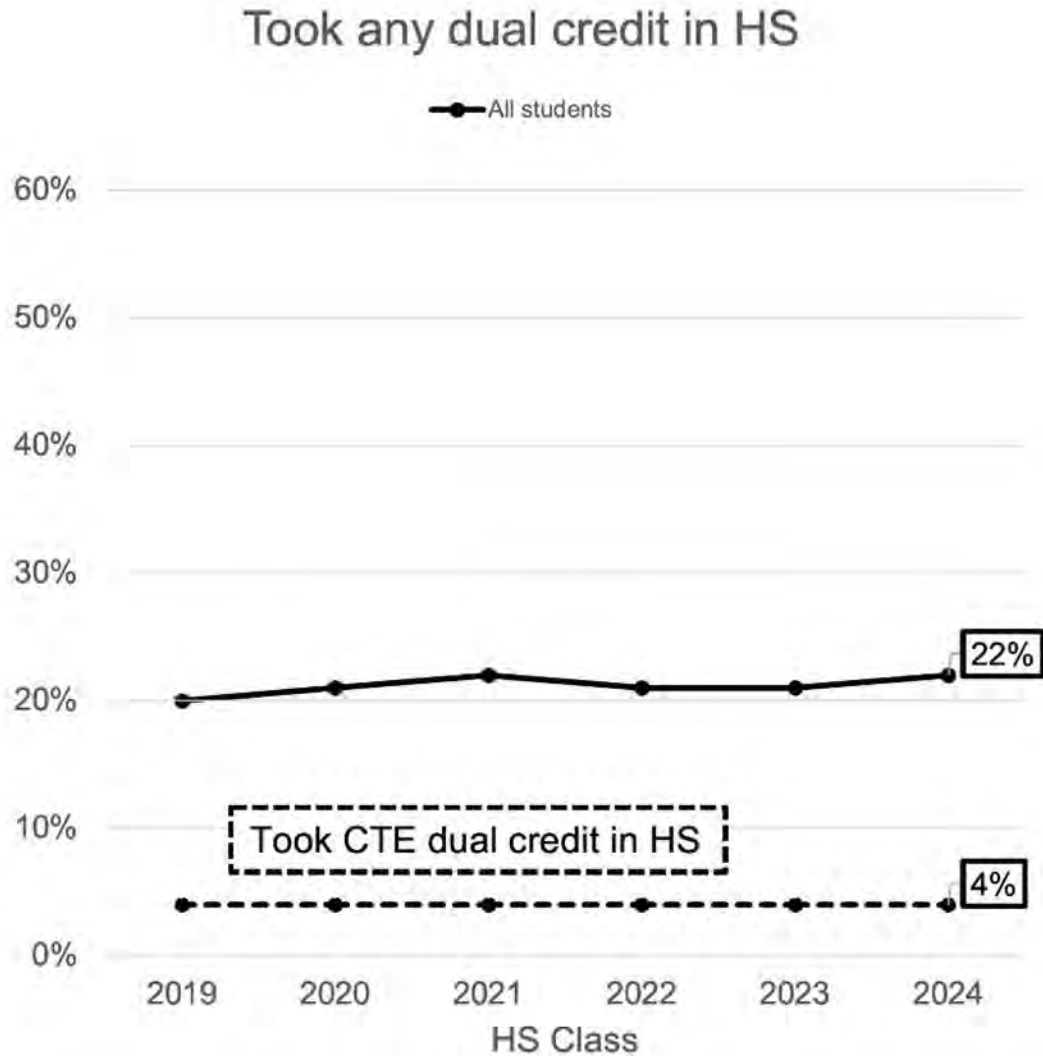
DEEP Questions

- ***Access for whom:*** Which student groups and schools participate in dual credit at lower rates? What are the biggest barriers to increasing access to DC?
- ***Access to what:*** What courses are students in dual credit, where are they going to college after high school, and what majors are they pursuing? How many come back to our college, and how many do not go to any college after HS?

Trends in Dual Credit Participation and Momentum

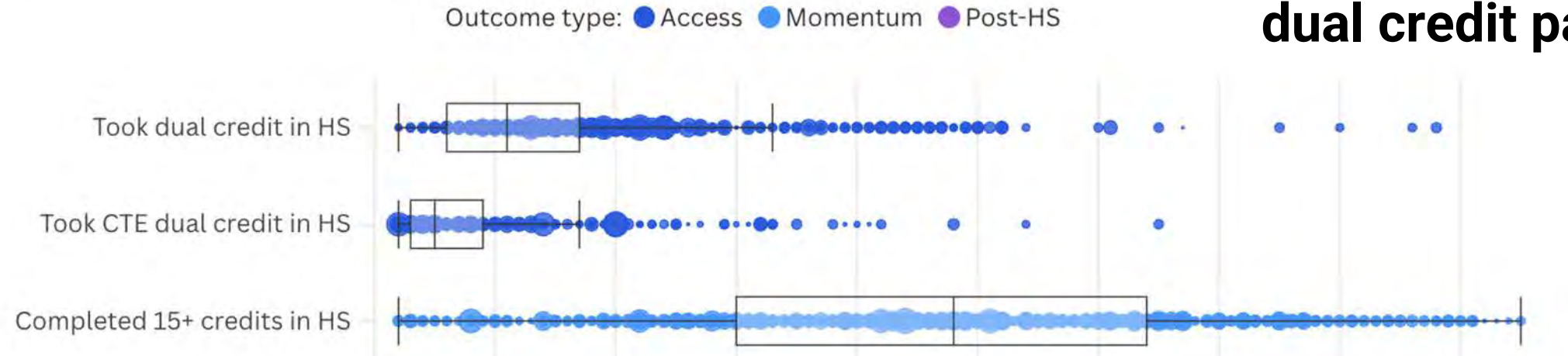


Trends in Dual Credit Participation and Momentum



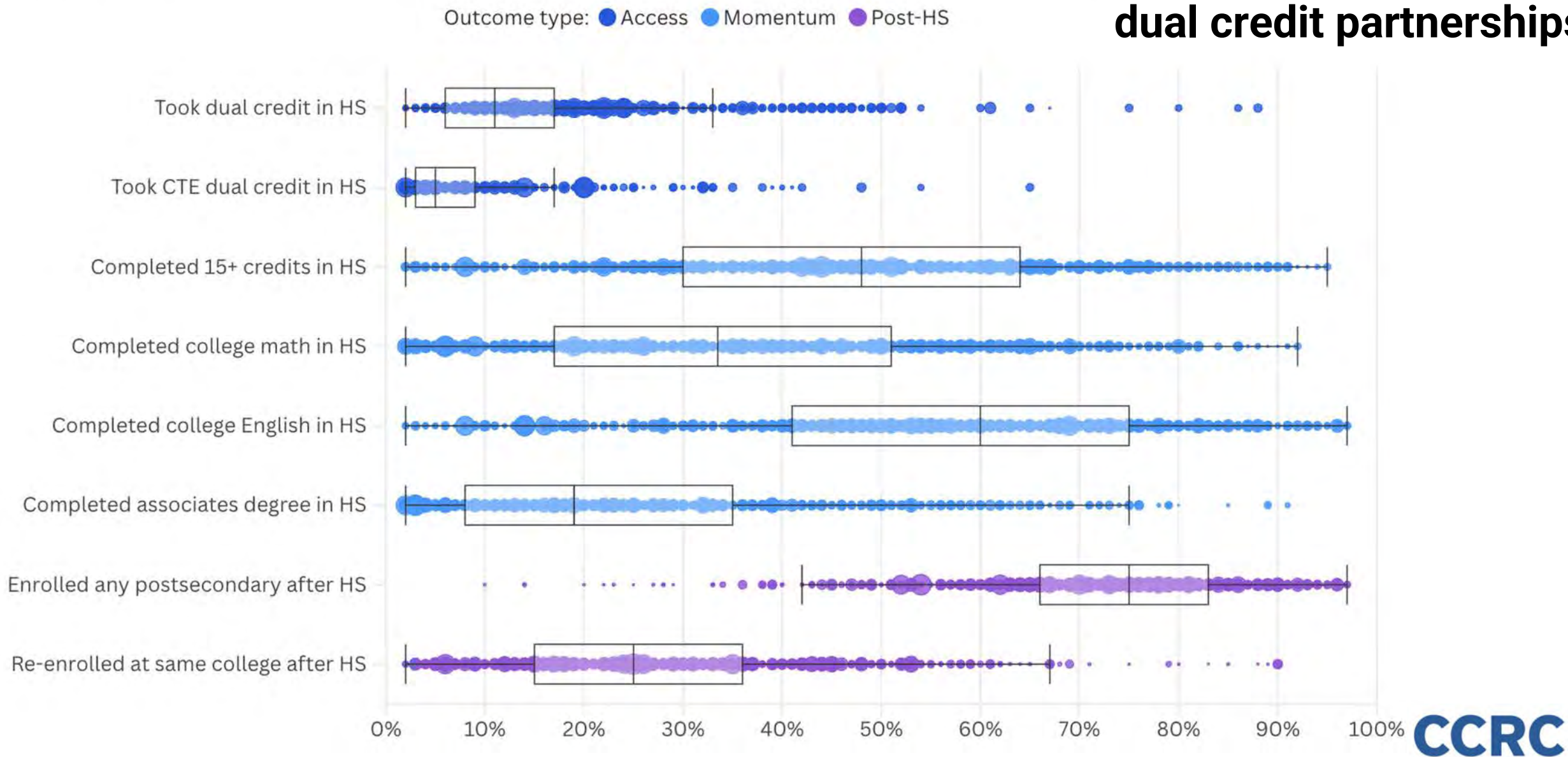
Partnership differences in dual credit student outcomes, high school class of 2023

**Substantial variation
among college-K12
dual credit partnerships**



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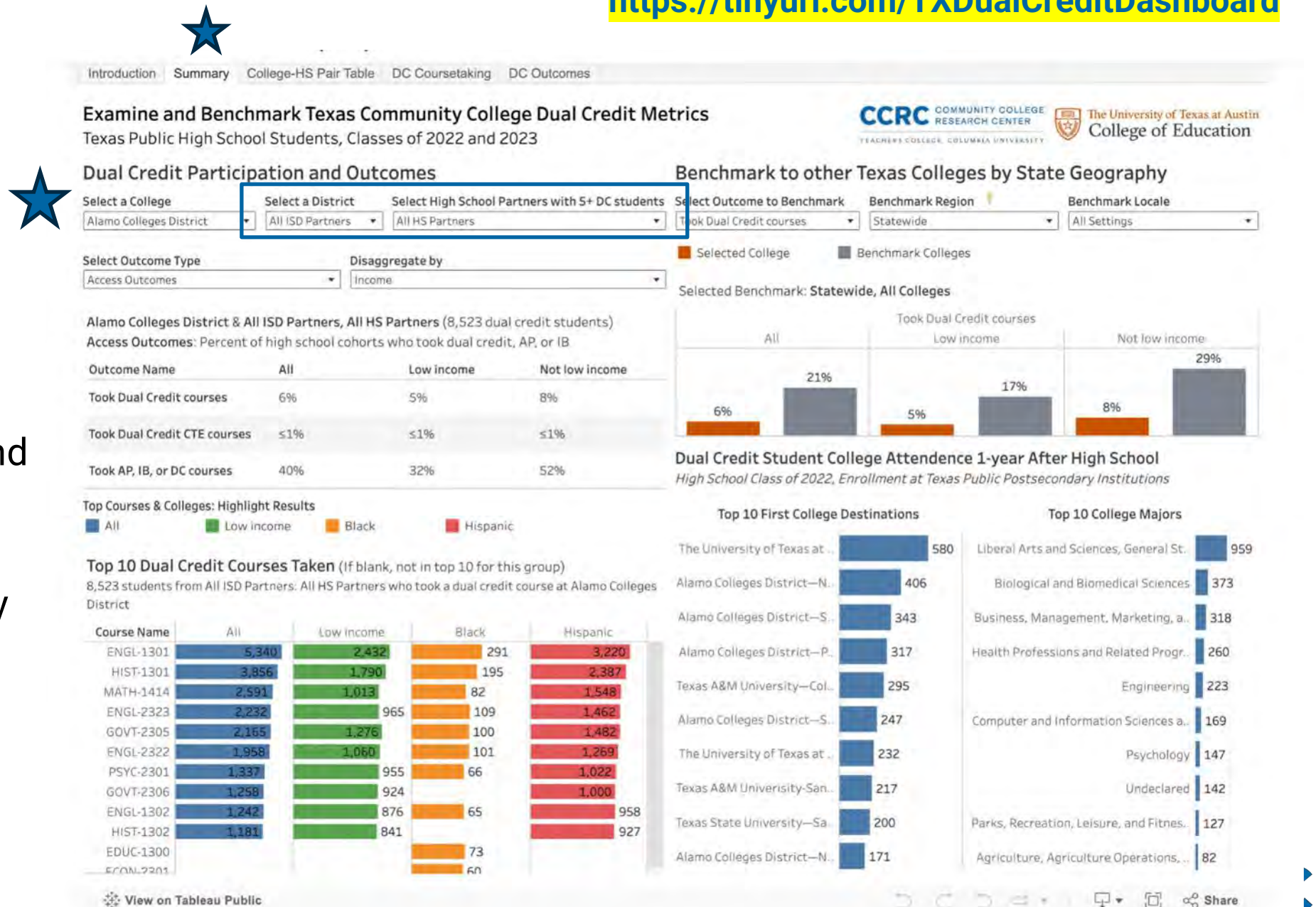
Accessing the Dual Credit Dashboard

On your computer search:

<https://tinyurl.com/TXDualCreditDashboard>

Dual Credit Dashboard Overview

- Access to DC
- DC Course Location and Modality
- DC Course Pass Rates
- DC Credit and Gateway Course Momentum
- Post-HS College Enrollments and Persistence



Dual Credit Data Sources & Definitions

- Dual credit definition broad, includes ECHS & P-TECH
- Statewide, longitudinal, student-level TEA/THECB data from the **Texas Education Research Center**
- **Pooled sample of the HS Class of 2022 and 2023** (entering 9th graders in 2018 and 2019)
 - Planned updates in 2026 & 2027
- Outcomes tracked 1 year after expected HS graduation (for class of 2022 only)
- Masking requirements for FERPA compliance



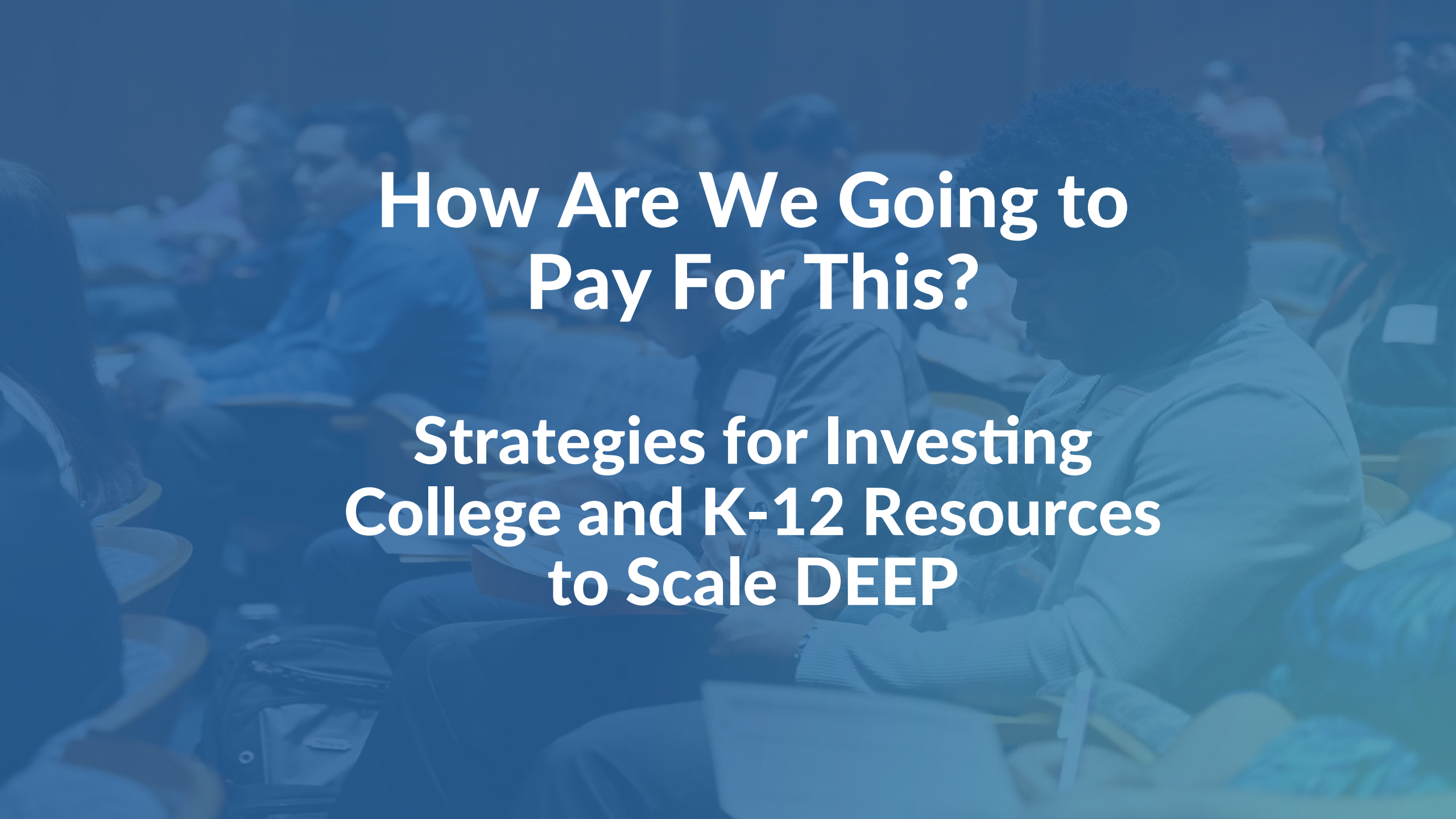
*Visit our website for our
latest research findings*
ccrc.tc.columbia.edu

Thank you!

John Fink: john.fink@tc.columbia.edu

Slides from today's
presentation

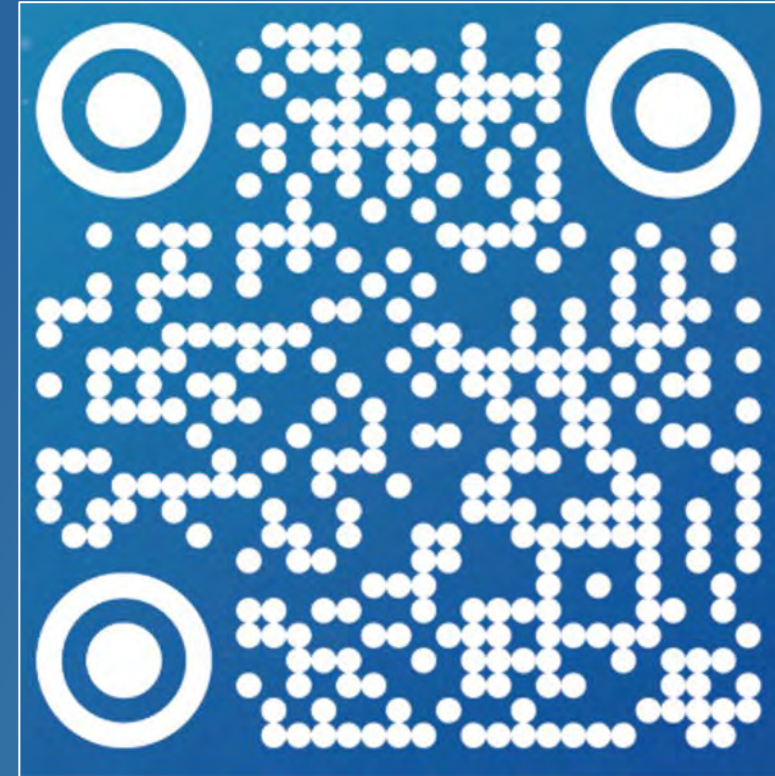
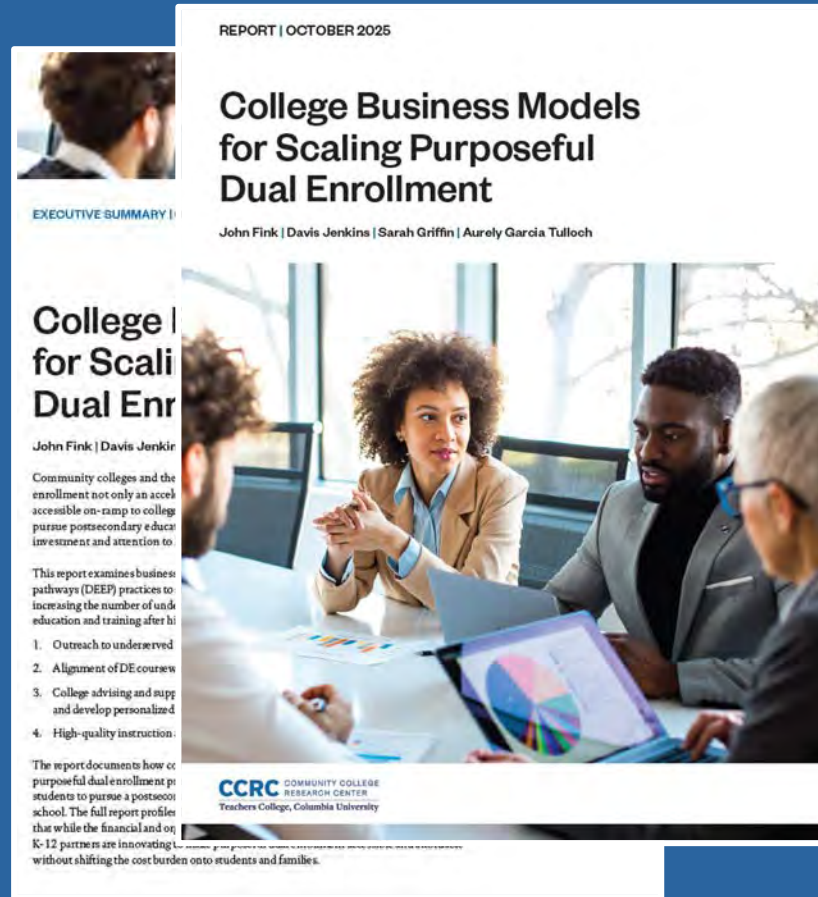




How Are We Going to Pay For This?

Strategies for Investing College and K-12 Resources to Scale DEEP

New Research From CCRC



Find the report at ccrc.tc.columbia.edu.

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Additional Costs of the DEEP Approach

DEEP Practice Area	Example Practice	Associated Costs
Outreach efforts to promote dual enrollment	Proactive marketing and recruitment to underserved K-12 schools and communities	Adequate staff to provide single point of contact and support for numerous partner high schools
Alignment of dual enrollment coursework	DE offerings mapped to postsecondary CTE degrees and bachelor's major pathways	Adequate staff time to plan course offerings and instructor availability by high school to avoid "random acts"
Advising provided by the college	College provides advising to all students in collaboration with high school counselors	Adequate staffing to provide individualized advising and planning assistance
High-quality instruction and support	DE students exposed to instruction by college faculty on college campuses and where possible in classes with post-high-school students Proactive academic and nonacademic support for DE students	Extensive quality control, professional development, and support for instructors who are high school teachers Faculty or staff time to proactively identify and support struggling students Learning management, early alert, and online tutoring systems for DE students
Close working partnerships with K-12	Day-to-day communication with K-12 partners to support planning, operations, and troubleshooting	Adequate staff time to coordinate planning and operations and to troubleshoot with numerous, often widely dispersed schools

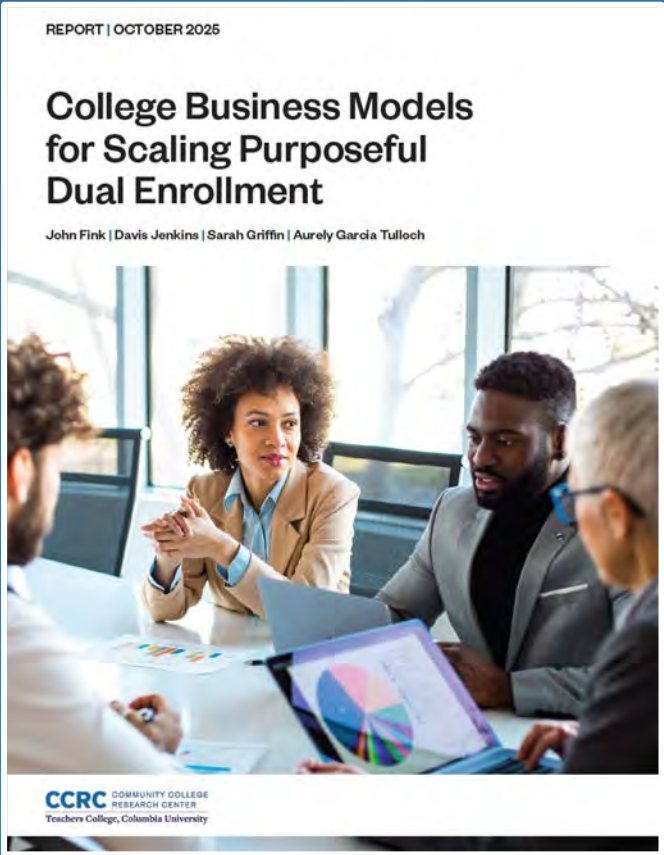
Potential Incentives for DEEP Investments

K-12 schools	• Can offer new and attractive programs in partnership with colleges • Can attract students and families looking for college acceleration options • Improved high school graduation, college-going and other student outcomes, particularly for underserved populations and schools • Gains in state performance reporting and funding
Employers	• “Grow-your-own” talent development strategy: Generates a reliable supply of employees with specific knowledge and skills catered to industry needs that also better reflect the specific make-up of the local community • Helps students gain early awareness and exploration of career opportunities that can promote better matching with jobs, more career advancement opportunities, and less employee turnover
Colleges	• Expands the pool of potential college-going students after high school • Downstream benefits to retention, completion, and statewide performance funding by increasing re-enrollment of former DE students after high school • Reputational benefits (generating public support to sustain or increase local funding)

We interviewed staff from colleges at various stages of DEEP implementation and with varying levels of state funding for DE.

State Funding for Dual Enrollment at Colleges Interviewed		
State	College	State DE funding level
Alabama	Coastal Alabama College	High
California	Compton College	High
	Lemoore College	
Iowa	Kirkwood Community College	Medium
Nebraska	Northeast Community College	Low
New Jersey	Hudson County Community College	Low
Ohio	Marion Technical College	Medium
South Carolina	Tri-County Technical College	High
Texas	Alvin Community College	Medium
	Amarillo College	
	South Texas College	
Washington	South Puget Sound Community College	High (Running Start); medium (College in the High School)
Wisconsin	Madison Area Technical College	Low

Note. Funding level characterization is based on a 50-state analysis of state funding of DE (Jenkins et al., 2025).



Conventional DE and DEEP Business Models



Lower costs: Minimal investments made to cover DE program operations

Lighter supports, designed for students who are already college-bound

Less re-enrollment after high school means lower downstream revenues



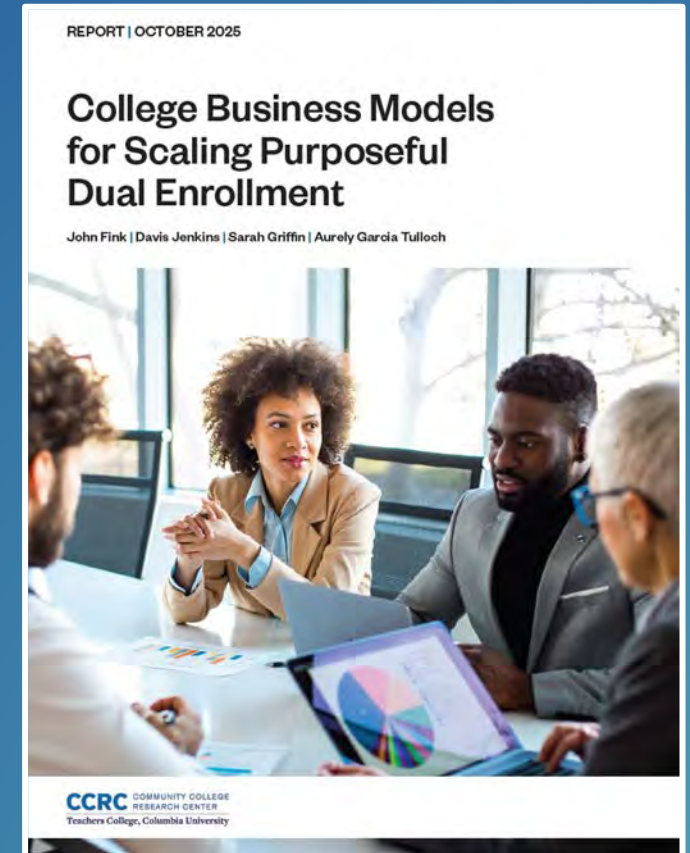
Higher costs: More investments to scale DEEP practices to implement DE as an on-ramp to college and career pathways

More supports, designed for all high school students

Greater downstream revenues from more students re-enrolling after high school instead of not pursuing any postsecondary education and training

How are colleges funding DEEP practices across different state contexts without passing on costs to students and families?

1. Establish a “DEEP” mindset by committing to dual enrollment as an accessible pathway to college and careers for every student
2. Leverage the college’s core staff, facilities, and technology resources to support a DEEP experience for students
3. Partner with K-12 schools to maximize available resources for DEEP
4. Strategically invest financial resources to scale DEEP practices



Fink et al., 2025

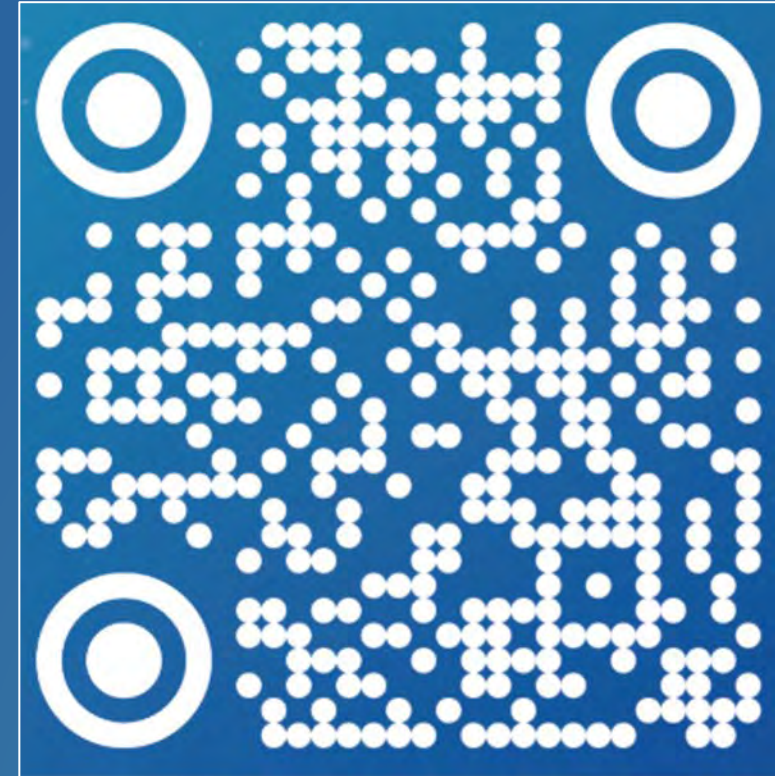
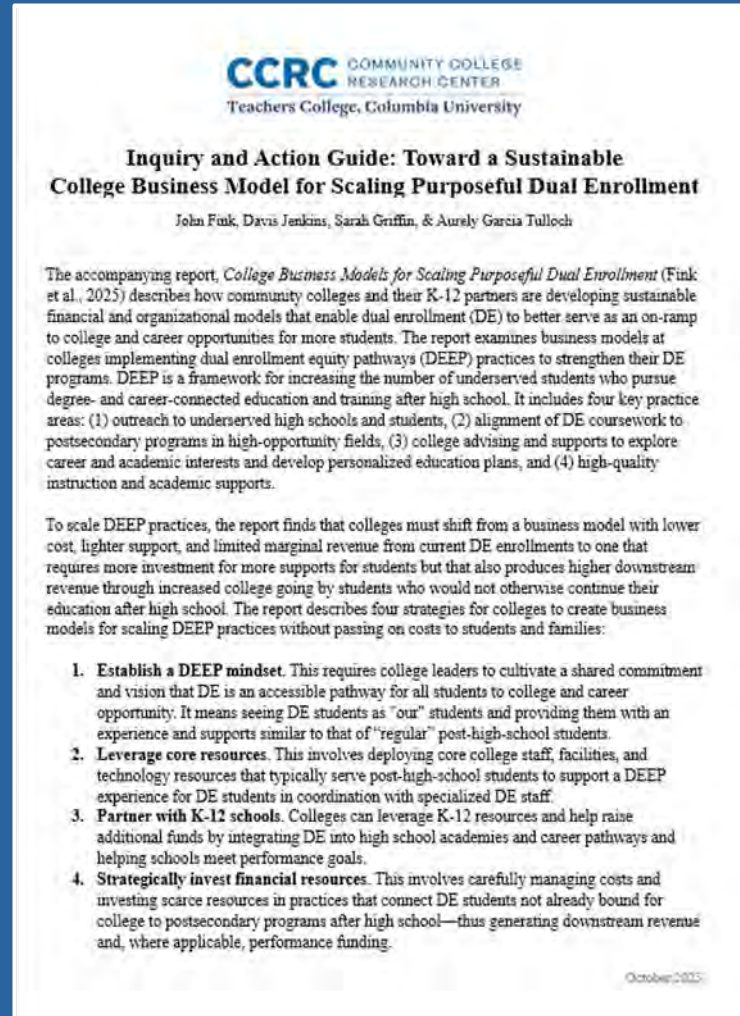
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4. Invest financial resources strategically

Such as:

- Measure and closely monitor dual enrollment costs
- Implement a sustainable pricing model that balances variable costs and returns
- Keep costs low and prioritize investments in underserved students and schools
- Capitalize on state and local workforce development funding
- Generate performance funding and reinvest in strengthening dual enrollment program supports
- Generate downstream revenue by increasing post-high-school matriculation of DE students

Take Action Using the Inquiry & Action Guide



Find the guide at ccrc.tc.columbia.edu.

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Overview of Action Steps

Action Steps Presented in This Guide

Phase 1. Self-Study and Gap Analysis to Identify DEEP Implementation Priorities	3
(1a) Produce a snapshot of your college's current DE program, including costs and revenues.	3
(1b) Inventory how dual enrollment is currently organized, staffed, and resourced.	7
(1c) Assess current DE practices using the DEEP framework to help identify priorities for improvement.	8
Phase 2. Planning and Execution of DEEP Practice Implementation Goals	11
(2a) Map resources available and needed for high-priority DEEP practice implementation goals. ...	11
(2b) Identify opportunities to redeploy current college resources.	12
(2c) Generate additional resources needed to scale DEEP practices.	13