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Dual Credit in New Mexico

Overview and Background

- Dual credit courses in New Mexico are college-level courses taken by high school students in which students earn simultaneous credit toward high school graduation and a postsecondary degree or certificate (Section 21-1-1.2 NMSA 1978). The dual credit program was established in New Mexico in 2008.
- College courses eligible for dual credit:
 - 1) Are academic or career technical education courses; and 2) Earn credit toward high school graduation and a postsecondary degree or certificate.
 - Remedial, developmental, and physical education courses are not eligible for dual credit.
- Section 21-1-1.2 NMSA 1978 requires institutions of higher education (IHEs) to waive all general fees and local education agencies (LEAs) to purchase books and course supplies for enrolled high school students. While statute requires HED to revise procedures in its funding formula to encourage IHEs to waive tuition for students taking dual credit courses, PED regulations require IHEs to waive tuition, which goes beyond statutory requirements. See [6.30.7 NMAC](#).
- For FY24, the General Appropriation Act (GAA) includes \$55 million from the general fund to the state equalization guarantee (SEG), the state's public school funding formula, for culturally and linguistically appropriate instructional materials, including dual credit instructional materials and educational technology.
- During the 2020-2021 school year (most recent data that is available), 16,587 New Mexico high school students enrolled in dual credit courses. Over 9 thousand students were female and almost 7 thousand were male.
- PED and HED report 44,407 unique course enrollments among the 16,587 students who participated in dual credit courses during the 2020-2021 school year, indicating that many students enroll in more than one dual credit course in a given school year.
- In New Mexico, 27 public postsecondary institutions offer dual credit courses. Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) serves the largest share of these students, with 4,479 enrolled dual credit students in the 2020-2021 school year.
- For students participating in dual credit courses, the four-year cohort graduation rate for the 2020 cohort was 89.3 percent. The four-year cohort graduation rate for all high school students in the same year was 76.9 percent, indicating students participating in dual credit are more likely to graduate high school.
- The top five content areas in which students take dual credit courses are:
 - 1) English language and literature (5,102 enrollees); 2) mathematics and statistics (4,744 enrollees); 3) biological and biomedicine services (2,921 enrollees); 4) foreign language services, literatures and linguistics (2,674 enrollees)

State law defines general fees as a "fixed sum charged to students for items not covered by tuition and required of such a proportion of all students that the student who does not pay the charge is an exception."

General fees include fees for matriculation, library services, student activities, student union services, student health services, debt service and athletics. An institution may charge fees in addition to general fees that are course-specific or that pertain to a smaller proportion of students. State law explicitly excludes general or other fees from the definition of "tuition."

Dual Credit Considerations and Challenges

- The funding of dual credit courses has been a topic of considerable debate in recent years. Students taking dual credit courses, since they are full-time students at their respective high schools, still generate funding

through the SEG. Institutions of higher education (IHEs) also claim dual credit hours in their postsecondary funding formula. The primary costs of dual credit include tuition, fees, instructional materials (including textbooks), and transportation costs to and from the student’s high school to the IHE, if a dual credit course is not being taken at the student’s high school. Each participating entity (student/family, secondary school, and postsecondary school) bear responsibility for various parts of these costs.

- The percentage of students that pass or fail dual credit courses is also a current challenge. Data shows 75 percent of dual credit courses taken are considered “successful,” meaning the student earned a grade of C or better. This means 25 percent of course enrollments are considered “unsuccessful,” meaning the student received a grade of D or F, withdrew from the course before completing, did not receive a grade from the higher education institution, or failed to complete coursework.
- Sufficient study of dual credit challenges has been an area of concern that has seen legislative action. House Bill 125 (HB125) from the 2023 legislative session would have created a temporary provision in law to establish a dual credit task force to study dual credit course offerings, enrollment practices, faculty hiring processes, student support services, credit transferability, and barriers to increasing dual credit participation. Despite passing both chambers of the Legislature unanimously, HB125 was vetoed by the governor. The veto message referenced the state’s existing Dual Credit Council as a body that may be able to accommodate the work of the proposed task force and that HB125 did not carry an appropriation to cover potential costs of the proposed task force.

New Mexico’s Dual Credit Council

- The Dual Credit Council, created in administrative code (see [6.30.7 NMAC](#)), is an advisory group consisting of staff from the Public Education Department (PED) and the Higher Education Department (HED). The council exists to facilitate and improve the dual credit program in New Mexico. Both HED and PED appoint three individuals to serve on the council each year. Leadership of the council is shared between HED and PED with an alternating chair from each department every two years. The council makes recommendations to both cabinet secretaries who then act jointly to respond to recommendations including:
 - Determining alignment of course content to ensure appropriate credit ratio allocation of higher education credit hours to one high school unit;
 - Administering appeals processes for local education agencies and higher education institutions; and
 - Developing a collaborative, systemic practice to facilitate the dual credit process for high school students.

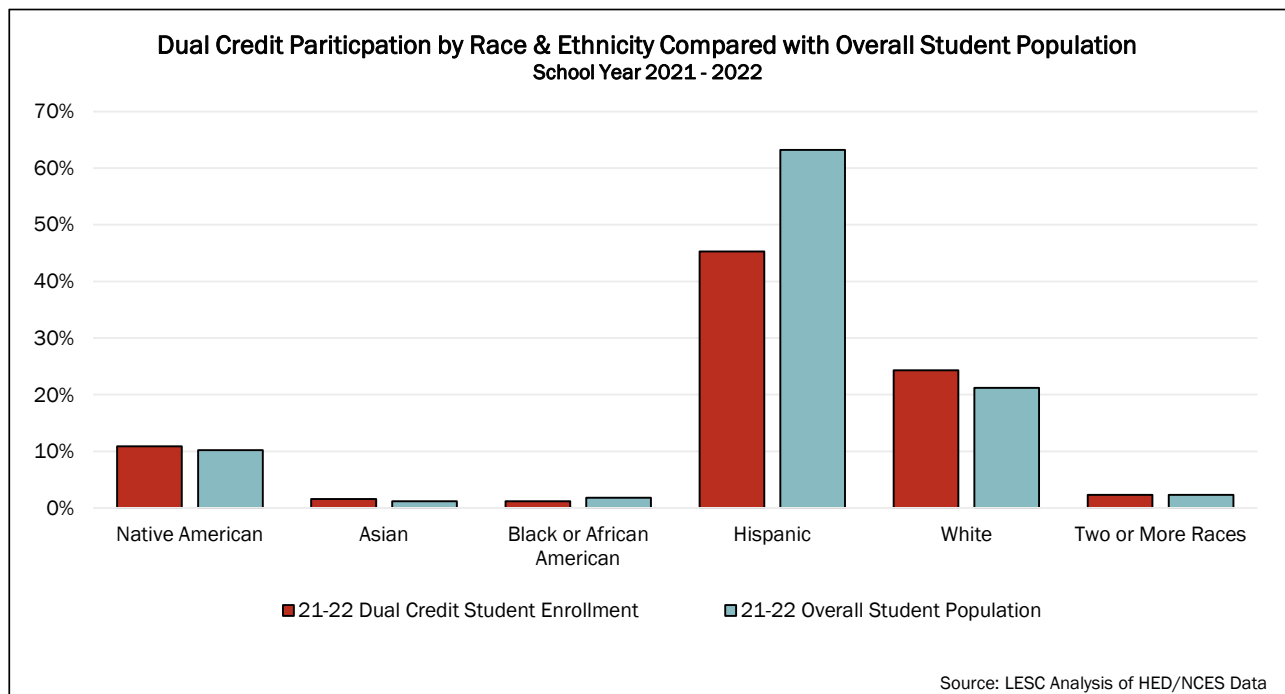
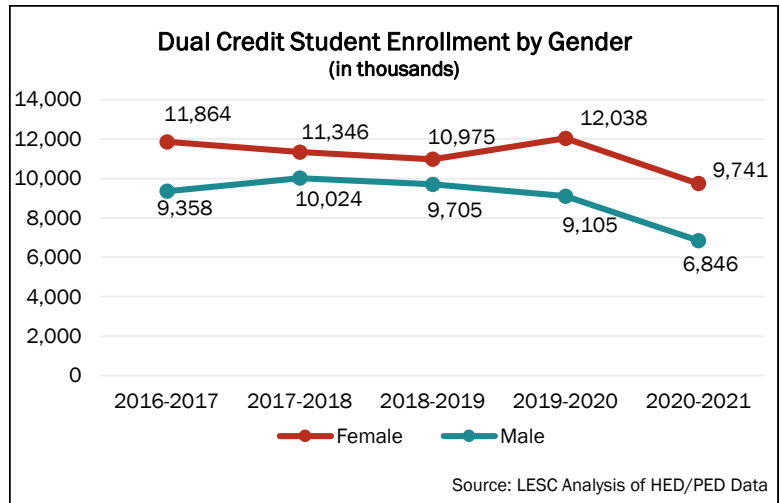
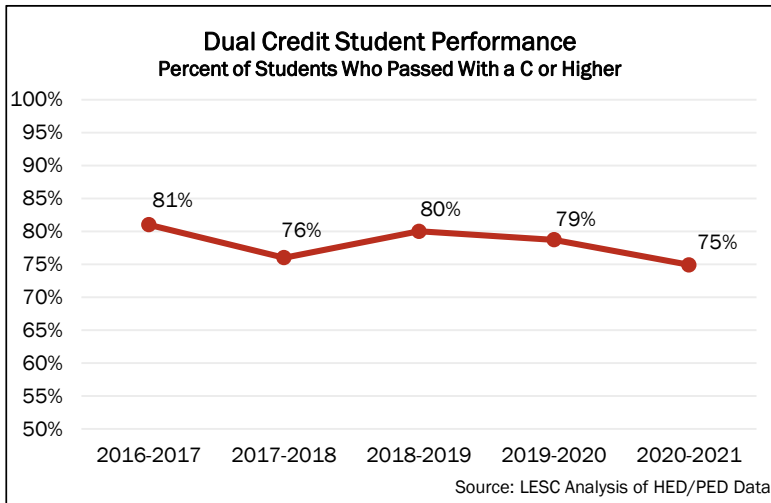
Data Snapshots of Dual Credit Student Performance and Demographics

Top 10 Dual Credit Courses by Enrollment

	Course Title	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	5-Year Student Enrollment Trends	
1	English Language and Literature/Letters	3,980	3,838	3,911	5,212	5,012		1
2	Mathematics and Statistics	4,079	3,993	3,722	4,934	4,744		2
3	Visual and Performing Arts	3,340	3,232	2,895	3,610	2,980		3
4	Biological and Biomedical Services	2,476	3,029	2,313	3,025	2,921		4
5	Foreign Languages, Literatures, And Linguistics	2,822	2,662	2,327	2,880	2,674		5
6	Physical Sciences	2,645	2,876	2,376	3,121	2,657		6
7	Social Sciences	2,589	2,703	2,230	2,648	2,333		7
8	Psychology	2,055	2,196	1,927	2,558	2,299		8
9	Personal Awareness and Self-Improvement	2,284	2,539	2,528	3,013	2,034		9
10	Health Professions and Related Programs	2,889	2,629	2,731	2,798	1,988		10

Source: LESC Analysis of HED/PED Data





Additional Dual Credit Resources

- [Dual Credit Annual Report 2020-2021](#) (New Mexico Public Education Department; New Mexico Higher Education Department); [Progress Report, Dual Credit: Funding and Student Outcomes](#) (Legislative Finance Committee, September 2017); [Policy & Procedures Manual for Dual Credit](#) (New Mexico Public Education Department; New Mexico Higher Education Department)