

➤ **House of Representatives Public Hearing Testimony – July 26, 2022**

Chancellor Justin Lonon, Dallas College

Interim Charge:

Examine partnerships between K-12, higher education institutions, and employers that promote postsecondary, career readiness, and identify current obstacles that public schools, higher education institutions, and employers face. Make recommendations to ensure career and technical education programs, internships, apprenticeships, and other opportunities are more accessible.

- Many jobs in today’s economy require a college degree, and degree holders typically earn higher wages than individuals whose highest credential is a high school diploma. In other words, college graduates and their families benefit from the increased earnings and social and economic mobility that a degree affords. These benefits translate into stronger local, regional, and national economies as well.
 - Research from the Institute of Higher Education’s [Lighting the Path to Remove Systemic Barriers in Higher Education and Award Earned Postsecondary Credentials](#) documented how increasing the postsecondary attainment rate of students of color and from low-income backgrounds generates measurable returns for individuals, communities, and society at large.
 - Research findings of the Community College Research Center indicate that students who participate in dual credit are more likely to finish high school, persist in postsecondary education, and accumulate college credits than their non-dually enrolled peers.
 - Nationally, 82% of public high schools offer dual enrollment coursework, mostly in partnership with community colleges.
- Dallas has significant workforce challenges that could limit further economic growth.
 - Employers report that there is not enough skilled and qualified local talent to meet business needs
 - Only 39% of Dallas County young adults have an Associate degree or higher
 - Only 1 in 4 adults earn a living wage of \$50,000/year
- Since HB505 was adopted by the Texas Legislature in 2015, Dallas College has expanded dual credit enrollment by 133% (from 12,643 to 29,414 in 2021-22), now representing 33% of its credit enrollment, with the majority from Title I high schools and low-income families and 87% students of color (54% Latino, 20% African American, 13% White, 7% Asian, 6% Other). During the past two years, dual credit student enrollment increased while adult student enrollment declined. The life circumstances of many adults changed, and they were forced to reprioritize as financial challenges, family obligations, childcare needs, lack of transportation, health challenges, work demands, new professional opportunities, or any combination of these made continuing with higher education seem impossible.

- With almost 200 high school partners, Dallas College offers comprehensive dual credit courses leading to certificates and degrees, including high demand Career and Technical Education programs that lead directly to employment. For in-district students, tuition waivers totaling \$24.6M enabled students to enroll in dual credit courses tuition and debt-free.
- Dallas College also expanded its facilities and industry partnerships to implement 85 College and Career Readiness School Models, including 29 Early College High Schools (ECHS), 41 Pathways in Technology (P-TECH) -- the most in the nation, and 14 Texas Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (T-STEM) Academies. 49% of Dallas College dual credit students are now enrolled in a P-TECH and ECHS. With the Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) alone, almost 100 industry partners support career exposure, mentoring, internships, and employment opportunities for 8,000 P-TECH/ECHS students.
- In 2019-20, 1,454 graduating high school students received a total of 2,066 Dallas College associate degrees and certificates. In 2021, this increased to 2,335 credentials earned (1,783 associate degrees and 552 certificates). For Dallas ISD, 10% of the 2021 graduating seniors (919) earned an associate degree, many from high schools that historically had less than 15% of their graduates complete any postsecondary credential within 6 years after graduation. This year, 2,200 graduating dual credit students from across Dallas County applied for graduation and participated in Dallas College's commencement ceremonies before they graduated from high school. P-TECH graduates are now working for Dallas regional employers and industry partners and other ECHS graduates are pursuing bachelor's degrees at universities.
- Dual credit students who do not complete an associate degree are also eligible for Dallas County Promise if they attend one of the 57 Promise high schools in Dallas County. There will be 69 high schools starting in Fall 2022. Dallas County Promise, funded by the Dallas College Foundation, covers the gap between need-based financial aid and the cost of tuition for up to three years or the completion of an associate degree, whichever comes first. Students seeking a bachelor's degree will have up to five years to complete their studies. Promise Scholars are also matched with a Dallas College Success Coach who serves as a mentor to help students from the end of their high school senior year through college completion. A total of 15,982 Promise students, graduating from high school from 2018 through 2021, have been enrolled at Dallas College.
- The National Clearinghouse Research Center has documented the positive effects of dual enrollment on transfer outcomes including high school grades and completion, college enrollment, college credit accumulation, and college degree completion (U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, What Works Clearinghouse, 2017). Dual enrollment is particularly beneficial for students from underserved groups. Dual enrollment participation has a positive effect on bachelor's degree attainment among participants, compared with non-participants with similar student and family characteristics, measures of student achievement, and high school characteristics. The effects were particularly strong for first-generation college students and students with parents who had some college experience but no degree. Former dual enrollment participants who subsequently enrolled at a public four-year college and completed a bachelor's degree did so, on average, one year sooner than other completers who

did not participate in dual enrollment. Among associate degree earners, former dual enrollment participants completed their degree two years earlier, on average, than did non-participants. This national study parallels Dallas College research, which found that university students with dual credit from the former Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD) had a first-year persistence rate of 92.1% and had higher four-year graduation rates than their peers at the university.

- Financial challenges include:
 - Sustaining tuition waivers that are currently supported by property taxes as well as the increasing operational costs of supporting dual credit students. The annual operational budget is about \$5.1 million, which supports staff for dual credit operations as well as instructional services payments to high schools that have instructors credentialed by Dallas College to teach dual credit courses. This does not include the cost of Dallas College faculty assigned to teach dual credit students, facilities remodeling costs that include additional office and classroom space and specific food service requirements, which are necessary when the high school students transition to college campuses in their junior and senior years
 - Increasing costs of maintaining campus facilities and equipment and the excessive cost of technology that keeps pace with ongoing innovations
 - Attracting, supporting, and retaining faculty to teach dual credit courses both at high schools and college campuses
- Despite the successes, the Texas outcomes-based Student Success Points and operational funding do not incentivize or reward dual credit enrollment within the THECB Accountability System and state formula. **Student Success Points (SSPs) should be revised** so that they are sufficient enough to incentivize behavior and simple enough to reward ultimate outcomes (transfer, credential attainment, occupational outcomes). SSPs are only 3.5% of total community college annual operating revenues.
- A state funding model for sustaining dual credit enrollment also needs to be developed that does not solely rely on community colleges to fund tuition waivers and student support through property taxes and provides equity in access to all Texas public high school students. Supplemental state funding is needed to address variances in costs of instruction and wrap-around services for key student populations, such as economically disadvantaged students, students of color, academically underprepared students, and students with disabilities. The funding model should also encourage and support community colleges to participate in shared services while expanding workforce and educational opportunities for all regions and populations across the state.