



The Honorable Tom Wolf
Governor
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf,

We are writing to urge you to establish a comprehensive dual enrollment program for the Commonwealth.

As noted in the “Schools That Teach” agenda and Pennsylvania’s ESSA Consolidated State Plan, advanced coursework – including dual enrollment –provides an accelerated pathway to a postsecondary degree, and in particular help historically underserved students graduate from high school.

Research shows that dual enrollment programs offer significant benefits to students, including reducing the average time and cost to-degree, and increasing the likelihood of graduation for participating students. According to a study published by the Education Commission of the States (ECS), dual enrollment positively influences college degree attainment, even after accounting for student, family, schooling achievements, and school context factors.¹ When students have an opportunity to start earning college credit while still in high school, they are exposed to rigorous curricula that prepares them for college coursework and expectations. In addition, accelerated learning gives them the motivation, financial incentive, and confidence to continue on to college. The enclosed document illustrates the positive impact dual enrollment has had on Pennsylvania students.

Data from ECS also shows that forty-seven states plus Washington, D.C., offer dual enrollment programs for students.² These states, and local secondary-postsecondary collaborations across Pennsylvania, have recognized the positive impact of dual enrollment offerings. In the 2015-16 academic year, over 14,000 high school students in Pennsylvania participated in some type of dual enrollment program at a Pennsylvania community college, with more students likely participating in similar programs at other postsecondary education institutions in the state. Yet, many more students need access to these programs, particularly if Pennsylvania is to meet its postsecondary attainment goal of 60% of Pennsylvanians with a postsecondary degree or credential by 2025.

¹ http://www.ecs.org/rs/Studies/DetailStudy.aspx?study_ID=a0r70000003q8KsAAI and <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/broadening-benefits-dual-enrollment-rp.pdf>

² <http://ecs.force.com/mbdata/mbprofallRT?Rep=DE13A>

We were encouraged to see the Administration recommend a \$9M dual enrollment program at PHEAA as part of the FY 15-16 budget proposal. We encourage you to revisit this policy proposal and include dual enrollment in the upcoming FY 18-19 budget.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth A. Bolden
President/CEO
Pennsylvania Commission for
Community Colleges



Nathan Mains
CEO
Pennsylvania School
Boards Association



Dr. Mark DiRocco
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Association
of School Administrators

Enclosure

CC: Secretary Sarah Galbally
Secretary Pedro Rivera
Secretary Randy Albright

A Closer Look at Dual Enrollment Success

Thousands of students across Pennsylvania enroll in dual enrollment opportunities at postsecondary education institutions across the state each year. Below is a sampling of their stories:

- Thanks to the high school dual enrollment program at **Delaware County Community College**, Monica McCarthy started at Drexel University in Fall 2016 having already completed 88 credits toward her general studies major and shaved a year off her course load at the university. Monica also saved money on college tuition and fees by completing college courses while still in high school. “I did not take the dual enrollment courses to save money,” she said. “But it ended up saving me a lot of money.” Her mother, Elizabeth McCarthy agreed. “For the time she put in, for the money we spent, the return was invaluable,” she said.
- **Pennsylvania Highlands Community College** graduate Carly Cernic is grateful for the 29 dual enrollment credits she earned while a student at Greater Johnstown High School (GJHS) - nearly a full year of college, for a fraction of the price. Entering into college with this amount of credits allowed Carly to finish her dual-major in less time than it takes most students to finish college with a single major. Specifically, in only three years, she graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown with a Bachelor’s of Science in Computer Science and Mathematics. While some students can accrue a sizeable student loan debt from post-secondary education, three years after graduating from high school, Carly has a bachelor’s degree, a salaried position with benefits, and minimal student loan debt. The dual enrollment program offered her a path to success at an early stage in her education and career.
- Ryan Hoffman received his associate’s degree from **Reading Area Community College** before graduating from Exeter High School in Berks County, accumulating 63 college credits over three years. Ryan majors in biology at Albright College and plans to complete a pharmacy program.
- Kailee Lear aspires to be a neurosurgeon. She was among the first Ligonier Valley High School students who graduated from **Westmoreland County Community College** before she received her high school degree. “Even two years off will get me into the workforce quicker and will take off those two years of expenses,” said Lear, who, upon graduation, planned to attend the University of Pittsburgh to study neuroscience and pre-med.
- Sadira Stallings from Hanover took most of her classes from **HACC, Central Pennsylvania’s Community College**, online, which allowed her the flexibility to work two jobs to pay tuition and maintain high school activities. She graduated with an associate degree in business administration before she graduated from high school, and anticipates returning to HACC to get her associate degree in nursing to become a registered nurse.