

# The State of Advanced Coursework IN WASHINGTON

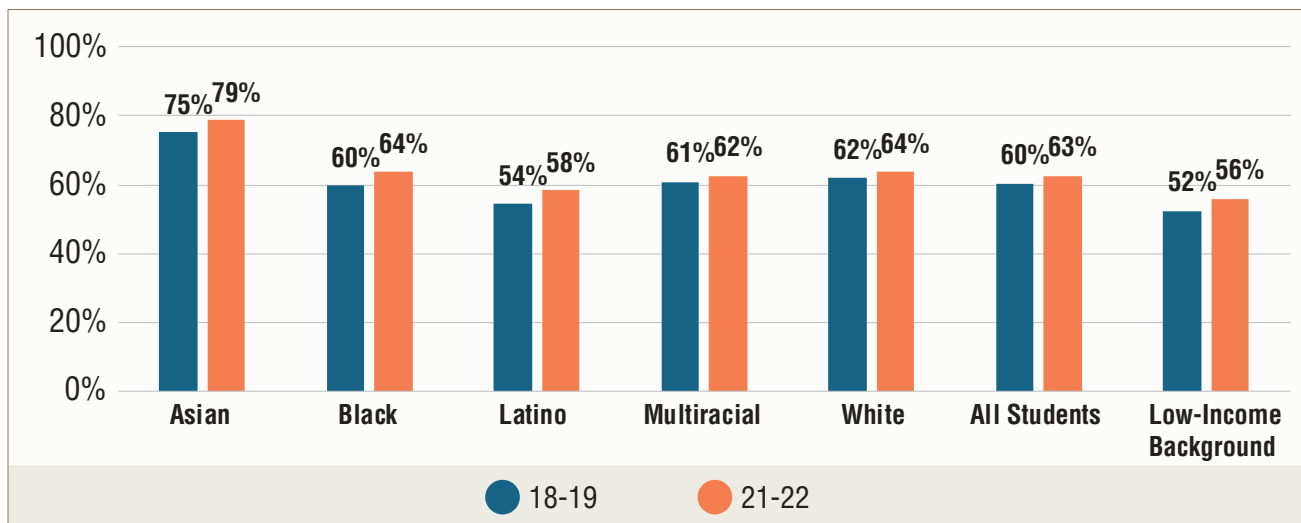
**WASHINGTON HAS DONE EXCITING WORK IN THE PAST FEW YEARS TO BROADEN ACCESS TO ADVANCED COURSEWORK OPPORTUNITIES.** The 2023 legislative session culminated in the elimination of College in the High School (CiHS) fees, a strengthening of the state's High School and Beyond plan, and more options for students through Summer Running Start (RS). The state also has been a national leader in academic acceleration policies that automatically enroll students who show readiness — through a test score or other identified criteria — in the next advanced class in a sequence.

Although the state's focus on academic acceleration is commendable, there are still some districts that have yet to adopt an acceleration policy, while others have moved, or are ready to move, beyond policy adoption to implementation of best practices. Additionally, while recent policies have extended dual credit access, some barriers remain, such as fees for Advanced Placement (AP) tests and career and technical education (CTE) certifications, and an unknown return on investment for CTE dual credit (DC) classes. As new policies are implemented, it is important for state and local policymakers to use available data to identify existing opportunity gaps and ensure that historically underrepresented students have more on-ramps to college and career success.

## State Context and Highlights

Comparing the school years 2018-19 and 2021-22, advanced coursework completion rose slightly. Completion rates for Black and Latino students and students from low-income backgrounds increased by 4 percentage points, which is similar to the 3 percentage point increase for all students. This increase is likely the result of more students enrolling in CTE dual credit courses, since enrollment in other advanced coursework opportunities (AP, CiHS, RS) didn't increase much. Given how many Black and Latino students are enrolling in CTE dual credit courses, and the [question](#) of whether these courses pay off, it's important to evaluate whether these students are getting the same benefits from CTE dual credit courses as they would from other types of dual credit courses.

### Statewide Advanced Coursework Completion, by Race: SY 2018-19 & 2021-22



## **RECOMMENDATION #1:**

### **Support districts that have not yet adopted an automatic enrollment policy, and strengthen implementation in districts with existing policies**

A small number of districts, mostly small and rural, still have not adopted an acceleration policy, so the state should ensure that these districts have a plan in place to implement their policy and provide guidance to support districts in the process. For most districts that have already adopted an acceleration policy, the state can elevate promising practices and successes from districts that have implemented equitable dual credit policies.

## **RECOMMENDATION #2:**

### **Eliminate barriers to advanced courses for students from low-income backgrounds, such as course and exam fees**

While 2023's SB 5048 eliminated CiHS fees, and HB 1316 expanded summer RS, there are still fees for students who participate in RS, as well as fees for AP, international baccalaureate (IB) tests, and CTE certifications, depending on the school a student attends. The state should build on the universal access model they created in SB 5048 and work to eliminate fees for all students in other dual credit programs.

## **RECOMMENDATION #3:**

### **Increase the rate of students earning transferable college credit for CTE dual credit courses**

CTE courses that are labeled as dual credit must be rigorous, career relevant, and give students opportunities to earn postsecondary credit and/or credentials. Current barriers can be addressed by implementing the policy recommendations outlined by the [CTE Dual Credit Project](#), such as building aligned data systems, strengthening student advising, and expanding K-12/college partnerships to increase the number of CTE dual credit students who earn college credit. Additionally, the state can also cover the transcription cost for students.

## **RECOMMENDATION #4:**

### **Ensure that the state collects and clearly reports essential data, so it can monitor access to advanced classes and student success in them and ensure that they are equitable**

Currently, Washington's [school report card dashboard](#) broadly defines "dual credit completion" and lumps together all dual credit opportunities. While the category disaggregates data by race, ethnicity, and student group, to better identify inequities across course types, the state should also share disaggregated completion and proficiency data separated by advanced course type.

## **RECOMMENDATION #5:**

### **Link student records across all education levels and agencies via a single course and credit earning system used by all dual credit programs in the state**

To address equity gaps, the state must be transparent about who is earning credits and where. An interlinked data system would be a large effort, although it would have an important impact on credit earning for students. Even if the state does not prioritize this effort, it can still work toward stronger data transparency. To see how some other states are working to collect high-quality data and improve and interconnect their statewide data systems, see Advance CTE and the College in High School Alliance's resource on [The State of CTE](#).