

Report to the Governor and the General Assembly of Virginia

# The Costs of Virginia's Dual Enrollment Program

2022



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# Summary: The Costs of Virginia’s Dual Enrollment Program

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## WHAT WE FOUND

### **Recent changes expected to improve the quality and transferability of dual enrollment courses, but there is a shortage of qualified high school teachers for dual enrollment**

In 2018, the General Assembly passed legislation to improve the quality of the state’s dual enrollment programs and to increase the likelihood that the state’s public four-year higher education institutions would accept dual enrollment credits. The reforms required by the legislature—and implemented by the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), and Virginia’s public higher education institutions—are likely to accomplish these goals, helping students achieve the time and cost savings that are promoted as a key benefit of dual enrollment courses.

A primary obstacle to increasing the number of Virginia high school students who can benefit from these reforms is the shortage of high school teachers qualified to teach dual enrollment courses. To teach dual enrollment, high school teachers must meet the same qualification requirements as community college faculty, which must conform to the requirements of the colleges’ accrediting body. Dual enrollment teachers are required to earn 18 credits at the master’s degree level in the subject area they teach, which is costly and time-consuming to complete. Additionally, teaching dual enrollment courses requires extra work for teachers, but few school divisions provide supplemental compensation for it.

### **School divisions incur more expenses than community colleges to operate dual enrollment programs**

Community colleges and school divisions collaborate to offer dual enrollment programs, and both incur dual enrollment-specific expenses. Community colleges dedicate staff time to accredit school divisions’ teachers, approve the course materials, and supervise course instruction, while school divisions provide the dual enrollment courses at the high schools and offer academic advising to students about dual enrollment programs. Both community colleges and school divisions incur other dual enrollment-specific costs as well, such as IT costs.

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#### WHY WE DID THIS STUDY

In 2022, JLARC approved a study resolution directing JLARC staff to review the costs incurred by community colleges and school divisions to operate dual enrollment programs in Virginia. The study focused on non-career and technical education dual enrollment courses taught on public high school campuses in partnership with Virginia’s 23 community colleges. Dual enrollment courses taught on college campuses or in partnership with other higher education institutions were not part of this review.

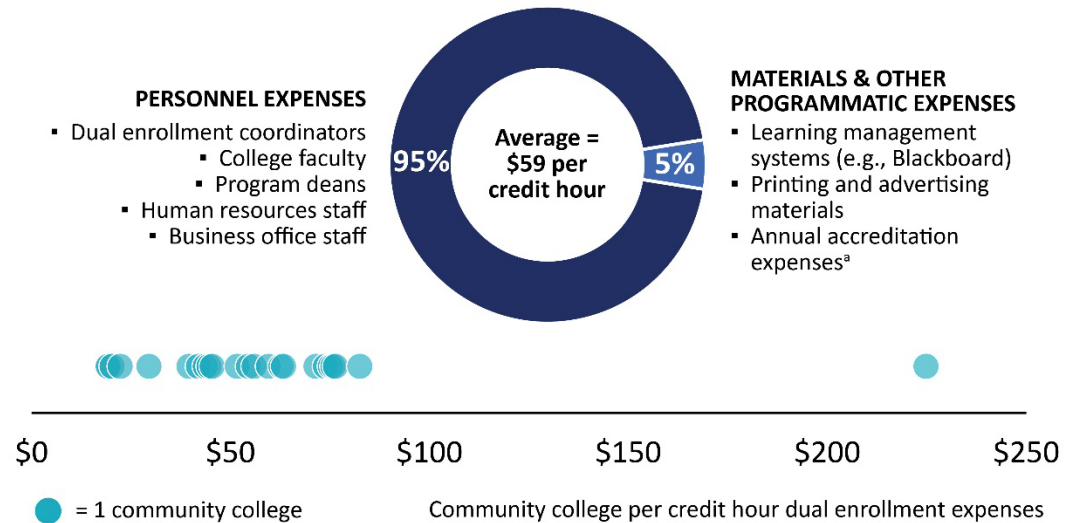
#### ABOUT VIRGINIA’S DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAMS:

Through dual enrollment programs, high school students earn college credits by taking college-level courses, primarily at their high school or a community college. State law requires school divisions to offer dual enrollment. Most dual enrollment courses are taught at high schools by high school teachers. Dual enrollment participation increased 54 percent between the 2012–13 academic year and 2021–22. Dual enrollment students as a proportion of total community college enrollment has grown from 13 percent in 2012 to 28 percent in 2021.

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Community colleges' dual enrollment expenses are \$59 per credit hour, on average. The salaries of the faculty and staff who administer and supervise the program make up most of colleges' costs. School divisions' dual enrollment expenses are \$276 per credit hour, on average. The largest component of these expenses is teacher compensation.

**Community colleges spend an average of \$59 per credit hour on dual enrollment, driven mostly by personnel costs**

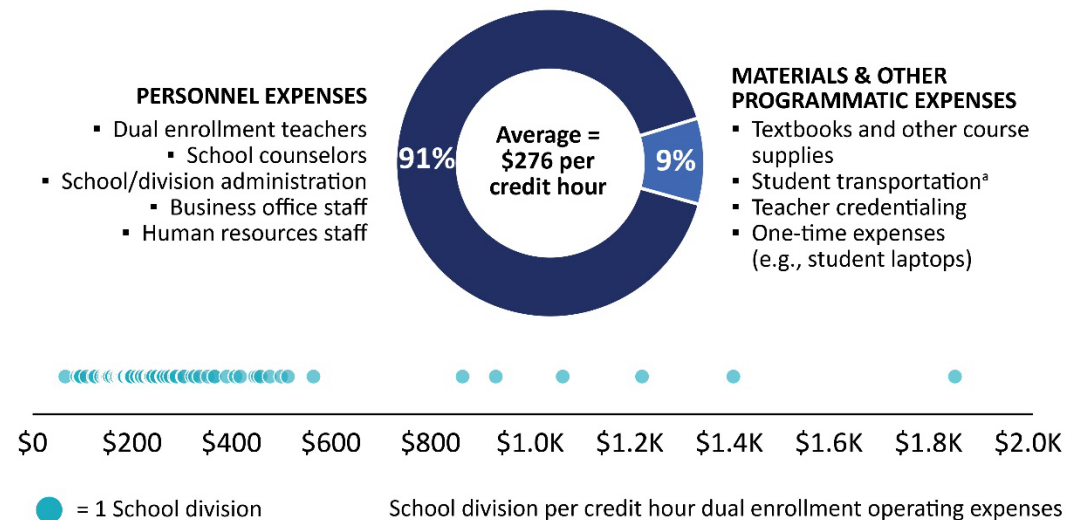


SOURCE: JLARC staff dual enrollment cost survey; VCCS course enrollment data for the 2021–22 academic year. NOTE: Community colleges' dual enrollment expenses cost a median of \$55 per credit hour. Expenses listed are not reflective of all programs. For example, two colleges did not incur any materials or other programmatic expenses for their dual enrollment programs. Personnel expenses include solely the portion of staff salaries attributable to time spent on dual enrollment-related responsibilities. <sup>a</sup> Expenses associated with maintaining optional accreditation by the National Association of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP).

**Most community colleges charge tuition and fees to cover dual enrollment costs, averaging about \$24 per credit hour**

VCCS considers dual enrollment students to be college students, and colleges charge the school divisions in their service areas for each student who enrolls in a dual-enrollment course taught at the high school. VCCS policy requires community colleges to charge school divisions no more than 40 percent of the tuition charged to traditional college students and allows school divisions to negotiate even lower tuition with the community college in their region, which all do. Most colleges also charge fees in addition to tuition. In 2021–22, 21 of Virginia's community colleges charged school divisions an average of about \$24 per credit hour in dual enrollment tuition and/or fees, which amounted to about \$200 for a student taking a typical course load of three, three-credit hour courses.

**School divisions spend an average of \$276 per credit hour on dual enrollment operating expenses, driven mostly by personnel costs**



SOURCE: JLARC staff dual enrollment cost survey; VCCS course enrollment data for the 2021–22 academic year.  
 NOTE: School divisions’ dual enrollment expenses cost a median of \$178 per credit hour. Expenses listed are not reflective of all programs. Does not include any dual enrollment tuition or fees paid by the division to the community college. Personnel expenses include solely the portion of staff salaries attributable to time spent on dual enrollment-related responsibilities. <sup>a</sup> Expenses associated with transporting students to the location where dual enrollment courses are taught, such as the local career center.

**An estimated majority of dual enrollment students in Virginia pay no tuition and fees for dual enrollment courses**

Of the school divisions for which information was available, 63 percent of students do not pay dual enrollment tuition and fees. Based on the information available for these divisions, an estimated majority of students statewide do not pay dual enrollment tuition and fees. School divisions that are subject to charges from community colleges absorb these charges rather than pass them on to students. Students who are charged by their school divisions for dual enrollment pay about \$33 per credit hour on average, or about \$300 per year for an average course load of three, three-credit courses.

**All community colleges, and the vast majority of school divisions, receive enough general funds to cover their dual enrollment costs**

VCCS bases community colleges’ state general fund allocations on their full-time equivalent students enrolled each fall—and counts dual enrollment and non-dual enrollment students equally. In the 2021–22 academic year, each community college received substantially more general funds than needed to cover its dual enrollment programs’ costs. Community colleges report they use this funding to support other aspects of their operations. For example, several colleges reported using these funds to support their career and technical education programs, which can be especially costly to operate because of the technology, space, and faculty expertise required.

Of the school divisions that responded to a JLARC survey, 94 percent reported receiving sufficient state and local funding to cover their dual enrollment expenses. Based on these survey results, it is estimated that the vast majority of school divisions receive enough state and local funds to cover their dual enrollment costs.

### **Charging dual enrollment students tuition and fees is unnecessary and creates a barrier for economically disadvantaged students**

Charging students for dual enrollment is not necessary because all colleges and the vast majority of school divisions receive sufficient state and local funding to cover dual enrollment program costs. This unnecessary tuition imposes costs on a substantial number of students and leads to inconsistencies in the amount students pay for dual enrollment across the state. Charging dual enrollment tuition and fees also makes dual enrollment less accessible to economically disadvantaged students.

## **WHAT WE RECOMMEND**

### **Legislative action**

- Include language in the Appropriation Act prohibiting community colleges and school divisions from charging tuition and fees for non-career and technical education dual enrollment courses taught on public high school campuses, as long as state funds cover dual enrollment expenses.
- Direct community colleges to document and track the amounts and sources of revenues and expenses related to their dual enrollment programs to improve transparency in what colleges spend to operate their dual enrollment programs, how they are funded, and funding sufficiency.
- Include language in the Appropriation Act to specify the amount appropriated for non-career and technical education dual enrollment courses taught on public high school campuses, based on community colleges' dual enrollment costs, to ensure transparency in state funding decisions.
- Direct VCCS to design and implement a process for distributing state funds to community colleges for their dual enrollment students based on the dual enrollment program expenses reported by the colleges to ensure transparency in how each college's dual enrollment program is funded.
- Assign to SCHEV responsibility for overseeing the state's dual enrollment program.

### **POLICY OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- Appropriate funding for bonuses to high school dual enrollment teachers.
- Appropriate funding to pay college faculty to teach dual enrollment courses at high schools with an insufficient number of dual enrollment teachers.

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**JLARC staff propose policy options for the General Assembly's consideration**, rather than recommendations, when (1) the action proposed is a policy judgment best made by elected officials, (2) addressing a report finding is not necessarily required but doing so could be beneficial, (3) there are multiple ways to address a report finding, and there is insufficient evidence to support a single best way.

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- If the General Assembly prohibits colleges and school divisions from charging dual enrollment tuition and fees: (i) appropriate funding for community colleges to replace dual enrollment tuition and fee revenue and (ii) create a grant program for school divisions that demonstrate the need for funds to create or maintain high-quality, well-staffed dual enrollment programs.
- Make no changes to the methodology that is used to base appropriations to VCCS for colleges' Educational and General Programs so that community colleges' overall funding levels are not reduced by the surplus amount of state funds they have been receiving for dual enrollment programs.

The complete list of recommendations and options is available on page vii.



# Recommendations and Policy Options: The Costs of Virginia's Dual Enrollment Program

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JLARC staff typically make recommendations to address findings during reviews. Staff also sometimes propose policy options rather than recommendations. The three most common reasons staff propose policy options rather than recommendations are: (1) the action proposed is a policy judgment best made by the General Assembly or other elected officials, (2) the evidence indicates that addressing a report finding is not necessarily required, but doing so could be beneficial, or (3) there are multiple ways in which a report finding could be addressed and there is insufficient evidence of a single best way to address the finding.

## Recommendations

### RECOMMENDATION 1

The Virginia Department of Education should work in consultation with the Virginia Community College System to draft and issue a superintendent's memo (i) outlining the types of alternative credentials and/or expertise that may be considered acceptable by the community colleges' accrediting body for qualifying high school teachers to teach dual enrollment courses; and (ii) clarifying that, on a case-by-case basis, divisions with teachers who may have sufficient alternative qualifications should work with their community college to determine whether these teachers can teach dual enrollment and document their credentials accordingly. (Chapter 2)

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### RECOMMENDATION 2

The Virginia Community College System, through its existing Memorandum of Understanding process for dual enrollment programs, should require community colleges to annually review school divisions' dual enrollment course offerings and provide recommendations to divisions on how they can increase the number or types of Passport and Uniform Certificate of General Studies courses they offer. (Chapter 2)

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### RECOMMENDATION 3

The General Assembly may wish to consider including language in the Appropriation Act that requires school divisions to provide dual enrollment courses to economically disadvantaged students at no cost by requiring community colleges and school divisions to waive dual enrollment tuition and fee charges for economically disadvantaged students for courses taught on Virginia public high school campuses. (Chapter 3)

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#### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

The General Assembly may wish to consider including language and funding in the Appropriation Act to pay for expenses associated with taking dual enrollment courses, excluding tuition and fees, that are incurred by economically disadvantaged students, including the cost of textbooks and other supplies, and directing the Virginia Department of Education to distribute such funds based on the proportion of economically disadvantaged students participating in dual enrollment in each school division. (Chapter 3)

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#### **RECOMMENDATION 5**

The General Assembly may wish to consider including language in the Appropriation Act prohibiting community colleges and school divisions from charging tuition or fees for non-career and technical education dual enrollment courses taught on Virginia public high school campuses as long as their dual enrollment expenses are covered by general fund appropriations. (Chapter 4)

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#### **RECOMMENDATION 6**

The General Assembly may wish to consider including language in the Appropriation Act under Item 212, Educational and General Programs for the Virginia Community College System, which specifies the amount appropriated for non-career and technical education dual enrollment courses taught on Virginia public high school campuses that is based on community colleges' costs to operate these dual enrollment programs. (Chapter 4)

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#### **RECOMMENDATION 7**

The General Assembly may wish to consider including language in the Appropriation Act directing the State Board for Community Colleges to develop and implement a process for distributing state general funds to community colleges for their dual enrollment programs based on the dual enrollment program expenses reported by the colleges. (Chapter 4)

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#### **RECOMMENDATION 8**

The General Assembly may wish to consider including language in the Appropriation Act directing community colleges to document and track the amounts and sources of revenues and expenses related to their dual enrollment programs, and report this data by September 1 every two years, starting in 2024 to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and the Virginia Community College System. (Chapter 4)

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## **RECOMMENDATION 9**

The General Assembly may wish to consider amending § 23.1-203 of the Code of Virginia to assign to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia responsibility for overseeing the state's dual enrollment program, including, but not limited to, (i) overseeing financial reporting by community colleges on their dual enrollment programs; (ii) tracking the extent to which state general fund appropriations continue to sufficiently cover community colleges' dual enrollment expenses; (iii) providing assistance to colleges and school divisions to maximize Passport and Uniform Certificate of General Studies courses offered; (iv) coordinating initiatives to increase the number of dual enrollment teachers across the state; and (v) evaluating the extent to which dual enrollment credits are accepted by Virginia's higher education institutions and recommending improvements and strategies for maximizing dual enrollment course transferability. (Chapter 4)

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## **Policy Options to Consider**

### **POLICY OPTION 1**

The General Assembly could appropriate funding to the Virginia Department of Education to provide annual bonuses to high school teachers statewide who teach dual enrollment courses. (Chapter 2)

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### **POLICY OPTION 2**

The General Assembly could appropriate funding to the Virginia Community College System to pay college faculty to teach dual enrollment courses at selected high schools that lack a sufficient number of credentialed teachers in their geographic area. (Chapter 2)

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### **POLICY OPTION 3**

The General Assembly could include language and funding in the Appropriation Act to provide an additional \$6.2 million to the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) as an adjustment to VCCS's base budget, and direct VCCS to allocate these funds to each community college to replace the revenue colleges would have received in dual enrollment tuition and fees. (Chapter 4)

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### **POLICY OPTION 4**

The General Assembly could include language and funding in the Appropriation Act to establish and provide funds for a grant program that would provide funds to school divisions that demonstrate a need for financial assistance to maintain a high quality, well-staffed dual enrollment program. (Chapter 4)

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**POLICY OPTION 5**

The General Assembly could continue to use its current methodology for determining the amount to appropriate to the Virginia Community College System for colleges' Educational and General Programs if it designates a specific amount for dual enrollment under Item 212 of the Appropriation Act. (Chapter 4)

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# 1 Dual Enrollment in Virginia

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In January 2022, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) directed its staff to determine the costs incurred by community colleges and school divisions to provide dual enrollment courses. This research was part of a study resolution directing staff to review Virginia’s higher education student financial aid award policies and processes.

To address this mandate, JLARC staff conducted several research activities. Staff conducted a statewide survey of community colleges and school divisions to collect financial data and other information about their dual enrollment programs including: (1) expenses incurred to provide dual enrollment courses; (2) revenue sources and amounts used to cover dual enrollment expenses; and (3) student expenses to take dual enrollment courses. Additionally, staff analyzed dual enrollment data from the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). JLARC staff also interviewed community college presidents and staff, school division superintendents and staff, national dual enrollment experts, and dual enrollment practitioners in other states. (See Appendix B for a detailed description of research methods.)

## High school dual enrollment students earn college credit, which may reduce higher education costs

Through dual enrollment programs, high school students earn both high school and college credits by taking college-level courses, primarily at their high school or a community college (sidebar). State law requires school divisions to offer dual enrollment and make students aware of these courses. School divisions and colleges both play an important role in providing these courses to students (Figure 1-1). School divisions typically provide classroom space and credentialed teachers, while community colleges provide program oversight intended to ensure course quality. Students who complete dual enrollment courses successfully with a grade of “C” or better receive both high school and college credit for the course.

Most dual enrollment courses are taught at the high school by high school teachers, but some are only taught on the college campus by college faculty. Dual enrollment courses are also offered online in certain school divisions, usually because they have a limited number of credentialed teachers available, and virtual instruction allows one teacher to teach students from multiple high schools in the division simultaneously.

Although most dual enrollment courses are offered in general education subjects (e.g., math, science, English), some school divisions also offer career and technical education (CTE) dual enrollment courses. Unlike traditional dual enrollment courses, CTE

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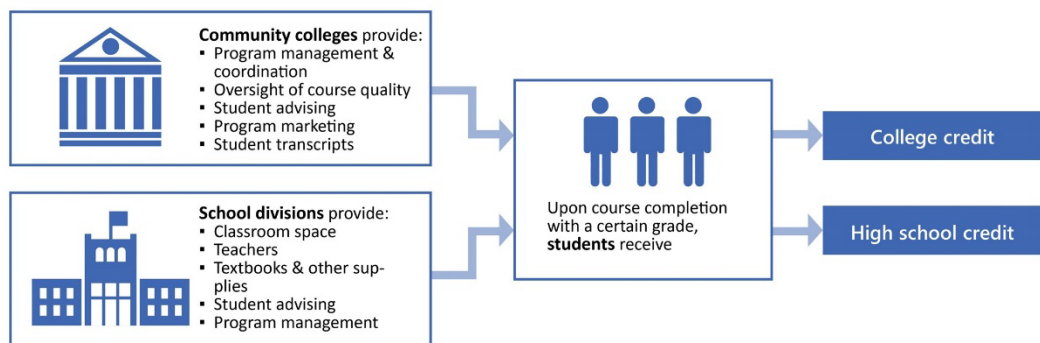
**A small number of dual enrollment courses are offered by four-year higher education institutions and Richard Bland College, typically courses that are not offered by community colleges (e.g., advanced math and science courses). During the 2021–22 academic year, students taking dual enrollment courses provided by one of these institutions made up about 6 percent of all dual enrollment students statewide. This report does not comment on dual enrollment courses at these institutions, and the recommendations included in the report do not apply to these courses.**

This study also did not evaluate costs incurred for **CTE dual enrollment courses or courses provided on the community college campus**, and the recommendations included in the report similarly do not apply to these courses.

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courses are generally not taken to transfer credit to a four-year institution. Rather, these courses can help students earn valuable short-term credentials in various occupations, such as nursing, welding, or cosmetology. However, because CTE courses are less common and have substantially different costs than traditional dual enrollment courses (e.g., specialized faculty and equipment), this report does not evaluate costs incurred by community colleges and school divisions to provide CTE dual enrollment courses.

**FIGURE 1-1**  
**Dual enrollment allows students to take courses for both high school and college credit**



SOURCE: JLARC staff summary of dual enrollment programs from interviews with school divisions and community colleges.

NOTE: Figure is illustrative based on typical dual enrollment courses but is not reflective of all programs. For example, not all school divisions provide textbooks and supplies for students.

School divisions and community colleges receive state general funds to cover their dual enrollment expenses, but just as community colleges charge tuition for their traditional courses, they can charge tuition for dual enrollment courses. Dual enrollment tuition policies vary statewide. Community colleges first determine whether to charge *school divisions* per credit-hour dual enrollment tuition and fees to cover the expenses community colleges incur to oversee the program. Tuition rates are negotiated between each community college and the school divisions in their service region. (State policy caps dual enrollment tuition at 40 percent of the college’s full tuition rate.) School divisions then decide whether to charge their dual enrollment *students* tuition and fees to cover school divisions’ dual enrollment costs—which include the tuition charged by community colleges and the costs divisions incur administering the courses. (For a more detailed discussion of dual enrollment expenses and revenue sources, see Chapter 3.)

Earning dual enrollment credits may help students save on higher education costs. A key objective of dual enrollment is to reduce the time and cost of attaining a postsecondary credential. The Code of Virginia requires local school boards to implement agreements with community colleges specifying options for students to complete an

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VCCS adopted a policy in 2013 requiring community colleges to reduce their regular tuition rates at least 60 percent for dual enrollment courses taught at the high school by a qualified high school teacher.

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associate’s degree or a one-year Uniform Certificate of General Studies (UCGS, sidebar) from a community college concurrent with a high school diploma. Students who earn these dual enrollment credits may have fewer college credits to earn after high school, saving them time in earning their postsecondary credential. Additionally, because dual enrollment courses typically cost less than traditional courses offered at community colleges and four-year institutions, earning college credits through dual enrollment potentially saves students some of the typical cost of attaining a postsecondary degree or credential. As part of its 2017 VCCS study, JLARC found that dual enrollment students who enroll in community college after high school take about one semester less, on average, to earn a postsecondary credential than non-dual enrollment students.

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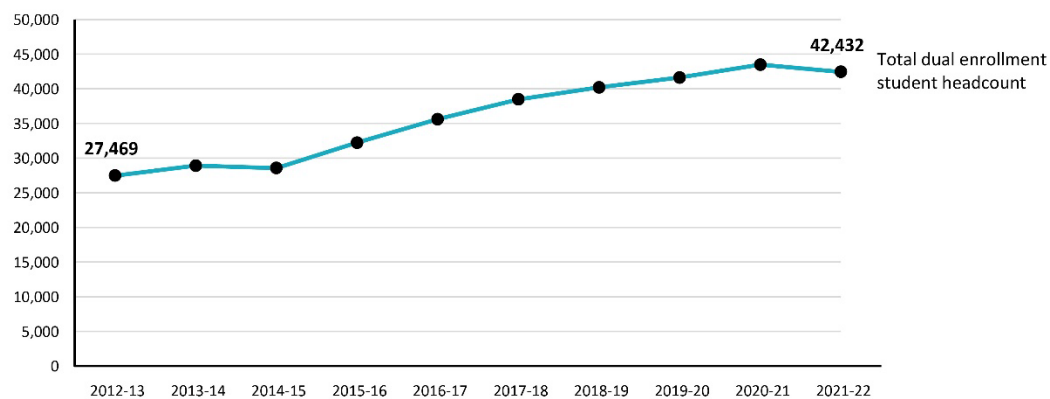
**UCGS** is a one-year college program, in which all courses are transferable and satisfy a general education requirement at any Virginia public institution of higher education.

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## Growth in dual enrollment has helped offset traditional community college enrollment decline

The total number of students participating in dual enrollment statewide has grown over time (except for a slight drop during the COVID-19 pandemic). Approximately 27,500 students participated in one or more dual enrollment courses statewide during the 2012–13 academic year. By the 2021–22 academic year, over 42,000 students were participating in dual enrollment statewide, a 54 percent increase from 2012–13 (Figure 1-2).

**FIGURE 1-2**  
Total number of students participating in dual enrollment has grown over the past decade



SOURCE: SCHEV enrollment data, 2012–22.

NOTE: Includes total number of students taking one or more dual enrollment courses across all institutions statewide, including community colleges, two-year, and four-year institutions.

Dual enrollment students have also grown as a proportion of community colleges’ total student enrollment. The proportion of dual enrollment students has grown from 13 percent of total VCCS students in 2012 to 28 percent in 2021 (including both full and part-time students). A large portion of this growth has been concentrated at

Northern Virginia Community College, which experienced an increase of nearly 12,000 dual enrollment students during this time period.

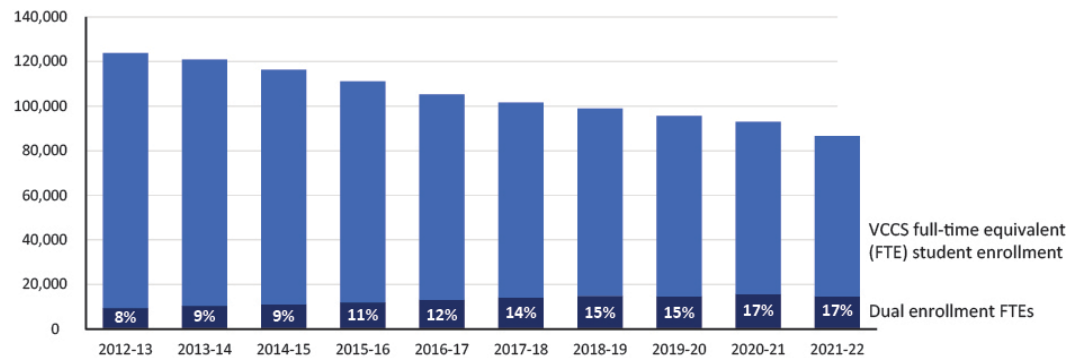
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**Full-time equivalent (FTE) is a standard measure** that converts part-time student enrollment to equivalents of full-time student enrollment (i.e., 30 credit-hours per year), meaning multiple dual enrollment students may be combined to equal one FTE.

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Dual enrollment students are counted as traditional community college students for funding purposes, which has helped community colleges maintain their state funding levels while traditional student enrollment declined. State general funds are allocated to community colleges based on the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students enrolled (sidebar). The number of traditional community college FTE students declined 37 percent over the past decade, triggering declines in state funding for those students. However, the decline in traditional student FTEs, and associated state funding, has been offset by the 55 percent increase in the numbers of dual enrollment FTEs. As the number of traditional student FTEs has declined, community colleges have become increasingly reliant on the state funding they receive for their dual enrollment FTEs to sustain their operations (Figure 1-3).

**FIGURE 1-3**  
**Proportion of dual enrollment students has increased over time as total community college enrollment has declined**



SOURCE: VCCS enrollment data, 2012–2022.

NOTE: In 2021-22, dual enrollment students represented 28 percent of all VCCS students in terms of student head-count, which includes both full and part-time students. Dual enrollment students represented 17 percent of VCCS enrollment when part-time students are converted to “full-time equivalent” students.

## **Passport and UCGS programs expected to improve institutions’ acceptance of dual enrollment credits toward postsecondary degree requirements**

To improve transferability of dual enrollment courses to public four-year institutions, the General Assembly created the Passport and UCGS programs. The 2017 JLARC review of VCCS found several problems with the transferability of dual enrollment courses, including reluctance by four-year institutions to accept dual enrollment credits; inconsistency by community colleges in ensuring course quality; and a lack of clarity in whether and how courses transfer across institutions. Partially because of these findings, the General Assembly passed legislation in 2018 directing VCCS to develop two programs at each community college.

- The UCGS is a 30-credit-hour program consisting of seven blocks from which students must select a specified number of courses. For example, students must select two written communication courses, one math course, one natural science course (e.g., biology), and one history course as part of the UCGS requirements. All courses are three credit hours.
- The Passport program is a condensed version of the UCGS, in which students select a subset of UCGS courses for a total of 15 credit hours. For example, the Passport program requires students to take only one written communication course.

All courses through these programs are transferable and satisfy a general education requirement at any Virginia public institution of higher education.

This legislation also included several additional changes to improve dual enrollment transferability, including the implementation of dual enrollment quality standards (sidebar) and the creation of the Transfer Virginia portal, an online course catalog that allows students to see how specific courses will transfer across institutions.

Legislative reforms to dual enrollment should improve program transparency and course transferability. During interviews with JLARC staff, most stakeholders reported that the Passport and UCGS programs are likely to improve the transferability of dual enrollment courses (sidebar). A few stakeholders expressed concerns that four-year institutions may still not accept these course credits but concluded it was too soon to determine the impact of these legislative reforms. State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) staff reported they have not received any requests from participating four-year institutions to waive acceptance of Passport/UCGS courses, which is allowed in state law, indicating that public four-year institutions intend to accept these course credits and apply them to students' degree completion requirements.

A large proportion of dual enrollment students have enrolled in one or more Passport/UCGS courses. During the 2021–22 academic year, over 33,000 dual enrollment students statewide (out of 40,000 total VCCS dual enrollment students) were enrolled in one or more Passport/UCGS courses. Passport/UCGS courses are offered at all 23 community colleges and 98 percent of school divisions, although the total number and types of courses offered vary. Passport and UCGS credentials were first awarded in spring 2022, with a total of 169 students completing the Passport program and 924 students completing the UCGS program statewide.

Although these changes are expected to positively affect dual enrollment transferability, there may still be variation in whether and how courses fulfill specific degree requirements. Leadership and staff from four-year institutions and community colleges reported during interviews that although Passport/UCGS courses will be accepted by public four-year institutions, the application of these courses may vary by institution and a student's program of study. For example, if a student has not yet chosen a major or decides to change majors, some courses may not be needed for certain majors and

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**VCCS implemented its Concurrent Enrollment Quality Standards in 2018**, in which dual enrollment teachers participate in course- and discipline-specific training, and college faculty conduct site visits to ensure dual enrollment courses offered at the high school are equivalent to courses offered on the college campus.

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“ I do think both [Passport and UCGS] will dramatically improve transferability for students who participate... We haven't had long enough to evaluate outcomes of transferability, but I think it will have a tremendous positive impact. ”

–Community college dual enrollment staff

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therefore may not be accepted toward the student's specific degree completion requirements. Dual enrollment courses outside of the Passport/UCGS programs are also likely to be accepted by public four-year institutions, according to stakeholders, but may be accepted as elective credit instead of core requirements depending on students' degree requirements.

# 2 Dual Enrollment Teacher Credentialing

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Dual enrollment teacher shortages have been an ongoing concern. JLARC’s review of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) in 2017 found a shortage of qualified dual enrollment teachers across the state. The number of credentialed dual enrollment teachers has declined statewide since that study by 7 percent, from 1,968 teachers during the 2018–19 academic year to 1,827 teachers in 2021–22. Without enough qualified high school teachers available to teach dual enrollment, school divisions cannot expand the courses that they offer. School divisions without sufficient teachers may rely on college faculty to teach courses, but these divisions do not receive the same discounted community college tuition rate they would if they used high school teachers. (For more information on dual enrollment tuition charged by community colleges, see Chapter 3.)

State officials will likely need to take a variety of approaches to increase the number of dual enrollment teachers because Virginia is experiencing a general shortage of K–12 teachers. This shortage stems both from a higher number of teachers leaving the profession as well as fewer people entering and graduating from teacher preparation programs (sidebar).

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**During the 2021–22 academic year, approximately 12 percent more teachers left the workforce, and 15 percent fewer teachers entered the workforce than pre-pandemic levels. (See JLARC’s 2022 *Pandemic Impact on Public K–12 Education* for more information on the teacher shortage.)**

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## **Credentialing requirements and additional workload deter teachers from teaching dual enrollment**

High school teachers must obtain certain credentials to teach dual enrollment courses in Virginia. To become credentialed, VCCS’s accrediting body—The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)—generally requires dual enrollment teachers to have a master’s degree, including a minimum of 18 graduate-level credit hours in the subject being taught. While many high school teachers have a master’s degree in education, they do not necessarily have the 18 graduate-level credit hours in a dual enrollment subject they may want to teach (e.g., math, history).

The time required to become qualified to teach dual enrollment deters high school teachers from pursuing these credentials. Completing the required 18 credit hours in a dual enrollment subject generally takes multiple semesters, because teachers typically take courses on a part-time basis while continuing to teach full time. For example, if a teacher takes one, three-credit-hour course each semester, it would take three years to complete the required 18 subject-matter hours to obtain this dual enrollment credential.

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**Eligibility requirements for the tuition grant program**

were modified to allow teachers to use funds toward graduate-level courses in the dual enrollment subject. Requirements initially specified that funds could be used only toward teacher preparation programs to obtain licensure. However, individuals interested in teaching dual enrollment are already licensed teachers and therefore do not need tuition assistance for teacher preparation programs.

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“  
*From a teacher’s perspective there is no advantage to teaching dual enrollment. It’s more work. We are trying to make it advantageous to the teachers, but there is a cost.*  
 ”

–**School division director of workforce & career development**

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**JLARC staff surveyed school divisions** about dual enrollment expenses and revenue for the 2021–22 academic year. Responses were received from 78 school divisions. (See Appendix B for more information.)

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The cost of becoming credentialed to teach dual enrollment also deters high school teachers from pursuing it. Teachers generally have to pay the tuition expenses for courses they need to take, which can cost between \$10,000 and \$20,000.

The state has provided some funding for tuition scholarships to help offset the cost, but these funds have not yet been widely used. Following a recommendation from JLARC’s 2017 VCCS study, the 2019 General Assembly began annually appropriating \$250,000 to provide qualifying teachers with up to \$7,500 to offset the cost of obtaining the necessary credentials to teach dual enrollment. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) awarded a total of only \$21,000 across 13 teachers in FY21 and \$36,000 across 15 teachers in FY22. VDOE staff are working to increase awareness of and participation in the program and have recently corrected flaws in the initial program requirements (sidebar). The state could also consider increasing the \$7,500 per teacher cap, which would not require additional appropriations because of current low participation. The General Assembly has also appropriated \$100,000 to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia to help teachers cover the cost of dual enrollment credentials beginning in 2022, but a grant program to distribute these funds has not yet been developed.

Teachers in most school divisions do not receive any compensation for the additional workload associated with teaching dual enrollment courses. School divisions reported during interviews with JLARC staff that teaching dual enrollment requires additional time commitment for teachers. Teachers must ensure course content and delivery is consistent with courses offered on the community college campus, including the same student outcomes, syllabi components, level and rigor of content, assessment and evaluation of student learning outcomes, and instructional effectiveness. However, high school dual enrollment teachers generally do not receive any additional compensation (sidebar). Of the school divisions that responded to JLARC’s dual enrollment cost survey (sidebar), only eight provided additional compensation for dual enrollment teachers, ranging from \$500 to \$2,500 per course taught (primarily bonuses).

The state could consider two approaches to alleviate the shortage of dual enrollment teachers: (1) provide bonuses to high school dual enrollment teachers to incentivize more teachers to pursue dual enrollment credentials and (2) provide funding to pay additional community college faculty to teach dual enrollment courses at high schools. Encouraging more high school teachers to teach dual enrollment is consistent with the primary dual enrollment delivery model across the state and would utilize teachers who are more familiar with teaching high school students. Paying college faculty to teach additional dual enrollment courses may result in higher course quality, because these teachers typically have more experience teaching college-level courses. Both approaches are likely needed to meaningfully improve the dual enrollment teacher shortage.

## **State could consider providing bonuses to high school teachers who teach dual enrollment**

The General Assembly could consider appropriating funds to provide bonuses to high school teachers who teach dual enrollment courses. This could help incentivize more teachers to obtain the necessary credentials to teach dual enrollment, as well as compensate these teachers for the additional work required to teach these courses. Teachers in at least a few other states (e.g., Idaho, Indiana, Maryland, and Minnesota) receive financial incentives for teaching dual enrollment courses. Additionally, research literature suggests that financial incentives can help states build a dual enrollment teacher pipeline.

School division superintendents interviewed by JLARC had mixed opinions about the effectiveness of providing bonuses to dual enrollment teachers. Some superintendents reported bonuses would encourage more teachers in their divisions to teach dual enrollment courses, while others observed that bonus amounts would likely need to be large to be effective.

If the General Assembly provided annual bonuses to high school dual enrollment teachers, it could consider providing the same bonus amount to all dual enrollment teachers statewide, or providing a higher amount for teachers who teach certain courses, such as Passport/Uniform Certificate of General Studies (UCGS) courses. The minimum bonus offered by any school division is \$500. Based on the current number of high school dual enrollment teachers and courses offered, providing a \$500 bonus *per teacher* would cost approximately \$915,000 annually, while providing a \$500 bonus *per course taught* would cost approximately \$5.8 million annually.

### **POLICY OPTION 1**

The General Assembly could appropriate funding to the Virginia Department of Education to provide annual bonuses to high school teachers statewide who teach dual enrollment courses.

## **State could fund cost of using more college faculty to teach dual enrollment courses at high schools**

The General Assembly could also consider appropriating funds to offset the cost of using additional college faculty to teach dual enrollment courses at high schools. Some school divisions currently use college faculty to teach dual enrollment courses, but this increases their dual enrollment expenses. Community colleges require school divisions to (1) pay a portion of the faculty member's salary and/or (2) pay a higher per-credit-hour tuition rate. Providing funding to cover these costs would help school divisions take advantage of existing faculty resources without incurring additional costs and passing these costs to students.

Some school division superintendents interviewed by JLARC favored this approach, while other expressed concerns. Some superintendents indicated that having access to

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**Policy options for consideration.** Staff typically propose policy options rather than make recommendations when (1) the action is a policy judgment best made by elected officials—especially the General Assembly, (2) evidence suggests action could potentially be beneficial, or (3) a report finding could be addressed in multiple ways.

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**College faculty who teach dual enrollment courses at the high school** must also have appropriate credentials to teach K–12 courses, such as a One-Year High School License.

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**Community colleges have annual dual enrollment contracts** with school divisions in their service region, which specify courses offered, tuition rates, faculty requirements, and course quality standards.

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additional community college faculty at no cost would allow them to expand their dual enrollment course offerings. However, others reported they would be hesitant to use additional college faculty who are not sufficiently trained or experienced in the most effective strategies for teaching high school students, which can differ with those needed to teach college students (sidebar).

If the General Assembly appropriates funding to expand the use of college faculty to teach dual enrollment courses, VCCS could use these funds to pay college faculty to teach dual enrollment in divisions with shortages of qualified high school teachers, prioritizing funding for faculty to teach Passport/UCGS courses. Virtual instruction could be considered when it is not feasible for the college faculty to travel to the high school and/or to allow faculty to serve multiple school divisions.

As part of the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) process in which community colleges and school divisions annually determine which courses to offer for the upcoming year (sidebar), divisions could work with their community college to identify college faculty to teach one or more of their dual enrollment courses. According to VCCS leadership, colleges maintain rosters of adjunct faculty who are not teaching because the course they normally teach is not currently being offered. Colleges may therefore already have some adjunct faculty available to teach additional dual enrollment courses at high schools. VCCS could distribute funds to community colleges to cover the cost of paying those faculty members to teach dual enrollment courses. Given the typical compensation for adjunct community college faculty, providing adjunct faculty to teach 100 additional dual enrollment courses could cost between \$200,000 and \$400,000.

## **POLICY OPTION 2**

The General Assembly could appropriate funding to the Virginia Community College System to pay college faculty to teach dual enrollment courses at selected high schools that lack a sufficient number of credentialed teachers in their geographic area.

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### **Credentialing flexibility may present options to increase dual enrollment teachers in limited circumstances**

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**If community colleges wish to make exceptions to the faculty credentialing requirements,** they must create a record justifying their decisions and provide it to SACSCOC during the re-accreditation process.

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SACSCOC's flexibility in faculty credentialing requirements may also present some opportunities to increase the number of dual enrollment teachers in limited circumstances, but Virginia's community colleges have been reluctant to use this flexibility. SACSCOC allows for certain exceptions to faculty credentialing requirements when teachers have other credentials or skills (e.g., related professional experience) that may qualify them to teach dual enrollment courses. Exceptions can also be made to allow teachers who are close to obtaining the required credentials to begin teaching dual enrollment courses, according to SACSCOC. For example, a teacher with a master's degree and 15 credit hours in the relevant subject who is working toward completing the remaining credit hours can teach dual enrollment. However, during interviews,



community colleges reported that making exceptions to their faculty credentialing requirements could raise concerns by four-year institutions about the quality of dual enrollment courses, making the institutions more reluctant to accept these course credits.

Some school divisions may have faculty who could qualify to teach dual enrollment through alternative credentials or experience, but divisions do not appear to be aware of the potential flexibility in the faculty credentialing requirements. During interviews, school divisions reported they do not have flexibility in the credentialing requirements for high school dual enrollment teachers, even though it was apparent that they had teachers on staff who they believed were fully capable of teaching dual enrollment courses given their experience or qualifications (sidebar). Though colleges should not routinely lower their credentialing requirements, which could raise issues during their reaccreditation, taking advantage of these flexibilities when appropriate could help high schools expand the numbers and types of dual enrollment courses they can offer. Using approved credentialing flexibilities is unlikely to allow a large number of additional teachers to become credentialed statewide, but it could have a positive impact in some school divisions.

VDOE could help ensure school divisions are aware of these flexibilities by issuing a superintendent's memo (1) outlining the types of alternative credentials or expertise that may qualify high school teachers to teach dual enrollment courses; and (2) clarifying that, on a case-by-case basis, divisions with teachers who may have sufficient alternative qualifications should work with their community college to determine whether these teachers can teach dual enrollment (sidebar). When drafting the memo, VDOE should work with VCCS to identify the types of alternative credentials and/or expertise that may be considered acceptable by SACSCOC.

### RECOMMENDATION 1

The Virginia Department of Education should work in consultation with the Virginia Community College System to draft and issue a superintendent's memo (i) outlining the types of alternative credentials and/or expertise that may be considered acceptable by the community colleges' accrediting body for qualifying high school teachers to teach dual enrollment courses; and (ii) clarifying that, on a case-by-case basis, divisions with teachers who may have sufficient alternative qualifications should work with their community college to determine whether these teachers can teach dual enrollment and document their credentials accordingly.

“  
*It's a huge challenge. We have lots of people with a master's in instruction who cannot teach dual enrollment...not a lot of incentive for people to get the 18 hours.*  
”

—School division superintendent

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VDOE uses superintendent's memos to communicate policy and guidance to the state's school divisions. Memos are posted publicly on a weekly basis.

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## More efficient use of credentialed teachers could help address teacher shortages

School divisions could help mitigate impacts of dual enrollment teacher shortages to some extent by ensuring that they use their existing qualified teachers strategically. A key goal of dual enrollment is to reduce the time and cost of attaining a postsecondary

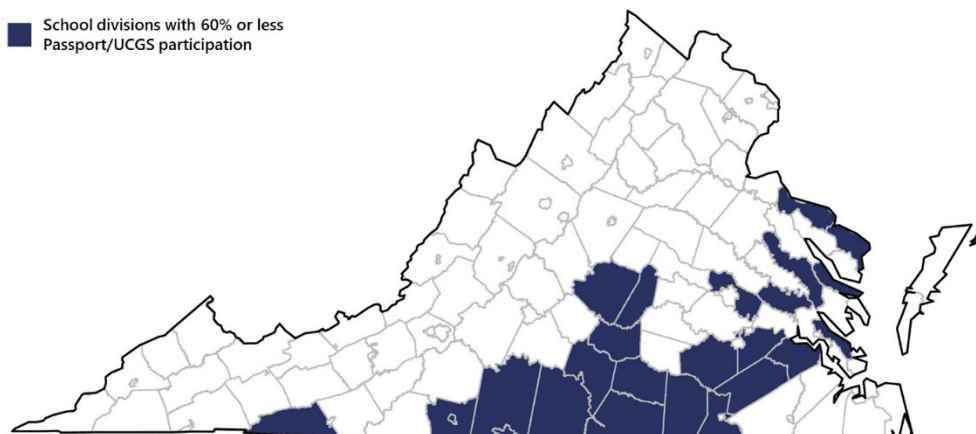
In 2022, the General Assembly appropriated \$250,000 to provide one-time grants to school divisions to better align their dual enrollment course offerings with the Passport/UCGS programs, such as by employing additional part-time faculty to teach Passport/UCGS courses.

CTE courses can also help dual enrollment students reduce the time and cost of attaining a postsecondary credential, as these courses lead to valuable short-term credentials in various occupations (e.g., nursing, welding, cosmetology, etc.). Depending on regional workforce demands and student interests, offering CTE dual enrollment courses can be advantageous for school divisions to help students obtain these credentials in high-demand fields.

credential, and school divisions should prioritize offering courses with credits that the state's higher education institutions are most likely to accept and apply toward degree requirements. Courses offered under the Passport and UCGS programs meet these criteria, and school divisions should strive to use the teachers who are qualified to teach dual enrollment to offer *these* courses instead of others (sidebar). Credits from other courses may not be accepted by Virginia's higher education institutions or may be more commonly accepted as elective credit, which is less valuable.

Some school divisions are not maximizing the number of Passport/UCGS courses offered even though they have teachers qualified to teach those courses. During the 2021–22 academic year, 27 school divisions had 60 percent or less of their dual enrollment students participating in either the Passport or UCGS programs. These divisions were clustered in the southern and eastern parts of the state (Figure 2-1). (Some of these divisions offer a higher number of career and technical courses [CTE], which also help students earn job credentials. See sidebar.)

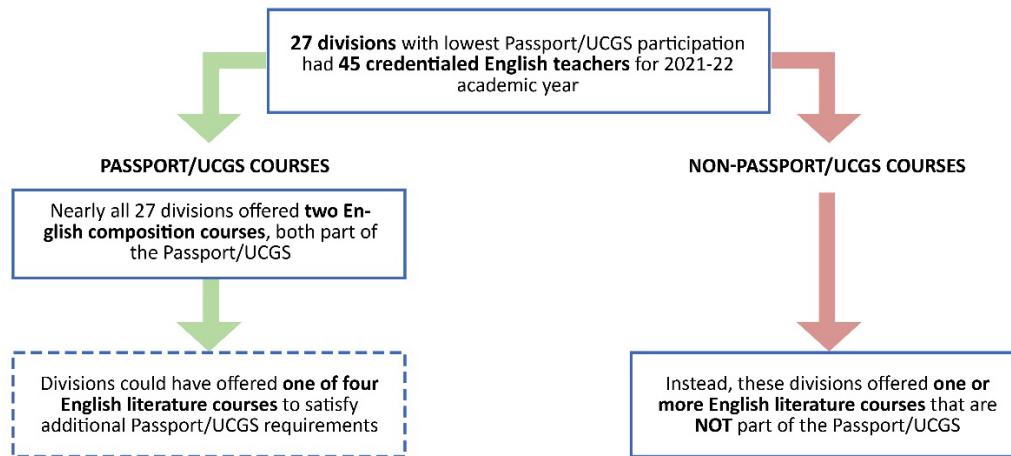
**FIGURE 2-1**  
During the 2021–22 academic year, low participation in Passport and UCGS courses clustered in southern and eastern regions of the state



SOURCE: VCCS course enrollment data for dual enrollment students for 2021–22 academic year.

Some school divisions with the lowest participation in Passport/UCGS courses could offer more of these courses without having to recruit additional teachers or raise the qualifications of their existing teachers. For example, the 27 divisions with the lowest Passport/UCGS participation had 45 total credentialed English teachers for the 2021–22 academic year. Although these divisions offered two Passport/UCGS English composition courses, they also offered several additional English literature courses that are not part of the Passport/UCGS programs. Teachers who taught these literature courses would have been qualified to teach Passport/UCGS English literature courses (Figure 2-2).

**FIGURE 2-2**  
**School divisions that offer fewer Passport and UCGS courses could offer more of those courses using their existing teachers**



SOURCE: VCCS course enrollment data for dual enrollment students for 2021–22 academic year; Passport/UCGS program requirements.

Because the programs are relatively new, and school divisions may not yet be familiar with which courses satisfy specific requirements, divisions may not be proactively considering ways to maximize Passport/UCGS courses when deciding which courses to offer. Community colleges should annually review school divisions’ dual enrollment courses as part of their existing MOU process and recommend to the school divisions ways to increase the numbers or types of Passport/UCGS courses offered.

**RECOMMENDATION 2**

The Virginia Community College System, through its existing Memorandum of Understanding process for dual enrollment programs, should require community colleges to annually review school divisions’ dual enrollment course offerings and provide recommendations to divisions on how they can increase the number or types of Passport and Uniform Certificate of General Studies courses they offer.

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# 3 Dual Enrollment Expenses and Revenue

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JLARC staff were directed to determine colleges' and school divisions' dual enrollment costs, given the wide variation in tuition and fees charged to dual enrollment students. JLARC staff recommended in a 2017 study of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) that the state should determine dual enrollment costs, but previous attempts to do so have not been conclusive (sidebar). Having accurate and comprehensive data on community colleges' and school divisions' dual enrollment expenses will help state and local officials evaluate the adequacy of funding for these programs and the appropriateness of the funding sources.

For this study, dual enrollment expenses incurred by community colleges and school divisions include both direct and indirect expenses. Most dual enrollment expenses for colleges and school divisions—such as college faculty and high school teachers—would be incurred regardless of whether dual enrollment is offered. However, to estimate the cost of dual enrollment, JLARC staff monetized portions of various expenses attributable to dual enrollment programs, including expenses incurred solely for the provision of dual enrollment and expenses that would have accrued even without a dual enrollment program. (See Appendix B for more information on the methodology used to calculate dual enrollment expenses.)

## **Total dual enrollment expenses are split among colleges, divisions, and sometimes students**

Community colleges, school divisions, and sometimes students incur expenses related to dual enrollment. Each college determines how its expenses will be covered, including whether to charge per credit-hour dual enrollment tuition and fees to school divisions (Figure 3-1). Per VCCS policy, community colleges must reduce their regular tuition rates by at least 60 percent for dual enrollment, and all colleges offer a greater tuition rate discount than VCCS requires (average of 90 percent in 2021–22) (sidebar). In addition to tuition and fees paid to the colleges, school divisions incur their own costs to operate dual enrollment programs, primarily teacher salaries. School divisions determine whether to charge students tuition and fees to cover these costs. Dual enrollment students in the divisions that decide to charge tuition and fees are responsible for paying these costs along with any other course-related expenses, such as textbooks or supplies that are not provided by the division.

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**Previous studies examined dual enrollment costs in Virginia.** VCCS conducted an internal dual enrollment cost study in 2018, but data was reported by only seven colleges and one school division. VDOE and the secretary of labor hired George Mason University to assess dual enrollment expenses in 2020, but the study relied on financial data for VCCS as a whole, instead of data from colleges and school divisions, to estimate dual enrollment expenses.

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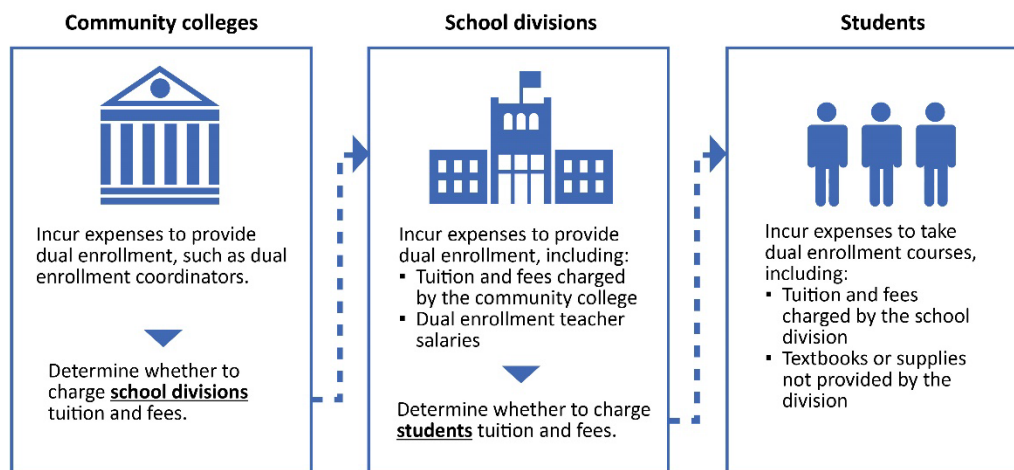
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VCCS adopted a policy in 2013 to require community colleges to reduce their regular tuition rates at least 60 percent for dual enrollment. The policy also allows school divisions to negotiate higher reductions for participating in certain activities, such as providing course textbooks for students. However in practice, tuition rates are typically set based on whether the school division provides the teacher for the course.

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FIGURE 3-1

## Dual enrollment expenses incurred by students are passed down from colleges and school divisions



SOURCE: JLARC staff summary of current dual enrollment funding model from interviews with colleges and school divisions and VCCS policy documents.

NOTE: Dual enrollment coordinators are responsible for day-to-day administration of colleges' dual enrollment programs, including developing contracts with school divisions, organizing program marketing and recruitment activities, and serving as liaisons between the colleges and high school administrative staff.

Some colleges use additional, smaller revenue sources to cover their dual enrollment expenses, such as private funds (e.g., from a foundation). These funds are typically used for scholarships for dual enrollment students.

VCCS allocates state general funds to individual community colleges. Eighty percent of funds are allocated to each college based on the total number of full-time equivalent students. The remaining funds are allocated based on various student outcome metrics at each college, such as the number of students who earn an associate's degree.

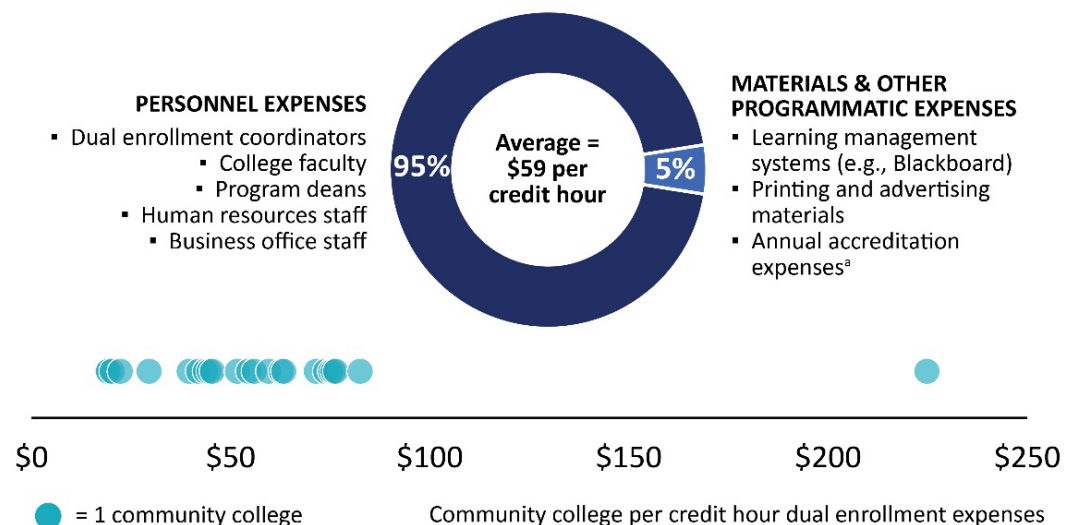
## Community colleges' dual enrollment expenses are covered by general funds, but most charge tuition

Colleges use state general funds and tuition and fees charged to school divisions to cover their dual enrollment expenses (sidebar). VCCS allocates general funds to colleges based on the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students enrolled (sidebar). Colleges receive the same amount of per-FTE funding for both traditional students and dual enrollment students, even though a dual enrollment student costs substantially less to educate than a traditional student. During the 2021–22 academic year, community colleges received \$51 million in state general funds based on their number of dual enrollment FTEs.

## Community colleges' dual enrollment costs are approximately \$59 per credit hour and are driven by personnel expenses

Expenses incurred by community colleges to provide dual enrollment courses vary across the state. During the 2021–22 academic year, community colleges spent between \$19 and \$225 per credit hour on dual enrollment-related expenses, with an average of \$59 per credit hour (median of \$55 per credit hour) (Figure 3-2) (sidebar, next page). Community colleges' total annual spending on dual enrollment ranged from \$90,000 to \$1.5 million, with an average of \$542,000 (median of \$480,000).

**FIGURE 3-2**  
**Community colleges spend an average of \$59 per credit hour on dual enrollment, driven mostly by personnel costs**



JLARC staff surveyed community colleges and school divisions about dual enrollment expenses and revenue for the 2021–22 academic year. JLARC staff received responses from all 23 community colleges (100 percent response rate) and 78 school divisions (63 percent response rate). (See Appendix B for more information.)

SOURCE: JLARC staff dual enrollment cost survey; VCCS course enrollment data for the 2021–22 academic year.  
 NOTE: Community colleges’ dual enrollment expenses cost a median of \$55 per credit hour. Expenses listed may not be reflective of all programs. For example, two colleges did not incur any materials or other programmatic expenses for their dual enrollment programs. Personnel expenses include solely the portion of staff salaries attributable to time spent on dual enrollment-related responsibilities. See Appendix B for additional information. <sup>a</sup> Expenses associated with maintaining optional accreditation by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP).

Dual enrollment programs’ costs vary based on size and number of staff in the program. Over 95 percent of colleges’ expenses are related to the personnel responsible for managing and overseeing the dual enrollment program. For example, colleges typically have one or more dual enrollment coordinators who are responsible for day-to-day administration of their dual enrollment programs, including developing contracts with school divisions, organizing program marketing and recruitment activities, and serving as liaisons between the colleges and high school administrative staff. College faculty and program deans are responsible for conducting oversight of high school faculty (e.g., reviewing syllabi, classroom observations) to ensure dual enrollment courses offered at the high school are the same quality as those offered on the college campus. Colleges also have indirect personnel costs for dual enrollment, such as human resources staff responsible for hiring dual enrollment coordinators and business office staff who process tuition invoices from school divisions.

Colleges also incurred materials and other programmatic expenses to provide dual enrollment courses, but these were much lower than personnel expenses. These expenses most commonly include learning management systems (e.g., Canvas, Blackboard) or other software to support dual enrollment, printing and advertising materials to market dual enrollment, and annual accreditation expenses, such as those incurred to maintain accreditation by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships

(NACEP). Community colleges may also incur dual enrollment-related capital expenses, such as building maintenance costs for dual enrollment program staff offices. However, because dual enrollment courses are primarily provided at the high school, dual enrollment capital expenses for colleges are likely negligible.

**All community colleges receive substantially more in state general funds than needed to cover their dual enrollment expenses, but most still charge tuition and fees**

Based on expenses reported by each of the community colleges, all received substantially more revenue than needed to cover their dual enrollment expenses using state general funds allocated for dual enrollment students (Figure 3-3). Colleges receive the same amount of state general funds per dual enrollment FTE as they do for a traditional student FTE, despite dual enrollment students being much less expensive for colleges to educate. For the 2021–22 academic year, colleges received an average of \$2.2 million in state general funds for their dual enrollment FTEs, and all colleges received sufficient general fund revenue for dual enrollment FTEs to cover their dual enrollment expenses. Colleges had an average of \$1.7 million in general fund revenue left over after accounting for their dual enrollment expenses.

Even though community colleges can cover their dual enrollment expenses with state general funds, most colleges also charge dual enrollment tuition to school divisions. Sixteen of Virginia’s 23 community colleges charged tuition during the 2021–22 academic year. Tuition rates ranged from \$1.50 to \$46.50 per credit hour, with an average rate of \$22.65 per credit hour. This amounts to around \$200 in tuition costs for students taking an average dual enrollment course load of three, three-credit hour courses per year.

In addition to tuition, nearly all colleges also charge per credit-hour fees for dual enrollment, such as auxiliary fees, student activity fees, and parking fees. These fees are largely used to cover auxiliary operations, debt service for parking, student facilities, and other student activities not covered by state general funds. Twenty-one out of 23 colleges charge dual enrollment fees, ranging from \$2.15 to \$24.80 per credit hour with an average of \$7.30 per credit hour. For an average student taking three, three-credit hour dual enrollment courses per year, this amounts to about \$66 in fees. In total, these 21 colleges charged an average of \$23.87 per credit hour in dual enrollment tuition and/or fees in 2021–22. Colleges with the highest tuition and/or fee rates tend to be in the northern and eastern regions of the state (Figure 3-4).

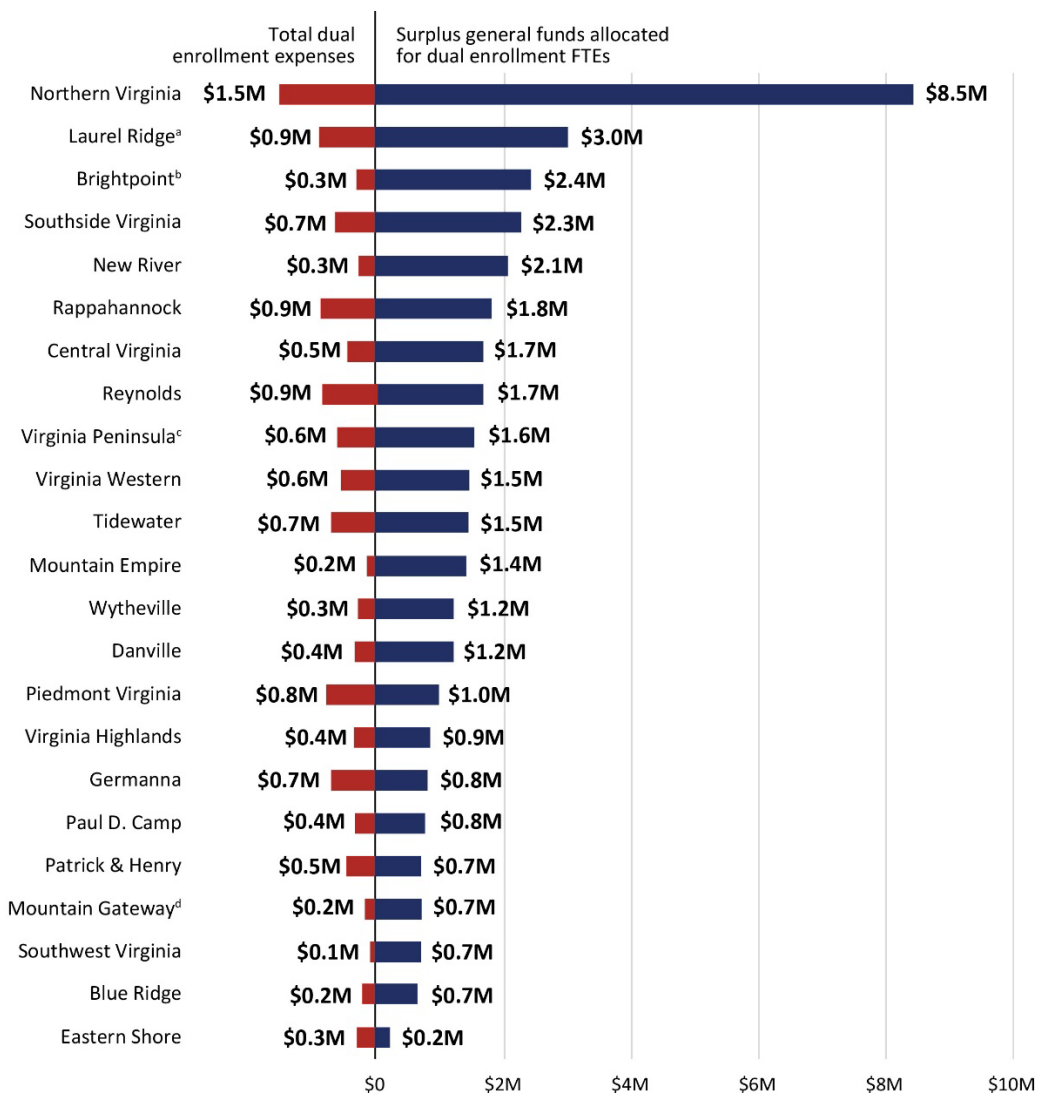
Most colleges do not discount fee amounts in the same manner as tuition rates, even though most dual enrollment students do not take courses on the community college campus. VCCS policy instructs colleges to charge dual enrollment students the same fee amounts as traditional students because dual enrollment students have access to the same on-campus resources and services as traditional students (e.g., library access, ability to attend sporting and other on campus events, etc.). However, only about 6



percent of dual enrollment courses are taken on the community college campus, meaning that most dual enrollment students are not utilizing the same on-campus resources as traditional students.

**FIGURE 3-3**

**All community colleges receive substantially more state general funds for their dual enrollment FTEs than needed to cover their dual enrollment expenses**

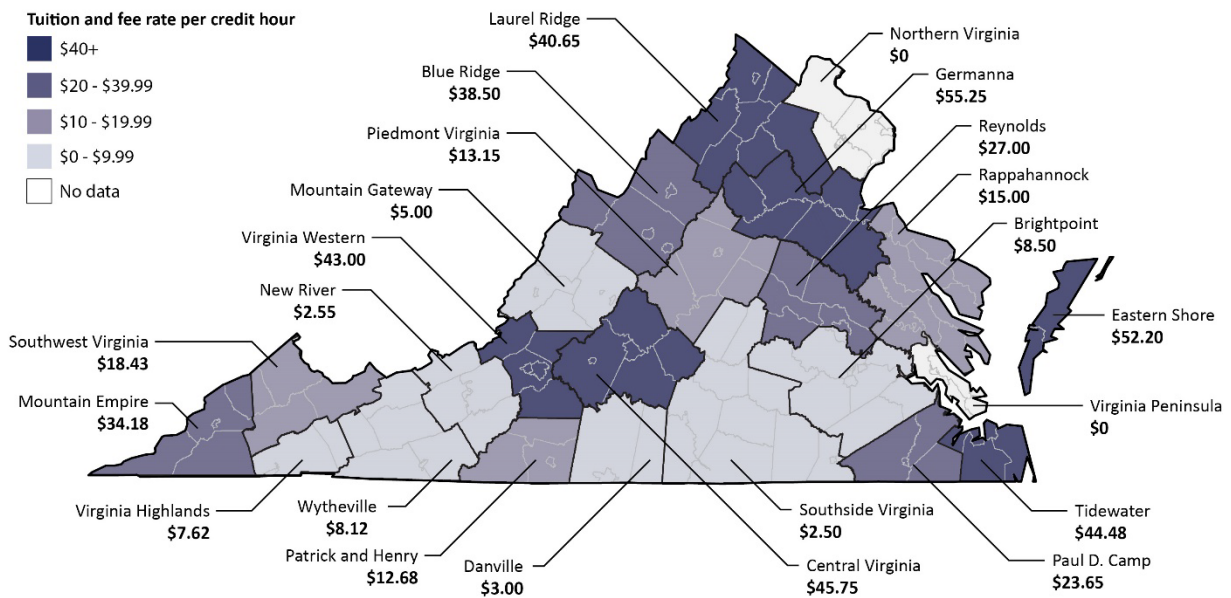


SOURCE: JLARC staff dual enrollment cost survey; VCCS financial data on general funds allocated to each community college based on FTE enrollment.

NOTE: Total amount of general funds allocated to a community college for dual enrollment FTEs equals amount of each college's dual enrollment expenses plus the surplus general funds allocated for dual enrollment FTEs. For example, Northern Virginia Community College received \$10.0 million in state general funds for its dual enrollment FTEs in 2021–22 (\$1.5 million in expenses plus \$8.5 million surplus). <sup>a</sup> Formerly Lord Fairfax Community College.

<sup>b</sup> Formerly John Tyler Community College. <sup>c</sup> Formerly Thomas Nelson Community College. <sup>d</sup> Formerly Dabney S. Lancaster Community College.

**FIGURE 3-4**  
Community college tuition and fee rates for dual enrollment vary across the state



SOURCE: JLARC staff dual enrollment cost survey.

NOTE: Reflects tuition and fee rates for dual enrollment courses provided on the high school campus taught by a credentialed high school teacher. Includes tuition and fee rates for 16 community colleges that charge both tuition and fees, as well as fee rates for five colleges that solely charge fees and do not charge any dual enrollment tuition.

### Colleges rely on dual enrollment revenue to fund other operations, including CTE courses

“ We get the same FTE whether we are doing technical education or dual enrollment. If we offer a technical program the Commonwealth needs us to offer... [it] costs a lot more in equipment and personal compared to English or history. The revenue we generate from [dual enrollment] courses has to be enough to support our CTE courses. ”

—Community college president

Surplus dual enrollment revenue—including tuition and fee revenue and general funds allocated for dual enrollment FTEs—is used by colleges to fund other aspects of their operations. Of community colleges’ dual enrollment FTE general fund allocations for 2021–22, colleges used an average of 85 percent of these funds (about \$40 million total across all colleges) to cover non-dual enrollment expenses.

Several colleges report using dual enrollment revenue to subsidize career and technical education (CTE) courses (e.g., nursing, aviation maintenance, automotive). According to community college staff, CTE courses are generally more expensive to provide than traditional courses because they typically have fewer students and lower student-to-faculty ratios; require specialized faculty; and require expensive equipment and technology such as 3D printers or simulators. For example, one college reported that direct instructional expenses are about \$15,000 per FTE for its nursing program and about \$7,000 per FTE for its welding program, in comparison to about \$1,000 per dual enrollment FTE. Colleges use surplus dual enrollment funding to help offset budget shortfalls for these more costly programs (sidebar).

## **Dual enrollment expenses are higher for school divisions but generally covered through state and local funding**

School divisions use state general funds, local revenue, and tuition paid by students to cover their dual enrollment expenses. Divisions receive state general funds based on their average daily membership (ADM), which includes dual enrollment students. School divisions also receive local revenue from a range of sources, most notably property and sales taxes. Divisions may also charge tuition and fees to students to take dual enrollment courses.

### **School divisions' dual enrollment costs are approximately \$276 per credit hour, nearly five times as much as community colleges**

School divisions' expenses to provide dual enrollment courses vary across the state, but they are generally much higher, on average, than colleges' expenses. During the 2021–22 academic year, school divisions spent between \$10 and \$1,800 per credit hour on dual enrollment-related operating expenses, with an average of \$276 per credit hour (median of \$178 per credit hour) (Figure 3-5). Including tuition and fees paid to the community colleges, school divisions' expenses to provide dual enrollment were about \$324 per credit hour on average (median of \$224 per credit hour). Total annual spending by school divisions (including tuition and fees) ranged from \$10,000 to \$13.5 million, with an average of \$728,000 (median of \$272,000).

Expenses incurred by school divisions are generally higher than community colleges' expenses because of costs associated with providing dual enrollment teachers (sidebar). Most division spending on dual enrollment (91 percent) was driven by personnel expenses. In addition to teachers, personnel costs include school counselors who advise students on course selection and, in many divisions, help with day-to-day program management at the high schools. Additional division staff also have dual enrollment-related responsibilities, such as registering students for courses and submitting student test scores, as well as processing tuition invoices from the community college.

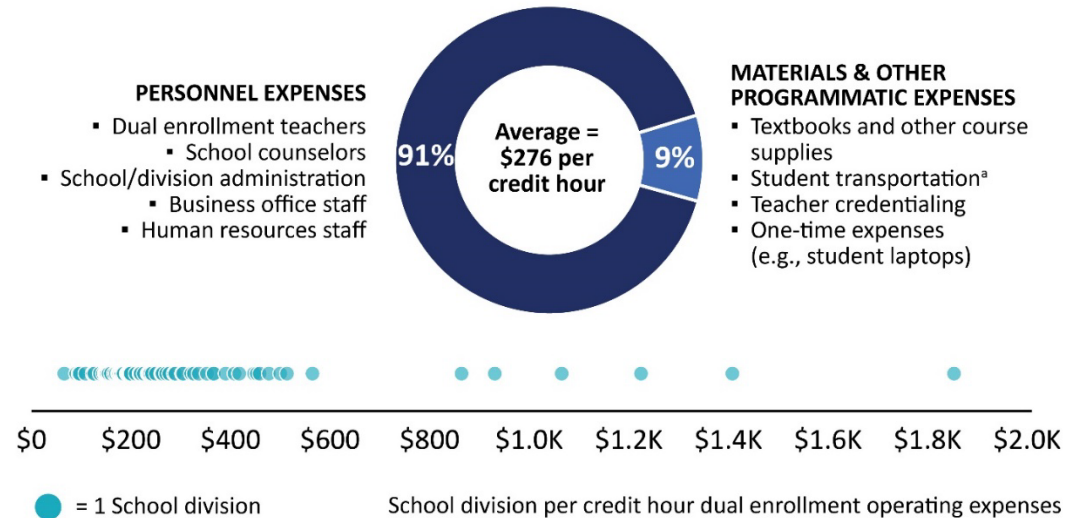
School divisions also incurred some materials and other programmatic expenses for dual enrollment. Most of these additional expenses were annual expenses, but four divisions reported one-time expenses for student laptops. Materials and other programmatic expenses most commonly include textbooks and other equipment and supplies for dual enrollment courses provided by the school division. Some divisions also incur expenses related to transporting students to the location where dual enrollment courses are taught, such as the local career center. Finally, several school divisions incur continuing education costs to help teachers obtain credentialing necessary to teach dual enrollment courses.

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**School division expenses for dual enrollment teachers** include the portion of teachers' salaries attributable to teaching dual enrollment courses. For example, if a high school teacher teaches two dual enrollment courses out of six total courses and makes \$60,000 per year, then \$20,000 of the teacher's salary is attributable to dual enrollment program expenses. (See Appendix B for more information.)

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**FIGURE 3-5**  
**School divisions spend an average of \$276 per credit hour on dual enrollment operating expenses, driven mostly by personnel costs**



SOURCE: JLARC staff dual enrollment cost survey; VCCS course enrollment data for the 2021–22 academic year.  
 NOTE: School divisions’ dual enrollment expenses were a median of \$178 per credit hour. Expenses listed may not be reflective of all programs. Does not include any dual enrollment tuition or fees paid by the division to the community college. Personnel expenses include solely the portion of staff salaries attributable to time spent on dual enrollment-related responsibilities. See Appendix B for additional information. <sup>a</sup>Expenses associated with transporting students to the location where dual enrollment courses are taught, such as the local career center.

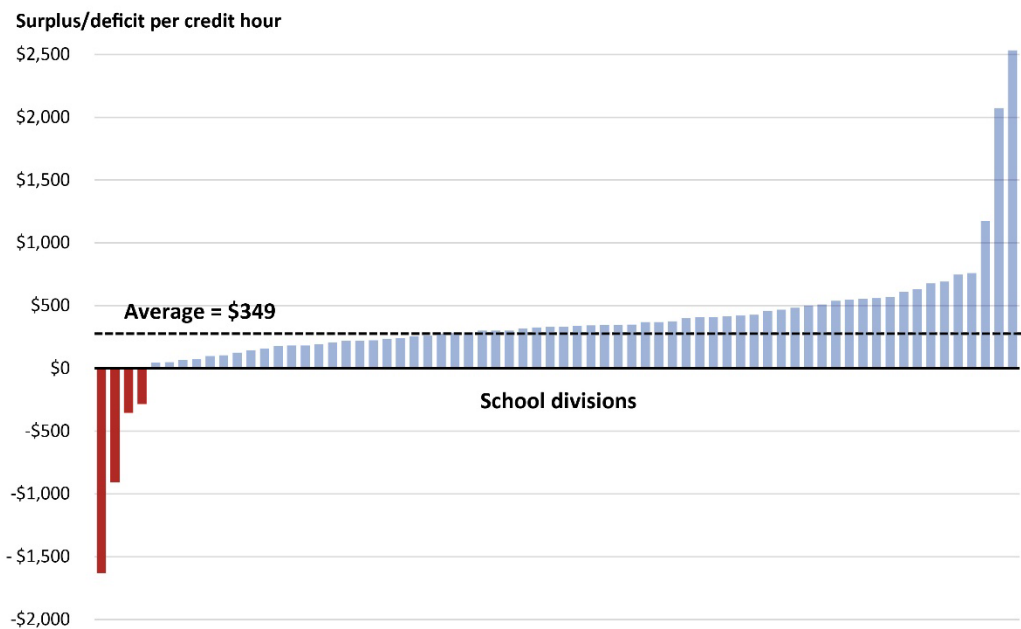
**Vast majority of school divisions are estimated to have enough state general funds and local funding to cover their dual enrollment expenses**

Of the 69 school divisions for which information was available, 65 had enough state general funds and local funding (excluding any tuition or fees charged to students) to cover their dual enrollment expenses (Figure 3-6) (sidebar). Four divisions did not have sufficient state general funds and local funding to cover their dual enrollment expenses: Arlington County, Caroline County, Chesapeake City, and Chesterfield County.

Thirty-seven divisions charged students to take dual enrollment courses, even though 28 of those divisions had sufficient state and local funding to cover their dual enrollment expenses. However, most of these divisions are only charging students enough to cover the tuition and fees their division is charged by community colleges. These divisions presumably would not charge students if colleges were not charging tuition or fees.

JLARC staff received survey responses from 78 school divisions. Of the divisions that responded, several did not provide complete information regarding their state and local funding amounts, so the total number of divisions with insufficient funding for their dual enrollment programs may be higher to some extent. The amount of revenue allocated to divisions to cover their dual enrollment expenses was determined by attributing a portion of each division’s state general funds and local funding to their dual enrollment FTEs, based on their proportion of the total student population. (See Appendix B for more information.)

**FIGURE 3-6**  
**Nearly all school divisions that submitted data have sufficient state general funds and local funding to cover their dual enrollment expenses**



SOURCE: JLARC staff dual enrollment cost survey; VCCS dual enrollment credit hour data.  
 NOTE: Expenses include all dual enrollment-related expenses, including any tuition and fees charged to the divisions by the community colleges. Revenue includes the portion of state general funds and local funding attributable to each division’s number of dual enrollment FTEs. Represents 69 total divisions for which information was available. For more information on school divisions surveyed, see Appendix B.

## Estimated majority of high school students do not pay for dual enrollment courses

The majority of students did not pay to take dual enrollment courses during the 2021–22 academic year (Figure 3-7). Students in 58 percent of the school divisions for which information was available did not pay any dual enrollment tuition or fees. This represents approximately 63 percent of total dual enrollment students in these divisions (sidebar). Students generally do not have to pay tuition and fees if (1) their school division is in a service region in which the community college does not charge tuition or fees, or (2) their school division absorbs these costs and does not pass them on to students.

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**Tuition information was available** for 88 school divisions.

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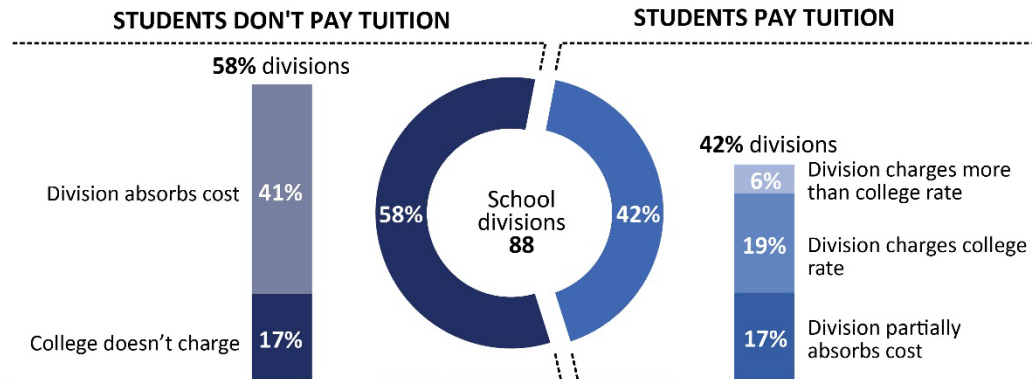
In divisions that do charge students tuition and fees for dual enrollment, divisions may

- charge students a *lower* tuition and fee rate than the community college rate and absorb the remaining amount;
- charge students the *same* tuition and fee rate charged by the community college; or

- charge students a *higher* tuition and fee rate than the community college rate, to cover a portion of the additional costs incurred by the school division to operate its dual enrollment program.

**FIGURE 3-7**  
**Students do not pay any tuition or fees for dual enrollment in 58 percent of school divisions**

JLARC staff also examined costs to divisions and students for AP courses compared to dual enrollment courses (Appendix D), as well as dual enrollment costs for homeschool students (Appendix E).



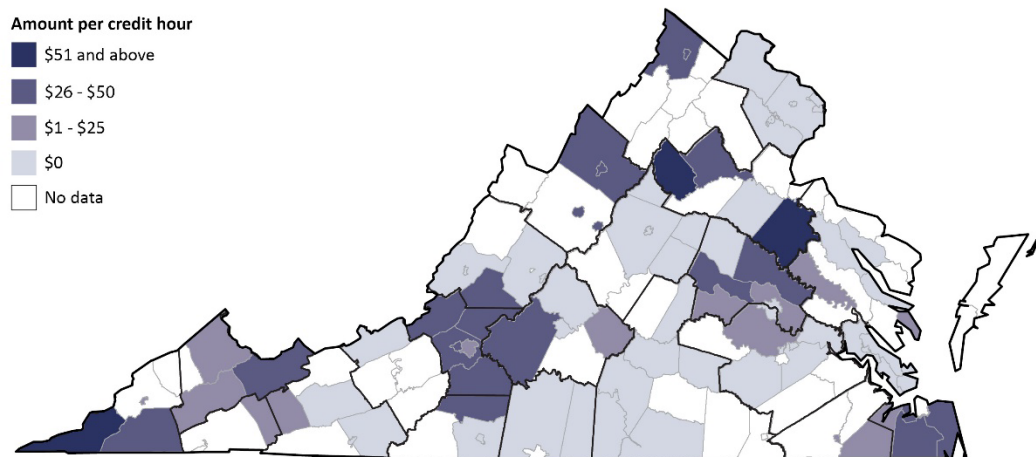
SOURCE: JLARC staff dual enrollment cost survey.

NOTE: Tuition information was available for 88 school divisions, despite receiving only 78 survey responses, because of additional divisions located in service regions in which the community college does not charge any dual enrollment tuition or fees.

**Most, but not all, dual enrollment courses are three credit hours**, so student costs are reflected on a per credit-hour basis rather than per course. Measuring student costs per credit hour enables comparisons of the costs incurred by colleges and school divisions.

In the school divisions that charged students for dual enrollment courses, students paid an average of \$33.70 per credit hour, including tuition and/or fees (median of \$38.50 per credit hour) (sidebar). Tuition and fee rates across school divisions ranged from \$4 to \$64 per credit hour (Figure 3-8), but nearly all students in these divisions paid less than \$50 per credit hour. For students taking an average dual enrollment course load of three, three-credit hour courses per year, total tuition and fee costs range from \$36 to \$576, with an average of \$303 per year. Variation in whether and how much students pay for dual enrollment occurs even among students in the same community college service region (Case Study 3-1).

**FIGURE 3-8**  
**Dual enrollment tuition and fee rates paid by students vary across the state**



SOURCE: JLARC staff dual enrollment cost survey.

NOTE: Reflects tuition and fee rates for dual enrollment courses provided on the high school campus taught by a credentialed high school teacher.

### CASE STUDY 3-1

#### Students within Reynolds Community College's service region paid different amounts for dual enrollment courses

During the 2021–22 academic year, Reynolds Community College charged \$27 per credit hour (including tuition and fees) for dual enrollment courses taught on the high school campus by qualified high school teachers. However, whether and how much of these costs were passed on to students varied by school division:

- Goochland County: \$45 per credit hour;
- Hanover County: \$40 per credit hour;
- Henrico County: \$50 per course;
- Richmond City: \$0;
- Powhatan County: Flat rate of \$150 per semester.

For students with an average course load of three, three-credit hour courses, annual costs ranged from \$0 to \$405 across these divisions. Student charges vary based on each division's dual enrollment program expenses and willingness or ability to absorb tuition and fees charged by the college, meaning students could pay different amounts to take the same courses depending on where they live in the region.



## Fewer economically disadvantaged students take dual enrollment courses

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**Economically disadvantaged students were defined as those who** (1) are eligible for free/reduced meals; (2) receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits; (3) are eligible for Medicaid; or (4) are identified as either migrant or experiencing homelessness. This definition is used by VDOE.

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**During the 2020–21 academic year**, 41 percent of students statewide were classified as economically disadvantaged, but only 23 percent of dual enrollment students statewide were economically disadvantaged.

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By charging tuition and fees, school divisions are likely deterring economically disadvantaged students from taking dual enrollment courses even though these students may benefit the most from dual enrollment's advantages (sidebar). Twenty-three percent of dual enrollment students were classified as economically disadvantaged in the 2020–21 academic year (sidebar), and tuition and fees may prevent more economically disadvantaged students from participating. These students have the lowest participation, on average, in dual enrollment programs that have higher tuition and fee rates. Both colleges and school divisions reported that dual enrollment tuition and fees can be a barrier for economically disadvantaged students, stating:

We live in a very poor area. I wish the community college would have the students apply for grants so that we did not have to charge students anything to pay for dual enrollment classes. (School division staff)

Charging any tuition is a huge barrier for students and families—\$50 or even \$100 is a huge stop for families. (Community college staff)

All families are different, so even a small amount is too much for houses that have to prioritize essentials. \$25 per course could come down to buying gas or not. (Community college staff)

Even relatively small tuition and fee amounts can be a burden for economically disadvantaged students and their families. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that expenses for low income households consistently exceed 100 percent of total household income, meaning that these families typically do not have any discretionary income available to pay for dual enrollment courses. During the 2021–22 academic year, many school divisions provided dual enrollment tuition and fee waivers, most commonly for students eligible for free or reduced meals. However, at least 11 school divisions did not provide waivers, charging between \$15 and \$135 in tuition and fees per three-credit hour course.

To ensure that tuition and fees are not a barrier, dual enrollment courses taught at the high school should be offered at no cost to economically disadvantaged students. This could be accomplished by requiring colleges and school divisions to waive dual enrollment tuition and fee charges for economically disadvantaged students. Based on the proportion of economically disadvantaged students currently participating in dual enrollment in each college's service region, requiring colleges to waive tuition and fees for these students would result in an average annual revenue loss of approximately \$82,000 per college, or \$1.9 million total across all colleges. However, costs will likely be higher to some extent, as more economically disadvantaged students will participate in dual enrollment if offered at no cost.



### RECOMMENDATION 3

The General Assembly may wish to consider including language in the Appropriation Act that requires school divisions to provide dual enrollment courses to economically disadvantaged students at no cost by requiring community colleges and school divisions to waive dual enrollment tuition and fee charges for economically disadvantaged students for courses taught on Virginia public high school campuses.

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The General Assembly should also consider providing funding to cover other dual enrollment expenses for economically disadvantaged students, such as textbooks. Across the state—even in divisions where students do not currently pay any tuition or fees—about 13 percent of school divisions require students to pay for textbooks and/or supplies to take dual enrollment courses. For an average dual enrollment student in Virginia taking three courses per year, textbook expenses could range from \$240 to \$450 (sidebar). Funding could be distributed to school divisions by the Virginia Department of Education based on the participation rate in dual enrollment courses by economically disadvantaged students, and school divisions could award funds to individual students. Based on current participation rates, costs to provide textbooks for these students would range from \$2.4 million to \$4.6 million annually.

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A 2021 Southern Regional Education Board report cites that hard-copy college **textbooks typically range from \$80 to \$150 per book**, with some costing as much as \$400.

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### RECOMMENDATION 4

The General Assembly may wish to consider including language and funding in the Appropriation Act to pay for expenses associated with taking dual enrollment courses, excluding tuition and fees, that are incurred by economically disadvantaged students, including the cost of textbooks and other supplies, and directing the Virginia Department of Education to distribute such funds based on the proportion of economically disadvantaged students participating in dual enrollment in each school division.

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# 4 Potential Changes to State's Dual Enrollment Funding Model

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The General Assembly could consider several changes to make dual enrollment more affordable for students, improve the transparency of funding, and ensure that funding amounts are based on the true costs of operating dual enrollment programs. These changes would apply to dual enrollment courses taught on high school campuses by credentialed high school teachers or adjunct community college instructors, excluding career and technical education (CTE) dual enrollment courses. Implementing a uniform dual enrollment tuition rate to make students' dual enrollment costs the same statewide, a change that has been considered by state officials in recent years, is not necessary and would increase the cost of dual enrollment for many students. As discussed in Chapter 3, an estimated majority of students statewide do not pay any tuition and fees to take dual enrollment courses at their high school. Any changes should ensure that school divisions and community colleges continue to receive sufficient revenue to cover their dual enrollment expenses, which are likely to increase as dual enrollment participation increases.

## Community colleges and school divisions do not need to charge dual enrollment tuition and fees

Tuition and fees are not needed to fund dual enrollment, and eliminating them would allow more students to afford dual enrollment courses. As discussed in Chapter 3, all community colleges and the vast majority of school divisions currently have sufficient state general funds and local funding to cover their dual enrollment expenses. Therefore, colleges and divisions do not need the revenue generated through tuition or fees to pay for their dual enrollment expenses (sidebar). If state general funds and local funding ever become insufficient to cover colleges' and school divisions' dual enrollment expenses, the General Assembly should consider appropriating funds specifically for community colleges and school divisions to pay for these expenses.

Although an estimated majority of students are not currently paying tuition or fees for dual enrollment courses, students who are charged by their divisions pay an average of \$33.70 per credit hour. This amounts to around \$303 for an average course load of three, three-credit hour courses per year. Eliminating these costs would help more students, especially those who are economically disadvantaged, participate in dual enrollment. Eliminating tuition and fees would also reduce certain administrative tasks performed by school divisions and community colleges, such as collecting tuition and fees from students and processing community college tuition invoices.

Eliminating dual enrollment tuition and fees charged by community colleges would generally have a positive impact on school divisions. The 51 divisions that indicated in

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**Eliminating fees charged to dual enrollment students** may cause some community colleges to increase mandatory fees for traditional students to meet colleges' debt service and financial reserve requirements for student centers and parking structures financed from revenue bonds, according to Virginia Community College System staff.

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survey responses that they absorb all or a portion of the costs of community colleges' tuition and fees, as opposed to passing these costs on to students, would save an average of \$81,000 per year.

This change should not apply to dual enrollment CTE courses, as these courses have substantially different costs than traditional dual enrollment courses (e.g., specialized faculty and equipment). These changes should also not apply to dual enrollment courses taught on college campuses instead of in high schools.

### **RECOMMENDATION 5**

The General Assembly may wish to consider including language in the Appropriation Act prohibiting community colleges and school divisions from charging tuition or fees for non-career and technical education dual enrollment courses taught on Virginia public high school campuses as long as their dual enrollment expenses are covered by general fund appropriations.

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Eliminating the ability of community colleges to charge dual enrollment tuition and fees would reduce college revenue by an average of \$270,000 per college per year, or \$6.2 million across all colleges (Table 4-1).

Across colleges, this represents a loss ranging from 0.2 percent to 3.7 percent of total revenue. All colleges would still be able to cover their dual enrollment expenses with state general funds, but some colleges would see negative impacts on other programs (e.g., CTE) because they use this tuition revenue to subsidize non-dual enrollment expenses.

To address this revenue loss, the General Assembly could consider providing an adjustment to the Virginia Community College System's (VCCS) base budget of \$6.2 million to replace dual enrollment tuition and fee revenue across all community colleges. Adding this amount to VCCS's base budget, rather than a one-time appropriation, would ensure that colleges' forgone tuition and fee revenue is replaced by general funds in future years.

### **POLICY OPTION 3**

The General Assembly could include language and funding in the Appropriation Act to provide an additional \$6.2 million to the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) as an adjustment to VCCS's base budget, and direct VCCS to allocate these funds to each community college to replace the revenue colleges would have received in dual enrollment tuition and fees.

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**TABLE 4-1**  
**Eliminating dual enrollment tuition and fees would reduce revenue by about \$270K, on average, per college per year (2021–22)**

Community college	Dual enrollment tuition & fee revenue	Proportion of total college revenue
Laurel Ridge <sup>a</sup>	\$1,379,904	3.7%
Tidewater	794,200	0.6
Germanna	671,925	1.2
Mountain Empire	567,779	3.0
Virginia Western	559,139	1.2
Reynolds	507,626	0.9
Rappahannock	263,003	1.4
Blue Ridge	245,741	0.9
Central Virginia	223,098	0.7
Brightpoint <sup>b</sup>	192,984	0.4
Eastern Shore	143,208	2.4
Piedmont Virginia	134,208	0.4
Paul D. Camp	111,991	1.0
Southwest Virginia	99,416	0.5
Virginia Highlands	65,311	0.4
Patrick & Henry	63,776	0.2
New River	50,332	0.2
Wytheville	48,743	0.3
Southside Virginia	44,438	0.2
Danville	32,945	0.2
Mountain Gateway <sup>c</sup>	20,089	0.2
Northern Virginia	-	-
Virginia Peninsula <sup>d</sup>	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,219,856</b>	<b>0.6%</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>\$270,429</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
<b>Median</b>	<b>\$134,208</b>	<b>0.5%</b>

SOURCE: JLARC staff dual enrollment cost survey and college financial data from VCCS and the Auditor of Public Accounts' Commonwealth Data Point.

NOTE: Includes dual enrollment tuition and fee revenue as reported by community colleges for courses taught on the high school campus. Does not include any dual enrollment tuition or fees reported by colleges for courses taught on the college campus. Northern Virginia and Virginia Peninsula would not lose any revenue because they currently do not charge any dual enrollment tuition or fees. <sup>a</sup> Formerly Lord Fairfax Community College. <sup>b</sup> Formerly John Tyler Community College. <sup>c</sup> Formerly Dabney S. Lancaster Community College. <sup>d</sup> Formerly Thomas Nelson Community College.

Several school divisions currently charge students *more* than the community college tuition and fee rate for dual enrollment, and these divisions would also lose this revenue if Recommendation 5 is implemented. At least five divisions charge students more than the college rate (sidebar). Among these divisions, the revenue decrease would range from \$5,000 to \$180,000 per division, or \$244,000 in total.

School divisions are justified in wanting to generate revenue to support a dual enrollment teacher workforce that can meet students' growing demands for these courses. School divisions may need revenue to hire appropriately credentialed teachers and to provide financial incentives to maintain a quality dual enrollment teacher workforce.

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**School divisions currently charging students more than the college rate for dual enrollment courses include** Caroline County, Frederick County, Goochland County, Hanover County, and Lee County. JLARC staff did not receive survey responses from all school divisions, so additional divisions may also be negatively impacted from this loss in tuition revenue if they are currently charging more than the community college rate. (See Appendix B for more information.)

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At least two school divisions that charge students more than the community college tuition and fee rate for dual enrollment—Frederick County and Hanover County—provide their teachers with additional compensation to teach dual enrollment courses. However, allowing school divisions to charge tuition creates variation among students' costs statewide and may contribute to lower participation by economically disadvantaged students.

To ensure that school divisions continue to have sufficient resources to operate high quality and well-staffed dual enrollment programs, the General Assembly could consider establishing a dual enrollment funding grant program for school divisions. The vast majority of school divisions are estimated to have sufficient funding to support their dual enrollment programs using state general funds and local revenue (Chapter 3). However, expenses are likely to grow as program participation increases, meaning current funding levels may become insufficient to cover expenses in future years. School divisions that can justify the need for additional funds to establish or maintain a high-quality, well-staffed dual enrollment program could be eligible to receive funding from the grant program.

To receive funding, divisions could be required to submit the following information to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE): financial data on the previous year's dual enrollment program expenses that were not covered by other state and local funding, projected expenses for the coming year, and the basis for any increase in expenses between the two years (e.g., the need to hire additional teachers). VDOE staff could make grant awards to divisions to cover all or a portion of the expenses that exceed revenues from other sources, based on the amount of available grant funds. Given the current estimated revenue loss for school divisions that charge more than the community college rate, and to account for additional divisions for which data is not available, the fund would likely need to be at least \$300,000.

In the future, the General Assembly could consider add-on dual enrollment funding for all school divisions as dual enrollment and school divisions' associated costs grow. However, given the relatively low expenses incurred by school divisions and the small number of school divisions that charge students additional tuition, a targeted grant program is a more practical approach at this time.

#### **POLICY OPTION 4**

The General Assembly could include language and funding in the Appropriation Act to establish and provide funds for a grant program that would provide funds to school divisions that demonstrate a need for financial assistance to maintain a high quality, well-staffed dual enrollment program.

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## **General funds allocated to colleges for dual enrollment should be based on dual enrollment expenses**

VCCS does not receive state funding appropriated specifically for dual enrollment. The General Assembly currently appropriates a total general fund amount to VCCS, which VCCS then distributes to individual community colleges to cover colleges' dual enrollment and non-dual enrollment expenses. Therefore, the amount the state is spending on its dual enrollment programs is not transparent.

To improve transparency and better ensure that state expenditures for dual enrollment align with the programs' costs, the General Assembly should include language in the Appropriation Act (e.g., under Item 212, Educational and General Programs), which specifies the amount for dual enrollment programs. The funding amount specified would be for non-CTE dual enrollment courses taught on high school campuses by high school teachers and would be informed by colleges' costs to operate these dual enrollment programs. This change would not need to result in a net reduction in appropriations to VCCS, because the total amount of appropriations to VCCS's Educational and General Programs could remain the same. Transparency would be improved because the portion of Educational and General Programs funding that is attributable to dual enrollment expenses would be identified in the new language.

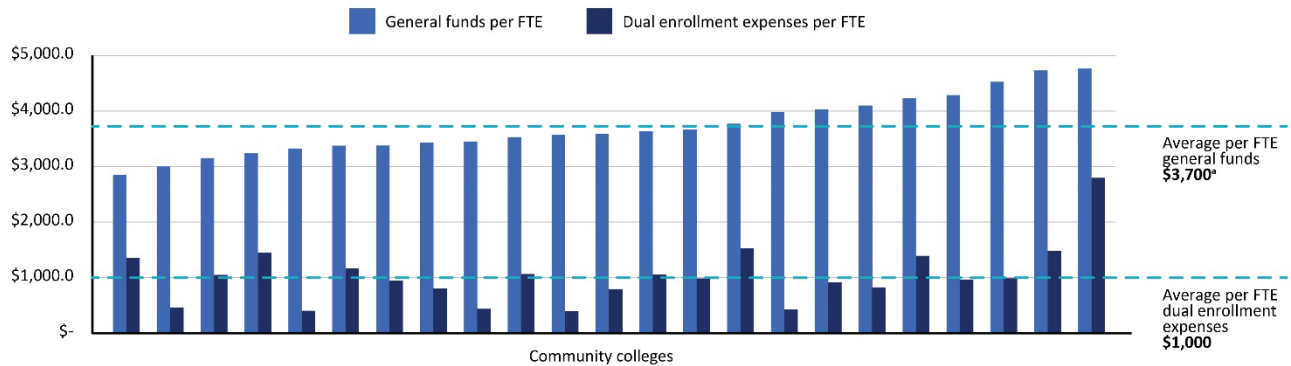
### **RECOMMENDATION 6**

The General Assembly may wish to consider including language in the Appropriation Act under Item 212, Educational and General Programs for the Virginia Community College System, which specifies the amount appropriated for non-career and technical education dual enrollment courses taught on Virginia public high school campuses that is based on community colleges' costs to operate these dual enrollment programs.

Currently, VCCS's allocation of general funds to community colleges does not distinguish between dual enrollment and traditional student full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollments. Under the funding formula, colleges receive a funding allocation based on FTE enrollment, and traditional and dual enrollment students are counted equally as FTEs. This approach results in colleges receiving the same per FTE funding for their dual enrollment students as their traditional students and does not tie funding amounts for dual enrollment FTEs to colleges' actual expenses to support these students (Figure 4-1). (Each community college's FTE funding amount is different under VCCS's current formula.)

**FIGURE 4-1**

**State general funds to community colleges for dual enrollment FTEs exceed what is necessary to cover colleges' dual enrollment expenses**



SOURCE: JLARC staff dual enrollment cost survey and college financial data from VCCS.

NOTE: Per FTE funding amounts include solely state general funds and do not include any tuition or fees. <sup>a</sup> Average amount of general funds received by colleges per FTE, including both dual enrollment and non-dual enrollment FTEs.

**General funds allocated to school divisions based on average daily membership (ADM)**

should remain unchanged, as per-student state general fund amounts allocated to school divisions are more closely aligned with divisions' dual enrollment program expenses. Additionally, school divisions would still be required to educate students, regardless of their participation in dual enrollment.

VCCS should develop and implement a process to distribute general funds to community colleges for their FTE dual enrollment students based on colleges' dual enrollment expenses. Funding for dual enrollment could be calculated by converting the colleges' total dual enrollment expenses for the academic year to a per dual enrollment FTE amount (average of \$1,000 per FTE based on 2021–22 expenses). Colleges could continue to receive funding for their traditional students based on the current per FTE approach used by VCCS, but VCCS would count only non-dual enrollment students in that calculation. If state funding for community colleges remained the same, the per FTE funding amount for non-dual enrollment community college students would *increase* while the per FTE funding for dual enrollment students would *decrease* to reflect the lower costs associated with these students. However, total funding to each of the colleges would not need to change. (A similar change is not needed for school divisions' funding formula; sidebar.)

**RECOMMENDATION 7**

The General Assembly may wish to consider including language in the Appropriation Act directing the State Board for Community Colleges to develop and implement a process for distributing state general funds to community colleges for their dual enrollment programs based on the dual enrollment program expenses reported by the colleges.

Some stakeholders have expressed concern that by separating dual enrollment funding from other funding, colleges may be less incentivized to offer these courses. However, the total amount of general funds colleges receive would not need to change because of including language in the Appropriation Act that specifies funding for dual enroll-



ment (Recommendation 6) or implementing a new process to distribute dual enrollment funding at VCCS (Recommendation 7). These changes should ensure colleges receive sufficient funding to cover their dual enrollment expenses. Additionally, student and school division demand for dual enrollment should provide adequate incentive for colleges to offer these courses.

Community colleges would no longer receive funding in excess of costs for their dual enrollment programs if the General Assembly reduced appropriations by the amount of estimated surplus funding colleges receive for dual enrollment. Collectively, colleges currently receive about \$38 million more funding than they need to cover dual enrollment expenses. If the General Assembly decided to reduce VCCS's appropriation by the total estimated amount of the surplus, colleges' funding would decrease by between \$230,000 and \$8.5 million (Table 4-2).

Community colleges maintain that they need to continue to receive these surplus funds to pay for other programs. During interviews with JLARC staff, colleges reported that losing a portion of the general funds they receive for dual enrollment students would be detrimental to their operations (sidebar), particularly those with a high proportion of dual enrollment students. As traditional student enrollment has declined over the past decade, colleges have relied on state general funds received for their dual enrollment students to support their operations. JLARC staff did not evaluate colleges' costs outside of dual enrollment, but colleges report that losing this funding could negatively affect other more expensive college programs, such as CTE. According to community college leaders, costly programs such as CTE do not receive sufficient revenue from tuition and fees and state general funds allocated for these FTEs to cover expenses.

To maintain VCCS's current level of funding, the General Assembly could continue to appropriate the same *total* amount of funding to VCCS based on their total student FTEs. The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) could continue to initially count VCCS's traditional and dual enrollment FTEs the same for the purposes of recommending a total appropriation amount to the General Assembly. This would maintain community colleges' funding levels, avoid negative impacts on colleges' operations, and would not be a new cost to the state. This could be done along with implementing Recommendations 6 and 7, which are solely intended to make dual enrollment expenses and funding more transparent.

“  
*If we lost [FTE] funding for dual enrollment...it would be catastrophic for the college and severely impact the ability of the college to exist.*  
”

**–Community college  
vice president**

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TABLE 4-2

Community colleges receive about \$38 million more in state general funds than they need to operate their dual enrollment programs (2021–22)

Community college	Dual enrollment FTEs	Total FTEs	Percentage of FTE enrollment	Remaining general funds after dual enrollment expenses	Percentage of total college revenue
Rappahannock	646	1,465	44%	\$1,831,886	9.7%
Southside Virginia	737	1,786	41	2,294,152	9.0
Laurel Ridge <sup>a</sup>	1,152	3,362	34	3,030,261	8.0
New River	692	2,386	29	2,087,457	7.9
Mountain Empire	404	1,397	29	1,437,258	7.5
Paul D. Camp	241	698	35	782,504	7.2
Mountain Gateway <sup>b</sup>	206	615	33	728,792	7.0
Wytheville	377	1,306	29	1,235,071	6.8
Central Virginia	606	2,041	30	1,695,681	5.7
Danville	372	1,414	26	1,234,892	5.6
Brightpoint <sup>c</sup>	837	4,727	18	2,445,992	5.6
Virginia Highlands	350	1,530	23	863,339	4.7
Virginia Peninsula <sup>d</sup>	604	3,756	16	1,555,237	4.0
Eastern Shore	117	381	31	229,900	3.8
Southwest Virginia	227	1,574	14	721,556	3.4
Virginia Western	610	3,215	19	1,481,376	3.3
Piedmont Virginia	560	2,639	21	1,001,722	3.1
Reynolds	746	4,681	16	1,647,535	2.8
Northern Virginia	3,337	28,878	12	8,465,290	2.6
Blue Ridge	247	1,959	13	662,984	2.5
Patrick & Henry	323	1,382	23	724,408	2.2
Germanna	545	4,585	12	818,482	1.5
Tidewater	699	10,838	6	1,469,095	1.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,635</b>	<b>86,615</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>\$38,444,869</b>	<b>3.7%</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>636</b>	<b>3,766</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>\$1,671,516</b>	<b>5.0%</b>
<b>Median</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>1,959</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>\$1,437,258</b>	<b>4.7%</b>

SOURCE: VCCS enrollment data; college financial data from VCCS and the Auditor of Public Accounts' Commonwealth Data Point.

NOTE: Remaining general funds after dual enrollment expenses includes the total amount of general funds each college received for their dual enrollment FTEs minus their total dual enrollment program expenses for the 2021–22 academic year. <sup>a</sup> Formerly Lord Fairfax Community College. <sup>b</sup> Formerly Dabney S. Lancaster Community College. <sup>c</sup> Formerly John Tyler Community College. <sup>d</sup> Formerly Thomas Nelson Community College.

### POLICY OPTION 5

The General Assembly could continue to use its current methodology for determining the amount to appropriate to the Virginia Community College System for colleges' Educational and General Programs if it designates a specific amount for dual enrollment under Item 212 of the Appropriation Act.

Colleges should be required to regularly report on specific expenses attributable to dual enrollment, including both direct and indirect expenses (sidebar), as well as revenue sources and amounts. This information would be used to inform the total funding amount for dual enrollment in the Appropriation Act, as well as by VCCS to develop and implement the new process for distributing dual enrollment funding to community colleges. Additionally, VCCS could use this information to track the sufficiency of general funds available for dual enrollment. During interviews, VCCS staff said that submitting this detailed information would be time consuming, but that colleges could establish standardized reporting processes to make the effort manageable, and reporting would become easier over time.

The funding formula for school divisions would not need to change, but it may be prudent for divisions to track their dual enrollment-related expenses and revenue to ensure they have sufficient funding to cover their dual enrollment expenses. This could be particularly important if dual enrollment participation continues to increase. Divisions that do not have sufficient revenue to cover their dual enrollment expenses from state general funds and local funding sources could apply to receive additional funds from VDOE to support their dual enrollment programs (Policy Option 4).

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**Community colleges should regularly report both direct and indirect dual enrollment expenses.** Direct expenses include both personnel and other expenses incurred solely for the provision of dual enrollment, such as dual enrollment coordinators and printing/advertising materials to market the program. Indirect expenses include portions of expenses that would have accrued even without a dual enrollment program, such as IT costs or time spent by college presidents overseeing the program.

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#### **RECOMMENDATION 8**

The General Assembly may wish to consider including language in the Appropriation Act directing community colleges to document and track the amounts and sources of revenues and expenses related to their dual enrollment programs, and report this data by September 1 every two years, starting in 2024 to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and the Virginia Community College System.

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## **State should establish centralized coordination and oversight of dual enrollment**

Though dual enrollment spans all community colleges and school divisions in the state, as well as some four-year higher education institutions, no state agency is currently tasked with program administration and oversight. Assigning a single agency responsibility for overseeing the state's dual enrollment program could help improve communication across entities and coordinate statewide program initiatives. For example, staff at the responsible agency should coordinate community colleges' regular reporting on their dual enrollment expenses and revenues and track the extent to which state general fund appropriations continue to sufficiently cover colleges' dual enrollment expenses. In addition, staff at the responsible agency should help coordinate efforts made by community colleges and school divisions to maximize Passport/Uniform Certificate of General Studies (UCGS) courses offered, and to increase the number of credentialed dual enrollment teachers across the state.

Dual enrollment oversight and coordination responsibilities would fit best at SCHEV. Although these responsibilities could be assigned to SCHEV, VCCS, or VDOE,

SCHEV staff are already responsible for recommending VCCS appropriation amounts to the General Assembly, and would therefore be best positioned to determine whether colleges need additional funding to cover their dual enrollment expenses. SCHEV staff could use data collected from colleges on dual enrollment program expenses and revenues to advise SCHEV leadership on VCCS funding recommendations. The responsibility to oversee and coordinate dual enrollment would also fit well at SCHEV because SCHEV has statewide responsibility for coordinating other aspects of dual enrollment, such as reviewing requests by four-year institutions to waive acceptance of Passport/UCGS courses and maintaining the online Transfer Virginia portal, where dual enrollment students can see how their course credits will transfer across institutions. Additional state funding for a new position may be needed depending on the scope of responsibilities assigned to SCHEV to oversee dual enrollment coordination statewide.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 9**

The General Assembly may wish to consider amending § 23.1-203 of the Code of Virginia to assign to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia responsibility for overseeing the state's dual enrollment program, including, but not limited to, (i) overseeing financial reporting by community colleges on their dual enrollment programs; (ii) tracking the extent to which state general fund appropriations continue to sufficiently cover community colleges' dual enrollment expenses; (iii) providing assistance to colleges and school divisions to maximize Passport and Uniform Certificate of General Studies courses offered; (iv) coordinating initiatives to increase the number of dual enrollment teachers across the state; and (v) evaluating the extent to which dual enrollment credits are accepted by Virginia's higher education institutions and recommending improvements and strategies for maximizing dual enrollment course transferability.

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## Appendix A: Study resolution

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### Virginia's higher education student financial aid award policies and processes

Authorized by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission on January 10, 2022

WHEREAS, state funding for student financial aid has increased in recent years, totaling more than \$200 million across Virginia's 15 public four year institutions in FY 22, and the state allocated \$60 million in FY 21 and \$73.5 million in FY 22 to maintain affordable access during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, student debt levels are in part determined by a student's ability to pay (e.g. household income and savings) and the cost of attendance, and students who need to assume debt to attend school have access to a variety of federal, state, and private loan and grant programs; and

WHEREAS, Virginia has numerous student financial assistance programs, and state funding for student aid at Virginia's public four year institutions ranged from 11 percent to 41 percent of total, non-loan aid (federal, state, institutional, and private or local aid); and

WHEREAS, state financial aid funding is allocated to institutions based on a formula, then each institution uses a variety of policies, criteria, and processes to make individual financial aid award decisions among students; and

WHEREAS, the average state financial aid award was \$2,336 per student but ranged from \$1,746 to \$3,904 per student at each institution, and each institution allocated these awards to varying degrees based on student ability to pay, other demographic factors, and other considerations; and

WHEREAS, 40 percent of recent graduates from Virginia's public four year higher education institutions had no student financial aid debt at graduation, yet 20 percent had \$10,000 to \$25,000 in debt and 25 percent had \$25,000 to \$50,000 in debt; and

WHEREAS, the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia's strategic plan sets a goal to lower student costs and it will be releasing a review of funding, efficiency, and effectiveness in mid-2022; and

WHEREAS, JLARC has not reviewed financial aid at Virginia's 15 public four year institutions since 2014; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission that staff be directed to review student financial aid at Virginia's 15 public four year institutions. In conducting its study, staff shall (i) assess student cost, enrollment, and graduation trends before and during the pandemic; (ii) assess the adequacy and equity of state financial aid funding across institutions given varying student ability to pay and demographics; (iii) identify, compare, and evaluate student aid award policies, criteria, and processes at each of Virginia's 15 public four year institutions; (iv) evaluate how, if at all, HBCUs and their students are being affected differently by rising higher education costs and student debt; (v) determine costs to provide dual enrollment courses and how well institutions share data about stu-

dents who complete dual enrollment courses or transfer across institutions; and (vi) evaluate the effectiveness of state student financial aid at lowering student costs considering funding levels, student demographics, and graduation rates at each institution.

JLARC shall make recommendations as necessary and review other issues as warranted.

All agencies of the Commonwealth, including the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia and all public higher education institutions and local school divisions, shall provide assistance, information, and data to JLARC for this study, upon request. JLARC staff shall have access to all information in the possession of agencies pursuant to § 30-59 and § 30-69 of the Code of Virginia. No provision of the Code of Virginia shall be interpreted as limiting or restricting the access of JLARC staff to information pursuant to its statutory authority.

## Appendix B: Research activities and methods

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Key research activities JLARC performed for this study include:

- structured interviews with community college presidents and staff; school division superintendents and staff; homeschool student stakeholder group; and national dual enrollment experts and dual enrollment practitioners in other states;
- statewide dual enrollment cost survey of community colleges and school divisions;
- survey of school divisions on costs to provide Advanced Placement (AP) courses;
- analysis of Virginia Community College System (VCCS) and Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) data;
- reviews of national research;
- reviews of state law and policy relevant to the provision of dual enrollment in Virginia; and
- reviews of state law and policy relevant to homeschool student participation in dual enrollment.

### Structured interviews

Structured interviews were a key research method for this report. JLARC conducted 51 interviews. Key interviewees included:

- college presidents and staff;
- school division superintendents and staff;
- leadership and staff of VCCS and other state agencies; and
- stakeholders, subject-matter experts, and dual enrollment practitioners in Virginia and nationally.

### *Community college presidents and staff*

JLARC staff conducted 10 structured interviews with community college presidents and staff, including vice presidents of finance and administration, dual enrollment coordinators, and business office staff. Colleges interviewed included:

- Blue Ridge Community College;
- Mountain Empire Community College;
- Northern Virginia Community College;
- Rappahannock Community College;
- Reynolds Community College;
- Tidewater Community College;
- Virginia Western Community College; and
- Wytheville Community College.

Topics varied, but interviews were primarily designed to understand colleges' dual enrollment programs, including major types of expenses incurred to provide dual enrollment and revenue sources used to cover those expenses, including tuition and fees charged to school divisions. Colleges were also asked about potential options to modify the dual enrollment funding model and how these changes would impact other aspects of their operations. For example, interviews were used to understand colleges' career and technical education (CTE) program costs, how funds allocated for dual enrollment have been used to support CTE programs, and how changes to dual enrollment funding could affect colleges' ability to offer CTE programs.

### ***School division superintendents and staff***

JLARC staff spoke with division superintendents and staff (including finance staff and workforce and career development staff) at 13 school divisions across eight individual and group interviews. School divisions interviewed included:

- Carroll County Public Schools;
- Chesapeake City Public Schools;
- Chesterfield County Public Schools;
- Culpeper County Public Schools;
- Cumberland County Public Schools;
- Danville City Public Schools;
- Greene County Public Schools;
- Henrico County Public Schools;
- King and Queen County Public Schools;
- Nottoway County Public Schools;
- Prince William County Public Schools;
- Roanoke County Public Schools; and
- Salem City Public Schools.

Interview topics focused on various aspects of divisions' dual enrollment programs, including expenses incurred by the division to provide dual enrollment courses and revenue sources used to cover those expenses; and tuition charged to students and other student expenses to take dual enrollment courses. Divisions were also asked about potential options to modify the dual enrollment funding model and how these changes would affect their dual enrollment programs.

### ***State agencies***

JLARC staff conducted 10 individual and group interviews with leadership and staff from Virginia agencies, including the:

- State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV);
- VCCS; and
- VDOE.



The purpose of these interviews was to obtain a better understanding of various aspects of the state's dual enrollment program, including the dual enrollment funding model; teacher credentialing requirements; and legislative reforms implemented as part of the creation of the Passport and Uniform Certificate of General Studies (UCGS) programs. JLARC also spoke to agency leadership and staff about potential changes to the dual enrollment funding model.

JLARC staff also conducted structured interviews with vice presidents and staff at five of Virginia's public four-year institutions, including:

- Christopher Newport University;
- Norfolk State University;
- Old Dominion University;
- Virginia Commonwealth University; and
- Virginia State University.

These interviews were designed to understand the circumstances in which dual enrollment is offered through four-year institutions and the transferability of community college dual enrollment credits to four-year institutions.

### ***Stakeholders, subject-matter experts, and practitioners***

JLARC staff interviewed several Virginia stakeholder groups, including representatives of:

- The Virginia Association of School Superintendents;
- The Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals; and
- The Home Educators Association of Virginia.

JLARC staff interviewed several dual enrollment subject-matter experts, both in Virginia and nationally, including representatives of:

- George Mason University (researchers contracted by the secretary of labor and VDOE who conducted 2020 Virginia dual enrollment cost study);
- The National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships;
- The National Conference of State Legislatures; and
- The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

JLARC staff interviewed several dual enrollment practitioners in other states, including representatives of:

- Idaho State Board of Education;
- Idaho State Department of Education; and
- Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

These interviews covered various topics to understand concerns with Virginia's current funding model; national best practices for funding dual enrollment programs; funding challenges encountered by dual enrollment programs in other states; and strategies to expand the number of credentialed dual enrollment teachers.

## Surveys

Three surveys were conducted for this study: (1) community college dual enrollment cost survey; (2) school division dual enrollment cost survey; and (3) school division AP cost survey.

### ***Community college dual enrollment cost survey***

JLARC staff used a survey, which included a data collection instrument and survey questions, to collect dual enrollment financial data and perspectives on the current funding model from community colleges. The data collection instrument requested data on each college's: (1) dual enrollment tuition and fee rates charged and total amounts collected from each school division in their service area; (2) personnel expenses for dual enrollment; (3) materials and other programmatic expenses for dual enrollment; and (4) revenue sources and amounts used to cover dual enrollment expenses. The survey questions asked community colleges about the extent to which they were satisfied with the current dual enrollment funding model and any opportunities to improve dual enrollment funding for their college or for students.

All data was collected and analyzed for the 2021–22 academic year, and all 23 of Virginia's community colleges submitted responses to the survey for a 100 percent response rate.

### ***School division dual enrollment cost survey***

JLARC staff used a survey, including a data collection instrument and survey questions, to collect dual enrollment financial data and perspectives on the current funding model from school divisions. The data collection instrument requested data from the 2021–22 academic year on each division's: (1) tuition and fee rates and total amounts paid to the community college; (2) personnel expenses for dual enrollment; (3) materials and other programmatic expenses for dual enrollment; and (4) revenue sources and amounts used to cover dual enrollment expenses. The survey questions asked school divisions to provide information about dual enrollment teacher compensation, homeschool student participation in dual enrollment, and student expenses to take dual enrollment courses in their division. The survey questions also asked school divisions about the extent to which they were satisfied with the current dual enrollment funding model and any opportunities to improve dual enrollment funding for their division or for students.

Out of the 123 school divisions surveyed, 78 school divisions submitted responses—a 63 percent response rate. The weighted response rate for the school division dual enrollment cost survey [calculated using the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) dual enrollment students in each division] was 72 percent. (Note: Not all school divisions statewide received the dual enrollment cost survey because a sample of divisions was selected to receive the AP cost survey. For a list of school divisions that responded to each survey, see Appendix F.)

### ***School division AP cost survey***

JLARC staff also used a data collection instrument to collect financial data from a sample of school divisions on the costs to provide advanced placement (AP) courses. The data collection instrument requested data from the 2021–22 academic year on: (1) student expenses to take AP courses and (2)

division expenses to provide AP courses, including personnel, materials, and one-time expenses. Divisions were also asked to provide information to compare their AP expenses to their expenses incurred to provide dual enrollment courses.

Fifteen school divisions received the data collection instrument. These divisions were selected by JLARC staff based on a combination of factors, including high participation in AP and/or low participation in dual enrollment, size, and geographic representation. Of the school divisions that received the AP data collection instrument, 12 submitted responses for a response rate of 80 percent. (For a list of school divisions that responded to the AP cost survey, see Appendix F.)

### **Data collection and analysis**

Several data sources were collected and analyzed for this study. JLARC staff collected and analyzed original data on dual enrollment expenses and revenue sources and amounts from community colleges and school divisions. JLARC staff also analyzed data from SCHEV (dual enrollment participation by college), VCCS (dual enrollment participation by college and by school division; general fund allocations by community college), and VDOE (credentialed dual enrollment teachers by subject and by school division; economically disadvantaged student participation in dual enrollment by school division; general fund allocations by school division). JLARC staff also collected and analyzed original data on school division AP costs.

#### ***Analysis of dual enrollment participation over time (Chapter 1)***

JLARC used SCHEV enrollment data to analyze (1) changes in the total number of dual enrollment students and (2) trends in the number of dual enrollment students and as a proportion of total community college enrollment. This data was analyzed for the years between 2012 and 2021, both by college and system wide at VCCS.

JLARC also analyzed SCHEV enrollment data on dual enrollment participation at four-year institutions across the state from 2012–2021.

#### ***Analysis of Passport/UCGS program participation (Chapter 2)***

JLARC staff collected and analyzed VCCS course enrollment data for the 2021–22 academic year to determine participation in Passport/UCGS courses. Passport/UCGS participation was calculated by school division and by community college, based on the school divisions included in each community college service region. Passport/UCGS participation was determined by calculating the proportion of Passport/UCGS course enrollments out of all dual enrollment course enrollments for each school division and community college.

JLARC staff also used VCCS course enrollment data to analyze specific course offerings and number of enrollments among divisions with low Passport/UCGS participation (classified as less than 60 percent Passport/UCGS participation for the 2021–22 academic year), along with teacher credentialing data from VDOE, to identify opportunities for divisions to expand their Passport/UCGS course offerings. Non-Passport/UCGS course offerings were assessed across these divisions and compared to similar Passport/UCGS courses in the same subject not currently offered to identify additional Passport/UCGS courses that could be offered in these divisions using existing credentialed teachers.

***Analysis of dual enrollment expenses and revenue by community college (Chapter 3)***

JLARC staff collected and analyzed original financial data from all 23 community colleges on their dual enrollment expenses and revenue to determine the costs incurred by community colleges to provide dual enrollment courses. All data was collected and analyzed for the 2021–22 academic year.

Colleges were asked to report both personnel expenses as well as any materials and other programmatic expenses incurred for their dual enrollment programs. For personnel expenses, colleges were provided with a list of various dual enrollment program responsibilities, such as “staff responsible for managing the dual enrollment program (e.g., dual enrollment coordinator)” and specific staff positions, such as program deans. Colleges were asked to provide total salaries and benefits for these staff as well as estimate the average percentage of time these staff spent on dual enrollment-related responsibilities. Based on these responses, JLARC staff calculated each college’s total personnel expenses attributable to their dual enrollment programs. Colleges were also asked to report their dual enrollment materials and other programmatic expenses in certain categories, such as “printing/advertising materials to market dual enrollment program.” For both types of expenses, colleges could also specify and include any additional dual enrollment expenses that were not already listed in the pre-defined categories.

Using the reported expense information, JLARC staff then calculated total dual enrollment expenses incurred by each college. JLARC staff also used data from VCCS on dual enrollment credit hours attempted at each community college to calculate per-credit-hour expenses for dual enrollment courses provided on the high school campus. JLARC staff calculated average and median expenses, both total and per credit hour, as well as analyzed the breakdown of expenses for personnel vs. materials and other programmatic expenses.

College revenue sources and amounts used to cover dual enrollment expenses were determined both through data reported by the colleges as well as college financial data received from VCCS. As part of JLARC’s dual enrollment cost survey, colleges were asked to report the total amount of state general funds received and non-dual enrollment tuition revenue collected, as well as specify any specific carve outs from these funding sources that were used to cover dual enrollment expenses. VCCS provided financial data on general fund allocations made to each of the community colleges using their current funding model. Colleges also provided information to JLARC on dual enrollment tuition and fees. Colleges provided per-credit-hour tuition rates and individual fee types and amounts (e.g., student activity fee, parking fee), as well as total amounts collected from each of the school divisions in their service area. Colleges could also specify any additional revenue sources and amounts they used to cover dual enrollment expenses, such as any federal or private funding sources.

JLARC staff calculated the amount of state general funds allocated to colleges to cover their dual enrollment expenses based on colleges’ dual enrollment FTEs. Using data on state general fund allocations made to each community college based on their FTEs by VCCS, JLARC staff determined the per-FTE amount of general funds received by each college. This amount was then multiplied by the total number of dual enrollment FTEs to determine the total amount of state general funds allocated to each college to cover its dual enrollment expenses. JLARC staff then compared this amount to colleges’ total dual enrollment expenses to determine the extent to which each college had sufficient general fund revenue to cover its dual enrollment expenses.

### ***Analysis of dual enrollment expenses and revenue by school division (Chapter 3)***

JLARC staff collected and analyzed original financial data from 78 school divisions on their dual enrollment expenses and revenue to determine the costs incurred by school divisions to provide dual enrollment courses. All data was collected and analyzed for the 2021–22 academic year.

School divisions were asked to report both personnel expenses, tuition and fee expenses, as well as any materials and other programmatic expenses incurred for their dual enrollment programs. First, for personnel expenses, school divisions were asked to provide information on their dual enrollment teachers. School divisions provided (1) the total number of teachers in the division who taught dual enrollment courses; (2) the number of dual enrollment courses taught by each teacher on average; (3) the total number of courses taught by each teacher on average; and (4) the average teacher salary in the division. Division dual enrollment teacher expenses were then calculated by JLARC staff as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Average dual enrollment courses taught}}{\text{Average total number of courses taught}} \times \text{Average teacher salary} \times \text{Total number of dual enrollment teachers}$$

For additional personnel expenses, divisions were provided with a list of dual enrollment program responsibilities, such as “staff responsible for registering students for dual enrollment courses,” and specific staff positions, such as administrative leadership/staff (e.g., superintendent). Divisions were asked to provide total salaries and benefits for these staff as well as estimate the average percentage of time these staff spent on dual enrollment-related responsibilities. JLARC staff used this information (in addition to the teacher expenses) to calculate each division’s total personnel expenses attributable to its dual enrollment programs. Divisions were also asked to report their dual enrollment materials and other programmatic expenses in certain categories, such as textbooks. For both types of expenses, divisions could also specify and include any additional dual enrollment expenses that were not already listed in the pre-defined categories.

Using the reported expense information, JLARC staff then calculated total dual enrollment expenses incurred by each school division. JLARC staff also used data from VCCS on dual enrollment credit hours attempted at each school division to calculate per-credit-hour expenses for dual enrollment courses provided on the high school campus. JLARC staff calculated average and median expenses, both total and per credit hour, as well as analyzed the breakdown of expenses for personnel vs. materials and other programmatic expenses.

JLARC staff calculated school divisions’ per-credit-hour dual enrollment expenses both including and excluding any community college tuition and fees. The difference between average school division operating expenses per credit hour (\$276) and average expenses including tuition and fees (\$324) is greater than the average community college tuition and fee rate (\$22), because it is an average of the tuition and fee rate that colleges charge. For example, one school division may pay for 1,000 credit hours at \$45 per credit hour, while another pays for 100 credit hours at \$5 per credit hour, which would bring the average per-credit-hour costs for these two divisions to \$41. Across all divisions for which information was available, the difference in average per-credit hour costs increases relative to the number of credit hours that are paid at each rate. Some school divisions also pay higher per-credit-hour rates because they use college faculty to teach their courses, which are not reflected in the average community college tuition and fee rate.

School divisions also reported revenue sources and amounts used to cover their dual enrollment expenses. School divisions were asked to report the total amount of state general funds received based on their average daily membership (ADM) and the total amount of local revenue received, as well as specify any carve outs from these funding sources that were used to cover dual enrollment expenses. School divisions also provided information to JLARC on the total amount of tuition and fees collected from students to participate in dual enrollment, if applicable, as well as any additional revenue sources and amounts they used to cover dual enrollment expenses, such as any federal or private funding sources.

JLARC staff calculated the amount of state general funds and local funding allocated to school divisions to cover their dual enrollment expenses based on divisions' total ADM and their dual enrollment FTEs. JLARC staff first used VDOE data on each division's ADM to determine the per-student amount of state general funds and local funding allocated to each division. This amount was then multiplied by the division's total number of dual enrollment FTEs, provided by VCCS, to determine the total amount of state general funds and local funding allocated to each division to cover their dual enrollment expenses. JLARC staff then compared this amount to divisions' total dual enrollment expenses to determine the extent to which each division had sufficient state general funds and local funding to cover their dual enrollment expenses.

### ***Analysis of dual enrollment student expenses and economically disadvantaged student participation in dual enrollment (Chapter 3)***

Information on student dual enrollment expenses was collected and analyzed from all 23 community colleges and 78 school divisions as part of JLARC's dual enrollment cost survey. All data was collected and analyzed for the 2021–22 academic year.

JLARC staff first analyzed variation in tuition and fees incurred by students to take dual enrollment courses. Divisions were asked to provide information on student expenses as part of the dual enrollment cost survey. School divisions provided data on tuition and fee rates and how these rates were charged to students (e.g., by credit hour, flat rate per course, etc.), as well as any additional expenses incurred by students, such as textbooks or other supplies. Because JLARC did not receive responses from all school divisions, staff also used tuition and fee information provided by community colleges to determine student expenses across the state. For example, for colleges that did not charge any dual enrollment tuition or fees (e.g., Northern Virginia, Virginia Peninsula), JLARC staff assumed that students in these service regions did not pay tuition or fees for dual enrollment (based on data received from other school divisions in these service regions indicating students did not pay tuition or fees). JLARC staff then analyzed this data to determine (1) breakdown of divisions in which students do/do not pay dual enrollment tuition and fees; (2) reasons why students do/do not pay tuition (e.g., division absorbs cost); and (3) range of tuition and fee rates paid by students across service regions and across the state.

JLARC staff also analyzed economically disadvantaged student participation in dual enrollment across the state. VDOE's advanced program participation data includes a breakdown of the number of economically disadvantaged students taking one or more dual enrollment courses by high school. JLARC staff used this data to determine the proportion of economically disadvantaged students participating in dual enrollment by school division and by community college service region. JLARC staff also

compared this data to additional VDOE data on the total proportion of economically disadvantaged students in each division/service region, to assess trends in gaps in economically disadvantaged student participation in dual enrollment across the state.

***Analysis of eliminating dual enrollment tuition and fees charged by community colleges (Chapter 4)***

JLARC staff estimated the amount and total proportion of revenue community colleges would lose if they were no longer permitted to charge dual enrollment tuition and fees for courses taught on the high school campus. Colleges reported the total amount of dual enrollment tuition and fee revenue collected by division on JLARC's dual enrollment cost survey. JLARC staff used these amounts, minus any tuition and fee revenue reported for dual enrollment courses taught on the college campus, to determine the total amount of lost revenue per college. JLARC staff also used additional college financial data from VCCS and the Auditor of Public Accounts to determine the total amount of college revenue from all sources and calculate the proportion of revenue lost if colleges could no longer charge dual enrollment tuition and fees.

***Analysis of AP costs incurred by school divisions and students (Appendix D)***

JLARC staff collected and analyzed original financial data from 12 school divisions on expenses incurred by divisions to provide AP courses and expenses incurred by students to take AP courses. All data was collected and analyzed for the 2021–22 academic year.

To determine division expenses, school divisions were asked to provide information on both personnel and materials and other programmatic expenses. Divisions were asked to provide information on AP teachers, including (1) the total number of teachers in the division who taught AP courses; (2) the number of AP courses taught by each teacher on average; (3) the total number of courses taught by each teacher on average; and (4) the average teacher salary in the division. School divisions were also asked to provide information on any continuing education expenses for teachers to obtain/retain credentials to teach AP courses; additional personnel expenses; materials or other programmatic expenses (e.g., textbooks); and any one-time expenses. This information was then used to calculate each division's total expenses to provide AP courses.

JLARC staff also determined each division's per-FTE costs to provide AP courses. Divisions were asked to provide the total number of AP students and the average number of AP courses taken per student. Using this information, JLARC staff determined the proportion of AP courses in the average student course load and calculated each division's total number of full-time equivalent AP students. Each division's total AP expenses were then divided by its total number of AP FTEs to determine per-FTE expenses to provide AP courses.

Divisions similarly provided information on student expenses to take AP courses, such as tuition or other registration fees, testing fees, and textbooks. School divisions also had the opportunity to provide information on any other student expenses that were not listed in the pre-defined categories. JLARC staff then calculated student expenses per AP course by division.

Several school divisions that provided information about their AP expenses also responded to the dual enrollment cost survey (Hanover County; Henry County; Norfolk City; Rockingham County;

Spotsylvania County; Williamsburg-James City County; and York County), allowing JLARC staff to compare operating expenses across the two programs. For each division that provided expense information for both programs, JLARC staff compared per-FTE expenses to provide AP to per-FTE expenses to provide dual enrollment (excluding any tuition and fees paid to the community college). JLARC staff also compared student expenses per AP course to expenses per dual enrollment course across these divisions.

JLARC staff also used VDOE data to calculate the total number and proportion of economically disadvantaged students participating in AP courses statewide and compare it the total number and proportion of economically disadvantaged students participating in dual enrollment courses.

### **Review of national research and experiences of other states**

JLARC staff reviewed research from a variety of sources, such as other government agencies and nonprofit groups. JLARC staff reviewed documents and publications that describe dual enrollment funding models and student outcomes in other states from the Education Commission of the States (ESC); the Institute of Education Sciences (IES); the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP); the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB); and several other states (including California, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Minnesota, and Oregon).

### **Document review**

JLARC staff reviewed numerous other documents and literature pertaining to dual enrollment costs and funding in Virginia and in other states, such as:

- Virginia laws, regulations, policies, and guidance documents relating to the responsibilities and requirements of community colleges, school divisions, SCHEV, VCCS, and VDOE;
- prior studies of dual enrollment costs in Virginia, including VCCS's 2018 internal cost study and George Mason University's 2020 study; and
- other states' dual enrollment laws, policies, and processes related to the structure of their dual enrollment programs and funding models.



## **Appendix C: Agency responses**

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As part of an extensive validation process, the state agencies and other entities that are subject to a JLARC assessment are given the opportunity to comment on an exposure draft of the report. JLARC staff sent an exposure draft of the full report to staff from the following organizations:

- the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV);
- the Virginia Community College System (VCCS);
- the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE); and
- the secretary of education.

Appropriate corrections resulting from technical and substantive comments are incorporated in this version of the report. This appendix includes response letters from SCHEV, VCCS, VDOE, and the secretary of education.



*COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA*  
*STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA*  
*James Monroe Building, 101 North Fourteenth Street, Richmond, VA 23219*

Peter Blake  
Director

(804) 225-2600  
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December 2, 2022

Hal Greer, Director  
Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission  
919 East Main Street Suite 2101  
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Mr. Greer,

On behalf of SCHEV, thank you for the opportunity to review the draft of the JLARC report, *The Costs of Virginia's Dual Enrollment Program*. The issue is complex, as it involves every school division and community college, all of which have different financial conditions, constituents and arrangements.

We applaud JLARC for analyzing and recommending funding and policy changes that will increase student participation across Virginia. "Affordable access" is a central feature of SCHEV's work. We also believe that dual enrollment provides high school students with rigorous college-level courses and has the potential to reduce disparities in educational attainment. SCHEV supports your efforts to make dual enrollment more accessible and affordable.

Recommendation 9 says that the General Assembly may wish to assign responsibility for overseeing dual enrollment to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. This recommendation makes sense, and we support it, provided the General Assembly is explicit about the authority it wants SCHEV to have and ensures we have the resources to fulfill the duty. In addition to data and reporting on enrollments and finances, such a function also could include program evaluation, mission and purpose of dual enrollment, and advocacy for fair access and program improvements.

Once again, we are grateful for the professionalism and dedication of your staff during this review. Thank you as well for including our staff throughout the process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Blake".

Peter Blake



December 6, 2022

Mr. Hal E. Greer, Director  
Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission  
919 E Main Street, Suite 2101  
Sun Trust Building  
Richmond, VA 23219

RE: JLARC's Report on the Costs of Virginia's Dual Enrollment Program

Dear Mr. Greer:

The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) thanks you for the opportunity to review the exposure draft of JLARC's report on *The Costs of Virginia's Dual Enrollment Program*. VCCS is appreciative of the professional way in which JLARC staff conducted its review of an extremely complex topic over a very short period.

The benefits of dual enrollment are numerous and include those that accrue both to students and the Commonwealth of Virginia. Students and their families benefit from the opportunity to reduce the average time to degree completion and future college expenses. Upon completion of high school, students can enter college, with credits applicable to their degree paths. According to SCHEV data, between 56% and 60% of students with dual enrollment credits will complete a bachelor's degree within 4 years, compared to less than 50% of students without dual enrollment credits. In many cases, students can, when they graduate from high school, complete associate degrees that prepare them for immediate entry into the workforce or for advanced standing at a university. Students engaged in dual enrollment gain an understanding of the rigor of college work and what is needed for a successful college experience. They also have access to college resources, facilities, and services such as advising and career counseling. College credit awarded through dual enrollment is widely accepted at Virginia's private and public colleges.

The benefits that accrue to the Commonwealth include the opportunity to create a pathway to the workforce and to advanced standing at universities, strengthening the labor force, and providing the opportunity to expedite bachelor's degree completion. Moreover, dual enrollment provides course credit completion at a significantly lower cost to the Commonwealth than if the same course credits are earned at Virginia's public universities. According to SCHEV, the average FTE funding allocation to Virginia's public universities is \$7,641, while the average FTE funding allocation to Virginia's Community Colleges is \$4,324. In short, dual enrollment is a win-win for Virginia and Virginia's families.

The Virginia Community College System does not contest the individual intent of the recommendations issued by JLARC. However, when taken together, the recommendations to both eliminate all tuition and fees for dual enrollment and to create a new funding formula that would reduce the proportion of state funding allocated to colleges for dual enrollment, would substantially reduce the incentive to deliver. Currently, state funds are allocated to colleges on an FTE basis regardless of student type (i.e., transfer, career education, or dual enrolled), and those funds, along with tuition receipts, comprise the college's overall budget to cover cost of education for students. Removing dual enrollment tuition and reducing state funds for dual enrollment FTEs is likely to disincentivize colleges from offering dual enrollment.

Mr. Hal E. Greer, Director

December 6, 2022

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As a result of this disincentive, it is likely that community colleges will deliver less dual enrollment, and fewer Virginians will have access to college credit while in high school. Annually more than 15,000 high school graduates who have earned college credit in high school will enroll at universities. Anything that reduces access to those substantially lower cost dual enrollment course credits will result in students taking the same college credits at more expensive universities, driving up costs for families and for the Commonwealth. Moreover, students who would have earned credits and associate degrees in high school that prepared them for entry into the workplace, will be delayed in, or deterred from, doing so.

Today, JLARC staff provided VCCS staff with clarification that it is not the intent of recommendation 7 to reduce the amount of funding that any one community college receives. JLARC staff reported that the intent of the recommendation is to provide greater transparency in accounting for funds used to support dual enrollment. Given this clarification and the understanding that individual community colleges, including those that deliver dual enrollment intensively, should not see a reduction in total state funding as a result of recommendation 7, the VCCS concern for disincentivizing dual enrollment is reduced.

VCCS is also concerned with the fact that these recommendations apply only to VCCS colleges and not to other public institutions of higher education that deliver dual enrollment to high school students. VCCS appreciates that JLARC staff did not study other public institutions. Still, the results of these recommendations, if adopted, would be a restriction on tuition and a state funding allocation change for Virginia's Community Colleges, but no such restriction, even if merited, would be placed on other public institutions delivering dual enrollment.

In addition to serving as a disincentive to delivering dual enrollment, the elimination of tuition and mandatory fees for dual enrollment students would shift a burden to non-dual enrollment students. Mandatory fees currently paid by all enrolled students are used to cover self-supporting auxiliary programs that received no state general fund per the Appropriation Act and state guidelines. Funding supporting auxiliary and student life programs covers general operations, maintenance, debt service for facilities constructed with revenue bonds and required operating reserves. The elimination of these fees for dual enrollment students would shift the burden to exclusively non-dual enrollment students, thus likely causing an increase in mandatory fees to non-dual enrollment students.

As always, VCCS deeply appreciates the analysis and effort invested by JLARC staff into the report and will continue to evaluate the options and recommendations included in this report. VCCS looks forward to continuing discussions with JLARC staff and members of the General Assembly as our team seeks to maximize the delivery of the VCCS mission.

Sincerely,



Sharon Morrissey,  
Interim Chancellor



## COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Jillian Balow  
Superintendent of Public Instruction

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
P.O. BOX 2120  
RICHMOND, VA 23218-2120

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November 28, 2022

The Honorable Hal E. Greer, Director  
Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission  
919 East Main Street, Suite 2101  
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Director Greer:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the forthcoming Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) report, *The Costs of Virginia Dual Enrollment Program*. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is committed to helping expand access to advanced-level coursework, including dual enrollment, and we appreciate that this report seeks to identify barriers and offer solutions for making dual enrollment more available to all of Virginia's students.

The report highlights several key challenges that continue to limit student access to dual enrollment courses. Virginia's dual enrollment tuition and fee models vary by locality and disproportionately impact economically-disadvantaged students. Additionally, dual enrollment course availability has also suffered from the same strains on our teacher pipeline as other K-12 classrooms; ensuring teachers are qualified to teach college-level coursework has been an obstacle for staffing and teachers are reluctant to take on the additional training and workload without the right incentive structures in place. The report also offers recommendations and policy options that would help to address some of these challenges, including restrictions on tuition and fees for dual enrollment, additional state support for sustaining dual enrollment programs, and leveraging division and community college staff resources to meet demand.

By and large, VDOE leadership and I agree with the report's findings as well as the need for strategic funding and staffing policies that promote access to dual enrollment. JLARC's recommendations and policy options are complements to Governor Youngkin's initiative to guarantee each student in Virginia graduate career- or college-ready, part of which would have many students earning an Associate's Degree before leaving high school. The proposed legislative actions also align with Executive Directive #3, which requires the state to maximize available policy levers to support the teaching profession.

As we work together to advance JLARC's recommendations and consider the proposed policy options, I would like to remind legislators that the barriers we see related to dual enrollment access are unique and complex. Addressing these issues will require an intentional

The Honorable Hal E. Greer, Director

November 28, 2022

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approach to teacher licensure and funding, which will implicate state and local funding resources as well as our local school divisions and community colleges. We ask that any legislative action be done so thoughtfully and in collaboration with VDOE and community college partners to guarantee our policy solutions are comprehensive, implementable, and sustainable.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide our perspective on the JLARC findings and recommendations as it relates to the costs of dual enrollment in Virginia. The actions resulting from this study have the potential to improve the quality of our public education system for students and teachers and improve college and career readiness. We look forward to continued collaboration with JLARC and state and local policymakers in addressing the issues identified in the report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dicky Shanor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dicky Shanor for

Jillian Balow, Superintendent of Public Instruction



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA**  
*Office of the Governor*

Aimee Rogstad Guidera  
Secretary of Education

December 6, 2022

Hal Greer, Director  
Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission  
919 East Main Street Suite 2101  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Director Greer,

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide comments on the the JLARC draft report on *The Costs of Virginia's Dual Enrollment Program*. As you well document, the simple goal of providing access for all of our high school students to advanced coursework and critical skills and knowledge is currently dependent on a complex, inconsistent and confusing implementation process. I hope that your report will raise awareness of the need to 1) provide greater clarity and transparency around how we fund and support the development of an expanded and enhanced dual enrollment system in the Commonwealth, and 2) establish clear expectations for how K-12 school divisions, the Virginia Community College System and our other institutions of higher education will work in partnership to open doors to postsecondary opportunities to all students while they are still in high school.

Dual enrollment provides students with important choices, greater opportunities and exciting and personalized pathways in their education. We know that these pathways need to lead to an acquisition of credentials that meet the skills that are most in-demand by our business community. All high school students should graduate prepared to meet this skill demand, and dual enrollment helps make that possible. Students can gain exposure, experience and expertise to workforce skills, knowledge and competencies through earning college credits or industry-recognized credentials. They can also pursue college-level academic courses that may not be available to them and earn credits toward a college degree at the same time. According to the Virginia Department of Education, 35% of our Virginia high school seniors did not enroll in higher education within 16 months of their high school graduation. By encouraging high school students to earn dual enrollment credits, we can open the doors to opportunity to be prepared for further training, education, jobs or the military.

The Youngkin Administration is laser-focused on prioritizing policies that incentivize students and families, school divisions, and our institutions of higher education to work together to create an education system that seamlessly connects high school with quality post-secondary experiences that prepare all students for success in life. As responsible stewards of the Commonwealth's resources, we believe dual enrollment is the most cost- and time-effective way

to accomplish this goal. We are pleased that JLARC's analysis and recommended policy changes highlight the need to expand dual enrollment access for our K-12 students so more students can attain post-secondary advanced studies through exposure to higher level academic matters and subjects not offered in their local school division as well as industry recognized credentials.

Our Administration is focused on expanding dual enrollment opportunities to all high school students in the most efficient, cost-effective and scalable way possible. To do so effectively, we need additional research and a landscape analysis on the funding of dual enrollment and to explore best-in-class approaches across the nation that will result in the best outcomes. After consultation with JLARC, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, the Virginia Community College System and the Virginia Department of Education, we believe additional analysis should be conducted to better-understand the cost and outcome differences between dual enrollment courses delivered in high schools and those delivered on college campuses. Our goal is to build a best in class education system with multiple pathways, and we must be guided by evidence and experiences from within the Commonwealth and across the country.

We believe that this report is an important step to address the urgent need to ensure all students have access to advanced course work as well as the exposure, experience and expertise in critical workforce skills and competencies. We appreciate your work to provide analysis and recommendations on policies which will assist all of our education institutions to work in partnership to serve the students of the Commonwealth more effectively and efficiently.

With appreciation,



Aimee Rogstad Guidera  
Secretary of Education



## Appendix D: Dual enrollment costs compared to AP costs

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Advanced Placement (AP) is a program of courses created by the College Board in which students can earn college credit for courses taken while in high school. To receive college credit for an AP course, AP students must take an exam at the conclusion of a course and may receive college credit if they score highly on the exam. (Exams are scored from 1–5; students must score a 3 or higher to receive college credit for the course, though the scores accepted vary by institution.) This differs from dual enrollment courses, in which students receive college credit upon completion of the course with a grade of “C” or better. AP courses are available in general education subjects, including psychology, statistics, biology, and U.S. history. Dual enrollment courses are also offered in these subjects, but students can also take more degree-specific dual enrollment courses, such as nursing, business, or engineering.

At its May 2022 commission meeting, JLARC asked staff to look into costs incurred by school divisions to provide AP courses in comparison to dual enrollment costs. To do this, JLARC staff developed an AP data collection instrument to collect information from a subset of school divisions on the expenses incurred by *divisions* to provide AP courses and expenses incurred by *students* to take AP courses. This data collection instrument was provided to 15 school divisions across the state, with responses received by 12 divisions for a response rate of 80 percent. These 12 divisions represent 12 percent of all AP students statewide. (See Appendix B for additional information on survey methodology and Appendix F for a list of school divisions that responded to the survey.)

### School division costs to provide AP courses

The costs school divisions incur to provide AP courses vary by division. Of the 12 divisions that completed the AP data collection instrument, total annual spending to provide AP ranged from \$112,000 to \$2.2 million, with an average total spending of \$810,000 per division during the 2021–22 academic year. School divisions’ spending per full-time equivalent (FTE) AP student ranged from \$1,600 to \$15,500, with divisions spending an average of \$4,600 per AP FTE.

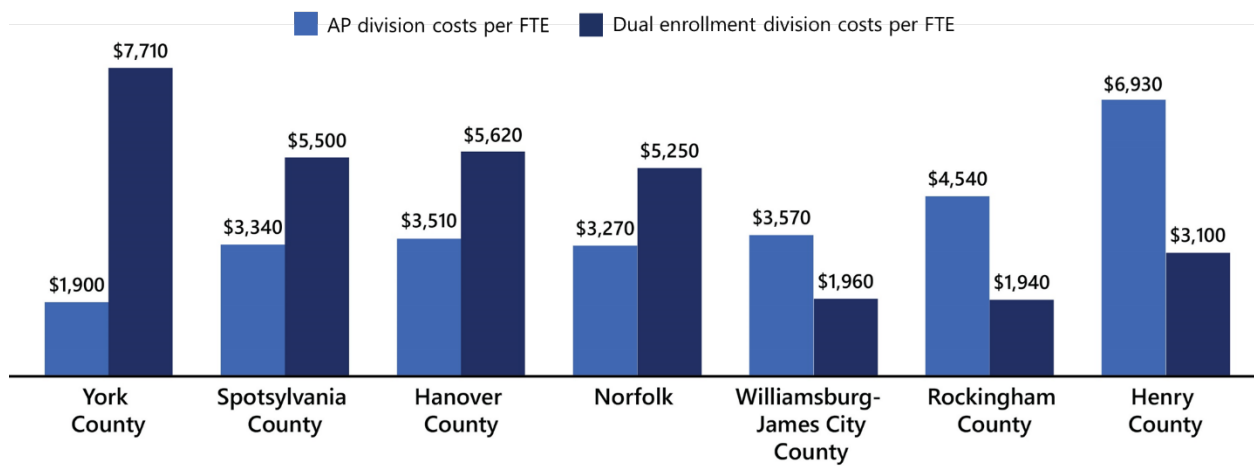
Most division spending to provide AP courses was driven by personnel expenses for AP teachers. Nearly all of divisions’ expenses (95 percent on average) were for AP teacher salaries. Remaining AP expenses incurred by school divisions include textbooks and other course materials, AP testing fees paid by the division on behalf of students, and credentialing expenses for teachers to become qualified to teach AP courses.

Some divisions paid more to provide AP than dual enrollment courses, while other divisions paid more to provide dual enrollment courses (Figure D-1). Of the seven school divisions that completed both the AP and dual enrollment data collection instruments, AP expenses averaged \$3,900 per FTE (median of \$3,500 per FTE) and dual enrollment operating expenses (excluding any tuition and fees paid to the community college) averaged \$4,400 per FTE (median of \$5,300). Among these divisions, per-FTE AP expenses were lower in four divisions (York County, Spotsylvania County, Hanover County, and Norfolk City), while per-FTE dual enrollment expenses were lower in the remaining three divisions (Williamsburg-James City County, Rockingham County, and Henry County). Programs with

more FTEs in each division had the lower per-FTE cost in most cases because divisions are able to take advantage of economies of scale (e.g., larger class sizes).

One factor that could make AP courses less expensive for school divisions to offer than dual enrollment is teacher credentialing requirements. It is both cheaper and less time consuming for teachers to become credentialed to teach AP courses than dual enrollment courses. Becoming certified to teach AP costs about \$1,200 per teacher, while becoming certified to teach dual enrollment costs about \$10,000–\$20,000 per teacher. Additionally, AP workshops can be completed in about a week, whereas the credit hours required to teach dual enrollment typically take multiple semesters to complete. (See Chapter 2 for additional information about dual enrollment teacher credentialing.)

**FIGURE D-1**  
**School divisions' AP expenses compared with dual enrollment expenses vary**



SOURCE: JLARC dual enrollment cost survey and AP cost survey.

NOTE: Includes seven school divisions that completed both the dual enrollment and AP data collection instruments. Dual enrollment expenses include solely operating expenses and do not include any tuition and fees paid by the school division to the community college.

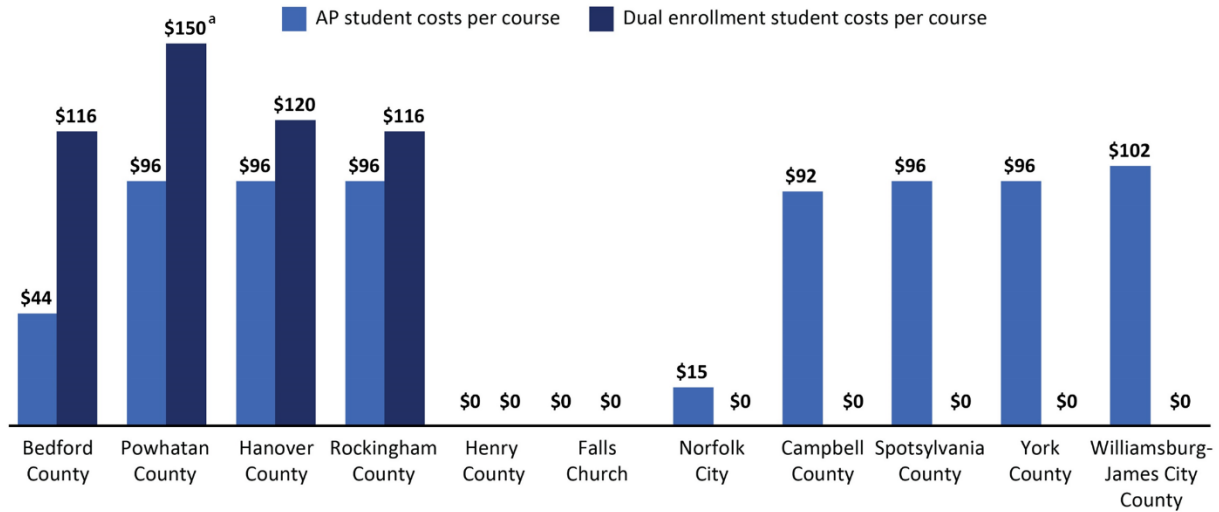
### Student costs to take AP courses

The most common expense incurred by students to take AP courses is the testing fee, but amounts paid by students vary by division. The College Board charged \$96 per AP exam for the 2021–22 academic year, but whether and how much of this expense was paid by students varied by division. Of the 12 divisions that completed the AP data collection instrument, 58 percent (seven divisions) required students to pay the full cost of the AP exam. The remaining divisions either partially or fully absorbed testing costs to reduce these costs for students. Most divisions also provided waivers to students who were eligible for free or reduced meals to reduce or waive testing fees. Students may also incur additional expenses for textbooks or other supplies (e.g., calculator, art supplies) needed for AP classes, but these expenses were only reported in three school divisions.

Average expenses incurred by students to take AP courses are higher than the costs incurred by students to take dual enrollment courses. Across divisions for which information was available, AP was cheaper in four divisions, dual enrollment was cheaper in five divisions, and in two divisions, students

did not pay for either program (Figure D-2). Student expenses for the two programs are driven by whether students are required to pay any dual enrollment tuition and fees in their division and whether the division charges for AP testing.

**FIGURE D-2**  
**Student AP expenses compared with dual enrollment expenses vary**



SOURCE: JLARC dual enrollment cost survey and AP cost survey.

NOTE: Includes seven school divisions that completed both the dual enrollment and AP data collection instruments, as well as four additional divisions for which student dual enrollment costs were available, although these divisions did not complete the full dual enrollment cost survey. AP expenses include the cost incurred by students to take the AP exam upon course completion. Dual enrollment expenses include the amount of tuition and fees paid by students for a three-credit-hour course. <sup>a</sup> Powhatan County charges a flat rate of \$150 per semester for dual enrollment, so dual enrollment would become cheaper than AP for any students enrolled in two or more courses per semester.

There is a similar proportion of economically disadvantaged students participating in AP and dual enrollment statewide. [Economically disadvantaged students are defined as those who (1) are eligible for free/reduced meals; (2) receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits; (3) are eligible for Medicaid; and/or (4) are identified as either migrant or experiencing homelessness.] In the 2020–21 academic year, around 17,700 economically disadvantaged students took one or more AP courses, compared to 8,600 who took one or more dual enrollment courses. Although a higher *number* of economically disadvantaged students take AP courses, a higher *proportion* of dual enrollment students are economically disadvantaged. In 2020–21, approximately 23 percent of dual enrollment students statewide were classified by the Virginia Department of Education as economically disadvantaged, compared with 20 percent of AP students.

## **Appendix E: Dual enrollment costs for homeschool students**

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Similar to public school students, homeschool students in Virginia may also take dual enrollment courses to earn college credit while they are still in high school. Because a key objective of dual enrollment is to reduce the cost of attaining a postsecondary credential, there is legislative interest in understanding the impact of dual enrollment costs on homeschool students relative to public school students, who can take dual enrollment courses at their high school at a reduced cost (see Chapter 3).

### **Homeschool student participation in dual enrollment**

Homeschool students in Virginia can participate in dual enrollment courses in two ways. First, students may enroll directly in dual enrollment courses through one of Virginia's 23 community colleges—either in person or online—similar to a traditional community college student. Some school divisions allow homeschool students to enroll with the division part time, allowing them to take dual enrollment courses at the local high school. However, school divisions are not required to enroll homeschool students; it is up to local school boards to determine whether to allow home school students to enroll in the division part time. According to VDOE data, approximately 42 percent of school divisions allowed homeschool students to enroll part time during the 2021–22 academic year.

Homeschool students represent a small proportion of dual enrollment students in Virginia. During the 2021–22 academic year, 868 homeschool students took one or more dual enrollment courses directly through the community colleges, representing approximately 2 percent of community college dual enrollment students statewide. These students made up between 0 percent and 7 percent of colleges' dual enrollment full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollments and between 0 and 2 percent of colleges' total FTEs (Table E-1). Of the 78 school divisions that responded to JLARC's dual enrollment cost survey, only five reported having any homeschool students taking dual enrollment courses in their division at the public high schools (Albemarle County; Fairfax County; Mecklenburg County; Tazewell County; and Virginia Beach City), ranging from one to six students per division.

**TABLE E-1**  
**Most community colleges had a small proportion of homeschool dual enrollment FTEs during the 2021–22 academic year**

College	Homeschool dual enrollment headcount	Homeschool dual enrollment FTEs	Total dual enrollment FTEs	Total FTEs
Blue Ridge	17	6	247	1,959
Brightpoint <sup>a</sup>	76	34	837	4,727
Central Virginia	41	20	606	2,041
Danville	8	2	372	1,414
Eastern Shore	3	1	117	381
Germanna	62	23	545	4,585
Laurel Ridge <sup>b</sup>	62	25	1,152	3,362
Mountain Empire	12	5	404	1,397
Mountain Gateway <sup>c</sup>	3	1	206	615
New River	21	7	692	2,386
Northern Virginia	232	79	3,337	28,878
Patrick & Henry	3	0	323	1,382
Paul D. Camp	11	3	241	698
Piedmont Virginia	35	14	560	2,639
Rappahannock	21	9	646	1,465
Reynolds	20	6	746	4,681
Southside Virginia	14	7	737	1,786
Southwest Virginia	2	0	227	1,574
Tidewater	94	32	699	10,838
Virginia Highlands	43	23	350	1,530
Virginia Peninsula <sup>d</sup>	46	12	604	3,756
Virginia Western	35	13	610	3,215
Wytheville	7	3	377	1,306
<b>VCCS Total</b>	<b>868</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>14,632</b>	<b>86,615</b>

SOURCE: VCCS enrollment and FTE data, 2021–22 academic year.

NOTE: <sup>a</sup> Formerly John Tyler Community College. <sup>b</sup> Formerly Lord Fairfax Community College. <sup>c</sup> Formerly Dabney S. Lancaster Community College. <sup>d</sup> Formerly Thomas Nelson Community College.

### Cost of dual enrollment courses for homeschool students

Homeschool students who take dual enrollment courses at the high school pay the same reduced tuition and fee rates as public school students. Community colleges negotiate reduced dual enrollment tuition rates with the school divisions in their service regions, and school divisions then determine whether to pass these costs on to students who take dual enrollment courses. This results in public high school students paying reduced rates to take dual enrollment courses at the high school, ranging from \$0 to \$64 per credit hour. To ensure homeschool students also have access to these reduced tuition rates, the 2016 Appropriation Act included language that directed the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) to “ensure that the same policies regarding the cost for dual enrollment courses held at a community college are consistently applied to public school students and home-schooled students alike.” A superintendent’s memo was subsequently issued by VDOE specifying that homeschool students who attend the public high school

to take dual enrollment classes are entitled to the same reduced rate paid by public school students. However, this policy applies only in school divisions that allow homeschool students to enroll on a part-time basis, according to VDOE, so homeschool students do not have access to these courses and reduced tuition rates in all divisions.

Homeschool students who take dual enrollment courses directly through the community college pay full tuition and fees, similar to public school students. Homeschool students who take courses at the community college—either on campus or online—are required to pay full tuition (~\$154 per credit hour, or about \$1,848 per year based on an average course load of four, three-credit hour courses per homeschool student). This policy is similar to public school students, who also pay full tuition and fees to take dual enrollment courses at the community college. Both public school and homeschool students pay full tuition and fees to take dual enrollment courses at the community college because the college incurs the same expenses for these students as they do for traditional students (e.g., faculty salaries, classroom space, etc.).

Expenses incurred by homeschool students to take dual enrollment courses can vary widely across the state. Although homeschool students pay reduced rates to take dual enrollment courses at the high school, there is inconsistency in dual enrollment tuition and fee rates charged by school divisions. (See Chapter 3 for more information on dual enrollment tuition rates.) For example, students in Fairfax County do not pay any tuition or fees for dual enrollment courses, whereas students in Tazewell County pay \$47 per credit hour. Additionally, some school divisions do not allow homeschool students to enroll part time to take dual enrollment courses. In these divisions, homeschool students who wish to take dual enrollment courses must enroll directly through the community college and are therefore required to pay full tuition and fees.

Eliminating tuition and fees for dual enrollment courses provided on the high school campus would positively affect a small number of homeschool students. If the state were to prohibit community colleges and school divisions from charging tuition or fees for dual enrollment courses provided on the high school campus (Recommendation 5 in Chapter 4), homeschool students who take dual enrollment courses at the high school would no longer be required to pay tuition or fees. Although a small number of homeschool students are currently taking dual enrollment courses through their local school division, this change could allow more homeschool students to participate in dual enrollment in these divisions, because they could take dual enrollment courses at no cost.

## Appendix F: School division survey respondents

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JLARC staff conducted a dual enrollment cost survey to collect dual enrollment financial data and perspectives on the current funding model from school divisions across the state. Out of the 123 school divisions surveyed, 78 school divisions submitted responses for a 63 percent response rate. (For more information on survey methodology, see Appendix B.) Divisions that responded to the dual enrollment cost survey include:

- Accomack County Public Schools;
- Albemarle County Public Schools;
- Alleghany County Public Schools;
- Amherst County Public Schools;
- Appomattox County Public Schools;
- Arlington County Public Schools;
- Botetourt County Public Schools;
- Bristol City Public Schools;
- Buchanan County Public Schools;
- Buena Vista City Public Schools;
- Caroline County Public Schools;
- Carroll County Public Schools;
- Charles City County Public Schools;
- Charlotte County Public Schools;
- Charlottesville City Public Schools;
- Chesapeake City Public Schools;
- Chesterfield County Public Schools;
- Colonial Beach Public Schools;
- Covington City Public Schools;
- Craig County Public Schools;
- Culpeper County Public Schools;
- Cumberland County Public Schools;
- Dinwiddie County Public Schools;
- Essex County Public Schools;
- Fairfax County Public Schools;
- Fluvanna County Public Schools;
- Franklin City Public Schools;
- Franklin County Public Schools;
- Frederick County Public Schools;
- Galax City Public Schools;
- Giles County Public Schools;
- Goochland County Public Schools;
- Greene County Public Schools;
- Hanover County Public Schools;
- Halifax County Public Schools;
- Hampton City Public Schools;
- Harrisonburg City Public Schools;
- Henrico County Public Schools;
- Henry County Public Schools;
- Hopewell City Public Schools;
- King William County Public Schools;
- Lee County Public Schools;
- Loudoun County Public Schools;
- Louisa County Public Schools;
- Lynchburg City Public Schools;
- Madison County Public Schools;
- Manassas Park City Public Schools;
- Martinsville City Public Schools;
- Mathews County Public Schools;
- Mecklenburg County Public Schools;
- Middlesex County Public Schools;
- Norfolk City Public Schools;
- Northampton County Public Schools;
- Norton City Public Schools;
- Nottoway County Public Schools;
- Pittsylvania County Public Schools;
- Portsmouth City Public Schools;
- Prince Edward County Public Schools;

- Prince George County Public Schools;
- Roanoke City Public Schools;
- Rockbridge County Public Schools;
- Rockingham County Public Schools;
- Russell County Public Schools;
- Salem City Public Schools;
- Scott County Public Schools;
- Smyth County Public Schools;
- Spotsylvania County Public Schools;
- Staunton City Public Schools;
- Suffolk City Public Schools;
- Tazewell County Public Schools;
- Virginia Beach City Public Schools;
- Waynesboro City Public Schools;
- West Point Public Schools;
- Westmoreland County Public Schools;
- Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools;
- Winchester City Public Schools;
- Wythe County Public Schools; and
- York County Public Schools.

JLARC staff also conducted an advanced placement (AP) cost survey to collect financial data from a sample of school divisions on the costs to provide AP courses. Out of the 15 school divisions surveyed, 12 school divisions submitted responses for an 80 percent response rate. (For more information on survey methodology, see Appendix B.) Divisions that responded to the AP cost survey include:

- Bedford County Public Schools;
- Campbell County Public Schools;
- Falls Church City Public Schools;
- Hanover County Public Schools;
- Henry County Public Schools;
- Norfolk City Public Schools;
- Petersburg City Public Schools;
- Powhatan County Public Schools;
- Rockingham County Public Schools;
- Spotsylvania County Public Schools;
- Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools; and
- York County Public Schools.







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