

Pathways to Opportunity:

EXPANDING AND ALIGNING COLLEGE
AND CAREER READINESS PROGRAMS
IN PENNSYLVANIA

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Introduction

In May 2020, the University of Pittsburgh Institute of Politics Workforce Development Policy Committee released a report entitled [“Prepared for the Future: Policy recommendations to increase access for students to Pennsylvania’s dual enrollment, early college high school, and pre-apprenticeship programs.”](#) The report, the product of 18 months of deliberation among the committee members, offers an in-depth look into the existing systems surrounding dual enrollment and pre-apprenticeships in Pennsylvania. While *Prepared for the Future* reveals significant upward momentum around these programs within individual school districts, postsecondary institutions, and other businesses and community organizations, it also reveals the lack of a statewide policy structure to support these innovative programs.

Dual enrollment and pre-apprenticeship programs have proven and demonstrated benefits to students and communities that have been detailed both in the IOP report and in many other sources. These benefits include but are not limited to: increased chance of postsecondary attainment and success, increased high school and college graduation rates, and increased earnings over time.


Programs are especially beneficial at helping to prepare students that might be at risk for not continuing on to postsecondary education after high school.

The lack of a statewide structure means that programs are primarily available to and currently accessed by students who seek out the opportunity in schools that have made such programming a priority. The *Prepared for the Future* report illustrates how this lack of structure contributes to the disparities in access for students; while data on dual enrollment programs are limited and fragmented in Pennsylvania, trends in participation

over the last decade show a widening racial gap, with a decline in real numbers of Black students participating. During the same time period, participation by economically-disadvantaged students has also remained stagnant, while participation among students who are not economically disadvantaged increased.

With regard to pre-apprenticeships, the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry has developed a nascent registration program for pre-apprenticeships. Barriers to expansion include the complicated nature of establishing pre-apprenticeships, which require coordination between employers, high schools, and, in some cases, postsecondary institutions or third-party organizations. Other policy challenges include expanding opportunities for students from underrepresented populations and aligning pre-apprenticeship programming with anticipated community needs and existing registered apprenticeships.

Faced with these challenges and opportunities, the IOP Workforce Development Policy Committee created a task force to examine current best practices in dual enrollment and pre-apprenticeship programs with the intent on providing guidance for equitable statewide expansion of these programs. The Workforce Development Policy Committee co-chairs selected Dr. Stanley Thompson as the chair of the task force noting his commitment to equity and college and career readiness. Pennsylvania Senator Camera Bartolotta was asked to co-chair the task force given her similar commitment to issues related to education and workforce development. Remaining task force members were selected for their practitioner-level knowledge of dual enrollment or pre-apprenticeship programs and/or their understanding of specific policy, data, and trends that currently impact or are likely to impact the development of state policy. A list of task force members is available in [Appendix A](#).



A primary goal for the task force was to take care not to develop policy recommendations that would exacerbate existing gaps but would instead increase equity in and access to dual enrollment for underrepresented populations.

Unlocking Potential: Partnership with the College in High School Alliance

The recommendations included in this report to advance Pennsylvania's policies supporting dual enrollment are informed by the work of the [College in High School Alliance](#) (CHSA), and specifically CHSA's state policy framework, which was developed in partnership with the Level Up coalition managed by the [Education Strategy Group](#), entitled [Unlocking Potential: A State Policy Roadmap for Equity and Quality in College in High School Programs](#). The Institute of Politics became aware of the *Unlocking Potential* report in 2020, and invited the author Alex Perry, also the coordinator of the national College in High School Alliance, to serve as a consultant for this project. Throughout the course of the project, Perry provided structure and guidance for the task force meetings as well as expert knowledge and examples from other states.

Unlocking Potential provides a holistic framework for policymakers and practitioners to apply towards advancing equity of access and success to dual enrollment, and it is through the lens of this framework that these recommendations were developed and are presented.

To truly expand equity of access to and success in Pennsylvania, it is essential that the commonwealth address policy changes in each of the following six categories.

These are:

- 1) Equity Goal and Public Reporting:**
States set an equitable, statewide public goal for increasing the participation and success of traditionally underserved student groups in college in high school programs, with clear, disaggregated public reporting and accountability for progress toward the goal.
- 2) Program Integrity and Credit Transfer:**
States support and promote high-quality college in high school programs through effective oversight and cross-sector collaboration between the K-12 and postsecondary sectors, as well as ensuring credit articulation.
- 3) Finance:**
States design funding mechanisms that remove financial barriers for low-income and moderate-income students to participate and excel in college level work in high school.
- 4) Course Access and Availability:**
States ensure that students have access to college in high school courses, regardless of geography, with pathways that maximize opportunities for students to earn multiple college credits and facilitate students exploring academic and career areas of interest while ensuring that those courses count toward high school graduation requirements.
- 5) Instructor Capacity:**
States develop strategies to recruit, support, and diversify the pool of instructors with the qualifications to teach college in high school while encouraging collaboration between K-12 and postsecondary partners as college in high school programs are scaled.
- 6) Navigational Supports:**
States prioritize the student navigational supports and advising needed to ensure student success in college in high school courses, particularly for those students historically underserved by these programs.

Defining Dual Enrollment

Pennsylvania does not have a definition of dual enrollment written into state policy, and the understanding of that term varies across the nation. For the purposes of this report, the definition of dual enrollment is aligned with the College in High School Alliance’s [definition for college in high school programs](#), casting the widest net possible over the variations in program design and modality that exist within the dual enrollment community:

Dual enrollment programs are partnerships between school districts and accredited institutions of higher education that provide high school-age students an intentionally-designed authentic postsecondary experience leading to officially transcribed and transferable college credit towards a recognized postsecondary degree or credential.

In Pennsylvania, dual enrollment can also be termed dual credit or concurrent enrollment. Programs are generally structured in one of two ways: participating secondary students take courses directly through the post-secondary institution with other college students (either in person or online), or participating secondary students take courses taught within their high school by an instructor credentialed by a college or university to offer college credit for the course. **Please note**, the definition of dual enrollment above does not include credit-by-exam models such as Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB). As a result, the policy recommendations below do not address those programs.

Pennsylvania Task Force on Equity in Dual Enrollment and Pre-apprenticeship Programming — Process

The task force met preliminarily in the first part of 2021 and continued to meet every month for the latter part of 2021, with the final two meetings occurring in early 2022. The meetings were structured to allow task force members to review best practices in other states alongside current practices in Pennsylvania in six key areas as identified by the College in High School Alliance’s *Unlocking Potential* report. This report provided the framework for the committee’s discussions and gave members the opportunity to consider how existing programs would fit into a statewide policy structure.



Simultaneously, existing pre-apprenticeship programming in the region was examined to determine:

- Continued barriers to recruitment and retention, especially with respect to underrepresented populations
- Challenges in program implementation and design
- Opportunities to gather additional data on student outcomes

External stakeholders were engaged as needed for conversations around:

- Data collection in Pennsylvania and opportunities for improvement
- Third-party agencies involved in the facilitation of pre-apprenticeships
- Best practices in dual enrollment in the Commonwealth

Shortly after the conclusion of the work of the task force, the PA General Assembly passed an omnibus education bill that included provisions for mandatory dual enrollment in Pennsylvania, and included a \$7 million appropriation in the 2022-2023 budget for the Commonwealth. More information about the provisions of this legislation (now Act 55 of 2022) can be found on page 25 of this report.

Key Themes

Pennsylvania has several strengths that have enabled existing dual enrollment programs to thrive and that will contribute to the successful future development of a policy structure. These include:

- A well-educated teacher workforce, many of whom meet the more stringent requirements for high school teachers teaching college-level coursework
- A high concentration of postsecondary institutions who could serve as partners to K-12 schools
- The development of the Future Ready PA Index, a dashboard system that includes data on college and career readiness indicators, including dual enrollment



Key issues to address mostly relate to the fragmented system that has emerged in Pennsylvania in the absence of state-level policy. These include:

- Inequitable access to programming across the Commonwealth; in order for a program to be well-utilized at the K-12 level, a champion must be present
- Consistent and coherent communication to parents and students about dual enrollment and pre-apprenticeship offerings and their respective benefits
- Data limitations, primarily around different populations of students participating in dual enrollment and pre-apprenticeship programs
- State policies for the transfer of credits earned at the myriad institutions in Pennsylvania

Current issues affecting college and career readiness: Pennsylvania context

Addressing the teacher supply

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated many of the stressors present in the profession of teaching. In the 2020-2021 school year, nearly 1 in 4 K-12 teachers reported they were likely to leave their jobs by the end of the school year, compared to the 1 in 6 teachers reporting they were likely to leave their jobs pre-pandemic. Much of the pressure put on educators can be attributed to the job-related stress and poor working conditions that have come about as a result of the pandemic.¹ Overall, teachers are recorded to experience higher rates of stress, depressive symptoms, and burnout than the general population. In a study conducted by RAND Education and Labor, 75% of teachers report their work since the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year had “frequently been stressful”. This percentage of teachers reporting stress is similar to the percentage of teachers who eventually left their positions before or during the pandemic, indicating a potential warning sign of mass resignation if this issue is not addressed. Additionally, nearly half of the teachers surveyed reported feeling “burned out,” and 27% reported feeling symptoms of depression. Furthermore, the rate of teachers experiencing job-related stress was at a staggering 78%. Comparing this to the general population’s 40% rate of job-related stress, it is clear that professional educators need special attention when it comes to maintaining the wellbeing of individual workers.

Teacher Supply and Dual Enrollment

In terms of the effects of teacher burnout on dual enrollment, it is of reasonable concern that higher turnover rates of K-12 educators could influence the number of instructors available to teach in-house courses for college credit. With enough teachers experiencing stress resulting from the conditions previously described, it is unlikely that teachers experiencing this stress would want to add optional professional development to their schedules to be certified to teach courses for college credit. However, there is also a possibility that working with college professors may lessen the burden for teachers as they have a shared responsibility to deliver course content and instruction.

In September 2022, the Pennsylvania Department of Education released a three-year plan designed to address teacher recruitment and retention in the commonwealth. The plan includes five key areas of focus, two of which may relate directly to dual enrollment programming. Focus area #4 states that educators should have access to high-quality preparation experiences, which could include offering prospective teachers access to education coursework while still in high school. As with other types of dual enrollment coursework, such classes allow students to test their level of interest in future occupations without committing to a major. Focus area #5 states that educators should have access to high-quality, relevant professional development opportunities, which may include training or additional coursework that would enable them to teach college in high school courses.²

¹ Elizabeth D. Steiner and Ashley Woo, “Job-related Stress Threatens the Teacher Supply: Key Findings from the 2021 State of the U.S. Teacher Survey,” Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2021, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1108-1.html.

² Pennsylvania Department of Education, “The Foundation of Our Economy: Pennsylvania Educator Workforce Strategy, 2022-2025,” Harrisburg, PA, 2022, <https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/Teachers-Administrators/PA%20Educator%20Workforce%20Strategy.pdf>.

Engaging business and industry

The need to engage business and industry in K-12 education has always been present; however, in recent years, this has been amplified by concerns expressed by business owners in their ability to hire workers who are prepared for the jobs available. This is reflected by an increase in the development of and participation in activities such as CEO in the Classroom and Teacher in the Workplace, but it is also visible in the policy priorities of organizations representing business interests such as the Allegheny Conference and the PA Chamber of Business and Industry.

In 2019, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development released [2020-2030 Next is Now](#), a report reflecting regional priorities in southwestern Pennsylvania. As part of their visioning process, stakeholders identified establishing pathways to in-demand careers and ensuring that all children have access to high quality K-12 education as their top two priorities under the category of “Thriving People.”³ Similarly, the PA Chamber of Business and Industry, in its 2021-2022 legislative priorities, identified greater coordination between K-12, higher education, and industry as a need, along with ensuring that students emerge from high school with the skills needed to be college and career ready. County-level groups such as the [Westmoreland County Forum for Workforce Development](#) and the [Beaver County Partnership](#) also developed in recent years to address workforce needs by bridging connections between education and industry.

As the world emerges from the pandemic, the decline in the available workforce has only exacerbated existing human capital shortages. As a result, businesses are even more invested in ensuring that students emerge from the K-12/16 system prepared to enter the workforce. Similarly, pre-apprenticeships are even more vital in recruiting and retaining students in programs designed to train employees for high-demand industries.

Decreasing college enrollment at 2- and 4-year institutions⁴

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, higher education has seen a 5.1% drop in enrollment across all 2 and 4-year public, non-profit private, and for-profit private institutions. Over the past year, undergraduate enrollment alone has decreased 3.1 percent, equating to about 465,300 students. Private, for-profit, four-year institutions have experienced the largest rate of decline, with enrollment falling 11.1% between fall 2020 and fall 2021. Community colleges have experienced a smaller drop (3.4%); however, the rate of associate degree-seeking students at 4-year institutions have fallen greatly, with an average drop of 9.7%. Despite these recent drops, first-year undergraduate enrollment has remained similar regarding enrollment rates of fall 2020 and fall 2021. However, compared to pre-pandemic rates, first-year enrollment is still down about 9.2%.

It is possible that dual enrollment programs can assist in post-pandemic efforts to improve enrollment in post-secondary institutions and training programs. In a statewide dual enrollment model, the financial cost of gaining college credit while still in high school would be drastically reduced, while one’s time in high school would become much more efficient in giving students a head start on post-secondary coursework. With a well-funded dual enrollment program, students can gain college credit at little to no cost. This could incentivize many students to continue and complete their post-secondary education upon high school graduation and assist in recovering the pre-pandemic enrollment rates that colleges and universities once had.

³ Allegheny Conference on Community Development, “2020-2023 Next Is Now: A 10-Year Vision of Vitality for the Pittsburgh Region,” Pittsburgh, PA, 2019, <https://www.alleghenyconference.org/wp-content>

⁴ <https://nscresearchcenter.org/current-term-enrollment-estimates/>



Pre-apprenticeships in Pennsylvania

Key Themes

- Pre-apprenticeships are one component of a larger mix of college and career preparatory programs, including internships/externships, co-ops, and out-of-school time programming.
- Specific programs should be designed to address specific occupational and community needs (not every program can or should be available in every community).

What are pre-apprenticeships?

Pre-apprenticeships are work-based education and training programs that prepare students for moving directly into a registered apprenticeship. Registered apprenticeships offer guaranteed employment for those who complete the program. Pre-apprenticeships must be connected to an existing registered apprenticeship program in order to be registered as an official pre-apprenticeship in Pennsylvania.



Components

Pre-apprenticeships are designed to accommodate participants who are high-school aged or individuals 18+. The U.S. Department of Labor identifies a quality pre-apprenticeship program as possessing the following qualities⁵:

- A curriculum approved by a training partner and registered apprenticeship program
- Simulated experiences featuring hands-on learning opportunities
- Facilitated entry into a connected registered apprenticeship
- A focus on recruiting and including underrepresented populations
- Wrap-around services that facilitate participation
- Sustainable relationships with employers and other community partners

⁵ U.S. Department of Labor, Explore Pre-apprenticeship, <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/employers/explore-pre-apprenticeship>



Finding the niche for pre-apprenticeships

Locally, a number of pre-apprenticeships have been successfully developed through sustained partnerships, but they can be complex and cumbersome to administer due to the number of systems with which they interact (secondary and/or career schools, workforce development boards, postsecondary institutions, industries and/or unions, and other third-party entities.) Additionally, they have multiple stakeholders who benefit from the programming — students, businesses, and sometimes postsecondary institutions, among others.

Pre-apprenticeships are unique among college and career preparatory programs in that they must be tied to an existing registered apprenticeship. Because of that, they cannot be ubiquitously applied. However, they fulfill a unique and important role in workforce development because they tie on-the-job experience with education and training and provide a direct avenue to employment if the individual completing the program decides to pursue the affiliated registered apprenticeship.

Persistent challenges

Recruitment

Educators at the secondary and sometimes postsecondary levels do not always understand the value of a pre-apprenticeship or aren't familiar with how it could fit within academic curriculum. They have trouble mapping the work that students in pre-apprenticeships do to existing courses and do not necessarily seek out ways to award credit for work done outside of school.

Often, pre-apprenticeship programs are competing with other programs for the same students. For example, in some cases, businesses bypass the registered

pre-apprenticeship programs in favor of offering internships through an informal agreement directly with the school district. This makes it difficult to track student and industry involvement for purposes of statewide data collection and analysis.

Additionally, students often have many opportunities for extra-curricular and employment activities. It can be difficult to convince them to spend time outside of school on apprenticeship/work opportunities in lieu of other activities like sports or clubs. This enhances the importance of offering pre-apprenticeship programs during school time.

Transportation

Transportation remains a major, possibly the number one, barrier to participation in pre-apprenticeship programs. Outside of the major cities, there is no public transportation; even students in the suburbs of Pittsburgh have no bus routes. Even if programs take place after school hours, students from low-income families in particular may not have a car available for their use. Schools do not usually have funds available for extra busing.

Some schools offer a hybrid program that provides asynchronous or virtual opportunities paired with occasional lab days that require in-person work. This lessens the burden on students to find transportation on a more frequent basis.

Instructor availability

Recruiting instructors who are qualified to teach industry skills at the secondary and postsecondary levels is highly challenging, given that many individuals coming from outside teaching are accustomed to much higher pay and don't necessarily have the time/patience to complete the coursework necessary to achieve certification in PA. Oftentimes, to teach at the postsecondary level, at least a master's degree is required — something that many potential instructors do not have. These requirements can sometimes be waived based on the courses to be taught; however, such requirements are often tied to the accreditation of programs at postsecondary institutions.

Current status of pre-apprenticeships

Data collection and reporting

The PA Department of Labor and Industry's Apprenticeship Training Office is working to update the list of registered pre-apprenticeship programs while including data to conduct program evaluation and track student progress. This system will require monthly reports from registered providers.

Right now, registered apprentices and others who interact with Pennsylvania's CareerLink system are tracked through the federal RAPIDS program; however, pre-apprenticeship participants are not currently in this system.

Efforts to expand program diversity

Efforts are underway to expand pre-apprenticeship programming offerings to traditionally underserved students as well as to programs that are atypical for pre-apprenticeships (i.e., health care, IT, hospitality, etc.)

Featured pre-apprenticeship programs

German-American Chamber of Commerce

The German-American Chamber of Commerce serves as the organizational home for a pre-apprenticeship offered to high school students in almost 50 secondary schools — traditional and career and technical centers — around Pittsburgh and throughout western Pennsylvania. Upon completion, students earn six credits through a local community college and a nationally-recognized certificate in manufacturing that enables them to continue on into one of four affiliated registered apprenticeship program or pursue other college or career opportunities.⁶

Butler Area School District

Butler Area School District partners with Penn United Technologies to offer a pre-apprenticeship program open to students in grades 10-12. The program offers training aligned with future career opportunities in advanced manufacturing and offers instruction as well as hands-on experience at Penn United for students. The pre-apprenticeship is funded in part by support from a local foundation.⁷

Pre-apprenticeship Recommendations

To advance pre-apprenticeships in Pennsylvania, the IOP Task Force on Equity in Dual Enrollment and Pre-apprenticeship Programming recommends the following:

- 1) Require registered pre-apprenticeship providers to conduct exit interviews with students to determine their planned next steps following graduation/program completion.
- 2) Develop a system through which students could be tracked across multiple agencies, possibly through the development of a multi-agency task force or commission that includes participation from community partners.
- 3) Ensure that students can earn credit towards graduation for courses with academically relevant content. (For example, courses related to mechanics are aligned with the academic standards in math.)

⁶ German-American Chamber of Commerce, Pittsburgh Chapter, <https://gaccpit.workforce.dev/pre-apprenticeships>

⁷ Butler Area School Distr, "Pre-apprenticeship program prepares students for success," <https://shs.basdk12.org/pre-apprenticeship-program-prepares-students-for-success>

Dual enrollment in Pennsylvania — model programs

Despite the lack of a policy structure to support dual enrollment in Pennsylvania, significant efforts on the part of individual secondary and post-secondary schools have resulted in the continued growth of programming throughout the Commonwealth. The following programs in southwestern Pennsylvania have made great strides in supporting students in pathways to postsecondary opportunities as well as careers.

Most programs operated by postsecondary institutions offer courses in two formats: one where high school students take courses at the postsecondary institution with college students, and one where students are taught college-level courses by specially certified high school teachers.

While dual enrollment programs vary significantly in design and implementation, one thing they have in common is the presence of one or more champions. Establishing and maintaining a dual enrollment programming takes commitment, and often these individuals go above and beyond what is required in their day-to-day job to provide opportunities for students.



University of Pittsburgh College in High School

The University of Pittsburgh College in High School program was founded in 1980, which makes it the oldest concurrent enrollment program in the Commonwealth. As a college in high school program, it provides students with the opportunity to take college-level courses within their own high schools, taught by high school teachers who are certified to teach University of Pittsburgh courses. The program also offers a traditional dual enrollment program at the University, where high school students attend courses on campus (or online) with college students.

Benefits of this program include receiving widely transferrable and highly regarded University of Pittsburgh credits at a fraction of the normal cost. Also, some of the traditional barriers to access are mitigated by the opportunity for an entire high school class to earn credits simply by enrolling in a course they likely would have already taken in high school. The [wide variety of courses offered](#) provides flexibility to high schools in selecting which courses match their curricular needs as well as their teachers' experience

and skill sets. In addition, students who complete at least one CHS course are invited to apply for admission to the University of Pittsburgh free of charge.

Over the last five years, the number of students participating in the University of Pittsburgh CHS program has grown to over 4,000 in the 2020-2021 school year. Because courses are taught within high schools by high school teachers, the program was only minimally disrupted by the pandemic.

The University of Pittsburgh's College in High School program is one of only two programs in Pennsylvania accredited by the National Association of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP). NACEP is the only national organization providing an accreditation for these programs, which recognizes high quality and standards in "faculty, course content, student outcomes, and support."⁸

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Courses	29	37	35	37	43
Schools	130	142	146	137	141
Headcount	3,248	3,635	4,237	4,276	4,309
Enrollments	3,771	4,317	5,116	5,146	5,373

Table 1: University of Pittsburgh CHS participation, 2016-2021

⁸ University of Pittsburgh College in High School, "The National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships," <https://www.chs.pitt.edu/national-alliance-concurrent-enrollment-partnerships>.

Justice Scholars Institute

The [Justice Scholars Institute](#) is a unique college preparatory partnership that combines Pitt's College in High School offerings with navigational supports from the University of Pittsburgh, in order to address equity in and access to postsecondary educational opportunities.

As part of the University of Pittsburgh School of Education, the [Justice Scholars Institute](#) embraces the School's mission of equity and justice through the courses it offers and the engagement with students and teachers through both in-school and out-of-school time supports. The program intentionally serves students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools who are often excluded from advanced opportunities, due to systemic educational inequities. Through providing the courses free of cost to the students and providing enhanced educational experiences, the program aims to level the playing field for students as they imagine pathways to post-secondary success.



The program began in 2016 with one course — Introduction to Social Justice — at one school in the Pittsburgh Public School system — Westinghouse High School. Since then, the program has expanded to include five courses and two additional schools — Pittsburgh Millionaires/UPrep and Pittsburgh Perry. This

year, 85 students are participating in the program across the three schools. In addition to the CHS courses, the program also engages students through workshops that support college readiness. Students are both exposed to a college environment and challenged in ways that align with the expectations they would experience in college. For example, high school seniors in the program are expected to write a 15-page research paper as part of their college preparation. In 2019, an out-of-school time component was built in to provide space for students to discuss issues affecting their community through engagement in youth participatory action research. In 2021, the program expanded to include a teacher collective as a professional learning community for the high school teachers who instruct the College in High School classes across all three schools. The group addresses what it looks like to center social justice while providing pathways for post-secondary success for students from marginalized communities.

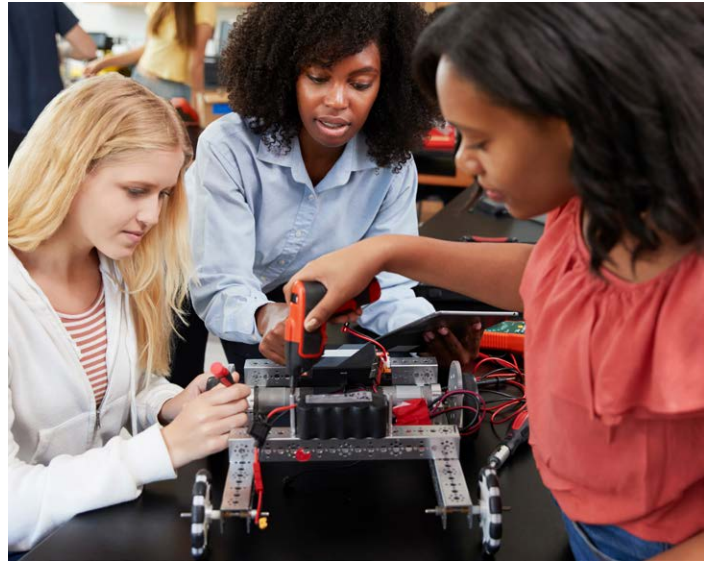
Program founder and School of Education Assistant Professor Dr. Esohe Osai says leadership, across multiple levels, is critical to ensuring program success. Teacher leadership is central to the program model. She notes that principal support is also important, even if that support looks different from school to school. Support and involvement from education and community leaders will help sustain the program for the long run. Dr. Osai constructed the Justice Scholars Institute in an all-encompassing manner, that centers deep partnerships both within the school and in the community. Since 2020, the Justice Scholars Institute has partnered with Catapult Pittsburgh to bring financial literacy to the students, with a focus on economic justice. Dr. Osai and her colleagues also engage in broader issues related to the program, including working with the Association of American Universities on policy issues related to racial justice and equity in higher education and supporting projects to address the diversification of the teacher pipeline.

Next steps

In terms of next steps, Dr. Osai and her team would like to build the family engagement aspect of the program. Since the program's inception, parents and community members have been invited to attend events that feature the students and their accomplishments. In the next phase the program hopes to more substantively engage families through discussions about their students' educational future.

This model would borrow from the way athletes are recruited to play sports for elite college athletic programs. The team envisions conversations with students and families in their homes, where they are free to ask questions about what the university experience might be like and where families are asked, "What do you want for your child's educational future?" Also, now that the first few cohorts of students have matriculated into higher education, Dr. Osai is starting to see some of their results within higher education.

One former participant from Westinghouse has graduated college and returned to become a teacher there, coming full circle. Another student gained admittance to the most selective Ivy League institutions and earned the prestigious Bill Gates Millennium Scholarship.



However, she would like to begin addressing challenges that occur once program graduates arrive at their chosen colleges and universities, noting that some postsecondary institutions are better than others at providing the kind of supportive environment necessary to ensure success. She hopes to create a two-year post-graduation alumni group for students who have transitioned on to college that could serve as peer support and a way for students to continue to connect with the particular tools and resources that are needed to experience success in post-secondary. Such a comprehensive and holistic approach centers equity through providing every resource needed to see students thrive as they make that transition from high school into the next steps in life.



Community college programs

Community colleges have some of the most flexible programs in the dual enrollment environment, as they can pair dual enrollment programs with associate's degree programs and certificates in workforce training to offer students a pathway to whatever college or career plans match their interest. Community colleges also offer significant opportunities to pair college credits and credentials with career-based skills training, either through a formal program such as a registered pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship program or specialized certificates based on the needs of individual employers.

Community College of Allegheny County

The Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) offers dual enrollment courses at full price to students who take courses at the college campus and for the price of one credit to students who take courses within their high schools taught by a high school instructor. Similar to other colleges, they are able to offer and help students plan for transitioning to careers, to an associate's degree, or to a four-year institution.

In recent years, CCAC has developed more robust partnerships with some schools within Allegheny County, including North Allegheny High School, which currently has a high number of students participating in dual enrollment. But it also partners with schools outside of Allegheny County in areas not served by other community colleges.

In addition, CCAC has partnered with the German American Chamber of Commerce to provide technical course content for their mechatronics pre-apprenticeship program, which in 2019 won recognition from the PA Department of Labor and Industry as an exemplary partnership.

Community College of Beaver County

The Community College of Beaver County (CCBC) offers traditional dual enrollment programming, but also offers a set of unique career-based pathways for students called High School Academies, available in the following six subject areas:

- Aviation
- STEM
- Criminal Justice
- Construction (*in partnership with Mascaro Construction*)
- Education
- Health

The academies began in 2015 as a result of special Pell grant funding awarded to just 40 community colleges in the nation. The programming provides students with the opportunity to spend part of their high school day onsite at CCBC to complete coursework and skills-based training. Most of the high schools in Beaver County participate, and the program partners with Parkway West CTC for the aviation academy and includes high school students in Allegheny County as a result.

Butler County Community College

Butler County Community College (BC3) believes that flexibility in programming is the key to success. Its collaboration with local industry, third party agencies, as well as other community colleges, has allowed it to establish a successful pre-apprenticeship program as well as numerous pathways for high school students, nontraditional students, and the existing workforce.

One of the most productive partnerships has been with Penn United Technologies, Inc., a precision manufacturer located in Cabot, PA. Penn United partners with BC3 and many local high schools in and around Butler County in a pre-apprenticeship program that serves both high school students and graduates. The pre-apprenticeship in manufacturing can lead directly to a registered apprenticeship in advanced manufacturing or to other higher education pathways within BC3.

BC3 developed their programs with the intent of making them stackable, so that students could easily customize their coursework to fit their needs or the needs of their future employers. For example, the Manufacturing Skills Training Certificate is stackable with the Basic Manufacturing Workplace Certificate.

Because of their proximity to other counties that do not have a resident community college, BC3 serves students and employers in Mercer, Lawrence, Armstrong, and Jefferson counties in addition to those in Butler County, and they have a variety of satellite locations to serve

those communities more efficiently. Their College Now program, which is their program for high school students wishing to take college courses on the college campus, offers over 50 courses to 10th-12th graders who meet the minimum GPA criteria. High schools that participate in BC3's College in High School programming include the following:

- Armstrong High School
- Brockway Area Junior High School
- Butler Area Senior High School
- Butler County Area Vocational-Technical School
- Cochranon Area Junior Senior High School
- DuBois Central Catholic
- Farrell Area High School
- George Junior Republic
- Grace Christian School
- Karns City High School
- Keystone Junior Senior High School
- Knoch Senior High School
- Lawrence County Career and Technical Center
- Lenape Area Vocational-Technical School
- Lincoln High School
- LindenPointe Entrepreneurship Academy
- Mars Area High School
- Mohawk High School
- Portersville Christian School
- Reynolds High School
- Seneca Valley High School
- Sharon High School
- Shenango Junior Senior High School
- Summit Academy
- Union Area Middle/High School (New Castle)



Westmoreland County Community College

Westmoreland County is home to a number of smaller school districts that have higher-than-average rates of participation in dual enrollment programming among students. Westmoreland County Community College (WCCC) plays a key role in providing an opportunity for students at the following schools both within and outside of Westmoreland County:

- Apollo Ridge
- Belle Vernon
- Brownsville
- Burrell
- Carmichaels
- Connellsville
- Derry Area
- EWCTC
- Franklin Regional
- Freeport
- Greater Latrobe
- Greensburg-Salem
- Hempfield
- Indiana
- Jeannette
- Laurel Highlands
- Leechburg
- Ligonier Valley
- Mt. Pleasant
- Norwin
- Penn-Trafford
- United
- Valley
- Yough

In addition to single courses taught either at the high school or on campus at the community college, WCCC offers the College Now! program. The program is designed to work with existing courses at the student's high school and supplement them as needed with courses at the college to create a program of study that will allow them to earn an associate's degree, and/or transfer up to two years' worth of credits to a four-year institution.

Jeannette City High School

In Westmoreland County, the small school district of Jeannette has launched an ambitious dual enrollment program that has led to more graduates pursuing postsecondary education. With a graduating class of just 63 students, more than 50 students annually participate in dual enrollment programs across a wide range of classes, from history to calculus. As a result, some students are able to graduate with a full semester's worth of college credits.

Dr. Nathan Forbes, a high school history and government teacher and primary coordinator of the school's dual enrollment programs, says that the school has formed partnerships with a variety of postsecondary institutions, including Seton Hill, Mount Aloysius, and Westmoreland County Community College — in order to enable students to gain access to both higher level courses and courses that might not otherwise be available at the high school level.

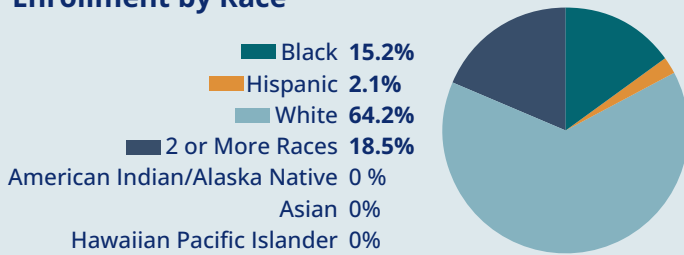
Students in 10th grade – 12th grade are eligible to participate in the program, which reflects the nature of the courses (most of which are mixed-grade) and allows students to participate in more courses over their high school careers. Forbes notes that because so many classes are offered as dual enrollment courses, a diverse cross section of students are able to participate. His efforts to expand the program have paid off — according to the 2020-2021 Future Ready PA Index, the high school reports that 93.1% of students graduate having participated in at least one college-level course.

He notes that some of the barriers that limit further expansion is the number of teachers interested in and/or qualified for teaching coursework at Jeannette. He notes that he is one of only 5 history teachers for the entire 7th – 12th grade. As a result, the school has more than enough history teachers who are qualified to teach dual enrollment, but not enough English teachers. A lack of coordination at

Jeannette City School District BY THE NUMBERS



Enrollment by Race



All data are from the 2020-2021 school year

the postsecondary level also promotes confusion, as students have to try to determine ahead of time whether or not their courses will transfer into the postsecondary institution they eventually attend. More reciprocity between schools and a simplified credit transfer process would be beneficial.

Aside from the dedication of Dr. Forbes and the school's counselors, students' high participation rates can also be attributed to an annual event that brings recent graduates of Jeannette back to the building to discuss post-graduation options. During the event, many of the students who previously participated in Jeannette's dual enrollment program share how that experience benefited them personally. This helps to convince current students who might be hesitant to enroll due to the rigor that the courses are worth their time and effort. Forbes says this increased confidence translates into higher rates of postsecondary enrollment, saying that often students think, "I did well in the course, and I have these credits — I might as well use them!"

Greater Latrobe School District

Greater Latrobe School District, located in Westmoreland County, offers a robust dual enrollment program as part of a larger initiative called [Greater Latrobe NEXT Career Pathways](#), which combines job shadowing opportunities and mentorships with internal counseling and coursework to help each student explore career pathways of interest. The importance of this program is evident given the resources that the school has devoted, from the allocation of staff — including a dedicated career pathways counselor — to the development of materials to help students plan and make choices.

Despite the pandemic, in the 2021-2022 school year, the district partnered with five postsecondary institutions to offer college in high school credit. Courses offered ranged from world languages to higher level/specialized math and science, general education requirements and even an engineering class in partnership with Saint Vincent and Kennametal. Students with financial need who apply to take any of the courses are encouraged to apply for one of a limited number of scholarships offered by the Greater Latrobe Partnership in Education Foundation.

Postsecondary Institution	Number of Courses Offered	Cost per Credit
Westmoreland County Community College	19*	\$60
Seton Hill	11	\$75
Mount Aloysius	4	\$60
Saint Francis University	8	\$58
Saint Vincent College	1	\$82

* Course offerings change from year to year.

IOP Task Force on Dual Enrollment and Pre-apprenticeship Programming

Dual Enrollment Recommendations

- Equity Goal and Public Reporting
- Program Integrity and Credit Transfer
- Finance
- Course Access and Availability
- Instructor Capacity
- Navigational Supports



Equity Goal & Public Reporting

1 Launch a State-Supported Task Force to Develop Principles for Pennsylvania's Dual Enrollment System

The state legislature should authorize the Pennsylvania Department of Education to create a Pennsylvania Dual Enrollment Task Force, comprised of a representative sample of stakeholders from the state's K-12, higher education, students, parents, and community organizations to develop a clear vision for the role of dual enrollment in Pennsylvania's education system to inform statewide policy development. Questions the Task Force should be asked to answer include:

- a. What is the ideal role of dual enrollment within Pennsylvania's education system?
- b. Which students should benefit from participating in dual enrollment?
- c. What kind of access should students have to these programs?

Other State Examples:

Louisiana Dual Enrollment Task Force — The [Louisiana Dual Enrollment Framework Task Force](#) was established by legislation in 2019 as a forum to promote cross-agency and stakeholder collaboration in the state, develop a clear vision for the state's dual enrollment programs, and operationalize the recommendations developed by the Task Force. The [initial report](#) issued by the Task Force outlines a vision for dual enrollment in Louisiana. The Task Force was initially asked to develop one report and conclude its work, but the success of the process has led to the Task Force being made permanent and continuing to work on actioning against the recommendations it developed. To date, this has included developing an [annual report](#) on dual enrollment in the state, and [launching a portal](#) for Louisiana students interested in learning more about dual enrollment.

2 Continue to Expand Public Reporting of Dual Enrollment Data

The Pennsylvania Department of Education should be funded to enable the inclusion of additional data within the Future Ready PA Index to include disaggregated data on student participation in dual enrollment, specifically relating to gender, race, economic status, disability status, and English language learner status. Alternatively, if it is not possible to integrate this data into the Future Ready PA Index, then PA should publish a separate annual report on dual enrollment that has data on participation and success in these programs.

Other State Examples:

Kentucky Department of Education School Report Card — The Kentucky Department of Education includes a significant amount of data on dual credit participation and success in the state by students on the state's School Report Card. In addition to including enrollment and completion data for 17 subpopulations of students, the School Report Card also includes participation and success data for students in 27 subject areas.

Indiana Commission on Higher Education Early College Report — The [Indiana Commission for Higher Education \(CHE\)](#) has published reports on dual credit and early college access and success for the state in 2016, 2017, 2019, and most recently in 2021. The annual report includes participation and success data broken down by student demographics, and includes additional data on student success such as credit transfer success rates and the return on investment to the state by investing in its dual credit programs.

3 Create a Formal Dual Enrollment Advisory Council to Provide Input on Developing Statewide Policy & Appoint Staff at PDE To Manage It

Once the Dual Enrollment Task Force has completed its work on developing a statewide vision for the role of dual enrollment, it should transition to become an ongoing Dual Enrollment Advisory Council tasked with providing recommendations to the legislature and the governor's office on advancing dual enrollment in Pennsylvania. To complement the functioning of the Dual Enrollment Advisory Council, the Pennsylvania Department of Education should also be funded to ensure there is a point person at the agency for dual enrollment issues, including running the Advisory Council.

Other State Example:

Colorado Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board (CEAB) — Colorado operates a statutory Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board, comprised of representatives from K-12 and higher education, as well as including representatives from parents and students. The CEAB meets quarterly to discuss issues of ongoing relevance to the state's dual enrollment policies, and also provides a forum for providing public input, through which new issues can be surfaced for the CEAB to address.

4 Encourage NACEP Accreditation for Concurrent Enrollment Programs

The PA Department of Education should encourage dual enrollment programs that use high school teachers to deliver course content to students to pursue accreditation from the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) to demonstrate a commitment to high program quality.

Other State Example:

NACEP in State Policy — Ten states, including Arkansas, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota and Washington currently either encourage or require dual enrollment programs in the state that are located at the high school and use high school teachers as their instructors to be accredited through NACEP.

5 Establish a Model Partnership Agreement for PA Dual Enrollment Programs

To ensure a consistent baseline level of program quality, and to ensure that certain elements of good dual enrollment partnerships are in place (including frequent partner communication and data sharing), the Pennsylvania Department of Education should develop a Model Partnership Agreement for PA's school districts and colleges to use as a baseline for their dual enrollment partnership agreements.

Other State Example:

Illinois Model Partnership Agreement — Under the Illinois Dual Credit Quality Act, if a school district and community college cannot agree on the terms of a local partnership for dual credit, the school district and community college must default to the Model Partnership Agreement (MPA), which was adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and Illinois Community College Board (ICCB).

Finance

6 Create a Dual Enrollment Scholarship

To provide improved equity of access for low income students to dual enrollment, and to encourage more school districts to develop partnerships with institutions of higher education to offer dual enrollment, Pennsylvania should create a Dual Enrollment Scholarship, and fund capacity at the Pennsylvania Department of Education to manage it, that allows all students/low income students the opportunity to take a set number of courses for free. To fund this, the state should set an agreed upon tuition payment rate per student, and to the extent practicable should require as little administrative burden on students, parents, and caregivers as possible.

Other State Example:

Kentucky Dual Credit Scholarship — Through statute, Kentucky high school students are entitled to take up to two dual credit courses free of charge. Institutions of higher education receive a fixed tuition reimbursement for offering the courses to students. In addition, the [Work Ready Kentucky Dual Credit Scholarship](#) to take two additional dual credit courses for free, which must be Career Technical Education (CTE) courses.

Course Access and Availability

7 Require School Districts to Inform Students Annually About Advanced Coursework Opportunities in Their School

The state should require that high schools inform students annually about their options to participate in advanced coursework opportunities, including dual enrollment, early college, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and others to ensure that students, parents, and caregivers have information about these opportunities to be able to explore them.

Other State Example:

Colorado Postsecondary Course Transparency Legislation — Through statute, Colorado requires school districts to provide annual notification to students about their opportunity to participate in dual enrollment courses, including both academic and CTE dual enrollment courses.

Instructor Capacity

8 Survey Pennsylvania High Schools to Understand Instructor Capacity Issues

To understand better the unique challenges facing high school teachers who also teach college courses through concurrent enrollment opportunities, the state should survey its high school teacher workforce to understand what issues related to instructor capacity exist and be able to develop policy solutions to address them.

9 Work with the Pennsylvania Association of Career and Technical Administrators and career and technical educators to determine a streamlined path for career professionals who are interested in becoming educators

This could be done through a task force at the state level or a partnership between CTCs and certification administrators in the Pennsylvania Departments of Education and Labor and Industry.

Navigational Supports

10 Create a Statewide Landing Page for Interested Dual Enrollment Students and Families

The Pennsylvania Department of Education should develop and actively operate a “What is Dual Enrollment?” landing page for PA dual enrollment stakeholders, including students, parents and caregivers to understand what the programs are and how they might go about accessing them. This page will be particularly important as PA expands availability of statewide policy, but in advance of the creation of such a policy greater messaging on advanced coursework opportunities for students is essential to encourage wider uptake.

Other State Example:

Louisiana Dual Enrollment Portal — The Louisiana Board of Regents just launched [Louisiana Dual Enrollment](#), a portal with exactly the same mission as outlined above. Louisiana is about at the same level of policy development as PA in terms of having statewide policy structures and access to dual enrollment across the state.

11 Develop explainer resources for school counselors to improve dual enrollment awareness

As a companion to the landing page in the previous recommendation, the PA Department of Education should also create some explainer resources specifically for school counselors to help them understand how to advise students on dual enrollment opportunities and how to access them.

Legislative update

In July 2022, Pennsylvania's General Assembly passed their annual bill making omnibus amendments to the Pennsylvania School Code. This legislation typically addresses a number of education policy initiatives prioritized by members of the legislature, including those that will be newly funded by the year's budget.

This year's bill was especially robust, and it includes the following provisions for dual enrollment in Pennsylvania:

- All public secondary schools in Pennsylvania are now required to enter into an agreement with a post-secondary institute to offer at least one dual enrollment course to students.
- Guidance will be provided with relation to:
 - > Data collection
 - > Responsibility for payment
 - > Alignment to pathways

Other relevant provisions include:

- the establishment of a statewide Commission on Education and Economic Competitiveness that will, over the course of the next year, propose long-term educational goals for the Commonwealth, and
- a streamlined certification process for teaching professionals holding out-of-state instructional certificates (including career and technical instructional certificates).

As of the publishing of this report, the Pennsylvania Department of Education continues establish guidelines and support for these initiatives.

Conclusion and next steps

Dual enrollment and pre-apprenticeships are not silver bullets; however, when done well, these programs can help to ensure that the next generation is more college/career ready, to help meet individual student/family goals as well as statewide goals for workforce development.

As Pennsylvania moves forward, collecting and disseminating additional data will be essential to developing robust dual enrollment and pre-apprenticeship programming. In order to facilitate truly student-centered programming, the Pennsylvania Departments of Labor and Industry and Education will need to engage in conversations around data sharing to ensure that program success can be tracked in a way that is meaningful for evaluation purposes.

The Task Force hopes that this report and the recommendations contained within will serve as a first step to developing a statewide structure for dual enrollment that will be flexible enough to support programs that all already in existence and doing well while incentivizing those districts who have not yet established robust, high quality programs to do so with equity in mind.



Special populations: Students with disabilities

As plans for a statewide dual enrollment structure are developed in Pennsylvania, special groups of students must be considered to ensure equitable access. One group of students that must be given consideration is students with disabilities.

In the 2018-2019 school year, 86.13% of students with disabilities graduated high school within their 5-year cohort in Pennsylvania. Given that the statewide graduation rate is 88.89% in the concurrent 2018-2019 5-year cohort, students with disabilities are graduating high school at a rate nearly equal to their peers. One may ask why, then, are there fewer individuals with disabilities seeking a post-secondary degree or certification? This gap is evident across the United States, but with accommodations and additional information to parents and students about dual enrollment opportunities, this gap may be reduced.

In a report by national nonprofit Jobs for the Future (JFF), dual enrollment opportunities for students from special populations are analyzed with the goal of finding the specific barriers that prevent certain groups of students from participating in dual-enrollment or pre-apprenticeship work.⁹ Using the state of California as an example, the report describes a common thread running through these populations in that “all are capable of college and career success, if they receive the appropriate supports.” The report identifies the impactful barriers of chronic underfunding for counseling and student services, a culture of low expectations, uneven access to information and opportunities, and a disconnect between policy approaches and support systems for special populations as the primary barriers for students seeking post-secondary education.

For students with disabilities in particular, the barriers reach beyond academic pursuits and focus more on successful transition from high school to a postsecondary institution. The Federal Individuals with Disabilities

Education Act (IDEA) guarantees students their right to a “free and appropriate public education” until they graduate high school or turn 21 years old. This means that colleges and post-secondary institutions are not bound to the same standards provided in the IDEA Act that would require equal and adequate accommodation across all areas of postsecondary education. Instead, postsecondary institutions are held to other standards set by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. These policies require equitable access to school grounds and existing services for students with disabilities, making it against the law for a school to not be ADA-compliant. While these policies ensure that the school will at least attempt to accommodate the needs of every student, it is no guarantee of an easy, barrier-less process in transitioning from high school to college. Once out of the K-12 system, it is crucial for the students with disabilities to be able to advocate for themselves; a life skill that must be emphasized in preparing all students for the postsecondary world.

Recommendations made by the JFF report include future goals in the two realms of high school-college partnerships and state systems and policy advocacy. The recommended practices center around the provision of more information and training for those involved in a student’s IEP and college planning process and the creation of a statewide template for dual enrollment that allows room for specialization in certain student groups. High school-college partnerships can be strengthened by designating both high school and college counselors to learn about the barriers and opportunities for students in special groups. Furthermore, the creation of a statewide system that develops special guidance for specific groups of students is crucial in disseminating valuable dual enrollment information to these liaisons. Any system developed in Pennsylvania in the future must consider these special arrangements in order to ensure equitable access to post-secondary opportunities for all students.

⁹ Sarah Hooker, Sam Finn, Derek Nino, and Alice Rice, “Dual Enrollment for Students from Special Populations: Improving College Transitions for English Learners, Students with Disabilities, Foster Youth, and Young People Experiencing Homelessness,” Jobs for the Future: March 2021, https://jfforg-prod-new.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/20210330_Dual_Enrollment_Special_Populations-updated.pdf

Appendix A

Pennsylvania Task Force on Equity in Dual Enrollment and Pre-apprenticeship Programs

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