# REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE ESSB-5187

## CTE Dual Credit Proviso 2024

*DECEMBER 2024*

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# Executive Summary

This first-year report outlines the progress and findings of the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Dual Credit pilot program, a proviso ([ESSB 5187](#)) funded by the Washington Legislature in June 2023 with an intent to increase career and technical education dual credit participation and credential attainment in professional-technical programs. The project leadership team — comprised of representatives from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Career Connect Northwest (CCNW) at Educational Services District (NWESD) 189, and partner colleges — made a strategic decision to focus first on building and strengthening system structures and capacity in CTE Dual Credit. This decision was informed by research conducted by SBCTC ([SBCTC 2023](#)), Community College Research Center ( ([CCRC 2023](#)), and the American Association of Community Colleges ([AACC 2024](#)) which identify the importance of integrated educational pathways and support systems.

**Background:** Effective dual credit programs must balance the priorities of both K-12 and higher education systems. The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges conducted a two-year study of Career and Technical Education (CTE) Dual Credit policies, focused on identifying the strengths and challenges by engaging student, staff, faculty, and administrator's voices. This two-year process and findings provided the framework for this proviso project ([SBCTC 2023](#)).

**Project importance:** The project focuses on strengthening CTE Dual Credit programs. Initial findings indicate a need for staffing resources to address challenges, increase participation, and align CTE credits with local workforce needs. Despite the benefits of CTE Dual Credit, support for these programs has not kept pace with other dual credit options.

**Project management:** SBCTC partnered with Career Connect Northwest at NWESD 189 to serve as the regional project manager. This collaboration builds on their existing relationships with multiple stakeholders, including local colleges and school districts, to develop a shared vision and strategy for regional CTE Dual Credit pathways.

## Key objectives

- **Develop a shared vision:** Create robust CTE Dual Credit pathways leading to postsecondary enrollment.

- **Forge connections:** Establish articulations within existing career pathways that lead to Industry Recognized Credentials and postsecondary enrollment.

- **Standardize processes:** Implement standardized tools and approaches for seamless regional and statewide articulations and policies.

- **Ensure equity:** Integrate equity and student success throughout the project.

# Challenges and barriers

- **Alignment across dual credit programs:** Students and their families can be confused by the dual credit options available to them, requiring a higher level of communication and clarity by secondary and postsecondary institutions.

- **Credit transcription issues:** Students taking CTE Dual Credit courses, unlike Running Start (RS) and College in the High School (CiHS), do not register through the college enrollment processes and their credits are not automatically transcribed.

- **Institutional policies:** Aligning partners' understanding of CTE Dual Credit programming requires ongoing communication and professional development.

# Year one successes

- **Shared vision:** Developed a vision centered on aligning dual credit pathways with regional workforce needs.

- **Articulation practices:** Reviewed and standardized regional forms and procedures for CTE Dual Credit articulation.

- **Community of practice:** Launched a community of practice for computer science teachers to enhance alignment and dual credit opportunities.

# Year two priorities

- **Revised articulation process:** Develop and pilot regional forms and tools.

- **Expand communities of practice:** Increase dual credit articulations in target pathways.

- **Create pathway maps:** Develop advising tools and conduct workshops.

- **Enhance communication:** Facilitate family information sessions and engage stakeholders.

# Longer-term recommendations

- **Personnel:** Recommend dedicated full-time CTE Dual Credit program staff at each community and technical college.

- **Policy:** Create standardized statewide policies.

- **Technical tools:** Develop centralized tools for tracking and maintaining articulation processes, enrollments, and course equivalencies.

# Lessons learned

- CTE Dual Credit is the most accessible of the dual credit options, attracting a more diverse and socioeconomically representative population. (ERDC 2024 Dual Credit Report and ERDC Dual Credit Dashboard)

- The two-year investment of $350,000 annually for pilot sites provided a good starting point to strengthen institutional capacity in support of CTE Dual Credit programs.

- All proviso partners utilized funding to support staff and faculty engagement in articulations, process review, and professional development, which was crucial to their participation in this pilot project.

- CTE Dual Credit students do not access course registration through the college, therefore their courses are not automatically transcribed. This creates confusion for students and families.

- Unlike traditional college classes, CTE Dual Credit requires time intensive negotiation of course articulations and learning outcomes, manual transcription of each course completed, and creation of specialized advising materials. Each of these processes would be improved by moving from manual to electronic.

The pilot program has made significant strides in its first year, indicating the funding support for administration and operation of CTE Dual Credit programs helped to inform and implement initial changes. The proviso project team believes the continuation and expansion of these efforts to additional regions would benefit the continued growth of workforce focused educational pathways.

# Introduction

"An education system reimagined for the 21st century engages youth of all ages in the power of career-connected learning and provides every student with the opportunity to gain real-life work experience, earn college credits, and make progress towards an industry credential before they graduate high school."

— *U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona (2022)*

Career and technical education (CTE) pathways at both the secondary and postsecondary level are responsive to the diverse interests and abilities of the state's students and instrumental in growing a diverse, inclusive, and highly skilled workforce. Developing a skilled and experienced workforce is critical to local, regional, and statewide economic growth and vitality. Career and technical education programs are designed to prepare students through education and training for employment in high demand sectors in our state. These programs provide opportunities to align CTE Dual Credit and industry recognized credentials, both of which support credential attainment and gainful employment.

CTE Dual Credit programs serve the most diverse cross section of students and more than the combined number of participants in Running Start and College in the High School. CTE Dual Credit is the most accessible of the dual credit options, attracting a more diverse and socioeconomically representative population. Washington Education Research & Data Center (ERDC), in its 2024 Dual Credit Report and Dual Credit Dashboard (ERDC Report and ERDC Dashboard), identified that CTE Dual Credit served over 65,000 students representing 76% of all dual credit students in the 2023 cohort. Over 70% of all students identifying as Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, two or more races, and/or low-income participated in CTE Dual Credit, while 63% of American Indian/Alaska Native students participated. These numbers are significantly higher than other dual credit options.

As the Legislature considers potential new investments in CTE Dual Credit programs, it is important to understand the impact this investment could have in meeting the career and educational goals of the diverse populations these programs are reaching. CTE Dual Credit programs are well positioned to address equity gaps, expand economic opportunities, and align education and training with the needs of industry.

It is the intent of this project to support students in the effective utilization of credits and credentials earned through CTE Dual Credit to further their career and postsecondary aspirations.

# Proviso Language

In June 2023, the Washington Legislature provided a CTE Dual Credit proviso (ESSB 5187) to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) to administer a pilot program to increase career and technical education dual credit participation and credential attainment in professional technical programs. The proviso directed the State Board to select community and technical college partners to participate in the pilot program during the 2023-24 and 2024-25 academic years. The colleges, as required by the proviso, are all located within the Northwest Educational Service District 189 (NWESD) service area, which covers Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom counties. The partnering colleges are a consortium of Bellingham Technical College (BTC) and Whatcom Community College (WCC), Everett Community College (EvCC), and Skagit Valley College (SVC).

The proviso further identifies the following priority topics to be included in the final proviso report, which have been integrated into all aspects of the first- and second-year planning:

- Course articulation and development of model articulation agreements

- Data collection and reporting

- Credit transcription and transfer

- Student advising and career guidance supports

- Alignment of career and technical education dual credit programs with credential pathways and in-demand career fields

- Funding for industry-recognized credentials

- Identification of priority courses and programs

- Evaluation of the statewide enrollment and data system, and recommendations for improvements to or replacement of the system to reflect articulation agreement data, student data, and transcription information to support data validity, credit portability, and program improvement

The legislative proviso established SBCTC as the authorized agency to guide this work, ensuring stakeholder engagement and project deliverables. SBCTC entered an interagency agreement with Career Connect Northwest at Northwest Educational Services District 189 to serve in a project management capacity to support key elements of the CTE Dual Credit Proviso. The full legislative proviso language is provided in Appendix A

# Purpose of this Report

This report is submitted by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to the Washington state Legislature in fulfillment of RCW 43.01.036, which reads in part: By Dec. 10, 2024, the State Board, in collaboration with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, must issue a preliminary report to the appropriate committees of the Legislature.

# Budget and Resources

The CTE Dual Credit Proviso was funded with $700,000 from the Workforce Education Investment Account for the 2023-25 biennium to administer a pilot program to increase career and technical education dual credit participation and credential attainment in professional-technical programs. The resources were allocated to project partner organizations in years one and two as identified in the table below.

| Organization | FY24 Allocation | FY25 Allocation | Expense Detail |
|---|---|---|---|
| CCNW/NWESD 189 | $75,000 | $90,000 | Staff/Convening/Stipends |
| BTC/WCC | $75,000 | $80,000 | Staff/Articulations/Stipends |
| EvCC | $75,000 | $80,000 | Staff/Articulations/Stipends |
| SVC | $75,000 | $80,000 | Staff/Articulations/Stipends |
| SBCTC | $20,000 | $10,000 | Goods & Services |
| Reserve Fund | $30,000 | $10,000 | TBD – Distributed January based on greatest need. |
| Total | $350,000 | $350,000 | |

# Program Overview

## Background and importance

In 2022, SBCTC concluded an intensive two-year study of CTE Dual Credit policies, documented innovative practices, and compiled information and resources into a report and guidebook that include recommendations for program consistency statewide. A key goal of the project was to support equitable student participation and outcomes — including credit transcription and utilization — in CTE Dual Credit, reflecting the vision statement of the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, which emphasizes racial equity.

The second phase of this initiative was to charter an advisory committee with broad stakeholder representation to review current CTE Dual Credit operations, policies, and procedures; assess statewide program practices administered or monitored by SBCTC and OSPI; identify internal policy, organizational and/or process changes necessary to improve the CTE Dual Credit experience for students and stakeholders; and jointly make recommendations to SBCTC and OSPI leadership to inform collaborative policy, legislative, and funding conversations.

An important finding of this earlier work was that CTE Dual Credit program support is more difficult to maintain as compared to dual credit programs that receive dedicated state resources. In the past, CTE Dual Credit (the program formerly known as Tech Prep) was a required element of federal funds provided by the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, providing a separate line item specific to Tech Prep. In 2010, this required use of funds was removed from the Perkins legislation and states were able to combine Tech Prep funds with their basic state grant funds.

While some colleges have continued to fund CTE Dual Credit positions with Perkins funding, many colleges moved funding to other career technical education priorities, eliminating or significantly reducing staffing supports. Since this shift, programs have struggled to address changing industry needs, grow and maintain articulation agreements, provide holistic enrollment supports, and transcribe credits. Perkins reporting still requires evidence of dual credit collaboration between K-12 and postsecondary institutions, however, there has been no requirement that colleges use Perkins funding to support CTE Dual Credit since 2010. During this same time period, there have been additional state resources dedicated to College in the High School, Running Start, and exam-based dual credit through grants and budget allocations available through OSPI and the Legislature.

## Project management

SBCTC recognized the importance of building upon the successful CTE Dual Credit initiatives already taking place across the state, as identified in prior CTE Dual Credit research. Since the proviso language specifically required a regional approach focused on the service district of NWESD 189, Career Connect Northwest (CCNW), hosted at the NWESD 189, was selected as the regional project manager to work closely with SBCTC on project priorities and deliverables.

## Proviso partner: Career Connect Northwest (CCNW)

Career Connect NW serves Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom counties. The region consists of 35 K-12 school districts, Tribal Education Compact Schools, and several private schools. The NWESD is a well-known regional educational partner that provides a centralized point for services and information relevant to K-12 education in the five Northwest counties. NWESD has an established history of offering comprehensive, quality services to all K-12 school districts in the region and has leveraged its relationships to engage local school districts in this initiative.

SBCTC and CCNW at NWESD convened leadership from the partner colleges to discuss project scope and expectations. Multiple stakeholder meetings were held with teams representing Bellingham Technical College (BTC), Everett Community College (EvCC), Skagit Valley College (SVC), and Whatcom Community College (WCC). To ensure comprehensive input, many stakeholder engagement activities comprising faculty, staff, and agency representatives were held to guide and inform this work. During this project, CCNW, SBCTC, OSPI, and regional CTE directors convened to focus on several critical objectives:

- Develop a shared vision and strategy aimed at creating robust CTE Dual Credit pathways leading to postsecondary enrollment.

- Forge deliberate connections and articulations within several career pathways, scaling college pathways that culminate in Industry Recognized Credentials aligned with high-paying, high-demand industries.

- Design and implement standardized tools, processes, and approaches to establish seamless regional and statewide articulations.

- Ensure equity and student success are integrated elements throughout this project.

# Pilot colleges

SBCTC and CCNW at NWESD met to define specific roles, commitments, and deliverables for partners involved in the proviso, aiming to set clear expectations and ensure college partners fully understood their roles and responsibilities. These commitments, along with the scope of work, were shared with BTC, WCC, SVC, and EvCC. SBCTC also convened with institutional leaders to confirm alignment and identify key contacts from each college who would participate in the proviso efforts.

- Support efforts to increase CTE Dual Credit articulations and course offerings, as described in legislative proviso.

- Implement project-identified processes and procedures to address shared challenges of the existing CTE Dual Credit program.

- Implement uniform/required tools, templates, and practices for regional and statewide articulations that are purposeful and intentional.

- Standardize processes, templates, and documentation for key functions, including outcomes, assessments, grading criteria, etc.

- Provide regional and aligned workshops to secondary partners to guide and support articulation process and curriculum alignment.

- Provide the required reporting and data as requested by the project management team.

- Identify and engage key college personnel to achieve project deliverables:

  - Commit to shared understanding, vision, and strategy to develop meaningful CTE Dual Credit pathways that lead to postsecondary enrollment.

  - Create intentional articulations in identified career pathways that include course equivalencies, credit transfer agreements and Industry Recognized Credentials.

  - Engage SMEs in review and alignment for CTE Dual Credit procedures.

- Develop program pathway maps and advising tools to help students understand how dual credit courses connect to pathways, align and sequence secondary and postsecondary courses, and fulfill certificate/degree requirements. Pathway maps include secondary coursework, dual credit options, labor market information (job titles and salaries), industry certifications, and postsecondary degrees and credentials.

Establishing these strong relationships and clear expectations allowed the project to build momentum during the first year of the proviso. The following is an overview of the initiatives and successes.

# CTE Dual Credit proviso — year one

Once colleges and team members were identified, a launch meeting was held in November 2023 to review the proviso purpose and goals. The group reviewed the scope of work and deliverables and a draft timeline for project deliverables. Key tasks the group identified as essential to successful pilot included:

- Establish a shared vision of CTE Dual Credit.
- Review articulation processes, procedures, and policies.
- Review regional pathway offerings and identify gaps.
- Identify high-wage, high-demand program pathways.

## Establishing a shared vision of CTE Dual Credit

While some program pathways have successfully established dual credit options, there is a clear need for a cohesive, strategic approach to expanding and standardizing articulations across regions. Many educators and administrators express limited familiarity with the nuances of CTE Dual Credit, often resulting in inconsistent or underdeveloped options for K-12 students. Despite these challenges, there is strong interest among stakeholders to foster collaborative partnerships between K-12 and postsecondary institutions, with a focus on creating clearer, more accessible CTE Dual Credit pathways that leverage successful models and faculty expertise.

## Review of articulation procedures and policies

This effort required a thorough examination of required forms, documentation, and approval processes. The project team gathered input from K-12 partners, including NWESD and community and technical colleges. By analyzing these materials and insights, the team sought to identify any procedural gaps, redundancies, or areas for improvement that may be hindering the ease and effectiveness of establishing dual credit articulations.

This alignment is intended to support students more effectively, reduce administrative barriers, and create a more cohesive framework for CTE pathways. The goal is to establish a standardized process that fosters seamless transitions from high school to college, allowing students to maximize the benefits of dual credit opportunities.

## Review regional pathway offerings and identify gaps

To illuminate course compatibility and secure essential resources to enhance school districts' access to CTE Dual Credit opportunities, the team emphasized the need for a strategic and deliberate approach when selecting courses for articulation. The aim was to help secondary partners understand the project's vision and align high school pathways with postsecondary opportunities, while also remaining responsive to each district's unique needs, including courses that may be necessary for high school graduation requirements.

The project team conducted in-depth regional analysis of CTE course data including courses offered, enrollment, course outcomes, and dual credit articulations. This information is being leveraged to help our educational partners explore expanded dual credit opportunities and obtain the necessary support and resources to revise and align their CTE course offerings.

Recently, through the process of mapping course options and postsecondary opportunities in the region, the project pinpointed significant programming gaps in computer science and information technology offerings. Despite the recognition of information technology, computer science, manufacturing, and engineering as emerging and sought-after fields, our examination of local course offerings revealed a lack of coherence and alignment, indicating a need for further conversation and investigation on how to build exposure to these high-wage, high-demand career pathways.

## Identify high-wage, high-demand program pathways

The project team reviewed the data and recommendations by CCNW and SBCTC to identify specific program pathways of focus, leveraging prior success and established faculty involvement in these areas. The pathways the proviso is focused on included:

- **Information technology (IT)/computer science (CS) pathway:** This pathway may include additional articulation opportunities in areas such as computer information systems, cybersecurity, data science, computer science, and cloud computing.

- **Advanced manufacturing/engineering technology pathway:** This pathway may include additional articulation opportunities in areas such as welding, composites, computer numerical control (CNC), machining, and marine technology.

To close these gaps, a community of practice was established to provide opportunities for high school teachers and college faculty opportunities to connect, share best practices, and align course learning outcomes to expand dual credit articulations in these fields. By ensuring high school courses flow into postsecondary programs and align with industry standards, students will be better prepared for entry into these career fields. As an example of partnerships between colleges, computer science faculty from Skagit Valley College and Everett Community College collaborated with CCNW to facilitate a series of professional development workshops for high school computer science teachers from across the five-county region.

In summary, the series established clear steps forward for pathway development, strategic course articulation, and alignment of procedural practices, with a commitment to flexibility and responsiveness to support the needs of both district and college partners.

# Challenges and Barriers

During the reporting period, the project leadership and team encountered challenges, which required their time and dedicated attention.

## Alignment across dual credit programs

The engagement of community and technical colleges and school district CTE directors confirms there is a need for focused attention to clarify and reduce confusion about CTE Dual Credit programs. Students and their families have expressed difficulties understanding the dual credit options available to them, requiring a higher level of communication and clarity by secondary and postsecondary institutions. This confusion highlights a pressing need for clear, accessible advising materials and how articulated credits may align with the Guided Pathways at each of the community and technical colleges. Such resources would help students, advisors, and families see how credits can be applied across college programs, making it easier to plan for postsecondary transition.

## Credit transcription

CTE Dual Credit students do not access course registration through the college, therefore their courses are not automatically transcribed. This creates confusion for students and families when students want to use these credits toward college transfer or degree planning. As a result, credits earned under CTE Dual Credit are sometimes overlooked during academic advising, affecting students' progress toward their intended career pathways. Addressing this issue requires a standardized approach to transcription that clearly identifies and records CTE credits.

## Institutional policies and procedures

Considerable time was spent aligning partners' understanding of CTE Dual Credit programming and related policies, highlighting the need for ongoing communication and professional development to bridge knowledge gaps. Building consensus among partners is essential to develop a unified approach to CTE Dual Credit that better serves students across institutions.

Thoughtful engagement by high school teachers and postsecondary faculty requires they have dedicated time to review and align curriculum and student outcomes as part of the articulation process. Some of the partner colleges faced low faculty participation in the proviso-coordinated community of practice potentially due to lack of funding, workload constraints, and competing responsibilities. To incentivize faculty engagement, potential approaches might include the awarding of professional development credits, offering recognition through certificates or awards, integrating articulation efforts into faculty professional development or evaluation plans, or seeking grant funding to support these initiatives. Establishing incentives could encourage greater faculty engagement and foster the growth of robust CTE Dual Credit pathways.

Extensive information and research exist on the barriers associated with CTE Dual Credit, often identifying a lack of staffing to promote, advise, and provide holistic supports for educators, students, and families navigating the complexities of dual credit. Additionally, the lack of consistent statewide policy guidance makes it difficult for stakeholders to fully understand and utilize CTE Dual Credit opportunities, hindering students' ability to access and benefit from these programs. Developing accessible programs that clearly communicate pathways, credit transferability, and program alignment could enhance understanding and participation in CTE Dual Credit.

# Year One Successes

## Adopted shared vision for CTE Dual Credit

The shared vision for CTE Dual Credit is centered on creating a more intentional and strategic approach that aligns closely with regional workforce needs and educational priorities. The vision emphasizes the development of dual credit pathways built upon clearly defined tenets and criteria, ensuring each pathway reflects in-demand program options. By providing explicit guidance and structured support, this approach aims to make CTE Dual Credit pathways more clearly aligned and communicated to students, educators, and industry partners alike. Additionally, the vision calls for establishing common goals and procedures across the region, fostering greater consistency and collaboration among K-12 schools, community and technical colleges, and workforce partners. This cohesive framework is designed to support seamless transitions, preparing students for successful careers and postsecondary achievements in a rapidly evolving job market.

Creating systemwide policies and procedures will strengthen awareness, navigation, and transferability of CTE Dual Credit across the community and technical college system, regardless of where the articulation was established (RCW 28B.50.531).

# Reviewed existing articulation practices and approaches

The team conducted a comprehensive review of college articulation practices and approaches, incorporating key policies and recommendations from previous CTE Dual Credit research and projects. As part of this process, college proviso partners shared an overview of their current practices, policies, and approaches to dual credit administration. This discussion revealed notable variations among participating colleges in both their administration of the program and their understanding of the practices involved in establishing and maintaining CTE Dual Credit articulations. These differences underscored the need for a shared vision and a cohesive approach to streamline and unify efforts across institutions, ensuring a consistent and effective pathway for students.

Throughout this feedback session, participants highlighted the benefits of adopting a standardized regional approach for articulation paperwork, processes, and course alignment. Currently, differing processes across institutions create unnecessary administrative burdens and confusion for both high schools and colleges. A unified regional approach would streamline the articulation process, making it more efficient and consistent across institutions. This would also reduce the complexity for students, districts, and colleges as they navigate dual credit and articulation agreements.

As a result of these convenings, our proviso partners agreed on the need for a region-wide course articulation process, addressing required documents, the approval process, annual calendar, and system timelines. The group agreed that a common set of procedures would lead to a more streamlined articulation process, improving the overall experience for students and families.

# Developed regional articulation forms and procedures

One of the most critical insights from the group's process work was the need to develop standardized regional forms and procedures for CTE Dual Credit articulation. The group identified improvements to address challenges faced by K-12 partners, including the recommendation for colleges to publish a list of articulatable courses along with detailed information on course learning outcomes, sample assessments, and assignments.

During a feedback session, the group also highlighted the importance of fostering mutual understanding between secondary and postsecondary education systems, which differ significantly in their documentation and procedural requirements. For example, high schools use course frameworks while colleges rely on syllabi, and aligning these tools is essential for effective course articulation. The group emphasized the need for college faculty to understand the role of high school course frameworks, which could support clearer and more meaningful articulation agreements.

Additionally, the group identified the importance of sequencing document collection to improve efficiency and clarity. For example, shifting syllabus creation to a later stage in the articulation process — after course approval and alignment with learning outcomes — is established, would ensure that the syllabus accurately reflects the agreed-upon standards and objectives.

Following several convenings, the process group outlined the next steps for developing essential forms and tools in year two of the proviso. These resources aim to standardize and streamline the CTE Dual Credit articulation process across the region. The planned forms and templates include:

- **Dual credit articulation process steps:** A clear outline of the steps required to establish dual credit articulations.

- **Dual credit articulation request form:** A standardized form for initiating articulation requests.

- **Course competency form:** A template to document course competencies and outcomes, details related to the college course necessary to align high school, and college course expectations.

- **High school articulation assurances and finalizations:** A form for finalizing articulation agreements, ensuring all required criteria are met.

- **Syllabi template:** A proposed template for high school teachers, detailing necessary components and including optional standard statements to align with college requirements.

These tools are designed to support a consistent approach to dual credit articulation, improving clarity and alignment between high school and college courses. The process group will collaborate with partners to draft and implement the above forms in the second year of the proviso.

## Established shared calendar and timeline

The group identified misaligned timelines as a significant barrier to offering dual credit opportunities and the ability to offer and integrate those courses into school and district course catalogs. Often, delayed communication around articulation approvals leads to missed opportunities for students, schools, and colleges. Establishing a shared calendar with clearly defined timelines and deadlines for articulation approvals — including timelines for submitting agreements, reviewing courses, and finalizing articulation decisions — course catalog updates, and dual credit opportunities would enhance communication and collaboration across partners. The calendar would ensure coordination across high schools and colleges, improving efficiency and ensuring that all stakeholders adhere to a uniform timeline.

## Established community of practice for computer science teachers

As noted earlier, the project team reviewed regional program offerings and industry sectors prior to recommending two high-wage, high-demand pathways of focus: Information Technology (IT)/Computer Science (CS) Pathway and Advanced Manufacturing/Engineering Technology Pathway. The focus of the first year of the proviso was computer science.

CCNW at NWESD 189 successfully launched a community of practice in collaboration with faculty from Skagit Valley College and Everett Community College aimed at increasing alignment and dual credit opportunities as well as enhancing professional development for high school computer science teachers.

Through this initiative, partners met regularly to review existing K-12 course offerings, align them with regional postsecondary programs and workforce needs, and collaboratively design professional development workshops to support pathway alignment and expand dual credit opportunities.

Over the year, four professional development workshops were facilitated, drawing participation from more than 18 high school computer science teachers representing districts across Oak Harbor, Monroe, Snohomish, Mukilteo, Sno-Isle Skills Center, Stanwood, Bellingham, Lakewood, and Everett. These workshops focused on deepening the teachers' understanding of postsecondary pathways, aligning high school and college-level curricula, and building sustainability in pathway development.

This community of practice has established a robust foundation for computer science education across the region, fostering alignment between high school and college pathways and increasing access to dual credit opportunities. The ongoing partnership has enhanced the support for teachers and aims to improve student preparation for postsecondary success in computer science fields. The ongoing partnership has strengthened support for teachers, and there is a desire to continue to collaborate to improve alignment and student readiness for postsecondary success in computer science. Due to the overwhelming success of this first series, the community of practice will continue into year two of the proviso. Additionally, a second community of practice will be established to support the manufacturing pathway, expanding the collaborative framework to benefit even more educators and students.

# Recommendations

The first year findings of this proviso work align very closely with the Community College Research Center's (CCRC) Dual Enrollment Equity Pathways (DEEP) research, which investigated the experiences of students historically underserved in dual enrollment to understand what these students want from dual credit programs and the educators who lead them.

DEEP is a research-based framework for broadening the benefits of dual enrollment to underserved students and communities by addressing inequities in dual enrollment access and strengthening alignment of dual enrollment course offerings to postsecondary opportunities (Fink & Jenkins, 2023). DEEP draws on decades of prior student success research on guided pathways reforms, early college high school (ECHS) models, and effective and equitable dual enrollment practices, as well as field research on effective practices of community colleges and their Title I high school partners that have broadened access and achieved strong outcomes for lower income, Black, and Hispanic dual enrollment students in Florida and Texas (Fink et al., 2023).

Our college partners identified and worked through several complexities and challenges as they implemented strategies to increase student access to CTE Dual Credit courses. Building on the DEEP framework, the following lessons and recommendations are offered for consideration.

## Year two priorities

In the second year of the CTE Dual Credit proviso, the partners will focus on developing and implementing regional forms, tools, templates, and practices to create a more intentional and standardized articulation process. Key activities include:

- **Developing and piloting a revised articulation process:** The team will introduce regional forms and tools to streamline dual credit articulation, ensuring purpose and clarity. A pilot of this revised process will be conducted, followed by feedback collection and adjustments as needed.

- **Expanding communities of practice (CoPs):** The computer science community of practice will continue and an additional CoP will be launched for manufacturing educators, fostering collaboration between high school teachers and college faculty to strengthen pathway alignment.

- **Increasing dual credit articulations in target pathways:** Efforts will focus on growing dual credit articulation agreements and enrollment in two high-demand pathways — computer science and manufacturing.

- **Creating pathway maps and advising tools:** To help students and advisors understand how dual credit courses contribute to career pathways, program maps and advising tools will be developed. These resources will align and sequence courses from high school to postsecondary programs, supporting degree and certificate requirements.

- **Enhancing communication and conducting workshops:** A series of workshops will be offered to secondary partners, providing guidance on the articulation process, sharing advising tools, and improving understanding and awareness of dual credit options.

- **Facilitating family information sessions:** Targeted sessions for families will focus on dual credit program pathways in computer science and manufacturing, addressing pathway benefits, requirements, and options.

- **Engaging with key stakeholders:** Ongoing engagement with high schools, colleges, administrative offices, and students will ensure that the revised processes and tools meet the needs of all stakeholders and provide a holistic perspective.

- **Exploring technology solutions:** The team will explore the use of ctcLink and other potential technologies to streamline admissions, registration, and transcription, enhancing administrative efficiency and improving student experiences.

- **Providing actionable recommendations:** Based on feedback and outcomes, the team will develop recommendations for implementing changes, including potential policy revisions, procedural updates, and communication strategies to support stakeholders.

These activities focus on refining, piloting, and expanding processes to create a more accessible and consistent CTE Dual Credit system to benefit students, educators, and families across the region.

# Longer-term recommendations

## Personnel

The growth and stability of CTE Dual Credit is dependent on administrative personnel at each college to effectively administer the CTE Dual Credit program to:

- Coordinate career engagement and exposure, counseling, and other critical supports.

- Ensure alignment of CTE Dual Credit courses with identified career pathways at community and technical colleges.

- Build stronger cross-sector data and accountability structures to ensure CTE student success and advancement.

- Support high school teachers and postsecondary faculty to collaborate on building, reviewing, and revising course articulations.

- Engage with local business and industry leaders to ensure programs are responsive to workforce needs.

- Manage enrollment and transcription of earned college credits.

## Policy

Create standardized and consistent statewide policies to:

- Align high school classes with in-demand college-level content to award postsecondary credits to fulfill a program or general education requirement at the community or technical college.

- Create articulation agreements for those courses that align with an existing career pathway at a community or technical college, ensuring articulations assist with meaningful momentum within the same pathway.

- Establish uniform grading practices for the award of college credit.

- Ensure any student completing an articulated course with a qualifying grade is aware of the opportunity to receive postsecondary credit.

- Utilize a standardized articulation agreement template, and other related forms, approved by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

- Incorporate CTE Dual Credit advising options available at high schools or skill centers to students, including all policies and relevant information necessary to make an informed choice.

- List CTE Dual Credit courses on websites, linked advising resources, or other available publications.

- Clarify and standardize the course criteria to be offered as CTE Dual Credit (e.g., CIP code, instructor certification, etc.).

- Require secondary institutions to ensure alignment of requested articulations with specific high school course codes and state approved frameworks.

    - All state approved frameworks have been vetted by industry and approved by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

    - By aligning K-12 approved frameworks, colleges would have a higher level of confidence in the quality and rigor of high school courses, which would lead to more consistent acceptance of articulated credits.

## Data enhancements and technical tools

Partners lack a centralized tool or platform for tracking and maintaining aspects of articulation, enrollment, and transcription processes. SERS, the current system that manages articulations and student registration, is dated and technical support resources are minimal.

In feedback sessions, partners emphasized the value of establishing a comprehensive shared platform (this could be a shared database or web portal) that lists all high school courses available for articulation with postsecondary institutions, can serve as a clearinghouse for forms and resources, and streamlines the registration and transcription processes. The ideal technical solution will:

- Create a centralized resource for educators and administrators, providing detailed information about course offerings, articulation agreements, and requirements.

- Provide secondary and postsecondary access to course learning outcomes, sample assessments, and syllabi to assist partners in determining course alignment and streamlining the articulation process.

- Include features to initiate articulation requests, upload required documentation, and streamline and automate communication between high schools and colleges.

- Maintain student enrollment records associated with each high school, college, and course.

- Generate data reports on enrollment, performance, transcription, matriculation, and credit application.

The ideal technical solution will assist with advising students, reflecting alignment between High School and Beyond Plan and CTE college pathways. In addition, it will allow for the integration of other types of dual credit, including College in the High School.

# Conclusion

Washington state's investment of $700,000 for the first two years of the pilot program is having positive impacts on colleges' ability to reimagine processes and systems to strengthen CTE Dual Credit at the four participating pilot colleges. The lessons learned, best practices identified, and data collected in the first year of the pilot project will provide a foundation for the year two priorities. The pilot colleges are dependent on the processes outlined to maintain continued progress.

Additionally, the pilot colleges believe the system could demonstrate continued success with expansion to additional region(s) and would specifically recommend eastern Washington. Ultimately, extending the program structure, student resources, instructional alignment, and administration for CTE Dual Credit and services at all 34 community and technical colleges would serve as a viable solution to supporting growth of this highly diverse and industry focused dual credit option.

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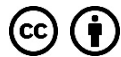jhammer@sbctc.edu
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# Appendix A: CTE Dual Credit Proviso Pilot Language (ESSB 5187)

Seven-hundred thousand dollars of the Workforce Education Investment Account — State Appropriation is provided solely for the State Board to administer a pilot program to increase career and technical education dual credit participation and credential attainment in professional-technical programs. The State Board, in collaboration with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, must select up to three community and technical colleges to participate in the pilot program during the 2023-24 and 2024-25 academic years. The three colleges must be located within the same educational service district and one must be located in a county with a population between 115,000 and 150,000. Colleges and school districts participating in the career and technical education dual credit grant program may utilize funding to cover the following expenses:

- Subsidized out-of-pocket costs to students and families for supplies, textbooks, materials, and credit transcription fees;

- Outreach to prospective students and students who have completed career and technical education dual credit courses and are eligible to receive postsecondary credit to encourage participation and credit transcription;

- Costs associated with staff or teacher time dedicated to curriculum alignment or the development of articulation agreements; and

- Equipment and supplies for career and technical education dual credit courses required to meet postsecondary learning objectives.

By Dec. 10, 2024, the State Board, in collaboration with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, must issue a preliminary report to the appropriate committees of the Legislature, pursuant to RCW 43.01.036, with findings and recommendations regarding the pilot program that may be scaled statewide. The final report is due by Dec. 10, 2025. The State Board must establish a stakeholder committee that is representative of students, faculty, staff, and agency representatives to inform this work. The report must include recommendations on the following topics:

- Course articulation and development of model articulation agreements;

- Data collection and reporting;

- Credit transcription and transfer;

- Student advising and career guidance supports;

- Alignment of career and technical education dual credit programs with credential pathways and in-demand career fields;

- Funding for industry-recognized credentials;

- Identification of priority courses and programs; and

- Evaluation of the statewide enrollment and data system, and recommendations for improvements to or replacement of the system to reflect articulation agreement data, student data, and transcription information to support data validity, credit portability, and program improvement.