Accelerate **ED**

ESG | Education Strategy Group

FRAMEWORK FOR SHARING **Dual Enrollment Data**

Accelerate ED

Accelerate ED is a learning community of state and regional cross-sector teams working to expand access to high-quality pathways that enable students—especially those historically underrepresented in advanced coursework—to earn substantial college credit and pursue aligned career pathways while in high school. The community advances this work through peer learning, convenings, and collaborative problem-solving that focus on developing coherent systems, aligning policy, and providing meaningful student support. The community is led by Education Strategy Group (ESG).

About This Resource

This resource is one of three interconnected public goods created through an Accelerate ED Designathon. Facilitated by ESG between August 2025 and January 2026, the Designathon brought together participants from community colleges, K–12 districts, intermediaries, and research organizations across Illinois, Louisiana, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia to address a critical question: *How might we strengthen the connection between dual enrollment and full postsecondary matriculation at the same institutions, creating seamless transitions that significantly increase the likelihood of students persisting in their chosen pathways?*

Through four virtual meetings; a three-day in-person design sprint in Charlotte, NC; and ongoing asynchronous collaboration, teams explored root causes, generated solutions, and rapidly prototyped practical tools. The process centered on real practitioner insights, iterative feedback, and a commitment to creating resources that could be immediately useful across diverse contexts. The result is three public goods that can be used independently or together to support practitioners and system leaders in strengthening dual enrollment transitions. **To view all of the public goods, visit https://edstrategy.org/resource/accelerate-ed-designathon.**

OVERVIEW

As dual enrollment opportunities continue to expand, the need for stronger coordination across K–12 districts, colleges and universities, and community partners has become increasingly clear. Students move between these systems simultaneously, yet the data needed to understand their experiences, identify gaps, and track long-term outcomes often either is not collected or remains siloed within individual institutions. Without aligned data across partners, coordinating supports, monitoring participation by different student groups, evaluating program quality, communicating results, and using evidence to guide policy and investment decisions are difficult. A lack of aligned data also restricts the capacity to create supports that guide students from dual enrollment into matriculation at the same postsecondary institution.

This framework recognizes that partnerships begin data sharing work at different stages of readiness. Some may need to build technical infrastructure or secure leadership buy-in before formalizing agreements; others may be ready to pilot a specific data exchange focused on a single metric. The phased approach in this resource is designed to meet partnerships where they are while providing a clear path toward sustainable, comprehensive data sharing. It is intended for districts, higher education partners, intermediaries, and policymakers who play a role in designing, governing, or supporting dual enrollment programs. Implementation timelines will vary depending on a partnership's entry point and existing infrastructure to support shared data work. Rather than prescribing a single starting point, the framework recognizes that partnerships will enter this work at different stages and provides guidance that can be adapted to local and regional contexts.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Dual enrollment represents one of the strongest predictors of postsecondary enrollment and persistence. Longitudinal studies of dual enrollment students find that participants have higher college enrollment and completion outcomes than nonparticipants (Velasco et al., 2024). Despite students' dual enrollment status in secondary and postsecondary institutions, essential data elements are collected and maintained in separate data systems. This fragmentation limits partners' ability to generate shared insights, coordinate supports effectively, assist students in continuing on at the same college to complete a certificate or degree, and monitor long-term student outcomes across sectors.

By aligning how partners define, share, and use cross-sector data, partnerships can:

- Track student entry, progress, and completion across institutions;

- Identify gaps in access and participation (by race, income, gender, and geography);

- Target advising and enrollment supports where students need them most; and

- Evaluate course quality, transferability, and postsecondary outcomes.

PHASED APPROACH TO DATA SHARING

PHASE 0: Assess Readiness for Data Sharing

Starting points matter. Not every partnership will be ready to implement all five phases of this framework immediately. Certain partnerships may need to build technical infrastructure or secure leadership buy-in before formalizing agreements. Others may begin with a pilot data exchange focused on a single metric or student cohort. Before jumping into data sharing, it is important for partners to assess their technical infrastructure, staffing capacity, governance structures, and political will. Clarifying data ownership, approval, and standardized guidance for stakeholder access to data sources can further support a shared understanding of the data landscape and establish a strong foundation for sustainable, scalable implementation.

Before formal data sharing begins, partners benefit from assessing their readiness. Aligning data systems and expectations early allows partners to:

- Identify and close gaps before the gaps widen;

- Assess the technical infrastructure of data systems, as well as staffing and operational capacity to implement data sharing;

- Target resources on the data systems that facilitate student success the most;

- Identify long-term student outcomes that will inform program improvement;

- Make the case for policy changes and sustained investment;

- Determine what approvals will be needed from governing bodies; and

- Gauge the political will of the multiple organizations to engage in this effort.

Assess readiness by discussing these questions with all partners:

TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- Do both institutions have student information systems capable of exporting and importing data?

- Do secure file transfer protocols exist, or will new systems need to be established?

- Can the systems generate common student identifiers across institutions, or do they contain similar and sufficient fields to identify unique students?

STAFFING AND OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

- Who will manage data requests, transfers, and quality control?

- Do these individuals have time for this work, or would it be added on top of all existing responsibilities?

- Do the institutions have the capacity to analyze data and turn it into actionable insights?

GOVERNANCE AND APPROVAL

- What approvals are required and from whom?

- Are there existing memoranda of understanding (MOUs) or partnership agreements that provide a foundation for the work?

POLITICAL WILL AND SHARED PURPOSE

- Does leadership from both institutions see clear value in data sharing? Can they articulate why it matters?

- Is there trust between partners? If not, what needs to happen first?

PRIVACY AND COMPLIANCE

- Does the team understand Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations, and can they ensure compliance?

- Are there state or local privacy laws that impose additional restrictions?

- Have the partners identified what data can be shared without transferring personally identifiable information?

PHASE 1: Gather Stakeholders and Define Key Questions

CONVENE CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERS

Convene cross-sector partners to define the questions that the shared data will be used to answer. Establishing these questions early creates a common purpose for data sharing and prevents collecting data that does not inform decision-making or action. Be inclusive when identifying who to bring to the table for these conversations. Data staff are critical, and including the individuals who will use data to make decisions is important. This process should intentionally include a range of perspectives, including district and college administrators, advisors and counselors, data and research teams, and intermediaries or community partners. Engaging multiple perspectives helps surface how data is currently used, where gaps exist, and which questions are most critical for the partnership to effectively measure and track cross-sector outcomes.

Start with broad questions such as: What do we need to know about dual enrollment students that our current data cannot answer? Which students are we most concerned about reaching and supporting? How would our decisions change if we had better data?

Then focus on specific, measurable questions that shared data can address. Strong guiding questions are actionable and inform decision-making. Examples include:

- Which student groups have the lowest dual enrollment participation rates and why?

- Are students who take degree-specific dual enrollment courses more likely to matriculate than those who take general education courses? Does instructor type, course location, or delivery modality affect matriculation rates?

- What percentage of dual enrollment credits are successfully applied toward degrees?

- Which dual enrollment students are not persisting to the next semester, and what are the early warning signs?

IDENTIFY KEY METRICS AND ALIGN PRIORITIES

When defining the questions, consider which metrics are most useful for understanding progress toward local, regional, and statewide milestones. Aligning questions to existing goals and accountability measures increases the usefulness of the data and supports coherence across systems.

Partners should also identify the strategic priorities of each participating organization and assess how shared metrics can advance those priorities. This step ensures that the data collected is relevant, actionable, and mutually beneficial, setting up a strong foundation before launching data sharing efforts.

PHASE 2: Identify the Data Needed to Answer Questions

Identify the specific data required to inform decisions and validate proposed strategies, as well as which data needs to be shared at the student level or in the aggregate. This work includes determining what information already exists within systems, what data can be accessed from partners, and what new data may need to be collected. The goal is to ensure that each question identified in Phase 1 can be answered with clear, actionable metrics supported by appropriate data.

Consider using additional local, regional, statewide, and national data sources such as education agencies, coordinating boards, and the National Student Clearinghouse.

The following tables provide sample questions, metrics, and data elements organized by focus area. These are starting points, not prescriptive requirements. Partnerships should adapt these items based on their specific questions from Phase 1.

PARTICIPATION AND ACCESS

SAMPLE QUESTIONS	SAMPLE METRICS	DATA NEEDED
■ Which students are participating in dual enrollment opportunities? ■ What courses are students enrolled in? ■ Who is not participating in dual enrollment?	■ Number of students enrolled in at least one dual enrollment course ■ Participation and gaps by demographic identifiers ■ Percentage of total students in grades 9–12 enrolled in dual enrollment ■ Participation by course, content area, and/or pathway	■ Crosswalk of student identifiers across institutions ■ List of students participating in dual enrollment by district and high school with demographic identifiers

COURSE COMPLETION AND SUCCESS

SAMPLE QUESTIONS	SAMPLE METRICS	DATA NEEDED
■ Are students succeeding and completing? ■ Which dual enrollment students are in poor academic standing? ■ How much progress are students making toward local, regional, and statewide benchmarks for dual enrollment?	■ Dual enrollment course success rates ■ College credential completion rates ■ Average grade point average (GPA) in dual enrollment courses ■ Percentage of students completing a certain number of credits	■ Grades earned ■ College GPAs ■ College credentials earned ■ Indicators for statewide or regional benchmarks ■ Percentage of students earning a C or better in dual enrollment courses

PERSISTENCE AND OUTCOMES

SAMPLE QUESTIONS	SAMPLE METRICS	DATA NEEDED
■ Which dual enrollment students are matriculating to the partner college? ■ Which dual enrollment students are matriculating to other postsecondary institutions? ■ How are students benefiting from dual enrollment?	■ Postsecondary enrollment at the partner college and other institutions within a certain time frame after high school ■ Persistence toward credential completion ■ Postsecondary credential completion ■ Percentage of students with dual enrollment applied to postsecondary credentials ■ Employment rates and whether students are earning a living wage after completing a postsecondary credential	■ Matriculation status at the partner college after high school graduation ■ Postsecondary enrollment status from state systems and/or the National Student Clearinghouse ■ Postsecondary credential completion from state systems and/or the National Student Clearinghouse ■ Credit acceptance information from student alumni surveys and/or state data systems ■ Employment and wage outcomes ■ Underserved students' progress in comparison to their peers

Important Note: Start with a manageable subset of metrics rather than trying to track everything at once. Most partnerships begin with participation and access data—figuring out who is enrolling—before moving to course completion and success and eventually to persistence and outcomes.

This work is iterative by design. As data systems improve and partners build trust, partnerships can add more metrics. Expand thoughtfully, adding new measures when the partnership has the capacity to collect the data consistently and has evidence that people are using what they are already tracking to make decisions. The number of metrics tracked should grow as the partnership matures and demonstrates value, not just because the data exists.

PHASE 3: Develop a Data Sharing Agreement and Data Flow Model

Real-time data sharing enables early interventions when students show warning signs, such as low grades, missing or late assignments, or missed advising appointments, which can predict lower success rates. However, partnerships often move directly to creating a data sharing agreement without completing the necessary readiness and preparation steps outlined in the previous phases. Once readiness is established, consider the following steps when creating a data sharing agreement template and designing the data flow between parties:

■ **Define how data will move** between the school district and college student information systems.

■ **Identify or create common student identifiers** (or a lookup table between high school and college identifiers) to facilitate matching across multiple data systems, particularly when doing so would enable data sharing without transferring personally identifiable

information (e.g., data of birth, name, Social Security number, home address, phone number).

■ **Ensure that data sharing agreements clearly specify what data will be shared,** for what purposes it will be shared, how and when it will be shared and stored, who is authorized to access it, how long it will be retained, and how student privacy will be protected. These practices must comply with FERPA, relevant state and local privacy laws, data governance policies, and audit requirements.

SAMPLE OUTPUTS

■ Data sharing agreement template

■ Dual enrollment data dictionary

■ Secure file-transfer (data flow) process

■ Pilot data set exchanged between institutions

PHASE 4: Begin to Use the Data

Effectively using shared dual enrollment data is not just about ensuring access or compliance; it requires building a shared culture of data awareness that turns information into actionable insight. When partners regularly examine trends and outcomes across systems, they develop a common understanding of what students are experiencing, where challenges are emerging, and which supports are making a difference. This shared awareness enables K–12 and postsecondary teams to anticipate barriers; coordinate interventions; and continuously adjust practices to ensure that dual enrollment programs are accessible, responsive, and aligned with students' academic and postsecondary goals. Key strategies to leverage shared data include:

- **Identify gaps** in access, participation, and success across student groups.
- **Monitor trends and outcomes** to inform program improvement and design decisions.
- **Guide outreach and advising** to target the students most in need.

- **Evaluate interventions** such as advising programs or college-going events.
- **Track postsecondary progress** to support transfer, degree completion, and credential attainment.

SAMPLE OUTPUTS

- Shared data visualization prototypes (e.g., dashboards showing participation, persistence, completion, and more)
- Data walks and dialogues with educators and administrators
- Feedback reports to specific audiences (e.g., high school administrators, college department chairs, and community-based organizations and industry partners)
- Dual enrollment data briefs highlighting findings (e.g., access and participation gaps, success rates, and transfer trends)
- Partner-specific case studies
- Storytelling templates highlighting dual enrollment success narratives

PHASE 5: Partner With Intermediaries to Maximize the Reach of Data

Expand data sharing MOUs to include all regional dual enrollment providers (e.g., community colleges and technical colleges) and relevant governing agencies, with the explicit goal of fostering a shared culture of data ownership across partners. In collaboration with intermediary organizations, develop a regional dual enrollment participation and success dashboard that is jointly stewarded and routinely used to inform policy and practice. A culture of data ownership—in which partners collectively take responsibility for the accuracy, interpretation, and use of data—supports coordinated decision-making around tuition coverage,

course access, transportation, faculty credentialing, and other strategies that promote accessible dual enrollment opportunities for students across the region.

SAMPLE OUTPUTS

- Dual enrollment participation and success dashboard
- Annual dual enrollment report
- Policy recommendations brief

DATA SHARING IN ACTION

INPUT
District Student Data and Transcript Data

Higher Education Institution Course

→

PROCESS
Shared Data Repository

→

OUTPUT
Analysis and Dashboards

→

IMPACT
ACTION: Targeted Advising, Access Expansion, Policy Advocacy

CONCLUSION

Done well, dual enrollment provides a powerful opportunity to accelerate postsecondary access and completion, particularly for students who have been historically underserved, but that opportunity can be fully realized only when committed partners work together with shared data and accountability.

Establishing effective cross-sector data sharing for dual enrollment requires intentional collaboration, shared commitment, and sustained effort. The goal is not simply to collect data but to use it to create wider access, support students' successful transition, and increase the likelihood that they will matriculate fully at the college where they earned credits.

This framework provides a roadmap for building the infrastructure, agreements, and practices needed to track student success across institutional boundaries. This work is iterative. Data sharing agreements will evolve as partnerships deepen, new questions emerge, and technology systems change. Annual review of agreements with continual conversations is crucial.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

RESOURCES

- Career Ladders Project, Policy to Practice Guide: Data
- E3 Alliance, Cradle-to-Career Data Dashboard
- Education Strategy Group, Building Better Outcomes: A District Playbook for Effective Postsecondary Data Practice

- Education Strategy Group, Trust, Strategy and Creativity: Breaking Through Data Barriers in Pathway Design
- National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships, Evaluation Resources Toolkit
- UP Partnership Data Resources, Data Resources | UP Partnership | Unlocking Education Data

REFERENCES

- Velasco, T., Fink, J., Bedoya-Guevara, M., & Jenkins, D. (2024, October). *The postsecondary outcomes of high school dual enrollment students: A national and state-by-state analysis*. Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center. https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/postsecondary-outcomes-dual-enrollment-national-state.html

DATA DICTIONARY

Academic Standing: A student's status based on their academic performance, often used to determine eligibility for continued enrollment.

Access: The ability for students to participate in programs, resources, or opportunities.

Advisors: Staff who guide students on course selection, academic progress, career pathways, and educational planning.

Benchmarks: Specific measures used to track progress toward a goal.

Community-Based Organization: A nonprofit or local group that supports students, families, or community needs.

Credential: A qualification earned by completing an educational or training program (e.g., certificate, degree, diploma, or industry certification).

Cross-Sector: Involving multiple types of organizations or institutions working together (e.g., K–12, higher education, workforce, and nonprofits).

Crosswalk: A tool that shows how students' identity information (date of birth, first name and last name, high school, etc.), courses, skills, or requirements align across different systems or institutions.

Dual Enrollment: A program that allows high school students to earn both high school and college credit at the same time.

Equity: Ensuring that all students receive the support they need to succeed, with attention to fairness and inclusiveness.

FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act): A federal law that protects the privacy of student education records.

Framework: A structured guide or model that outlines key components of a process, system, or strategy.

Higher Education Partner/Institution: A college or university collaborating with a school or organization.

Intermediary Organization: An organization that connects partners, coordinates work, and supports collaboration across sectors.

Matriculation: The process of enrolling in and officially entering a college or academic program.

Milestones: Key moments or achievements that mark progress toward a larger goal.

MOU (Memorandum of Understanding): A written agreement that outlines roles, responsibilities, shared goals, and expectations between partners.

Persistence: A student's continued progress toward completing a postsecondary credential, typically measured by returning from one semester/term or year to the next.

Postsecondary: Education or training after high school, such as college, university, apprenticeship, or certification programs.

Retention: The ability of a school or program to keep students enrolled from year to year.

School Administrators: Leaders in a school who oversee operations, staff, and student services (e.g., principals, superintendents).

School District/District: A local education system made up of multiple schools governed by a central administrative body.

Stakeholders: Individuals or groups that have an interest in or are affected by a program, policy, or decision.

Student Information System: A digital platform used by schools to collect, manage, and track student data such as enrollment, grades, attendance, schedules, and transcripts.

Transferability: The extent to which a course or credit can be accepted or applied toward a postsecondary credential by another institution.