

College Credit Plus

Recommendations Summary

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

With the exception of AY 2021, which was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the CCP program has seen growth in participation in each year of existence. This growth has occurred both in the number of individuals participating and in the number of credits which are attempted and earned. Ohio has one of the highest rates of dual enrollment in the country. However, the market for talent is increasingly competitive for job seekers, businesses, and governments seeking to encourage economic growth. Ohio benefits from a well-educated workforce and identifying ways to increase participation in CCP can help give graduating seniors a competitive edge.

Our review of program participation and outcomes identified some key areas that will assist overall participation and enhance program experience for Ohio's students and families. We further identified areas where changes could be made to encourage low-income and minority students to participate at a greater rate.

Recommendation 1: Providing information and promoting CCP to families encourages and increases program participation. Traditional school districts are required by law to begin providing information regarding CCP to students and families beginning in 6th grade. However, several districts self-reported that they failed to comply with this requirement and there is wide variation as to when information is first provided to families. ODE is broadly responsible for administering the educational policies of the state including the administrative responsibilities of school officials and personnel and should work to ensure compliance with requirements specific to CCP. ODE and ODHE should take a larger role in the marketing, communication, and compliance of the program. As a part of this, the Departments should consider, using rule writing authority if necessary, developing standard communication forms that Districts would be required to use to eliminate confusion regarding the use of state funding for the program. Ensuring consistent communication and marketing of the CCP program and offering clear CCP enrollment forms will help to increase program participation. Also see **Recommendation 7**.

Recommendation 2: College courses can be taken through CCP on a college or university campus, in a high school setting, or online. Currently, the CCP delivery methods that are the most easily accessible to students are those models which are held at a high school campus. In order to improve overall CCP participation rates, school districts should work to increase the number of classes available in the high school setting. This will require decisions to be made at the local district level based on the needs of the community. In some instances, it may require the credentialing of additional high school teachers, sharing credentialed teachers among school districts, or leveraging county Educational Service Centers to provide CCP instruction.

In others, it may require strong partnerships with colleges or universities to provide professors on the high school campus. By expanding access to CCP courses at the high school, students will be able to more easily participate in the program.

Recommendation 3: The General Assembly has allocated a total of \$8 million in grant funding for the purpose of increasing the number of CCP credentialed high school teachers which was jointly administered by ODE and ODHE. The most recent grants were awarded in FY 2020 and provided funding through FY 2023. Entities were awarded funds to be used towards graduate coursework necessary to credential teachers to instruct CCP courses. Grantees received funding through a reimbursement of expenses once claims were verified by ODE. However, the law did not grant ODE the authority to require that individuals complete the credentialing process. This means that grant funding may not be maximized as individuals may ultimately choose to not seek out credentialing. If future grants are awarded, ODE and ODHE should work with the General Assembly to require the attainment of CCP instructor credentials as a condition of the award, along with a required service period. Doing so would help to ensure that the grant funds are fully maximized for their intended purpose of increasing the number of CCP credentialed teachers. In turn, this could result in increased program participation.

Recommendation 4: Traditionally underserved students, particularly those that are low-income or minority, participate in the CCP program at a lower rate than their peers. The reduced rate of participation is due, in part, to barriers that these populations face that impact the ability to attend courses online or on campus. To improve program participation, ODE and ODHE should work to minimize barriers to participation such as limited access to support services and high speed internet for these students. In doing so, the Departments can improve CCP participation rates for traditionally underserved students, allowing more families to take advantage of program benefits, including exposure to advanced educational opportunities and cost savings associated with pursuing post-secondary education. As additional data is collected and incorporated into long-term strategic goals, ODHE and ODE can work with colleges and universities and districts to design and expand targeted initiatives to further address barriers and develop a plan to increase participation.

Recommendation 5: For those students who choose to attend CCP courses at a college or university, there is little to no program specific orientation available to them. While colleges and universities have orientation programs for traditional students, new CCP students may not benefit from those to the same degree as orientations specifically tailored to them. ODE and ODHE should work with colleges and universities to ensure there is a robust and uniform orientation program for CCP participants. These orientation programs should be designed in a way that the comfort level of CCP participants is increased as they navigate college course and so that they are prepared for the rigor and expectations of college courses.

PROGRAM OPERATIONS

The CCP program functions as a collaborative effort with ODHE and ODE providing funding and general oversight and high schools, colleges, and universities responsible for the education of students. While there is no direct funding support for the operations of this program, the staff working on this program are funded through general appropriation to the Departments; ODHE employs two full-time positions dedicated to implementation and oversight functions. To the extent that public funding is applied to the program, it is in the transfer of school foundation funding from districts to colleges and universities for those students participating in CCP and the inclusion of CCP students in the calculation of the State Share of Instruction (SSI), which is distributed to public colleges and universities through ODHE.

Our review of the program's governance, funding, and cost implications led to multiple recommendations that would improve overall programmatic operations. In particular, our recommendations are focused on the strategic utilization of data and improved oversight in order to develop goals and objectives for the program.

Recommendation 6: The CCP program does not have distinct, progressive, measurable program goals supported by routine data analysis and evaluation. While ODHE and ODE both collect significant amounts of data related to the CCP program and student participation, this information is focused on outputs, such as the number of courses taken in a year, and not outcomes, such as reduction in time spent pursuing a degree or certificate program. As appropriate program oversight is established and data collection is enhanced to include outcome data, formal goals and metrics should be developed to ensure desired programmatic outcomes are being achieved and to identify areas for improvement.

Recommendation 7: The laws governing CCP establish specific duties for ODHE and ODE related to the distribution of funds and data collection and reporting. They further require the establishment of an advisory committee to assist in the development of performance metrics and monitoring of the program's progress. However, the laws do not identify who is responsible for overall program oversight. ODHE, ODE, and the CCP advisory committee should work with the General Assembly to clarify and strengthen the management, oversight, and compliance monitoring functions necessary to allow CCP to reach its potential. In doing so, they should consider what structures and resources will be necessary to continue to monitor and improve the program in order to provide strategic direction that will support the evolving needs of Ohio's students, economy, and workforce.

Recommendation 8: There is a significant amount of data collected by both ODHE and ODE regarding the CCP program, and the content and quality of this data exceeds that of most peer state dual enrollment programs. This data is largely related to program participation while students are in high school and is used to comply with annual reporting requirements that provide historic detail on the outputs of the program. While the data collection practices used by ODHE and ODE are generally good in comparison to peer states, there is room for improvement. In some cases, there are data fields that are incomplete, particularly as it relates

to demographic information, and data that is inconsistent in nature, such as identifying the type of courses being taken. This type of information is critical in identifying where program improvements could be made. Both ODHE and ODE should work to ensure that the CCP data collected is both complete and consistent. This information can then be leveraged to identify and work towards strategic programmatic goals.

Recommendation 9: When a student takes college courses through the CCP program, ODE directs payment to the college or university based on a default rate that is specified in ORC. The default rate varies based on the delivery model and contains both a maximum and minimum charge. The current formula that establishes the default rate uses a set dollar amount identified in ORC as a baseline and has not been significantly updated since the program first began. The General Assembly should review the default payment rates to ensure that they appropriately reflect the current cost to IHE's to provide CCP courses to high school students. In doing so, the General Assembly should consider how future changes to the foundation funding model might impact the program's default fee rates.

Recommendation 10: In addition to CCP participation fees, school districts are also required by law to cover the costs of textbooks, which can be costly. One way to reduce the impact of purchasing textbooks is through the use of open educational resources (OER), which are freely accessible, openly licensed text, media and digital assets including college textbooks, online supplements, etc. While efforts have been made to expand opportunities for the use of open educational resources in the state, their current utilization appears to be limited. The General Assembly should require ODE and ODHE promote opportunities to increase the use of OER materials among CCP participants and could consider splitting the cost of educational materials between colleges and universities and high schools. A strategic effort should be made to align existing and available OER materials with CCP courses offered among the State's various colleges and universities. Collaborative efforts should be aimed toward gaining wider acceptance and adoption of OER materials among Ohio's colleges and universities. Increased adoption of OER textbooks would reduce costs to school districts, which could, in turn, encourage further participation in the program.

Issue for Further Study: Public colleges and universities receive funding from the state through the State Share of Instruction (SSI) to subsidize the cost to educate Ohio residents. This funding is based on a complex formula that takes into account student enrollment and academic outcomes and is based on detailed cost information reported by institutions to ODHE within the Higher Education Information (HEI) system. The formula does not differentiate CCP students based on course delivery model. This means that a CCP student using the high school instruction delivery method would generate the same SSI value as an on-campus CCP student. As a result, the SSI funding received for the education of CCP students may be outsized relative to the actual costs of that education. ODE and ODHE should work with the General Assembly to re-evaluate how to best set and deliver SSI payments to ensure the payments align with the costs incurred by colleges and universities to deliver CCP services.