

# DUAL ENROLLMENT

What the research tell us  
(and what it doesn't)

## Dual definitions lead to confusion.



"Dual enrollment" can refer to 1) all opportunities in which high school students can earn both high school and postsecondary credit; or 2) a specific program. This dual usage can lead to findings being misapplied from one type of dual credit program to another.

## Programs and data collection vary widely.



Dual enrollment programs often vary more within states than between them. And data can be incomplete, outdated or incomparable between programs. This means that positive outcomes observed in one program may not necessarily be seen in another.

## Correlation does not equal causation.



Data constraints coupled with impediments to conducting experimental studies mean researchers have difficulty determining to what extent positive student outcomes are related to participation versus unobserved variables and student characteristics.

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR STATES



**Define goals. Align policy. Measure outcomes.**

Clarify goals for dual enrollment programs. Ensure policies support those goals.

Collect data that:

- 1) connects K-12 and postsecondary
- 2) includes relevant programmatic and student variables
- 3) tracks students over time and across state lines