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Dual Enrollment and Guided Pathways Converge for Equity

A Case Study

By Career Ladders Project

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Strategic thinking, consistent collaboration, and creative, diligent, boundary-crossing implementation have characterized Bakersfield College's approach to both Guided Pathways redesign and dual enrollment. That breadth of thought and depth of commitment made this report possible. Career Ladders Project (CLP) owes particular gratitude to Lesley Bonds, director of student success and equity at Bakersfield College; Sonya Christian, president of the college; and the able and enthusiastic leaders of dual enrollment at Bakersfield—Anna Laven, Kylie Swanson, and Steve Watkin.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bakersfield College is leading a sea change. Collaborating with numerous partners across Kern County, the college aims to enable every high school student in its vast geographic area to take college courses. As of fall 2019, every ninth grader at more than 30 high schools in Kern County can look forward to earning at least nine college credits in the next four years, and many can expect to earn more. Some will even attain associate degrees at the same time as they finish 12th grade. More than 120 Kern County students already have. And the potential is growing: By 2018-19, nearly 8,000 individual high school students were dually enrolling at Bakersfield College (BC) each year.

Dual enrollment at BC is a clear strategy for educational equity. Early data show encouraging correlations with an increase in high school GPA and with higher course completion rates in college. About 90 percent of participants in dual enrollment at Bakersfield College are Latinx or African American, groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

Widespread implementation of dual enrollment originated with a vision to transform a county where far fewer adults hold college degrees than average for California or the United States. But many factors contributed to making it a reality, including:

- Strong leadership and a decision to enlist all of Bakersfield College in pursuit of equity;
- Convergence of dual enrollment with Guided Pathways redesign efforts now under way statewide; and
- Dedication of faculty, staff, administrators, and leaders in various institutions to integrating dual enrollment into their operations and academic programs.

This report explores how Bakersfield College pursued and implemented dual enrollment and how it converges with the pursuit of equity in Guided Pathways redesign.

INTRODUCTION

Based on site visits, student data, and interviews with students and participants in this work across Bakersfield College and its partner K-12 school districts, this report lays out the steps that these institutions took to implement carefully structured dual enrollment — and the lessons that their experience offers for other partnerships across California.

Section One explores the motivations and conditions that have fostered dual enrollment in Kern County. Section Two describes the convergence of dual enrollment with Guided Pathways, and how dual enrollment is a strategy for equity. Section Three shows how Bakersfield College laid the groundwork for change and then implemented dual enrollment. It also describes the current landscape of dual enrollment at the college. Section Four looks at students' experience as told through data and their own stories. The final section of this report addresses sustainability and offers lessons for the field.

Definition: Dual enrollment is when high school students enroll in college courses.

This includes concurrent enrollment, early college, and high school students taking college courses during school or outside regular hours. Bakersfield College often uses the term “early college.”

Here are some important characteristics of dual enrollment in California:

Legal foundation: In California, college districts and high school or K-12 districts partnering to offer dual enrollment may choose to operate under an agreement reached in accordance with the College and Career Access Pathways law (CCAP). Also known as AB 288, CCAP took effect in 2015 and was amended, effective January 2020, by AB 30. It has led to significant growth in dual enrollment statewide. Schools and colleges also may choose to create other forms of dual enrollment, now known as “non-CCAP.” (BC offers dual enrollment under non-CCAP agreements with high school partners.)

Place and time: Dual enrollment can take place online, on high school campuses, via distance ed, on college campuses, or at satellite campuses—during or outside regular high school hours.

Funding: Colleges can receive funding for dually enrolled high school students in the same way they get funding for college students who are adults, as long as classes are open to the general public. They receive higher base funding for dually enrolled students. CCAP enables colleges to receive funding for enrollment in classes open only to high school students.

Pathways structure: Studies suggest that it is effective practice to include dual enrollment in carefully structured pathways aligned across education systems, in which (a) students receive support and (b) their coursework builds toward a certificate, degree, or transfer, or career advancement.

Cost to students: Dual enrollment courses and materials are free to students, or they cost very little. Under CCAP, they must be free.



Section One: Motivations and Conditions for Dual Enrollment at Bakersfield College

College attendance opens opportunities and increases income and social mobility. People across the United States who hold a bachelor's degree earn, on average, nearly double what people with only a high school diploma do. And federal data show the wage benefit of a bachelor's degree has consistently been greater in California than in any other state (\$59,709 versus \$30,036 in 2017, according to the U.S. Census). But in Bakersfield College's service area of Kern County, baccalaureate attainment is low: Just 10 percent of residents over age 25 hold a bachelor's degree in rural parts of the county, and 15 percent do countywide, compared with 40 percent across California.

Geography presents a significant challenge for county residents hoping to attend college. Kern County's 893,000 residents are spread over 8,142 square miles, an area about the size of New Jersey but with much less infrastructure. Even within Bakersfield — the centrally located county seat, which is home to more than one-third of county residents and a California State University campus — lack of transportation

limits access to educational resources. "I went to North High School, and we didn't have a car," recalls Lesley Bonds, now director of student success and equity at Bakersfield College. "BC was only seven miles away, and it might as well have been 70." Some parts of the county are more than 100 miles from Bakersfield College.

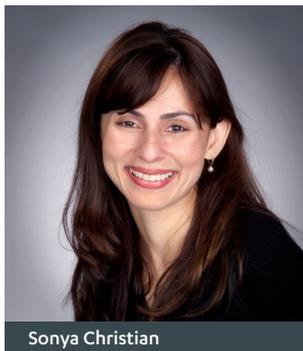
On math and English language assessments, students in Kern High School District, which serves Bakersfield and a large share of the county, perform below state averages, which can further limit their access to college and well-paying jobs. And there are stark (and growing) gaps in achievement by race and ethnicity. Latinx students (68.9 percent of the district's 39,520 students in 2017-18), African American students (6.3 percent), and students with disabilities (10.6 percent) in Kern High School District scored below county averages in 2018, with two-thirds of African American students falling below the first of four levels in math proficiency, for example. In contrast, scores of the district's white, Asian, and Filipino high school students not only top county averages: They exceed statewide averages.

Kern County's poverty rate (18 percent) is roughly even with California's, and its immigrant population (19.6 percent) is sizable, but not relative to California's (26 percent). About 70 percent of parents in Kern County haven't attended any college, thanks in part to limited employment opportunities in the county's rural areas. There was a clear need to nurture a college-going culture, and Bakersfield College was well positioned to do it.

1. Moral imperative to ensure more Kern residents enter a path to a certificate, college degree, or transfer

Sonya Christian, president of Bakersfield College, has embraced these challenges since taking her position in 2013: "We had to get out into Shafter, into McFarland, and make the connections and make the changes at the high schools. That emerged in the early conversations we were having at BC leadership retreats."

Gathering to read Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" crystalized a sense of purpose and urgency among leaders at the college. "It wasn't something we even thought too deeply about; it just came up with all of us." The groundwork to align education systems and provide universal access to dual enrollment began with this moral imperative.



Sonya Christian

As a promising on-ramp to college, with growing support in state policy, dual enrollment became an essential part of Bakersfield College's plans to increase college enrollment and completion among Kern County residents and to pursue equity in college access and success.

2. Conditions at Bakersfield College were ripe for offering dual enrollment countywide

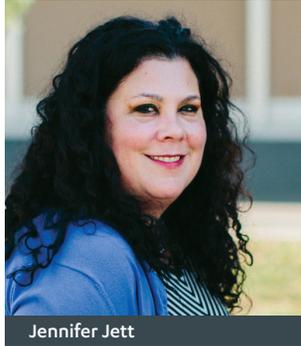
Instructional faculty, counselors, and administrators interviewed for this report see Christian's own leadership style and management skills as key to scaling dual enrollment to the extent that Bakersfield College plans. "Our president is the ultimate project manager," says Bonds. "That has helped us immensely, that skillset, along with her vision. All of us did work plans. Our responsibility was to create a structure for everyone who reported to us. So, for example, when we were talking about something as big as our dual enrollment program, we wouldn't frame it as, 'How do you support dual enrollment,' but as, 'How do you ensure students come to college prepared to attempt and succeed at 15-plus units per term and complete their transfer-level math and English in the first year?'" Not only does Christian set high expectations for achievement, by college staff as well as students, she has been known to disregard formal structures, texting program coordinators to check in on a weekend or sitting in a coffee shop for a half-hour with a high school administrator just to cement the college's support of her school.

"We must come to see that human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless and persistent work of [people]..., and without this hard work time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation.... I have tried to make it clear that it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends. But now I must affirm that it is just as wrong, or even more, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends."

—Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail," August 1963

Creating a new expectation of college success for all local students also grew out of trusting relationships — built quite intentionally during Bakersfield’s work under a California Career Pathways Trust grant — both within the college and between the college and counselors, teachers, and administrators at area high schools. BC’s first dual enrollment directors, Corny Rodriguez and Cindy Collier, gathered college and high school faculty to hash out everything from online Spanish curriculum to classroom norms. They met one on one with numerous administrators and staff to work out challenging details such as the difference in required classroom hours at high schools (108 for a semester-long course) and colleges (just 54). And they created as many courses in as many locations as they could.

Jennifer Jett, now chair of Bakersfield College’s English department and a vocal proponent of dual enrollment, says she first approached it with skepticism. “The first time I heard about dual enrollment was in a department meeting when many of our faculty were very upset about dual enrollment. Their main concern was that they didn’t feel that the high school instructors had the same level of rigor in the classroom that we did here at Bakersfield College,” says Jett. “Our department has held several workshops with our faculty and the high school dual enrollment faculty, and we’re coming together and discussing things like grading, looking at papers, talking about how to



Jennifer Jett

teach....That was the key for the English department, to actually bring the two parties together.”

Bakersfield College engaged local school board members early on and then followed with five years of careful preparation, especially by the college’s Rural Initiatives Team, which focused on communities outside Bakersfield, such as

Delano, Shafter, and Arvin north and south of the city, and Tehachapi 40 miles east. And appreciation in Kern County for the potential of dual enrollment goes beyond Bakersfield College. Some students in the sprawling Kern High School District — with 39,520 students at 18 comprehensive high schools¹ and seven adult and alternative schools — are dually enrolled at CSU Bakersfield or at Taft College, a community college near the southwestern edge of Kern County. The push at BC also benefited from two specific factors: a pilot of dual enrollment at

Wonderful College Prep Academy, a charter school in Delano, Calif., that raised expectations across the region; and a limited number of K-12 and high school districts that the college must collaborate with.²

Ultimately, Bakersfield College’s dual enrollment work rests on a firm sense of purpose and a focus on students, says Bonds: “Every time we talk about it, this is a completion strategy. This is a way that we advance student equity.”

Rural Kern County Residents Missing Out on Benefits of a Bachelor's Degree

MEDIAN INCOME NEARLY DOUBLES WITH BACHELOR'S DEGREE

California residents with a bachelor's degree **\$59,709**

California residents with a high school diploma **\$30,036**

SHARE OF RESIDENTS OVER AGE 25 WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE

California **40%**

Kern County **15% overall**

Rural Kern County **10%**

SOURCES: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census, 2017

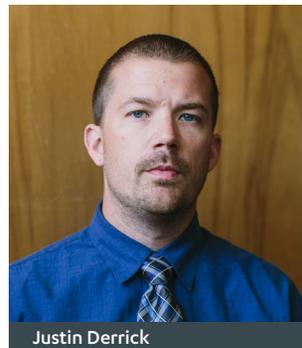
Section Two: Strategy for Equity, Convergence with Guided Pathways Redesign

The mission of dual enrollment at Bakersfield College is to provide high school students with a seamless path to postsecondary education. To address “this crazy discrepancy we call the achievement gap,” Christian says, it is also important to make college more affordable and provide clear pathways to support more students in reaching their goals, and reaching them faster. Broadly, these also are the goals of the Guided Pathways redesign work under way at all community colleges across California, which aims for more community college students to attain their goals, whether they pursue certificates, degrees, transfers to four-year institutions, career advancement, or a combination.

Equity — closing achievement gaps by race, income, and other measures — is an explicit goal of the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office’s (CCCCO’s) [Vision for Success](#). And Guided Pathways is the CCCCCO’s framework for pursuing that vision. Guided Pathways redesign at Bakersfield College centers on four “pillars” (in line with terminology used by the CCCCCO):

- **Clarify the Path** – Create clear curricular pathways to employment and further education.
- **Enter the Path** – Help students choose and enter their pathway.
- **Stay on the Path** – Help students stay on their path.
- **Ensure Learning** – Ensure that learning is happening.

Bakersfield includes dual enrollment in its work on the first two pillars, “clarify the path” and “enter the path.” Dual enrollment zeroes in on smoothing transitions to college as a means of increasing access, based on the idea that students who have access to college courses while still in high school will have a wider network of support while they are learning how to be successful college students. One study found that students who participated in dual enrollment while in high school were more likely to graduate and then to enter college and finish college than similar students who didn’t participate.³ Another study found that males, students from low-income families, low-achieving students,⁴ and students of color⁵ saw even more gains from participating in high-quality



Justin Derrick

dual enrollment than their peers did. “When you raise the standards, usually students rise up to those standards,” says Justin Derrick, principal of McFarland High School in northern Kern County, where all students begin dual enrollment in ninth grade, as of fall 2019. “When they start to see that they’re being successful in college courses, that’s building their confidence, and we’re there to add an additional level of support.”

Dual enrollment addresses numerous elements of the Guided Pathways framework, including ensuring effective career exploration, smoothing the transition to college, monitoring progress toward momentum points that are connected to college access and success, integrating student supports, and the use of data to shape programs and measure effectiveness. “When the final outcome we’re pursuing is getting students enrolled in those 15 credits within the pathway,” Christian says, “you see the marriage between Guided Pathways, articulation, and dual enrollment. It’s all coming together in one entity rather than separate conversations in separate units on the campus.”

Bakersfield College started dual enrollment in engineering as it built out that pathway, which now includes a bachelor’s degree. Liz Rozell, retired vice president of instruction, a former longtime engineering faculty member, and the administrator who led implementation of Bakersfield’s bachelor of science degree in industrial automation, notes that dual enrollment also aligns with other initiatives on campus.

“In order to build a pipeline to a baccalaureate degree,” she says, “you’ve got to reach down into the middle schools and high schools.”

To skeptics who say that Guided Pathways redesign forces students to be too goal- and completion-oriented, and costs them opportunities to explore their possible interests, Christian says the complaint shows a complete misunderstanding. “It’s like telling someone who comes from India to Los Angeles to navigate LA without a map and calling that exploration,” says Christian, herself

an immigrant from southern India who came alone to Los Angeles (to study at the University of Southern California). “I call that being petrified and stumbling and staying in your room and going only to the closest stores because you’re afraid to explore. Exploration is for those who are privileged.... Guided Pathways is not tracking and limiting the students from Arvin. It is giving them the wings to fly.”

Section Three: Groundwork, Implementation of Dual Enrollement, and the Current Landscape

Once the conditions were ripe, Bakersfield College and its partners were ready to lay the groundwork for universal access to dual enrollment—and begin to implement it.

1. Laying the groundwork

The process took about five years and focused on four tasks:

- **Internal buy-in:** This involved working with faculty, counselors, and administrators at both districts and more than 30 high schools, and starting role-alike meetings about curriculum and course design. This work across institutions served the twin purposes of creating buy-in and improving program consistency and quality. “We are down in the weeds together working on this,” says Bonds.

- **New structures:** Dual enrollment was placed under the leadership of the outreach director, who now reports to both the academic and student services divisions. “I literally have a meeting with the vice president of instruction every Monday morning at 8,” says Steve Watkin, director of outreach and school relations. “We’re discussing biology B11, trying to find an instructor who meets the minimum qualifications.” Bonds points out that putting that coordination for dual enrollment into one office leaves much less room for errors and confusion on students’ part.



Steve Watkin

- **External buy-in:** High school principals are now some of dual enrollment’s biggest fans. “We’re trying to make 21st-century thinkers, and prepare students for the real world,” says Derrick at McFarland. “Dual enrollment was really the best way to go. There’s no better way for a student to get early access to a college education, and to make a more informed decision on what path to take in their career, than to have some dual enrollment classes that give that exposure.”
- **Outreach:** Watkin leads constant, direct outreach with support from the Rural Initiatives Team in schools farther from the city. Because of his long history working with area high schools, “Steve is recognizable in the

high schools, so when you’re asking people to do more with less, it makes it easier,” says Bonds. Noting the importance of his outreach and coordination, she recalled a recent meeting with leaders of Kern High School District: “Steve hopped into the meeting, and the comfort level immediately increased.”

2. Implementation of dual enrollment through Bakersfield College

Full implementation in 2019 involved extensive footwork on the part of dozens of community college faculty members and administrators and counselors from both Bakersfield College and the area’s high schools. Already in 2018-19 annual student headcount had reached 7,697 (11,200 course enrollments).

Key participants who gathered at Delano High School in spring 2019 to offer their insights for this report highlight several themes:

- **Leadership.** “It takes visionary leadership,” says Abel Guzman, executive director of Bakersfield College’s Rural Initiatives Team. “These are two very different systems, and it takes a lot to align them.”
- **Mutual support.** “For college professors going into the high school classroom for the first time, support from high school faculty can be pivotal and helpful,” says Chris Cruz-Boone, who grew up in rural Kern County and came back after college to join the BC faculty there. “I have numbers in my phone for six high school teachers I can ask for help—and weird classroom management tips: 14-year-olds are very, very different from 19-year-olds.”
- **Student and instructor impacts.** “It’s making me a better teacher,” says Jesse Oropeza, a counselor on the Delano Campus of Bakersfield College. “Quite frankly,” says Cruz-Boone, “A lot of these students outperform some of my traditional students on regular sites so I’m amazed by them every semester. But it’s something they think they can’t do until we put them in a classroom and they realize they can.”



Jesse Oropeza

Strategic themes emerged in conversations with leaders of Bakersfield’s dual enrollment push:

- **Transparency, agility, culture.** “There’s a cultural aspect of the college, which has really seeded the innovation, and an ability of the rural initiatives team and the coordinator at Bakersfield College to understand a need and just move into it and take care of it, rather than stick to the structures in job descriptions,” Christian says.
- **Funding opportunities.** Under the new funding formula, dual enrollment students are funded at a higher rate for FTEs (full-time-equivalent students) than for adult students, a change that will encourage colleges to offer dual enrollment. BC also has employed careful fiscal management to support dual enrollment. For instance, because paperwork for dual enrollment students may be processed later in the semester, after many colleges first upload the data that triggers funding, those colleges may not receive full funding. “We will do another upload if we have even one more student enroll,” Bonds says, only half joking.
- **Norming through language.** Christian and others at Bakersfield College have used clear terminology to animate their approach to system change; they talk about “distributed leadership,” for administrators, “ownership,” for students and faculty, and a “college-going mindset” for the community as a whole.
- **Relationships.** Instructors, counselors, outreach personnel, coordinators, administrators, and leaders interviewed for this report all returned, again and again, to their support for one another, their trust, and how closely they stay in touch.

Sidelight: Work-based learning. In 2018 and 2019, Wonderful College Prep Academy (a dual enrollment pilot funded by the agricultural conglomerate The Wonderful Co.) graduated more than 170 students. More than 120 earned both high school diplomas and associate degrees for transfer, in agricultural business. Wonderful was established as a charter school with that end in mind.

Sidelight: Pride in the ‘Bakersfield Sound.’ Students at North High School, which serves the traditionally isolated, low-income neighborhood of Oildale on the outskirts of Bakersfield, where country music’s famed Bakersfield Sound originated, can take college music classes, thanks to a combination of funding. North built a state-of-the-art recording room, and students participate remotely there in music courses being offered on the main campus of Bakersfield College.

3. The current landscape of dual enrollment at Bakersfield College

Bakersfield estimated that it has the largest program in California, with 7,697 individual students participating in 2018-19 (about 10 percent of all “special admit” students statewide, according to the Chancellor’s Office’s Datamart).⁶ By 2017-18, in various settings, Bakersfield College offered high school students 384 sections of dual enrollment courses, up from just four in 2012-13.

The landscape of dual enrollment across BC’s numerous initiatives by fall 2019 was complex:

- **Full implementation:** At McFarland High School, all students starting ninth grade in fall 2019 and later may complete between 9 and 60 units during high school toward a certificate, degree, or transfer to a four-year institution — through a combination of dual enrollment opportunities on their campuses, including courses offered during the school day and after school.

- **Six high schools offer complete certificate or associate degree pathways:** Two of them, Wonderful College Prep Academy and Wasco High School, have already graduated their first cohorts, including many students who earned associate degrees at the same time as high school diplomas.

- **Another 24 high schools offered college courses on their campuses:** A combination of dual and concurrent enrollment gives students across Kern County new and structured access to college courses.

In the early years, Bonds says, Bakersfield College approved almost any interested high school teacher with a master’s degree to teach dual enrollment, and it opened enrollment in almost any class where students expressed interest. The resulting random selection of courses, most in career technical education, didn’t optimally serve students. All that has changed. As

high schools reach full implementation, their students are choosing dual enrollment courses that are part of carefully structured pathways, and that build toward a certificate, degree, or transfer to a four-year institution, and/or career advancement. To summarize:

- **There are six main pathways.** The main pathways that high school students in Kern County can pursue in dual enrollment are agriculture, education, public health, business, welding, and industrial automation.



Lesley Bonds

- **Each pathway includes two to three introductory courses.** Appropriate for inclusion in an early college model, these courses are intended to get students “onto the path.”

- **Several associate degree majors are offered:** Different sites offer varied degree programs, in agriculture business, mechanized agriculture, communication, Spanish, and liberal studies.

Section Four: Students’ Experience of Dual Enrollment — Told through Data and Their Own Words

1. Early data show achievement rising and gaps closing

Bakersfield College’s institutional research team has concluded that, by raising expectations, cultivating a college-going culture, and giving students the confidence and skills they need to succeed in higher education, dual enrollment is having a substantial impact.

Three benefits appeared while students were still in high school:

- Dual enrollment students completed college courses at rates as high as 92 percent in 2014 to 2018, far exceeding BC’s average course completion rate by adult students of 69 percent.
- Broken down by race and ethnicity, this higher course completion is especially dramatic:
 - African American dual enrollment students completed as many as 91 percent of their college courses in 2015 to 2019, while adult African American students complete 52 percent on average.
 - Latinx dual enrollment students completed as many as 92 percent of their college courses in 2015 to 2019, compared with adult Latinx students completing 67 percent on average.
- Students who participated in dual enrollment had higher high school GPAs than students who didn’t participate (2.92 versus 2.67).

Benefits of participation in dual enrollment continued in the first year of college. Students who had been dually enrolled during high school, compared with those who hadn’t been, saw more success at BC, by several measures:⁷

- Higher credit completion: 12.8 versus 10.2 credits over the year (with an even bigger benefit for students who had high GPAs in high school: 15.77 versus 12.886 credits)
- Higher rate of completing transfer-level math in the first year of college: 16 percent versus 7 percent (again, with an even bigger benefit for students who had high GPAs in high school: a 24 percent pass rate versus 14 percent)
- Slightly higher college GPA (a difference of about 0.145 grade points)

Among Latinx students (but not students in other groups), participating in dual enrollment in high school also correlated with a higher rate of completion of transfer-level English in the first year at Bakersfield College: 4.7 percentage points higher than the completion rate for Latinx students who didn’t participate in dual enrollment.

2. Impacts of dual enrollment on students and the community

Leaders across the local education system have seen various benefits of dual enrollment for their students. Maria Herrera, a career technical education specialist at McFarland High School, says, “It makes college feel doable.”

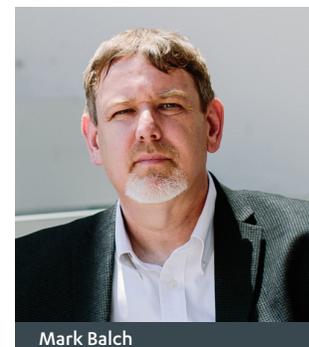
Jesse Oropeza, who grew up in rural Kern County and now works across the county as a counselor for BC, enjoys how dual enrollment builds pride. “For me, education was the key to breaking the poverty cycle, and being able to share that with other people is very important to me. ... The best time I’ll have is speaking to students right after they finish their first class, when they’ve gotten a grade. That is the moment when students realize, ‘I can do college. College is for me. It’s not some mythical thing that my teachers are telling me about that I might not necessarily be successful in.’ ”

Watkin, who coordinates scheduling and instructor qualifications, as well as outreach, sees institutional benefits too. “We’re providing opportunities for students in this community... If Kern County wants to have a thriving community with working adults, we need to make sure that our young people have an education and have a skill set. Allowing high school students to take dual enrollment courses gives them a head start.”

Jaime Lopez, adult education program manager at Bakersfield College’s campus in Delano, says the first impact he always thinks about is access. Doing outreach — sometimes literally in a field — he can draw a crowd of farmworkers at 5 a.m. They are either potential adult students eager to

hear about courses they can take for career advancement, or parents thrilled to hear about this new opportunity for their children. “We’re serving communities that have high poverty rates, and most of these students cannot travel to the closest college campus. So creating access for them, through their hometowns, to dual enrollment and concurrent enrollment, is key.”

Mark Balch, principal of North High School in Bakersfield, says, “A lot of our students don’t see college as a possibility. So, if we give them an opportunity to take, first, one class, then another, then a third, and we give them opportunities to experience themselves as college students while they’re still in high school, all of a sudden college becomes a reality for them.”



Mark Balch

The financial benefit to students and their families is substantial, given that dual enrollment is free, including the cost of textbooks and other course

Dual Enrollment Students More Likely Than Adult Students to Complete Courses at Bakersfield College

Participating in dual enrollment has been particularly beneficial for Latinx and African American students

COURSE COMPLETION RATES AT BC FOR:	DUAL ENROLLMENT STUDENTS, 2014–2019:	ADULT STUDENTS, ROLLING AVERAGE:
ALL STUDENTS	84% - 92%	69%
African American Students	73% - 91%	52%
Latinx Students	88% - 92%	67%

SOURCE: Bakersfield College Department of Institutional Research.

NOTE: Each set of data used in this graph covers a slightly different time period. Data for dual enrollment students overall cover the academic years from 2014-15 to 2017-18, but data for the subgroups of Latinx and African American dual enrollment students cover the academic years from 2015-16 to 2018-19. The data for dual enrollment students were not averaged for the whole period. In contrast, data for adult students are averages over the whole period.

materials. BC estimates that dual enrollment participants already have saved a collective \$2 million, compared with earning the same credits at a public California university. Put another way, for a student whose living circumstances are the same in community college and on a CSU campus, attending community college for the first two years saves more than \$20,000 in fees. But a student who completes those first two years for free while still in high school saves even more money — and lots of time.

Recent participants in dual enrollment in Kern County bring to life the observations of teachers, counselors, and principals about the power and promise of dual enrollment.

• Reem Hassan

“I would recommend it to everybody because it’s super beneficial. You save a lot of money, you learn a lot, you become friends with people from various age groups and from different backgrounds, and then you create a connection with the professors, and then you have those professors to come back to.”



Reem Hassan

Reem, whose family immigrated from Yemen in pursuit of good education when she was 5, participated in student government and clubs at Cesar Chavez High School in Delano, Calif., graduated in June 2019, and entered the nursing program at CSU Bakersfield as a sophomore in the fall.

“I actually don’t think that many people, if they didn’t do dual enrollment, would continue with college. I was in the door when I did dual enrollment ... and that’s going to push me into continuing with college.”

• Mariano Balbuena

“Dual enrollment gave me the confidence to know that I’m capable of handling the challenges that come with going to college, especially going to a college that’s kind of far away, out of the atmosphere where I grew up.... If I hadn’t taken dual enrollment, I don’t know if I would be willing to take the jump to attend UCLA.”



Mariano Balbuena

A high-achieving student before he started taking classes at the Delano satellite campus of Bakersfield College between sophomore and junior years of high school, Mariano credits dual enrollment with his “growth as a student and as a person.” He graduated from Delano High School with enough credits to enter UCLA as “almost a junior” in fall 2019, and he plans to become an emergency room physician.

“Dual enrollment classes offered me a different approach to high school, compared with my friends that graduated before me, who had to take all these AP exams and had the stress throughout the year,... and then if they didn’t pass the exam, they weren’t given those college credits.”

• Amy Rose Abitago

“It’s a really good opportunity. I think you should just do it and see where it leads you.... It’s an opportunity for learning about yourself and what you want to do in life.”



Amy Rose Abitago

Amy, who plans to become a pediatric nurse, said friends who had aimed to enter the workforce right after high school changed their minds after learning, through dual enrollment, about the options college would open for them; participating also inspired some of her classmates at Robert F. Kennedy High School in Delano to work harder before going to college, she says.

“With those classes, I enjoyed high school a lot more because I was always doing something [... and] I am doing a lot of stuff sooner because I have the privilege of knowing what I want to do.”

Section Five: Sustainability—and Lessons for the Field

Leaders across Kern County say sustaining dual enrollment remains a challenge, even with Bakersfield College’s and its partners’ commitment, planning, and structured implementation, and their flexibility and sensitivity to variations by school and by student. Among the concerns they expressed:

- **Cost of materials.** Students and schools may face steep costs for textbooks, computers, internet access, and other materials required for dual enrollment. KHSD and other districts have applied for and received grants under Strong Workforce and other programs to support purchases of course materials, and Bakersfield College tries to negotiate purchase of textbooks with five-year (and longer) life cycles.
- **Getting teachers qualified as college instructors.** High schools across Kern County are encouraging their teachers to obtain master’s degrees in their content area so they can teach dual enrollment courses. (Those who already have master’s degrees typically earned them in education, which qualifies them only to teach courses in education at the college level.) Administrators said constraints on the pipeline of qualified instructors could soon limit the growth of dual enrollment.
- **Math refocusing.** Bakersfield’s math department is working with Kern High School District to build alignment, including with the direct placement into transfer-level math that’s now required by AB 705. (Starting in fall 2019, California community colleges must ensure most students have an opportunity to complete transfer-level math and English in their first year). Bakersfield also is participating in a California Academic Partnership Program (CAPP) grant that allows BC and KHSD to work together to align their curricula and prepare students for studying college-level math after they finish high school.
- **College faculty pipeline.** Bakersfield College as a whole has seen tremendous growth and is challenged to find enough qualified instructors for all kinds of courses, especially in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). This challenge is felt across the state, especially in rural areas.

Opportunities for dual enrollment have expanded across California in recent years, thanks largely to CCAP, which took effect in 2015. Two updates to state dual enrollment law take effect in January 2020: [AB 30 amends CCAP](#), extending it another five years, simplifying paperwork, and making other important improvements; and SB 554 allows students in GED or other diploma-equivalency programs to participate in dual enrollment.

Chief among potential policy changes, BC leaders said two would be especially helpful:

- **Expand baccalaureate offerings.** One way to increase the capacity of California’s many colleges and universities would be to change state policy to allow and encourage community colleges to offer more bachelor’s degrees.
- **Four-year colleges focus on upper division.** Another way to expand college access would be to amend [SB 850](#) to encourage campuses of the CSU and the University of California to relinquish freshmen and sophomores to community colleges and make the whole system more responsive to economic change, in accordance with [a recommendation from the Public Policy Institute of California](#).⁸

Bakersfield’s experience offers several important lessons for other colleges and partnerships pursuing equity by expanding dual enrollment.

- **Think strategically about where dual enrollment will have the most impact.** And start with a focus there. For Bakersfield College, with low population density across a large area, the greatest need for increased access to college is in rural areas. So the college focused its program development and design and outreach on rural Kern County.
- **Lay carefully planned groundwork.** In Kern County, this process began with getting internal buy-in and envisioning new structures and working relationships. Then it extended to getting external buy-in, from high school principals and others, and conducting creative and consistent and continuing outreach.
- **Get started, and then iterate.** Dual enrollment offerings at Bakersfield College are now extensive and enormously varied, but it all began with a willingness to say, “Yes!” to any instructor or department that wanted to start a dual enrollment course. Be willing to jump in and then to keep making changes.

CONCLUSION

Dual enrollment has seen tremendous growth at Bakersfield College. An early adopter and leader of Guided Pathways reform in California, Bakersfield has pulled dual enrollment into the core of its framework for redesign. And that makes sense. Broadly, Guided Pathways redesign seeks to connect the sometimes siloed good work going on across a college campus, make all of it integral to the college, and scale it so that all students benefit. Dual enrollment extends this approach into high schools by providing students a scaffolded transition to college along intentionally designed pathways. Guided Pathways, in turn, provides the framework that amplifies the positive outcomes of dual enrollment.

The connections between Bakersfield College and its high school and community partners are impressive. The glue connecting them is a moral imperative to raise the standard of living in their community by making access to college equitable and by supporting successful completion. The partners moved toward their common college completion goal based on intentionally designed dual enrollment — from the decision to start in rural areas to the creation of pathways that fill local needs. And strong leadership and a shift in institutional culture and the everyday workings of Bakersfield College support the sustainability of dual enrollment.

The high school and community partners and Bakersfield College have all committed to make student success their job. This may mean realigning traditional reporting structures, or working with uniquely configured teams, or working on teams with members from different institutions. By allowing the mechanics and structures of their work to follow cultural change, and committing to open collaboration, the Bakersfield College community has put a stake in the ground. It has declared that all high school students in their area will have access to dual enrollment because it is a proven strategy for colleges to increase course completion and a stepping stone for students to college and to economic prosperity.

ENDNOTES

1 The 18 comprehensive high schools in the Kern district are Arvin, Bakersfield, Centennial, East Bakersfield, Foothill, Frontier, Golden Valley, Highland, Independence, Kern Valley, Liberty, Mira Monte, North, Ridgeview, Shafter, South, and Stockdale. It's adult and continuation schools are Central Valley, Nueva, Tierra del Sol, Vista, Vista West, and Workforce high schools, and Bakersfield Adult School.

2 Those partners are Kern High School District, Wonderful College Prep Academy, Wasco Union High School District, Delano Joint Union High School District, and McFarland Unified School District.

3 U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, What Works Clearinghouse. (2017). Transition to College intervention report: Dual Enrollment Programs. Retrieved from <https://whatworks.ed.gov>

4 National Research Center for Career and Technical Education (2007). The Postsecondary Achievement of Participants in Dual Enrollment: An Analysis of Student Outcomes in Two States Karp, M.; Calcagno, J.; Hughes, K.; Jeong, D.; and Bailey, T. Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University. Retrieved from http://www.nrccte.org/sites/default/files/publication-files/dual_enrollment.pdf

5 Findings for students of color emerged from the Early College High School Initiative Impact Study (2013). Early College, Early Success. Andrea Berger, Project Director Lori Turk-Bicakci, Deputy Project Director Michael Garet, Principal Investigator Mengli Song Joel Knudson Clarisse Haxton Kristina Zeiser Gur Hoshen Jennifer Ford Jennifer Stephan. Retrieved from https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/ECHSI_Impact_Study_Report_Final1_0.pdf

6 Other colleges also dually enroll thousands of students. There are significant challenges in comparing data from college to college and statewide because dual enrollment is growing rapidly and is commonly measured in at least two different ways (counting total course enrollments or counting individuals who are "specially admitted").

7 Report by Bakersfield College to the College Futures Foundation, prepared by Dr. Anna Laven with Steve Watkin, Craig Hayward and Carla Stallworth (July, 2019). Retrieved from <https://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/download/30646>

8 Public Policy Institute of California (January 2017). California's Future: Higher Education. Retrieved from https://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_117HJR.pdf



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