

# Bridging Systems, Building Pathways

Sacramento K-16 Collaborative: Dual Enrollment  
Stakeholder Engagement Insights

Designed for Sacramento K-16 Collaborative

Presented by Capitol Impact, March 2025

Annie Sterling, Program Director  
Jasleen Bains, Program Associate  
Lex Carlsson, Program Director  
Alex Taghavian, Partner

# About Us

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## Sacramento K-16 Collaborative

[The Sacramento K-16 Collaborative](#) launched in 2022 as part of the California Regional K-16 Education Collaboratives Grant Program. The Collaborative is committed to advancing educational equity and workforce opportunities by strengthening college and career pathways across California's Capital Region through a multi-county partnership between K-12 county offices of education and districts, higher education institutions, and employers.



CAPITOL  
IMPACT

## Capitol Impact

[Capitol Impact](#) serves as the backbone convener, providing project management, research, and strategy for the Sacramento K-16 Collaborative. Capitol Impact is a social impact consulting firm that is dedicated to forging a better future for all Californians. To achieve this mission, we partner with visionary leaders across the social sector to advance practical solutions to our state's most pressing challenges.

Previous research products of the Sacramento K-16 Collaborative and Capitol Impact are available at: [www.sacramentok16.org/resource-hub/](http://www.sacramentok16.org/resource-hub/)

For more information about Capitol Impact's services, please contact: [research@capitolimpact.org](mailto:research@capitolimpact.org)

# Table of Contents



<i>SECTION</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
<u>Introduction &amp; Context</u>	4
<u>Methodology &amp; Approach</u>	9
<u>Landscape Analysis: Dual Enrollment</u>	14
<u>Best Practices Literature Review: Dual Enrollment</u>	16
<u>Voices from the Field: Dual Enrollment Stakeholder Engagement Findings</u>	18
<u>Dual Enrollment Survey Findings</u>	20
<u>Themes by Stakeholder Group</u>	25
<u>In Depth Perspectives</u>	29
<u>Bright Spots &amp; Promising Practices</u>	37
<u>Actionable Recommendations</u>	38
<u>Threads that Bind: Insights across Focus Areas</u>	39
<u>From Insight to Action: Recommendations for Meeting Collaborative Goals</u>	44
<u>Together Towards Transformation: Concluding Reflections &amp; Next Steps</u>	50

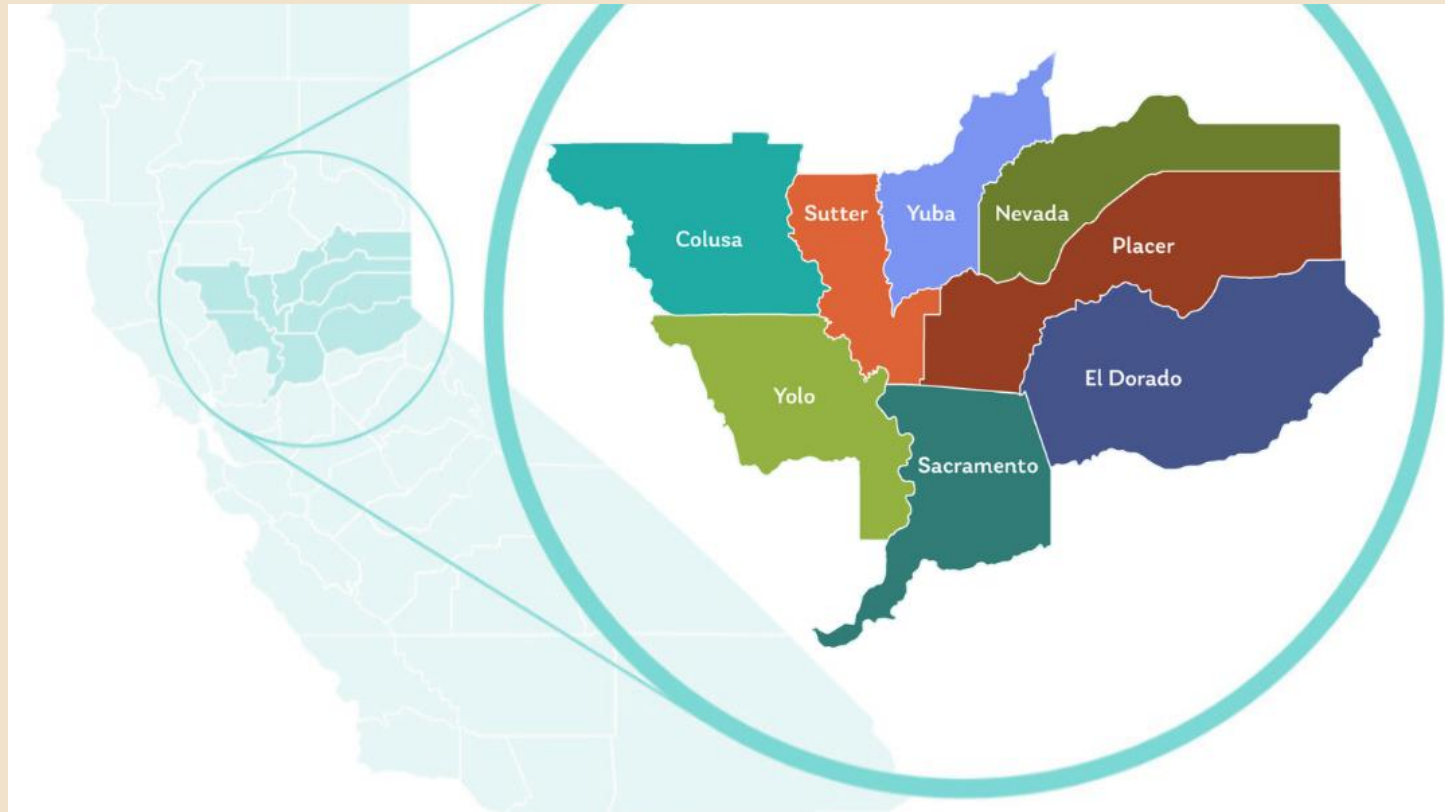


# Introduction & Context

*From Insight to Impact: Closing the Loop on Stakeholder Engagement*

## BACKGROUND

# Sacramento K-16 Collaborative



### Expand Career Pathways

Into healthcare, engineering, and computing.



### Expand Dual Enrollment

Expand dual enrollment opportunities for students across the region's education ecosystem.



### Support Priority Student Populations

Students of color, low-income, first generation, rural, and adult learners.



### Streamline Transfer Pathways

To create more seamless transitions for students between institutions.

# Timeline of Capitol Impact's Research



# Three-Phase Research Cycle



## **Landscape Analysis** *February-March 2024*

Assessed the current state of systems and supports in relation to four of the Sacramento K-16 Collaborative's key initiatives.



## **Best Practices Literature Review** *March-April 2024*

Determined areas of research inquiry to inform use of Collaborative resources and prioritization of programming to meet needs, gaps, and opportunities within the region.



## **Stakeholder Engagement Findings** *March 2025*

Identify themes and key insights from conversations with students, families, educators, and employers. Make recommendations for short-term activities and long-term sustainability of the Sacramento K-16 Collaborative.

# Target Outcomes

The stakeholder engagement campaign and findings report are intended to provide enhanced understanding for the Sacramento K-16 Collaborative in the following areas:







# Methodology & Approach

*Listening to Understand: Our Engagement Strategy*

# Research Methodology

The following describes our research team's activities and outputs throughout the stakeholder engagement process.

Activity	Output
1. Held brainstorm sessions with workgroup members.	List of research questions and priorities.
2. Drafted research framework and process.	Refined research framework and process
3. Designed interview protocols.	Draft interview protocols for stakeholder groups
4. Sought workgroup feedback and revised interview protocols.	Finalized interview protocols
5. Conducted stakeholder interviews.	Raw interview data in the form of recordings and transcripts
6. Reviewed and cleaned all interview transcripts.	Cleaned and formatted transcripts
7. Designed a codebook for interview transcripts from research questions and protocols.	Codebook with dominant- and sub-categories.
8. Read and coded all interview transcripts.	Master sheets of coded themes by stakeholder group.
9. Analyzed coded comments by workgroup initiative and stakeholder group.	Thematic analysis by workgroup and stakeholder group.
10. Identified cross-cutting themes.	Cross-cutting thematic analysis
11. Analyzed cross-cutting themes by K-16 goal.	Recommendations for immediate actions and long-term sustainability planning for each Sacramento K-16 Collaborative goal.

# K-16 Collaborative Educational Partners

Stakeholder engagement focused on programs, pathways, services, and supports within these institutions.

K-12 Districts	County Offices of Education	Community Colleges	4 Year Universities
San Juan USD	Sacramento County Office of Education	Los Rios Community College District (ARC, CRC, SCC, FLC)	CSU Sacramento
Sacramento City USD	Placer County Office of Education	Sierra College	UC Davis
Elk Grove USD	Yuba County Office of Education	Yuba Community College District (WCC, YCC)	
Folsom-Cordova USD	Yolo County Office of Education	Lake Tahoe Community College	
Placer Union HSD	El Dorado County Office of Education		
Marysville Joint USD			
Western Placer USD			

OUR RESEARCH SCOPE

# Stakeholders Engaged



3 Student Focus Groups (K-12)

1 Family Focus Group (K-12)

5 K-12 District Interviews

5 Community College Interviews

2 4-Year College Interviews

2 Employer Focus Groups

1 K-12 Survey with Dual Enrollment Focus

**20+** Sacramento K-16 Collaborative Partner Entities Engaged throughout the Research Process

Conversations took place from May-October 2025. We conducted outreach for interviews and focus groups, as well as survey responses, through Sacramento K-16 Collaborative workgroup members.

# Dual Enrollment



*Early Access, Lifelong Impact*



# Landscape Analysis

*Dual Enrollment - Baseline Data*

# Key Takeaways from Landscape Analysis

## Dual Enrollment Landscape Analysis



- 1 Information Access Essential to Building Dual Enrollment (DE) Awareness**

Information about each school's DE program was variable and inconsistent. Info about benefits of DE, course offerings, how students receive instruction, in addition to parental rights is needed.
- 2 Need for Language Consistency**

Board policy language across the Collaborative is inconsistent and outdated. Distinctions between CCAP and non-CCAP dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, academic enrichment, and articulated courses are often unclear.
- 3 Opportunity to further develop CTE DE offerings**

Most DE programs in our region are transfer-focused, and course articulation continues to be an important avenue for providing college credit in CTE classes. The K-16 grant presents an opportunity to strengthen pathways through DE.
- 4 Importance of Guidance Counselors and Uniformly Available Education Plans**

Identified need for counselors at both K-12 and community college level to assist students in navigating DE, as well as professional development for existing counselors. Merced Community College & Merced Union High School District pathways counseling program is a model.



# Best Practices Literature Review

*Dual Enrollment -Preliminary  
Recommendations*



# Best Practices Overview

## Dual Enrollment Best Practices to Inform Action Planning

1

- **Equitable Access:** Multilingual outreach, addressing biases, and using data to ensure inclusivity.
- **Strategic Communication:** Broad dissemination, leveraging counselors and student testimonials, and using data storytelling to promote dual enrollment.

Information  
Access

2

- **Career & Academic Alignment:** Dual enrollment courses tailored to workforce demands, equitable access strategies, and structured curriculum planning.
- **Quality Instruction & Advising:** Comprehensive student support, professional development for instructors, and training for counselors on dual enrollment pathways.

Program  
Strategy

3

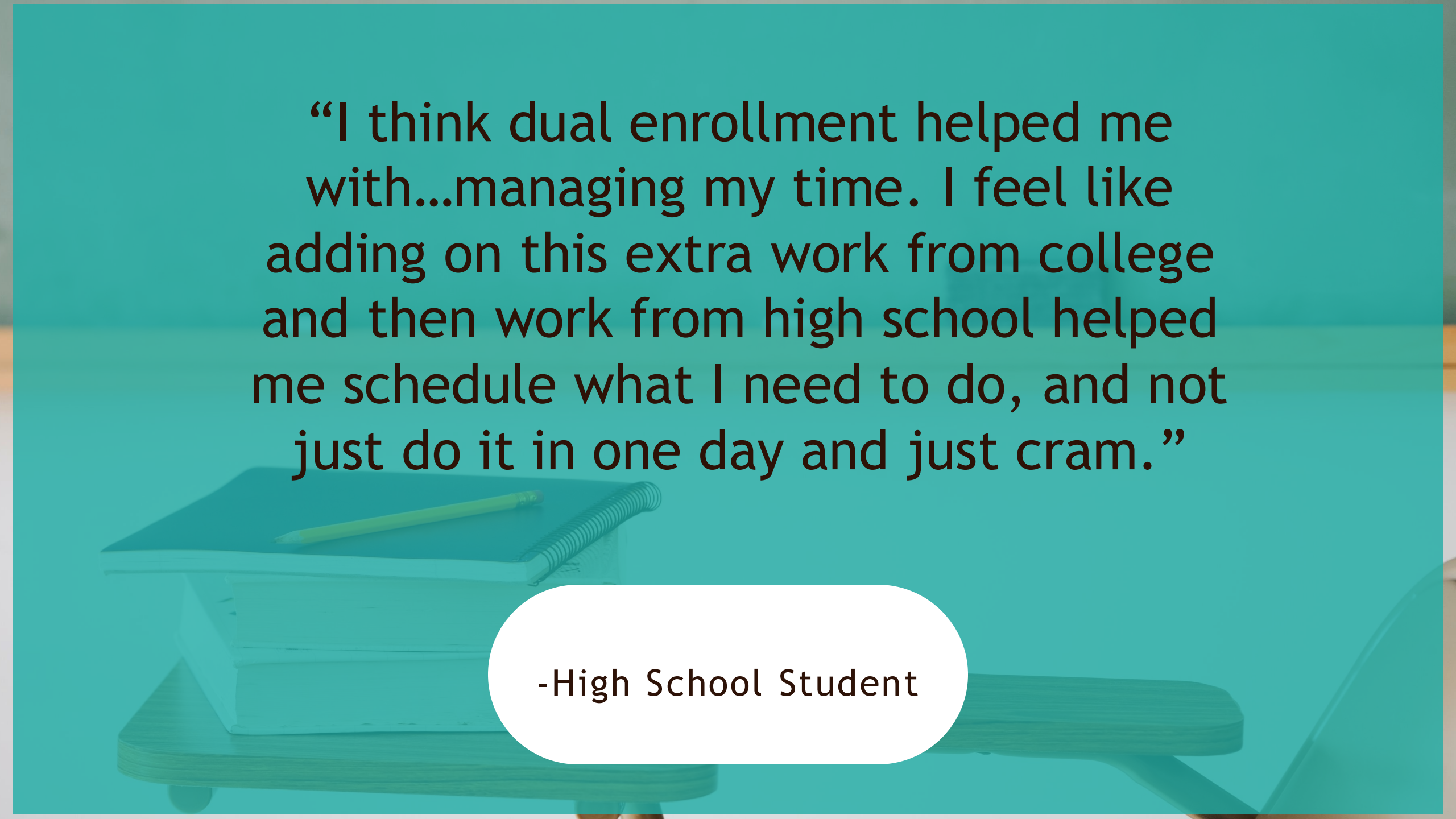
- **Collaborative Frameworks:** Sustainable funding, staff infrastructure, credentialing for HS teachers, and integrating dual enrollment into student success strategies.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Cross-sector data sharing, regional data analysis, and transparent reporting to track student outcomes and improve programs.

Regional  
Partnerships



# Stakeholder Engagement

*Dual Enrollment - Voices from  
the Field*



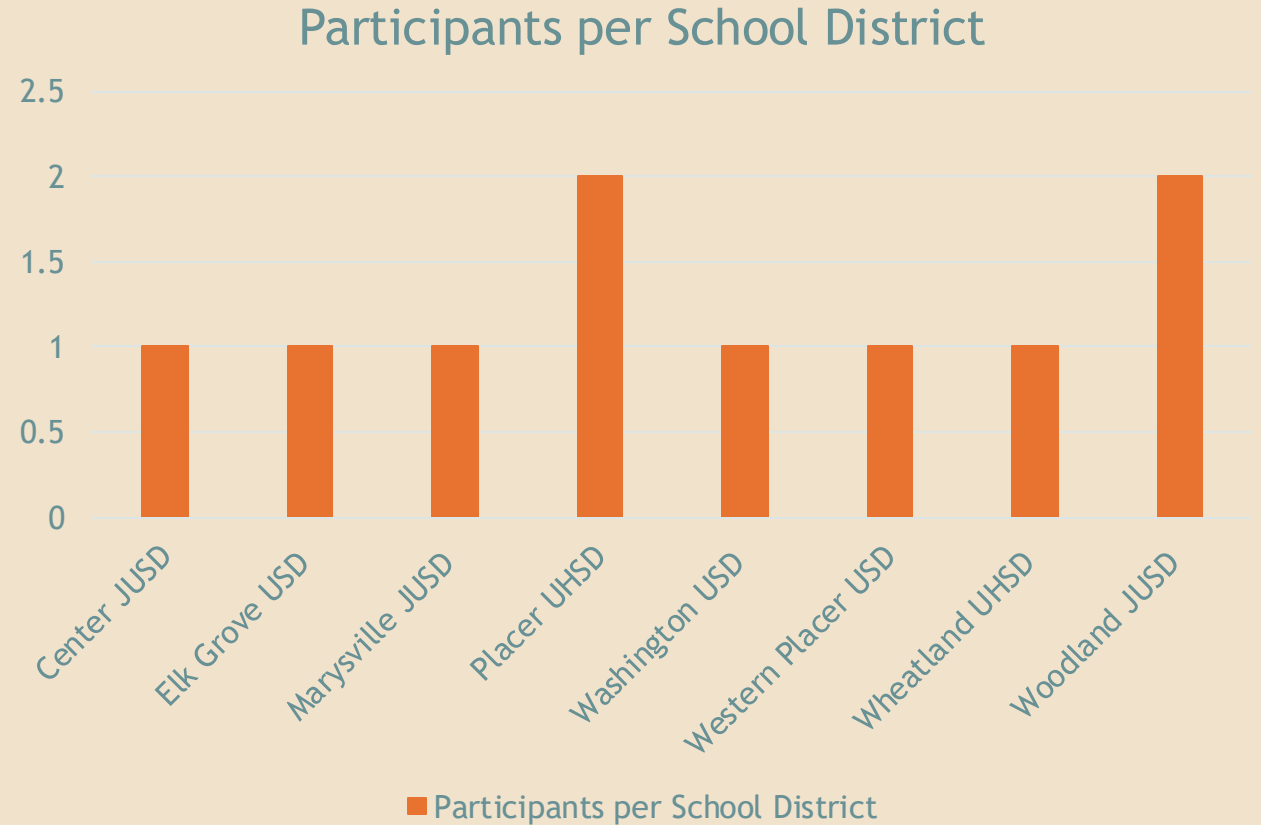
“I think dual enrollment helped me with...managing my time. I feel like adding on this extra work from college and then work from high school helped me schedule what I need to do, and not just do it in one day and just cram.”

-High School Student

# Dual Enrollment Survey Findings

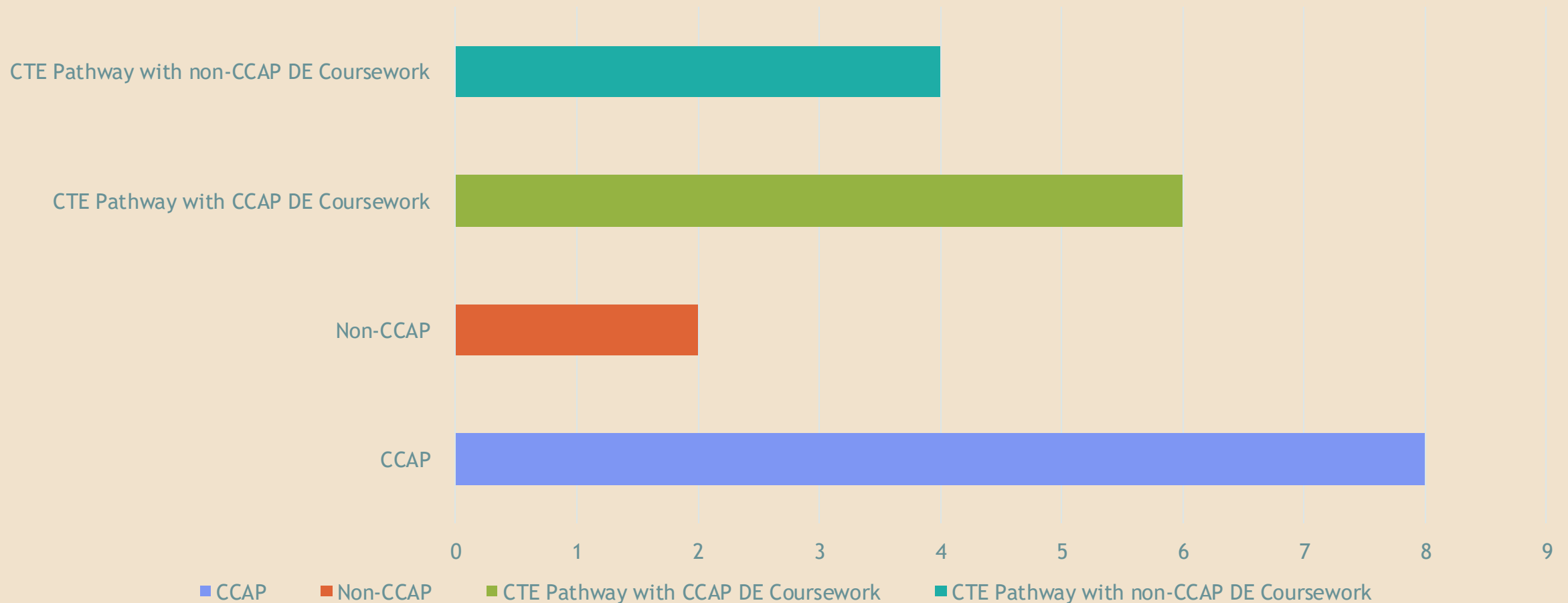
## Overview

- **Focus Areas:** Dual enrollment implementation, barriers, instructional delivery, communication, and opportunities.
- **Survey Participants:** 10 responses from 8 K-12 districts
- Complete survey response data [available here](#).



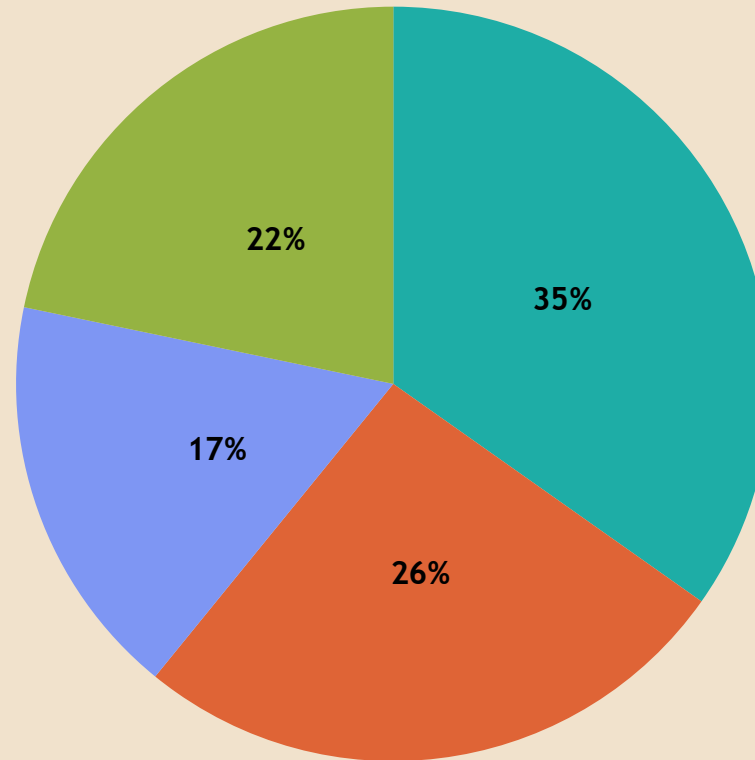
# Survey: What types of dual enrollment pathways are offered in your district?

Dual Enrollment Pathways



# Survey: How is dual enrollment instruction delivered to students?

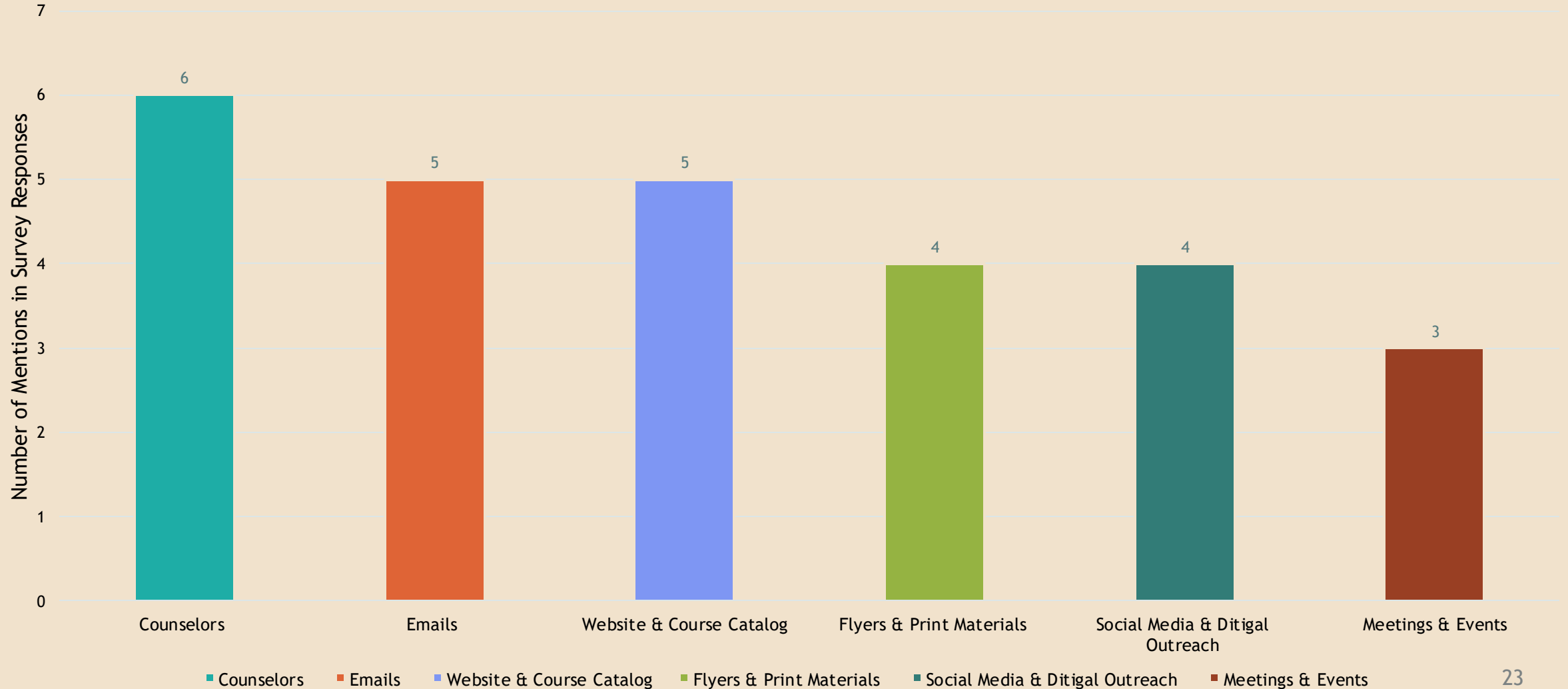
Instruction Method



- Taught synchronously by a qualified high school teacher.
- Completed asynchronously on campus during school hours.
- Taught synchronously by community college faculty.
- Completed asynchronously outside school hours by community college faculty.

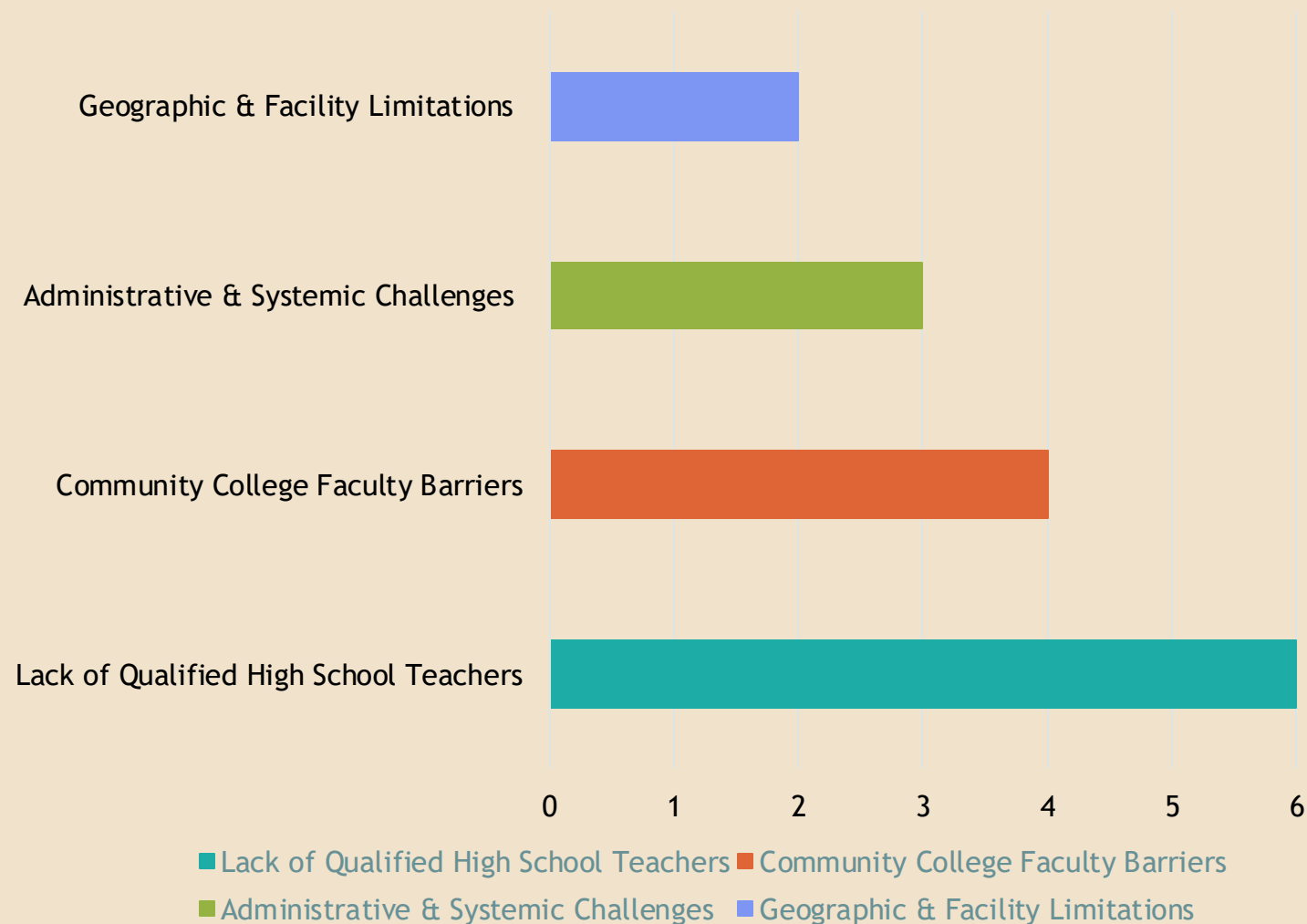
# Survey- How are dual enrollment opportunities and benefits communicated to students and families?

Top Marketing Methods to Students & Families



# Survey: What are the greatest barriers to expanding dual enrollment?

## Barriers to Dual Enrollment



•**Limited Qualified Teachers:** K-12 schools depend on community college professors for dual enrollment due to a lack of high school teachers meeting minimum qualifications, restricting course options.

•**Community College Faculty Constraints:** Some community college instructors are unwilling to expand dual enrollment or offer certain courses, limiting availability.

•**Administrative Challenges:** Navigating communication, approvals, and coordination with colleges is difficult.

•**Regulatory Barriers:** State policies and teachers' union rules can create obstacles.

•**Geographic & Space Limitations:** Remote school locations and a lack of space hinder in-person dual enrollment classes.



# Stakeholder Group: K-12 Students

## DUAL ENROLLMENT

Theme	Key Insight
Independence vs. Support	<p>Students value the independence of dual enrollment but often find it challenging to manage workloads without consistent support, especially with conflicting schedules or unfamiliarity with self-paced learning.</p> <p><a href="#">Click here</a> for detailed analysis.</p>
Communication Gaps with Instructors and Counselors	<p>Students experience varied levels of communication and support, with some receiving prompt feedback while others feel disconnected from instructors and counselors.</p> <p><a href="#">Click here</a> for detailed analysis.</p>
Barriers to Dual Enrollment Participation	<p>Students often learn about dual enrollment late, and some programs are not accessible due to scheduling conflicts or lack of availability in desired pathways. Additionally, students can only enroll in Fall classes during the Spring but do not have the option to enroll in Spring classes during the Fall.</p> <p><a href="#">Click here</a> for detailed analysis.</p>
Social and Emotional Supports	<p>Dual enrollment students often feel isolated, particularly in online or asynchronous classes, and crave more opportunities for connection and collaboration.</p> <p><a href="#">Click here</a> for detailed analysis.</p>

# Stakeholder Group: K-12 Parents

## DUAL ENROLLMENT

Theme	Key Insight	Quotes
<b>Preparation for College Success</b>	Parents see dual enrollment as a powerful way for their children to gain experience with college-level work and prepare for future academic success. They value the opportunity to align high school courses with college goals.	"She's prepared for it when she goes to whatever college she chooses. She already knows how the setup is like. How the [instructors] teach and what kind of work they give out."
<b>Workload and Stress Management</b>	Parents are concerned about the overwhelming workload dual enrollment places on students, especially those balancing high school, college courses, and extracurriculars like sports. The intensity can lead to exhaustion and late nights.	"It's a lot of work on top of high school as well. And she's trying to balance sports. She's an athlete, too, trying to balance with sport and college and high school at the same time, so it's overwhelming."
<b>Scheduling Conflicts Between High School and College Calendars</b>	Parents note that mismatched calendars between high schools and colleges disrupt family and social time, causing stress for students trying to balance the two schedules.	"When most of the kids, his friends are, or even his family, are on school break, he can't go see them because he has college. And then it's the opposite way when the college has a break and school is in session."

# Stakeholder Group: K-12 Districts

## DUAL ENROLLMENT

Theme	Key Insight
<b>Administrative &amp; Systemic Barriers</b>	<p>Disjointed policies, complex enrollment processes, and inconsistencies across colleges create obstacles for students, parents, and educators.</p> <p><a href="#">Click here</a> for detailed analysis.</p>
<b>Resource Constraints &amp; Financial Challenges</b>	<p>Limited staff, space, and funding—coupled with costly materials—restrict access to and the quality of dual enrollment programs.</p> <p><a href="#">Click here</a> for detailed analysis.</p>
<b>Misalignment Between K-12 &amp; College Systems</b>	<p>Structural and cultural disconnects between K-12 schools and colleges hinder seamless dual enrollment implementation. Some disconnects include: registering students, creating an educational plan that aligns with students college &amp; career goals, providing books, and providing students supports with classes.</p> <p><a href="#">Click here</a> for detailed analysis.</p>

# Stakeholder Group: Community Colleges

## DUAL ENROLLMENT

Theme	Key Insight
<b>Accessibility and Equity in Dual Enrollment Opportunities</b>	<p>Barriers such as location, transportation, and inconsistent resources limit equitable access to dual enrollment, especially for rural and underserved communities.</p> <p><a href="#">Click here</a> for detailed analysis.</p>
<b>Gaps in Awareness and Outreach to Underrepresented Communities</b>	<p>Despite ongoing outreach, gaps remain in reaching underrepresented families and communities, limiting participation in dual enrollment.</p> <p><a href="#">Click here</a> for detailed analysis.</p>
<b>Misalignment Between Systems and Administrative Processes</b>	<p>Structural misalignments, such as MOUs, onboarding, and tracking systems, create significant barriers to expanding and streamlining dual enrollment programs.</p> <p><a href="#">Click here</a> for detailed analysis.</p>



# In Depth Perspective: K-12 Students



## THEME: Independence vs Support

**KEY INSIGHTS:** Students appreciate the opportunity to take dual enrollment classes, but adjusting to different learning styles compared to high school can be challenging. They often navigate a **balance between independence and support**, as **accessing help in college differs**—instructors are available via email, unlike high school teachers who provide in-person guidance. Dual enrollment students **rely on peer support**, but building connections can be difficult, especially in asynchronous courses where students come from different schools. This lack of interaction makes it harder to collaborate or receive immediate help. Overall, dual enrollment **helps students develop independence and experience college expectations early**. Some students realize that **procrastination leads to increased stress in a college setting**, reinforcing the importance of self-discipline and time management.

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

- *"Give me too much free will and I won't do assignments until last minute."*
- *"I feel like the college programs...become more independent because...the high schools kind of baby you a little bit. So you have to push yourself to see where you're at and not having a constant reminder of the teacher's telling you have to do this. You have to remind yourself to do it."*
- *"Since I'm the only mid-class high school senior in my [dual enrollment] class it's a little bit harder to communicate with [other students] because they all sit in their own group in the class. So I'm kind of solo and alone. But at the same time...we all communicate together whenever we need to...It's a little bit scary to put myself out there."*
- *"Before starting [dual enrollment], I thought college was a huge difficulty spike and scary. But after taking [dual enrollment]...I've become used to programs [like Canva] and seeing the work that college entails. I'm much more relaxed and I feel comfortable about college now."*



# In Depth Perspective: K-12 Students



## THEME: Communication Gaps with Instructors

### KEY INSIGHTS:

Communication in dual enrollment varies depending on the professor, affecting students' ability to seek help and stay on track academically. While some students have **responsive instructors who reply to emails quickly**, others experience **delayed communication, making it difficult to get timely support**. Many students also struggle with a **lack of feedback and slow grading**, leaving them uncertain about their performance. In some cases, **unclear expectations** and a sense of disconnect between students and instructors can make it difficult to get clarification on assignments. Additionally, while office hours are available, **students may not always utilize them due to scheduling conflicts or unfamiliarity with the process**. These challenges highlight the **need for more structured communication, timely feedback, and clearer guidance to help students successfully navigate the dual enrollment experience**.

### IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

- *"My instructor [in College Success], she's an amazing instructor, and I tend to email her, she tends to get back to me on the same day. If not, if she's typically busy."*
- *"But I do wish like teacher in the classrooms a bit more like connected to the class. Sometimes we have questions and we can't contact [the professor] right away so we don't know, and the teacher doesn't know what we are talking about either. If [the professor and teacher] were on the same page about what assignments we are doing that would be a help."*
- *"If you need help, [the professor] has office hours where you can come into a Zoom meeting at a certain time, ask her questions or ask her for help."*
- *"The only drawback I really see with dual enrollment is just the lack of feedback from professors. They have to get their stuff graded and we don't know for awhile."*
- *"For the exam...we had to work with other people, and we didn't even know until three days before."*



# In Depth Perspective: K-12 Students



## THEME: Barriers to Dual Enrollment Participation

**KEY INSIGHTS:** Students experience **barriers to fully accessing and benefiting from dual enrollment**, which can impact their ability to make informed decisions about participation. **Many students do not learn about dual enrollment until later in high school**, leading some to miss out on opportunities they would have taken earlier. While counselors are a common source of information, **awareness varies depending on how actively dual enrollment is promoted at their school**. Additionally, **students wish for a wider selection of courses**, particularly in fields like engineering, to better align with their interests. Finally, **scheduling conflicts prevent some students from engaging in both career education programs and dual enrollment**, leaving them feeling forced to choose between pathways rather than exploring both. Addressing these challenges through **earlier outreach, expanded course offerings, and flexible scheduling options** could improve student experiences and participation rates.

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

- *"I didn't know what [dual enrollment classes] were until end of last year. So when I was signing up, they were like you could take a dual enrollment class, but they didn't really say what it was like or how it worked. So I just didn't really know."*
- *"I'm pretty sure my counselor didn't tell me anything. Like in the Canva app there was like a notification [and] I was like that sounds interesting."*
- *"They can advertise it more at the very start of high school freshman year, even though you might not be taking dual enrollment class freshman year. It's something that you should know about and not be finding out at the end of sophomore year when you're picking your classes or middle of junior year."*
- *"I wish that they had more of an engineering push. I don't know what engineering classes that they offer here, but it doesn't really fit me in general. It fits more of a construction/framing of a house type of engineering instead of math and electrical. I wish that they have more programs instead."*
- *"At this school when they have [career education] programs, [they are during] the first two periods [of the day], and most of us can't join some programs because we're doing dual enrollment. I wish they had certain programs after school as well. Some of us miss out on a great opportunity."*



# In Depth Perspective: K-12 Districts



**THEME:** Administrative and Systemic Barriers



**KEY INSIGHTS:** Dual enrollment faces systemic challenges due to inconsistent policies, complex enrollment processes, and equity concerns that create barriers for students and schools. Varying application and registration procedures across colleges make it difficult for students and families to navigate dual enrollment, often leading to confusion and delays. Differences in enrollment timelines give priority to college students over high school students, raising concerns about equitable access. Additionally, security measures and application verification protocols add unintended obstacles, requiring extra steps that slow down student participation. At the district level, unclear policies around credit weighting, course replacements, and GPA calculations create uncertainty for both students and educators. Addressing these challenges requires greater alignment between institutions, streamlined enrollment processes, and clear policies that support equitable participation in dual enrollment programs.

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

- *"Every Community College has a different dual enrollment process. So some of them have a form you fill out online. [Other colleges] wants us to send them the papers like the non CCAP forms, but then others want the kids to send the papers from their e-mail. So on top of there being like a variety of classes and like a variety of ways to earn that college credit, there's a variety of way to sign up for it."*
- *"College students can register for classes two to three weeks before high school students can. There's an equity issue in that also because our students are trying to accomplish their IGETC's and their Associates degrees...on top of their high school classes just as all these other students are. It seems a little bit of a lack of equity in students who are highly motivated to achieve those classes."*
- *"The open CCC system confuses families...they do that application they think they're finished now. And they don't understand that they have to go on and do the community college application"*
- *"Through the application process, colleges are upping their security, but then it makes like more barriers students have to jump across. One thing we've noticed is if students are applying from the high school, it's the same IP address, so all of their applications are being marked as spam. Now...the students have to go to the college or we have to allow them to miss class to jump on a zoom to like prove their identity. So it just kind of delays that process that much more."*
- *"Our board policy systems haven't really caught up to it yet because we don't really know all of our systems like as far as calculating GPA. Is the course going to be a weighted course? Are we going to limit the number of weighted courses? Are they going to be core course replacement?"*





# In Depth Perspective: K-12 Districts



## THEME: Resource Constraints & Financial Challenges

**KEY INSIGHTS:** Schools face **significant resource limitations** that impact dual enrollment access and sustainability. **Seat availability is a major challenge**, with more students interested in dual enrollment than schools can accommodate. **High costs associated with textbooks and course materials** add further financial strain, as many books become obsolete after one semester, making it difficult to budget for long-term sustainability. Additionally, **access codes for digital materials come with one-time costs**, making them expensive and inaccessible when open educational resources could be an alternative. Beyond financial barriers, **staffing shortages and training gaps** create additional challenges, as there are not enough experienced facilitators to support the rapid expansion of dual enrollment programs. These constraints highlight the **need for increased funding, sustainable resource planning, and investment in faculty development** to ensure equitable access to dual enrollment opportunities.

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

- *"Our biggest barrier is that we have more kids that want to take dual enrollment classes than we can put in seats."*
- *"[Textbooks are] not sustainable because next semester we could be looking at a completely different professor and those books are now obsolete. And so we have a hundred \$375 psychology books. What do we do with them? We can't do anything with them. We're not using them again. It's not like a one time cost that you can budget for and sustain and maintain."*
- *"Codes for access that are one time use are also very pricey. When professors at the Community College could be using Open Access resources, and they're not. That is a frustration and a challenge."*
- *"...as far as growing quickly, we don't have the number facilitators that have the experience and that are trained in the platform. So just maintaining the fact that our training processes for getting them up to speed are also a challenge."*



# In Depth Perspective: Community Colleges



**THEME:** Gaps in Awareness and Outreach (to Underrepresented Communities)

**KEY INSIGHTS:** Schools and colleges need more consistent and targeted engagement beyond one-time events to ensure all students are informed about dual enrollment opportunities. Certain groups, such as Latinx and lower-income students, may require customized outreach strategies, partnerships with community organizations, and simplified access to resources. A more proactive communication approach—beginning in 9th grade and emphasizing clear program benefits—can help bridge the gap.

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

- *"The college has partnered with our local Family Resource Center and the school district to start really trying to inform our Latinx community about dual enrollment opportunities."*
- *"I was waiting to hear about the community college's dual enrollment and I never heard it. So I think that some smaller areas that we could capture some of these demographic socioeconomic lower where we could capture some of those students and tell them about the opportunities that are available could be caught a little bit better. Maybe we're doing it, maybe the high school isn't passing it forward, but I just saw a little gap there."*
- *"I think that we have a great outreach department that does what they're supposed to do, but I still feel like this is a small niche or a caveat area that could be a bit more advertised, a bit more...really shine the light on, this is what we have. This is what you guys can get, especially there's high schools locally that are in our district that have the full collaboration where they start in ninth grade. They start dual enrollment as a freshman..."*
- *"It's that access to someone who can help you right away when you're trying to navigate these complex systems. And so we do have a lot of really great events and we'll see a spike in our enrollments right after these events, but, you hate to rely on an event here and there. We really need to improve our system so that it's as easy as buying something at Amazon, right? You know we need to better also provide responsive support to our students as well."*

# Cross-Cutting Stakeholder Themes

## DUAL ENROLLMENT



### Theme: Equity and Accessibility in Dual Enrollment Supports

Stakeholder Group	K-12 Students	K-12 Districts	Community Colleges
Key Insight	Dual enrollment students often feel isolated, particularly in online or asynchronous classes, and crave more opportunities for connection and collaboration.	Dual enrollment opportunities disproportionately benefit students from privileged backgrounds, leaving underserved groups behind.	Barriers such as location, transportation, and inconsistent resources limit equitable access to dual enrollment, especially for rural and underserved communities.
Quote	<p><i>"Since I'm the only high school senior in my class... I'm kind of solo and alone."</i></p> <p><i>"I wish they had certain programs after school as well... so some of us that miss out can have that opportunity."</i></p>	<p><i>"The savvy kids with parents used to college are signing up... Others don't think college is for them."</i></p> <p><i>"Students at McClatchy have more access and are more competitively eligible."</i></p> <p><i>"Low-income students think dual enrollment will be financially hard."</i></p>	<p><i>"The location of our campuses for our rural communities... We have pretty minimal course offerings there."</i></p> <p><i>"Transportation can be a real challenge for a lot of our students. So that can be a barrier in and of itself."</i></p> <p><i>"The college has partnered with our local Family Resource Center and the school district to start really trying to inform our Latinx community about dual enrollment opportunities."</i></p>

# Deep Dive into Administrative Barriers

## DUAL ENROLLMENT

### K-12 Districts

**Insight:** Disjointed policies, complex enrollment processes, and inconsistencies across colleges create obstacles for students, parents, and educators.

#### Quotes:

- *"Every Community College has a different dual enrollment process."*
- *"[Community college] students can register for classes two to three weeks before high school students can."*
- *"The open CCC system confuses families... They think they've finished when they haven't."*
- *"Through the application process, colleges are upping their security, which creates more barriers."*

### Community Colleges

**Insight:** Structural misalignments, such as MOUs, onboarding, and tracking systems, create significant barriers to expanding and streamlining dual enrollment programs.

#### Quotes:

- *"I can't tell you how many students have told me that they've completed their application to the college, but they didn't hit submit at the end. And so we have no proof that it ever happened. And, you know, there's the state part and then it sends you over to the local part. But that's just an ongoing issue that I feel like it's totally like is unnecessary hurdle."*
- *"We don't hear about the ones that aren't, you know, we don't really, we don't have an easy way to see, oh, these folks dropped off at this part in the process."*

What's Working: Success Stories from the Region

## Bright Spots & Promising Practices



### Formal K-12 and Community College Partnerships

Western Placer Unified School District's steering committee involving community college representatives. Establishing a formalized collaboration between K-12 districts and local colleges ensures alignment in course offerings, student support, and overall program success.

*"We've created a steering committee that involved our local Community College to be involved in that process...I think that's been very beneficial having those opportunities to partner closely with colleges and having the staff available to provide supports needed so that kids can try out classes."*



### Incentivizing Teacher Credentialing for Dual Enrollment Expansion

Wheatland Union High School District offers financial incentives for teachers to earn master's degrees in subject areas needed for dual enrollment. A major barrier to dual enrollment is the lack of qualified instructors. Providing financial support helps expand the number of eligible teachers, increasing course availability.

*"One of the big barriers we have is having enough teachers with minimum qualifications. One of the ways that we've tried to get around that is offering an incentive for a paying for part of their Masters program... We've worked it out with our Union where we can pay for part of that."*



# Actionable Recommendations

## Dual Enrollment



- Disjointed policies and inconsistent collaboration between K-12 schools and community colleges create barriers for students, exemplifying a need for stronger partnerships for smoother transitions. The CLP toolkit provides school districts guidance on **building infrastructure with sample MOUs and board policy language** to facilitate effective collaboration.
- Foster **regular communication and collaboration** between K-12 and college staff to alleviate barriers.
- Students and families often struggle with navigating dual enrollment due to unclear pathways and inconsistent advising support, guidance for targeted outreach can be found in the CLP toolkit.
- **Host a Family-Friendly Dual Enrollment Orientation-** Provide interactive sessions where students and families learn about dual enrollment, receive on-the-spot enrollment support, and connect with K-12 and community college staff. Facilitate ongoing joint advising to align student pathways and address challenges.
- Dual enrollment should not only provide college credit but also expose students to **high-demand careers** through **industry-aligned coursework and hands-on experience**.
- **Align Dual Enrollment with High-Demand Careers** - Ensure courses connect to growing industries like healthcare, engineering, technology, and skilled trades.
- **Expand Work-Based Learning Opportunities** - Develop internships, apprenticeships, and employer partnerships to give students hands-on experience.
- Many students face **barriers to participation** in dual enrollment due to a lack of awareness or limited course offerings at their campuses.
- **Intentional Outreach for Underserved Students** - Partner with **high school affinity groups, community organizations, and family resource centers** to reach low-income and first-generation students.
- **Increase Course Availability at Rural Campuses** - Partner with **community colleges and K-12 districts** to offer more in-person dual enrollment courses at rural campuses



# Cross-Cutting Themes

*Threads that Bind: Insights Across Focus Areas*

# Theme 1: Institutional Misalignment & Bureaucratic Barriers

**Challenge:** Disjointed policies, complex administrative processes, and lack of coordination between K-12, community colleges, and four-year institutions create barriers for students.

**Recommendation:** Establish streamlined, regionally-aligned policies for dual enrollment, transfer, and career pathway articulation to eliminate systemic barriers.

## Dual Enrollment

Inconsistent enrollment processes across institutions make it difficult for students and families to navigate.



## Career Pathways

Bureaucratic hurdles delay employer-education partnerships, limiting student access to real-world learning.



## Transfer Pathways

Confusion over transfer requirements and inconsistent advising result in missed opportunities for students.



## Priority Student Populations

Outdated policies assume all students are full-time and financially stable, disadvantaging working students and student parents.





# Theme 2: Gaps in Advising & Student Support Services

**Challenge:** Inconsistent or insufficient advising leads to uninformed decision-making, negatively impacting student enrollment, retention, and completion rates.

**Recommendation:** Expand case management-style advising models and mandatory orientation programs to provide structured support at key transition points.

## Dual Enrollment

Students report varying levels of counselor and instructor engagement, leading to difficulties in managing workloads.



## Career Pathways

Limited access to career counseling prevents students from exploring high-growth industries.



## Transfer Pathways

Many students lack early advising and structured onboarding, resulting in transfer delays and uncertainty.



## Priority Student Populations

First-generation and low-income students often receive inadequate guidance, limiting their ability to navigate college and financial aid processes.



# Theme 3: Equity Gaps in Access & Participation

**Challenge:** Priority student populations remain underrepresented in dual enrollment, career pathways, and transfer programs due to limited access, awareness, and resource constraints.

**Recommendation:** Implement targeted outreach, mentorship, and scholarship programs to close equity gaps in student participation and success.

## Dual Enrollment

Participation rates are higher in well-resourced schools, while rural and low-income students face accessibility challenges.



## Career Pathways

Lack of **STEM and healthcare mentorship opportunities** disproportionately affects students of color and first-generation students.



## Transfer Pathways

Students from smaller, under-resourced schools struggle to access transfer guidance and financial aid resources.



## Priority Student Populations

Financial constraints and lack of transportation continue to be significant barriers for low-income and rural students.



# Theme 4: Employer-Education Alignment & Career Readiness Gaps

**Challenge:** Despite strong workforce partnerships, there remains a disconnect between academic programs and employer expectations, limiting student preparedness for high-demand industries.

**Recommendation:** Strengthen employer advisory boards, industry-led curriculum development, and work-based learning opportunities to enhance career readiness.

## Dual Enrollment

Most dual enrollment programs focus on transfer pathways rather than **career-aligned career technical education** programs.



## Career Pathways

Faculty shortages in **STEM and healthcare fields** restrict access to critical coursework.



## Transfer Pathways

Employers emphasize the need for **curriculum alignment with workforce demands** to enhance job readiness.



## Priority Student Populations

Work-based learning opportunities remain concentrated among high-achieving students, limiting access for underrepresented groups.





# From Insight to Action:

Meeting Collaborative Goals

*Actionable Recommendations  
by Goal*

## GOAL ONE

# Send 1,300 young men of color to UC Davis and Sacramento State by 2025.



### In the Next 18 Months: Immediate, short-term actions

- **Expand targeted outreach & mentorship programs:** Continue strengthening partnerships with Improve Your Tomorrow (IYT) and local affinity groups to increase awareness and engagement.
- **Strengthen culturally responsive advising:** Implement peer mentorship programs and “warm hand-off” models between high schools, community colleges, and four-year institutions. Provide professional development for advisors.
- **Facilitate transfer support workshops:** Provide dedicated case management-style advising for young men of color throughout their educational journey.
- **Embed proactive retention supports:** Provide wraparound services including mental health, financial literacy, and career counseling.

### Beyond the Grant Term: Sustainability strategies for long-term impact

- **Institutionalize mentoring & affinity-based retention programs:** Establish permanent funding streams for mentorship, student affinity groups, and transfer support services.
- **Expand scholarships & financial aid programs:** Advocate for state and philanthropic funding to support full-ride scholarships for young men of color in STEM and high-demand fields.
- **Data-driven program improvement:** Use the data sharing agreement to track persistence, retention, and graduation rates and use equity-focused metrics to inform ongoing improvements.

### Accomplishments & Opportunities

- IYT & Sacramento County Office of Education dual enrollment program pilot funded to provide classes to young men of color on Saturdays with near-peer mentor support.
- Enhancing Equitable Transfer Success from CRC to Sac State: two-year pilot funded to place a full-time CSUS advisor at CRC to support priority students with transfer process.

GOAL TWO

# Triple the number of students graduating high school with freshman college credits by 2026.



## In the Next 18 Months: Immediate, short-term actions

- **Standardize dual enrollment policies:** Create uniform guidelines for use within and across K-12 and community college districts to eliminate administrative barriers.
- **Expand dual enrollment pathways in CTE fields:** Increase offerings in STEM, healthcare, and trades to align with regional workforce needs.
- **Continue to address faculty shortages in dual enrollment:** Provide financial incentives (e.g., tuition reimbursement) for high school teachers to earn master’s credentials needed to teach dual enrollment courses.

## Beyond the Grant Term: Sustainability strategies for long-term impact

- **Expand the existing regional data-sharing agreement beyond pilot partners to track dual enrollment participation, identify equity gaps, and inform program improvements:** Leverage data insights to drive targeted outreach, advocate for expanded course offerings, and strengthen credit articulation between K-12, community colleges, and four-year institutions.
- **Sustainable funding model for dual enrollment:** Secure state and philanthropic funding to support ongoing faculty training and program expansion.
- **Institutional commitment to equity in dual enrollment:** Embed data-driven DE equity goals in district LCAP plans to hold schools accountable for increasing access for priority student populations.

### Accomplishments & Opportunities

- Dual Enrollment Toolkit created. Make accessible to K-12 districts for standardization and best practices in DE policy.
- \$5,000 stipends available for teachers to pursue discipline-specific master’s degrees. Track effectiveness of initiative and share best practices to advocate for sustained funding.

## GOAL THREE

# Triple students graduating from healthcare/engineering pathways by 2026.



### In the Next 18 Months: Immediate, short-term actions

- **Enhance employer partnerships for career exposure:** Where possible use the Talent Pipeline Management framework to align work-based learning, job shadowing, and apprenticeships with healthcare and engineering employers' priorities, requirements, and job descriptions.
- **Address STEM faculty shortages:** Partner with industry professionals to create adjunct faculty pipelines for high-demand technical programs.
- **Align K-12 coursework with industry standards:** Expand A-G aligned CTE courses that feed into stackable credential programs in healthcare and engineering. Offer pre-requisite postsecondary classes in high school.

### Beyond the Grant Term: Sustainability strategies for long-term impact

- **Develop a regional healthcare & STEM talent pipeline strategy:** Formalize K-16 career pathways consortiums that include employers, education leaders, and workforce boards.
- **Institutionalize industry advisory boards:** Ensure long-term employer engagement in curriculum design and career-connected learning.
- **Expand funding for STEM and healthcare scholarships:** Establish endowed scholarships and other public-private talent finance solutions targeting students from underrepresented backgrounds in STEM and healthcare fields.

### Accomplishments & Opportunities

- Allied health career programs funded in alignment with Roseville TPM Healthcare Collaborative's priorities and with employer partnership in programming. Continue leveraging TPM data to build employer buy-in and co-designed solutions.
- Sierra College & Kaiser Permanente partnership pilot to fund instructors on release from KP; opportunity to track and share learnings from this innovation.

## GOAL FOUR

# Award 2,000 degrees and certificates to comebackers and reverse transfer students by 2026.



### In the Next 18 Months: Immediate, short-term actions

- **Bolster the Comebacker Campaign:** Increase targeted outreach to adults with some college, no degree, emphasizing flexible degree completion pathways.
- **Expand direct admission & reverse transfer agreements:** Facilitate seamless credit transfer between community colleges and universities via the Data Sharing MOU and Secondary Data Agreements (SDAs).
- **Strengthen wraparound supports for adult learners:** Establish dedicated adult learner centers offering career counseling, financial aid assistance, and academic coaching.

### Beyond the Grant Term: Sustainability strategies for long-term impact

- **Sustain the Comebacker Campaign as a permanent initiative:** Secure state or regional funding to institutionalize re-enrollment efforts.
- **Leverage workforce partnerships for tuition assistance:** Collaborate with employers and workforce agencies to offer tuition assistance programs for adult learners in high-demand fields.
- **Leverage the existing reverse transfer data-sharing agreement to develop a permanent data infrastructure for tracking adult learner outcomes:** Use statewide longitudinal data systems to monitor degree completion rates for comebackers, assess program effectiveness, and inform targeted re-enrollment strategies.

### Accomplishments & Opportunities

- Reverse transfer piloted between Sierra College, Lake Tahoe Community College, and CSU Sacramento. Share learnings and expand through the Data Sharing MOU and SDAs.
- Comebacker Campaign launched regionally in Fall 2024. Evaluate impact and implement continuous improvements while sustaining the initiative.



## GOAL FIVE

# Achieve Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) status across institutions.



### In the Next 18 Months: Immediate, short-term actions

- **Expand Latinx student recruitment efforts** through targeted outreach, bilingual resources, and culturally relevant high school engagement.
- **Increase Latinx participation in dual enrollment and transfer pathways** by strengthening advising, peer mentorship, and access to financial aid guidance.
- **Develop high school-to-college bridge programs** that provide early exposure to higher education, academic support, and college application assistance.
- **Promote financial aid and scholarship access** by streamlining FAFSA/CA Dream Act support and connecting Latinx students with funding opportunities.

### Beyond the Grant Term: Sustainability strategies for long-term impact

- **Institutionalize HSI-aligned student success initiatives** such as Latinx cultural centers, mentorship programs, and affinity-based academic advising.
- **Secure long-term funding through Title V HSI grants** to expand student support services, faculty development, and targeted retention strategies.
- **Strengthen retention and degree completion efforts** by implementing proactive academic counseling, first-year experience programs, and financial aid renewal support.
- **Foster inclusive campus environments** through Latinx student leadership programs, faculty diversity initiatives, and partnerships with community organizations.

### Accomplishments & Opportunities

- Data Sharing MOU and Secondary Data Agreements will allow targeted recruitment efforts and supports for Latinx students.
- Los Rios Transfer Academy funded by the Collaborative is a 2-day hybrid event providing in-depth information regarding transfer options, focused on recruiting men of color.



# Together Towards Transformation

*Concluding Reflections &  
Next Steps*

# Reflections on Stakeholder Insights



## Seamless Pathways Require Stronger Alignment

Institutional misalignment continues to create barriers for students. Expanding regional collaboration and standardizing policies across K-12, community colleges, and four-year institutions will be critical to improving student transitions.

## Equity Gaps Persist in Access and Participation

Despite program expansion, priority student populations—especially low-income, rural, and Latinx students—face barriers to participation. Targeted outreach, culturally responsive support, and financial aid accessibility must remain a priority.

## Advising and Support Systems Must Evolve

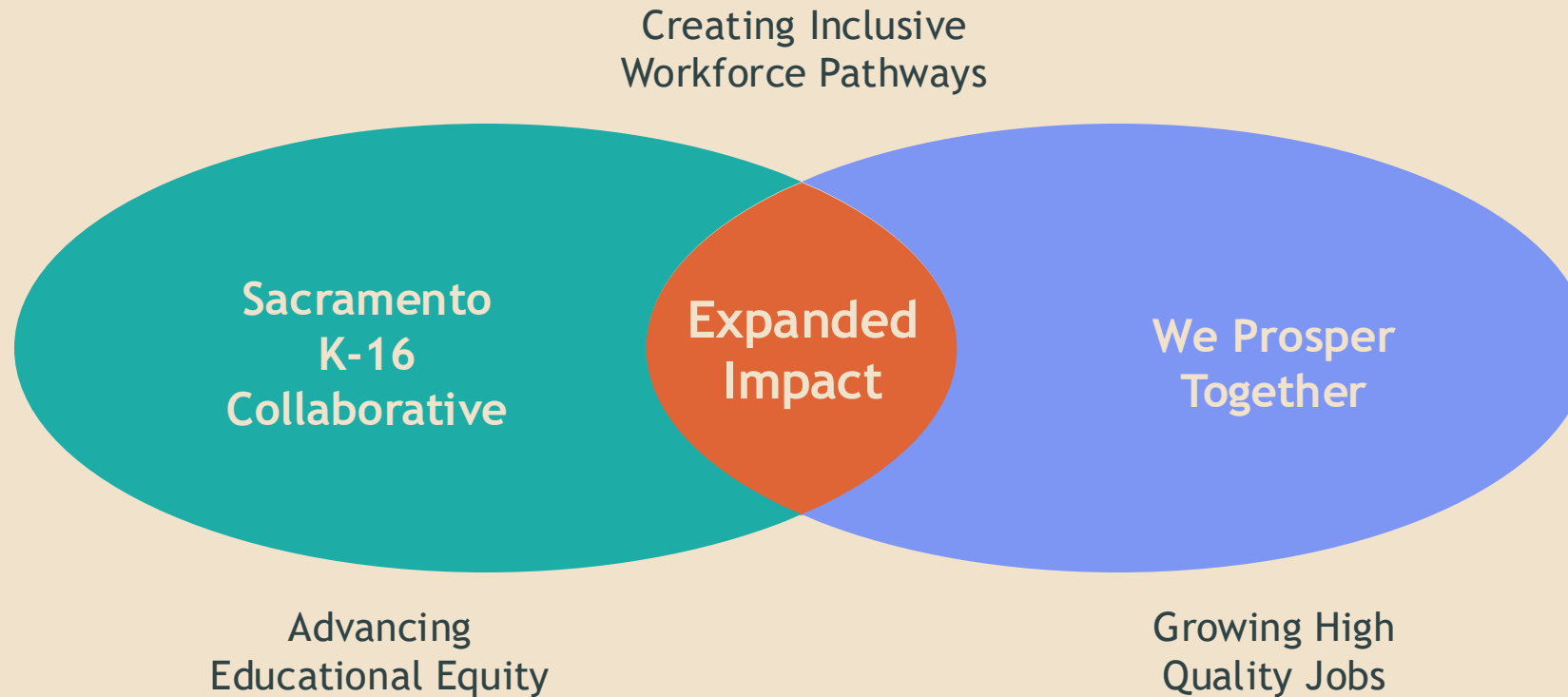
Students at all levels struggle with navigating complex enrollment, transfer, and career pathways. Expanding proactive advising, peer mentorship, and wraparound support services will be key to long-term success.

## Employer Partnerships Strengthen Career Readiness

Work-based learning, industry-aligned curriculum, and employer engagement are essential for bridging education and workforce needs. Sustainable partnerships will ensure students are prepared for high-demand careers.

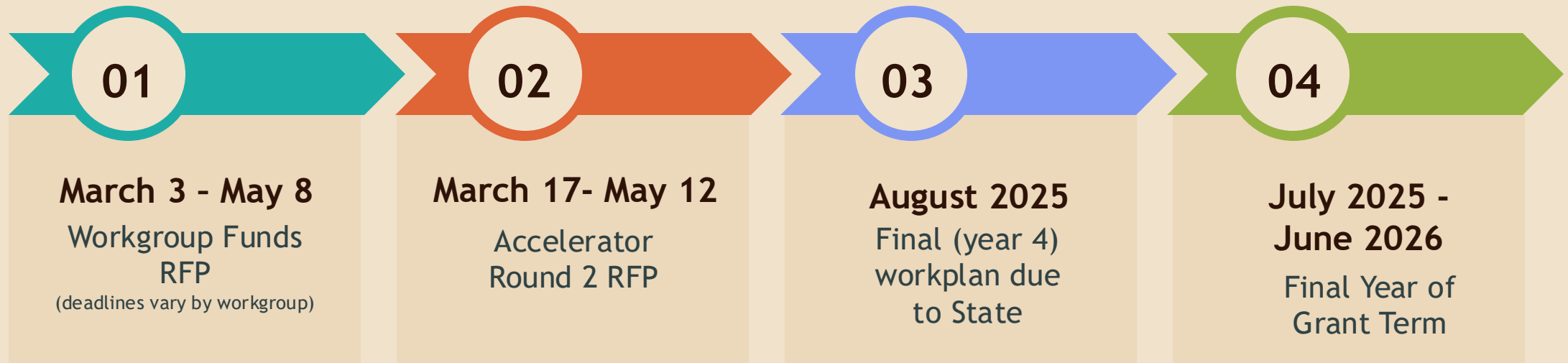
# K-16 Integration with Jobs First

As the Master Plan for Career Education and priorities of the Governor's office signal the importance of regional collaboration, utilizing stakeholder engagement findings to inform how the Sacramento K-16 Collaborative aligns its efforts with We Prosper Together will lead to expanded impact for learners and workers in our region.



# Timeline for Next Steps

As this research cycle concludes, it should be the launch of a new cycle of collaboration, action-planning, program improvement, and funding for the K-16 Collaborative. Use the findings and recommendations as resources to guide project proposals, inform the next year's workplan and to prioritize sustainability activities for the Sacramento K-16 Collaborative.





# THANK YOU

For more information and to access all research produced for the Sacramento K-16 Collaborative to date, please visit:

[www.sacramentok16.org/resource-hub/](http://www.sacramentok16.org/resource-hub/)

To contact Capitol Impact:  
[research@capitolimpact.org](mailto:research@capitolimpact.org)