



March 12, 2024

The Business Council of New York State Inc., and our 15 partner Chambers of Commerce, submit this letter in support of the *Dual Enrollment S.5616 (Mayer) / A.8941 (Benedetto)* legislative bill. The *Dual Enrollment* legislation presents a significant opportunity to enhance educational access and attainment for students across NYS state. Partnerships, through school districts and higher education institutions, allow high school students to enroll in college courses and earn transferable college credits.

In many states, *Dual Enrollment* has been historically used as an acceleration strategy for high-achieving learners and often served middle- or higher-income students. However, these opportunities are highly beneficial for all students. Taking college courses in high school has been found to have significant positive effects on college degree attainment and is particularly vital for students from underserved populations.

Yet, in many cases, participation rates in dual enrollment programs among students of color and students from low-income backgrounds are noticeably lower than their counterparts. Data from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center shows that while many community colleges faced enrollment declines post-pandemic, these institutions reported higher matriculation of *Dual Enrollment* students. Community colleges saw over an 11% growth in their programs; programs that allow students to earn college credits without incurring the cost of tuition and loans because school districts are saddled with financial burden.

NYS is experiencing a changing educational system, which emphasizes diverse post-secondary education and work-based learning, to ensure students succeed. However, NYS is just one of a handful of states without permanent state funding for dual/concurrent enrollment programs. The *Dual Enrollment* legislation offers a solution by allowing TAP funding to be used as a source for students earning credits through this coursework. These programs empower students to explore college-level coursework in a supportive environment by facilitating partnerships that lead to lifelong success.

The benefits of *Dual Enrollment* go beyond academic achievement to include personal and professional growth. Engaging in college-level coursework fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and time management skills, equipping students with the tools necessary for success in higher education and beyond. Supporting the *S.5616 (Mayer) / A.8941 (Benedetto)* legislation is an investment into the next generation of leaders, innovators, and changemakers. It offers a pathway to success and long-lasting impacts on the students, schools, education system, and the workforce of NYS.

For these reasons, The Business Council of New York State and our chamber partners support passing the *Dual Enrollment S.5616 (Mayer) / A.8941 (Benedetto)* legislative bill.

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