



Dual Credit and Academics: Assessing Outcomes for Low-Income and URM Students

The sixth of six research briefs on dual credit in Kentucky

What are the effects of dual credit based on income and minority status?

This research brief examines the impact of dual credit participation on second-year persistence and first-year GPA among low-income and underrepresented minority (URM) students, and explores whether dual credit opportunities help close outcome gaps affecting these student groups. Low-income is defined by a student's federal Pell grant status, and underrepresented minority students include those who identify as American-Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African-American, Hispanic or Latinx, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or two or more races. In this data sample, only 6.8% of dual enrollment participants were URM and low-income students, 4.7% were URM and non-low-income, 32% were non-URM and low-income, and 56.5% were non-URM and non-low-income.

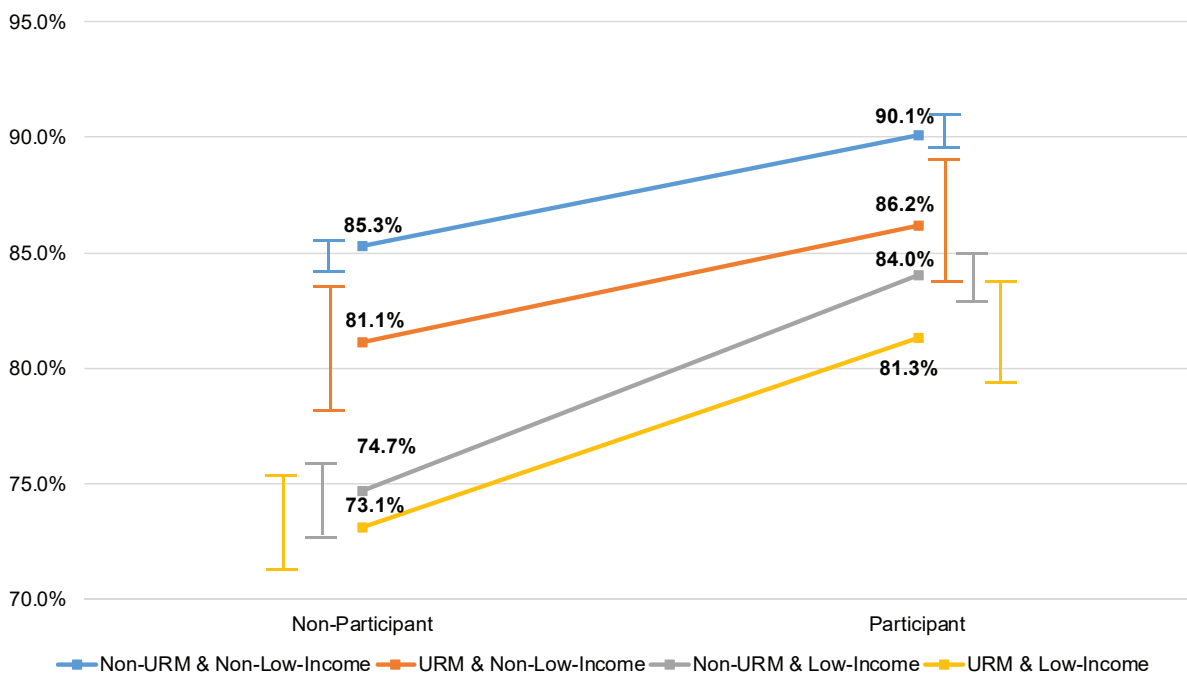
Greatest effect on persistence for low-income, non-URM students

Low-income, non-URM students benefited the most from participating in dual credit courses, which increased their likelihood of persisting to a second year by 9.3 percentage points. Low-income, URM students benefited the second most with an increase of 8.2 percentage points. The likelihood of persisting to a second year rose 5.1 points for non-low-income, URM students and 4.8 points for non-low-income and non-URM students. All the increases were statistically significant.

Reducing the persistence gap for low-income URM students

Overall, non-low-income, non-URM students had the highest probability of second-year persistence,

Figure 1. Effects of Dual Credit on Second-Year Persistence Across Income and URM Groups



regardless of dual credit participation, while low-income, URM students had the lowest probability. However, a dual credit experience significantly narrowed that gap from 12.2 to 8.8 percentage points. Additionally, participation in dual enrollment considerably narrowed the gap between non-low-income URM students and low-income URM students, from 8.0 to 4.9 percentage points.

Largest GPA gains among low-income, non-URM students

On grades, low-income, non-URM students benefited the most from dual credit enrollment. Their probability of obtaining a GPA equal to or greater than 3.0 rose 11.1 percentage points with a dual credit experience. Low-income, URM students benefited the second most with an increase of 8.6 percentage points. The probability climbed 8.1 points for non-low-income non-URM students and 5.3 points for non-low-income URM students. However, the increase for non-low-income URM students was not statistically significant.

Narrowing the gap in grades for URM students with lower incomes

Regardless of dual credit enrollment, students who were neither URM nor low-income had the greatest probability of obtaining a GPA equal to or greater than 3.0, while students who were both URM and low-income had the lowest probability. Participation in dual credit slightly narrowed the gap between non-low-income, non-URM students and low-income URM students from 26.0 to 25.5 percentage points. Moreover, participation significantly narrowed the gap between non-low-income URM students and low-income URM students, from 16.8 to 13.5 percentage points.

Summary

Low-income, non-URM students benefited the most from dual credit enrollment, followed by low-income URM students. Additionally, dual credit experiences show particular promise in helping reduce outcome gaps for low-income and URM students. Expanding dual credit opportunities statewide could help Kentucky improve student performance overall and close aggregate outcome gaps across the system.

Figure 2. Effects of Dual Credit on First-Year GPA Across Income and URM Groups

