



Dual Credit in Kentucky: Effects on Persistence and GPA

The second of six research briefs on dual credit in Kentucky

What are the effects of dual credit on postsecondary outcomes?

In Kentucky, the number of high school students participating in dual credit programs is on the rise, increasing the need for research to explore the effects of dual credit on postsecondary academic outcomes. This research brief focuses on two areas: second-year persistence and first-year grade point average (GPA) in college.

More Likely to Persist to the Second Year of College

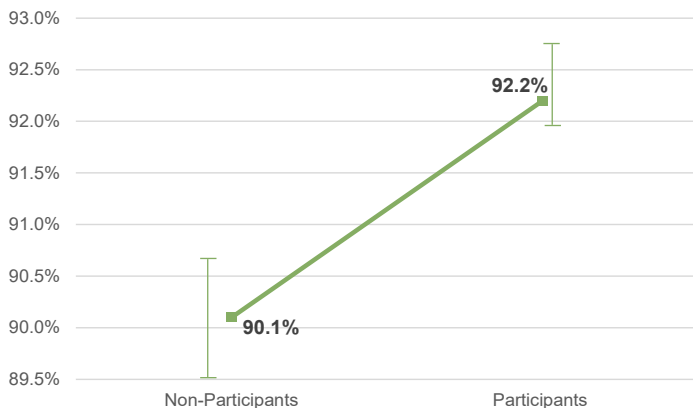
The study indicated that dual credit students were more likely to persist to a second year of college than students who did not participate in dual credit. The probability of dual credit students persisting

to a second year of college was 92.2%, compared to 90.1% for non-participants, a difference of 2.1 percentage points, as indicated in Figure 1.

More Likely to Obtain a First-Year GPA of 3.0 or Higher

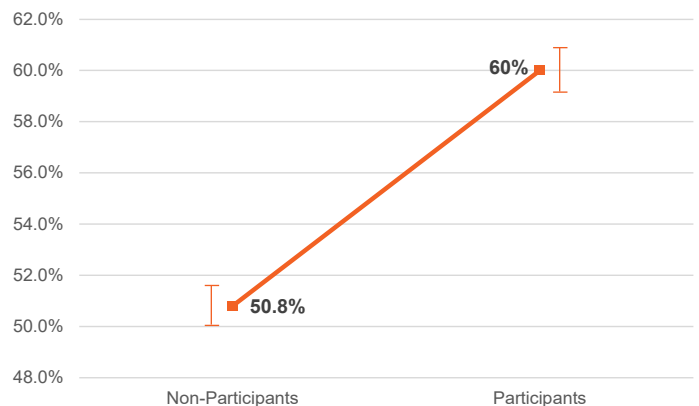
Dual credit students were also more likely to earn a GPA equal to or greater than 3.0 in their first year of college. According to the study, the probability of dual credit students earning a 3.0 GPA or higher in their first year was 60%, compared to 50.8% for non-participants, a difference of 9.2 percentage points, as indicated in Figure 2.

Figure 1. Probability of Persisting to a Second Year of College - Dual Credit Participants and Non-Participants



Vertical lines represent 95% confidence intervals. Values: Non-participants (89.5%-90.6%) and participants (91.8%-92.7%).

Figure 2. Probability of Earning a First-Year GPA of 3.0 or Higher - Dual Credit Participants and Non-Participants



Vertical lines represent 95% confidence intervals. Values: Non-participants (50%-51.7%) and participants (59.2%-60.9%).

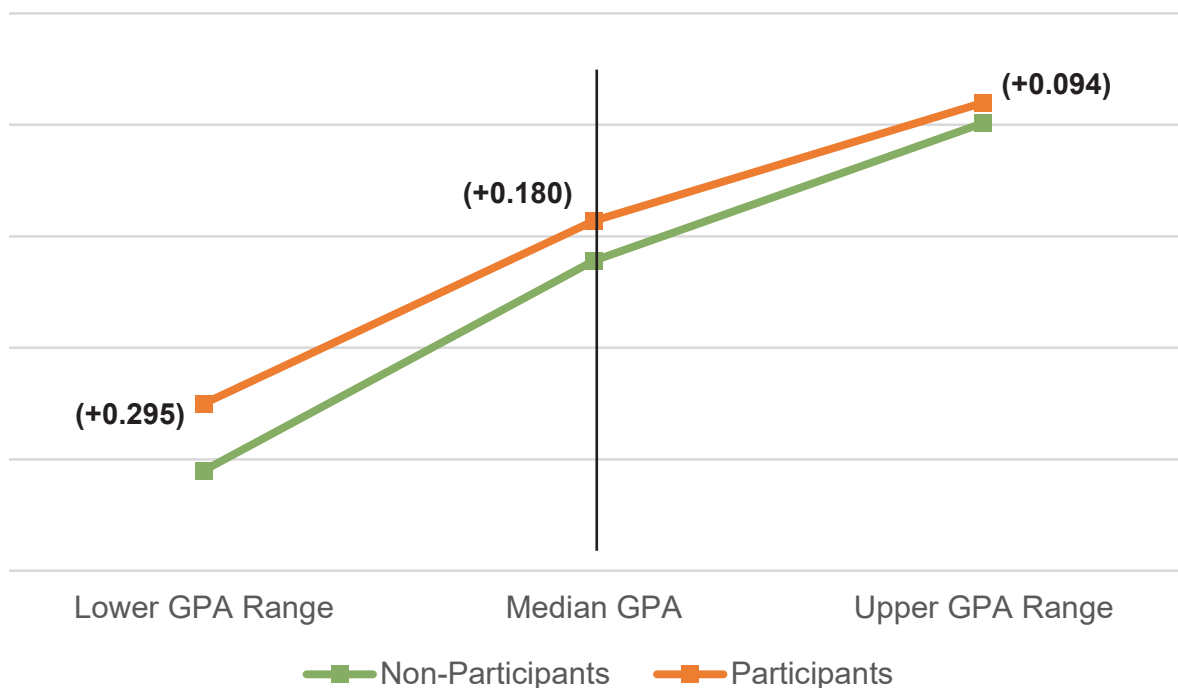
Impact on Students with Lower First-Year GPAs

Participation in dual credit had a stronger impact on students with lower first-year GPAs than those with higher GPAs. The effect of dual credit on first-year GPA decreased as first-year GPAs increased. At the lower end of the GPA range (approximately 2.25), dual credit participants averaged 0.295 points higher than non-participants. At the median GPA (3.07), dual credit participants averaged 0.180 points higher than non-participants. At the upper end of the range (approximately 3.6), dual credit participants averaged 0.094 points higher than non-participants, as indicated in Figure 3.

Summary

Based on these findings, Kentucky would benefit from increasing access to dual credit opportunities in high school. The study shows that a dual credit experience not only boosts academic performance during a student's first year of college, it also improves the likelihood that students will continue for a second year. Kentucky could better support these opportunities by improving outreach and advising for middle and high school students and increasing access to dual credit courses at local high schools during the school day.

Figure 3. Dual Credit's Effect on GPA at the Lower, Median and Upper Ranges



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