

A Rising Tide

Dual Enrollment is Growing Among California High School Students

Bolstered by state policy changes and substantial evidence that participation in college courses during high school leads to better preparation and persistence, dual enrollment is growing steadily in California. Participation remains uneven among different groups of California students, however, with variations by race/ethnicity and socio-economic status.

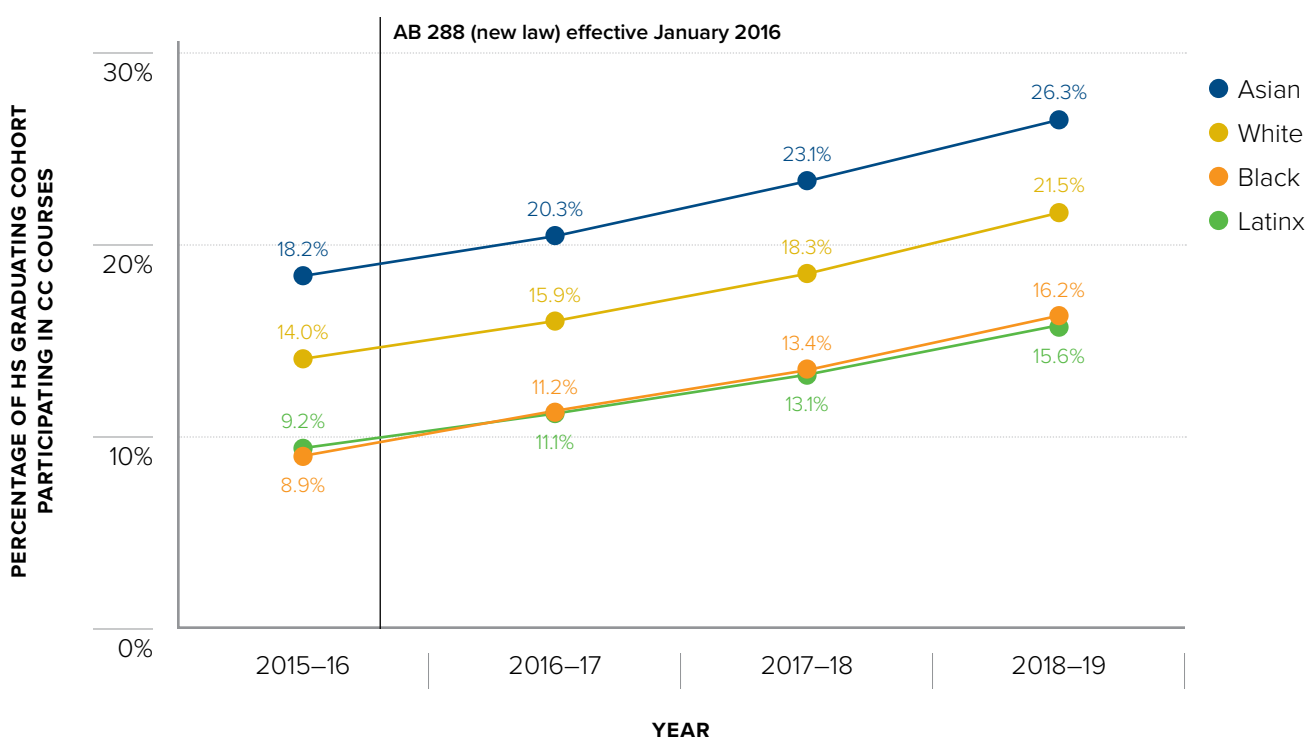
More students are participating in dual enrollment over time.



* In *A Leg Up on College* (January 2020), we reported that 12.6% of 2016–17 high school seniors participated in community college courses during their high school years. Since the publication of that report, we improved our methods for matching high school students to the community college data, resulting in this updated figure.

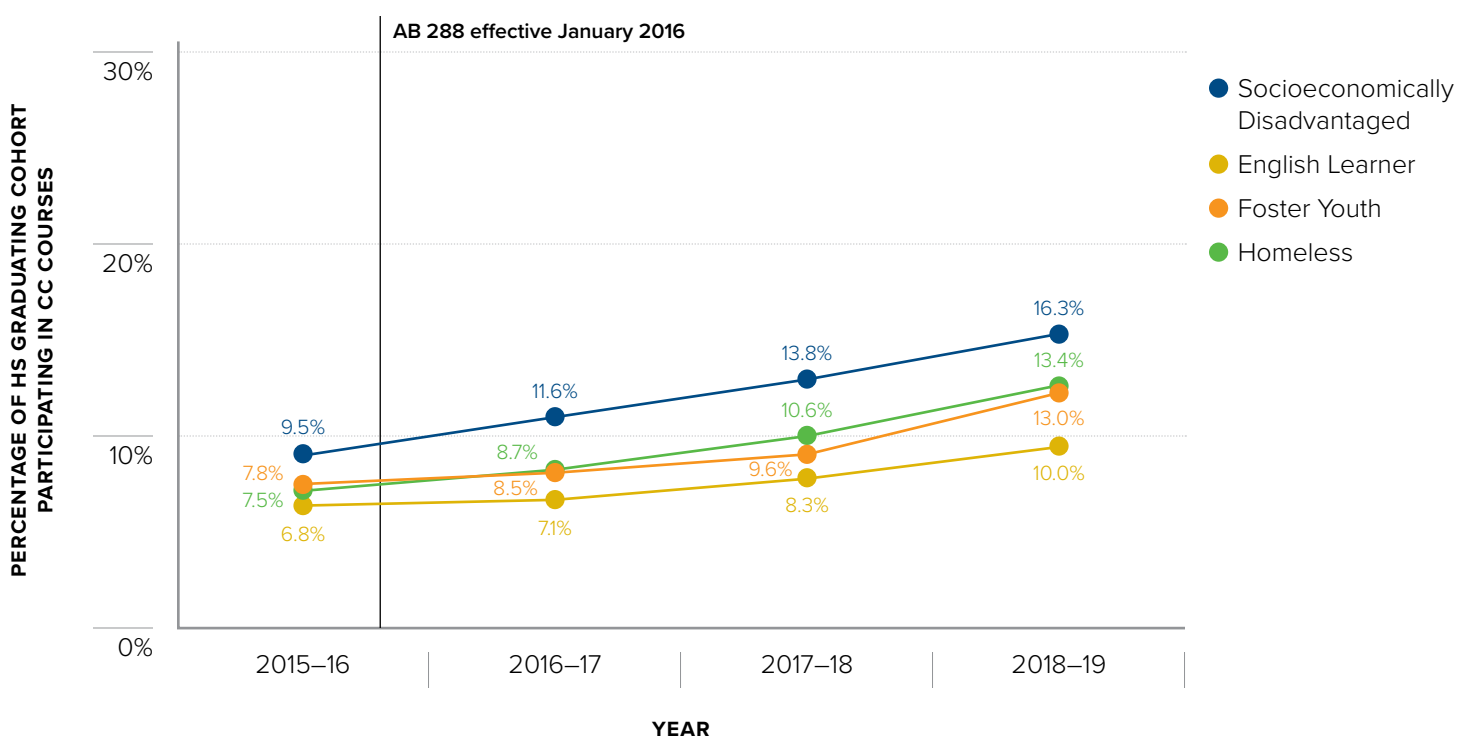
Participation in dual enrollment is increasing for all student subgroups, but inequity persists.

Over a four-year period, participation in dual enrollment grew steadily for all students by seven percentage points. Yet, gaps in participation rates between students from different racial/ethnic subgroups have not changed. Even with the near doubling of participation by Black and Latinx students, their rates still lag their Asian peers by 10 percentage points.



Students who face educational barriers are less likely to participate in dual enrollment.

Across California, many students are disadvantaged in their educational pursuits due to economic hardships or family circumstances. These students are further challenged by unequal educational opportunities, including their lagging participation in dual enrollment courses. Encouragingly, however, participation is increasing for all subgroups of students, though at varying rates of growth.



POLICY CONTEXT

In 2015, the California legislature enacted AB 288, subsequently extended by AB 30 in 2019, allowing college classes to be taught on high school campuses exclusively for high school students. Community colleges and high schools may establish partnerships to offer dual enrollment courses that count for both a high school diploma and an Associate of Arts degree. These agreements, known as College and Career Access Pathways (CCAP) Partnerships, are designed to increase opportunities for students to participate in college credit courses in high school. While causal attribution cannot be concluded, the evidence presented here suggests this policy contributed to growth in student participation in dual enrollment. As a strategy for increasing college preparedness, persistence and efficiency, dual enrollment is supportive of student success efforts initiated in recent years at the state, district and campus levels.

DATA AND METHODS

Results are drawn from a match of two separate datasets:

- Student-level data from the California Department of Education for the 2015–16 through 2018–19 public high school graduating cohorts.
- Data from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office "special admit" population of all high school students statewide who concurrently enroll in a community college between 2012 and 2019.

This analysis does not capture dual enrollment in the California State University, University of California, nor other means of completing college-level coursework, such as AP or IB programs.

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To view the original research brief, *A Leg Up on College*, please go to: education.ucdavis.edu/leg-college-0