

A Leg Up on College

Community College Participation Among California High School Students

An Effective Onramp, But Not Open to All

Research shows that dual enrollment—a practice in which high school students take college courses while they are still in high school—has multiple benefits for students, high schools and colleges. Researchers found that California high school students take college courses at a rate higher than the national average. But there are significant differences in college course-taking by race and socioeconomic status. Access to dual enrollment, an important on-ramp to college and its benefits, is not equal.



12.6%

of California high schoolers take community college courses

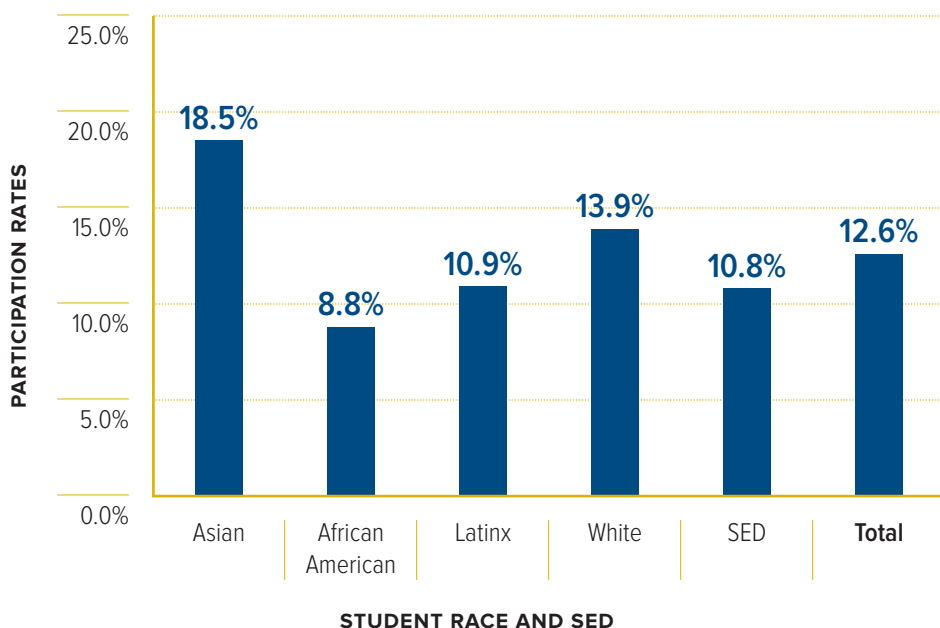


82%

of California high schools have *no* students enrolled in community college courses

Access to Dual Enrollment is Highly Unequal

Large difference in participation by race and SED status are notable. The lower participation rates of Latinx and SED students are particularly concerning given that Latinx students make up 50%, and SED students 65%, of high school seniors.



DATA AND METHODS

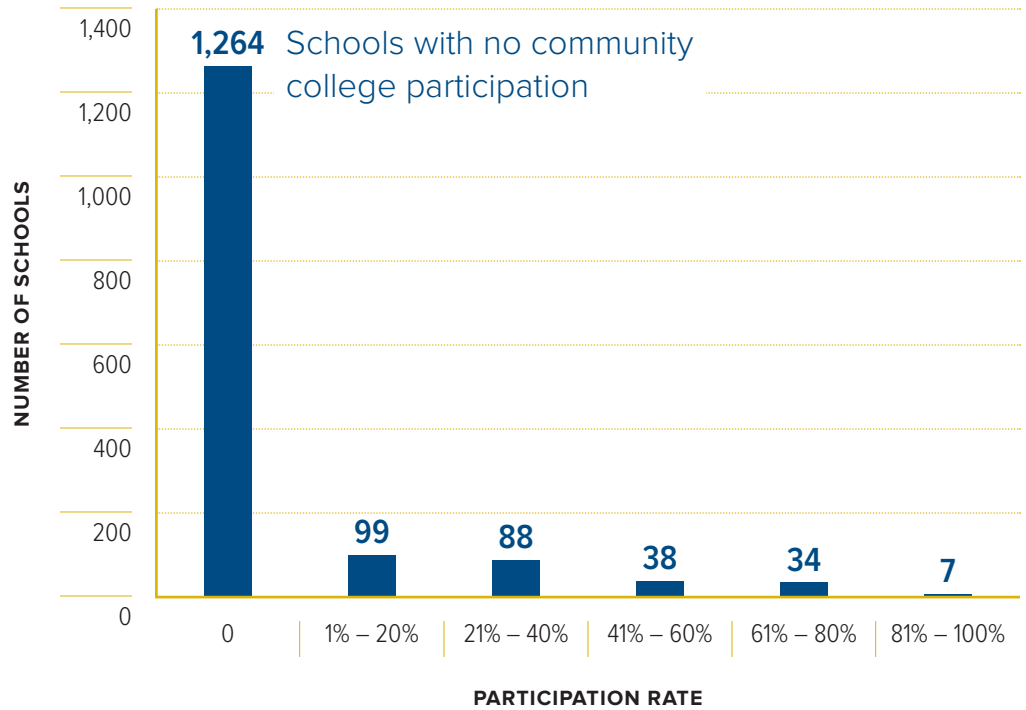
Results are drawn from a match of two separate datasets:

- Statewide student-level data from the California Department of Education (College/Career Indicator for the 2016–17 public high school graduating cohort).
- 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 2013 and 2017.

This is the first time that community college and K–12 data have been merged to examine high school students' college course-taking patterns statewide. This analysis does not capture dual enrollment in the California State University, nor other means of completing college-level coursework, such as AP or IB programs.

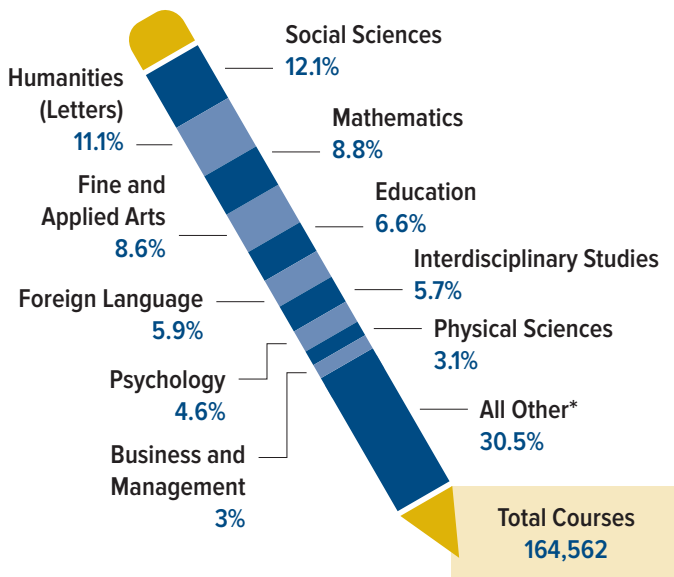
Participation Varies Substantially Statewide

Not all students have access to college courses during high school. Approximately 18% of public high schools serving 15 or more seniors had at least one student enrolled in a community college course. More than 1,200 high schools had no students who were dually enrolled.



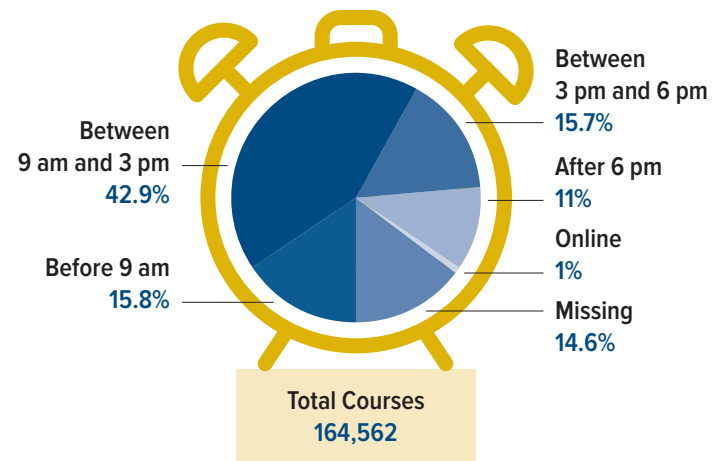
What Are They Taking?

Students take a wide range of college courses across subject areas. The most common were social sciences and humanities, which account for nearly a quarter of the total.



When Are They Taking It?

Most students participating in dual enrollment took community college classes during the course of a typical school day.



To view the full research brief on which this infographic is based, please go to: education.ucdavis.edu/wheelhouse

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