

September 2025



Credit Where Credit is Due:

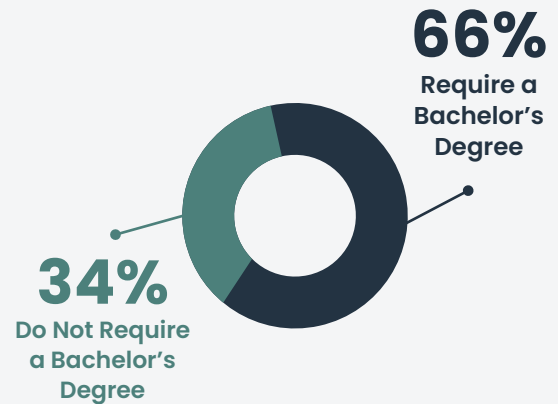
Charting the Course for
Cost-Effective, Career-Ready
Futures in New Jersey.



Executive Summary

The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce makes clear that college remains the most reliable pathway to “good jobs” defined in New Jersey as jobs that meet or surpass a wage threshold of \$47,600. However, while 66% of good jobs require a bachelor’s degree, recent data show rising unemployment rates among young college graduates. This, coupled with the fact that college’s perceived importance has hit new lows in every societal group in America, has led to uncertainty and confusion among New Jersey’s students and their families about how best to launch a successful life after high school. There is an urgent need to focus on viable college majors and affordable ways to get a college degree. Equally important, is the need to create a landscape that connects high school students to the 34% of good jobs that do not require a bachelor’s degree.

Good Jobs by Education



This policy brief identifies JerseyCAN’s two-pronged focus to create cost-effective, career-ready futures:

1. Democratize College Access and Completion.

Policy Focus:

- **Creating more college credit-earning opportunities for high schoolers that are available and scalable** – in all of New Jersey’s school districts via Advanced Placement (AP) exams; the College Level Examination Program, or CLEP; dual enrollment; and early college high schools .

2. Publicize Viable Non-College Pathways that Lead to Good Jobs.

Policy Focus:

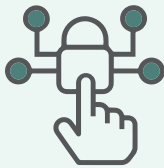
- **Increasing the use of industry-valued credentials** that strengthen the high-school-to-work pipeline by connecting high school students to high-wage, high-demand jobs in New Jersey that do not require a college education.



Ensuring students have access to excellent college and non-college postsecondary options in our state's high schools is vital to the lifeblood of our state, and there is work to be done. College has not been democratized - made available to everyone - in the state of New Jersey. Affordability is a significant barrier - 63% of New Jersey's college graduates have student debt, averaging more than \$35,000 per borrower. Academic preparedness also separates prospective college students from access. Nationally, 40% of students who enter community college are being assessed as underprepared for college level coursework and New Jersey ranked 15th in the country for the percentage of students (46%) taking remedial courses during their first semester in college.

JerseyCAN's **solution calls for substantively expanding college credit earning opportunities while still in high school**. For students not intending to go to college, **earning industry-valued credentials in high school is a crucial next step for accessing the world of work**, so this is an arena that our policy solution also addresses.

Our goal is for policymakers to ensure:



Access:

Fund early-earning and credentialing pathways (AP, CLEP, dual enrollment, early college programs, industry-valued credentials) to make them accessible in all of the state's regions and settings.



Affordability:

Streamline credit acceptance and transfer across public institutions so that students see a tangible return on their investment, and earmark funding for industry-valued credentials to increase available seats for students.



Assistance:

Address inequities and support individual student needs by targeting resources to districts where a large percentage of high school students are underperforming academically and/or are disconnected from good jobs upon graduation.

New Jersey ranks twenty-third in the United States for economic wellbeing, due in part to a decrease in recent years in the number of children in the state whose parents have secure employment. By creating a policy landscape that creates a path for every high school student to either earn college credit or acquire workplace credentials, New Jersey can build a fair-minded, economically viable future for all.



Introduction

The focus of this policy brief is twofold – delving into how New Jersey can **democratize** college access and completion and **publicize** viable non-college options to increase postsecondary success for students who are not engaged in attending college after high school.

Democratizing college access and completion is centered on making college truly available to the broad masses of students in New Jersey’s schools. In the current era, the value of generic messaging about the value of college degrees has been outlived and there is now a dire need to effectively frame and communicate the value of a cost-effective high-school-to-college pipeline, and to solve for academic and financial barriers that have prevented students from capitalizing on earning college credit while still in high school. JerseyCAN’s core policy recommendation is to substantially increase the number of students earning college credit in high school, based on the proven ability of this factor to focus student learning, defray some of the cost of college, and increase college completion.

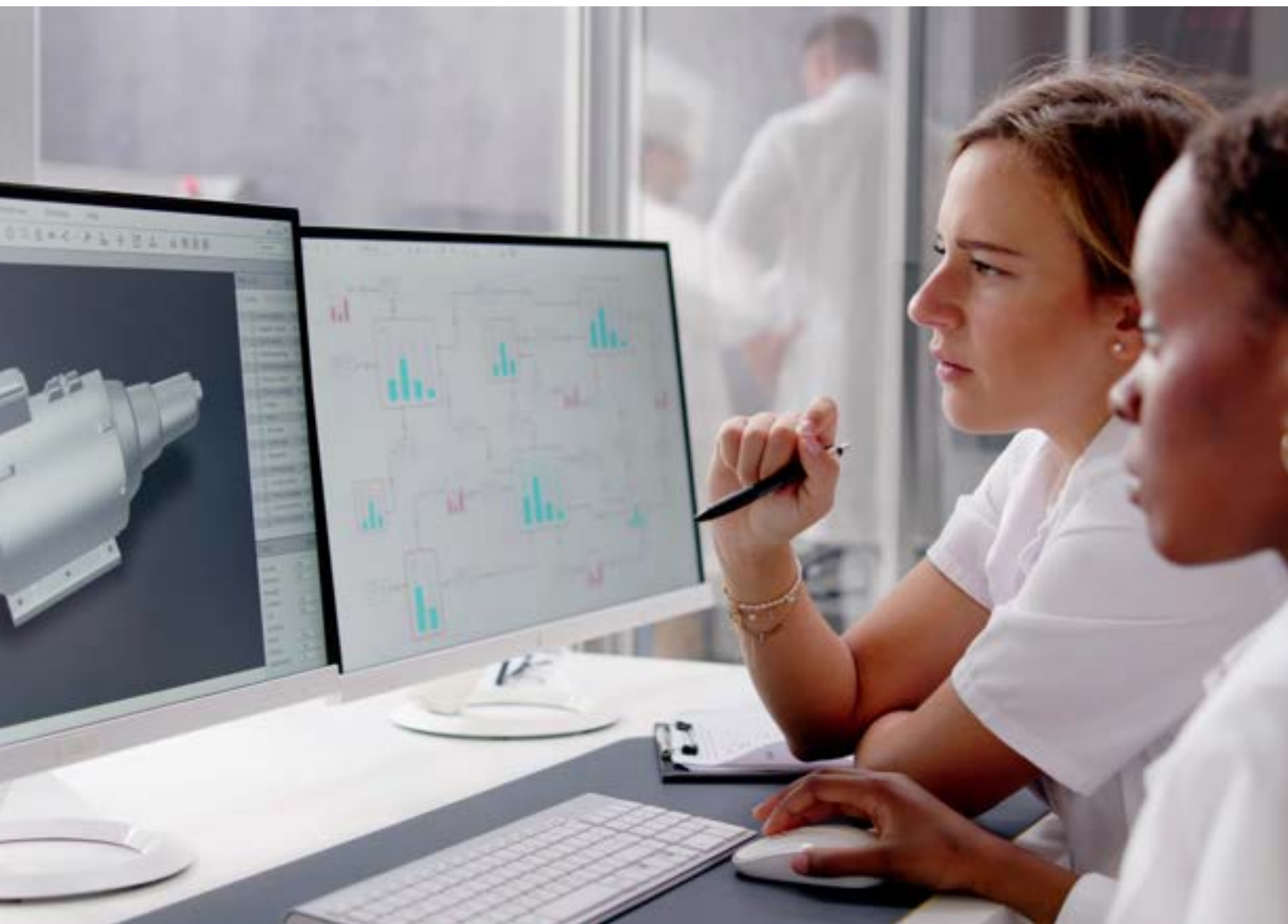
Summary of Recommendations

- **Amplify Support for Advanced Placement (AP) courses** to increase the number of students meeting receiving institutions’ required pass rate of 3, 4 or 5 on one of 39 AP examinations.
- **Substantially increase the use of the College Level Examination Program (CLEP)** to confer college credit for students meeting receiving institutions’ required score of 50+ on one of 34 CLEP examinations.
- ***Deepen investment in dual enrollment** in high school and community college classes to confer some college credits to students before they leave high school.
- **Expand seats in early college high school programs** to ensure more capable students can earn a degree from a local community college while also earning a high school diploma.
- **Strengthen the high-school-to-work pipeline** by connecting students to high-demand industry-valued credentials in New Jersey..
- **Promote awareness and respect for non-college job options**, including options that require industry-valued credentials in skilled trades and technical careers, affirming their value as being on par with four-year college degrees.

**For this report, dual enrollment which confers some college credit but not enough to earn an associate’s degree is treated separately from early college high school programs that confer associate’s degrees.*



Publicizing viable non-college options, specifically industry-valued credentials, is also a chief goal of this policy brief. College is only one part of the landscape of cost-effective, career-ready futures, but while college is not always necessary, a high school diploma void of specialized knowledge is simply not enough. Here too, discernment is needed. Students should be educated on the fact that all career and technical education opportunities are not created equal. New Jersey's business and industry organizations focus heavily on workplace development needs and the New Jersey Department of Education regularly [publishes a list of approved programs that award industry-valued credentials](#). Both of these actions bode well for bolstering the connection between high-demand jobs and student preparedness to fill those roles. Focusing on this connection will help to grow the state's economy and allow students to better navigate the full breadth of New Jersey's employment opportunities.



Democratize college access and completion in New Jersey.

The New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C.) 6A:8-3.3 states:

“District boards of education, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:61C-1, shall make reasonable efforts to increase the availability of college-level instruction for high school students through courses offered by institutions of higher education at their campuses and in high schools. The credits shall be accepted at all public New Jersey higher education institutions pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:61C-8.”

New Jersey’s codified regulations clearly assign value to dual enrollment programs that teach college course content in the classroom and confer college credits to high school students through dual enrollment and early college high schools. Curricular connections between academic content in the senior grades in high school and the material covered in various courses in the earliest years in college also make it possible to earn college credit through credit-by-testing programs - namely Advanced Placement (AP) and the College Level Examination Program (CLEP).



Democratizing college access and completion ensures that the widest range of students who aspire to attend college can do so. With mechanisms to support students' success with college level work in high school, student preparedness for college can be affirmed with successful earning of college credit, and, when students do not meet the bar for success, this can serve as an early warning signal to activate further support for the student to succeed, rather than waiting for students to enter college and face crippling academic challenges early on. Because of their demonstrable value, college credit earning options should be scalable and available in all of New Jersey's regions and districts.

This brief will expound on four opportunities for earning college credits in high school:

1. Advanced Placement (AP) courses – AP confers college credits if students meet the receiving institution's required pass rate of 3, 4 or 5 on one of 39 AP examinations.

2. College Level Examination Program (CLEP) – CLEP confers college credit if students meet the receiving institution's required score of 50+ on one of 34 CLEP examinations.

3. *Dual enrollment in high school and college (DE) – DE confers some college credits usually from local community colleges.

4. Early college high school programs (EC) – EC confers sufficient college credits to simultaneously confer high school degrees and associate's degrees.

**For this report, dual enrollment which confers some college credit but not enough to earn an associate's degree is treated separately from early college high school programs that confer associate's degrees.*



1. Advanced Placement (AP) courses

Policy Goal

Amplify Support for Advanced Placement (AP) courses to increase the number of students meeting receiving institutions' required pass rate of 3, 4 or 5 on one of 39 AP examinations.

Recommendations:

- Create a policy to incentivize high test participation, not just course registration, for AP students.
- Create a policy for uniformity on AP credit acceptance across New Jersey's public colleges and universities, with a waiver process for tertiary institutions to be exempt from the policy in certain circumstances.

Advanced Placement offers college-level coursework and college credit-by-testing examinations to high school students. [There is data to show](#) that earning college credit through AP exams increases the likelihood of students graduating college after four years of matriculation, an encouraging datapoint concerning the value of Advanced Placement. However, [recent research](#) highlights a critical gap in the Advanced Placement (AP) system: while enrollment in AP courses is substantial, many AP course enrollees fail to take the corresponding exams, thereby missing out on the opportunity to earn college credit. With over 30 AP courses tied to exams that can yield credit at thousands of colleges and universities nationwide, this is not a trivial finding. Also, predictive models suggest that nearly one-third of students who do not take the exams could have earned scores of 3 or higher.

[New Jersey's Advanced Placement data is admirable in multiple regards.](#) The state shows exemplary rates of AP course offerings, with 95.2% of the state's public high schools offering AP courses. The state also ranks first in the nation for having the highest percentage of public high schools offering 5 or more AP courses (86.9%). Most notably, over the course of a decade, the state has shown a 7.2% increase in the students scoring a 3 or higher on an AP exam. Given the state's access and participation rates, opportunities for the state to further improve success with AP lies in the state being able to more rapidly increase the percentage of students that pass the Advanced Placement examinations that they take.





Bright Spot: North Star Academy Charter School

In crafting policy, New Jersey can look to North Star Academy Charter School, which serves as a standout for the manner in which the school has maximized Advanced Placement as a tool for earning college credits in high school. 45.9% of North Star’s AP test-taking students earn a passing

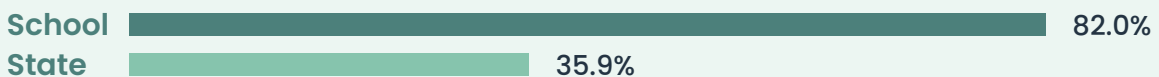
score of 3 or higher, effectively doubling the state average of the percent of students who earn a 3 or higher on AP tests. The data show that 82% of North Star students enrolled in one or more AP or IB courses whereas that was only true for 35.9% of students statewide. In addition, the gap between their course enrollment and exam-taking percentages is only 1.3%, compared to a statewide gap of 5.1%. This means that most AP course enrollees at North Star follow through to take the exam. It would be worthwhile to create a policy that encourages AP course enrollment for prepared students and establishes a goal for test taking participation attached to AP course enrollment. North Star also implements a well-planned suite of student supports for each AP class. Replicating these actions statewide could reap dividends for more students to earn college credit in high school, thereby saving thousands of dollars in college course-taking fees later on.



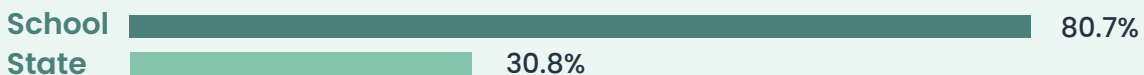
AP/IB Coursework – Participation and Performance

This chart shows the percentage of 11th and 12th graders who enrolled in one or more AP or IB courses, who took one or more AP or IB exams, and who had one or more exams with an AP score of 3 or higher or IB score of 4 or higher.

Students enrolled in one or more AP or IB course



Students taking one or more AP or IB exam



Students with one or more exams with a score of at least 3 on AP exams or 4 on IB



Source: [2023-24 NJ School Performance Report](#)



Advanced Placement Report Card

How does Advanced Placement fare in the 3 crucial categories on our report card?

✓ Access:

- New Jersey leads the nation in providing access to Advanced Placement coursework in its public high schools.
- AP Exams are tied to AP courses and the courses are strongly recommended to support student mastery. However, students can choose to take the exam without taking the course as there is no barrier to prevent them from doing so.

✓ Affordability:

- New Jersey participates in the Advanced Placement Exam Fee Reduction Program, which reduces the cost of AP tests for low-income students, who are designated as such based on their eligibility for free and reduced price lunches. Depending on the test, AP exams incur a cost of \$99 - \$147 dollars, but through this program, the testing fee for low-income students is reduced to \$13 in out-of-pocket costs for students.

✓ Assistance:

- AP Classroom is a free College Board resource to provide academic support to students taking AP courses. There are daily videos for students to engage regularly with bite-sized portions of course content. Other resources exist on AP Classroom but the portal supports both AP teachers and students, as opposed to focusing all resources on direct student support. Pass rates of AP exams suggest that supportive resources are either underutilized or insufficiently robust and may need to be revised.



2. College Level Examination Program (CLEP)

Policy Goal

Substantially increase the use of the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) to confer college credit for students meeting receiving institutions' required score of 50+ on one of 34 CLEP examinations.

Recommendations:

- Launch an information campaign for students and families to understand how to reduce college costs through low-cost credit by CLEP examination.
- Create a state-based CLEP testing fee waiver process for low-income students in New Jersey.
- Create a policy for uniformity on CLEP credit acceptance across New Jersey's public colleges and universities, with a waiver process for tertiary institutions to be exempt from the policy in certain circumstances.

For more than half a century, The College Level Examination Program, or CLEP, has made it possible for persons to show mastery of college level material and earn college credit. CLEP provides test takers with the chance to demonstrate competency in 34 subject areas, covering first and second year college courses in history, economics, mathematics, foreign language and other subjects. For less than \$100, students can take a CLEP test and earn between 3 and 12 college credits depending on the subject. Formal results are typically available within hours - or a bit longer for some tests - providing a short feedback loop for test takers. There are other benefits to CLEP - [a College Board analysis](#) of test-takers found that students who earn course credits by achieving the minimum required score on CLEP exams per their institution's credit policy perform the same or better in subsequent courses than their non-CLEP peers who took the equivalent introductory college course at the institution. [Another analysis found](#) that high school CLEP test takers who score 50 or higher and matriculate to a four-year college have better college retention and graduation rates than a comparable group of students who were not CLEP test takers. The analysis also found that CLEP students performed better than students who had not earned early credit.



In the 2018–2019 school year, [only 22% of CLEP test takers nationally were high school students](#) and recent unconfirmed estimates point to a far lower percentage in New Jersey. CLEP usage at the high school level in New Jersey is scant, and holds great potential to advance the democratization of college in New Jersey.



Bright Spot

[Modern States Education Alliance](#) is a noteworthy resource to boost CLEP usage and success in New Jersey. It is a nonprofit



MODERN STATES

organization that seeks to increase college accessibility by building CLEP-aligned online courses that are free and universally available to teach the content that CLEP tests with its exams. In 2021, New Jersey committed to a pilot [partnership](#) with Modern States which was supported by the state-commissioned [On-Ramps to College Working Group](#). The partnership was formed during the COVID-19 pandemic, largely for adults to gain broader access to higher education pathways, however CLEP remains severely underutilized in the state of New Jersey.

With over 30 fully built online courses, available asynchronously for students to engage with whenever they choose, Modern States can help New Jersey to make significant inroads with college credit earning in high school. Their free course materials feature slide decks, short teaching modules delivered via video by college professors, as well as short, frequent checks for understanding, and longer sample tests. For high schools or any managing entity that wants to be able to track and support engagement of students with the Modern States platform, the organization also has the capacity to generate reports showing the frequency and amount of use each student had with the platform over a given period. As of August 2025, the organization also pays for students to take CLEP tests, if they register on the platform.



College Level Examination Program (CLEP) Report Card

How does the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) fare in the 3 crucial categories on our report card?

✓✓ Access:

- CLEP guarantees that every New Jersey high school has access, with no barriers for participation, to an affordable college-credit earning opportunity.
- CLEP is not well-known, which is a barrier to access.

✓ Affordability:

- As of August 2025, students who register with Modern States for CLEP course preparation can obtain fee waivers from the organization, however the future of such funding for students is unclear. Unlike AP, the NJDOE does not provide test fee waiver assistance for CLEP testing.

✓ Assistance:

- Through Modern States, CLEP courses have a full infrastructure for course content exposure and a mechanism for self-driven or educator-supported academic tutoring.



3. Dual Enrollment

Policy Goal

Deepen investment in dual enrollment in high school and community college classes to confer some college credits to students before they leave high school.

Recommendations:

- Use state funding to fully defray the cost of dual enrollment for low-income students.
- Institute a policy for New Jersey to join the [20+ states](#) that have legal requirements for notifying students and parents about dual enrollment programs.



Dual enrollment allows high school students to take college level courses and simultaneously earn both high school and college credits, typically from local community colleges. A [university study](#) found that students who participate in dual-enrollment programs are more likely to apply to and gain admission to a greater number of colleges, including more selective institutions. The benefits are especially significant for certain students; Black students were 15.6 percent more likely to apply to a four-year institution for each dual-enrollment credit earned.

In New Jersey, dual-enrollment programs currently account for [9% of all college enrollment](#). This highlights the potential for further expansion given the demonstrated student benefits. Dual enrollment participation for high schoolers in New Jersey has increased each year for the past three school years, and currently sits at 26.9%. Through these programs, high school students take college-level courses that count toward both their high school diploma and college degree, at a fraction of the cost of traditional tuition. Completing 30 credits through dual enrollment can save a student more than \$10,000



in tuition at a four-year college. Beyond affordability, dual enrollment can build students' confidence in their ability to tackle college-level work.

The [New Jersey Dual Enrollment Study Commission Report](#) reported that students who participate in dual enrollment (identified for this study as either dual enrollment that confers some college credits, or early college programs that confer associate's degrees) earn a higher first year grade point average (GPA) in college and have a shorter average time to bachelor's degree completion. Model legislation spearheaded by former New Jersey Assemblywoman Pamela Lampitt successfully championed a law which codifies standards for statewide transfer agreements for college credits. The "Lampitt Law" was updated to include dual enrollment situations.

Despite the benefits of dual enrollment, there are barriers for participation. Only a discrete number of seats are available each year, leaving some students without opportunities. Even discounted tuition can be prohibitive for families living with financial insecurity, and New Jersey does not specify consistent eligibility criteria, require districts to notify all students and parents about available programs, or provide reliable statewide funding. School districts are often strained to allocate general operating funds in covering the costs such as stipends for teachers delivering college-level instruction, and may not understand which federal funding streams are appropriate for this program.



Bright Spot

Brookdale Community College has a publicized [dual enrollment release program agreement](#) with 22 area high schools, paving the way for students from these institutions to enroll in courses at the college and spend half of their school day on a Brookdale Community College campus. Making the agreement known is excellent practice, since New Jersey is a state that does not mandate parent notification of dual enrollment programs. Monmouth County High School, one of the schools partnered with Brookdale Community College, has [increased dual enrollment by 39% over a five-year period](#) and the school has set a longer-term goal to increase enrollment by 50% more by 2028. With these actions, it is evident that there is an intentional focus on dual enrollment as a driver of college access in Monmouth County at both the high school and community college levels. This serves as a model for other communities in New Jersey to follow. Creating goals with specific metrics around dual enrollment, like Monmouth County High School has done and publicizing affiliation with the program as has been done with Brookdale Community College, creates a focus to advance student success with dual enrollment.



Dual Enrollment Report Card

How does Dual Enrollment fare in the 3 crucial categories on our program report card?

! Access:

- There are a discrete number of seats available, after which participation is restricted.
- Not all families are aware of the program.

! Affordability:

- The program incurs costs, and funding mechanisms vary across districts.

! Assistance:

- Student support varies, with differentiated support based on the level of district focus accorded to the program.



4. Early College High School Programs

Policy Goal

Expand seats in early college high school programs to ensure more capable students can earn a degree from a local community college while also earning a high school diploma.

Recommendations

- Use state funding to fully defray the cost of early college high school programs for low-income students.
- Institute a policy for New Jersey to join the [20+ states](#) that have legal requirements for notifying students and parents about early college high school programs.

Early college high school programs in New Jersey are powerful engines for college access, as students earn associate's degrees before completing high school. These programs exist in all kinds of public school settings, including traditional public schools, public charter schools, and county vocational-technical schools, or "vo-tech" schools. In 2024, 337 vocational-technical students were set to graduate with an associate degree from several vo-tech schools, including 89 from Bergen County Technical School District, 73 from Cumberland County Technical Education Center, and 46 from Ocean County Vocational Technical Schools. This distribution is indicative of the scale and impact of early college high school programs statewide.

There is a cost for tuition and transportation. There is also an issue of awareness because New Jersey law does not mandate local education agencies (LEAs) to notify all students and parents of dual enrollment. There are at least 27 states that have this enshrined into law. Further, New Jersey does not provide state-level funding for dual



enrollment programs and it does not require LEAs/school districts to fund these programs. Notification barriers as well as financial barriers are potentially impeding expansion of early college high school programs. Transportation challenges are also a consideration, since a significant amount of participation occurs on the community college campuses.

Even with these challenges, hundreds of students each year graduate high school with an associate's degree, reducing the cost of higher education and accelerating their paths to four-year college graduation. This makes a tangible contribution to more students being prepared for both college and career success.



Bright Spot

Strong partnerships are central to the success of early college high school programs. Nowhere is this better exemplified than in Camden County. Camden County College works with Mastery Charter High School of Camden, Camden Academy Charter, and Camden County Technical Schools to enroll 60–70 students each year, distributed across the partner schools. Partner schools have their own selection processes for the program to ensure college readiness. After enrollment, some students do developmental level coursework at the college before accessing college-level work. Students earn associate's degrees in Liberal Arts which they can then parlay into earning bachelors degrees after two years of additional study. The program counsels students to understand that their program of study at a four-year college will affect the acceptance of individual courses earned toward their associate's degree and the College works with a transfer coordinator to develop partnerships with institutions where students commonly transfer. The College works intensely with colleges and universities in the area to understand their policies and thus guide students to gain the greatest advantage from the early college high school program structure. There are specialized nuances. For example, New Jersey's Ivy League institution, Princeton University, does not accept college credits earned in high school to be transferred toward an undergraduate degree, however the university does permit transfer applications from students who have completed an associate's degree. Understanding these nuances and how various policies affect students is crucial so that students' efforts and accomplishments are not nullified by the rules and policies of the tertiary institutions they hope to attend. That said, this formal partnership with three different schools in Camden County is a positive reminder that students at varied school settings can successfully take advantage of early college high school programs.



Early College Programs Report Card

How do Early College programs fare in the 3 crucial categories on our program report card?

✓ Access:

- Academic readiness bars exist but the program does accommodate some students that need remediation.
- Local districts provide transportation assistance to students.

⚠ Affordability:

- The program incurs several costs that are not reliably covered by entities other than students' families, in the event of financial hardship.

⚠ Assistance:

- Academic assistance is available but uneven; it varies by institution and participating partners.



Publicize viable non-college pathways that lead to good jobs in New Jersey.

Policy Goals

Strengthen the high-school-to-work pipeline by connecting students to high-demand industry-valued credentials in New Jersey, and **promote awareness and respect for viable non-college job options**, affirming their value as being on par with four-year college degrees.

Recommendations:

- Launch a high-profile state campaign that highlights a sampling of in-demand industry-valued credentials, including compensation offered, training required at the high school and postsecondary levels, and efforts to remove the stigma that often plagues non-college career options and points them as being inferior conduits to meaningful work.

In New Jersey, “industry-valued credential” is used as an umbrella term for a menu of deliverables that can be awarded for an occupational competency if students meet the outlined requirements. Certificates, certifications and diplomas are among these options, some of which can be cumulatively earned, or “stacked” on top of each other as stepping stones to more advanced credentials in the field. For example, a student in a nursing school program who has completed a “Fundamentals of Nursing” course can earn a home health aide certificate in New Jersey. A nursing degree can be later stacked on top of this credential after the student has earned it. In this way, industry-valued credentials can

offer an immediate on-ramp to employment and are a key part of workforce development in New Jersey.

The Future of Good Jobs: Projections through 2031 report indicates that [52% of good jobs are expected to be on the middle skills pathway](#), denoting jobs that require credentials beyond a high school diploma but not a bachelor’s degree. Industry-valued credential programs are awarded across a diverse landscape of fields - manufacturing, culinary arts, electrical work, exercise science, and more. To ensure relevancy, career credentialing programs are guided by an advisory board composed of employers in



the field so that training, materials, and curricula align with industry standards. For career and technical education in the state, the Perkins V State Plan mandates that programs career and technical education programs or “CTE” have to result in a specific deliverable, and industry-valued credentials are options that meets this requirement. As the landscape of work evolves, an uptick in industry-valued credentials has occurred, and will become ever more relevant with time. In 2022, 6,000 students in New Jersey earned industry-valued credentials and that number rose by 62% to a total of 9,649 students in the 2023-2024 school year.

Industry-valued credentials can increase graduates’ employability for immediate benefit to students leaving high school. To marry workplace demands with worker prosperity, New Jersey must give special focus to high-wage, high-demand credential-based work in our state. In some instances, these work streams will mirror national trends, and in other instances specific workplace demands will be linked to our state. On the national front, the field is growing for electricians with a median salary of [\\$62,350 per year](#). The American Public Power Association has projected that 100,000 electrical workers and 30,000 apprentices will be trained over the next five years to keep up with some of the demand of artificial intelligence and other developments reliant on electrical products and grids, and a segment of New Jersey’s students should be prepared to avail themselves of these opportunities.





Bright Spot

New Jersey is the birthplace of the film industry, from an early film invention in Newark in 1887 to Thomas Edison developing motion picture technology in nearby West Orange shortly thereafter. One hundred thirty-eight years later, The New Jersey Film Academy, created under the Center of Workforce Innovation for Film & Television Production, is working to strengthen the state's film industry with training programs to arm New Jerseyans with the skills and knowledge that roles in the film industry demand. The Academy provides pathways for students from diverse backgrounds to earn industry-valued credentials and degrees, in order to cement New Jersey as a film production hub in the country. Through New Jersey's community colleges, the Film Academy is training workers in varied film and television roles that may not be well-known to the general public. A grant program has been established to facilitate training and a [review](#) of eligible roles that are vital to film production shows several roles that could potentially be taught at the high school level for an earned credential upon high school graduation. For example, the audio and video technician role involves a detailed understanding of audio and video equipment. If districts invest in current technology being used in the field, students can be well-versed on the AV equipment and software to succeed in this role directly out of high school and the mean annual wage estimate for audio and video technicians is [\\$59,260](#). Other film-related jobs for which industry-valued credentials in high school already exist include roles as hair stylists and makeup artists (estheticians).

A place-based strategy to match training with workplace demands will be important in this field, because a film incentive program in New Jersey has attracted major players in the film industry and promises to infuse millions of dollars into the state's economy. Projected job creation is in excess of 8,000 jobs. Netflix and Lionsgate serve as two examples of these investments, with a commitment from Netflix of \$848 million in capital investments for a facility in Monmouth County, and Lionsgate committing to a major production facility in Newark's South Ward. These investments will have positive ripple effects for local residents who are equipped with the skills to fill related roles.



New Jersey
Film Academy
Where the best in the biz begin
A NJ Nonprofit Corporation



Industry Valued Credentials Report Card

How do Industry-Valued Credential programs fare in the 3 crucial categories on our program report card?

Access:

- There are many programs available; financial requirements and specialized teacher expertise impact access to industry-valued credentials.
- Stigma against non-college options can dissuade students from opting into industry-valued credential programs.

Affordability:

- While some programs are more costly than others, school districts can build their annual budgets to account for federal and state funding of industry-valued credentials they offer.

Assistance:

- Due to the volume and diversity of industry-valued credentials being offered across regions and counties in New Jersey, the level of assistance being provided to students in the wide field of industry-valued credentials is outside of the scope of this report. JerseyCAN is committed to learning from school districts across the state about the varied credentials they offer, and how students are supported in pursuit of these career pathways.

Conclusion

There have always been multiple pathways to college and career but as students and families contemplate economic futures, manageable college debt and job-ready skills are more relevant than ever before. In sum, students want credit where credit is due, whether through the college pathway or credentials earned in a non-college field. By establishing policies that grant widespread access to college credit and workplace credentials in high school, an economically sustainable future will be secured for the Garden State.

