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## Why It Matters

The benefits of dual enrollment are well established. High school students benefit from college course-taking opportunities by gaining early exposure to college experiences and accumulating units that can later be applied to a college degree.

An extensive body of research indicates that students who take college courses while they are still in high school:

- are more likely to graduate from high school,<sup>3</sup> to enroll and persist in college and to earn a bachelor's degree in shorter time.<sup>4</sup>
- outperform non-dual enrollment students on a range of college outcomes, including college enrollment, first-year grade point average (GPA), credit accumulation and persistence to the second year of college.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to student benefits, dual enrollment also confers institutional advantages to both K-12 and community colleges. It allows community colleges to strengthen relationships with local feeder high schools and increase enrollments, while allowing high schools to increase efficiencies in coverage of content and instruction while providing more curricular variety to students than might otherwise be achievable.

These benefits are particularly relevant for California, where educators and policymakers are increasingly focused on improving college attainment and time to degree, and where the college pipeline is heavily impacted by capacity constraints.

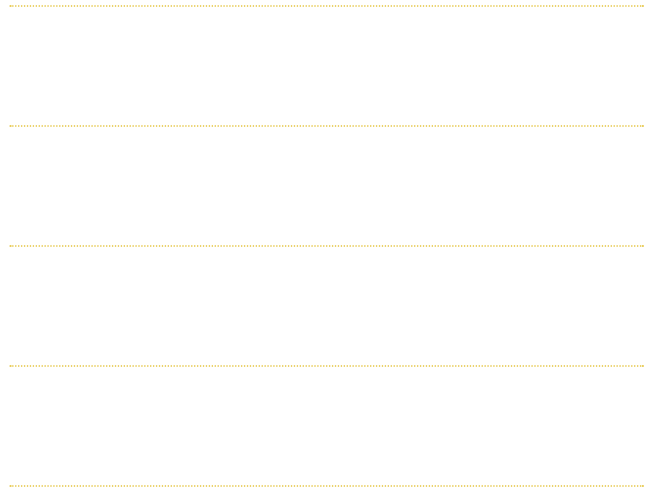
## Onramp Not Open to All

Previous research has also found that access to dual enrollment is highly unequal.<sup>6</sup> A nationally representative survey of high school students found that, overall, 10.9% earned high school credit through dual enrollment from 2009 to 2013, but rates differed among racial subgroups: Whites, 13%; Asians, 10.1%; African Americans, 6.5%; and Latinx, 8.7%.<sup>7</sup> These national findings are mirrored in our California analysis. Another recent study found big differences across school districts in dual enrollment participation.<sup>8</sup>

## California Results

closely, however, with the reported counts of community college participation by high school students—the “special admit” population—that appears in DataMart at the Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office. Figure 1 shows California high school students’ community college course participation rates by race/ethnicity and by socioeconomically disadvantaged (SED) status.

Large differences by race and SED status are notable. For example, Asian and White students are overrepresented in community college course-

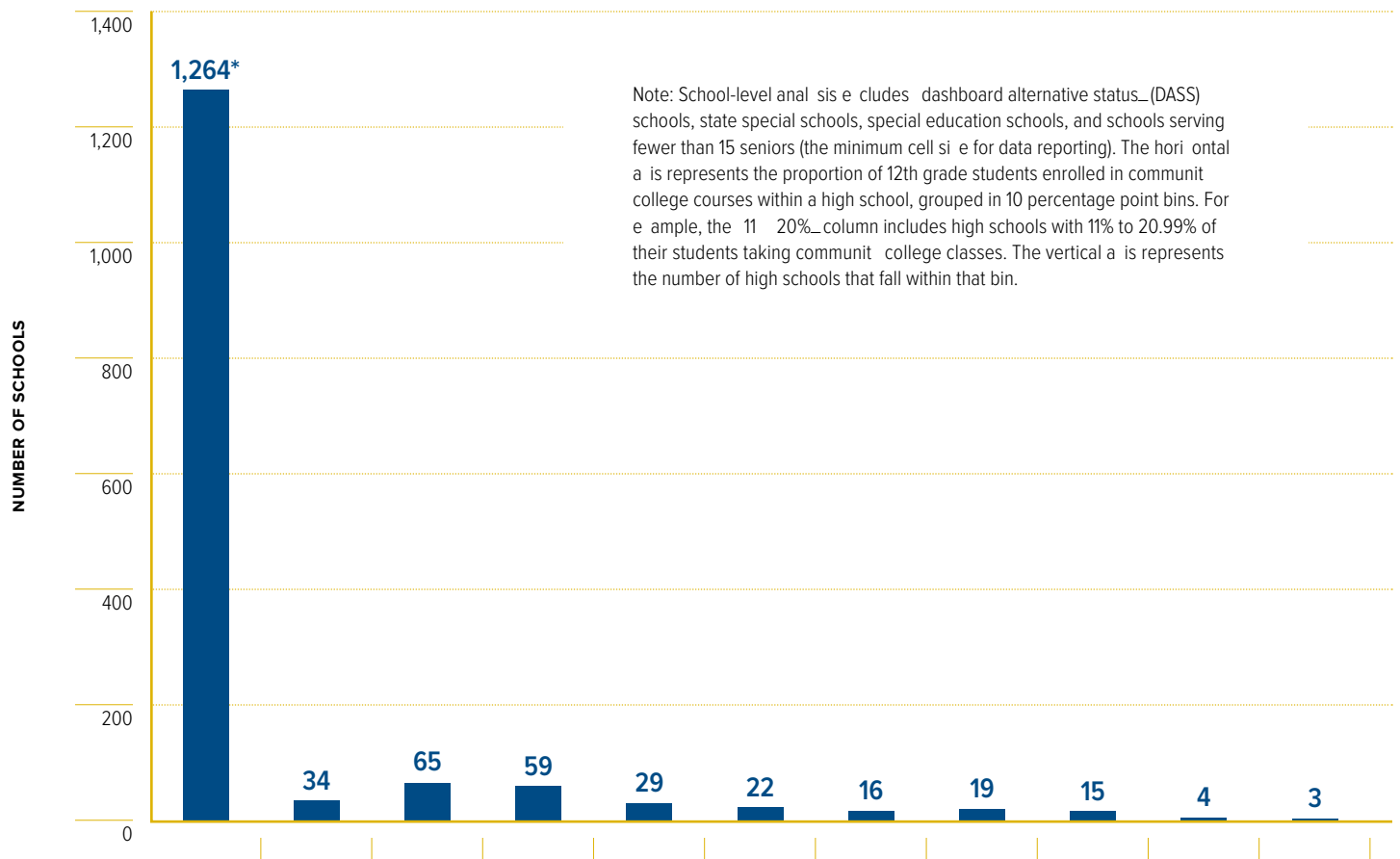


### Opportunity Is Not Equal

Not all students have access to college courses during high school. Figure 2 shows that high school students' participation in college courses varies substantially statewide. Approximately 18% of public high schools (266) serving 15 or more seniors had at least one student enrolled in a community college course. Twenty-two schools had very high levels of participation with more than 70% of 12th graders enrolled in community college courses. Of the schools with greater than 70% participation, most are small schools serving fewer than 100 seniors, nine are charter schools and nine others are alternative schools of choice; eight are early or middle college high schools.<sup>11</sup> We observed

nine public school districts in which more than 70% of seniors participated in college credit course-taking; all of these districts

Figure 2. Proportion of Community College Participation by Public High School

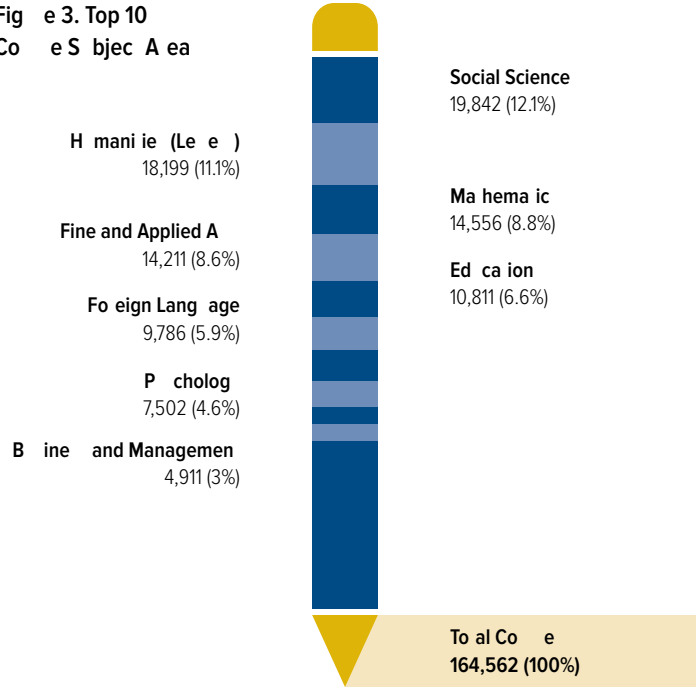


### What, When and How Much?

Figure 3 shows the wide range of dual enrollment courses taken across subject areas. The most common were social sciences and humanities (letters), accounting for almost one-quarter of all dual enrollment courses. An additional 9% of students each took classes in mathematics and fine arts. The most popular individual courses taken were psychology, communications, health, English and sociology.

When, in the course of their high school careers, did students take these courses? Figure 4 shows that the timing of community college course participation is, not surprisingly, heavily weighted toward the senior year. Approximately 20% of all community college course-taking occurred in the fall of students' senior year, with 25% of courses taken in spring of senior year.

Figure 3. Top 10 Course Subjects Area



\* All Other includes 13 other course subject areas, each with fewer than 3% enrollment.<sup>13</sup> Social Sciences includes history, political science and sociology. Humanities (Letters) includes English, Language Arts, Comparative Literature, Speech Communication, Creative Writing, Philosophy and Reading. Education includes physical education courses.

Figure 4. Class of 2016-17 High School Participation in Community College Course (Enrollment Number by Term)

