

Introducing Advanced Coursework

What to Learn from Your State's ESSA Plan

Advanced coursework refers to classes that provide students the opportunity to earn college credit while in high school, including Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and dual enrollment. Research shows that rigorous high school courses contribute to postsecondary success, and students who enter college with six or more credits are more likely to earn a degree.

ESSA provides states the opportunity to use information about advanced coursework completion and/or enrollment in accountability systems as an indicator of school and student success. Regardless of its use in state accountability, however, Title I flexibility around direct student services (DSS) allows states to set aside 3 percent of their Title I funds for use in a targeted way to expand access to advanced coursework and instructional options, including public school choice, personalized learning, credit recovery, and advanced coursework.

Guidance for School Improvement

While many states have statewide systems that offer access to advanced coursework, districts and schools may use nationally-available online courses, university partnerships, or locally-initiated in-school course offerings that expand student access to advanced coursework.

Find Support for this Strategy in ESSA

TITLE I, PART A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies

TITLE III, PART A: English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act

TITLE IV, PART A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants



Keep in Mind

Districts are required to report advanced coursework data to US ED's Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), including for all students and specific subgroups. It is important that when reporting on access to rigorous courses, the data is accurate, annual, timely and reported in a way that makes disparities clear.

Essential Stakeholders

- ✓ Institutions of higher education, including state and community colleges
- ✓ Departments of Labor
- ✓ Training course providers
- ✓ Advanced assessment providers (e.g. College Board)
- ✓ Community-based organizations providing advanced courses or training to students
- ✓ Online course providers
- ✓ Families and students, particularly those that are often underrepresented and those that may not have access to online coursework and/or require financial support for assessments
- ✓ School counselors, including college/post-secondary advisors
- ✓ Network or advanced coursework coordinators

Ask the Experts

- ✓ [Advanced Coursework](#) (Education Trust)
- ✓ [Help Low-Income Students Access the Promise of AP](#) (College Board)
- ✓ [Expanding Equity: Leveraging the Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) to provide Direct Student Services](#) (Chiefs for Change)

Spotlight on Rhode Island: The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) Advanced Coursework Network



All Rhode Island public secondary schools have the opportunity to expand coursework available to their high school and middle school students through the Advanced Coursework Network. Districts and schools have the option of joining the Network as Network Members, in which they allow their students to enroll in coursework offered by the Network. More than 35 schools and districts are currently members, including charter programs, offering hundreds of college credit, AP, career and/or advanced secondary courses offered in person and online.