

# Adult Dual Enrollment:

## Why It Matters and How School Boards Can Help Adult Learners Thrive Through ADE

Since Senate Bill (SB) 554 adoption in 2019, California adult learners working toward a high school diploma (HSD) or high school equivalency (HSE) can participate in Adult Dual Enrollment. This allows adult school students to enroll at community college as special part-time students and take credit courses while enrolled in adult education. Given its potential to expand college access for California's 400,000+ adult education students, Adult Dual Enrollment merits **board-level** attention and expanded implementation.



**What it is:** Adult Dual Enrollment (ADE) allows eligible adult school students to take up to 11 units of credit community college coursework tuition-free while still enrolled in an adult school program.

### Why Board Members Should Care:

- **Student Success:** Students can explore college, complete prerequisites and/or general education, and earn certificates while still receiving adult school support.
- **Enrollment Strategy:** With statewide K-12 enrollment declines, colleges are increasingly focusing on adult learners; ADE is a named expansion pathway aligned to the CA Community College Chancellor's "Vision 2030" that allows adult learners to remain in both systems while receiving services.
- **Equity:** ADE lowers cost barriers and builds bridges to college for learners who are often underserved.
- **Workforce:** ADE accelerates entry into high-value credentials and careers (especially CTE certificates).

### Facts:

#### What ADE is (and isn't)

- ADE is a limited special admit option designed for adult learners in HSD/HSE programs.
- ADE is not traditional dual enrollment for high school students – but it may use similar systems (special admit processes, MOUs, shared supports).
- ADE can align with other transition strategies such as Ability to Benefit, Credit for Prior Learning, and Credit by Exam.

#### What students gain

- Up to 11 tuition-free college credit units per semester
- Early momentum toward certificates, prerequisites, and General Education (GE) units
- Access to college student services (counseling, onboarding, tutoring, etc.)
- A supported “on-ramp” that reduces fear, confusion, and opportunity cost

#### What your district may already be doing (without calling it ADE)

- Offering adult school transition counseling or college navigation support
- Referring adult learners to a nearby community college (without a formal pathway)
- Running noncredit bridge programs that could connect to credit
- Partnering informally with a college on career pathways

# Adult Dual Enrollment:

## Why It Matters and How School Boards Can Help Adult Learners Thrive Through ADE

### What Implementation Requires

ADE succeeds when districts and colleges treat it like a shared success pathway – not just a registration process.

- **Champion Across Institutions:** adult school leaders, college admissions & records, enrollment, counseling and student services
- **Clear Program Design:** how ADE aligns with (and differs from) concurrent enrollment and other special admit options
- **Defined Roles & Responsibilities for:** enrollment steps, onboarding, student supports, course selections, and exit/transition
- **Eligibility & Course Decisions:** work best as a shared decision-making process between adult school staff, counselors, and the student
- **Coding & Tracking:** aligned systems to track participation and outcomes

### Questions to ask as a Board Member:

- Do we currently offer Adult Dual Enrollment under SB 554? If not, why not – and what would it take to start?
- Which community college partner(s) do we work with, and is the partnership formalized (MOU) or informal?
- How many adult learners participated last year? How many attempted and completed credit courses?
- Who in our district helps transition ADE students from enrollment through completion?
- How do we determine whether a student is “ready” for credit coursework – and who makes that decision?
- How are we ensuring access for underserved adult learner groups (low income, refugees, undocumented, opportunity youth, etc)?
- How do we code and track ADE participation across the district and community college? Who owns the data?
- What outcomes are we tracking (course success, certificate completion, college enrollment after adult school, wage gains)?
- What barriers are staff reporting (registration, course placement, scheduling, transportation, counseling capacity)?
- What would it cost to expand ADE – and what funding sources are we using or could we use?



### Call to Action What You Can Do Now:

- **Be a champion for adult dual enrollment! Request a brief ADE status report from district leadership (program design, participation, outcomes, barriers)**
- **Ask for a draft MOU or partnership refresh with your local community college**
- **Prioritize transition counseling capacity and cross-institution coordination**
- **Set a goal: every eligible adult learner has access to ADE within the next school year!**

### Need Help?

- For general information or to engage in policy action, visit <https://www.caedge.org> or email [info@caedge.org](mailto:info@caedge.org)
- For technical assistance and information to implement adult dual enrollment in your community, email [dualenrollment@careerladdersproject.org](mailto:dualenrollment@careerladdersproject.org)

