

# Are College Classes in High School Right for My Student?

## THINGS TO CONSIDER FOR PARENTS OF COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENTS IN GRADES 9-12

Many high school students today are eager to jump into college-level coursework and earn post-secondary credits before high school graduation. There are several advantages to this educational approach, including well-established programs that have been proven to help students and their families save time and money during the college years.

Two of the most popular programs are known as **College in the Classroom** and **Dual Enrollment**. This article provides a brief introduction to each program, highlighting the features of both.

As most families begin the college planning process as early as the student's 9th grade year, it's never too soon for parents to consider whether these opportunities are suitable for their high schooler.



### How Do I Know if My Student is Ready for College-Level Courses in High School?

A successful transition to college coursework requires more than just academic prowess—it demands the ability to handle everything from increased independence to more challenging workloads.

Parents should engage in open conversations, assess their child's level of responsibility, and encourage them to explore their interests. By fostering a deeper connection and comprehensively evaluating their teenager's readiness, parents can make informed decisions about whether their high schooler is prepared for the challenges and responsibilities of pursuing early college classes.

Of course, this process works best as a close collaboration between parents, teachers, counselors, and other members of the student's school community with a vested interest in their success. Parents should work with their student's school to learn about available college readiness programming and connect with guidance resources.

### What is College in the Classroom?

**College in the Classroom** allows students to earn college credit at their desks in their high school classrooms, taught by accredited high school faculty members. Available subjects and the total cost per course will vary depending on which college(s) your high school has a partnership with.

At the end of senior year, students request that a transcript be sent from the institution where they earned the course credit to the college or university of their choice. Those college credits can be used to fulfill graduation requirements toward their undergraduate degree. And, if they have taken multiple qualifying courses, students could potentially enter college with enough credits to graduate a semester or a year early.

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## What is Dual Enrollment?

**Dual Enrollment** is a program that allows older high school students—typically seniors—to take collegiate-level courses at a local university, college, or community college at a discounted rate.

For mature students who want an immersive introduction to college coursework before high school graduation, dual enrollment presents an excellent opportunity. Students are permitted to leave their high school campus to take a class on a college campus or complete an online college class independently. Both offer the opportunity to earn credits awarded at the college or university and their high school.

While not every local college or university will have a dual enrollment agreement with a given high school, students will often have some choice between where they can take classes.



## 3 Big Ways Earning College Credits Before Graduation Benefit a High Schooler

We have talked a lot about earning credits in this article so far, but how exactly does the process of earning those college credits benefit a high school student as they prepare to graduate and move on to full-time college studies? It's true that colleges and universities do not directly discount a semester tuition bill accounting for credits that are transferred; however, the early investment in post-secondary education has great appeal for **three simple reasons**.

1

### OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE FUTURE CAREER PATHS & STRENGTHS

From a personal and career development perspective, college courses taken in high school help a student explore what they want to do with the rest of their lives. This early illumination of possible career paths and fields of study allows students to gain a sense of direction and can also spark excitement for the college years ahead. Just perusing a course catalog from any college is an enlightening look at career clusters and introduces a student to a world of possibilities regarding career choice.

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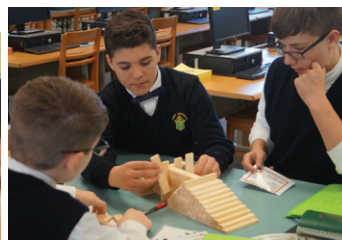


2

### INTRODUCTION TO COLLEGE-LEVEL ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS WITHOUT LEAVING HOME

College courses taken on a campus outside the high school environment introduce students to the rigorous academic side of collegiate culture and help transition high school seniors from the world of lockers, bells, and study halls to the more fluid feel of a college schedule. The transition to complete independence on a college campus can be overwhelming at first, and many first-year college students struggle with simple time management skills. After all, they are no longer required to be somewhere for every minute of an eight-hour day.

High school students become so accustomed to their high school schedule that they can't envision how different campus life and a college schedule will be. A course taken on a campus a mile or two away from school or home during the high school years is a great first step toward college independence without the transitional shock.



3

### POTENTIAL TO GRADUATE EARLY FROM COLLEGE OR EXPLORE STUDYING ABROAD

Some high school students earn enough college credits through dual enrollment to allow them to graduate from college a semester—or even sometimes an entire year—early or have more room in their schedules to explore opportunities with studying abroad in college. This is where the financial savings can make a measurable difference in available choices.

Of course, parents should help their students consider if a compressed college experience or spending a sustained amount of time in another country while studying abroad is the right thing for them. Some undergraduates are fully ready to exit the classroom by January of their senior year, but others may want to continue taking courses or spend time exploring other cultures before they hit the “real world.”

### How to Get Your Student Started with Taking College Courses in High School

Families who decide college courses in high school are a fit for their student should look forward to banking college credits as an investment in academic success upon graduation from high school. Students are encouraged to get to know their school counselor as early as possible and work with them to set up a game plan for course selection to maximize the benefits of Dual Enrollment and College in the Classroom options.

## Looking for a Personalized Approach to College Prep for Your Student?

### We are Here to Help.

York Catholic offers a personalized approach to college prep, including both College in the Classroom and Dual Enrollment options as part of our comprehensive college and career preparation program for all students. Our counselors guide students and their families through setting goals and making informed decisions about their futures, hand-in-hand with our talented faculty and staff.

*Have questions about our programs? Get in touch.*

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