Nebraska Community Colleges Dual Enrollment

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT

FY25

Prepared by Tripp Umbach

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DUAL ENROLLMENT IMPACT
HIGHLIGHTS FY25

EXTRA EARNINGS ATTRIBUTABLE TO DUAL ENROLLMENT

$463.2 million
in extra annual earnings attributable to participation in dual enrollment.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF EXTRA EARNINGS ATTRIBUTABLE TO DUAL ENROLLMENT IN NEBRASKA

$833.7 million
in statewide economic impact

$463.2 million in direct impact
$370.5 million in indirect/induced impact

7,250 total jobs
supported and sustained statewide

4,028 direct jobs
3,222 indirect/induced jobs

$33.3 million
generated in state and local taxes

LIFETIME PUBLIC COST SAVINGS

$874.4 million
is projected to be generated in lifetime public cost savings.

Medicaid cost savings	$344.1 million
Corrections cost savings	$251.0 million
Public Assistance cost savings	$195.7 million
Public Healthcare cost savings	$83.6 million

ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC IMPACT IF DUAL ENROLLMENT IS EXPANDED TO LOWER SOCIOECONOMIC STUDENTS

$40.6 million
in statewide economic impact

353 total jobs
supported and sustained statewide

$1.6 million
generated in additional state and local taxes

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dual enrollment programs offer high school students the opportunity to earn college credits while completing their secondary education, creating a bridge to postsecondary success and providing early exposure to workforce-relevant skills. By combining academic advancement with practical career preparation, these programs help students accelerate their educational pathways and strengthen local economies, facilitate workforce development, and generate tax and societal benefits for communities.

Nebraska Community College Association (NCCA) engaged Tripp Umbach in August 2025 to conduct a comprehensive statewide economic impact study of its dual enrollment programs. The study also focuses on the need to increase dual enrollment course access for low socioeconomic status students and the potential economic impact and return on investment for the State of Nebraska by reducing the disparity in participation between students with higher and lower incomes.

This report demonstrates that dual enrollment programs are a strategic investment in human capital, creating economic, employment, and tax impacts through participants' additional earnings. By accelerating post-secondary attainment and boosting lifetime earnings, these programs strengthen the talent pipeline and create lasting benefits for families, communities, and the economy. This analysis highlights how dual enrollment contribute to personal success and to long-term societal and economic gains.

Key findings from this study include:

Extra earnings attributable to dual enrollment: Dual enrollment increases future earnings for participating students, generating **$463.2 million** in additional earnings in FY25. These earnings reflect the long-term value of accelerated postsecondary attainment, which enhances household income, fosters individual financial mobility, and improves students' labor-market positioning in high-demand career pathways such as healthcare, information technology, skilled trades, logistics, and advanced manufacturing.

Economic impact: Accounting for direct, indirect, and induced impacts, dual enrollment sparked a total economic impact of **$833.7 million** in FY25 from participants' additional earnings. This impact reflects the ripple effects of increased household spending on businesses and communities, strengthening regional economies and job creation and enhancing overall economic activity, particularly in rural and under-resourced areas.

Employment impact: The economic activity generated by dual enrollment participants' additional earnings underpinned **7,250** jobs statewide in FY25. These include employment across education, healthcare, retail, professional services, construction, and finance sectors. By creating labor demand across diverse industries, dual enrollment stabilizes the workforce, promotes talent retention, and enhances long-term economic resilience throughout communities.

Tax impact: Higher projected earnings and associated household spending resulted in **$33.3 million** in local and regional tax revenue in FY25. These additional taxes fund essential public services, including education, infrastructure, and healthcare, reinforcing the sustainability of tax impacts and the capacity to invest in community priorities.

Lifetime public cost savings: Participation in dual enrollment yields a projected lifetime public cost savings of **$874.4 million**, resulting from reduced expenditures in Medicaid, corrections, public assistance, and public healthcare. These savings reflect lower-than-anticipated program utilization and reduced criminal justice involvement among students who attain higher levels of education. Beyond public savings, dual enrollment is expected to promote societal outcomes such as increased civic engagement, reduced crime, improved health and family stability, and intergenerational educational gains, all of which contribute to stronger communities.

Workforce and community impact: By equipping students with credentials and skills aligned with employer demand, dual enrollment functions as a critical on-ramp to the workforce, sparking talent retention and economic mobility. Programs collaborate closely with K–12 schools, employers, and community organizations to deliver dual credit coursework and customized training, enhancing educational outcomes, supporting business development, and bolstering communities.

Impacts of higher participation among lower socioeconomic groups: Expanding access to dual enrollment for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds is projected to produce an estimated **$40.6 million** in additional economic impact and bolster **353** jobs statewide. The expansion is projected to yield an additional **$1.6 million** in state and local tax revenue. These outcomes indicate that broadening dual enrollment access is a sound fiscal investment and a means of advancing educational opportunity throughout the state.

INTRODUCTION

Dual enrollment programs are growing across Nebraska, allowing high school students to earn college credits while completing their secondary education. These programs are increasingly central to the state's education and workforce development strategy, accelerating college completion, reducing postsecondary costs for families, and helping students transition into higher education and skilled careers. As participation expands, so does the need to understand and communicate the economic and community benefits of dual enrollment.

To address this need, the Nebraska Community College Association (NCCA) engaged Tripp Umbach in August 2025 to conduct a comprehensive statewide economic impact study of dual enrollment programs offered through the state's community colleges. The study examines the economic, workforce, and community value these programs trigger, providing policymakers, education leaders, and community stakeholders with clear evidence of how dual enrollment contributes to Nebraska's growth, workforce readiness, and community well-being.

The study evaluates the impact of dual enrollment programs across Nebraska high schools, focusing on students who participate in courses offered in partnership with the state's six public community colleges:

Central Community College
Northeast Community College
Metropolitan Community College
Southeast Community College
Mid-Plains Community College
Western Nebraska Community College

These institutions provide place-based access to affordable college-level coursework, workforce training, and educational assistance, enabling high school students to accelerate postsecondary attainment and strengthen career pathways.

The analysis examines the economic and social impacts of dual enrollment during FY25, with emphasis on these impact areas:

- **Extra earnings attributable to dual enrollment:** Projected incremental earnings over the working life of participants, reflecting long-term benefits of accelerated postsecondary attainment.
- **Economic impact:** Anticipated increases in household income and broader economic activity attributable to dual enrollment participants.
- **Employment impact:** Jobs driven directly and indirectly through increased earnings, household spending, and supply-chain activity.
- **Tax impact:** State and local taxes attributable to higher earnings and associated consumption by students and their households.
- **Public healthcare expenditures and Medicaid utilization:** Expected reductions in public healthcare costs and Medicaid reliance associated with higher educational attainment.
- **Public assistance and social services:** Anticipated decreases in reliance on social safety-net programs as educational outcomes improve economic self-sufficiency.
- **Corrections and incarceration costs:** Potential savings in corrections and criminal justice expenditures resulting from increased educational attainment.

Beyond immediate earnings and spending, the analysis highlights these programs' economic and social values, including enhanced workforce readiness, talent retention, and community stability, particularly in underserved areas.

The study also addresses themes central to dual enrollment programs, including access to postsecondary education by socioeconomic groups, alignment with workforce needs, and the role of early college pathways as a strategic lever for student success and statewide economic development. Across Nebraska, dual enrollment represents a critical mechanism for stimulating student achievement, economic mobility, and long-term community prosperity.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND EXTRA EARNINGS IMPACT

Dual enrollment programs in Nebraska are expected to translate into impactful earnings by accelerating post-secondary attainment. Students who complete postsecondary credentials are anticipated to earn substantially more than high school graduates, creating economic value for individuals and the state. For context, the average annual earnings for a high school graduate are **$49,655**. In contrast, individuals without a high school diploma earn $39,404 annually, $10,251 less than those with a high school diploma, highlighting the foundational economic importance of educational progression.

In FY25, **21,327** Nebraska students participated in dual enrollment courses, completing approximately **198,160** credit hours at an average cost of **$55** per credit hour. Through partnerships with six public community colleges – Central, Metropolitan, Mid-Plains, Northeast, Southeast, and Western Nebraska community colleges – dual enrollment achievement by Nebraska students is projected to produce economic, employment, and tax impacts across communities.

Among the **18,554** students expected to earn postsecondary credentials, dual enrollment participation is anticipated to mean **$463.2 million** in additional annual earnings, averaging **$24,963** per student. This projected figure represents the anticipated wage premium relative to the baseline for high school graduates and reflects the recurring nature of these earnings gains. Over 40 years of working life, the cumulative lifetime impact amounts to millions of dollars in additional personal income circulating within Nebraska's economy. By enabling earlier and more successful postsecondary attainment, dual enrollment is expected to increase individual financial mobility and statewide economic output.

Associate's Degree

Attaining an associate's degree leads to a wage premium relative to the high school benchmark. Among the **4,905** students participating in dual enrollment and attaining an associate's degree, the average annual earnings are **$58,678**, representing **$9,023** more than those of high school graduates.[1] This additional earning power contributes to stronger economic stability for individuals and aid for the state's workforce.

Associate's degree attainment translates into **$44.3 million** in incremental annual earnings, which reinforces productivity within Nebraska's middle-skill workforce, enhances household purchasing power, and improves economic mobility for students entering the labor market.

Dual enrollment participation contributes to these outcomes by reducing time-to-degree and lowering barriers to credential attainment, enabling students to enter high-demand fields more quickly. This impact is delivered in applied and technical occupations, including healthcare support, information technology, skilled trades, logistics, and advanced manufacturing, where workforce demand is growing.

[1] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: Education pays, 2024: Career Outlook

Postsecondary Progression (Some College/Associate's Degree)

Transitioning from two-year institutions to four-year degree pathways makes a difference in long-term earnings outcomes. With **2,346** students in the FY25 cohort, the average annual earnings are **$70,531**, representing an additional **$20,876** over those of high school graduates.[2] This differential reflects enhanced labor market competitiveness, expanded professional mobility, and greater access to career advancement opportunities within Nebraska's evolving economy.

The annual advantage means $49.0 million in additional earnings for this group alone each year, underscoring the economic value of structured academic progression. These findings demonstrate that dual enrollment operates as an early college access initiative and also as a strategic bridge that strengthens bachelor's degree attainment, accelerates academic momentum, and expands lifetime earning potential.

From a workforce development perspective, this progression boosts in-state talent retention, fuels long-term workforce competitiveness, and improves alignment with professional and technical sectors requiring advanced credentials. These outcomes position dual enrollment as a critical lever for advancing individual economic mobility and Nebraska's talent development strategy.

Bachelor's Degree

Attaining a bachelor's degree produces the highest annual wage premium in this analysis. Among the **11,303** students estimated to earn a bachelor's degree, average annual earnings are **$82,384**, an additional **$32,729** over those of high school graduates.[3] This credential elevates lifetime income trajectories, creates economic stability, and promotes long-term labor market positioning.

Bachelor's degree attainment means $369.9 million in incremental annual earnings, representing most of the total postsecondary earnings impact. This concentration reflects the scale of degree attainment and the magnitude of wage differentials associated with bachelor's-level credentials.

Dual enrollment contributes to these outcomes by accelerating academic momentum and reducing structural barriers to completion. Specifically, it:

- Reduces accumulated credit hours at matriculation.
- Improves college readiness and persistence.
- Decreases time-to-degree.
- Lowers total cost of attendance.

These factors increase completion rates, expand access to high-skill career pathways, and trigger long-term workforce outcomes across Nebraska's professional and technical sectors, reinforcing the role of dual enrollment as a critical tool for advancing individual economic mobility and the state's talent development strategy.

[2] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: Education pays, 2024: Career Outlook

[3] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: Education pays, 2024: Career Outlook

ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

Economic Impact

Dual enrollment programs bring economic value to Nebraska by increasing participants' earnings and stimulating economic activity throughout the state. By enhancing household income, assisting local spending, and advancing workforce development, these programs contribute directly and indirectly to business activity and employment across Nebraska, resulting in a total economic impact of **$833.7 million** in FY25.

Economic impacts occur through multiple channels. The additional earnings of dual enrollment participants create immediate demand for goods and services, including housing, food, healthcare, transportation, childcare, retail, and professional services. This initial spending is followed by secondary impacts, as households and businesses re-spend income within communities. These direct, indirect, and induced impacts expand the overall impact of dual enrollment-related earnings, sustaining jobs, business growth, and regional economies.

These extra earnings gained by dual enrollment participants totaled **$463.2 million** in direct impact. These earnings represent increased human capital productivity and enhanced labor-market value resulting from higher educational attainment. Spending these extra earnings within Nebraska directly helps businesses and enhances household consumption.

As participants and their households spend their increased income, businesses respond to greater demand by purchasing from suppliers, expanding operations, and adding payroll. This generates secondary consumer spending, amplifying the economic impact. These indirect and induced impacts, totaling **$370.5 million**, highlight how educational attainment drives economic ecosystems across urban and rural areas.

Economic Impact	FY25 (million)
Direct Impact	$463.2
Indirect and Induced Impacts	$370.5
Total Economic Impact	**$833.7**

These combined economic impacts contribute to increased labor productivity, expanded business revenues, and stronger regional economies through diversified income sources. Dual enrollment programs serve as a strategic tool for long-term economic development growth. By building human capital and boosting statewide workforce competitiveness, these programs empower the workforce while generating economic benefits for Nebraska communities.

Employment Impact

Dual enrollment programs translate into employment benefits in Nebraska by increasing participants' earnings and stimulating economic activity across the state. By boosting household incomes, triggering local spending, and strengthening workforce development, these programs create labor demand across multiple industries and regions. The additional economic activity caused by higher earnings leads to **7,250** jobs statewide, illustrating the direct and ripple effects of educational attainment on Nebraska's labor market.

Direct employment impact totaling **4,028** jobs is associated with industries that immediately benefit from increased household spending. Indirect and induced employment, totaling **3,222 jobs**, is supported through supply chains and additional consumer-driven demand.
This employment support spans multiple sectors, including:

- Healthcare
- Retail and hospitality
- Professional services
- Construction and housing
- Financial services
- Education

Employment Impact Type	Number of Jobs
Direct Jobs	4,028
Indirect and Induced Jobs	3,222
Total Jobs Supported	**7,250**

These employment impacts illustrate how educational attainment contributes to individual prosperity and to labor market vitality and statewide workforce strength.

State and Local Tax Impact

The higher earnings for dual enrollment participants translate directly into expanded state and local tax collections, creating a revenue stream funding essential public services and community development. In FY25, dual enrollment participants contributed approximately **$33.3 million** in state and local taxes.

This recurring annual revenue builds on Nebraska's tax revenue base and enables investment in infrastructure, education, healthcare, and other community initiatives. This tax impact also highlights how dual enrollment is a strategic public finance tool that delivers revenue benefits assisting the state's long-term growth.

LIFETIME PUBLIC COST SAVINGS RESULTING FROM DUAL ENROLLMENT PARTICIPATION IN NEBRASKA (FY25)

Participation in dual enrollment programs in Nebraska continues to develop lifetime public cost savings and societal benefits. The projected total lifetime public cost savings for dual enrollment participants in the Nebraska community colleges are approximately **$874.4 million**, reflecting anticipated reductions in expenditures for Medicaid, public assistance and social services, public healthcare, and corrections/incarceration over the students' lifetimes.

Breaking these savings down by major expenditure categories illustrates the mechanisms by which dual enrollment participation leads to reduced public costs. Medicaid savings account for approximately **$344.1 million**, reflecting lower anticipated program utilization among participants over their lifetimes. Corrections and incarceration savings are projected at **$251.0 million**, driven by reduced criminal involvement among students who attain higher levels of education. Savings in public assistance and social services are estimated at **$195.7 million**, while public healthcare contributes approximately **$83.6 million** to lifetime savings.

Analyzing these projections by educational attainment demonstrates each level's contribution to overall savings. Medicaid and corrections-related reductions represent the top lifetime public cost savings.

Expenditure Category	Associate's Degree 4,905 students (millions)	Postsecondary Progression 2,346 students (millions)	Four-Year/Bachelor's Equivalent 11,303 students (millions)	Lifetime Public Cost Savings (millions)
Medicaid	$57.1	$39.4	$247.6	$344.1
Corrections/incarceration	$58.0	$30.7	$162.3	$251.0
Public assistance/social services	$35.0	$22.7	$138.0	$195.7
Public healthcare	$18.6	$10.1	$54.9	$83.6
Total Lifetime Public Cost Savings	**$168.7**	**$102.9**	**$602.8**	**$874.4**

Beyond these public savings projections, students completing college-level coursework while in high school are more likely to engage in civic life, including higher rates of voting, volunteering, and community involvement, thereby strengthening democratic legitimacy, social trust, and local problem-solving capacity. Dual enrollment also results in economic productivity spillovers, as higher educational attainment increases earnings and productivity for participants and the community, enhancing regional competitiveness and tax capacity.

Participation in dual enrollment programs is also associated with reduced crime and victimization, healthier lifestyles, and improved family stability. Children of better-educated parents tend to achieve better educational outcomes and overall well-being, creating intergenerational benefits. Education influences health behaviors, including increased preventive care and pro-environmental behaviors, contributing to cleaner communities and lower pollution-related public costs. Civic engagement and improved health behaviors interact to amplify the societal returns from dual enrollment, fostering long-term community health and resilience.

THE IMPACT OF SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS ON DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Tripp Umbach analyzed the dual enrollment landscape in Nebraska to identify barriers to broader student participation, particularly among low-income and underrepresented populations. The Nebraska Statewide Workforce & Educational Reporting System (NSWERS) does not include income data; Tripp Umbach conducted a detailed literature review to estimate the percentage of students from various socioeconomic backgrounds who are less likely to participate in dual enrollment programs. Tripp Umbach estimates the potential economic benefits and return on investment to Nebraska communities if access to dual enrollment is expanded. Encouraging higher levels of participation among lower-income students will result in higher high school graduation and college-going rates, reduced time-to-degree, increased postsecondary attainment, and earlier workforce entry.

National research consistently shows that participation in dual enrollment is stratified by socioeconomic status. Students from higher-income, more-educated family backgrounds are more likely to participate in dual enrollment programs.[4] In contrast, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds face structural, financial, and information access barriers that reduce their participation. Importantly, the research suggests that disparities are not limited to whether dual enrollment programs are offered at a student's school or whether the student can afford them. This is exacerbated by schools serving higher-poverty populations that offer fewer college preparatory opportunities, thereby limiting the dual enrollment pathway, with only 60 percent of high-poverty schools offering an advanced placement course.[5] Because students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to attend schools that lack the resources to compensate teachers for advanced college-level courses, these students face individual and structural challenges based on where they attend school.[6]

The lack of understanding of the opportunities and benefits of dual enrollment, the lack of advice and assistance, and implicit bias in participant recruitment are also critical barriers. However, when access to information, guidance, and financial assistance is provided to lower-income students, they are just as likely to participate at rates more comparable to those of their more advantaged peers.[7]

National Center for Education Statistics data indicate that participation in dual enrollment varies significantly by parental education level. Approximately 42% of students whose parents hold a bachelor's degree or higher participate in dual enrollment, compared with 26% of students whose parents have less than a high school diploma.[8] This study finds that students in the lowest socioeconomic quintile are less likely to participate in dual enrollment programs (73.1%) than students in higher-income groups (94.4%). This reinforces both access and participation gaps. Also, a study in the Texas Education Review found that socioeconomic status is one of the strongest predictors of dual enrollment participation, with students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds more likely to participate.[9] This aligns with a more recent report by the Education Commission of the States, which found cost barriers, including tuition, fees, books, and transportation, disproportionately affect low-income students and reduce participation.[10] Other research from the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation reinforces the notion that dual enrollment programs were historically designed for higher-achieving and more advantaged students.[11] Further, the dropout rate in dual enrollment courses is four times higher among lower-income students than among higher-income students.[12]

While some high-poverty schools may offer dual enrollment opportunities, research shows that students from low-income backgrounds still lack equitable access to or success in dual enrollment, underscoring the need to focus on actual participation rates rather than just course availability.[13] A combination of financial barriers, academic eligibility requirements, lack of advising, and institutional design factors drives these disparities. Addressing these gaps among students with varying socioeconomic backgrounds requires targeted policy interventions focused on affordability, awareness, and academic preparation.

Investing state and institutional resources to ensure that all Nebraska students, regardless of socioeconomic background, geography, or school district, can achieve comparable dual enrollment participation and outcomes will generate substantial long-term returns for Nebraska.

As the economic and social impact findings in this report demonstrate, dual enrollment participation contributes to higher college access, persistence, degree completion, workforce readiness, and lifetime earnings, while also reducing barriers to postsecondary education and strengthening Nebraska's talent pipeline. Expanding equitable access to high-quality dual enrollment opportunities is not simply an educational initiative; it is a strategic economic development investment that will enhance workforce competitiveness, promote community vitality, and deliver long-term economic and fiscal benefits for Nebraska employers, families, and taxpayers.

While substantial research shows that dual enrollment participation is associated with improved college access, persistence, and degree attainment for lower-socioeconomic-status students, the literature lacks a widely accepted standardized metric to quantify the extent to which dual enrollment financial and other assistance programs increase participation among lower-income students.[14]

Economic Impact and Return on Investment

Increasing access to dual enrollment programs for low-socioeconomic-status students is likely to make a positive economic impact. Tripp Umbach's economic impact model assumes a 5% increase in the overall participation of lower-socioeconomic-status students. Tripp Umbach's analysis suggests that a targeted state investment of $1.6 million to improve equitable access to dual enrollment opportunities would yield a strong positive return on investment for the State of Nebraska.

Investing $1.6 million to drive a 5% increase in participation and increase the retention of lower-socioeconomic-status students demonstrates will result in more than $40.6 million in statewide economic impact, sustain 353 jobs, lead to $1.6 million in additional state and local tax revenue, and create an estimated $43.7 million in long-term public cost savings associated with improved educational attainment, workforce participation, and reduced reliance on public assistance systems. Additional state investment or higher rates of participation and retention will have even higher returns.

Beyond the economic returns, expanding equitable participation in dual enrollment would strengthen Nebraska's long-term workforce pipeline, improve social mobility, and enhance the state's overall economic competitiveness. As a result, investments aimed at reducing barriers to participation should be viewed not as short-term educational expenditures but as strategic long-term economic development investments that will benefit Nebraska communities, employers, taxpayers, and future generations.

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APPENDIX A

Demographic Characteristics of Dual Enrollment Credit Earners

The economic, social, and public cost savings documented in this report are not distributed evenly across Nebraska's student population. Because dual enrollment generates savings primarily by shortening time-to-degree, reducing accumulated tuition costs, and lowering the need for postsecondary remediation, the students who participate are also the students best positioned to capture those benefits. Examining who earns dual enrollment credit and who does not is therefore essential to understanding the reach of these savings and the opportunities to extend them. This appendix summarizes the demographic patterns of dual enrollment credit earners in Nebraska, using data from the NSWERS for 2022.[15] The tables show participation, expressed as the share of each demographic cohort that earned dual enrollment credit.

Dual Enrollment Credit Earners, by Gender

Gender	Share
Female	56%
Male	44%

Female students made up the majority of dual enrollment credit earners, at 56%, compared with 44% for male students. This pattern is consistent with broader national trends in which female students enroll in and complete college-credit coursework at higher rates than their male peers.

Percent of Cohort Earning Dual Enrollment Credit, by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Percent of Cohort Earning DE Credit
White	35.6%
Multiracial	34.0%
Asian	28.2%
Hispanic	19.3%
Black	11.3%
Pacific Islander	8.7%
American Indian	5.5%

[15] Nebraska Statewide Workforce & Educational Reporting System (NSWERS), 2025 Report

Participation varied substantially across racial and ethnic groups. White (35.6%), Multiracial (34.0%), and Asian (28.2%) students earned dual enrollment credit at the highest rates; Black (11.3%) and Hispanic (19.3%) students participated at rates below the leading groups but above the lowest groups. Pacific Islander (8.7%) and American Indian (5.5%) students participated at the lowest rates, with a roughly sixfold gap between the highest- and lowest-participating groups.

These gaps are unlikely to reflect differences in student ability or interest alone. Participation in dual enrollment depends heavily on factors outside a student's control: whether their high school offers dual enrollment courses, whether a partnering postsecondary institution is nearby, the cost of credit to families, and the availability of advising that connects students to these opportunities. In Nebraska, several of the lowest-participating groups are concentrated in rural communities and areas with fewer postsecondary partnerships, where access to courses is structurally more limited.

Implications for the Dual Enrollment Impact Analysis

The demographic patterns above carry two implications for the findings presented in the body of this report. First, the aggregate savings attributable to dual enrollment are currently concentrated among the groups that participate most, meaning the students and families realizing the greatest reductions in tuition and time-to-degree are not representative of Nebraska's student population. Second, and more constructively, the same gaps represent unrealized savings. If participation among the lowest-participating groups were brought closer to that of the highest, the state could expect both a broader distribution of benefits and a larger total pool of public and private savings, since each additional credit earner contributes to the per-student savings modeled earlier in this report. In this sense, equity of access and the magnitude of statewide savings are complementary.

APPENDIX B

NSWERS Data Analysis Applied to the 2025 Impact Model

High School Graduation and College-Going Outcomes

The NSWERS maintains high school graduation and postsecondary enrollment outcomes derived from administrative records.[16] NSWERS provides longitudinal, student-level data that link K–12 and postsecondary records, enabling observed comparisons and statistically adjusted estimates of the impacts of dual enrollment participation.

The attainment results incorporated into the 2025 Dual Enrollment Economic, Employment, and Tax Impact Analysis are based on the most recent complete statewide cohorts available at the time of analysis. These observed outcomes provide the empirical foundation for modeling the expected results of participation in FY25.

High School Graduation

Four-year on-time graduation rates consistently show higher completion rates among dual enrollment participants than among non-participants. In the most recent cohort analyzed, 98.8% of participants graduated on time, compared with 80.2% of non-participants, a change of 18.6 percentage points.

To isolate the incremental impact attributable to participation, outcomes were adjusted for measurable student characteristics, including prior academic performance and demographic variables. These adjustments mitigate observable selection outcome and yield an estimate of the additional probability of on-time graduation associated with participation in dual enrollment.

The adjusted estimate was applied conservatively within the FY25 impact framework to project the number of incremental high school graduates expected to result from program participation.

Postsecondary Progression (Some College/Associate's Degree) Enrollment

College-going was defined as enrollment in a two-year or four-year postsecondary institution within 16 months of high school graduation.

In the most recent cohort analyzed, 87% of dual enrollment participants enrolled in postsecondary education, compared to 60% of non-participants, representing an observed difference of 27 percentage points in overall participation.

After controlling for pre-existing academic and demographic differences, dual enrollment participation is estimated to increase college-going by approximately nine to 10 percentage points. This regression-adjusted estimate was applied to the FY25 participant population to project the incremental number of postsecondary enrollees attributable to dual enrollment participation.

[16] Nebraska Statewide Workforce & Educational Reporting System (NSWERS), 2025 Report

Enrollment by Institution Type

NSWERS data further allows disaggregation of postsecondary enrollment patterns by sector.

Postsecondary Enrollment Type	Dual Enrollment Participants	Non-Participants
Associate's degree	24%	23%
Two- to four-year progression	11%	5%
Bachelor's degree	53%	32%

These data indicate that participation in dual enrollment does not reduce two-year enrollment. Rather, participation increases overall college-going and shifts a substantial share of students toward four-year pathways and multi-institution enrollment patterns associated with transfer and credit mobility.

Application to the 2025 Economic Impact Model

The 2025 Dual Enrollment Economic, Employment, and Tax Impact Analysis incorporates regression-adjusted causal estimates derived from NSWERS to model the expected outcomes of participation. These estimates quantify the incremental impacts of dual enrollment on high school completion, postsecondary enrollment, and four-year college participation.

The adjusted attainment outcomes were applied to the FY25 participant cohort to estimate incremental educational attainment attributable to program participation. These projected gains form the foundation for modeling associated lifetime earnings differentials, expanded workforce participation, increased state and local tax contributions, and reduced long-term public expenditures.

By anchoring projections in observed, statistically adjusted statewide outcomes, the FY25 impact estimates reflect evidence-based expectations rather than assumed program benefits.

APPENDIX C
Methodology

This report estimates the direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts for Nebraska's FY25 dual enrollment participants. The analysis captures the economic activity associated with students' increased educational attainment, subsequent labor market outcomes, and the ripple effects of higher earnings throughout the state economy.

The analysis captures total economic, employment, and tax impacts, as well as public cost savings, resulting from dual enrollment participation, using the Bureau of Labor Statistics, IMPLAN, and lifetime public cost savings models to estimate how incremental earnings and spending circulate through Nebraska's economy. The models account for leakage, ensuring that only activity that remains in the state is captured, and adjust for substitution and displacement impacts to produce conservative estimates.

Impacts were measured across several categories:

- **Extra earnings attributable to dual enrollment:** Extra earnings attributable to dual enrollment are the additional lifetime income that participants are likely to earn as a direct result of taking dual enrollment courses. These gains lead to expanded workforce participation, create additional jobs, increase household income, and result in higher state and local tax revenues. They also help reduce long-term public expenditures, including costs for Medicaid, public assistance, healthcare, and corrections/incarceration.

- **Economic impacts:** Higher earnings from dual enrollment translate into increased spending on housing, food, transportation, retail, and other goods and services. This spending stimulates businesses and bolsters additional jobs throughout the community.

- **Employment impacts:** The additional earnings and spending of dual enrollment participants drive job creation across Nebraska. This includes direct employment from increased workforce participation and indirect and induced positions created through household and supplier spending.

- **State and local tax impacts:** Extra earnings from dual enrollment create additional state and local tax revenues. These funds strengthen budgets and go to essential government services, public infrastructure, and other community priorities.

- **Lifetime public cost savings:** Dual enrollment participation can reduce long-term public expenditures by lowering the need for services such as Medicaid, public assistance, healthcare, and corrections/incarceration. These savings result from higher educational attainment, increased earnings, and improved socioeconomic outcomes, providing benefits to state and local governments over participants' lifetimes.

IMPLAN Methodology

IMPLAN is an econometric input-output modeling system developed by applied economists at the University of Minnesota and the U.S. Forest Service. It has been in continuous use since 1979 and is widely employed by private consulting firms, academic institutions, and government agencies. IMPLAN integrates data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and other federal sources to model trade flows between industries and households, allowing analysts to estimate how changes in economic activity affect a defined geographic area.

For this study, IMPLAN's Regional Economic Accounts and Social Accounting Matrices were used to construct state- and regional-level multipliers relevant to Nebraska. These multipliers describe how spending by community colleges, their employees, and students generates additional economic activity, which eventually "leaks" out of the state. IMPLAN explicitly accounts for such leakage based on workforce composition, supplier availability, and regional purchasing patterns, ensuring that only Nebraska-specific impacts are included.

The model also accounts for substitution and displacement effects by applying multipliers deflated to levels below the national benchmark. Multipliers are applied only to personal disposable income, producing more realistic estimates of induced economic effects. IMPLAN excludes imports to the economic area by applying Regional Purchase Coefficients (RPCs), which estimate the proportion of goods and services likely to be purchased within Nebraska based on observed trade flows and regional economic characteristics.

Lifetime Public Cost Savings Methodology

Lifetime public cost savings were projected for FY25 dual enrollment participants. These estimates capture the anticipated public savings from postsecondary educational attainment, reflecting reductions in public expenditures as students attain higher levels of education. Key categories include Medicaid, public assistance and social services, public healthcare, and corrections/incarceration. By modeling the expected outcomes of dual enrollment participants, component-level savings were applied across these expenditure categories to estimate the total lifetime public cost savings attributable to educational attainment. This approach provides a comprehensive view of how early access to postsecondary coursework can reduce long-term reliance on public programs while enhancing community well-being.[17]

Postsecondary Progression (Some College/Associate's Degree) represents participants who are expected to complete an associate's degree and pursue additional postsecondary coursework without earning a bachelor's degree. For this group, component-level savings were proportionally scaled across all expenditure categories to reflect the public savings resulting from their educational achievements. This methodology ensures that the analysis captures the value of continued postsecondary progress even when a bachelor's degree is not completed.

All present-value estimates were converted to current dollars using the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.[18] This adjustment ensures that the projected savings reflect present-value lifetime benefits, making the results comparable and meaningful in today's economic context.

Per-graduate lifetime public cost savings are summarized across all expenditure categories, demonstrating how participation in dual enrollment programs contributes to long-term public sustainability, reduced reliance on public programs, and societal benefits for communities. By investing in early postsecondary education, these programs trigger economic and social returns that extend well beyond individual participants. The figures below represent lifetime public cost savings per graduate and form the basis for estimating total lifetime savings for Nebraska's graduate population.

Attainment	Present Value Savings per Graduate
Associate's Degree	$34,386
Postsecondary Progression (Some College/Associate's Degree)	$43,860
Bachelor's Degree	$53,334

17 Philip A. Trostel (2007), "The Fiscal Impacts of College Attainment," New England Public Policy Center Working Paper No. 07 2, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston.

18 Archived Consumer Price Index Supplemental Files: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

APPENDIX D
Definition of Terms

Study Year	FY25 represents the period from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. For Nebraska community colleges, data were supplied for FY25.
Extra Earnings	Additional lifetime earnings that participants are projected to earn as a direct result of taking dual enrollment courses. These earnings increase household income, improve workforce positioning, and enhance career opportunities in high-demand fields.
Total Economic Impact	The combined direct, indirect, and induced impacts of spending by dual enrollment participants using their extra earnings to generate additional economic activity in local businesses and services, including housing, retail, food, transportation, and other sectors.
Direct Economic Impact	Spending by dual enrollment participants who attain post-secondary degrees.
Indirect Economic Impact	Re-spending by vendors and suppliers that provide goods and services to dual enrollment participants who attain post-secondary degrees.
Induced Economic Impact	Jobs sustained as vendors and suppliers spend their earnings in the local economy.
Multiplier Effect	The added economic activity created when dual enrollment participants' direct spending circulates through local businesses and households.
Direct Employment	The total number of jobs directly supported by dual enrollment participants' additional earnings and spending.
Indirect Employment	Additional jobs created as vendors and suppliers respond to increased demand driven by dual enrollment participants' additional earnings.
Induced Employment	Jobs sustained as vendors and suppliers spend their earnings in the local economy.
State and Local Tax Impact	The extra earnings of dual enrollment participants that lead to additional state and local tax revenues. This includes taxes paid directly by participants, as well as taxes resulting from household spending and purchases by vendors and suppliers that support the local economy.

APPENDIX E

Tripp Umbach Qualifications

Founded in Pittsburgh, PA, and now headquartered in Kansas City, MO, Tripp Umbach is recognized as the nation's leading private consulting firm specializing in economic and community development. For 35 years, the firm has partnered with more than 1,000 education, healthcare, government, and corporate clients to measure, plan, and advance the economic, social, and physical well-being of communities worldwide. Tripp Umbach has completed more than 500 economic impact studies for higher education institutions across the United States, as well as community assessments and economic development strategies. As a pioneer in developing economic impact analysis in the 1980s, Tripp Umbach is the most respected and trusted provider of university impact studies.

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