

Florida's Career Dual Enrollment Boom Hasn't Reached Every District Yet

2026-27



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Career Dual Enrollment: Overview

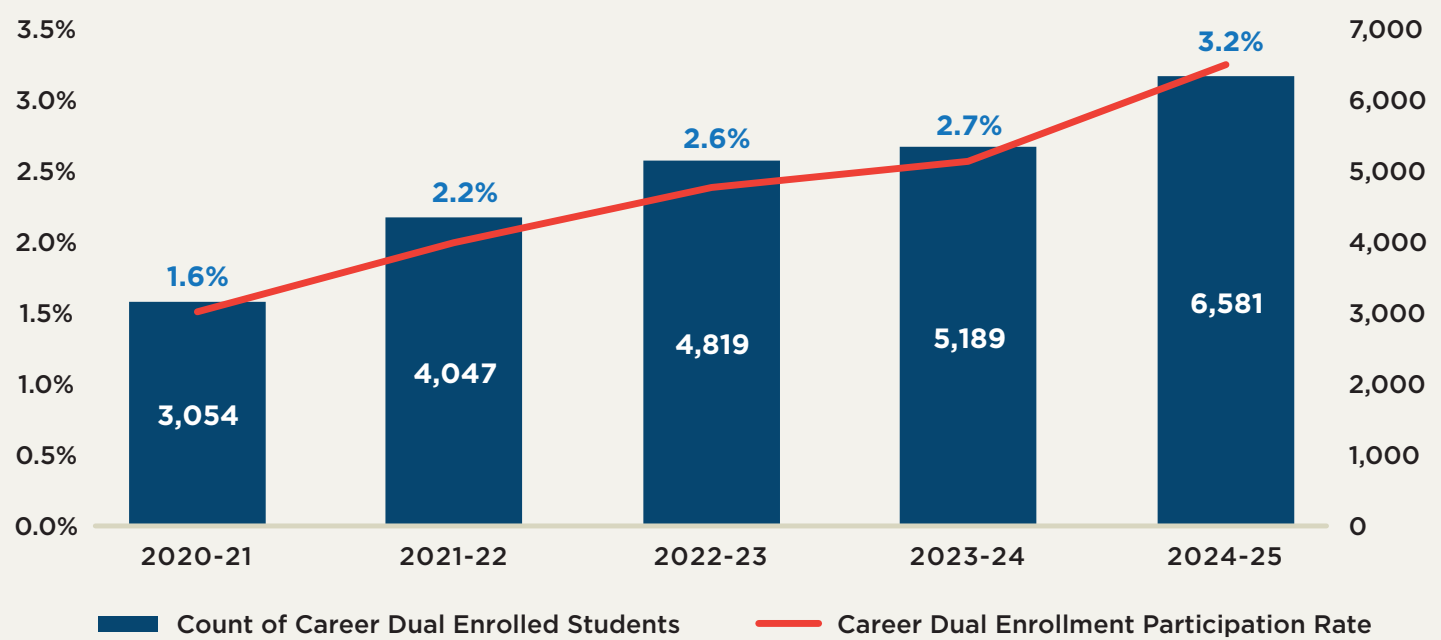
Florida has long been recognized as a national leader in expanding access to accelerated pathways connecting education to workforce opportunity. This report examines how career dual enrollment (CDE) is functioning across Florida's districts, extending the CDE overview in FCAN's [2025-26 Career Pathways Environmental Scan](#) with participation, outcome, and district-level data. Supported by the Career and Professional Education (CAPE) framework and the state's dual enrollment statute (F.S. 1007.271), Florida has built a comprehensive career pathway ecosystem that promotes Career and Technical Education (CTE) from middle school through postsecondary education, with CDE serving as a key bridge

between secondary and postsecondary programs. In 2023-24, Florida College System institutions and district technical centers conferred nearly 61,000 industry certifications statewide.¹ District K-12 schools in 2024-25 awarded 211,933 industry certifications*, reflecting a 76% pass rate, underscoring the scale of career preparation across the state's secondary and postsecondary systems.²

Within this system, CDE enables students to earn postsecondary credit while completing industry-aligned coursework leading to high-value credentials. As shown in Figure 1 below, participation in CDE among secondary students enrolled in either traditional K-12 or CTE schools increased by 3,527 students between 2020-21 and 2024-25 marking a 115.5% gain.³

*Does not include digital tool certificates

FIGURE 1: CAREER DUAL ENROLLMENT PARTICIPATION DOUBLED IN FIVE YEARS



Source: Florida Department of Education

Career Dual Enrollment: Eligibility

To support participation, Florida has established broad eligibility criteria for CDE. CDE is available to students in grades 6-12 who enroll in approved programs aligned to industry-recognized certifications on the [CAPE Industry Certification Funding List](#) or the [CAPE Postsecondary Industry Certification Funding List](#). Offered through partnerships with Florida College System institutions and district technical colleges, CDE courses are provided at no cost to students, with eligibility beginning at a minimum 2.0 GPA.⁴ To further reduce barriers, programs may offer academic supports, including remediation for students who do not initially meet basic skills requirements.⁵

Career Dual Enrollment: District-Level Patterns

In May 2025, the Florida Department of Education (FL DOE) added a [College and Career Accelerated Credit](#) visualization to its online reporting, providing district-level counts and percentages of graduates who earned CDE accelerated credit. A review of these data reveals substantial variation in CDE participation across Florida's districts. Among the county-based districts, Wakulla and Hamilton stand out with the highest participation rates at 36.1% and 32.3%, respectively, greater than ten times the statewide average of 3.2% for the 2024-25 academic year. At the other end, 15 districts report no CDE participation.

This variation can reflect differences in CTE delivery models rather than differences in overall access to career-focused pathways. For example, although Alachua and Palm Beach report no CDE participation, these



districts issued 2,734 and 15,767 K-12 education industry certifications, respectively, in 2024-25.⁶ In the same year, 879 students from Alachua and 5,282 students from Palm Beach districts earned at least one industry

AMONG THE COUNTY-BASED DISTRICTS, WAKULLA AND HAMILTON STAND OUT WITH THE HIGHEST PARTICIPATION RATES AT 36.1% AND 32.3%

certification, representing 43.8% and 37.2% of those counties' graduates, respectively, demonstrating substantial engagement in career preparation outside of the CDE model.⁷ This pattern suggests that a student's access to a free college credential through CDE currently depends less on interest or readiness than on which district happens to offer the infrastructure, staffing, and partnerships to deliver it.



participants as measured by both the number of CDE courses completed with a grade of C or better and the number of CAPE industry certifications earned.⁸ Between 2020-21 and 2023-24, the number of successfully completed CDE courses increased from 17,459

BETWEEN 2020-21 AND 2023-24, THE NUMBER OF SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED CDE COURSES INCREASED FROM 17,459 TO 24,619, A 41% INCREASE OVER THE FOUR-YEAR PERIOD.

District-level patterns in CDE participation can be explored further through the interactive density map available on FL DOE's [College and Career Accelerated Credit page](#).

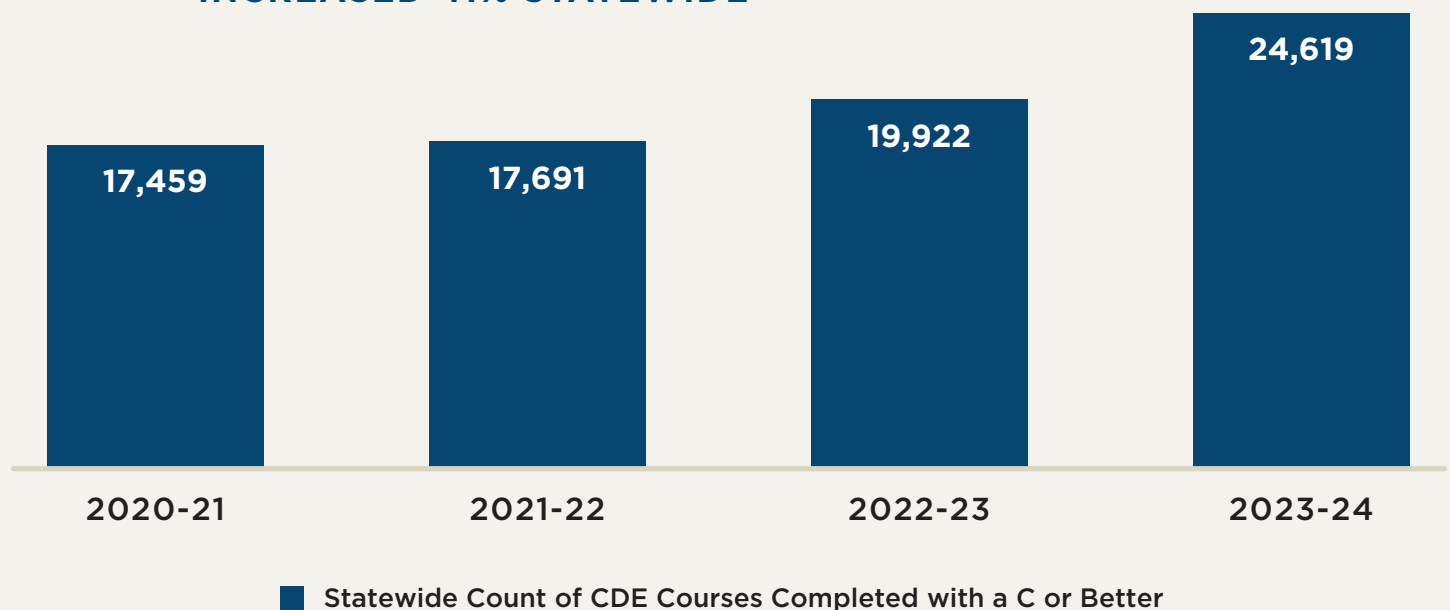
Career Dual Enrollment: Student Success and Industry Certification Outcomes

Data from the FL DOE provide insight into statewide student success among CDE

to 24,619 (Figure 2), a 41% increase over the four-year period.

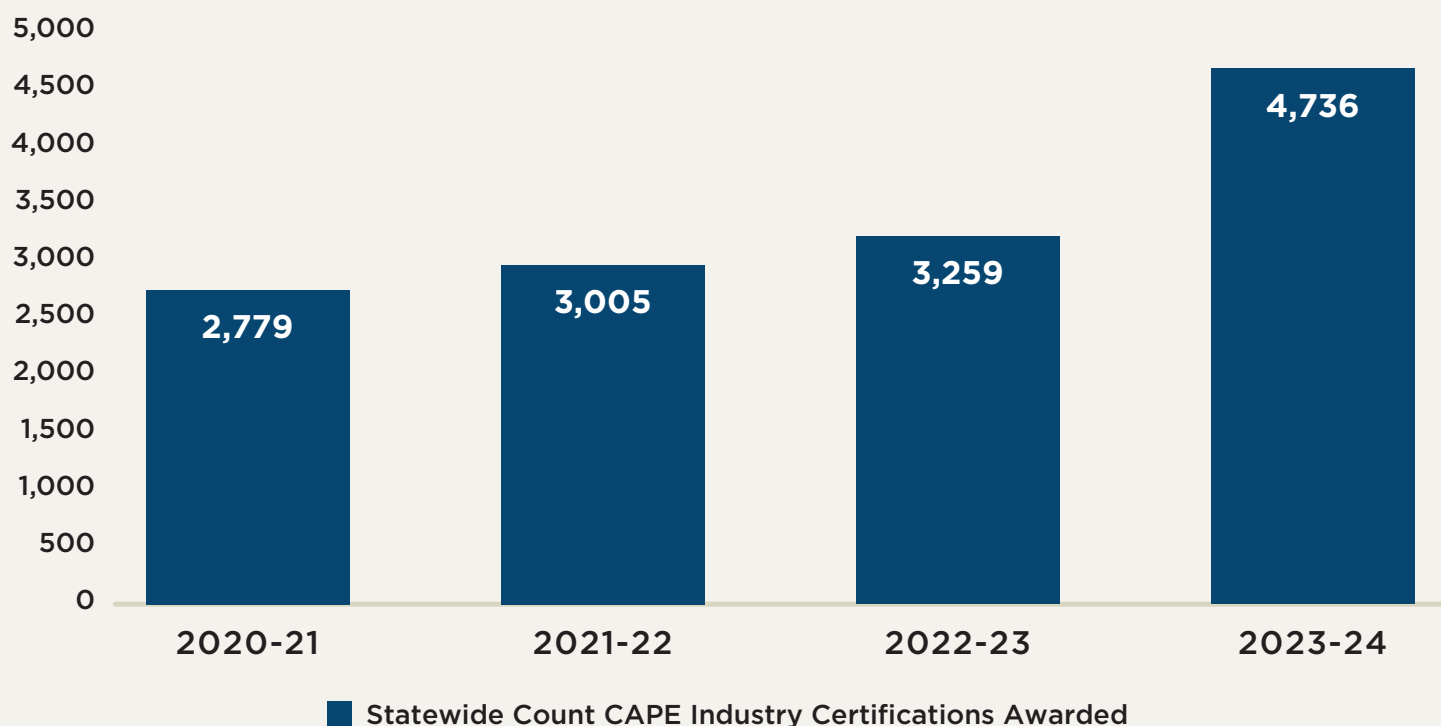
During the same timeframe, CAPE industry certifications awarded to CDE students increased from 2,779 to 4,736 certifications (Figure 3) marking a 70.4% increase.

FIGURE 2: SUCCESSFUL CDE COURSE COMPLETIONS INCREASED 41% STATEWIDE



Source: Florida Department of Education

FIGURE 3: MORE CAREER DUAL ENROLLED STUDENTS ARE EARNING WORKFORCE-VALUED CREDENTIALS



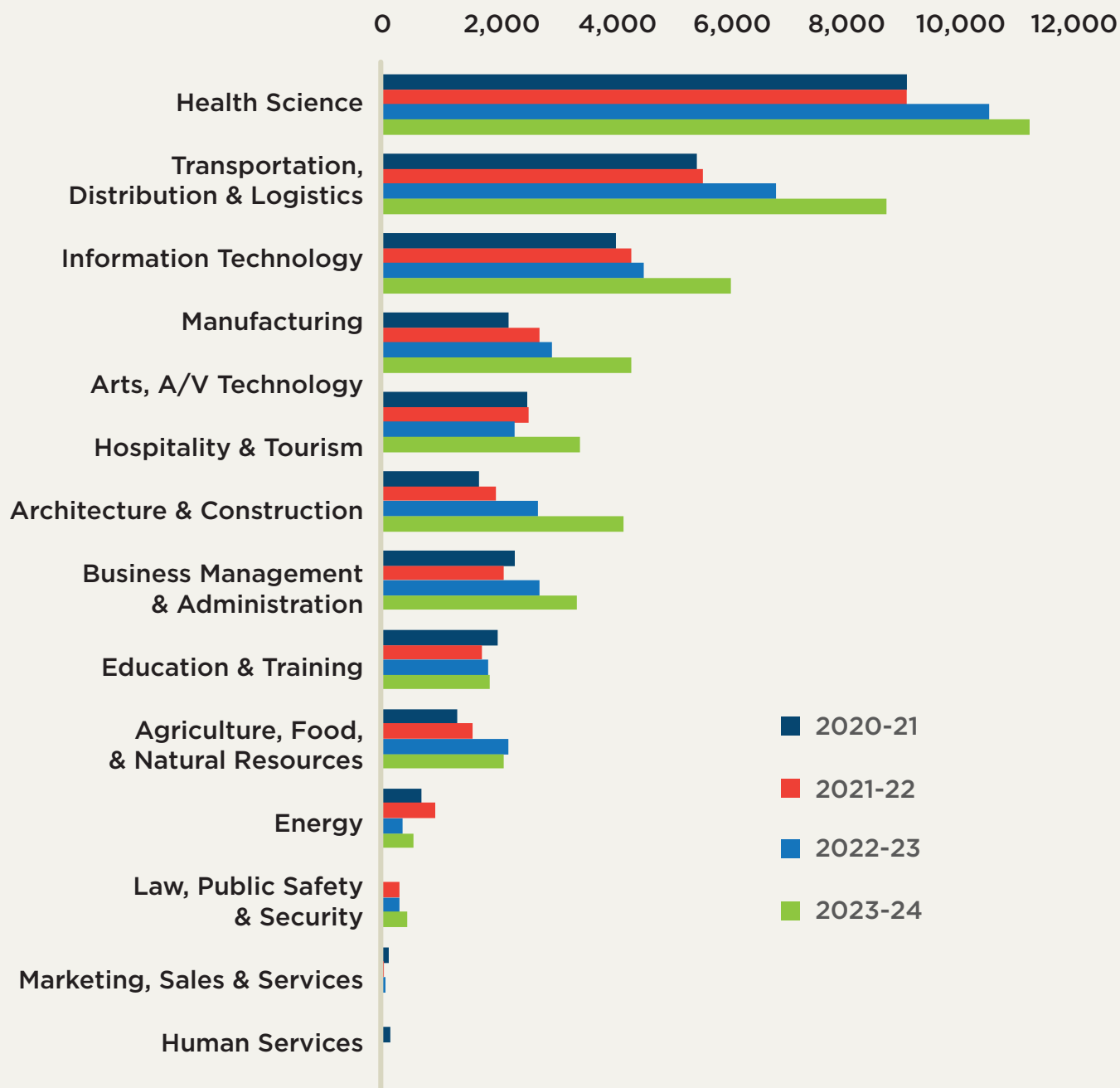
Source: Florida Department of Education

These trends suggest that growth in CDE participation has been accompanied not only by increased enrollment, but also by higher levels of credential attainment aligned with workforce preparation.

Further analysis was conducted to look at student success by career cluster. Aggregate outcomes were examined across career clusters using two measures: (1) the number of CDE courses successfully completed (earning a grade of C or better) and (2) the overall course success rate, defined as the number of successfully completed CDE courses divided by the total number of CDE courses attempted within each career cluster. Between 2021-22 and 2023-24, the Health Science career cluster recorded the highest cumulative number of successful course completions (40,277), followed by

Transportation, Distribution & Logistics (26,829) and Information Technology (19,181). Together, these three career clusters accounted for 57.4% of all successful CDE course completions during the period. Most career clusters experienced year-over-year growth in the number of successfully completed courses. However, the Arts, A/V Technology & Communications, Architecture & Construction, and Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources career clusters did not exhibit consistent year-over-year growth. The Business Management & Administration and Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security career clusters experienced an overall decline in successful course completions during the period. A summary of successful course completions by career cluster between 2021-22 and 2023-24 is provided in Figure 4.

FIGURE 4: SUCCESSFUL CDE COURSE COMPLETIONS INCREASED 41% STATEWIDE



Source: Florida Department of Education

Examining course success rates offers additional context by measuring the proportion of attempted courses that were completed successfully. Success rates are based on available data within each county-based district. In 2023-24, Health Science programs demonstrated the highest CDE course success rate statewide at 60.9%,

followed closely by Business Management & Administration (60.2%), Manufacturing (58.7%), and Transportation, Distribution & Logistics (53.9%). By contrast, Hospitality & Tourism (38.3%), Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security (37.5%), and Arts, A/V Technology & Communications (35.0%) reported lower rates of successful course

completion. Career clusters exhibiting more year-over-year variation include Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources, which increased from 46.6% in 2020-21 to 81.2% in 2021-22, declined to 38.1% in 2022-23, and then rose again to 51.4% in 2023-24. The Information Technology cluster increased from 38.8% in 2022-23 to 50.1% in 2023-24. In contrast, Law, Public Safety & Security declined from 63.8% in 2022-23 to 37.5% in 2023-24.

These fluctuations may reflect both changes in participation levels and possible differences in program implementation across years. Success rates should be considered alongside participation counts – career clusters with smaller or rapidly changing cohorts contribute to greater year-to-year variability in observed success rates. CDE course success rates by career cluster from 2021-22 through 2023-24 are summarized in Figure 5.

FIGURE 5: HEALTH SCIENCE AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION CAREER CLUSTERS CONSISTENTLY REPORT HIGHEST COURSE SUCCESS RATES

Career Cluster	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	46.6%	81.2%	38.1%	51.4%
Architecture & Construction	49.3%	37.1%	37.9%	42.3%
Arts, A/V Technology & Communication	26.5%	25.1%	23.3%	35.0%
Business Management & Administration	54.6%	56.8%	58.4%	60.2%
Education & Training	44.4%	49.3%	51.0%	49.0%
Health Science	53.6%	53.8%	58.7%	60.9%
Hospitality & Tourism	34.7%	28.2%	29.4%	38.3%
Information Technology	45.4%	41.4%	38.8%	50.1%
Law, Public Safety & Security	82.2%	80.4%	63.8%	37.5%
Manufacturing	56.4%	58.6%	48.2%	58.7%
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	48.6%	46.7%	47.9%	53.9%

Source: Florida Department of Education

Finally, CDE success rates were analyzed at the district level to highlight any geographic variation in outcomes (Figure 6). Among districts reporting CDE participation in 2023-24, Suwannee County had the highest success rate at 88.2%, serving 194 unique students at Riveroak Technical College.

Several smaller-scale districts also posted strong success rates. Manatee County reported the next-highest rate statewide at 84.2% (109 students), followed by Escambia County at 79.7% (85 students) and Bay County at 77.8% (35 students). In these districts, CDE students are primarily served by area technical colleges, including Manatee

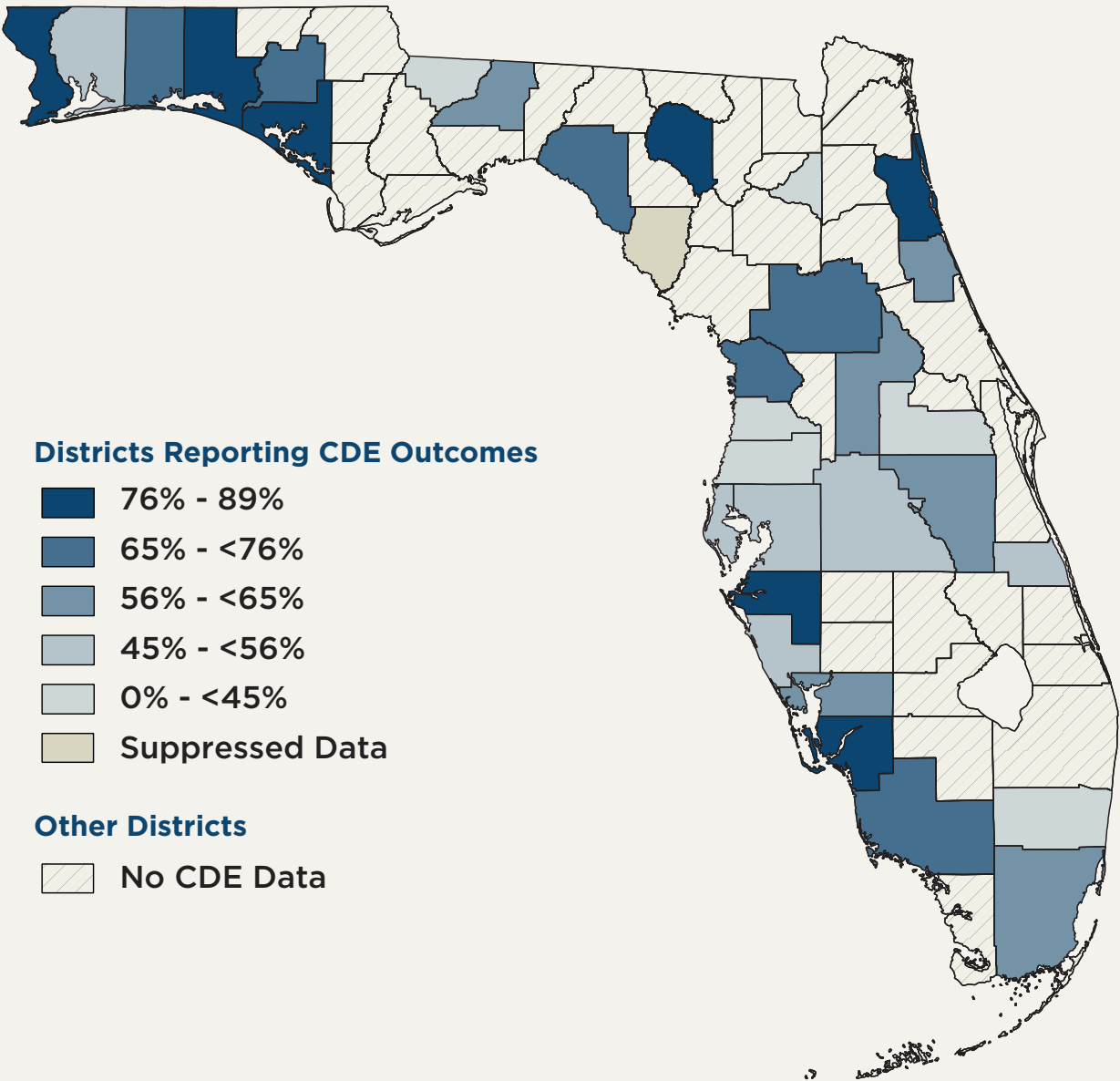
Technical College (Manatee), George Stone Technical College (Escambia), and Tom P. Haney Technical College (Bay).

At a larger scale, Miami-Dade County reported a CDE course success rate of 61.6% while serving 2,231 unique students in 2023-24, exceeding the statewide average of 50.8%. Students in Miami-Dade are served through multiple postsecondary career and technical education centers and colleges, with Miami Lakes Educational Center and

Technical College serving the largest number (748 students) during the reporting year. The map below shows geographic variation in CDE success rates across Florida's 67 county-based districts.

Note: Because districts vary substantially in the number of CDE students served, success rates should be interpreted alongside participation counts when comparing district performance. See Appendix for district-level counts and success rates.

FIGURE 6: 35 COUNTIES IN FLORIDA REPORT NO CDE OUTCOMES



Source: Florida Department of Education

The data further demonstrate the central role district technical colleges play in Florida's Career Dual Enrollment ecosystem. In 2023-24, Florida College System (FCS) institutions enrolled 492 unique CDE students statewide, compared to 15,254 students enrolled through district technical colleges and centers.⁹ Of the 13 FCS colleges which offer CDE, 9 reported outcome data; 48 out of the 52 district technical colleges and centers reported outcome data. To protect the privacy of individuals, data are suppressed and are displayed only when the total number of students in a group is at least 10. District technical colleges therefore accounted for approximately 96.9% of all reported CDE enrollments statewide.

Career Dual Enrollment: Understanding High CDE Participation

CDE participation rates were calculated and districts ranked from highest to lowest. The top ten districts were invited to participate in a structured phone interview conducted by FCAN, designed to explore practices associated with higher CDE participation. A standardized interview protocol was used to gather perspectives from district and postsecondary leaders on key factors that contribute to the success of CDE in their districts. Four districts of the top ten districts participated in the interviews: Wakulla (36.1% CDE participation), Washington (16.4%), Orange (15.1%), and Taylor (13.8%), based on 2024-25 CDE participation rates.

Career Dual Enrollment: Summary of Findings

Key Factors in Driving CDE Participation

The findings that follow reflect themes that emerged across district responses and are intended to support shared learning and continuous improvement in



CDE implementation statewide. Based on conversations with district and postsecondary leaders who participated in phone interviews, five overarching factors were consistently identified as contributing to higher levels of CDE participation in the identified districts:

- Sustained leadership commitment that positions CDE as a priority across districts
- Workforce-aligned programming
- Strong partnerships (secondary, postsecondary, and community)
- Early student engagement
- Intentional supports that reduce barriers to access

Highlights from High-Performing CDE Districts

Early Leadership & Workforce Alignment: Orange County

Orange County regards itself as a trailblazer in CDE, launching its efforts in 2013 under strong associate superintendent leadership. This future-focused vision to expand career-connected opportunities for students by aligning program offerings to high-demand fields is cited as key strategy contributing to Orange County's strong CDE participation.



Leveraging Postsecondary and Community Partnerships: Taylor County

Taylor County underscored the role of strong partnerships in sustaining and scaling CDE. In addition to close collaboration with postsecondary institutions, the district highlighted partnerships with community organizations, including Rotary groups and local churches. The district also noted having several articulation agreements with multiple counties, as well as public and private schools, aimed at expanding access and supporting student transitions.

Early Awareness and Student Engagement: Wakulla County

Wakulla County emphasized the importance of introducing students to career pathways well before high school. The district begins communicating about career programming at the elementary level and continues through middle school by offering early exposure opportunities, including digital information technology and drone programs. High school counselors and assistant principals also engage directly with middle school students to promote career pathways and support early planning.

Reducing Logistical Barriers to Access: Orange County

Orange Technical College highlighted intentional efforts to reduce logistical

and scheduling barriers that can limit participation in CDE. High school students are transported by district school buses to one of the college's five campuses, and many CDE courses are also offered directly on high school campuses, expanding access for students who might otherwise face transportation or scheduling challenges.

Orange Technical College participates in Tech Express, a partnership with Valencia College and Osceola Technical College, to create clear postsecondary pathways for students completing technical certificate programs. Through Tech Express, students can apply approved technical certificate credits toward an Associate of Science (A.S.) degree at Valencia College, supported by dedicated advisors who assist with applications, enrollment, and individualized planning. Together, these strategies emphasize stackable credentials, reduce time and cost to degree, and strengthen transitions from technical training to postsecondary education.

Key Factors that Drive High Student Interest

In addition to identifying factors associated with high participation in CDE, interviewees were asked to identify which CDE programs generate the strongest student interest and enrollment. While specific course offerings vary by local context, four common themes emerged regarding the types of programs students are most drawn to and the factors contributing to their perceived success.

- Programs aligned to immediate employment opportunities
- Health care programs
- Specialized offerings
- Instructor expertise and learning environment

High-Demand Programs Aligned to Immediate Employment: Taylor County

Taylor County emphasized the role of workforce-aligned programming in driving strong student interest in CDE. The district is served by two technical institutions - Riveroak Technical College in neighboring Suwannee County and Big Bend Technical College in Taylor County - both of which offer programs closely connected to immediate employment opportunities. District leaders highlighted especially strong demand for health care pathways, including programs in patient care technology, practical nursing, and professional nursing (LPN-RN bridge) that prepare students for credentials such as CNA, phlebotomy, home health aide, patient care assistant, and EKG.

Taylor County also identified manufacturing and industrial programs as key drivers of participation. Big Bend Technical College is nationally recognized for its welding program, which prepares students for placement in advanced manufacturing settings, including aerospace-related industries. Students also have access to specialized offerings such as electrical instrumentation and millwright/industrial mechanic pathways that provide exposure to a range of industrial careers. A recently launched 12-week aluminum and welding program (which necessitated building an additional 10 new welding booths) further leverages the college's proximity to nearby manufacturing plants, strengthening hands-on learning and connections to employment.

High Student Demand for Health-Focused Career Pathways: Orange County

Students at Orange Technical College show especially strong interest in health care-related CDE programs, with several health-focused programs often having waiting lists. District leaders identified health academies as among the most popular offerings, with Nursing and Medical Assisting courses generating particularly high

demand. Approximately half of participating students rank within the top 20% of their graduating class and frequently continue into postsecondary health professions, including nursing and medical careers.

These programs are supported by strong postsecondary partnerships and experienced instructional staff. For example, Orange Technical College has maintained a long-standing partnership with Orlando Health and Advent Health. At Lively Technical College, additional high-demand health programs such as phlebotomy and CNA are taught by instructors with extensive clinical leadership experience, including former hospital administrators.

Career Dual Enrollment: Lessons Learned

In addition to identifying factors associated with high participation and understanding which programs generate the strongest student interest in CDE, district and postsecondary leaders were asked to reflect on lessons learned from managing CDE in their districts. Interviewees were invited to consider what they would or would not do differently if they were building or scaling CDE programs today. The strategies that follow reflect practical, experience-based insights intended to support other districts seeking to expand access to and participation in CDE.

- Align programs with local industry and immediate employment opportunities
- Start early building awareness through multi-touch outreach (CDE orientation nights, college & career fairs, websites, classroom visits, etc.)
- Invest in dedicated staffing to coordinate and champion CDE
- Make CDE personal, welcoming, and student-centered
- Plan for program sustainability (cross-training staff, partnership-building)



A Personalized Approach to Recruitment: Taylor County

Taylor County leaders emphasized that recruitment and marketing are critical to growing CDE participation. Each February during CTE Month, Big Bend Technical College invites students to campus for lunch, tours, and one-on-one conversations centered on a shared message: we are family and we are invested in your future. These experiences - paired with swag, prizes, and direct interaction with college staff - help students picture themselves as college students.

Dedicated Staffing Streamlines Access: Orange and Washington Counties

Orange County credits much of its success to a dedicated CDE specialist who focuses exclusively on recruitment, advising, and scheduling. This CDE specialist helps students and families understand career pathway options, coordinates course schedules across institutions, and enables students to begin CDE as early as ninth grade.

Like Orange County, Washington County utilizes a dedicated staff member to streamline the CDE process. Eight years ago, Washington County created a full-time, grant-funded college and career counselor position serving both district high schools. This role enables highly personalized advising, particularly for seniors, and supports intentional matching of scholarships to student needs.

Individualized Support Matters: Wakulla County

Wakulla County's CDE program is the result of more than 30 years of intentional investment. District leaders described a long-standing commitment to vocational education, supported by Perkins funding and other grants, and shaped by a former director's vision to ensure rural students could graduate with a meaningful credential. Recognizing that many students balance school with work and family responsibilities, Wakulla prioritizes individualized support and flexible pathways that allow students to leave high school with credentials that immediately improve their economic mobility.

Career Dual Enrollment: Conclusion

Florida's investment in CDE has produced real gains in participation and credential attainment. But those gains are not shared equally. CDE is one of several pathways available to Florida students, alongside traditional college enrollment and other forms of dual enrollment. For students who choose it, CDE access means the difference between graduating high school with college credit and an industry certification already in hand, at no cost, versus graduating without either. Which students have that pathway available to them currently correlates more closely with which district they attend than with their preparation, interest, or willingness to pursue it. Wakulla and Hamilton, the two districts with the most developed staffing, transportation, and postsecondary partnerships, report CDE participation rates of 36.1% and 32.3%, more than ten times the statewide average of 3.2%. Fifteen districts report none. Closing that gap, not simply growing the state total, is the next test of CDE's reach in Florida.

APPENDIX: CDE SUCCESS RATES BY DISTRICT

District	# of CDE Courses Taken	# of CDE Courses Passed with a C or Better	Success Rate
Bay	99	77	77.8%
Bradford	94	34	36.2%
Broward	5,030	2,254	44.8%
Charlotte	438	270	61.6%
Citrus	144	94	65.3%
Dixie	*	*	*
Collier	1,906	1,239	65.0%
Escambia	143	114	79.7%
Flagler	33	19	57.6%
Gadsden	79	0	0.0%
Hernando	115	31	27.0%
Hillsborough	2,936	1,556	53.0%
Indian River	209	116	55.5%
Lake	372	213	57.3%
Lee	175	134	76.6%
Leon	1,047	642	61.3%
Manatee	348	293	84.2%
Marion	297	193	65.0%
Miami-Dade	7,137	4,399	61.6%
Okaloosa	35	26	74.3%
Orange	16,178	5,784	35.8%
Osceola	1,013	648	64.0%
Pasco	339	0	0.0%
Pinellas	1,771	829	46.8%
Polk	2,359	1,251	53.0%
Santa Rosa	330	150	45.5%

District	# of CDE Courses Taken	# of CDE Courses Passed with a C or Better	Success Rate
Sarasota	1,859	958	51.5%
St. Johns	370	293	79.2%
Suwannee	659	581	88.2%
Taylor	347	246	70.9%
Walton	102	79	77.5%

* = Data masked for student privacy
Districts not listed had no CDE participation

ENDNOTES

¹U.S. Dept. of Education, NCES, IPEDS, 2023-24 Completion Data, Awards/degrees conferred by program (2020 CIP classification)

²FL DOE, F71082 Report, [Industry Certification by Grade](#), 2024-25

³FL DOE, Advanced Reports, College and Career Accelerated Credit, 2020-21 through 2024-25

⁴Section 1007.271(2), Florida Statutes, defines an eligible secondary student for Florida's Dual Enrollment Program

⁵Under Section 1004.91(2), Florida Statutes, students who do not meet basic skills requirements for certificate career education programs must be referred to career-preparatory instruction or adult basic education.

⁶FL DOE, F71082 Report, [K-12 Industry Certifications Attempted, Earned and Pass Rate by District](#), 2024-25

⁷FL DOE, Advanced Reports, College and Career Accelerated Credit, 2024-25

⁸FL DOE, Bureau of PK-20 Education Reporting and Accountability (PERA)

⁹FL DOE, Bureau of PK-20 Education Reporting and Accountability (PERA)

About Florida College Access Network

Florida College Access Network (FCAN) leads the statewide collaborative movement to strengthen Florida by ensuring every Floridian attains education beyond high school toward a rewarding career. We envision a thriving Florida working together where education is the pathway to economic mobility and a prosperous economy for all.

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