2025 District and School Accountability Reporting:

Advanced Courses

# Introduction

In 2018, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) began reporting accountability results under its new framework for district and school accountability and assistance, which was approved by the U.S. Department of Education as part of Massachusetts’ Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plan. The accountability system includes indicators that provide additional information about school quality and student opportunity.

Massachusetts includes completion of advanced coursework as one of its accountability indicators. This indicator measures the percentage of all students enrolled in 11th and 12th grade that complete at least one advanced course, including but not limited to Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Project Lead the Way (PLTW), dual enrollment for credit, Chapter 74-approved vocational/technical secondary cooperative education programs and articulation agreement courses, and other DESE-selected rigorous courses. Eligible courses extend beyond traditional AP courses and do not necessitate student participation in AP tests. This indicator is included in the accountability results for any district, school, or subgroup with at least 20 students enrolled in grades 11 and 12.

# Background

Massachusetts’ student-level course data indicate that there are varying levels of participation in and completion of advanced coursework across the state and that within school districts there are equity gaps in participation across subgroups. In addition, Massachusetts PSAT, SAT, and course grade data indicate that additional students are prepared for advanced coursework but are not enrolling in those courses. By including a measure of advanced coursework completion, the accountability system can incentivize student participation in these types of courses.

# Courses

Certain DESE-identified courses are considered “advanced” for the purposes of accountability reporting. These courses are identified in the [EPIMS Appendices](https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/epims/appendices.xlsx) document on DESE’s data collection [website](https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/epims/default.html), along with the course descriptions (see *Appendix G2: Secondary Subject Area-Course Codes*). Please note that the course codes and names are aligned with DESE’s [Student Course Schedule (SCS)](http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/scs/) data collection, and it is the course code that is used to calculate the advanced coursework completion rate.

In addition to the courses identified in the [EPIMS Appendices](https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/epims/appendices.xlsx), DESE includes other rigorous courses in the calculation of the advanced coursework completion rate. These courses are identified as follows:

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| **Dual Enrollment for Post-Secondary Credit** |
| Any course taken for postsecondary credit, reported in [SCS09](http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/scs/SCS-DataHandbook.docx) as course level “04” |
| **Chapter 74-Approved Vocational/Technical Secondary Cooperative Education Program** |
| Enrollment in a Chapter 74-approved vocational technical secondary [cooperative education program](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/cvte/), reported in [SIMS DOE035](http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/SIMS-DataHandbook.docx) as “02” |
| **Chapter 74-Approved Vocational/Technical Secondary Program Articulation Agreement** |
| Enrollment in a Chapter 74-approved vocational technical secondary course that meets statewide [articulation agreement](https://masscc.org/technical-high-schools-transfer-agreements/) requirements, reported in [SCS09](http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/scs/SCS-DataHandbook.docx) as course level “04” |

Any student who completes at least one of these courses is included in the advanced coursework completion rate for the district, school, or group. Students completing multiple advanced courses are counted only once.

To assist districts in the submission of accurate coursework data, the end-of-year SCS data collection application includes district- and school-level summary reports that display advanced course-taking rates. Districts must review these reports before certifying their end-of-year SCS data. The Department is unable to make changes to certified SCS data once the collection is closed.