

# Geneva High School

## Memorandum

**To:** Dr. Barrett, Superintendent

**From:** Doug Drexler, GHS Associate Principal

**Date:** October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Subject:** Dual Credit Expansion Opportunities at GHS, Phase 1

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### **Background on Study**

As part of the district's strategic plan, the high school was tasked with identifying additional dual credit courses that could be implemented. Specifically, each department was asked to identify one dual credit course that might be feasible. Since courses from different departments need to be compatible with each other in the overall GHS schedule and in the four-year plans of students, we decided to take a wider approach to this study, looking at a variety of options with no preconceived notion of what the final recommendations would be. Our goal was to develop a building-wide dual credit plan that could guide effective strategic implementation over multiple years.

Given the scope of this study, the study was divided into two phases spanning two school years. During Phase 1 (the 2024-2025 school year) we focused on the overall dual credit approach as well as specific course possibilities in the core academic departments of English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. During Phase 2 (the 2025-2026 school year), the focus will be on specific course possibilities in the non-core departments of Fine & Applied Arts, Wellness, and World Language.

This report is a summary of Phase 1, with a similar report projected for October 2026 once Phase 2 is complete.

## **Dual Credit 101: The Basics**

Dual credit courses are effective ways for students to earn both high school and college credit simultaneously. The Illinois landscape of dual credit legislation, policies, and practices continues to evolve, but below is some basic information about how dual credit courses currently operate:

### **Course parameters**

- There are several courses taught at multiple public universities in Illinois that have an Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) number associated with them. Although courses with the same IAI numbers may have different course titles and university course numbering systems between different universities, the course outlines and course content are the same. For example, all of the courses below have the same IAI number:

Waubonsee Community College	PSY 100	Introduction to Psychology
College of DuPage	PSYCH 1100	General Psychology
Northern Illinois University	PSYC 102	Introduction to Psychology
Illinois State University	PSY110	Fundamentals of Psychology

- The intention of the dual credit legislation in Illinois is that any course designated with an Illinois Articulation Initiative number (IAI) be made available to high school students via dual credit agreements with local high schools. In practice, this is still evolving.
- It is possible for high schools to offer dual credit for courses that don't have an IAI number associated with them, but the transferability of the course is sometimes not as straightforward.
- A high school and university enter into a partnership agreement that details the responsibilities of each institution. The high school agrees to cover the course outlines developed at the university.
- For individual courses, high schools submit proposal applications to the university for a review. The university reviews the course proposals as well as faculty qualifications. The July 2025 legislative amendments to the Illinois Dual Credit Quality Act are impacting this process, and it remains to be seen exactly how this will play out.

### **Faculty parameters**

- Faculty qualifications to teach dual credit courses is one of the most limiting factors to the expansion of dual credit opportunities. There has also been some incompatibility between Higher Learning Commission university guidance, Illinois Community College Board policies, and Illinois state law governing dual credit. July 2025 legislation has attempted to clarify this, but it remains to be seen what the actual impact of this will be in practice.
- In order for a high school teacher to teach a dual credit course, they must possess one of the following:
  - A graduate degree in the specific content area to be taught
  - A graduate degree in any discipline along with 18 graduate hours in the specific content area to be taughtHigh school teachers essentially become adjunct instructors at the university. While they can be very useful, graduate degrees in Education, Curriculum & Instruction, Counseling, and Administration do not qualify teachers to teach dual credit courses.
- Graduate programs targeting teachers seeking dual credit credentials are starting to become more prevalent.
- ISBE recently started offering a Dual Credit Endorsement in nine different disciplines, which offers statewide portability of dual credit credentials.

### Student parameters

- Students choosing to enroll in a dual credit course are required to meet any course prerequisites established by the college, which may include qualifying standardized test scores, GPA requirements, and coursework. This information is typically compiled by the high school and submitted to the university.
- In the first few days of a dual credit course, students complete the college enrollment information. Students may choose to enroll in a dual credit course at GHS but elect not to seek dual credit, although the course requirements remain the same. Successfully completed courses will always earn GHS credit.
- Dual credit courses taken in high school will be the first grades on a student's college transcript, and as a result there can be academic and financial aid ramifications. Each college has a Drop Period when a student can be removed from the dual credit portion of the course without any record appearing on their college transcript. There is usually also a Withdraw Period in which a student may receive a W on their college transcript. After these deadlines, a student who withdraws from the dual credit portion of the course may earn an F on their college transcript. It is important to note that receiving a grade lower than a C or a W on a college transcript could impact a student's future college financial aid eligibility.
- At the conclusion of the course, the course grade will appear on the GHS transcript (for high school credit) and the community college transcript (for college credit). Students will eventually need to request that this college transcript be sent to the colleges of their choice for review as transfer credit.
- On rare occasions, GHS may not be able to offer the college credit portion of these courses due to faculty members who may be on a leave of absence. When this occurs, students will be notified before the course begins and will have the opportunity to switch to a different course if desired.

### College acceptance of dual credit courses

College acceptance of high school dual credit courses has changed considerably in the last decade and continues to evolve. Below are some generalities regarding college acceptance of dual credit courses:

- On the part of four-year universities, there was some initial hesitancy to accept dual credit courses for anything other than general elective credit.
- Most colleges and universities now accept dual credit, but students are advised to check with prospective colleges regarding their specific dual credit transfer policies.
- Universities will generally only accept dual credit courses when the earned course grade is a C or higher.
- Within the same university, specific dual credit courses may be viewed differently depending on an individual student's college major. Some college majors require that students take specific courses on campus as part of their academic program. Dual credit and/or AP credit may not be accepted for these courses.
- Some colleges are starting to place limitations on the amount of "tuition-free credits" that are transferable. These limitations can include both dual credit and AP credit.
- Somewhat ironically, the colleges that limit or do not accept dual credit and/or AP courses still value them in the college admissions process.

## **Methodology of the GHS Study**

- The GHS Building Leadership Team discussed and determined the primary roles that dual credit courses should have at GHS and developed a set of Guiding Principles that guided the rest of the study.
- A variety of information sources were consulted, including:
  - University dual credit administrators at 12 prospective partner universities
  - University core requirements at small, medium, and large universities (both public and private)
  - University faculty at both two-year and four-year institutions
  - Surveyed GHS students enrolled in specific courses about their motivations for taking certain courses and linking this with their possible college majors
  - Conversations with GHS Department Chairs and faculty members in all core departments
  - Conversations with dual credit administrators in other high schools
  - Tools allowing for the evaluation of how specific dual credit courses would transfer to specific colleges and universities (Transferology)
  - Teacher employment application data indicating the relative frequency of specific content-area graduate degrees in various disciplines
  - Dual credit infrastructure in other states with more prevalent dual credit programs
  - Professional/external organizations
    - Illinois Community College Board
    - Illinois State Board of Education
    - Illinois Dual Credit Think Tank
    - Illinois P-20 Network
    - National Association of Concurrent Enrollment Programs
    - Midwestern Higher Education Compact
    - High School Alliance
    - Higher Learning Commission
- Examined existing GHS courses that potentially align with a university course at a partner university
- Examined university courses for which a dual credit GHS course could be sustainably implemented
- Examined the human resource infrastructure needed to implement and sustain expanded dual credit coursework at GHS
- Examined the implications of the GHS academic calendar on the expansion of first-semester dual credit courses

## **Guiding Principles**

Early in the study, the GHS Building Leadership Team developed the following 10 Guiding Principles to help evaluate and prioritize dual credit options:

- When possible, GHS dual credit courses should meet general education requirements at a four-year university and/or the community college. Meeting some of these general education requirements while in high school can potentially shorten degree completion time and reduce tuition expenses. Perhaps more importantly, meeting some general education requirements in high school provides increased course flexibility in college, making it much easier for students to:
  - obtain a second major
  - obtain multiple minors
  - more easily participate in study abroad programs

The outcome of this flexibility can make students more adaptable and marketable to prospective employers in a rapidly evolving job market (<https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/double-majors-in-college-what-to-know>).

- GHS dual credit courses should be accessible to a wide range of students and not only in niches that require specialized skills, copious pre-requisite coursework, or honors-level work. Internally, the GHS Building Leadership Team sought to implement at least two courses (6.0 college credits) of non-Honors/AP dual credit coursework in each of the core departments.
- GHS dual credit courses should not hinder strong enrollment in the existing Honors/Advanced Placement program. A minimum of four years of Honors/AP coursework should be maintained within each of the core departments. It is possible that some GHS AP courses may be able to offer dual credit simultaneously, which would result in continued high levels of AP course enrollment but fewer students taking the optional exams.
- In order to maintain the best learning environment for the highest number of students, GHS dual credit courses should not generate an additional “level” of a course (i.e. Government, Dual Credit Government, AP Government). Due to the large number of course sections, dual credit status should generally be avoided for non-AP core sequence courses, which would include:
  - English: English 1, 2, 3, 4
  - Math: All courses up to and including Algebra 2
  - Science: Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics
  - Social Studies: World History, US History, Government

Instead, dual credit courses should be sought within the elective realms of these core departments. In non-core departments, these types of restrictions largely do not apply.

- Recognize that just because GHS could offer a specific dual credit course does not necessarily mean that we should. Some learning experiences are best reserved for a university classroom with more specialized facilities, and some developmental skills are best honed over time in both high school and college. A student's overall learning outcomes and critical skill development over 8 years (4 years of high school and 4 years of college) should be considered when determining potential dual credit courses at GHS. Long-term student learning outcomes may not always be best met by offering a dual credit course in a specific discipline, particularly in the areas of written communication, critical reading, academic research skills, and information literacy.
- Specific GHS dual credit courses should exist in areas most likely to be sustainable in the long term and able to withstand personnel changes over many years. In Social Studies, for example, prioritizing dual credit courses that require a content master's degree in History as opposed to the less common content master's degrees in Political Science, Philosophy, Humanities, Religion, Law, etc. will be more sustainable.
- GHS dual credit courses should encompass new learning experiences and not be repetitive of content students may have already learned in other GHS courses.
- Choose dual credit partner institutions that provide the most local control over student assessments and curricular oversight.
- Limit the number of different dual credit partner institutions in order to provide the most consistent student, parent, and faculty experience.
- Hiring the best student-centered teacher candidates should remain the overall priority. This may mean hiring candidates with advanced degrees and the experience to teach dual credit courses right away. This may also mean hiring strong candidates without the credentials to teach dual credit courses immediately, instead developing this capacity over time. A good teacher with a bachelor's degree is preferable to a mediocre teacher with a content master's degree who can teach dual credit. This means that the dual credit designation of courses may sometimes need to be paused to allow time for existing faculty to obtain the needed qualifications to teach dual credit (as most high schools do, we already list this disclaimer for all of our dual credit courses).

### **Specific courses that are strong contenders for dual credit at GHS**

The study resulted in several specific courses from the core departments being identified as strong contenders for dual credit at GHS. These courses are identified by department below along with some contextual information. Although these courses have not been officially submitted to a university for consideration, we are reasonably confident that we will be able to identify a university to partner with.

#### **GHS English**

<b>GHS Course</b>	<b>GHS Course Status</b>	<b># of GHS semesters</b>	<b>College Course Alignment</b>	<b>College Partner</b>	<b>Possible Dual Credit Implementation</b>
Modern Mass Communication	Existing	1	MCOMM1100: Introduction to Mass Communication	College of DuPage	Established
Advanced GTV Broadcasting	Existing	1	MPTV1220: Introduction to Television Studio Production	College of DuPage	Established
Introduction to Literature	New	1	Introduction to Literature, Interpreting Literature	TBD	TBD
English 4: Transitional English with Integrating Reading and Writing	New	2	Satisfies college prerequisites for ENG101 without having to take a placement exam or take courses below 100 level (if student earns a C or better)	TBD	TBD
AP Literature and Composition	Existing	2	Introduction to Literature, Interpreting Literature	TBD	TBD
AP Language and Composition (Sem 1)	Existing	1	First Year Composition 1	TBD	TBD
AP Language and Composition (Sem 2)	Existing	1	First Year Composition 2	TBD	TBD
Speech	Existing	1	Fundamentals of Speech Communication	TBD	TBD
Drama 1	Existing	1	Theatre Appreciation, Introduction to Theatre	TBD	TBD
Critical Approaches to Film	Existing	1	Film as Literature	TBD	TBD

When fully enacted, approximately 89% of students will have access to at least 6.0 credit hours in English as part of their four-year core English requirements. Students could earn a maximum of 18.0 college credit hours through dual credit opportunities in the English Department.

#### **Additional information about English dual credit opportunities:**

- The Introduction to Literature course would serve multiple dual credit purposes within the English Department:
  - Juniors taking AP Literature and Composition would earn credit for Introduction to Literature
    - These juniors would then have multiple dual credit options as seniors
      - Take AP Language and Composition to earn dual credit for First Year Composition 1 and 2
      - Take English 4 (not dual credit) during one semester and then Speech or Critical Approaches to Film (both dual credit) the other semester.
      - Drama 1 would also meet the fine arts requirement at many universities.

- Seniors taking a new, stand-alone, one-semester elective called Introduction to Literature opposite their English 4 semester.
  - Juniors who took AP Literature and Composition would not be eligible for this course
  - Eventually explore if Introduction to Literature could be incorporated into our English 4 curriculum instead of an additional course (doing this now would require several dual credit-credentialed faculty, which we do not have).
- Seniors could opt to take AP Language and Composition even if they didn't take AP Literature and Composition.
- English 4: Transitional English with Integrated Reading and Writing would be a new way for seniors to meet their high school English requirement.
  - Full year English course
  - Does not earn college credit in the traditional dual credit sense, but essentially serves the same purpose for college bound students who potentially may need sub-100-level college coursework as college freshmen. Specifically, our English-learner students and some special education students would benefit from this type of dual credit. For students on this college pathway, this course would serve the purpose of freeing up space in their college schedule to take other credit-bearing courses that count towards a degree.
  - This is similar to the Transitional Mathematics: Quantitative Literacy & Statistics course that GHS implemented a few years ago.
- Two other existing English electives, Creative Writing and Journalism, are not strong contenders for dual credit. Neither of these courses are part of the Illinois Articulation Initiative. While we could still offer them as dual credit options, the other courses listed would be more readily accepted by colleges and universities.
- Our goal is for students to become excellent writers, as this skill is foundational to success in just about every field. While First Year College Composition 1 and 2 are commonly offered dual credit courses in some other high schools, we question how students will somehow become better writers by taking fewer writing-intensive courses. Students need to practice the skills of writing, receive feedback, and make revisions over a period of years in order to become effective writers. It is for this reason that we are limiting dual credit First Year Composition 1 and 2 to students enrolling in the yearlong AP Language and Composition course. Students taking this course will be able to receive credit for both First Year Composition 1 and First Year Composition 2.



## GHS Math

GHS Course	GHS Course Status	# of GHS semesters	College Course Alignment	College Partner	Possible Dual Credit Implementation
Quantitative Literacy & Statistics	Existing	1	Satisfies college prerequisites for MTH101, MTH102, MTH103, MTH104, and MTH107 without having to take a placement exam or take courses below 100 level (if student earns a C or better)	Waubonsee CC	Established
Calculus 3	Existing	1	MTH241: Calculus 3	U of Illinois	Established
AP Calculus BC (Sem 1)	Existing	1	MTH131: Calculus with Analytic Geometry 1	Waubonsee CC	Established
AP Calculus BC (Sem 2)	Existing	1	MTH132: Calculus with Analytic Geometry 2	Waubonsee CC	Established
AP Calculus AB (Full year)	Existing	2	Calculus with Analytic Geometry 1	TBD	2026-2027
Calculus (Full year)	Existing	2	Calculus for Business and Social Science	TBD	2026-2027
AP Statistics (Full year)	Existing	2	Basic Statistics	TBD	2026-2027
AP Precalculus (Sem 1)	Existing	1	Precalculus 1	TBD	2027-2028
AP Precalculus (Sem 2)	Existing	1	Precalculus 2	TBD	2027-2028
Precalculus (Sem 1)	Existing	1	Precalculus 1	TBD	2028-2029
Precalculus (Sem 2)	Existing	1	Precalculus 2	TBD	2028-2029

When fully enacted, approximately 85% of students will have access to at least 6.0 credit hours in Math as part of their four-year core Math requirements. Students could earn a maximum of 17.0 college credit hours through dual credit opportunities in the Math Department.

### Additional information about math dual credit opportunities:

- Due to an easily accessible graduate program in mathematics that existed at a nearby university, several of our math teachers hold a graduate degree in mathematics. This allows for faster implementation of dual credit opportunities for students. Unfortunately, this graduate program has been discontinued, so we do need to be mindful of ways to sustain dual credit credentials in the math department in the long term.
- Our goal is for students to take the most challenging math courses they are capable of at GHS. While College Algebra is a commonly offered dual credit course in many high schools, implementing this at GHS would incentivize students taking an easier math course than they are capable of being successful in. The majority of GHS students are able to reach Precalculus or above as a senior.

## GHS Science

GHS Course	GHS Course Status	# of GHS semesters	College Course Alignment	College Partner	Possible Dual Credit Implementation
Adv Earth Science: Natural Disasters	Existing	1	ESC125: Severe and Unusual Weather	Waubonsee CC	Established
Astronomy	Existing	1	AST100: Introduction to Astronomy	Waubonsee CC	Established
Horticulture	Existing	2	HORT1100: Introduction to Horticulture and HORT2300: Introduction to Sustainable Urban Agriculture	College of DuPage	Established
AP Chemistry (Sem 1)	Existing	1	General Chemistry 1, General Chemistry	TBD	TBD
AP Chemistry (Sem 2)	Existing	1	General Chemistry 2, Chemistry and Qualitative Analysis	TBD	TBD
AP Environmental Science	Existing	2	Introduction to Environmental Biology, Introduction to Sustainability	TBD	TBD
AP Physics 1	Existing	2	Introduction to Physics, General Physics	TBD	TBD

When fully enacted, approximately 95% of students will have access to at least 8.0 credit hours in Science as part of their four-year core Science requirements. Students could earn a maximum of 12.0 college credit hours through dual credit opportunities in the Science Department (or more if they double up on science courses).

### Additional information about Science dual credit opportunities:

- The GHS courses of Anatomy & Physiology, AP Biology, and AP Physics C were considered for dual credit status. However, the majority of students enrolled in these courses are planning to pursue biology-related or engineering-related undergraduate majors. Universities often recommend that students with these majors take these courses on-campus as college freshmen. GHS students taking Anatomy & Physiology, AP Biology, and AP Physics C are well-prepared to excel in these classes as college freshmen.
- Conversely, the majority of students enrolled in AP Chemistry, AP Environmental Science, and AP Physics 1 are not planning to pursue undergraduate majors within these disciplines. As a result, these GHS courses are strong contenders for students to meet their college life science or physical science requirements or prerequisites.

## **GHS Social Studies**

<b>GHS course</b>	<b>GHS Course Status</b>	<b># of GHS semesters</b>	<b>College Course Alignment</b>	<b>College Partner</b>	<b>Possible Dual Credit Implementation</b>
AP Psychology	Existing	2	Introduction to Psychology	TBD	2026-2027
Psychology 1 & 2	Existing/New	2	Introduction to Psychology	TBD	2026-2027
Ancient Worlds	New	1	World History to 1500, Ancient History	TBD	TBD
Urban History	Existing	1	Chicago History, Urban History	TBD	TBD
Viking History	New	1	History of the Vikings	TBD	TBD

When fully enacted, approximately 95% of students will have access to at least 6.0 credit hours in Social Studies as part of their four-year core Social Studies requirements. Students could earn a maximum of 9.0 college credit hours through dual credit opportunities in the Social Studies Department.

### **Additional information about English dual credit opportunities:**

- The existing GHS World History course that many students take as freshmen does not cover pre-1500 history, so the Ancient Worlds course will not be repetitive of course content students have already experienced.
- These courses would potentially meet multiple college requirements: History, Non-Western History, Social Science

## **Additional Implications and Recommendations**

In addition to pursuing implementation of the dual credit courses identified in this report, there are additional recommendations to consider that are important to help support and sustain expanded dual credit offerings at Geneva High School:

- Develop and sustain an infrastructure that supports faculty attainment of dual credit teaching credentials. It will be important to differentiate approaches between teachers with varying levels of current content-area graduate degree attainment.
- Acknowledge the increased management and oversight needs of an expanded GHS dual credit program. The dual credit courses that have been added in the past couple of years have already created additional responsibilities at GHS. With the continued growth of dual credit opportunities for students, these responsibilities will only continue to increase as well. Consider amending one or more positions to include responsibilities for dual credit coordination and working closely with partner universities.
- Consider academic calendar implications. A late-August start to the Geneva school year presents challenges to students enrolled in dual credit courses:
  - Students in one-semester dual credit course during the fall semester have a shorter amount of time to learn the material. The university semester usually concludes the second week of December (a week earlier than the Geneva semester), further exacerbating the calendar discrepancy.
  - Current practice at GHS is to allow students to add or change courses at the beginning of the semester. Ideally, there would be a week of GHS courses prior to the college registration deadline to allow for interested students to join a dual credit course if desired.
  - There are many factors that go into determining the calendar for a school district. Looking at this solely through the lens of setting students up for success in dual credit (as well as AP and Fox Valley Career Center courses), there is a student benefit to an earlier start date to the Geneva school year.
- Consider ramifications of possible changes to district rankings when an AP course is simultaneously a dual credit course
  - Students will still be highly prepared to take the AP exam in May
  - Since students will already be receiving dual credit, fewer students will likely elect to take the optional AP exams. This is a positive for students, as they will be able to reallocate some of their time to focusing on preparing for other AP exams and other end-of-semester assessments.
  - In their attempts to quantify and compare high schools, some external school/district rating systems (US News & World Report, Niche, etc.) utilize the number of AP exams attempted as a factor that weighs in their rankings. With the expansion of student dual credit opportunities and fewer AP exams being taken, these statistics will likely decrease for GHS over time. This should not be seen as a reason to limit dual credit opportunities, but rather as a flaw in the rating systems used by some external organizations. Although it has no bearing on actual student learning, we just need to be aware that this ripple effect is likely.

## **Conclusion and Next Steps**

During the 2010-2011 school year, GHS had one dual credit course. We currently have fourteen dual credit courses and are poised for significant continued growth. Our goal at GHS is to help students to be the best-prepared for college and the workforce, and strategically expanding our dual credit program is an important component to this.

In the coming months, we will continue to:

- Submit applications for the specific courses to be implemented during the 2026-27 school year
- Closely monitor the evolving landscape of dual credit policies and opportunities in Illinois
- Incorporate the departments of Fine & Applied Arts, Wellness, and World Language into Phase 2 of the dual credit study
- Develop actionable plans to implement an HR infrastructure that sustains a robust dual credit program
- Bring forward additional specific dual credit courses as conditions allow

Please let me know if you have any questions about our planned dual credit expansion.