



Frequently Asked Questions

Encouraging Student Participation in Challenging Courses

What are challenging courses?

Every school offers different challenging courses. These include Advanced Placement (AP) courses, an International Baccalaureate (IB) program, and/or dual credit courses offered in partnership with Connecticut's universities and colleges. Career-focused pathways also incorporate challenging courses designed to prepare students to enter career programs, earn industry certificates, or even enter the workforce immediately upon graduation. Students may also consider earning the [Connecticut State Seal of Biliteracy](#) by demonstrating high proficiency in English and one or more other languages. Not all courses may be available to students in all grades, but teachers and school counselors can provide more information.

My student is already registered for challenging courses. Should I do anything different?

Probably not. This notification is just a reminder that course registration will begin soon in most schools. Now is the time for students to ensure they are selecting courses that challenge them and match their individual interests.

What are the benefits to students for taking challenging courses in high school?

Students who take such courses benefit in many ways. They can:

- earn college credit while in high school;
- potentially skip introductory courses;
- save money on postsecondary tuition;
- earn an industry-recognized credential prior to graduation;
- learn exciting subjects in greater depth; and
- set themselves apart when they pursue college or career opportunities.

Who can I talk to about the courses my student is taking in high school?

Please talk to your student's school counselor.

Do these challenging courses cost money? Is financial assistance available?

While the courses themselves should not cost money, there may be a cost for exams or other fees associated with some of these courses. Financial assistance is available for eligible families. For example, state-level subsidies allow students from low-income families to take AP exams at no cost. Districts may offer other financial supports. Please check with your school for availability and eligibility.

What can I do to support my student?

Student success requires more than strong academic preparation. You can encourage your student to demonstrate a willingness to engage, persist, think critically, and work together with peers. Identifying and reinforcing these habits in everyday life will help them achieve success.