



# Evidence in Action

## *A K20 Center Research Brief*

### Decreasing Barriers to College Access

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#### Introduction

This intervention brief explores the short-term impact of the Temple Education Scholars (TES) dual enrollment program. The study addresses the persistent disparities in college enrollment and degree attainment among underrepresented student groups, such as low-income families, first-generation college students, and racial and ethnic minorities. The authors highlight the potential of dual enrollment programs to bridge these gaps by providing high school students with early exposure to college-level coursework and the associated academic and social skills necessary for postsecondary success. The TES program specifically targets culturally diverse high school seniors interested in pursuing college degrees and careers in education.

#### Methodology

##### Research Design:

The study employs a qualitative case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the TES program's components and its impact on participants.

##### Sample:

The sample consists of the inaugural cohort of the TES program, which includes 12 high school seniors (11 women and 1 man) from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Eleven participants identify as first-generation college students.

##### Data Analysis:

Data were collected through document analysis, high school and college transcripts, college admissions applications, course assignments, and semi-structured interviews with 6 of the 12 participants. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify key themes related to college knowledge, readiness, and opportunities.

#### Results

The TES program positively impacted participants in three main areas:

1. **College Knowledge:** Participants gained a better understanding of college admissions and financial aid processes, campus resources, and the social dynamics of college life. Workshops and direct interactions with college staff and faculty helped demystify the



college application process and highlighted the importance of building relationships with professors and peers.

2. **College Readiness:** The program enhanced participants' academic skills, such as time management, study skills, and public speaking. The support from College Success Coaches and Tutor-Mentors was crucial in helping students navigate the academic challenges of college coursework. Participants reported feeling more prepared and confident in their ability to succeed in college.
3. **College Opportunities:** All participants gained admission to four-year colleges or universities, with many choosing to continue their studies at Temple University. The program provided unique academic and non-academic experiences, such as attending conferences and studying abroad, which broadened participants' perspectives and solidified their career aspirations.

## Application into Practice

To replicate the TES program in other schools, consider the following steps:

1. **Partnerships:** Establish collaborations between school districts and local colleges or universities to share resources and funding.
2. **Program Design:** Develop a comprehensive dual enrollment program that includes daily engagement, credit hour transferability, and wrap-around supports. Ensure the program is accessible to diverse student populations.
3. **Support Systems:** Provide dedicated staff, such as college success coaches and tutor-mentors, to offer guidance and support throughout the program. Incorporate workshops on college admissions, financial aid, and academic skills.
4. **On-Campus Experience:** Facilitate opportunities for students to take college courses on campus, allowing them to acclimate to the college environment and build relationships with faculty and peers.
5. **Affordability:** Ensure the program is free or low-cost for participants by securing funding from school districts, colleges, and external grants.

## Work Cited

Johnson, J. M., Paris, J. H., Curci, J. D., & Horchos, S. (2021). Beyond college access: An exploration of the short-term impact of a dual enrollment program. *Journal of College Student Retention*, 26(1), 41-63. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15210251211056319>