

Education-to-Workforce Indicator Framework— *DESSE* Crosswalk

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Introduction

To develop a comprehensive crosswalk between the Education to Workforce (E-W) Framework's recommended indicators and the Dual Enrollment Survey of Student Engagement (*DESSE*) focus areas, we carefully aligned the framework's student outcome milestones and associated system conditions with *DESSE*'s thematic structure. Rooted in research and informed by expert input, the E-W Framework outlines key indicators spanning the educational-to-career continuum, each selected for its relevance to promoting economic mobility and long-term security. For every indicator, the framework offers a rationale explaining its significance, recommends robust metrics and data sources, and details important considerations for equitable and accurate measurement. These elements were mapped to *DESSE*'s 15 focus areas to ensure coherence in evaluating how dual enrollment experiences contribute to student success, particularly for underrepresented and economically vulnerable populations. This alignment effort supports a more integrated and data-informed approach to tracking student progression and system performance from early education through postsecondary transitions into the workforce.

Overview of *DESSE*

The Dual Enrollment Survey of Student Engagement (*DESSE*), developed by the Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE), is a national initiative designed to capture the experiences of high school students enrolled in college courses. Recognizing the rapid growth of dual enrollment programs and the need to understand student experiences, especially among historically underserved populations, *DESSE* aims to provide insights that can inform and improve dual enrollment practices across institutions.

DESSE encompasses 15 focus areas intended to capture key dimensions of student experience, including academic support, engagement, expectations, and access to resources that influence learning and persistence. These areas range from advising, motivation, and sense of belonging to perceptions of course rigor, student-faculty interaction, and the value of community college as a postsecondary option. These focus areas are explored through detailed survey items that gather first-hand data from students about their engagement, challenges, perceptions, and support systems. By centering the student voice, the *DESSE* offers a nuanced and equity-informed lens into how educational environments serve diverse learners.

DESSE Focus Areas

1. **Academic Advising and Planning** assesses the quality, availability, and impact of advising services that help students make informed decisions about courses, degree paths, and career goals.
2. **Academic Challenge** evaluates whether students feel intellectually stimulated and supported by rigorous curricula that promote higher-order thinking and problem-solving.
3. **Active and Collaborative Learning** measures student involvement in participatory learning experiences such as group projects, discussions, and real-world applications of knowledge.
4. **Barriers to Persistence** identifies structural or personal obstacles such as financial strain, time constraints, or family responsibilities that may hinder students' ability to continue their education.

5. **Career Counseling** looks at access to and satisfaction with career guidance, including exposure to career options, resume support, job search assistance, and alignment between studies and workforce goals.
6. **Course Taking** investigates student decision-making about course selection, course load, and sequencing, including whether they feel empowered and informed when registering for classes.
7. **Getting Started** focuses on the early college or school experience-orientation, onboarding, and first-term integration, that can significantly shape long-term engagement and success.
8. **Goals** explores students' short and long-term academic and personal aspirations, as well as how clearly those goals are defined and supported by their institution.
9. **Instructor Expectations** gauges student perceptions of how clearly instructors communicate expectations, grading criteria, deadlines, and standards of performance.
10. **Motivation and Preparedness** examines how motivated and academically ready students feel when entering an educational environment, and how well that institution builds on those foundations.
11. **Sense of Belonging** measures the extent to which students feel accepted, respected, and connected within their academic community, key to emotional safety and retention.
12. **Stigma** examines how high school students perceive community colleges as a postsecondary option, including how those perceptions influence their interest or likelihood of attending after graduation.
13. **Student Effort** looks at the amount of time and energy students invest in their studies, including hours spent studying, completing assignments, and participating in class activities.
14. **Student-Faculty Interaction** assesses the frequency, quality, and meaningfulness of interactions between students and faculty.
15. **Support Services** evaluates awareness of and access to tutoring, mental health resources, financial aid offices, food pantries, mentoring programs, and other institutional supports.

By collecting student-reported data across these 15 focus areas, *DESSE* helps institutions understand the full ecosystem of student engagement. It highlights not only academic inputs and outcomes but also the relational, emotional, and structural dimensions of learning environments. These data serve as a critical resource for closing equity gaps, informing strategic interventions, and ensuring that student-centered practices are embedded across educational policies and programs.

Ultimately, the *DESSE* is a powerful tool for elevating student voice and fostering continuous improvement in the service of inclusive, high-impact education systems.

Overview of the E-W Framework

The Education-to-Workforce (E-W) Indicator Framework consists of 99 indicators and metrics that collectively capture the multifaceted journey individuals take from early education through career entry and advancement. These indicators help illuminate the critical links between educational experiences and workforce outcomes, guiding decision-makers across policy, education, and industry sectors. The framework is designed to be navigable through four organizational lenses: sectors, indicator types, domains, and clusters, each offering a unique perspective on systemic performance and opportunities for improvement.

Sectors

The sectors represent the major stages of the education and workforce pipeline:

- » **Pre-K** covers early childhood learning experiences that lay the foundation for future academic, social, and emotional development.
- » **K–12** (kindergarten through 12th grade) includes primary and secondary education, focusing on the skills and competencies learners build during their formative years.
- » **Postsecondary** refers to education beyond high school, including two- and four-year colleges, vocational training, apprenticeships, and other credentialing programs.
- » **Workforce** encompasses employment and career development, including job placement, career advancement, and alignment between educational preparation and labor market demands.

Indicator Types

Each indicator falls into one of three types, reflecting the nature of what is being measured:

- » **Adjacent System Conditions** capture broader contextual factors outside the direct education-to-workforce system—such as housing, healthcare, or transportation—that influence educational and employment outcomes.
- » **E-W System Conditions** focus on the internal structures, policies, and practices within the education and workforce systems themselves, such as data systems, funding models, and program design.
- » **Outcomes & Milestones** reflect measurable learner achievements or transitions, such as graduation rates, credential attainment, job placements, or wage progression.

Domains

The framework is further organized into three domains, each encompassing a critical aspect of learner development and success:

- » **Academic Progress & Completion** measures indicators related to learning outcomes, proficiency, enrollment, retention, and credentialing.
- » **Career Readiness & Economic Success** includes metrics tied to employability skills, labor market alignment, income growth, and career stability.
- » **Social, Emotional & Physical Wellbeing** addresses non-academic factors that affect learning and employment, such as mental health, school climate, safety, and wellness.

Clusters

To enable more focused analysis, the indicators are grouped into eight clusters that represent common themes or transition points across the pipeline:

- » **Kindergarten Readiness** assesses how well early learning prepares children for formal schooling.
- » **School Climate** evaluates the conditions that influence student engagement, safety, and belonging within K–12 environments.
- » **Social-Emotional Learning** tracks development of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills critical for lifelong learning and work.
- » **Teaching Effectiveness** focuses on educator preparation, development, and instructional quality.
- » **Postsecondary Transitions** covers the movement of students from high school to higher education, including readiness and enrollment.
- » **Postsecondary Success** includes persistence, completion, and attainment of credentials that support economic mobility.
- » **Workforce Transitions** examines the handoff from education to employment, including internships, apprenticeships, and career services.
- » **Workforce Success** measures job quality, career progression, and long-term labor market outcomes.

Together, these components of the E-W Indicators framework provide a structured, data-informed way to assess system performance, identify equity gaps, and drive continuous improvement from early education through workforce participation.

Crosswalk Development

To strengthen alignment between system-level outcomes and student-reported experiences, we undertook a structured process to develop a crosswalk between the 99 Education-to-Workforce (E-W) indicators and the 15 *DESSE* focus areas.

Indicator Selection Process

Our process began with a comprehensive analysis of all 99 E-W indicators, with particular attention to those within the K-12, postsecondary, and workforce sectors—the segments most closely aligned with the student experience data collected through the *DESSE*. From this larger set, we narrowed the scope to 20 priority indicators that demonstrated the most direct relevance to the *DESSE* focus areas.

EWI Indicators	Workforce	K12	Post Secondary
Access to college and career advising		X	X
Access to early college coursework		X	X
Access to health, mental health, and social supports	X	X	X
Access to in-demand CTE pathways	X	X	X
Access to technology	X	X	X
Access to transportation	X	X	X
College preparatory coursework completion		X	
CTE pathway concentration		X	X
Early college coursework completion		X	X
Grade point average		X	X
Inclusive environments	X		
Industry recognized credential	X	X	X
Postsecondary certificate or degree completion			X
Postsecondary enrollment directly after high school graduation		X	X
Self-efficacy	X	X	X
Self-management	X	X	X
Student perceptions of teaching		X	X
Successful career transition after high school		X	
Teachers' contributions to student learning growth		X	X
Transfer			X

Mapping Approach

Once the 20 indicators were identified, we systematically mapped each one to one or more of the 15 *DESSE* focus areas. This step involved assessing conceptual alignment, such as whether a metric measuring academic persistence corresponded to student feedback on motivation, or whether a workforce readiness indicator aligned with perceptions of career counseling. Because of the interconnected nature of educational and experiential data, many of the 20 indicators naturally aligned with multiple *DESSE* focus areas, reflecting the complexity and multidimensionality of student engagement and success.

This crosswalk provides a valuable bridge between system-level accountability metrics and student-centered measures of experience, offering a holistic view of educational quality and equity. It enables institutions and policymakers to better interpret quantitative outcomes through the lens of student voice, while also identifying opportunities where improving student experiences may influence long-term success metrics.

Key Alignments

<i>DESSE</i> Focus Area	EWI Indicators	Workforce	K12	Post Secondary
Academic Advising and Planning	Access to college and career advising		X	X
	CTE pathway concentration		X	X
	Selection of a well-matched postsecondary institution		X	X
Academic Challenge	Access to early college coursework		X	X
	Access to in-demand CTE pathways	X	X	X
	Early college coursework completion		X	X
	Grade point average		X	X
Active and Collaborative Learning	Teachers' contributions to student learning growth		X	X
Barriers to Persistence	Access to technology	X	X	X
	Access to transportation	X	X	X
	FAFSA completion		X	X
Career Counseling	Access to college and career advising		X	X
Course Taking	Access to early college coursework		X	X
	Access to in-demand CTE pathways	X	X	X
	Early college coursework completion		X	X
Getting Started	Access to college and career advising		X	X
Goals	Early college coursework completion		X	X
	Industry recognized credential	X	X	X
	Postsecondary enrollment directly after high school graduation		X	X
	Successful career transition after high school		X	
	Transfer			X

<i>DESSE</i> Focus Area	EWI Indicators	Workforce	K12	Post Secondary
Instructor Expectations	Student perceptions of teaching		X	X
	Teachers' contributions to student learning growth		X	X
Motivation and Preparedness	College preparatory coursework completion		X	
	Self-management	X	X	X
Sense of Belonging	Access to health, mental health, and social supports	X	X	X
	Inclusive environments	X		
Stigma	—			
Student Effort	Self-efficacy	X	X	X
	Self-management	X	X	X
Student-Faculty Interaction	Student perceptions of teaching			
Support Services	Access to college and career advising		X	X
	Access to health, mental health, and social supports	X	X	X

DESSE Focus Areas

Focus Area	DESSE Items
Academic Advising and Planning	26. Are you aware of the following services provided by this college? a. Academic advising/counseling 27a. During the past year, how often have you used academic advising/counseling services? 27a1. When you used academic advising/counseling services, what did you discuss? (<i>Mark all that apply</i>) (a) Developing an academic plan that specifies which courses you are required to take to complete a college certificate or degree (b) Continuing your degree at this community college after graduating high school (c) Which courses will transfer toward your intended program or major at a 4-year college (d) How college courses are different than high school courses (e) How well you are doing in your dual enrollment courses (f) Academic support services (tutoring, writing center, math skill lab, etc.) available to you at the college (g) Your commitments outside of school (work, family obligations, extra-curricular activities, etc.) to determine how many dual enrollment courses to take (h) When your next advising session should be (i) Your career interests (j) Average earnings for careers in which you are interested (k) Entering the workforce after high school (l) Other (please specify) 28a. How satisfied have you been with your use of academic advising/counseling services during the last year?
Academic Challenge	23. Do the instructors of the dual enrollment classes you are taking or have taken this academic term expect less, about the same, or more than the instructors of the non-dual enrollment high school classes you have taken? 24. Are the assignments in the dual enrollment classes you are taking or have taken this academic term less challenging, about the same, or more challenging than the assignments in the non-dual enrollment high school classes you have taken? 25. Have you struggled academically in the dual enrollment classes you are taking or have taken this academic term?
Active and Collaborative Learning	17. Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now or have taken this academic term, about how often have you done each of the following? 17a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions 17c. Worked with other students on projects during class 17d. Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments

Focus Area	DESSE Items
Barriers to Persistence	32. Which of the following have you discussed with someone who works for this college? a. Financial assistance for dual enrollment courses (help paying for dual enrollment courses, supplies, and books) b. Financial assistance for college after high school graduation (help paying for college after graduating high school) c. Basic needs assistance (help with food, housing, transportation, child care, etc.) d. Mental health services e. None of the above 33. Which of the following make it difficult to take dual enrollment courses through this college? a. Access to technology b. Accessing information or resources on college website c. Being academically underprepared d. Cost e. Scheduling conflicts f. College registration process g. Where the courses are offered h. Transportation i. Balancing workload between dual enrollment and non-dual enrollment courses j. None of the above k. Other (please specify)
Career Counseling	9. Why are you taking dual enrollment courses through this college? l. To explore potential careers or college programs/majors 17. Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now or have taken this academic term, about how often have you done each of the following? 17g. Talked about career plans with an instructor 26. Are you aware of the following services provided by this college? b. Career counseling 27a. During the past year, how often have you used academic advising/counseling services? 27a1. When you used academic advising/counseling services, what did you discuss? (i) Your career interests (j) Average earnings for careers in which you are interested 27b. During the past year, how often have you used career counseling services? 28b. How satisfied have you been with your use of career counseling services during the last year?
Course Taking	12. Did someone who works for the college help you determine the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now or have taken this academic term? 12a. Who or what helped you determine the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now or have taken this academic term? <i>(Mark all that apply)</i> a. Someone who works for your high school b. Friends, peers, or classmates c. Family members d. College website e. High school website f. Other: _____

Focus Area	DESSE Items
Course Taking <i>(continued)</i>	5. During this academic term, how many dual enrollment courses are you taking... - Face-to-face (a class in which all instruction is face-to-face in a classroom) - Online (a class in which all instruction is online) - Hybrid (a class that is a mixture of face-to-face and online instruction) - Virtual (a class in which students are in a physical classroom, but the instructor is in a remote location) 13. In which of the following subject areas have you taken or are you currently taking dual enrollment courses? - Humanities (English, arts, foreign languages, communications, journalism, etc.) - Social Sciences (history, psychology, economics, criminal justice, government, etc.) - Science (anatomy, biology, biotechnology, chemistry, physics, etc.) - Technology (animation, computer science, robotics, nanotechnology, digital communications, etc.) - Engineering - Math (algebra, statistics, calculus, etc.) - Business (entrepreneurship, accounting, etc.) - Career and Technical Education/CTE (agriculture, information technology, health sciences, culinary, law enforcement, automotive technology, skilled trades, etc.) - College Success/First-Year Experience (FYE) Course - Other (please specify) 16. Who teaches the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now? 34. How do you prefer to take your dual enrollment courses?
Getting Started	7. From what source did you first learn about the opportunity to take dual enrollment courses? - Someone who works for this college - Someone who works for your middle or high school - Friends, peers, or classmates - Family members - Digital or print materials from the college (college website, social media, billboards, advertisements, etc.) - Digital or print materials from your middle or high school (middle or high school website, social media, billboards, advertisements, etc.) - Other (please specify) 8. Who most encouraged you to start taking dual enrollment courses? - Someone who works for this college - Someone who works for your middle or high school - Friends, peers, or classmates - Family members - Self - Other (please specify) 9. Why are you taking dual enrollment courses through this college? - To provide a boost to your high school grade point average or class rank - To take courses for Career and Technical Education (CTE) training (agriculture, information technology, manufacturing, health sciences, law enforcement, skilled trades, etc.) - To earn credit toward a certificate or industry credential - To earn college credit - To earn an associate degree while in high school - To save money on college - To take more challenging courses - To take more interesting courses - To take courses that are not available at your high school - To take courses that better fit your schedule - To see what it is like to be a college student - To explore potential careers or college programs/majors - Other reasons not listed above (please specify)

Focus Area	DESSE Items
Getting Started (continued)	10. Did you participate in an orientation for dual enrollment courses through this college? 11. How was the process to initially sign up for dual enrollment courses offered through this college? 12. Did someone who works for the college help you determine the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now or have taken this academic term? 12a. Who or what helped you determine the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now or have taken this academic term? <i>(Mark all that apply)</i> a. Someone who works for your high school b. Friends, peers, or classmates c. Family members d. College website e. High school website f. Other: _____
Goals	9. Why are you taking dual enrollment courses through this college? a. To provide a boost to your high school grade point average or class rank b. To take courses for Career and Technical Education (CTE) training (agriculture, information technology, manufacturing, health sciences, law enforcement, skilled trades, etc.) c. To earn credit toward a certificate or industry credential d. To earn college credit e. To earn an associate degree while in high school f. To save money on college g. To take more challenging courses h. To take more interesting courses i. To take courses that are not available at your high school j. To take courses that better fit your schedule k. To see what it is like to be a college student l. To explore potential careers or college programs/majors m. Other reasons not listed above (please specify) 37. What do you plan to be doing 6 months after you graduate from high school? a. Attending a community or technical college b. Attending a 4-year college or university c. Working for pay d. Being in the military e. Undecided f. Other (please specify) 37a. Which community or technical college do you plan to attend? <i>(Only displays if response to Item 37 is A)</i> 37b. Which college or university do you plan to attend? <i>(Only displays if response to Item 37 is B)</i> 37c. What are your reasons for planning to attend a 4-year college or university instead of a community college? <i>(Only displays if response to Item 37 is B)</i>
Instructor Expectations	18. Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now or have taken this academic term, how many of your instructors did the following? 18c. Provided a syllabus on the first day of class 18d. Clearly explained class grading policies 18e. Clearly explained the class attendance policy 18f. Clearly explained academic and student support services available at this college 23. Do the instructors of the dual enrollment classes you are taking or have taken this academic term expect less, about the same, or more than the instructors of the non-dual enrollment high school classes you have taken?

Focus Area	DESSE Items
Motivation and Preparedness	20. I am motivated to do what it takes to succeed in my dual enrollment courses. 21. My academic background has prepared me to succeed in my dual enrollment courses. 35. While in high school, have you taken any of the following types of courses? a. Advanced Placement (AP) b. International Baccalaureate (IB) c. Cambridge (AICE) d. None of the above 38. Has taking dual enrollment courses through this college made you less confident or more confident that you could be successful in college after high school?
Sense of Belonging	18. Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now or have taken this academic term, how many of your instructors did the following? 18a. Learned your name 18b. Had activities to introduce students to one another 19. I feel like part of the community at this college. 29. Because you are currently taking or have taken dual enrollment courses, have you participated in any college-sponsored activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, intramural sports, etc.)?
Stigma	30. Prior to taking dual enrollment courses, what was your opinion of attending a community college after high school? 31. Has your dual enrollment experience changed your perception about attending a community college? a. It made my perception worse b. It made my perception better c. No 31a. What about your dual enrollment experience changed your perception about attending a community college for the worse? <i>(Only displays if response to Item 31 is A)</i>
Student Effort	17. Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now or have taken this academic term, about how often have you done each of the following? 17a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions 17b. Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources 17h. Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations 17i. Come to class without completing readings or assignments 17l. Not turned in an assignment
Student-Faculty Interaction	17. Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now or have taken this academic term, about how often have you done each of the following? 17e. Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor 17f. Asked for help from an instructor regarding questions or problems related to a class 17g. Talked about career plans with an instructor 17h. Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations 17j. Communicated with an instructor through the course website or email 17k. Received timely feedback (written or oral) from instructors on your performance

Focus Area	DESSE Items
Student-Faculty Interaction <i>(continued)</i>	18. Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now or have taken this academic term, how many of your instructors did the following? 18a. Learned your name 22. I know how to get in touch with my dual enrollment instructors outside of class.
Support Services	18. Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now or have taken this academic term, how many of your instructors did the following? 18f. Clearly explained academic and student support services available at this college 25. Have you struggled academically in the dual enrollment classes you are taking or have taken this academic term? 25a. Has someone from this college contacted you when you have struggled academically with your dual enrollment coursework to help you get the assistance you need? 26. Are you aware of the following services provided by this college? a. Academic advising/counseling b. Career counseling c. Tutoring d. Writing, math, or other skill lab e. Transfer counseling to a 4-year college or university f. Services for students with disabilities (physical, learning, mental health, autism etc.) 27a. During the past year, how often have you used academic advising/counseling services? 27a1. When you used academic advising/counseling services, what did you discuss? (<i>Mark all that apply</i>) (a) Developing an academic plan that specifies which courses you are required to take to complete a college certificate or degree (b) Continuing your degree at this community college after graduating high school (c) Which courses will transfer toward your intended program or major at a 4-year college (d) How college courses are different than high school courses (e) How well you are doing in your dual enrollment courses (f) Academic support services (tutoring, writing center, math skill lab, etc.) available to you at the college (g) Your commitments outside of school (work, family obligations, extra-curricular activities, etc.) to determine how many dual enrollment courses to take (h) When your next advising session should be (i) Your career interests (j) Average earnings for careers in which you are interested (k) Entering the workforce after high school (l) Other (please specify) 27b. During the past year, how often have you used career counseling services? 27c. During the past year, how often have you used tutoring services? 27d. During the past year, how often have you used writing, math, or other skill lab services? 27e. During the past year, how often have you used transfer counseling services? 27f. During the past year, how often have you used services for students with disabilities? 28a. How satisfied have you been with your use of academic advising/counseling services during the last year? 28b. How satisfied have you been with your use of career counseling services during the last year? 28c. How satisfied have you been with your use of tutoring services during the last year? 28d. How satisfied have you been with your use of writing, math, or other skill lab services during the last year?

Focus Area	DESSE Items
Support Services <i>(continued)</i>	28e. How satisfied have you been with your use of transfer counseling services during the last year? 28f. How satisfied have you been with your use of services for students with disabilities during the last year? 32. Which of the following have you discussed with someone who works for this college? a. Financial assistance for dual enrollment courses (help paying for dual enrollment courses, supplies, and books) b. Financial assistance for college after high school graduation (help paying for college after graduating high school) c. Basic needs assistance (help with food, housing, transportation, child care, etc.) d. Mental health services e. None of the above