



**BEACON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
10 Education Drive  
Beacon, New York 12508  
845-838-6900 phone  
845-838-6905 fax

*Meredith Heuer, President*  
*Flora Stadler, Vice President*

**Dr. Matthew Landahl**  
*Superintendent of Schools*

Letter from the BCSD Board of Education regarding Dual Enrollment at Dutchess Community College

Dutchess Community College (DCC) has decided to end a decades-long policy of offering dual enrollment courses at no cost to high school students in Dutchess County. This sudden decision will have a severe impact on our students, nearly 50% of whom qualify as economically disadvantaged.

Dual enrollment courses offer students the opportunity to take college-level classes and earn free college credits during high school. These courses are an essential way for students to grow their experience, helping them to see college as more accessible and a place that they belong.

DCC's decision comes at a time when college is more expensive than ever and students are still recovering from 2 years of interrupted learning. The equity gap between students with and without means is expanding. We fear that economically disadvantaged students, as well as students who are ambivalent about attending college, will no longer consider college an option if they don't have the opportunity to experience a college class at no cost and in the comfort of their high school community.

In its [2019 guidance on Equitable Course Access](#), the New York State Education Department (NYSED) emphasized that educational equity "includes a focus on increasing students' access to rigorous learning opportunities" and that districts should ensure that "no single measure excludes participation" in advanced coursework. DCC's decision could make cost the single measure that excludes the participation of many students.

As Board of Regents Chancellor Betty A. Rosa put it: "If we want to create a truly equitable education system, we must ensure that every child, regardless of their race or socioeconomic status, has access to the same coursework as their peers." If students have to choose their classes with cost in mind, many will make the difficult decision to go with other courses that may not challenge them or strengthen their resume to the same extent. This would create a two-tiered system within our high school, in complete opposition to our goal of providing equitable opportunities for all students.

The district would face prohibitively high costs to offer free, comparable alternatives for students who could not afford dual enrollment tuition. We estimate the total cost to students would be more than \$140,000 per year. Because of the laws around gifts of public funds, we wouldn't be able to absorb this burden into our budget, even if we wanted to.

The district currently offers these dual enrollment courses to students at minimal cost to DCC. Our district and/or students pay for the materials, books, faculty, utilities and space provided to teach these classes in our building. Our teachers qualify to teach these courses through our own resources and are in no way compensated by DCC directly for their work.

Our district is committed to the goals of academic excellence and educational equity for all students. This change is counter to the mission of public schools and to the policy that has made DCC a pathway to higher education for many students.

We hope that legislators, NYSED officials and community members will join us in urging DCC leadership and the DCC Board of Trustees to consider an option that does not exclude our students – the future professionals, leaders and citizens of our community – from the educational opportunities that they deserve.

The Beacon City School District Board of Education