District 214’s Guide to
Early College Credit
Benefits of early college credits

High School District 214 is committed to offering students a variety of opportunities to earn early college credits while they are in high school.

By providing these opportunities, we know students will be successful when they leave our doors.

Early college credits allow students to simultaneously earn high school and college credit. District 214 students can take these early college credit courses on District 214’s campuses. There are times when students may need to travel to a community college to take these classes.

As a result of our efforts, District 214 students in 2018-19 could choose from more than 100 early college credit courses. In the pages that follow, you will learn more about these early college credit opportunities and how they help our students succeed.

Today’s economic realities make attaining a postsecondary credential more important than ever. As educators, we have a moral imperative to prepare students for college and careers and minimize future student debt.

We are committed to ensuring every student is prepared for their future.
Ways to earn early college credit

Students can earn early college credit through:

**Advanced Placement Courses:** District 214 offers more than 30 Advanced Placement courses, beginning as early as freshman year. These classes are rigorous, mirroring college-level work, and successful completion prepares students for a corresponding Advanced Placement examination.

Students who earn a score of “3” or higher on the 5-point exam are guaranteed college credit at any public state college or university in Illinois.

**Dual Credit Courses:** District 214 currently offers more than 70 dual credit courses, partnering with higher education institutions across the state. These classes tie directly into District 214’s Career Pathways, allowing students to explore career interests with college-level classwork. These courses are taught by a qualified District 214 instructor, typically at the District 214 school. In some cases, these classes are offered on the college campus.

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**District 214’s Partnering Colleges**

The credits earned from these courses can be transferred to community colleges and four-year institutions.

- Eastern Illinois University
- Harper College
- Lewis University
- National Louis University
- Moraine Valley Community College
- Northeastern Illinois University
- Triton College
High School District 214
Early College Credit Facts

40,000
Early college credits earned in 2018-19 school year

85%
Seniors who successfully completed early college credit classes in 2018-19

70+
Advanced Placement Classes

30+
Dual Credit Courses
Student Spotlight: Samantha Pelaez

Samantha Pelaez took advantage of every opportunity that came her way at Elk Grove High School.

The Elk Grove alumna graduated with a clear sense of her next steps and about 30 early college credits, saving her thousands of dollars in tuition and time spent in college.

The early college credits she earned came from a mixture of courses, all taken on District 214’s campuses and taught by District 214 teachers. A future educator, Samantha earned credit through advanced education classes in District 214’s Career Pathways program and college-level English and math courses through Eastern Illinois University.

Samantha, a first generation college student who is attending Harper College and will later transfer to a four-year university, says the early college credit courses gave her a better understanding of the rigor of college.

Dual credit courses, she says, helped her improve her time management skills and learn how to advocate for herself. Samantha says she is grateful to all those who believed in her and created opportunities to help her find success.

“There were days when I was hesitant but I’m glad I pushed myself, as did my teachers,” says Samantha. “If I had the chance, I would tell everyone thank you.”

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Elk Grove High School graduate
Samantha Pelaez
Student Spotlight: Tanya Sarkis

Tanya Sarkis took four dual credit courses during her senior year at Wheeling High School.

The dual credit courses allowed her to simultaneously earn high school and college credit, and better understand the rigor of college.

Tanya, who is studying at DePaul University, was able to earn 18.5 college credits through those four dual credit classes and saved about $11,000 in college tuition. She can also graduate college ahead of schedule.

Dual credit classes move quickly, Tanya said, and a lot of material is covered during the school year. She remembers studying for weekly exams and writing college-level essays with strict requirements for some of her classes.

But students should know they can handle the work if they’re driven and motivated, she added.

“I know what to expect now,” she said. “The teachers I had really made you realize this is how college is going to be. There are certain deadlines that aren’t going to be extended.”

Ultimately, Tanya earned all A’s in her dual credit classes. One of the courses – Entrepreneurship – counted toward her college major – business administration – and another course – College Algebra – allowed her to bypass a college precalculus course.

“I’m really glad (that) we were offered dual credit classes. They really did make a difference,” she said. “Now I feel more confident. I feel like I’m ahead in college.”

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Wheeling High School High School graduate Tanya Sarkis
The cost savings of early college credits

Early college credit opportunities are offered in District 214 at limited or no expense to the student. Most credits transfer to any public college or university in the nation, offering our students a no-cost or low-cost head start on their postsecondary journey. Typically, 60 credits are needed to graduate with an associate’s degree and 120 credits are needed to graduate with a bachelor’s degree. Below are examples of potential tuition savings and expenses (including room and board, books and supplies) associated with attending higher education institutions in Illinois.

The cost savings of 15 hours of early college credits

Student earns 15 hours of early college credit in high school and potential savings of one semester of time and expenses (including room and board, books and supplies) associated with attending college and university.

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<th>COMMUNITY COLLEGE</th>
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<th>FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total associate’s degree cost ($125/credit hour x 60 credits):</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
<td>Total bachelor’s degree cost for 4 years ($533/credit hour x 120 credits):</td>
<td>$63,960</td>
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<td>Total bachelor’s degree cost for two years ($533 x 60 credits):</td>
<td>$31,980</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total tuition cost without early college credit</td>
<td>$39,480</td>
<td>Tuition savings from early college credit ($533 x 15):</td>
<td>$7,995</td>
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<td><strong>Tuition savings from early college credit ($125 x 15 credits):</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,875</strong></td>
<td>Total tuition with savings from early college credit:</td>
<td><strong>$55,965</strong></td>
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<td>Total tuition with savings from early college credit:</td>
<td><strong>$37,605</strong></td>
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The cost savings of 30 hours of early college credits

Student earns 30 hours of early college credit in high school and potential savings of two semesters of time and expenses (including room and board, books and supplies) associated with attending college and university.

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<tr>
<td>Total tuition cost without early college credit</td>
<td>$39,480</td>
<td>Tuition savings from early college credit ($533 x 30):</td>
<td>$15,990</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tuition savings from early college credit ($125 x 30 credits):</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,750</strong></td>
<td>Total tuition with savings from early college credit:</td>
<td><strong>$47,970</strong></td>
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<td>Total tuition with savings from early college credit:</td>
<td><strong>$35,730</strong></td>
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* Tuition estimates based on average (resident) cost of a public four-year state college or university and community college. Actual costs, and resulting cost savings, could be less or substantially more.
For more information on early college credit opportunities, contact your school counselor or Erin Torrisi, District 214 early college credit supervisor, at erin.torrisi@d214.org.