Using Open Educational Resources (OER) in Dual Enrollment: Stakeholder Perspectives

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I. Executive Summary

This report examines the use of open educational resources (OER) in dual enrollment programs, drawing on the viewpoints of educators, administrators, and policy leaders throughout Midwest and Southern states to identify best practices, barriers, and the policy landscape.

Key Findings

- There is a significant discrepancy in how OER is adopted across dual enrollment programs in the Midwest and South, with some institutions embracing it robustly and others facing notable obstacles.

- OER demonstrates strong potential for reducing costs, improving student access to educational materials, and supporting innovative pedagogical practices.

- Feedback from institutions and educators that have implemented OER in dual enrollment is overwhelmingly positive, especially regarding affordability, access, and flexible content adaptation.

- The largest tactical burden to OER adoption for dual enrollment is in the initial course materials curation and design.

- Adoption in higher education dual enrollment programs shows promise, while high school implementation is more fragmented due to administrative complexity, resource and time limitations.

Recommendations

- Strengthen administrative backing and policy initiatives at the state and institutional level to support OER adoption in dual enrollment programs.

- Invest in faculty development and peer mentoring networks to share effective OER strategies and models, encouraging collaboration between higher education faculty and high school teachers.

- Package and disseminate high-quality OER materials and course templates to ease the burden on instructors, particularly for high-demand subject areas.

- Encourage consistent funding mechanisms and consider stipends for OER adoption efforts to support sustainability and wider rollout.

This summary reflects the broad consensus that OER offers clear benefits in dual enrollment, with enhanced impact where institutions invest in coordinated support and strategic implementation.

Important Definitions: This paper uses the Hewlett Foundation's definition of open educational resources (OER): "OER are teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and repurposing by others. Open educational resources include full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials, or techniques used to support access to knowledge.

For purposes of this report, "dual enrollment" is an umbrella term used to refer to college courses offered to high school students, regardless of instructor type (faculty or approved high school teacher), course location (high school or postsecondary campus) or modality (face-to-face, hybrid, or fully online). These types of courses are also sometimes referred to as concurrent enrollment or dual credit programs.

II. Introduction & Background

Introduction and Purpose

Dual enrollment programs—where high school students take college courses for credit—have expanded rapidly in the United States over the past decade. By 2018, over 80% of U.S. public high schools offered some form of dual enrollment for their students (NCES, 2020). In the 2023-24 academic year, there were 2.8 million dual enrollment students—a 12.7% increase over the prior year. Eighty percent of community colleges specifically reported increases in dual enrollment from 2022-23 to 2023-24 (Fink, 2025). However, while taking a dual enrollment course can be particularly beneficial for Black, Hispanic, and other groups underrepresented in higher education, gaps in access persist: students from lower-income communities and students of color remain underrepresented in these programs (Fink, 2025).

One significant barrier is the cost of textbooks and course materials for college courses. Many state dual enrollment policies either do not address textbook funding or leave it to local discretion, meaning costs may fall on high schools or students' families (Zinth, 2021). Passing on textbook expenses to students' families has an obvious negative impact on participation. Even when high schools or colleges cover these costs, they often must limit the number of students or courses offered to contain expenses, especially for high-cost STEM courses (Zinth, 2021a). In fact, as of 2021 only 3 U.S. states fully covered dual enrollment textbook costs at the state level; 13 states required students/families to pay, and many others left the responsibility to local decision or have unclear policies (Zinth, 2021a). Such patchwork policies create potential for unequal access to high quality college-level courses, disproportionately affecting low-income students and under-resourced school districts. In this context, educators and policymakers have increasingly looked to Open Educational Resources (OER) as a solution for reducing costs and expanding access to dual enrollment programs (Zinth, 2021c).

This report synthesizes diverse research and frontline perspectives on the use of OER in dual enrollment programs to help inform policy and practice. Drawing from interviews with educators and administrators, this report documents both the well-established advantages, such as increased access, affordability, and support for curriculum alignment, and the persistent implementation challenges noted in the literature and field. By integrating firsthand experiences and expert insights on strategies for successful OER adoption, as well as common barriers faced, this report concludes with actionable recommendations for advancing effective, scalable OER integration in dual enrollment to support a broader and more impactful application.

Benefits Reported in Literature

The use of open educational resources (OER) in dual enrollment settings offers multiple advantages for students, educators, and institutions. These benefits go beyond affordability, influencing how students engage with materials and how instructors tailor their teaching. Research over the past decade has documented a range of positive impacts associated with OER adoption, including reduced costs, improved access to materials, enhanced student performance, and instructional adaptability. This section explores these outcomes and the growing body of evidence supporting the integration of OER into dual and concurrent enrollment programs.

Cost Savings and Improved Access: The clearest benefit of using OER in dual enrollment is the elimination of textbook costs, thereby lowering the financial barrier for high school students taking college classes. Several sources highlight that textbook expenses can deter students from enrolling in dual credit courses if those costs aren't covered by a school or program (Richard, 2021). By replacing expensive commercial textbooks with free OER materials, dual enrollment programs can become more cost-effective and accessible. A 2021 multi-state report by the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) and Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) explicitly concluded that OER can help more students afford and succeed in college-level courses while in high school (Zinth, 2021a).

Removing cost barriers to course materials makes it feasible for more low-income and first-generation students to participate in dual enrollment, supporting broader access (Richard, 2021).

Academic Success and Engagement: Beyond cost savings, studies suggest that OER usage may have a positive impact on student learning outcomes – an important consideration for rigorous dual enrollment classes. Research in higher education has found that when instructors adopt OER, students perform as well or better in terms of course grades and completion rates compared to using traditional textbooks (Colvard et al., 2018). In dual enrollment settings, where students are balancing high school and college expectations, having immediate access to high-quality OER texts could similarly boost student engagement, confidence, and success. While specific outcome data on OER in dual credit courses is still limited, stakeholders widely believe that OER's known benefits for college students (affordability, day-one access, and pedagogical flexibility) carry over to high school dual-enrollment students (Perez, 2021).

Enhancing Relevance and Connection: Beyond lowering costs, OER's adaptability has been highlighted in the literature on OER localization, which focuses on tailoring open content to fit the needs of specific student populations, institutions, or regional contexts. Studies of library- and consortium-led OER initiatives show that when faculty and staff adapt OER, they can incorporate examples, language, and case studies that resonate more directly with their learners' experiences (Fazzino & Turley, 2019; University System of Maryland, 2024). Localization also supports alignment with local curriculum requirements, accreditation standards, and workforce needs, making OER especially well-suited for dual enrollment courses that must meet both high school and college expectations.

Using OER in dual enrollment is seen as a means to level the playing field – giving all qualified students the opportunity to succeed in college coursework during high school without undue financial burden.

Challenges Reported in Literature

While the benefits of OER adoption in dual enrollment are clear, the literature also underscores several barriers that can make implementation complex. Challenges emerge not only from the absence of consistent state-level policy and funding, but also from practical considerations around faculty preparedness, subject-specific resource availability, and the infrastructure needed to support reliable use. The following subsections highlight the most frequently identified challenges in the literature—policy and funding gaps, concerns about quality and alignment, and awareness and workload barriers.

Policy and Funding Gaps: A recurring theme in the literature is that most states do not explicitly fund dual enrollment course materials, leaving responsibility to students, families, or local institutions (Zinth, 2021a). As a result, the provision of textbooks and learning resources often depends on local budgets, grants, or ad hoc arrangements, creating wide variation in student access across states and districts (Richard, 2021; Zinth, 2021b). Reports emphasize that this patchwork approach can limit the scalability of OER in dual enrollment, since programs without dedicated funding struggle to invest in the development or adaptation of open materials (Perez, 2021).

Concerns about quality and alignment. Faculty skepticism about OER quality is another challenge identified across multiple studies. Instructors often express concern about whether open resources can match the rigor, currency, and comprehensiveness of commercial textbooks (Zinth, 2021a; Zinth, 2021b). These concerns carry particular weight in dual enrollment, where high school teachers must satisfy dual obligations: aligning with college-level learning outcomes while also meeting state or district high school standards. In some cases, instructors have noted that while OER materials exist, they may require significant adaptation to meet specific curricular requirements or to ensure students

are prepared for subsequent courses in a sequence. This dual alignment challenge makes the quality debate more acute in concurrent enrollment contexts than in standard college courses.

Faculty awareness and workload barriers. Even when suitable OER are available, faculty awareness and workload remain significant hurdles. Research shows that many instructors are simply unaware of existing OER repositories or assume that few resources exist for their subject areas (Hilton, 2016). For those who are aware, the perceived effort to locate, vet, and adapt OER is often seen as too great given other professional demands (Colvard, Watson, & Park, 2018). These barriers are magnified in dual enrollment, where instructors—often high school teachers credentialed to teach college-level content—must devote extra time to ensuring alignment with postsecondary expectations.

Without compensation, release time, or structured support, the workload associated with transitioning to OER can deter participation. Several studies point out that when faculty stipends, training, or communities of practice are available, adoption rates increase significantly, suggesting that the barrier is not unwillingness but rather lack of resources and time (Hilton, 2016; Colvard, Watson, & Park, 2018).

The literature makes clear that without dedicated funding, confidence in quality, and meaningful faculty support, OER adoption in dual and concurrent enrollment will remain uneven and difficult to scale.

Methodology

To better understand how open educational resources (OER) are being considered and applied within dual enrollment contexts, the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) and the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) jointly identified a pool of potential participants for interviews to understand their experience and perspectives. The initial list drew from higher education and K–12 institutions with significant dual enrollment activity. Subsequent outreach emphasized locating individuals directly engaged in or advocating for OER adoption in dual enrollment settings, resulting in a group of educators and administrators across the Midwest and Southern regions.

An interview protocol (see Appendix) was developed to guide the process, outlining core themes, structured questions, and discussion topics. This protocol was reviewed and approved by MHEC and SREB leadership prior to implementation. Potential participants were then invited to take part in 45-minute virtual interviews. Of the 21 individuals contacted, 14 agreed to participate. Interviews were conducted between June and September 2025, with informed consent obtained from each participant. Audio recordings were used exclusively to ensure the accuracy of documentation.

Participants represented a range of roles and institutional contexts (see call-out box). Following completion of the interviews, transcripts were systematically analyzed to identify and codify major themes. A preliminary report outline, based on these findings, was subsequently reviewed with MHEC and SREB leadership to ensure fidelity with collaborative research protocols.

Interviewee Demographics

Midwestern Region (MHEC): 7
Southern Region (SREB): 7

Four-year institution-based educators: 2
Community college-based educators: 5
High school-based educators: 2
Administration (state and system-level): 5

III. Stakeholder Perspectives

Benefits of Using OER in Dual Enrollment

The perspectives shared by stakeholders largely reinforced what is already documented in the scholarly literature and institutional reports on OER. In particular, interviewees emphasized that the benefits of adopting OER in dual enrollment programs closely mirror those found in prior studies. Most commonly, stakeholders pointed to cost reduction as the primary driver of OER integration, enabling broader student participation in dual enrollment. At the same time, educators and administrators highlighted additional benefits unique to their contexts, offering deeper insight into how OER adoption is shaping dual enrollment practice.

Cost Saving. Early adoption often began within a single department or by individual faculty, most frequently at the community college level, championed the transition to OER materials. Schools and districts consistently identified cost savings for students and families as the chief motivator, noting that reducing or eliminating textbook expenses was essential for expanding access. For example, one community college reported savings exceeding $900,000 as a result of systematic OER implementation. This was calculated based on the cost savings from traditional textbooks to OER times the number of students. In one course alone, this institution reduced student cost from $295 per course textbook to $39.

Flexibility. Beyond cost reductions, the flexibility of OER was widely cited as a significant asset. Educators highlighted the ability to update and tailor course materials in real time, thereby ensuring relevance to emerging student interests and current events. This capacity for immediate content revision stands in contrast to the lengthy cycles of traditional textbook publishing. In one instance, faculty responded to student inquiries about new nutrition trends by updating their OER course content, a process that would have taken years with standard publishing models. Other examples include educators adding images or content that have a regional focus. Helping students connect the course content to their culture and community correlated to better understanding and engagement according to interviewed educators.

Student Experience. The faculty emphasized improvements in student experience through enhanced access to materials. Immediate availability of resources on the first day of class minimized delays that had previously hindered student success, especially given the rigorous pace of dual enrollment courses. The digital nature of OER also mitigated challenges related to forgotten or lost textbooks and facilitated multimedia learning tailored to student learning preferences. In one dual enrollment course taught in a Midwest high school, the educator noted that in her last year of teaching her course with OER she only had one student fail out of 57 students enrolled. Previously, with traditional textbooks she would have seen much higher failure rates. She felt strongly that the immediate and on demand access to the course material was a key factor for these outcomes.

Peer Networking. Faculty networking emerged as a key benefit in programs with integrated dual enrollment and OER adoption. Educators described mutual support within local and virtual networks, which fostered the exchange of teaching strategies and adaptation methodologies for OER-enhanced courses.

Interviewees noted that the adoption of open educational resources in dual enrollment programs has produced substantial benefits, including reduced costs for students and institutions, increased access to timely and relevant course materials, and enhanced student engagement.

Challenges of Using OER for Dual Enrollment

The challenges highlighted across stakeholder interviews can largely be understood through the lens of change management. In the context of dual enrollment, where K–12 and higher education often

operate in silos, interviewees noted that modifying deeply entrenched practices was exceptionally difficult—particularly in the absence of administrative champions (such as high school principals in smaller school districts, district assistant superintendents, assistant superintendents, and assistant principals of curriculum). Widespread adoption of OER in dual enrollment programs, they emphasized, requires not only strong policy mandates at the institutional level but also clear and sustained support from all levels of leadership.

Structural Misalignment. The most significant barriers to OER adoption were reported at the K–12 level, primarily due to misalignment between secondary and postsecondary institutions. A recurring theme was the lack of communication and coordination between school boards, high school principals, and the community colleges that credential dual enrollment courses. This disconnect led to inconsistencies in expectations, assessment metrics, and instructional priorities, creating a fragmented experience for educators who must navigate both educational systems simultaneously.

Time for Professional Development. A second major barrier identified was the lack of time for professional development. While there was broad interest in adopting OER, educators—particularly those in K–12 settings—struggled to find time to develop or adapt OER materials. Coordinating peer collaboration for course development was also reported as challenging due to differing work schedules between K–12 and higher education faculty.

Varying Levels of OER Preparedness. Interviewees reported a wide range of professional development needs related to OER. Some faculty required resources below the level of an introductory "OER 101" course to begin their engagement, while others, with more advanced experience, expressed the need for deeper, more specialized training to expand their skills. This highlighted a clear need for differentiated professional learning opportunities that span the OER proficiency spectrum.

Gaps and Overabundance in Materials. Availability of OER materials varied significantly by discipline. In fields such as science, literature, and history, interviewees noted an overwhelming volume of available content, complicating the curation process. Conversely, subjects such as technical education, mathematics, and psychology were frequently cited as lacking up-to-date or comprehensive OER resources. In some cases, discontinuation of previously available materials hindered sustained adoption. One community college cited that several of their high school-based educators were moving from OER back to textbooks. The lack of updated material was one of the significant drivers of this change.

Perceived Stigma of OER. Particularly within K–12 settings, a lingering stigma around OER was reported. Concerns from school boards and principals included skepticism about instructional quality without traditional textbooks, uncertainty about the credibility of open content, and resistance to adopting unfamiliar formats.

Technological and Logistical Constraints. Beyond pedagogical concerns, logistical barriers also hindered OER implementation. Limitations within learning management systems (LMS), including the inability to efficiently deliver OER content for dual enrollment, were cited frequently. Additionally, challenges such as lack of student internet access at home or unreliable school connectivity further complicated OER deployment in certain districts.

Credit Transfer and Institutional Recognition. Although mentioned less frequently, issues related to credit transfer were still a concern. Some interviewees noted that when course OER content had not been explicitly authored or approved by the credit-granting institution, dual enrollment credits were more likely to be questioned or denied. Where these challenges were highlighted, educators noted that while all dual enrollment courses faced credit transfer challenges, those with OER were more frequently denied as compared to traditional textbook based courses.

Stakeholder interviews revealed that widespread adoption of OER in dual enrollment programs faces several systemic challenges. Key issues include a lack of alignment between K–12 and higher education institutions, insufficient time and support for professional development, and varied levels of OER readiness among educators. Additional barriers include inconsistent access to quality materials across disciplines, lingering stigma around the use of OER, particularly in K–12 settings, and logistical complications related to technology and internet access. Finally, concerns about credit transfer and the absence of institutional and state-level policy support further hinder sustainable implementation.

Success Stories & Lessons Learned

Throughout this research, interviewees shared a range of success stories and lessons learned that can inform institutions and networks exploring the use of OER in dual enrollment programs.

Policy as a Catalyst. In several states, policy mandates aimed at reducing textbook costs and expanding access to postsecondary education have played a pivotal role in advancing OER adoption. These policies not only elevate the priority of OER among both higher education institutions and K–12 systems but also enable coordinated efforts to support faculty. State-level funding, such as grants and OER networks, has been instrumental in alleviating the burden on individual instructors by providing infrastructure and incentives for systemic change. Interviewees consistently identified policy support—particularly in the form of mandates and time allocations for course development—as a critical enabler of sustainable OER integration.

Leadership Support. Leadership support was consistently referenced as instrumental to OER adoption. Widespread integration typically correlated with clear institutional and state-level policies, incentives, and grant funding targeted at OER development. Administrative engagement, from K-12 principals to college deans, provided the necessary infrastructure and encouragement for faculty to prioritize OER curation as part of their instructional duties.

Access to Curated Resources. Another key lesson was the importance of providing faculty with curated, standards-aligned OER content as a foundational resource. Colleges that developed and shared complete course materials with their K–12 partners saw significantly higher success in OER adoption. This approach gave high school instructors a strong starting point while still allowing for local adaptation. Several states have also developed shared repositories and centralized OER leadership networks to support this process, ensuring access to high-quality instructional materials. Additionally, institutions that utilized shared learning management systems (LMS) between K–12 and higher education noted improved communication, streamlined content delivery, and increased faculty engagement.

Collaborative Faculty Networks. Discipline-specific and regional faculty networks were frequently cited as a driving force behind successful OER adoption. Opportunities for faculty collaboration—such as scheduled meetings, content review sessions, and co-teaching experiences—fostered professional learning communities that supported sustained engagement with OER and helped bridge the gap between secondary and postsecondary educators.

Innovative Solutions to Access Barriers. Educators also shared innovative strategies for addressing persistent access challenges, particularly in areas with limited internet connectivity. To ensure students could engage with course materials regardless of home internet access, instructors implemented solutions such as extended library hours, offline access via flash drives, and downloadable course content. These adaptive practices proved essential in maintaining continuity in dual enrollment OER courses.

IV. Recommendations

Strategic Recommendations

Strategic recommendations were developed based on themes from both interview findings and the broader literature. Key areas of focus include strengthening communication around OER's impact, cultivating communities of practice, aligning institutional and individual incentives, and leveraging policy at both the institutional and state levels. Institutions aiming for sustainable and scalable OER adoption in dual enrollment programs should consider an integrated approach that addresses cultural, structural, and operational dimensions.

Leverage strategic messaging across the entire ecosystem on the benefits of OER in dual enrollment. Effective and targeted communication is essential to broaden awareness and support for OER in dual enrollment. Messaging should highlight core benefits such as cost savings, increased student success, enhanced instructional flexibility, and reduced financial burden for students and families. Importantly, communication strategies must extend beyond faculty outreach to include students, parents, institutional leaders, school boards, and policymakers. Crafting compelling narratives around the tangible impacts of OER adoption, particularly in underserved communities, can help build momentum and normalize its use across educational sectors.

Create a local discipline-based professional learning community for dual enrollment OER adopters. Sustainable change requires a supportive and collaborative professional culture. Throughout this project, the most successful OER implementations occurred in environments where regionally based discipline-specific communities of practice were intentionally cultivated. These communities, both in-person and virtual, provide educators with space to co-create, share, and refine materials, as well as address implementation challenges. Facilitating regular opportunities for collaboration, whether through shared learning platforms, faculty workshops, or cross-institutional networks, can significantly improve both the quality and consistency of OER use in dual enrollment settings.

Incentivize adoption of OER in dual enrollment. A recurring theme was the need to better align incentives with institutional goals and faculty workload realities. Many educators cited competing priorities and lack of recognition as barriers to OER adoption. Institutions can drive more consistent engagement by providing concrete support such as course development stipends, release time, formal recognition in promotion and tenure processes, and dedicated professional development pathways. Additionally, the presence of administrative champions, particularly at the department chair or dean level, was repeatedly cited as a key factor in fostering a culture that supports OER work.

Leverage existing and create new policies to help prioritize use of OER. Policy plays a foundational role in prioritizing and scaling OER adoption. States with formal policies aimed at increasing access to higher education and reducing textbook costs create enabling conditions that lower adoption barriers and foster institutional alignment. While state-level mandates and funding initiatives can set the stage, institutional policies are critical for execution. These may include integration of OER goals into strategic plans, standardization of OER reporting in curriculum development, and investment in cross-sector OER leadership roles. Institutions that bridge state-level direction with internal infrastructure are best positioned to implement OER sustainably within dual enrollment programs.

Advancing OER in dual enrollment requires a strategic, multi-level approach that integrates clear communication, supportive communities, aligned incentives, and enabling policy frameworks. When these elements are thoughtfully coordinated, institutions can foster a culture of innovation, reduce barriers for educators, and expand access to high-quality learning materials for students. These recommendations offer a roadmap for stakeholders seeking to implement sustainable, scalable OER solutions that enhance both academic and economic outcomes in dual enrollment programs.

Implementation Recommendations

Faculty and institutional leaders alike highlighted the need for more intentional infrastructure, professional development, and strategic alignment to ensure sustainable implementation. More than strategy, interviewees highlighted key factors that support the foundational stages of OER adoption in dual enrollment, emphasizing actionable strategies to reduce early barriers and build institutional capacity.

Create an OER on-ramp to help ease the burden of adoption for dual enrollment educators. The initial adoption of OER was consistently identified as the most significant challenge. Faculty reported that without clear starting points, the process of identifying, curating, and aligning materials to course outcomes was overwhelming, especially for those working across K–12 and higher education systems. In institutions where OER templates were developed and aligned with course objectives, adoption was greatly simplified.

Create OER dual enrollment course "packages" with all the necessary materials. The lack of auto-graded assessments and high-quality ancillary materials was frequently cited, particularly in disciplines such as STEM and social sciences. Best practices for overcoming these challenges included the development of pre-built OER packages complete with instructor guides, assessment tools, and LMS-compatible formatting. Educators emphasized the importance of an "adapt rather than build from scratch" approach, particularly for K–12 faculty teaching dual enrollment.

Offer professional development time and resources for educators. Differentiated professional development was another central recommendation. Faculty at varying stages of OER implementation expressed the need for tailored training opportunities. For experienced faculty, advanced tracks focused on refining materials, integrating multimedia, and evaluating student outcomes were highly valued. For those new to OER or exploring its potential, foundational workshops focused on the rationale, impact, and instructional value of OER served as an effective on-ramp to more technical training such as OER 101. Institutions that invested in a tiered professional learning structure saw stronger engagement and higher rates of sustained adoption.

Align schedules to help support communities of adoption. The misalignment of academic calendars and professional development schedules between K–12 and higher education faculty was another frequently mentioned barrier. Educators advocated for joint professional development opportunities that provided structured time to co-develop course materials, troubleshoot challenges, and align instructional approaches. These collaborative sessions created shared ownership over curriculum and reinforced the cross-sector nature of dual enrollment instruction. When coordinated effectively, these sessions also served as opportunities for innovation and knowledge exchange.

Remove communication and technology barriers for educators. The need for coordinated technological infrastructure was also highlighted. Institutions that implemented synchronized LMS across all dual enrollment instructors reported significantly improved collaboration, resource sharing, and instructional consistency. Beyond LMS alignment, faculty called for centralized platforms to communicate, share materials, and provide ongoing support. In regions where students faced persistent technological barriers, institutions that proactively provided educators with tools, strategies, and access solutions (e.g., offline content delivery or device lending programs) were better able to ensure continuity in OER-based instruction.

Laying a strong foundation for OER adoption in dual enrollment requires more than individual faculty initiative; it demands a coordinated strategy that supports early-stage implementation. By developing ready-to-use resources, offering tiered professional development, aligning professional learning schedules, and investing in shared technology infrastructure, institutions can significantly reduce barriers to entry. These strategies support both faculty effectiveness and the long-term sustainability of OER in dual enrollment programs.

V. Conclusion

When asked about strategies and tactics to drive meaningful change in the adoption of OER within dual enrollment programs, educators consistently identified three pivotal factors: supportive policy, time, and incentives. Despite their substantial personal investment in curating OER content, these educators acknowledged they were among a minority of early adopters willing to innovate. They emphasized that broad, systemic transformation across dual enrollment offerings requires explicit motivation for change. Policymaking aimed at lowering textbook expenses, regardless of whether such policies originate at the institutional or state level, was widely recognized as a critical catalyst. Educators echoed that their colleagues were resistant to change unless required to implement changes to comply with state or institutional policies.

Educators further agreed that OER adoption demands significant upfront time and effort. The "on ramp" to adopting OER in general is time intensive and often overwhelming that without allocating dedicated time, especially for K-12 faculty, would substantially support the steep initial learning curve. What was often underscored, was once educators built their initial content there were only minor changes year over year. They felt that if there was dedicated professional development time carved out for these activities they could expand and explore further. Most participants reported that their efforts to develop OER-based dual enrollment courses were undertaken outside contracted work hours.

The availability of grants and similar incentives was seen as an effective means of prioritizing OER development for new adopters. Veteran faculty also highlighted the necessity of ongoing financial and professional support to sustain and enhance their educational resources and expertise.

Finally, in places where peer networks didn't exist, there was a desire to create this infrastructure. In several cases, these educators were the only faculty using OER for their dual enrollment course in their department and sometimes institution. Having access to others to share challenges, learn best practices, and discuss new materials was strongly requested.

In conclusion, OER presents considerable transformative potential for dual enrollment, but widespread adoption hinges on strategic alignment and sustained implementation support. Across the Midwest and Southern regions, experienced educators have embraced OER within dual enrollment and offer essential recommendations to guide future adopters. Higher education has led the way in the adoption of OER for dual enrollment and can offer strategic insights and tactical capabilities to K-12 educators to help increase adoption without adding strenuous burden. With thoughtful policies, support structures, and stakeholder collaboration, OER can be scaled to improve affordability and student outcomes through relevant and timely content in dual enrollment programs.

VI. Appendix: Interview Protocol

Interview information
- **Interviewer Name:** [Your Name]
- **Interviewee Name:** [Participant's Name]
- **Interviewee Title:** [Participant's Title]
- **Interviewee Institution:** [Participant's Institution]
- **Date:** [Insert Date]
- **Location/Platform:** [e.g., Zoom, In-Person, Phone]
- **Duration:** 60 minutes

Intro, consent and confidentiality:
- Thank the participant(s) for their time.
- Share the purpose of the interview: to explore how OER is being used in dual / concurrent enrollment programs, understand challenges and opportunities, and identify strategies for broader adoption and integration.
- Confirm what term they generally use (dual credit enrollment or concurrent enrollment) and use that term throughout the interview.
- Confirm consent to participate and record (for transcription purposes only).
- Reassure confidentiality and explain the reporting format (e.g., aggregated themes, no direct quotes without permission).
- Initial work was done on this topic in 2021 and we are updating/expanding upon that now.

Background information
- Can you please describe your current role and your experience with dual / concurrent enrollment or OER?
- How long have you been involved in this area of education?
- What types of students or institutions do you typically work with?
- What was your motivation behind implementing OER in DE/CE?

Open Educational Resources (OER) and Dual/Concurrent Enrollment

A. Perceived Benefits
- In your experience, what are the main benefits of using OER in dual / concurrent enrollment?
- Do you see potential for OER to help address common challenges in dual / concurrent enrollment—such as cost of materials, credit transfer, or curricular alignment between high school and college?

B. Challenges and Limitations
- What barriers or sources of resistance exist when trying to use OER in dual / concurrent enrollment settings?

C. Implementation and Support
- Are there specific subjects where OER are particularly strong or particularly lacking?
- What kinds of training, resources, or professional development are most helpful for supporting teachers/faculty in using OER for dual/concurrent enrollment?
- Is there policy or funding support for using OER in dual/ concurrent enrollment at your institution/state/district/school? If so, describe. If not, probe on what might be helpful from a policy perspective (expectations around use or selection, incentives, statewide initiatives, funding, etc.)

Future Directions
- What recommendations would you make for improving access, quality, or implementation of OER in dual/concurrent enrollment?

- What policy levers—at the institutional, district, state, or regional level—could better support the combined use of OER and dual / concurrent enrollment?
- What resources or networks do you consult (or wish existed) to support your work in this area?

Closing
- Is there anything we haven't covered that you think is important to share about OER, dual enrollment, or their intersection?
- Can I follow up with you if I have additional questions?
- Anyone else you might recommend that is using these tools/consult on this work?

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