

Benefits of Attending CHESS over Community College

At CHESS you save money, but that's not all.

Homeschooling parents of older teens have a decision to make: continue with high school classes or enroll their students at community college through dual enrollment. When high school students dual enroll, they can simultaneously earn high school and college credit. And, on the surface, dual enrollment appears attractive.

But making an informed decision isn't as simple as you think. Cost is a major concern, but learning how dual enrollment works should also be taken into account. Finally, the CHESS experience is far different than the community college campus experience – academically, socially and spiritually.

Money matters

We all like to save money. Dual enrollment sounds like a great way to whittle down college costs. But does it?

The table below shows how prices compare for three typical upper-level courses.¹ NOVA course names are in parenthesis.

- Chemistry Lecture/Lab (Chemistry 111)
- Effective Writing/Honors (Composition 111/Honors)
- Pre-calculus (Math 166)

The bottom line: CHESS saves you money. Taking these three classes at CHESS with available discounts, plus additional book fees and parking, you could save as much as \$1,230 over NOVA.

Courses	CHESS w/ discount	CHESS w/o discount	NOVA	CHESS Book Fees	NOVA Book Fees	CHESS Other Fees	NOVA Other Fees
Chemistry Lecture/Lab	\$549	\$697	\$748	\$94	\$115-132	\$40 registration	\$80 parking
Effective Writing, Honors	\$306	\$454	\$561	\$25	\$60-90		
Pre-calculus	\$537	\$697	\$935	\$70	\$100-150		

¹ NOVA published in-state rates and CHESS published rates as of 06/25 for 2018/19. *CHESS rates with discount* include 5% multi-course discount, and volunteer track pricing.

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Dual enrollment challenges.

Dual enrollment allows high school students (public, private, or homeschooled) to earn college credit and high school credit simultaneously. In that sense, dual enrollment can save a family on future tuition, but it's more complicated than it sounds.

Personal experience has taught many a homeschool family that careful planning on a student-by-student basis is required.

Here are three questions that should be considered when taking dual enrollment classes.

Will my student's credits be accepted?

Not every college or university accepts community college credits. Some accept only general education requirements, while others only accept credits if they have a course they consider equivalent to the community college course. Some will not accept credits in the student's major.

Every college that will accept credits from a Virginia community college has its own "Articulation Agreement" with the community college, outlining what credits it will accept. So students should identify universities they hope to attend and study those universities' policies on accepting transfer credits.

In addition, students should consider their future major. They should study the policy on accepting transfer credits for the department they hope to major in. For example, one homeschooled student did not investigate transferring credits, and took several engineering classes at NVCC, then had to repeat them at his four-year college.

Will my student take calculus/above math courses?

Math courses below calculus taken at community college will not count toward a bachelor's degree, including precalculus, trigonometry, geometry, and algebra.

Will dual enrollment endanger my student's freshman status?

Transferring college credits to a four-year institution can affect your freshman status. This can limit your eligibility for scholarships, sports, and perhaps even dorm assignments. Consider whether your teen is ready to transfer in as a sophomore.

CHESS provides many college-level courses at the high school pace, helping equip and prepare students for continuing education, the college experience and for life.

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CHESS offers a very different experience from community college.

CHESS not only offers financial advantages, but also offers a significant academic, social and spiritual experience at an age appropriate level.

Use the comparison below to help your family determine which environment is best suited for your student.

Environment	CHESS	NOVA	Advantage
Pace of class	Year/ 33 weeks	Semester/ 15 weeks	CHESS gives students more time to study and master the course material. Parents are involved in the process.
Teaching format	Typically interactive and personal	Typically lecture	CHESS offers a variety of participatory classes where students and teachers get to know each other.
Class size	Typically 5-12	Varies 25 - 150	The smaller class sizes at CHESS encourage peer interaction and accountability.
Student ages	12-18	16 and up	CHESS students learn among their peers who share the same level of emotional maturity.
Teachers	Christian	Christian/Non-Christian	CHESS teachers are Christians and support rather than oppose a student's Christian beliefs.
Academic Calendars	Easter break April 15-19	Spring break March 12-18	Will dual calendars complicate your student's learning experience or your family's plans for travel?