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Report shows continued growth in Colorado's dual enrollment programs

Nearly 30 percent of Colorado 11th-graders, 12th-graders participated in dual enrollment programs in 2014-15

DENVER – May 6, 2016: Nearly 30 percent of Colorado's 11th-graders and 12th-graders participated in some type of dual enrollment program during the 2014-15 school year – an increase of 15 percent over the previous year -- according to the 2014-15 concurrent enrollment report released today by the Colorado Department of Higher Education and Colorado Department of Education.

Dual and concurrent enrollment are terms used interchangeably and refers to college courses students take while in high school. In 2009, Colorado passed concurrent enrollment legislation that provided a framework for school districts to enter into agreements with Colorado institutions of higher education. These concurrent enrollment agreements enable students to enroll in college courses tuition free.

Colorado is successfully using dual or concurrent enrollment as a strategy to cultivate seamless P-20 pathways aimed at boosting college completion and decreasing high school dropout rates. Research shows students in dual enrollment programs are more likely to enroll in college than their peers and are less likely to need remedial education once in college.

"With more and more students taking and passing dual enrollment programs, we continue to see the huge benefit these programs offer," said Chief Research Officer at the Colorado Department of Higher Education Beth Bean. "Our participating colleges and universities continue to see that students participating in these programs are more likely to enroll and progress through college."

Key findings in the report:

- Nearly 30 percent of Colorado 11th- and 12th-graders – 35,713 high school students – participated in concurrent enrollment, ASCENT or other dual enrollment programs in 2014-15. That number was an increase of more than 4,600 students from 2013-14, or a 15 percent increase in dual enrollment participation overall.
- Concurrent enrollment continues to see sustained increases in participation, up 13 percent statewide with 23,127 students participating in 2014-15.
- The two-year institutions that served the most students in the 2014-15 academic year were Arapahoe Community College with 3,614 students, followed closely by the Community College of Aurora with 3,339 students.
- Of the four-year institutions offering dual enrollment programs, the University of Colorado Denver served 4,878 students primarily through its institutionally developed dual enrollment program.

- Denver Public Schools had the most students participating in concurrent enrollment by headcount with 2,848 students, while Karval RE-23 School District had the highest percentage of students participating in concurrent enrollment out of all Colorado school districts.
- Statewide, 94 percent of school districts and 84 percent of high schools offer concurrent enrollment programs.
- Among Colorado public high schools, Grandview High School in the Cherry Creek School District reported the greatest number of students participating in concurrent enrollment with 627 students.
- Compared to the prior year, participation in concurrent enrollment programs increased dramatically among Hispanic students (26 percent increase), African American students (30 percent increase), and Native American/Alaskan Native students (39 percent increase).
- A large majority of the concurrent enrollment hours taken by students—93 percent— were passed in 2014-15. This is an improvement from the previous year’s complete pass rate of 89 percent.
- More than 1,200 students in concurrent enrollment programs earned some type of postsecondary credential in 2014-15.
- More than half of students who participated in ASCENT in 2014-15 were Hispanic, a minority group that is historically underrepresented in postsecondary education. One of the goals of the ASCENT program is to increase the percentage of traditionally underserved students who participate in postsecondary education.
- According to previous DHE research, students who participated in dual enrollment programs in high school had higher college enrollment rates, first-year credit hour accumulation, grade point averages, and retention rates in college.
- A previous DHE study found that participation in dual enrollment is associated with a 23 percent increase in the likelihood of enrolling in college and a 10 percent decrease in the need for remediation, holding gender, income, race/ethnicity, and ACT scores constant.

“As college tuition costs continue to increase, dual enrollment programs are becoming life-changing assets for Colorado’s students, enabling them to get a jump ahead, not only on their education but on the investment in their future,” said Colorado Education Commissioner Richard Crandall. “These programs are increasing in popularity because they help students get college-level experience and college credit, starting them on a smooth path for success after high school.”

This report was prepared by the Colorado Department of Higher Education and the Colorado Department of Education and was submitted to the Education Committees of the Senate and House of Representatives pursuant to 22-35-112 C.R.S. [Read the complete report.](#)

*“Dual Enrollment” in this report refers to the broad array of programs available to high school students that allow them to take college-level courses for free. “Concurrent Enrollment” refers only to statewide programs created by House Bill 09-1319 and detailed in the Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act (C.R.S. 22-35-101 et seq.).

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