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Colorado's dual enrollment programs grow for seventh straight year

More than 30 percent of Colorado 11th- and 12th-graders participated in dual enrollment programs in 2015-16

DENVER – April 6, 2017: More than 30 percent of Colorado's 11th- and 12th-graders participated in some type of dual enrollment program during the 2015-16 school year—an increase of 7.9 percent (2,806 students) in total participation over the previous year—according to the latest report released today by the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) and Colorado Department of Education (CDE).

Dual and Concurrent Enrollment 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 colleges and universities enabling students to enroll in college courses tuition-free.

Colorado is successfully using this strategy to cultivate seamless P-20 pathways aimed at boosting college credential completion in high school. Research shows students in dual enrollment programs are more likely to enroll and persist in college than their peers and less likely to need remedial education.

“We’ve long been aware of the benefits these programs offer, giving high school students an early college start and boosting college going rates. While I am pleased with the program growth, we still have too many high school students who do not have this opportunity. We must work collaboratively to change that,” said Colorado Department of Higher Education Executive Director Kim Hunter Reed.

Key findings

- Statewide, 38,519 students participated in dual enrollment programs of any type in the 2015-2016 academic year. This represents more than 30 percent of all 11th- and 12th-graders in public high schools in Colorado.
- Denver Public Schools had the most students participating in Concurrent Enrollment by headcount (2,531 students), while Moffat Consolidated School District 2 had the highest percentage (80 percent) of students participating.
- The two-year institutions that served the most high school students in the 2015-16 academic year were Arapahoe Community College, with 4,403 students, followed by Front Range Community College with 4,210 students. Of the Area Technical Colleges, Pickens Technical College served the most high school students with 570 students. Of the four-year institutions offering dual enrollment programs, the University of Colorado Denver served 5,297 students primarily through their institutionally developed dual enrollment program.
- Compared to the prior year, participation in Concurrent Enrollment program participation increased among Asian students (18 percent increase), Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students (21 percent increase), Hispanic students (7 percent increase), White, non-Hispanic students (8 percent increase), and students identifying as more than one race (12 percent increase).
- Through Concurrent Enrollment or ASCENT programs, 1,491 students earned some type of postsecondary credential in 2015-16. This is a 21 percent increase over last year's total credential completion number (1,231).

- Participation in ASCENT increased by 5 percent from the previous year, with 485 students participating statewide in 2015-16. Nearly half of students who participated in ASCENT in 2015-16 were Hispanic.

“Concurrent Enrollment has proven to be a highly effective strategy for preparing students to succeed in college and in life,” said Education Commissioner Katy Anthes. “When students have the opportunity to take rigorous college courses while they are still in high school, it opens their eyes to the opportunities of a college education and empowers them to succeed when they arrive on campus.”

Related Events

The report is an [agenda item](#) on the Colorado Commission on Higher Education’s monthly meeting (open to the public) on **Friday, April 7**. In addition, Reed will hold a Student Voices and Concurrent Enrollment Roundtable on **Friday, April 14 at noon** where she will meet with high school and college students who are enrolled or have participated in the program. Media availability will follow at 1:15 p.m. The event takes place at CEC Early College High School, 2650 Eliot St., Denver.

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 and fact sheet.](#)

*“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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