



COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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MEMORANDUM

Date: December 6, 2010
To: State Board of Education, Colorado Commission on Higher Education,
Education Committees of the house of representatives and senate
From: Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board
Re: Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act guidelines and recommendations

Background

In May 2009, Colorado State Legislature passed HB09-1319 and SB09-285 (hereafter the "Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act" or CRS 22-35-101 et seq). The intent of the Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act is to broaden access to and improve the quality of Concurrent Enrollment programs, improve coordination between institutions of secondary education and Institutions of Higher Education, and ensure financial transparency and accountability. Beyond coordinating and clarifying the existing Concurrent Enrollment programs, the legislation also creates the "5th year" ASCENT program and establishes the Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board within the Colorado Department of Education.

Role of the Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board

As defined in 22-35-107 (6)(a) through (d) The Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board duties include:

- 1.) Establishing guidelines for the administration of the ASCENT program;
- 2.) Advising and assisting local school education providers and institutions of higher education in preparing cooperative agreements;
- 3.) Making recommendations as necessary to the general assembly, the State Board of Education, and the Commission on Higher Education concerning the improvement or updating of state policies relating to concurrent enrollment programs, including but not limited to recommendations of policies that will allow every local education provider in the state to have adequate resources to enter into at least one cooperative agreement; and
- 4.) Considering and making recommendations to the State Board of Education and the education committees of the House of Representatives and Senate, regarding the feasibility of a wavier process for a qualified student to apply to the Colorado Department of Education to be designated as an ASCENT program participant in the second year following the year in which he or she was enrolled in the twelfth grade.

Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board Reporting Requirements

Pursuant to the Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act (section 22-35-107 (7)(a) (b), C.R.S.), the Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board is required to prepare a report and submit it to the State Board of Education and the Commission on Higher Education regarding any guidelines that the board has established for the administration of the ASCENT program; and any recommendations that the board makes concerning the improvement or updating of state policies relating to concurrent enrollment programs.

Pursuant to the Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act (section 22-35-107 (6)(d), C.R.S.), the Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board is required to make recommendations to the State Board of Education and the education committees of the House of Representatives and Senate, or any successor committees, regarding the feasibility of a waiver process whereby a qualified student could apply to the department for a waiver, which would allow the student to be designated by the Department as an ASCENT program participant in the second year following the year in which he or she was enrolled in the twelfth grade so long as he or she:

- a. Was so designated in the year directly following the year in which he or she was enrolled in the twelfth grade of a local education provider;
- b. Requires fifteen or fewer credit hours of postsecondary course work to achieve a postsecondary credential; and
- c. Is eligible for free or reduced-cost lunch pursuant to the federal "National School Lunch Act", 42 U.S.C. sec. 1751 et seq.

Progress of the CEAB on Reporting Requirements

I. ASCENT Guidelines

On March 15, 2010, the CEAB finalized the guidelines for the ASCENT program. See Attachment A for a copy of the ASCENT Guidelines.

I. Recommendations for Improvement or Updating of State Policies

The Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board has reviewed current policies regarding concurrent enrollment opportunities for Colorado students. Based on Year 1 implementation for the Concurrent Enrollment Act, the board believes that no recommendations are needed at this time for updating state K-12 policies. The Board will recommend several technical policy changes to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education by February 2011.

II. Recommendations on Waiver Provision

The Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board has begun to examine the feasibility of a waiver process whereby a qualified student could apply to the department for a waiver, which would allow the student to be designated by the Department as an ASCENT program participant in the second year following the year in which he or she was enrolled in the twelfth grade. By late Spring 2011, the Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board will continue to explore the feasibility of the waiver provision utilizing additional data, to be obtained from results of Year One implementation.

