

TOPIC: CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

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I. SUMMARY

C.R.S. 22-35-107 requires the Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board (CEAB) to report to the Commission concerning the improvement or updating of concurrent enrollment programs. 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 was 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 created the “5th year” ASCENT program and established the Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board within the Colorado Department of Education. The Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board (CEAB) consists of members appointed by the Governor, Executive Director of Department of Higher Education, and the Commissioner of the Department of Education. Cliff Richardson, interim president of Community College of Denver, serves as the chair of the board and Scott Stump, assistant provost for Career & Technical Education for the Colorado Community College System, serves as the vice chair. (Please see attachment A for a complete list of CEAB members.)

II. BACKGROUND

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.

1. Recommendations for Improvement or Updating of State Policies

The Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board reviewed current policies regarding concurrent enrollment opportunities for Colorado students. The board drafted and recommended several statutory revisions based upon current implementation practices and identified barriers to districts and postsecondary institutions. Recommended changes include the following:

- Updating ASCENT projection deadlines as they are not aligned with school processes
 - Move the current September 1st deadline for ASCENT counts back to February in order to more accurately report eligible students during their senior year
- Counting ASCENT students in five-year versus four-year high school graduation rates.
- Striking obsolete language from concurrent enrollment statute that addresses state-based financial assistance
 - Current language concerning ASCENT students being eligible for state-based financial assistance during their ASCENT year is obsolete as the intended program was never created.
- Create additional capacity in CDE to support districts and schools in concurrent enrollment and ASCENT implementation.

2. Recommendations on the Law's Waiver Provision

The Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board recommends the inclusion of a waiver process allowing an ASCENT student the opportunity to apply to the Department for a waiver, whereby the student would 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. On November 15, 2012, the CEAB revised the proposed guidelines and forms for the 6th year wavier. This recommendation will be given to the State Board of Education in the Fall of 2013.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

The Concurrent Enrollment Advisor Board has made significant progress. The numbers for concurrent enrollment continue to grow in Colorado. Cliff Richardson, who served as the chair of the board since its inception, resigned his position in May 2013 (he plans to retire from state service in summer 2013). Scott Stump, will chair the board.

Department of Education Response to CEAB Recommendations for Improvement or Updating of State Policies

The Colorado Department of Education/State Board of Education included many of the changes proposed by the CEAB in House Bill 13-1219, including the following:

- The ASCENT projection deadline to report eligible student during their senior year was changed in statute to February
- CDE sought support for an additional position that will support districts and schools in concurrent enrollment and ASCENT implementation as well as provide technical assistance.

The following items were not addressed by the SBE this year.

- Counting of ASCENT students in five-year versus four-year high school graduation rate was not addressed, as this is a federal issue not a state issue.
- Striking obsolete language from concurrent enrollment statute that addresses state-based financial assistance.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

No action is required. This is an information item.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. §22-35-107