

TOPIC: **JOBS FOR THE FUTURE – EARLY COLLEGE DESIGN REPORT**

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I. SUMMARY

As part of a multistate early college design state policy initiative, the Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado Department of Higher Education partnered with Jobs for the Future (JFF) to investigate how to increase the number of low income students and other underprepared students graduating from high school and going on to complete postsecondary credentials using early college designs. We began our work with JFF in early 2012. The original focus of JFF's work was on early colleges, but because Colorado has a unique structure of early colleges and it seemed best to focus on increasing concurrent enrollment in Colorado using early college designs.

A growing body of evidence shows that dual enrollment improves academic attainment for low income students and other underprepared students by integrating a sequence of free college courses into the high school programs of study, accompanied by a comprehensive system of academic and social supports. This initiative explored how to do this statewide to increase concurrent enrollment.

II. BACKGROUND

DHE gathered a group of expert practitioners with experience in early colleges and concurrent enrollment. The Early College Design (ECD) Stakeholder Committee (please see attached list) began convening in February of 2012. JFF facilitated the group's meetings. The group also received presentations from all the early colleges in Colorado. The early colleges presented on their programs, student makeup, and how current policy was helping/hindering their work.

JFF worked with DHE and CDE data teams to develop many of the statistics found in the final report (please see attached). These numbers were used as JFF worked with the ECD to set intermediate benchmarks and five-year goals (beginning in 2013-2014) for increasing the number of high school juniors and seniors completing college courses in high school.

The goals put forth incorporate what the ECD believes could happen in the state over the course of the next five years, especially with the impact of new policy passed by the Colorado General Assembly in 2012. It also takes into account short- and long-term strategies. The short-term strategy is to maximize participation among schools and districts already offering concurrent enrollment. The long-term strategy is to help recruit concurrent enrollment skeptics and areas that have had difficulty offering such programs.

By 2017-18, the ECD would like to see all public high schools in Colorado offer college course, (AP, IB, concurrent enrollment, etc.) opportunities for its 11th and 12th grade students. During this time period, the ECD would like to see the percent of high schools participating in concurrent enrollment programs increasing from 243 (53.9 percent) in 2010-2011 to about 309 (67.5 percent) in 2017-2018. Coinciding with a growth in the number and the rate of high schools participating in the concurrent enrollment program, the ECD has set a target of 34.6 percent of all high school juniors and seniors taking part in concurrent enrollment. The group aims to increase the rate of success for students passing all of their concurrent enrollment courses from 59 percent in 2010-2011 to 75 percent in 2017-2018, assuming that supports for students have also been increased. Ideally, supports would be provided to students in the form of structured and sequenced concurrent enrollment programs.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

These policy recommendations reflect JFF's best judgment for developing a state-level strategic vision and supportive policy conditions that build upon existing partnerships between districts and colleges to offer college course-taking to a broader range of students. Members of the ECD identified these recommendations as priorities.

1. The State Board of Education should establish a transparent application process for a secondary school to request designation as an Early College.
2. The Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board should develop guidance for use by schools, districts and institutions of higher education on an array of recommended student support services that should be integrated into their program of study. Such services, along with specified roles and responsibilities for delivery should be included in all cooperative agreements.
3. The state should explore the feasibility of altering the administration deadlines of the ASCENT program to provide districts with greater predictability of funding.
4. The state should provide school districts, on a pilot basis, the flexibility to enroll a student as early as grade 9 in one or more Basic Skills courses at an institution of higher education through the Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act.
5. The state should develop capacity-building vehicles within CDE to provide support to high schools, districts and postsecondary institutions participating in concurrent enrollment,
6. The state should develop mechanisms for providing public recognition to high schools and postsecondary institutions that are increasing the participation and success of low-income and other underserved students through concurrent enrollment, ASCENT and other acceleration programs.

7. State and district accountability systems should include postsecondary remediation rates as a measure of postsecondary/career readiness.
8. Colorado's Individual Career and Academic Plan should be used with greater intentionality.
9. The State should ensure that concurrent enrollment and early college concepts are incorporated into proposed Postsecondary Workforce Readiness (PWR) endorsed diploma.
10. The state should consider license endorsement or license renewal incentives to encourage more teachers to become credentialed to teach concurrent enrollment courses.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

This information was given to the Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board. They are considering creating a committee to continue to work the Early College Design stakeholder committee began with JFF. CEAB felt the analysis was useful and JFF was well received when they came and did a formal presentation of their findings for CEAB. This information has also been presented to the State Board of Education.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

No action is required. This is an information item.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. §22-35-107, §22-35-109, §24-1-115