



Annual Report on

# Concurrent Enrollment

2017-2018 Academic Year

Executive Summary



**COLORADO**  
Department of  
Higher Education



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

This report was prepared by the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) pursuant to C.R.S. §22-35-112.

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When it comes to preparing all students for a fast-changing world, the state of Colorado must continue to blur the lines among K-12 education, higher education and industry. That’s why we’re proud of our dual enrollment programs, which allow students to earn college-level credit while in high school. Concurrent Enrollment (CE) and dual enrollment not only save students time and money, but also remedy the deep-rooted inequities across our state. And their popularity is soaring.

Nearly 46,000 students participated in dual enrollment programs throughout the state this year, up 10 percentage points from the previous year. This represents more than a third of all juniors and seniors who attend public high school in Colorado.

The state-facilitated Concurrent Enrollment program offers extra benefits. Established in 2009, CE connects local education providers, typically high schools, and higher education institutions to deliver college-level coursework in 97 percent of districts statewide. Most CE credits are guaranteed to transfer to every public college, university, and technical school in the state, ensuring more students save money and time on their journey to postsecondary completion.

Anecdotally, many students tell us that concurrent enrollment gives them the confidence to tackle college-level work, and the data agrees. A recent study by CDHE funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences showed that 77 percent of Colorado CE students went on to college compared to 52 percent of students who did not participate. And 82 percent of CE students continued in their postsecondary education—known as persistence— compared to 77 percent of non-CE students.

Even better, more students of color are taking advantage of CE. Compared to the previous year, participation in CE increased 16 percentage points among African American and black students, 17 points among Hispanic students and 18 points among Native American and American Indian students—populations that are the least likely to enroll in, persist through, and ultimately earn a credential from our state’s postsecondary institutions. Engaging our historically disenfranchised students, and activating their potential through successful completion, gives us the best shot to secure a vibrant, strong economy long term.

Dual and Concurrent Enrollment programs work, which is why we hope to scale them even further through smart policy tweaks and investments this year and in years to come. They are among our most powerful strategies that will help our state reach 66 percent attainment by 2025.

The following report dives into these findings and policy priorities in more detail. We are eager to convene conversations with schools, institutions and community partners to continue to drive program participation.

Sincerely,


Governor Jared Polis, Dr. Angie Paccione, Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education, and Dr. Katy Anthes, Colorado Commissioner on Higher Education



# Highlights

STATEWIDE  
**45,787 students**  
participated in dual enrollment programs of any type in the 2017-2018 Academic Year.

This represents nearly **35 percent** of all 11th and 12th graders in public high schools in Colorado.




From 2016-2017 to 2017-2018 participation in Concurrent Enrollment increased

- 11 PERCENT** Asian students
- 16 PERCENT** African American students
- 23 PERCENT** Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students
- 17 PERCENT** Hispanic students
- 18 PERCENT** Native American students
- 7 PERCENT** White students

Concurrent Enrollment continues to see sustained increases in participation,

up nearly **10 PERCENT**




statewide with 30,979 students participating in 2017-2018.

In 2017-2018, high school students attempted

**264,304** Concurrent Enrollment CREDIT HOURS


The average number of credit hours attempted per student was 8.5 with an average of 8 hours passed

Nearly **40 PERCENT** of students who participated in ASCENT in 2017-2018 were Hispanic, a minority group that is historically underrepresented in postsecondary education.



Participation in ASCENT increased by more than 20 percent from the previous year with

**557 STUDENTS** participating statewide in 2017-2018.



In 2017-2018

**2,758** HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

earned some type of postsecondary credential after participating in Concurrent Enrollment or ASCENT programs





# Additional Highlights

- Concurrent Enrollment continues to see sustained increases in participation, up nearly 10 percent statewide with 30,979 students participating in 2017-2018. Participation in other high school dual enrollment programs in 2017-2018 increased by nearly 10 percent from the previous year.
- Four-year institutions saw the biggest percentage increase in Concurrent Enrollment participation with a 10.2 percent increase.
- At the district level, Denver Public Schools had the most students participating in Concurrent Enrollment by headcount (2,932 students), while Crowley County School District had the highest percentage (74 percent) of students participating in Concurrent Enrollment out of all Colorado school districts.
- At the high school level, Colorado Early College Fort Collins had the most students participating in Concurrent Enrollment by headcount (870 students).
- Statewide, 173 school districts—or 97 percent—and 85 percent of high schools offer Concurrent Enrollment programs. This represents a 1 percentage-point increase in the number of districts and a 1 percentage-point decrease in the number of high schools from last year.
- In 2017-2018, 34 districts had less than 5 percent Concurrent Enrollment participation among their 9th through 12th grade student population. This is a slight increase from last year when 31 districts had less than 5 percent Concurrent Enrollment participation.
- A large majority of the Concurrent Enrollment hours taken by students—94 percent—were passed in 2017-2018 (unchanged from last year).
- Participation in remedial Concurrent Enrollment courses makes up 5.3 percent of the Concurrent Enrollment total, representing 1,648 students. This percentage is a decrease from last year's rate of 7.1 percent, representing 2,011 students.
- More than 88 percent of ASCENT students were enrolled in a credential-seeking program, and 48 percent of Concurrent Enrollment students were enrolled in a credential-seeking program.

# Outcomes of Dual Enrollment Programs

To support research into the impact of Concurrent Enrollment on postsecondary student outcomes, CDHE received a two-year \$400,000 from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences to study dual enrollment in Colorado. Several aspects of the research are still on-going but preliminary results have shown positive outcomes for Concurrent Enrollment students.

Controlling for several factors (such as 9<sup>th</sup> grade test scores, Free or Reduced Lunch eligibility, race/ethnicity, and English Language Learner status), students that participated in Concurrent Enrollment had a college-going rate of **77 percent compared a 52 percent** for students not participating in Concurrent Enrollment. Additionally, the persistence rate in postsecondary education for Concurrent Enrollment students was **82 percent compared to 77 percent** for non-Concurrent Enrollment students. For comparison, CDHE's recent [Legislative Report on the Postsecondary Progress and Success of High School Graduates](#) showed a college-going rate of 56.3 percent and a persistence rate of 79.5 percent for recent Colorado high school graduates.

Research into outcomes for Concurrent Enrollment students will continue to investigate the relationship between dual enrollment in Colorado on credential completion as well as the return on investment of Colorado's Concurrent Enrollment program.

Previous CDHE research has also shown positive impacts of Concurrent Enrollment on postsecondary student outcomes. A 2014 study using Colorado data shows better outcomes on all indicators for dual enrollment students as compared to students who did not take dual enrollment courses. Participation in Concurrent Enrollment is associated with:

- An increased likelihood of enrolling in college after high school (**23 percentage points higher**);
- A decreased need for remediation (**11 percentage points lower**)<sup>1</sup>;
- Higher earned cumulative credit hours by the end of students' first year (**9 more credit hours**);
- Higher first-year grade point averages (**0.15 GPA higher**); and
- Higher first-year retention rates (**3 percentage points higher**)<sup>2</sup>

Research released by the U.S. Department of Education reviewed the results of 35 studies that examined dual enrollment and showed consistent and positive outcomes for dual enrollment students. Dual enrollment programs were found to have positive effects on students':

- Degree attainment;
- College access and enrollment;
- Credit accumulation;
- Completion of high school; and
- General academic achievement<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bautsch, B. (2014). *The Effects of Concurrent Enrollment on the College-Going and Remedial Education Rates of Colorado's High School Students*. Available at: [https://highered.colorado.gov/Academics/Concurrent/ConcurrentEnrollmentEffectsAnalysis\\_2014.pdf](https://highered.colorado.gov/Academics/Concurrent/ConcurrentEnrollmentEffectsAnalysis_2014.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Bean, B. (2015). Annual Report on Concurrent Enrollment 2013-14 School Year. Available at: [https://highered.colorado.gov/Publications/Reports/Enrollment/FY2014/2014\\_Concurrent\\_Enrollment\\_Sep\\_2015.pdf](https://highered.colorado.gov/Publications/Reports/Enrollment/FY2014/2014_Concurrent_Enrollment_Sep_2015.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> US Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. (2017) *WWC Intervention Report: Dual Enrollment Programs*. Available at: [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/InterventionReports/wwc\\_dual\\_enrollment\\_022817.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/InterventionReports/wwc_dual_enrollment_022817.pdf)

# Next Steps

Since its creation, the state’s Concurrent Enrollment program has shown rich, scalable impact year-over-year. Governor Jared Polis continues to champion Concurrent Enrollment as an effective strategy that levels the playing field for students, saving them time and money. In accordance with C.R.S. §22-35-107(7), the General Assembly may consider the following guiding principles and areas of focus for improvements:

## Guiding Principles of Concurrent Enrollment

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**To help the state reach its goals, Colorado’s Concurrent Enrollment infrastructure should strive to:**

- Provide meaningful college exposure;
- Offer college courses that are transferable and applicable to programs of study at Colorado institutions of higher education;
- Accelerate time to degree and offer opportunities for students to receive credentials in high school;
- Provide students with access to both CTE and general education pathways; and
- Ensure Concurrent Enrollment courses offer the same level of quality as other postsecondary courses.

## Suggestions for Improving Concurrent Enrollment

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**To achieve universal access to Concurrent Enrollment in the state and to maximize its impact, CDHE, CDE, institutions of higher education, and LEPs should:**

- Leverage Open Education Resources and similar approaches to minimize costs to families;
- Streamline the administrative processes for institutions and districts adopting Concurrent Enrollment;
- Provide opportunities for high school teachers to earn the necessary qualifications to teach Concurrent Enrollment courses, particularly in rural areas;
- Create greater access to Concurrent Enrollment via diverse delivery models;
- Communicate clearly how Concurrent Enrollment impacts a student’s financial aid status;
- Provide opportunities to receive stackable credentials in high school;
- Ensure Concurrent Enrollment courses carry through to a postsecondary education by counting successful credits toward a program of study or approved CTE program;
- Explore ways to improve access by first better understanding barriers for students to enroll;
- Improve transparency for student and families through clear branding and public, statewide information about Concurrent Enrollment offerings, associated costs, transferability and applicability; and
- Offer Supplemental Academic Instruction (corequisite remediation) opportunities through Concurrent Enrollment.