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NEWS RELEASE

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Colorado's dual enrollment programs continue to grow with gains among minority groups

More than a third of Colorado's 11th- and 12th-graders participated in dual enrollment programs in 2016-17

DENVER – April 3, 2018: Nearly 42,000 students participated in a dual enrollment program during the 2016-17 academic year, representing more than a third of all of 11th- and 12th-graders in public high schools in the state, [according to a report released today](#) by the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) and Colorado Department of Education (CDE). The new numbers show an 8.7 percent increase of more than 3,330 additional students from the previous year with gains among minority groups.

Often tuition-free, dual enrollment programs provide high school students the opportunity to enroll in college-level courses and earn high school and college credit. Participation in Colorado's Concurrent Enrollment (CE) program, established by the legislature in 2009, was the most popular choice among dual enrollment programs for the third year in a row: about 2,700 more students opted for CE classes in 2016-2017 from the previous year, continuing an annual growth rate of about 10 percent per year. Statewide, 96 percent of school districts and 86 percent of high schools offer CE programs.

More students of color took advantage of CE classes in the 2016-2017 academic year. CE participation grew by 21 percent among Hispanic students, 16 percent among Asian students, 12 percent among students who identify with two or more races, and 8 percent among African American students and Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students from the previous year. Students also passed 94 percent of their CE classes in 2016-2017, and more than 2,000 participants earned a credential while still in high school.

"Dual enrollment is more than just a great opportunity for Colorado high school students. It's also a powerful strategy in reaching 66 percent statewide attainment by 2025 and erasing equity gaps among Colorado's minority students," said Dr. Kim Hunter Reed, executive director of CDHE. "Not only are dual enrollment students more likely to enroll and persist in college than their peers, they are less likely to need remedial education once they arrive on campus. Our goal is to ensure universal access to these programs across our state."

"I'm so pleased to see the increase in students enrolling and succeeding in college courses while still in high school," said Education Commissioner Katy Anthes. "When students graduate with a high school diploma in one

hand and a postsecondary credential in the other, our entire state benefits with young adults who are better prepared for jobs, college or military service.”

Key findings

- Statewide, 41,857 students participated in dual enrollment programs of any type in the 2016-2017 academic year. This represents more than 32 percent of all 11th- and 12th-graders in public high schools in Colorado.
- CE continues to see sustained increases in participation, up more than 10 percent statewide with 28,290 students participating in 2016-2017. Participation in other high school dual enrollment programs in 2016-17 increased by more than 5 percent overall from the previous year.
- Douglas County School District had the most students participating in CE by headcount (2,582 students), while Edison School District 54JT had the highest percentage (77 percent) of students participating in Concurrent Enrollment out of all Colorado school districts.
- Statewide, 96 percent of school districts and 86 percent of high schools offer CE programs, a 2 and 4 percent increase from the 2015-16 academic year, respectively.
- Compared to the previous year, participation in CE increased among Asian students (16 percent increase), African American students (8 percent increase), Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students (8 percent increase), Hispanic students (21 percent increase), white, non-Hispanic students (6 percent increase), and students identifying as more than one race (12 percent increase).
- In 2016-17, high school students attempted a total of 242,728 CE credit hours. The average number of credit hours attempted per student was 8.6, with an average of 8 hours passed (averages of 8 credit hours attempted and 7.5 credit hours passed in 2015-16).
- A large majority of the CE hours taken by students—94 percent—were passed in 2016-17.

Related Events

The report will be presented as an [agenda item](#) on the Colorado Commission on Higher Education’s monthly meeting, which is open to the public, on **Friday, April 6**.

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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