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## **Colorado's dual enrollment programs growing, attracting more underrepresented students**

**DENVER – May 8, 2015** – The 2013-2014 dual enrollment report released today by the Colorado Department of Higher Education shows continued growth in dual enrollment programs and a 12 percent increase in Hispanic student enrollment in these programs.

Dual enrollment (also referred to as concurrent enrollment) refers to college courses students take in high school at no tuition cost to them. Dual enrollment is one strategy Colorado is successfully using to cultivate seamless P-20 pathways aimed at boosting college completion and decreasing high school dropout rates. Research indicates that dual enrollment students are more likely to enroll in college than their peers and are less likely to need remedial education once in college.

“Dual enrollment is truly a gem in the Colorado education landscape,” said Lt. Gov. Joe Garcia, executive director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education. “These programs enable students from all socioeconomic backgrounds to demonstrate that they are capable of performing college-level work and even earn college credit at no cost while they are still in high school.”

Key findings in 2013-2014 report:

- The Concurrent Enrollment\* and ASCENT programs continue to see sustained increases in participation (up 15 percent and 43 percent, respectively). Nearly 20,500 students participated in Concurrent Enrollment\* in 2013-2014, up from 17,900 the previous year. ASCENT allows students to tack on a fifth year of high school and enroll in community college courses at no charge to them. In this way, students can graduate from high school with an associate degree in hand.
- About 31,000 Colorado students participated in dual enrollment programs of all types in the 2013-2014 academic year. This represents a quarter of all 11<sup>th</sup>- and 12<sup>th</sup>-graders.
- The two-year institutions that served the most students in the 2013-14 academic year were Arapahoe Community College, with 3,591 students, followed by the Community College of Aurora, with 3,262 students.
- Of the four-year institutions offering dual enrollment programs, the University of Colorado Denver served 4,378 students primarily through its institutionally developed dual enrollment program.

- Among Colorado’s public high schools, Cherokee Trail High School in the Cherry Creek School District reported the greatest number of students participating in Concurrent Enrollment for the fourth year in a row.
- Denver Public Schools reported the most students participating in Concurrent Enrollment of all Colorado school districts.
- Statewide, 94 percent of districts and 80 percent of high schools offer Concurrent Enrollment programs.
- Nearly half of students who participated in ASCENT in 2013-14 were Hispanic, a minority group that is historically underrepresented in postsecondary education. One of the goals of the ASCENT program is to increase the percentage of traditionally underserved students who participate in postsecondary education.
- Since the beginning of Concurrent Enrollment in 2009, the program has diversified, and the composition of the program now more closely resembles the overall composition of Colorado public high schools.
- Eighty nine percent of students passed all of their Concurrent Enrollment courses in 2013-14.
- More than 950 students in Concurrent Enrollment or ASCENT programs earned some type of postsecondary credential in 2013-14.
- Students who participated in dual enrollment programs in high school had higher first year credit hour accumulation, grade point averages, and retention rates in college.

“With more jobs than ever before requiring some college, our state’s concurrent enrollment and ASCENT programs are playing a life-changing role for Colorado’s students,” said State Education Commissioner Robert Hammond. “These programs can open students’ eyes to the world of opportunities a college education can provide and pave the way toward success in college.”

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.](#)

*\*“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 credit. “Concurrent Enrollment” refers only to the 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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