



COLORADO
Department of Education

201 East Colfax Avenue
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Date: January 22, 2015
To: Colorado State Board of Education, Colorado Commission on Higher Education, Education Committees of the House of Representatives and Senate
From: Interim Board Chair Mimi Leonard, on behalf of the Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board
Re: Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act Recommendations

Background

This memorandum is an update on the Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board. 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 established the Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board (CEAB) within the Colorado Department of Education (Department).

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 Colorado 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. Making recommendations on a funding allocation model, to be approved by the State Board of Education on or before July 1, 2013 in the event that the number of qualified students identified by local education providers exceeds available appropriations;
5. Submitting recommendations to the State Board of Education for its approval or disapproval;
6. 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 waiver 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 Colorado 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.

Pursuant to the Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act (section 22-35-107 (6)(d), C.R.S.), the Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board is required to make recommendations to the State Board of Education and the education committees of the House of Representatives and Senate, or any successor committees, regarding the feasibility of a waiver process whereby a qualified student could apply to the department for a waiver, which would allow the student to 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 so long as he or she:

- a) Was so designated in the year directly following the year in which he or she was enrolled in the twelfth grade of a local education provider;
- b) Requires fifteen or fewer credit hours of postsecondary course work to achieve a postsecondary credential; and
- c) Is eligible for free or reduced-cost lunch pursuant to the federal "National School Lunch Act", 42 U.S.C. sec. 1751 et seq.

Progress of the Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board on Duties and Reporting Requirements

1. Establishing guidelines for the administration of the ASCENT program

The CEAB first established guidelines for administration of the ASCENT program in 2010. In 2014, the CEAB assisted the Department in reviewing the ASCENT guidelines and approving updates and clarifications. These updates are largely based on alignment with current statute and reporting requirements. The updated guidelines are attached to this memo as Exhibit A.

2. Advising and assisting local school education providers and institutions of higher education in preparing cooperative agreements;

The CEAB continues to work with the Department and the Department of Higher Education to provide guidance to Local Education Providers (LEP) and Institutions of Higher Education (IHE). In alignment with priorities established by CEAB for 2014, the CEAB assisted the Department in: updating frequently asked questions for concurrent enrollment programs, providing clarified guidance on attendance documentation for concurrent enrollment programs, and communicating to the field updated guidance on funding determination for concurrent enrollment programs.

3. Recommendations for improvement or updating of state policies

House Bill 13-1219 updated the timeline and process by which LEPs provide information to the Department on the anticipated number of ASCENT participants to the Department. The Department has received positive feedback on this adjustment from schools and district participants and will continue to monitor the implementation of this refined process. The CEAB is also assisting the Department in continuing to review current policies regarding concurrent enrollment opportunities



for Colorado students. The CEAB does not have specific recommendations for statute revisions at this time.

4. **Recommendations of a funding allocation model for ASCENT**

In May 2013, the CEAB recommended, and the State Board approved, a funding allocation model for ASCENT to be utilized in the event that the number of qualified students identified by LEPs exceeds available appropriations. The Department used this model to distribute ASCENT allocations to districts during the 2013-14 academic year, however, as available appropriations were able to cover all requests for ASCENT participation in the 2014-15 academic year the model was not utilized.

