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Colorado's dual enrollment programs grow by nearly 10 percent
Biggest increases among students of color

DENVER – April 1, 2019: Nearly 46,000 students took at least one dual enrollment course during the 2017-18 academic year, representing almost 35 percent of all 11th- and 12th-graders in Colorado's public high schools, [according to a report released today](#) by the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) and Colorado Department of Education (CDE). With about 4,000 more students enrolled over last year, participation is up 10 percent with significant growth among students of color. [Read the executive summary.](#)

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. Colorado's Concurrent Enrollment (CE) program, established by the state legislature in 2009, was the most popular choice among dual enrollment programs for the fourth year in a row: 2,679 more students opted for CE classes in 2017-2018 from the previous year, continuing an annual growth rate of about 10 percent per year. Statewide, 173 school districts—or 97 percent—and 85 percent of high schools offer CE programs.

"I've long been a vocal supporter of concurrent enrollment programs and am heartened to see participation grow, especially among our students of color," said Gov. Jared Polis. "These programs are a key way we can contain higher education costs for Coloradans and encourage more students to earn a credential."

More students of color took advantage of CE classes in the 2017-2018 academic year. CE participation grew by 23 percent among Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students, 19 percent among students who identify with two or more races, 18 percent among American Indian and Alaska Native students, 17 percent among Latinx and Hispanic students, and 16 percent among African American and Black students from the previous year.

Students passed 94 percent of their CE classes, and 2,758 students earned some type of postsecondary credential while in high school during the 2017-18 school year—a 37 percent increase over last year's credential completion rate.

"It takes ownership and initiative to succeed in college-level courses as a high school student," said Dr. Angie Paccione, executive director of CDHE. "Not only do these programs save students money, they also improve

academic outcomes long term. Students who participate in dual enrollment are more likely to enroll in college after high school, have higher first-year grade point averages and retention rates and are less likely to need remediation.”

“CDE is focused on working with the Department of Higher Education and our other partners to make sure students have a full range of options for acquiring the knowledge and skills they will need to succeed in college and careers that pay a living wage,” said Education Commissioner Dr. Katy Anthes. “Concurrent enrollment classes, along with other rigorous coursework, internships and apprenticeships are great ways for students to prepare for success after high school.”

Key findings

- 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.
- The highest area of participation growth in 2017-2018 was in Concurrent Enrollment (CE) programs at two- and four-year institutions, which saw a combined increase of 9.5 percent. Four-year institutions saw the biggest percentage increase in CE participation with a 10.2 percent increase.
- Denver Public Schools had the most students participating in CE (2,932 students), while the Colorado Early College Fort Collins was the top school (870 students). Crowley County School District was the top rural school district with the highest percentage of 9th through 12th-graders in CE (74 percent participation, or 90 students).
- Statewide, 97 percent of school districts (173 out of 178) and two Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) participated in CE. In 2017-2018, 34 districts had less than 5 percent CE participation among their 9th through 12th grade student population, up from 31 districts last year.
- In 2017-18, high school students attempted a total of 264,304 CE credit hours. The average number of credit hours attempted per student was 8.5 with an average of eight hours passed.
- A large majority of the CE hours taken by students—94 percent—were passed.

Related Events

The report will be presented at the [Colorado Commission on Higher Education’s monthly meeting](#), which is open to the public, on **Friday, April 5**.

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.](#)

*In this report, “dual enrollment” 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.).