

## DUAL ENROLLMENT OPTIONS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Dual enrollment programs allow high school students to jump-start their college career and provide an on-ramp that eases the student into postsecondary level work. In Colorado, legislation has been passed with the intent to broaden access to and improve the quality of dual enrollment programs, improve coordination, and ensure financial transparency and accountability. In particular, House Bill 09-1319 and Senate Bill 09-285 (the “Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act” or CRS §22-35-101 et seq) clarify the term “concurrent enrollment” to mean an eligible student is simultaneously enrolled with a Local Education Provider (school district or charter school) and also with a qualified Institution of Higher Education or career and technical course.

Students with disabilities have the right to access any program offered by the school district as long as they meet all of the same eligibility requirements and prerequisites for enrollment. Students with disabilities are held to the same financial obligations, academic performance expectations, and consequences for both success and failure as all other students.

Most options require advanced planning, so early conversations and decisions are critical. This information should be used in collaboration with the high school guidance counselor, special education providers, parents, and, most importantly, the student, to generate conversation during the transition planning process for students with disabilities. Dual Enrollment considerations should align with the student’s identified Postsecondary Goals as well as address any necessary accommodations or services.

### **ACCOMMODATIONS**

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It is important to understand the differences between high school and college level course work and the accommodations that are available at the postsecondary level.

Students with disabilities who meet the prerequisites of a course may be provided reasonable accommodations that allow equal access. However, colleges will not provide modifications to change the course content or performance expectations that would substantially alter the essential elements of the course. Students need to understand that not all accommodations available at the high school will be allowed in college level classes.

**Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act:** Passed by the Colorado State Legislature as HB09-1319 and SB09-285, as described in C.R.S. §22-35-101, phases out previous concurrent enrollment programs of Fast Track, Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO), and Fast College Fast Jobs, and implements the new ASCENT “5th year” program.

**Concurrent Enrollment** is a type of dual enrollment program that is explicitly defined in statute and provides the opportunity for students to earn high school and college credit at the same time. Open to students in 9th-12th grade, tuition for approved courses is paid by the district. Credits earned are deducted from the student’s life time College Opportunity Fund account. [www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/concurrentenrollment](http://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/concurrentenrollment)

**ASCENT (Accelerating Students through Concurrent Enrollment)** is a 5th year program for the student who has completed or is on schedule to complete at least 12 credit hours of postsecondary course work by the end of his or her 12th grade year. The student will continue for an additional year to earn high school and college credit for courses completed satisfactorily. The student is not counted as a high school graduate until completion of the 5th year.

[www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/ce\\_ascent](http://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/ce_ascent)



**Extended Studies** is a higher education term that denotes off campus instruction offered by four year public colleges in Colorado. These courses may look similar to concurrent enrollment courses, but they are administered through the statewide extended studies policies authorized through the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) policies and rules pursuant to C.R.S. 23-1-109, and they will not be eligible for COF. Courses may provide high school as well as college credit based on an agreement between the school district and four year institution. College credits earned are recorded on the official college transcript. In many cases tuition will be paid for by the student or parent but may be subsidized by the district. One example of an extended studies program is *CU Succeed*.

**Are concurrent enrollment options available in every school or district?**

**No.** Concurrent enrollment opportunities are dependent upon a cooperative agreement between the school district and the college. There are no statutory requirements for a district to enter into an agreement or offer accelerated learning options.

**How does an institution of higher education determine that the student is qualified for admission?**

The institutions of higher education will utilize existing procedures and/or those in the cooperative agreement to determine if a student is qualified. Administrative approval is required at the high school level before a student can register for a class through concurrent enrollment.

**Are the rules different if the class is held at the high school?**

**No.** If the class is for college credit, the same rules apply regardless of the location of the class.

**Does the Accuplacer exam have to be taken prior to enrollment?**

The legislation does not require a specific test; however, a student who intends to concurrently enroll in a postsecondary course must satisfy the minimum prerequisites for the course prior to enrollment. The institution may require testing or other means to demonstrate preparedness.

**Do the accommodations listed in the student's IEP automatically apply to college classes?**

**No.** It is important to remember that the IEP does not continue to college or the workplace. Some accommodations provided at the high school may also be appropriate at the college level. However, at the high school there may be supports and services

provided that go beyond reasonable accommodation and would not be appropriate at the college level.

**Does the IEP team make decisions about accommodations provided in college classes?**

**No.** Although the IEP team plays a key role in providing recommendations and documentation for requested accommodations, decisions about the accommodations provided in college classes will be determined by the college.

**What is the process for obtaining accommodations in concurrent enrollment courses?**

The student must:

- apply to the office of Disability Services at the college to self-identify disability;
- request accommodations; and,
- provide the necessary documentation.

It may be appropriate for the special education teacher to assist the student in this process as a transition service.

**If a student is eligible for interpreter services or text in alternate format, does the college provide these services or the high school?**

The college is responsible for providing any accommodations for the college class upon approval. However, there may be good reason for the college and the school district to collaborate on some services. Roles and responsibilities related to specific accommodations should be clearly defined in the concurrent enrollment agreement developed between the school, the student and the parent.

**Is a student with disabilities held to the same grade requirements as other students?**

**Yes.** Students with disabilities are held to the same standards of academic and behavioral performance.



**If the student does not complete the concurrent enrollment class with a passing grade, what are the consequences?**

The student may be responsible for reimbursing the district for tuition costs; the grade received will appear on both the official high school and college transcripts; and the forfeited credit for the course could mean that the student is lacking credit for high school graduation.

**Can a student participate in concurrent enrollment by auditing a class?**

**No.** Concurrent enrollment applies only to classes that are taken for college credit.

**My son is receiving 18-21 year old services. Do the concurrent enrollment requirements apply?**

**Yes.** Students receiving 18-21 services are counted as continuing seniors. Educational services provided to students beyond the typical senior year are individually designed as part of the student's comprehensive transition plan.

**How will compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) be addressed in concurrent enrollment programs?**

Requirements under the IDEA concerning a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) do not apply at the postsecondary level.

The contents of this handout were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

Colorado Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services Unit  
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