



Colorado Legislative Council Staff Fiscal Note
**STATE and LOCAL
 FISCAL IMPACT**

Drafting Number: LLS 09-0226 **Date:** March 26, 2009
Prime Sponsor(s): Rep. Merrifield; Massey **Bill Status:** House Education
 Sen. Williams **Fiscal Analyst:** Josh Abram (303-866-3561)

TITLE: CONCERNING CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT OF PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN COURSES OFFERED BY INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

Fiscal Impact Summary	FY 2009-2010	FY 2010-2011
State Revenue		
State Expenditures		
General Fund	\$30,030	\$22,896
FTE Position Change	0.3 FTE	0.3 FTE
Effective Date: The bill is effective upon signature of the Governor or upon becoming law without his signature.		
Appropriation Summary for FY 2009-2010: See State Appropriations section.		
School District Impact: See School District Impact section.		

Summary of Legislation

This bill repeals the High School Fast Track program, the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act, and the Fast College Fast Jobs Act, and replaces these with the Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act. The bill continues to permit a student in grades 9 through 12 to enroll in courses at institutions of higher education and apply earned credits toward the requirements for high school graduation. Subject to course availability and the approval of the school district, students may enroll in unlimited college courses. Only 12th graders may enroll in basic skills courses. If a student is retained by the high school beyond the senior year, the bill limits the number of courses in which the student can concurrently enroll.

The school district and the institution of higher education must enter into a cooperative agreement for the student's enrollment. Among other things, the agreement must specify that the school district is required to pay the student's tuition. The tuition rate may not exceed the amount of the student's share of the resident rate charged at community colleges. The student, or his or her parent or legal guardian, must agree to reimburse the school district if the student fails to complete the college course. The institutions of higher education may receive College Opportunity Fund (COF) stipends on behalf of the students; however, each applied credit counts against the student's lifetime limit of 145 COF credits. For the purposes of school finance, the school district shall include the student in the district's funded pupil count. For COF purposes, the institution of higher education shall include the student in determining student FTE.

The bill also creates the Accelerating Students Through Concurrent Enrollment program (ASCENT) for students retained by the high school for instruction beyond the senior year (5th year seniors), which begins in FY 2010-11. School districts must submit an annual recommendation of current grade 12 seniors who will become eligible for the ASCENT program in the following fiscal year. Subject to available appropriations, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) may approve any student who:

- ▶ is under the age of 21;
- ▶ has completed 15 credits of concurrent enrollment by the end of grade 12;
- ▶ is not in need of basic skills courses;
- ▶ is accepted into a degree program at an institution of higher education; and
- ▶ has not participated in the ASCENT program in any previous year.

Funding for the ASCENT program is set at \$6,135 per full time-student. The program shall give priority to students currently participating in the Fast College Fast Jobs pilot program, which this bill replaces. A school district shall not include ASCENT students in the district's per pupil funding count. School districts cannot use the per pupil funding provided from school finance to pay for tuition of ASCENT students in higher education. Rather, appropriations from the General Assembly will provide money to districts to fund these students through the ASCENT program.

The bill creates the Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board in the CDE and sets requirements for the board's composition and duties. Board members shall serve without compensation and without reimbursement for expenses. The Department of Higher Education (DHE) and the CDE must collect specific data from schools and institutions of higher education and collaborate to prepare a report on concurrent enrollment for the education committees of the General Assembly.

Background

Colorado law contains three separate acts permitting school districts to establish programs for concurrent enrollment of high school students. HB09-1319 consolidates the three existing programs into a one and makes some clarifications that do not substantively change the options available to students.

Most students participate via the High School Fast Track program and the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act. For FY 2006-07, total participation in these programs was 5,070 students enrolled in 1 to 12 credit hours at institutions of higher education. Although the Fast College Fast Jobs Act permits school districts to create a pilot program that allows students to complete a high school diploma and an associate's degree or a technical education certificate in 5 years, only Denver Public Schools (DPS) has established a program. As of FY 2008-09, 708 9th graders and 255 10th graders are participating in the program.

State Expenditures

In FY 2009-10, this bill has total costs of \$30,030 General Fund and 0.3 FTE in the Colorado Department of Education. Total costs for FY 2010-11 are \$22,896 and 0.3 FTE. Consolidating concurrent enrollment programs does not change state funding for school finance or for state support of institutions of higher education. New expenditures are a result of creating a new funding mechanism for 5th year seniors.

ASCENT Program. The bill requires the CDE to administer the ASCENT program. Under current law, school districts administer concurrent enrollment programs. The CDE is not appropriated funding or staff for these programs. New staff is required beginning in FY 2009-10 to support the work of the advisory board, coordinate the adoption of rules, and assist school districts to designate students for participation in the ASCENT program. Staff will also manage the collection of data and prepare final reports for the General Assembly. The department requires legal services from the Department of Law to assist with rule setting and operational expenses to host meetings of the advisory board. Total costs are identified in Table 1.

Cost Components	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11
Personal Services	\$18,692	18,692
FTE	0.3	0.3
Legal Services	10,139	3,004
Advisory Board Expenses	1,200	1,200
TOTAL	\$30,030	\$22,896

Ongoing Expenditures. In FY 2009-10, and FY 2010-11, it is estimated that this bill will have no impact on the number of concurrently enrolled students, state funding for school finance, or payments to colleges through the College Opportunity Fund.

The ASCENT program begins in FY 2010-11. No data is available to predict the number of 5th year seniors who might be eligible in that year. Since the bill gives priority to students currently participating in Fast College Fast Jobs, it is estimated that 170 students in Denver Public Schools will require 5th year funding in FY 2011-12 and 475 students will require funding in FY 2012-13. These estimates assume a 33 percent attrition rate from current participation levels. These students will be funded at a fixed rate of \$6,135 per pupil, or a total of approximately \$1.0 million and \$2.9 million, respectively. Under current law, DPS is only eligible to receive 85 percent of per pupil funding through school finance for these students, or about \$6,250 per pupil. Since the rate under the ASCENT program is fixed at a rate similar to what the district receives under current law, there are only minimal cost savings; however, the funding under HB09-1319 will be appropriated through the ASCENT program instead of provided via school finance.

School District Impact

Beginning in FY 2010-11, a school district that retains a student for further instruction beyond the senior year and designates that student for participation in the ASCENT program will receive funding in a fixed amount (\$6,135 per student) that may be more than or less than the per pupil funding the district would receive under current law. Statewide average per pupil funding in FY 2008-09 is approximately \$6,900.

State Appropriations

In FY 2009-10, the Colorado Department of Education requires an appropriation of \$30,030 General Fund and 0.3 FTE. Of this amount, the Department of Law requires \$10,139 in reappropriated funds.

Departments Contacted

Education

Governor's Office

Law

Higher Education