



The Bell Policy Center

Research • Advocacy • Opportunity

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Emailed to supporters May 6, 2009

Success from the session

More high school students can set sights higher with concurrent enrollment

More Colorado high school students will be able to get a head start on college thanks to landmark, bipartisan legislation that is on its way to Gov. Bill Ritter.

The “concurrent enrollment” bill, strongly supported by the Bell, will allow high school students to simultaneously complete their diplomas and also earn college credits, certificates or associate's degrees.

The bill should increase participation in higher education, but research also shows that other important outcomes are likely to be lower high school dropout rates and improved school performance.

The bill was based on a recommendation from Gov. Ritter's P-20 Education Coordinating Council. The Bell's Frank Waterous served on a subgroup of the council that helped to develop the recommendation, and he was among the key education stakeholders who provided input and advice on the draft legislation. Frank testified in favor of the bill before both the House and Senate Education Committees.

“Expanding concurrent enrollment opportunities is about more than just offering broadened curricular options,” Waterous told lawmakers. “It is really about creating *pathways to success*, without which many students – and especially those from low-income and minority families – would not be able to develop their talents, pursue their dreams and reach their full potential.”

The Bell believes that HB 09-1319 contains three critical components that will lead to expanded educational opportunity in our state:

1. The bill explicitly expands the mission of concurrent enrollment to serve a wider range of students – and particularly those from low-income and minority communities with historically low rates of high school graduation and college participation.

2. The bill focuses on student success and student readiness, rather than on grade-level attainment, as the measures by which the benefits of participation are gauged. And by requiring that every participating student have an academic plan of study to guide and support his or her progress, the student's success is further ensured.

3. The bill establishes a funding process that is understandable, predictable and consistent – elements that the research identifies as crucial to supporting the creation of effective concurrent enrollment pathways throughout the state.

In summary, the Bell Policy Center believes that HB 1319 will benefit both our students and our state. We applaud the legislature for passing this important bill.