

ASCENT Program, State Guidelines**Eligibility:**

- Any student who has fulfilled all local school district graduation requirements at the end of 4 years, and has completed, or is scheduled to complete, 12 credit hours of postsecondary course work is eligible for the ASCENT program. Students must be college ready in accordance to the pathway they enroll. Any remedial coursework previously taken does not qualify as a part of the 12 credit hours of required college coursework.
- Students must complete an Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) prior to declaring intent to participate in ASCENT.
- Students must apply, and be accepted, into a Colorado post secondary institution.
- Students are not to be granted a high school diploma until they complete the ASCENT program.
- Eligible students may only participate in the ASCENT program for 1 academic year.
- If an eligible student is denied admission to a public higher education institution, the institution must provide a written explanation to the student and the local education provider within 10 days.

Enrollment:

- On or before September 1, and each year thereafter, a local education provider shall submit to the Colorado Department of Education an estimate of the number of students in the local education provider who will seek to be designated by the department as ASCENT program participants for the following school year.
- Students may only enroll in Guarantee Transfer credit courses, or state approved Career and Technical Education (CTE) postsecondary program, unless parent and student sign a form indicating "credits may not transfer." The ASCENT pathway (AAS, AS, AA, etc.) must be clearly spelled out which would include an explanation of "credits may not transfer." Eligible students will be selected for participation by the high school principal or equivalent school administrator.

Funding:

- School districts must report ASCENT students in October count to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). Fall term schedules and corresponding transcripts at term's end shall suffice as documentation for the October 1 enrollment for ASCENT students.
- Textbooks and fees are the responsibility of the student.
- Institutions of higher education will include enrolled ASCENT students in official full-time equivalent student reporting.
- ASCENT participants will be required to apply for Colorado Opportunity Fund (COF) funding, and authorize, for each term of postsecondary enrollment at institutions which receive COF funding.

Reporting

- Each participating school district shall provide a report to the CDE on or before April 15 each year that includes:
 - Summary demographic information on ASCENT participants;
 - Total tuition costs paid on behalf of ASCENT students.

- Each participating higher education institution shall provide a report to the CDHE on or before April 15 each year that includes:
 - Names of school districts that have entered into cooperative agreements;
 - Number of qualified students who participated in the ASCENT program for the academic year;
 - Total number of credit hours attempted;
 - Total number of credit hours completed by ASCENT students. Students must pass successfully complete the course;
 - Summary data on the degree programs in which ASCENT participants were enrolled at the postsecondary institution;
 - Data indicating the total number of ASCENT participants who completed a postsecondary degree or certificate within the 5 year period of student's high school career

ASCENT Program School Procedures

- Notification of participation to students.
- Determine appropriate GPA standard for students enrolled in program or intending to enroll.
- Districts should create procedures for students who fail one or more courses.
- Timeline for students to sign up for ASCENT program, prior to September 1 of senior year. Districts should consider adding ASCENT interest in students' ICAP form, during their sophomore year of high school.
- Student orientation in partnership with local post secondary institution.
- Districts should create policy for students to participate in graduation. Diploma may not be awarded, but a certificate of attendance or completion may be awarded at high school graduation.
- Districts should create procedures for students who drop the ASCENT program in the middle or end of the semester.
- Districts should create a system to prioritize students for ASCENT participation.
- Books and fees will be purchased by each student or his/her parent or guardian at participating college, unless identified differently in the cooperative agreement or district policy.
- Secondary Advising: High School is responsible for advising 9-12th graders per American School Counseling Association model. High school should work with students in their senior year to develop "self advocacy" to access college advisors for the ASCENT year. High school counselors should continue to pursue college admission and financial aid opportunities.
- Post Secondary Advising: Colleges will provide advising that shall be sought out by the ASCENT student. College should ascertain the degree/certificate plan each ASCENT student is seeking and will advise for courses according to that track and course eligibility.
- Districts should notify ASCENT-eligible students to complete college admissions and financial aid application processes at desired post-secondary institutions. Prior to participation in ASCENT, students and parent/guardian should review the best financial option for them.