



May 22, 2025

## PPR Funding Considerations: AECs & HSED Programs



# Purpose

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The goals of today's webinar are to:

- Provide a high-level overview of the funding and audit documentation requirements related to the Student October Count data submission/Funded Pupil Count
- Review scheduling information that may be especially relevant to HSED programs and schools with the Alternative Education Campus (AEC) designation
- Define Direct & Alternative Instruction Courses
- Discuss Concurrent Enrollment considerations specific to students beyond their 4<sup>th</sup> year of high school

# The School Finance Unit and the School Auditing Office

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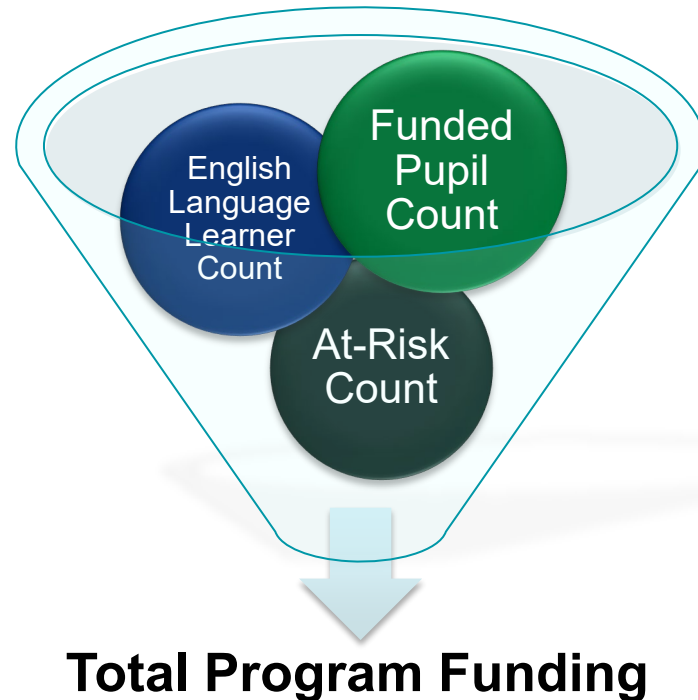
**The School Finance Unit** at CDE calculates “Total Program” funding based on data reported by districts in the Student October Count data submission.

**The School Auditing Office:**

- Publishes annual Audit Resource Guides, including the Pupil Count Audit Resource Guide.
- Provides technical guidance and support to districts related to funding eligibility requirements and supporting audit documentation.
- Conducts annual audit reviews, and any subsequent expanded audits, of all funded counts used in determining a district’s Total Program funding.

# Counts From Student October Data Collection Determine Total Program Funding

- School districts in Colorado are funded by a variety of sources
- The biggest source of funding comes from the School Finance Act
- The amount a district receives according to the School Finance Act is called **Total Program Funding**
- Counts from the Student October Count Data Collection are used to calculate Total Program Funding



# Student October Count Day 2025

The 2025 pupil enrollment count date will be:

**Wednesday, October 1, 2025**

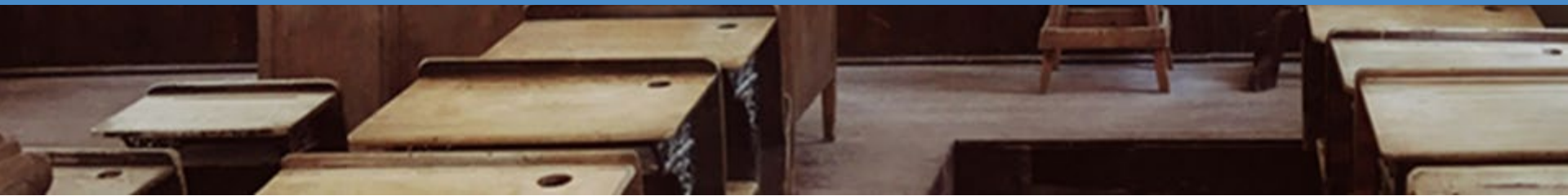
Districts can request an alternative count date on behalf of an individual school, if needed.

September						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

October						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



## General Funding Requirements



# Students Attending AECs or HSED Programs

## For Funding Purposes



AECs are not considered a unique school type!  
HSED programs are not considered a unique program type!  
(Unless some other criteria—such as being a Colorado public Online School or Program—applies).



Students attending AECs or HSED programs must meet the same general funding requirements as any other students.



If a unique student, course, program, or school type applies to a given student (including Alternative Instruction Courses) then those additional funding and/or audit documentation requirements do apply.



# Funding Requirements:

All funding requirements are based on the pupil enrollment count date.

General funding requirements:

1. Enrollment
2. Attendance
3. Scheduled Instructional Hours

Details about the funding requirements, including specific student, course, program, and school types, can be found in the Student October Count Audit Resource Guide, on the [Pupil Count website](#).





# Funding Requirements: Enrollment

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To be eligible for funding, as of the pupil enrollment count date, students must:

- Be enrolled with the district
- Be younger than 21 years old
  - **Exception:** Students receiving services outlined in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) may turn 21 before the pupil enrollment count date in the semester of the pupil enrollment count date and still be eligible for funding
- Not have met the district's minimum graduation requirements
  - **Exception:** Students receiving services outlined in an IEP who have met the district's minimum graduation requirements are eligible for funding through age 21
  - **Exception:** Students are eligible for funding for a minimum of 4 years of high school. If the student meets the district's minimum graduation requirements before the 4<sup>th</sup> year of high school, the student may still be eligible for funding
  - **Exception:** Students who are being retained to participate in a 5th or 6th year extended high school postsecondary program (ASCENT, P-TECH, TREP)

# Funding Requirements: Attendance

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- Students must be present for all, or any portion of, the pupil enrollment count date (in any scheduled class)

**OR**

- If the student is absent for any reason on the pupil enrollment count date:
  - Must establish attendance (in any scheduled class) prior to the pupil enrollment count date during the current school year AND
  - Must resume attendance (in any scheduled class) within 30 calendar days following the pupil enrollment count date
    - If the student withdraws during the current school year prior to the pupil enrollment count date—with the intention of leaving the district—and re-enrolls within 30 days following the pupil enrollment count date, the student is not eligible for funding

**Exception:** Students who are only scheduled into postsecondary courses do not need attendance documentation.

# Funding Requirements: Scheduled Instructional Hours

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- Districts and schools must provide individual student schedules for all secondary (grades 6-12) students.
  - Should reflect what was true as of the pupil enrollment count date
  - Should encompass the entire semester of the pupil enrollment count date
- For most student/course types, funding level eligibility is based on scheduled instructional time (direct or alternative) during the semester of the pupil enrollment count date:
  - Part-time funding: 90, but less than 360, hours
  - Full-time funding: 360+ hours
- Alternative Instruction courses for brick-and-mortar students, and Colorado Public Online Schools & Programs, use Instructional Time Equivalencies for each course
- Additional considerations apply to Postsecondary courses

# Funding Requirements: Postsecondary Courses

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Funding determination for students taking postsecondary courses depends on the number of eligible credits paid entirely by the district:

- **Part-Time Funding = 3-11** semester college credits
- **Full-Time Funding = 12+** semester college credits

A student may also be eligible for full-time funding if their schedule qualifies as:

- Part-time based on high school scheduled instructional time (i.e., **90+ hours**) **AND**
- Part-time based on postsecondary credit hours (i.e., **3+ credit hours**)

Qualifying Dropout Recovery programs run by a community college need only 7 credits for full-time funding.

# “The Semester of the Pupil Enrollment Count Date”

- Funding level is based on the student’s **entire** fall semester schedule (i.e., semester 1, quarters 1 & 2, or hexters 1, 2, & 3, etc.)
- Fall semester is half the scheduled student contact days according to the school calendar, regardless of how the school organizes terms.



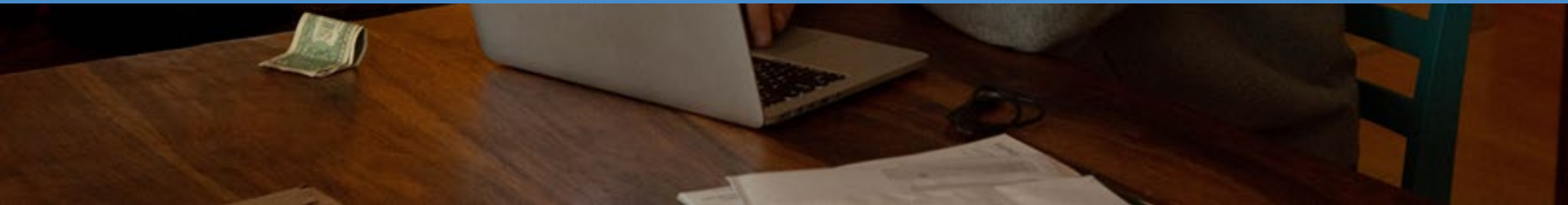
# General Funding Requirements - Takeaways

- While AECs have some flexibilities on the Accountability requirements, there are no special flexibilities on the funding requirements.
- The enrollment, attendance, and scheduled hours requirements for AECs & HSED programs are the same as they are for students at a regular secondary school!





## Online Schools & Programs





# Online Schools & Programs: Definitions

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- An “Online School or Program” is:
  - a Colorado online public school, or online program
  - authorized by a Colorado school district or BOCES that has submitted Authorizers Assurances to the CDE Office of Blended and Online Learning and
  - that meets the statutory definition of an online school or program.
- An “Online School or Program” does **not** refer to vendors of particular software, curriculums, or “online courses” (such as CDLS, Edgenuity, Edmentum, Gradpoint, K12, etc.) nor online schools or programs operating out of the state of Colorado (such as Florida Virtual Academy).
  - CDE does not review/approve these vendors; districts are responsible for choosing appropriate materials for their students.

# Online AEC Schools and Online HSED Programs

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- If an AEC or HSED program is a Colorado public online school or program, refer to the Online Schools and Programs section of the Student October Audit Resource Guide.
  - The 2025 training for Online Schools and Programs is currently scheduled for 7/24/25.
  - A complete list of certified MDOL schools and SDOL schools and programs that have provided notification to the Office of Blended and Online Learning is available on the [Multi-District and Single District Online Schools & Programs List](#) webpage.
- All of the online school & program guidance applies to you! There are no special flexibilities for online AECs or for HSED courses at an online school or program.



## Brick-and-Mortar Student Schedules

# In-Person Student Schedules

- Depending on the school or program design, some brick-and-mortar AECs and HSED programs may not be set up to follow a traditional bell schedule.
  - “Traditional” meaning, each student is provided a list of courses into which they are scheduled, and each course meets regularly at specific days and times.
- Even in a “non-traditional” school or program, students must still have **documented schedules** which clearly state the days and times when students are scheduled to attend **for all of Fall semester, as of the pupil enrollment count date.**



# Student Schedule Considerations

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- On count day, students should be aware of the courses (or the days and times for which they are scheduled) during the entire semester of the pupil enrollment count date.
- Any schedule changes during the semester should be documented.
- Each student's schedule should be developed to meet the student's individual needs.
- It is normal for an AEC or an HSED program to have some part-time students who can't commit to a full-time schedule due to life circumstances.

# Scheduled Instructional Time

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- In general, if a student is expected at a specific day and time, and they will be marked *absent* if they don't come, that time is part of the student's schedule for funding purposes.
- Examples of times that are NOT included in a student's scheduled hours for funding purposes:
  - Optional times, like a "soft start" or "drop-in" lab
  - "Flex sessions" without specific start and end times
  - A "commitment" to come a certain number of hours per week
  - Any asynchronous time not associated with a specific Alternative Instruction Course

# Session Schedule Example 1

This program is structured into **direct instruction** sessions that meet certain times/days each week, and each student is scheduled into one session for the semester.

- The student schedules provided for audit will show which session the student is in for the semester.
- Depending on the calendar and bell schedule calculation, students in Session 1 are likely eligible for full-time funding; however, students scheduled into Session 2 or 3 are likely eligible for part-time funding.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Total/week
Session 1	8:30am-3:30pm 30 min lunch	8:30am-3:30pm 30 min lunch	8:30am-3:30pm 30 min lunch	8:30am-3:30pm 30 min lunch	8:30am-3:30pm 30 min lunch	32.5 hrs/week
Session 2	8:30am-11:30 am (no lunch)	8:30am-11:30 am (no lunch)	8:30am-11:30 am (no lunch)	8:30am-11:30 am (no lunch)	no session	12 hrs/week
Session 3	12:30pm-3:30pm (no lunch)	12:30pm-3:30pm (no lunch)	12:30pm-3:30pm (no lunch)	12:30pm-3:30pm (no lunch)	no session	12 hrs/week



## Session Schedule Example 2:

This program allows students to select which **direct instruction** sessions they will commit to attend for the semester.

- The student schedules provided for audit will show which session the student is each weekday for the semester.
- The example student below is scheduled for 18.5 hours of **direct instruction** each week.
- This might be enough for full-time funding, depending on the calendar and bell schedule calculation, but is likely to be part-time.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Daily Hours
Session 1	8:30am-3:30pm 30 min lunch	8:30am-3:30pm 30 min lunch	8:30am-3:30pm 30 min lunch	8:30am-3:30pm 30 min lunch	8:30am-3:30pm 30 min lunch	6.5 hrs/day
Session 2	8:30am-11:30 am (no lunch)	8:30am-11:30 am (no lunch)	8:30am-11:30 am (no lunch)	8:30am-11:30 am (no lunch)	8:30am-11:30 am (no lunch)	3 hrs/day
Session 3	12:30pm-3:30pm (no lunch)	12:30pm-3:30pm (no lunch)	12:30pm-3:30pm (no lunch)	12:30pm-3:30pm (no lunch)	12:30pm-3:30pm (no lunch)	3 hrs/day

# In-Person Schedules - Takeaways

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- Even in a “non-traditional” school or program, students must still have **documented schedules**.
- On count day, students should be aware of their schedule for all of fall semester.
- In general, if a student is expected at a specific day and time, and they will be marked *absent* if they don't come, that time is part of the student's schedule for funding purposes.
- Optional periods are never included in a student's schedule for funding purposes.



## Direct Instruction vs. Alternative Instruction Courses



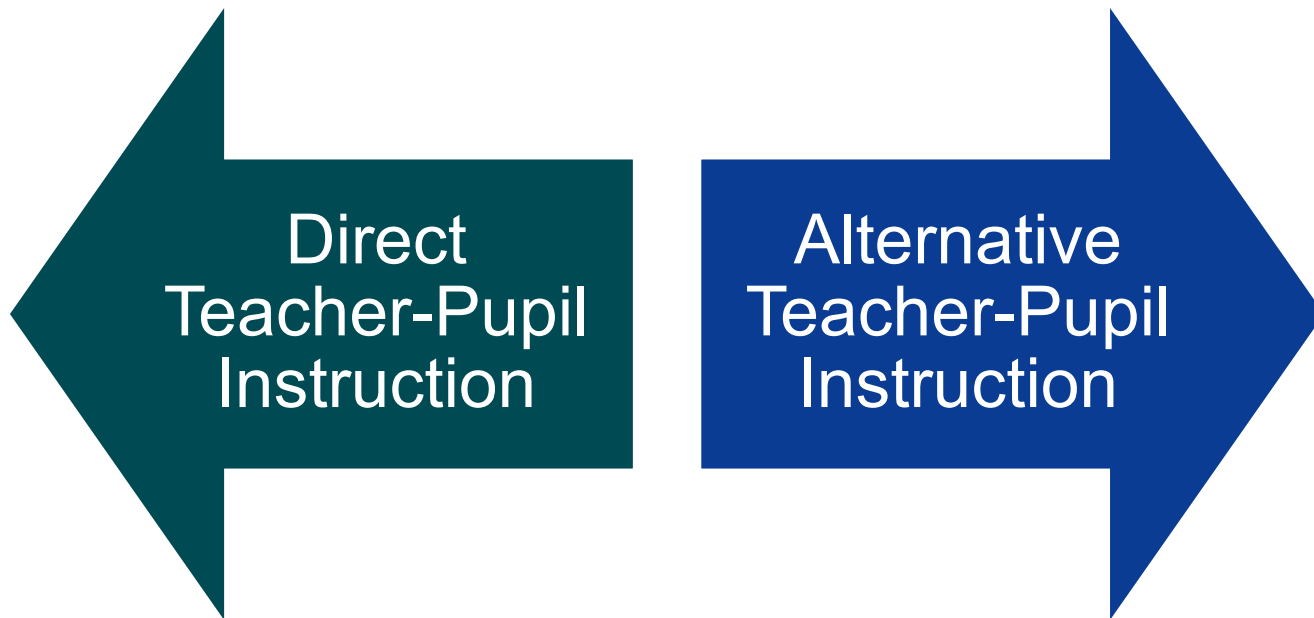
# 2024 Update to School Finance Rules

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- In March 2024, the State Board of Education approved changes to [the Rules for the Administration of the Public School Finance Act](#) (1 CCR 301-39).
- These rules apply to **all** schools and programs, including AECs & HSED programs.
  - Exception: Section 2.05 does not apply to **online schools and programs**, which are governed by 22-30.7-105(2)(a) and 1 CCR 301-71, Rule 8.
- The key school finance rule update we will discuss today is the distinction between **direct** teacher-pupil instruction and **alternative** teacher-pupil instruction.

# Instruction Types in the Updated Rules

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# Direct Instruction

## “Direct teacher-pupil instruction”

[T]he organized delivery of educational content (aligned to state standards where applicable) for pupils enrolled in brick-and-mortar public schools under the supervision of a licensed educator that **takes place synchronously**, when the licensed educator and the pupil are in the **same physical location or** when the licensed educator and the pupil are in the **same virtual classroom**.

Direct instruction also includes engagement with educational content in courses, such as **study hall or advisory or credit recovery lab or independent study**, that are on-site **at a scheduled time during regular school hours and for a set amount of time and where attendance is mandatory**.

**Synchronous** means students & teachers engage:

- At the same time
- In the same physical or virtual classroom

**Direct instruction** includes non-credit-bearing periods or sessions that are:

- At a scheduled time
- During regular school hours
- For a set amount of time
- With mandatory attendance

# Alternative Instruction

**Asynchronous** means students and teachers engage in material:

- At different times, and/or
- Not in the same physical or virtual classroom

**Alternative instruction** is asynchronous.

(“Alternative Instruction” has nothing to do with an “Alternative Education Campus.”)

## “Alternative teacher-pupil instruction”

[T]he organized delivery of educational content (aligned to state standards where applicable) for pupils enrolled in a brick-and-mortar public school under the supervision of a licensed educator that **may take place asynchronously**.



# Courses Using Alternative Teacher-Pupil Instruction In the Updated Rules

Alternative Instruction can only be included in a student's schedule for funding purposes if it is part of **a specific course**.

The 4 types of alternative instruction courses are:

- Blended Learning Courses
- Independent Study Courses
- Supplemental Online Courses
- Work-Based Learning Experience Courses

Alternative instruction courses are only available to students in grades 6-12, and students receiving home-bound/expelled services (in any grade).



# What do Alternative Instruction Courses have in common?

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- All alternative instruction courses are delivered under the supervision of a licensed teacher. (Also true of direct instruction courses.)
- Each alternative instruction course is **credit-bearing**.
  - Credit-bearing means that “a passing grade and credits are given for satisfactory completion of course requirements within the parameters of the academic calendar.”
  - This is true for all students, even if they are not in a credit-seeking program (ex: HSED, Transition, homebound elementary students, etc.).
- **Instructional time** used to calculate a student’s funding level is based on an **equivalency** for each alternative instruction course.
- The course must appear in a **catalog of courses** using alternative instruction, published to the school, district, or BOCES website.

# Which Type of Instruction Do You Use Now?

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- Are students scheduled to come in-person or in live “virtual classrooms,” at a set day and time?
  - This is direct instruction and is still evaluated based on the scheduled “seat time” hours for the semester.
  - The School Auditing Office does not evaluate the number of courses or the amount of credit earned by students in regular direct instruction sessions.
- Do students have flexibility to work asynchronously at least part of the time – e.g., from home, or in person without a set time?
  - To count asynchronous time for funding, the student must be scheduled into individual alternative instruction **courses**.
  - For funding purposes, instructional time equivalency is evaluated at the course level, not the “program” level.
- Even if the students are working on the same material, the State Board Rules make it clear that the schedules must be evaluated based on the type of instruction!

# Non-Traditional Students & Alternative Instruction Courses

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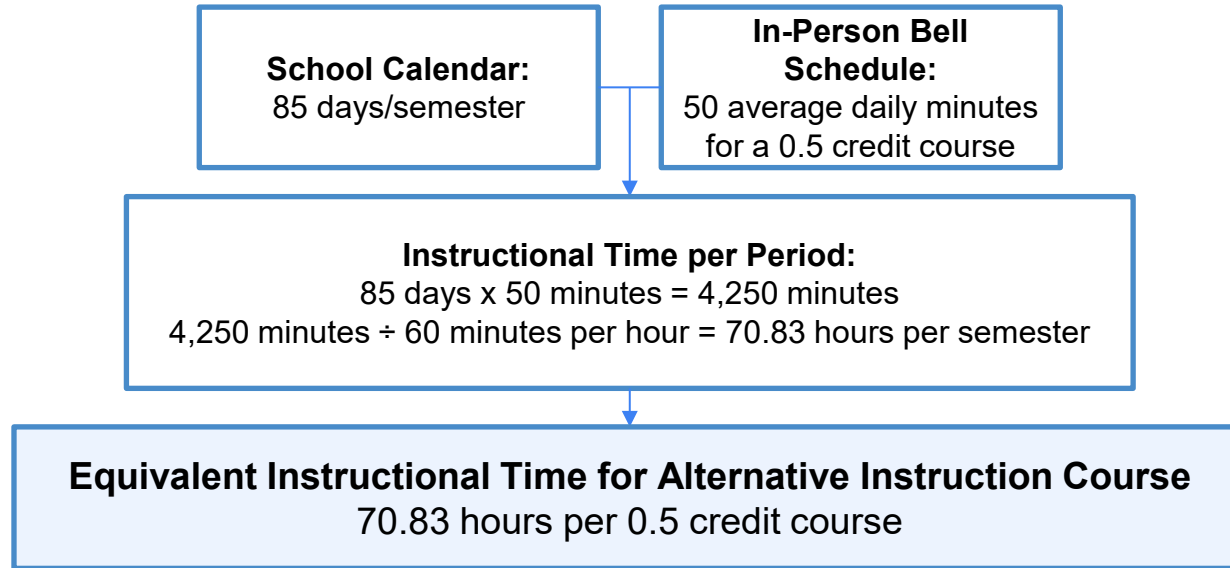
- Alternative instruction courses are a flexibility in calculating scheduled hours for funding purposes that districts may or may not choose to use.
- **Brick-and-mortar AECs & HSED programs must follow the same guidance regarding Alternative Instruction courses as any other brick-and-mortar school and program.**
- Non-traditional and non-diploma-seeking programs considering alternative instruction courses should consider carefully – again, alternative instruction courses **must be credit-bearing!**

# Instructional Time Equivalency for Alternative Instruction **Courses**

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- All alternative teacher-pupil instruction is evaluated **at the course level**.
  - Alternative instructional time cannot be associated with a “session” or “program” – it must be associated with a specific course.
- The instructional time that may be included in calculating a student’s funding level is based on the amount of instructional time a student would receive:
  - if taking a similar credit-bearing course (i.e., offering the same number of credits)
  - in a 100% direct instruction course
  - offered **at the school where the student is reported**.
- This can be a major challenge for schools & programs with non-traditional schedules!

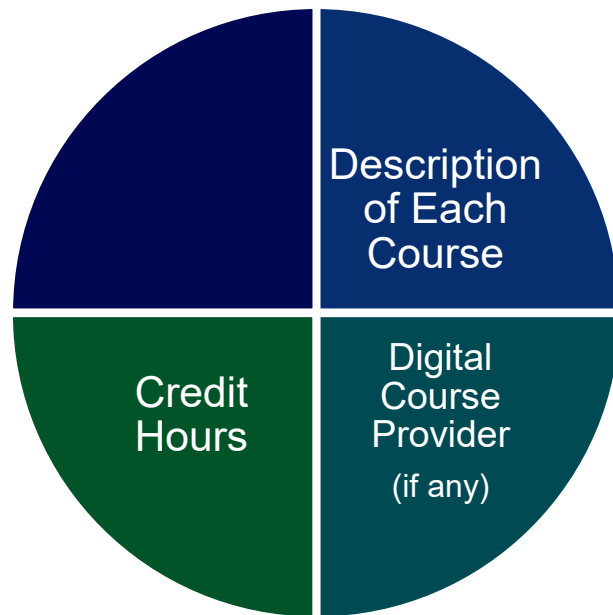
# Simplified Example of Instructional Time Equivalency Calculation



Therefore, students reported at different schools may have a different equivalency for the same alternative instruction course. For full details, review Appendix A of the Student October Count Audit Resource Guide.

# Alternative Teacher-Pupil Instruction Course Catalog

- To include alternative teacher-pupil instruction in the determination for funding, the school/district/BOCES must have a course catalog that includes the 4 requirements.
- This catalog must be posted on the school/district/BOCES website by the applicable count date.
- Reminder: work-based learning courses must be in the alternative instruction course catalog.





# Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) for Work-Based Learning

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- Per statute, ICAPs are required for all students enrolled in public schools in the state (including AEC & HSED students).
- Per state board rule, for funding purposes, work-based learning documentation in the ICAP Portfolio must include, at minimum:
  1. the student's name
  2. the term for which it applies (i.e., Fall 2025)
  3. the date the documentation was created/updated
  4. the work-based learning the student pursues; and
  5. a description of how the work-based learning course connects to the student's postsecondary workforce or education goals
- Look for specific guidance in the 2025 Student October Count Audit Resource Guide in July.

# Alternative Instruction Courses - Takeaways

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- AECs & HSED programs do not have any special flexibilities for alternative instruction courses.
- Alternative instruction courses are evaluated **at the course level**, not at the “program” level.
- Alternative instruction courses **must be credit-bearing**.
- Work-based learning courses are alternative instruction courses.
- Communicate with your district’s data respondents & registrars.
- When in doubt, review the [Student October Count Audit Resource Guide](#)!



# Qualifying Postsecondary Course Considerations



# Post-Secondary Courses

- Qualifying post-secondary courses and programs are special cases of contractual education as outlined in specific legislation.
- Follow the guidance specific to each of these sections of the Audit Resource Guide:
  - Concurrent Enrollment
  - ASCENT
  - TREP
  - Early College
  - Dropout Recovery
- P-TECH postsecondary courses fall outside the scope of this training.
- Other post-secondary courses that don't qualify in any of these categories are evaluated like any other contractual education.



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# Concurrent Enrollment – General Requirements

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This list is not comprehensive, but in general, to be considered CE:

- The course is delivered by a Colorado state approved institution of higher education (IHE).
  - The IHE must have a physical campus in the State of Colorado.
- The district pays all of the student's share of tuition directly to the IHE.
  - The district cannot require the student to pay any portion of the tuition for the course.
  - The district may choose whether to pay for other costs (e.g., books & fees).
- The student receives both college AND high school credit.
  - The high school credit counts toward high school graduation requirements.

# Schedule Documentation Requirements – Qualifying Post-Secondary Courses

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- Verification the district paid the student's share of tuition directly to the IHE
- College credit hour verification (from the IHE) in the semester of the pupil enrollment count date
- Cooperative Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the school or district and the IHE
- Documentation showing the student met any programmatic requirements for the specific course/program, as outlined in the Audit Resource Guide.
- Reminder: Students taking only qualifying post-secondary courses do not need attendance documentation.

# Anticipated Year of Graduation (AYG)

- AYG is set when a student first enters the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, or when they are reported in Student October for the first time in grades 9-12. It is used to determine the 4-year graduation rate, among other things.
- A student who repeats a grade, leaves school and later returns, etc. does not have the AYG “clock” reset.
- Most qualifying post-secondary courses have specific requirements and limitations depending on the student’s AYG.



# Concurrent Enrollment – Credit Hour Limits

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## **During the first four years of high school (as determined by the student's AYG):**

- Upon successfully completing a Concurrent Enrollment course, the student must receive credit that applies toward completion of high school graduation requirements.
- Students are not statutorily limited to the number of allowable credit hours per semester or per year.
- Districts may not establish limitations on allowable credit hours per student.

## **Home School Students**

- Home school students are never eligible for more than part-time funding, regardless of the number of credit hours paid by the district.





# Concurrent Enrollment – Credit Hour Limits

## 5<sup>th</sup> Year & Beyond (Not ASCENT/TREP)

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### **CE in 5th Year and Beyond** (as determined by the student's AYG) if not in ASCENT/TREP:

- Students are limited to a total of nine (9) Concurrent Enrollment credit hours for the remainder of their high school career.
- Students are limited in the number of college credit hours in which they can be concurrently enrolled per semester:
  - Up to **3 credit hours** if scheduled less than part-time with high school courses, or
  - Up to **6 credit hours** if scheduled at least part-time with high school courses.
- Courses that result in college credits above this limit will be evaluated as contractual education (based on “seat time” instead of credits).

# Concurrent Enrollment – Graduation Requirements

## 5<sup>th</sup> Year & Beyond (Not ASCENT/TREP)

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### **CE in 5th Year and Beyond (as determined by the student's AYG) if not in ASCENT/TREP:**

- All CE courses taken during the 5th year and beyond **MUST** post to the student's high school transcript **AND** apply toward the student meeting their **remaining** high school graduation requirements.
- Whether the student is pursuing a traditional diploma program or working towards a GED/HSED, CE credits must still post to their high school transcript.
- Courses that don't apply toward the student's remaining high school graduation requirements will be evaluated as contractual education (based on "seat time" instead of credits).

## Concurrent Enrollment – Additional Documentation Requirements 5<sup>th</sup> Year & Beyond (Not ASCENT/TREP)

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In addition to the general Postsecondary course documentation, the district should be prepared to provide:

- High school graduation requirements
- High school transcript
- Documentation of the specific college course/s paid by the district
  - The district should be able to identify which remaining high school graduation requirement is being met by each course included in the determination for funding.

## Concurrent Enrollment – Additional Documentation Requirements 6<sup>th</sup> Year & Beyond (Not TREP)

If any students in the 6<sup>th</sup> year or beyond took CE courses, the district should be prepared to provide:

- All the 5<sup>th</sup> year Postsecondary course documentation
- All college invoices the student might have appeared on, going back to the end of their 4<sup>th</sup> year of high school
  - This is needed to “prove the negative” – that the student did not already exceed their maximum credit hours for the 5<sup>th</sup> year and beyond.



# Dropout Recovery Programs

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- Students must be enrolled in and taking **all** courses through a dropout recovery program **offered and run by a local community college or local district college**.
  - A “credit recovery” program offered by the district is **not** categorized as dropout recovery
  - Dropout recovery students may not be taking classes at a school operated by the local education provider (e.g., the district).
- Dropout recovery courses must count toward the student meeting the district’s minimum graduation requirements.
- College credit hour requirements for Dropout Recovery programs are different than all other qualifying post-secondary programs/courses.
  - Full-time funding eligibility requires the equivalent of 7+ semester credit hours

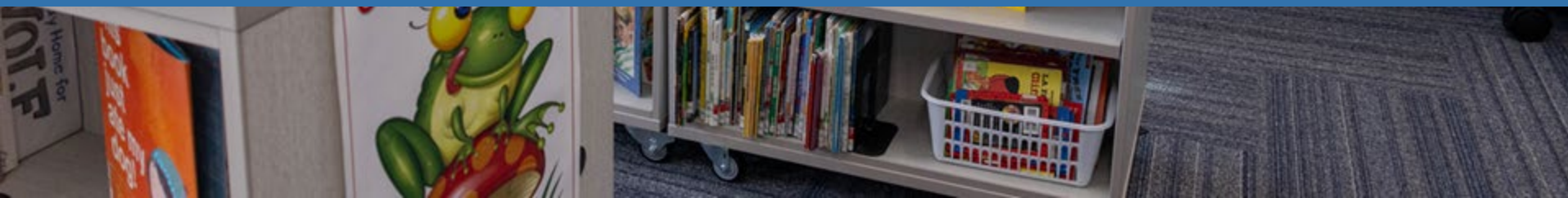
# Concurrent Enrollment Courses - Takeaways

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- Qualifying postsecondary courses have specific requirements & limitations depending on a student's AYG
  - A student's AYG does not reset due to repeating a grade, leaving school and then returning, etc.
- The district must document that the increasingly specific requirements in the 5<sup>th</sup> year and beyond have been met
- If the district chooses to pay for a student to take college courses that don't meet the definition of CE, they will be evaluated for funding like any other contractual education course - based on the instructional time



## Resources



# CDE Offices That Offer Technical Assistance

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Technical Assistance for PPR/Total Program Funding: [School Auditing Office](#)

- Email: [audit@cde.state.co.us](mailto:audit@cde.state.co.us)

Technical Assistance for AECs: [School Quality and Support Division](#)

- B Sanders, AEC and Accountability Analyst: [sanderswa\\_b@cde.state.co.us](mailto:sanderswa_b@cde.state.co.us)
- April Thompson, AEC Consultant and ACI Program Coordinator: [thompson\\_april@cde.state.co.us](mailto:thompson_april@cde.state.co.us)

Technical Assistance for HSED Programs: [Colorado High School Equivalency Testing](#)

- Alena Barczak, High School Equivalency Coordinator: [Barczak\\_a@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Barczak_a@cde.state.co.us)

Technical Assistance for Student Engagement, Attendance and Support Services:

- [Office of Student Support](#)
- [Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-Engagement](#)
- Peter Hoffman, Attendance collection: [hoffman\\_p@cde.state.co.us](mailto:hoffman_p@cde.state.co.us)

Technical Assistance for Postsecondary Programs/Courses: [Office of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness](#)







Questions?

