

Counting ASCENT students in School District's or Institute Charter School's Graduation Rates

Q&A from the Office of Postsecondary Readiness

Q: How will HB 17-1294/C.R.S. 22-35-108 (2017) impact the conferring of high school diplomas for ASCENT students?

A: [C.R.S. 22-35-108 \(5\) \(b\) \(2017\)](#) states in part that:

For purposes of applying the provisions of article 11 of this title 22 concerning school accountability and reporting graduation rates, a qualified student who is an ASCENT program participant shall be counted in the enrolling school district's or institute charter school's graduation rate in the school year in which the student completes the school district's or institute charter school's minimum high school graduation requirements.

The intent of this subsection is to ensure that schools and school districts are not adversely affected in calculating and reporting the completion of high school graduation requirements by qualified students who have been designated by the department as ASCENT program participants.

This new rule, which will become effective with the 2017-18 school year, will not change the existing requirements with regard to an ASCENT student's high school diplomas, in that an ASCENT student's high school diploma cannot be dated and conferred to the student until he/she has completed the ASCENT(5th) year. Also, the date of graduation on the ASCENT student's official high school transcript must reflect the date that the student completes his/her ASCENT (5th) year. ASCENT appropriations are made to the Colorado Department of Education for grade levels K-12; therefore an ASCENT student must still be classified as a high school student in their 5th year in order to be eligible to receive ASCENT funding. For example, if an ASCENT program participant has completed all of a district's minimum graduation requirements by the end of their 4th year, this student should be counted as a 4 year graduate, but should remain enrolled and may not receive his/her official diploma until no longer participating in the ASCENT program.

Districts/Institute Charter Schools can decide if they will allow ASCENT student to participate in regular graduation ceremonies without receiving an official diploma.

Students completing their 4th year of high school, who have met their district's graduation requirements and are being retained for a 5th year to participate in an approved postsecondary program (including ASCENT and PTECH) should be reported in the district's End of Year data submission to CDE with an Exit Code of 90 and a Retention Code of 2. Please refer to pages 11 & 12 of the [2017-18 Student Interchange File Layout – Student School Association](#) for more details.