



Higher Education

During the 2020 legislative session, the General Assembly considered several measures related to scholarships and financial assistance; student compensation and academic credit; concurrent enrollment; admission requirements; and higher education funding.

Scholarships and Financial Assistance

The General Assembly considered three bills regarding financial and scholarship assistance. The Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) links tuition assistance and student supports to ensure that every Colorado student has access to higher education opportunities. The General Assembly passed [Senate Bill 20-006](#), which modifies aspects of COSI by removing certain requirements, updating definitions to reflect the program's focus on financial assistance rather than just tuition assistance, and revising the scholarship's eligibility criteria.

The General Assembly also passed [House Bill 20-1275](#), which extends in-state tuition eligibility at community colleges to active or honorably discharged members of the armed forces, veterans, and dependents of members of the armed forces. In-state tuition rates apply regardless of whether or not the student meets in-state residency requirements.

[Senate Bill 20-112](#), would have created the College Trust Scholarship Program for Early

Graduation. The program would have offered scholarships for Colorado high school students who graduate high school prior to their senior year and enroll in postsecondary education by the age of 21. The bill was postponed indefinitely.

Admissions, Compensation, and Credit

The General Assembly passed three bills related to admission requirements, student athlete compensation, and academic credit. Under current law, all institutions of higher education (IHEs) require a national assessment test score from either the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) or American College Testing (ACT) in addition to other performance indicators in order to enroll a student. [House Bill 20-1407](#) temporarily allows each state-supported IHE to decide if it will require a national assessment test score for first time freshman students who graduate from high school in 2021.

[Senate Bill 20-123](#) revises requirements related to representation and compensation for student athletes. Specifically, the bill prohibits the following:

- IHEs from upholding any rule that prevents a student athlete from receiving compensation for the use of their name, image, or likeness;
- athletic associations from preventing a student athlete from earning compensation

or barring an IHE from participating in intercollegiate athletics because a student receives such compensation;

- athletic associations and IHEs from compensating current and prospective student athletes; and
- a student from entering into a contract that conflicts with a team contract.

Students can obtain professional representation from an attorney or athlete advisor and take legal action if they feel that their IHE or association has violated these provisions.

[House Bill 20-1002](#) requires the Department of Higher Education (DHE) to create and implement a plan to award postsecondary academic credit for work-related experience, as well as a statewide system for the guaranteed transfer of that credit between IHEs.

Concurrent Enrollment

The General Assembly passed [Senate Bill 20-095](#) which requires the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) to work with local education providers to develop and disseminate materials on concurrent enrollment to the parents of students in grades six through eight beginning in the 2021-22 academic year. The materials must include information on the benefits of participating in concurrent enrollment in high school, the types of courses available, the requirements and process for enrolling, and the contact information for the district or charter school staff who administer concurrent enrollment. The bill also provides requirements for how materials should be dispersed.

Higher Education Funding

[House Bill 20-1366](#) establishes a new higher education funding allocation model beginning in FY 2021-2020. The new model retains the current method of allocating state

appropriations via fee-for-service contracts with IHEs, but revises the requirements for these contracts in terms of ongoing base funding, performance funding, and temporary additional funding. The new allocation model also aligns the funding mechanisms for the College Opportunity Fund and specialty education programs with previous mechanisms.

The bill requires the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) and DHE, in collaboration with other institutions, to submit funding recommendations to the Joint Budget Committee for each component through the annual budget process. CCHE, DHE and other institutions must also identify and recommend ways to better measure the success of students who are not first-time, full-time students. The funding formula must be reviewed by CCHE every five years beginning November 1, 2026.