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Governor Bullock Announces Huge Gains in Students Taking Dual Credit Courses
Almost twice the number of high school students taking college courses to save money and graduate on time

HELENA – Today, Governor Bullock announced that the number of Montana high school students taking dual credit enrollment courses for college credit has nearly doubled over the past two years. Expanding access to dual enrollment courses for Montana students has been a priority for the Bullock administration.

Governor Steve Bullock and Commissioner of Higher Education Clayton Christian lauded the growth in “dual enrollment” as helping to make college more affordable through reduced tuition rates, fee waivers, and helping students to graduate from college on time. This fall there are 2,067 high school students in Montana enrolled in at least one college class, a 96-percent increase over the 1,055 dually enrolled students in spring 2012.

About 65 percent of this fall’s dually enrolled students are receiving both high school and college credit for the college-level course, with the instruction being delivered by a qualified high school teacher (so-called “dual credit”).

Bullock said the dual-credit incentive program provides a catalyst for teachers and school districts to better inform students and families about the dual-credit opportunities.

“Montana teachers have so many demands on them already,” Bullock said. “Our state’s high school teachers deserve huge credit for helping to double the number of students who are getting an early start on college at half the normal tuition price.”

"This is really about supporting teachers to improve college access and affordability for Montana students and families," Christian said. "It's a great investment to prepare students for success, reduce the cost of college, and shorten the time to a college degree."

Under Board of Regents policy, dual-credit courses are offered to high school students for a fraction of the cost charged at a college campus. A high school student can take a dual-credit course in a high school classroom for less than one-quarter of the price charged at a four-year campus, or less than one-half of the price charged at a two-year campus.

Bullock and Christian noted that the Montana University System and Office of the Governor are promoting an incentive program for high school teachers to expand dual credit opportunities. This year and next year, high school teachers who teach dual credit courses can earn coupons for tuition-free undergraduate or graduate-level college courses to use for themselves, family members, or anyone of their choice.

Lieutenant Governor Angela McLean, a former dual enrollment educator, said: "I have seen firsthand the benefits high school students derive from this effort. Students who thought they could not find success in college – or could not afford it – are now thriving at schools across Montana."

"Montana students have never had more opportunities to assess their college readiness and get a head start on life after high school. Universal ACT testing, increased access to dual credit and Advanced Placement courses, and a focus on college and career planning through Graduation Matters Montana programs are opening up exciting new opportunities for Montana students," said Denise Juneau, Superintendent of Public Instruction.

More information on the Dual Credit Teacher Incentive Program may be found at <http://www.mus.edu/dualcredit/>