

Red Rocks Community College/Warren Tech

Lakewood, Colorado

Focus on Dual/Concurrent Enrollment

Colorado Innovation Profile

Colorado's Career and Technical Education programs are developing a seamless system of education that ensures ease in student transition from one educational system to another and from one level of instruction to another.

There are eight key strategies that Colorado CTE teachers and administrators are applying:

- *Implementing Career and Technical Education Plans of Study;*
- *Strengthening Accountability for Results;*
- *Moving To a Project-Based Focus for Local Planning and Implementation;*
- *Assessing Career and Technical Skills;*
- *Integrating Academic and CTE Skills and Knowledge;*
- *Transforming Professional Development, Recruitment and Retention of CTE Teachers;*
- *Ensuring Effective Instruction and Strategies for Special Populations; and*
- *Connecting CTE to Employers and Workforce Priorities.*

The Colorado Community College System has prepared a series of "Innovation Profiles" that describe how Colorado's schools, community colleges and community partners are creating innovative strategies to improve their programs on behalf of students.

Key Innovation Activity

- **Related Strategy:** *Implementing Career and Technical Education Plans of Study*

Through a dual/concurrent enrollment partnership with Red Rocks Community College (RRCC), Warren Tech in the Jefferson County School District offers its students an extensive – array of CTE programs eligible for college credit. This close working relationship between RRCC and Warren Tech helps high school students earn college credits while still in high school, and make seamless transitions into the community college upon high school graduation.

Background

Warren Tech and RRCC have created extensive collaboration between their institutions, both for articulation agreements, which create connected programs of study between the school and the college, and for dual/concurrent enrollment, in which certain courses taught at Warren Tech can count for college credit as soon as the student completes the course. These concurrent enrollment credits are not "held in escrow," where they would only count if the student enrolls at RRCC following their graduation

from high school. Instead, they are “transcripted” immediately, so the student is earning high school credits and also has an actual transcript for courses taken from RRCC. He or she can take these transcripted credits and apply them at any other college or university, subject to that institution’s rules and guidelines for honoring transferred credits.

The following table illustrates which programs are eligible to articulate and which degree the credits go towards:

Table 1

Programs and Corresponding Degree

Warren Tech and Jeffco Public Schools Courses	Red Rocks Community College Degrees
Accounting	AAS Accounting Tech
Auto Collision Repair	AAS Auto Collision Tech (Offered on-site at Warrant Tech)
Automotive Technology	AAS Automotive Service Tech (Offered on-site at Warren Tech)
Business	AAS Business
Business Technology	AAS Administrative Professional
Cisco	AAS Cisco Network Associate
Culinary Arts	AAS Culinary Arts (Offered on-site at Warren Tech)
Dental Assisting	AAS Applied Technology
Drafting	AAS Engineering Graphic Technology
Esthetics	AAS Applied Technology (Offered on-site at Warren Tech)
Hairstyling	AAS Applied Technology (Offered on-site at Warren Tech)
Hospitality, Travel & Tourism	AAS Applied Technology
Multimedia	AAS Applied Technology
Nail Technology	AAS Applied Technology (Offered on-site at Warren Tech)
Oracle	AAS Oracle Database Administrator
Process Tech	AAS Process Technology
Precision Machining Technology	AAS Precision Machining Technology (Offered on-site at Warren Tech)
Welding	AAS Welding (Offered on-site at WarrenTech)
Individually Approved Gen Ed Classes	AA/AS

Note. From “Articulated Programs,” by Warren Tech, 2007.

Funding Considerations

RRCC leadership estimates that the actual cost of college participation by students is approximately 10 percent more than the cost of tuition. So the college pays Warren Tech for the instructional expenses to offer the course, and the Jefferson County School District pays the college for the cost of tuition for the course. This exchange of funds is a simplification of an earlier process which required detailed accounting for specific goods and services and exchange of in-kind materials and services between the institutions.

Further Innovation with Bachelor's Degrees

RRCC continues to innovate to offer degrees that integrate and recognize learning that has taken place at both Warren Tech and RRCC. RRCC is currently working with DeVry University and Regis University to offer a Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degree. This BAS would recognize transcribed dual/concurrent enrollment credits, general education credits earned toward an associate's degree at RRCC, another year of general credits earned at RRCC, and a year of study at either DeVry or Regis. So, approximately 90 of the required 120 credits for a bachelor's degree could be earned through courses taken at Warren Tech and RRCC.

Key Factors in Implementation

Specific Process for Dual/Concurrent Enrollment

Many of the obstacles that may arise with dual/concurrent enrollment can be eased by a good working relationship between the participating institutions and by the strong support of students by their counselors. .

At Warren Tech, the dual/concurrent enrollment process starts when a student enrolls in a course eligible for dual/concurrent enrollment.

There are a few key counselors who make an extensive effort to meet with Warren Tech students and explain this opportunity, going into every class and meeting with every student who is eligible for dual enrollment credit. If a student is interested, he or she must fill out the paperwork and go online to submit forms. Once the dual/concurrent enrollment application is submitted, a counselor from RRCC sits down with the student to ensure they have submitted everything correctly. Once a student has been approved, he/she returns those forms to the Warren Tech counselor, who finalizes them and executes the processing of funds between Warren Tech and RRCC.

Meeting College Expectations for Rigor

While the leaders from both institutions have established the process for dual/concurrent enrollment and give strong support to the effort, individual college instructors must validate that the high school courses meet rigorous standards to count as a college credit from RRCC.

Warren Tech principal Joe Shaw indicated that in the past three years, he has required Warren Tech teachers to create a specific course outline for each course, as well as assessments that back up the units of instruction within the course outline. The courses must be aligned with the Colorado Community College System common course numbering system, ACT's college readiness standards, national or state industry standards, and the Jefferson County School District standards. This extensive course alignment has raised the rigor of Warren Tech's programs and provides greater confidence to college faculty about the quality of the Warren Tech programs.

Ensuring the rigor of programs that articulate is another obstacle in dual/concurrent enrollment. At Warren Tech, RRCC has the power to veto a program's college credit. Each year, instructors from RRCC meet with instructors from Warren Tech to review and approve college credit for each course. In some cases, college faculty for courses such as CAD, multi-media, graphic design and photography, hold week-long summer workshops which high school teachers are required to attend. During the workshops college faculty review their curriculum, supplies and software that are used. These workshops build collaborative relationships and trust between faculty and teachers. Procedures recently adopted require high school teachers and college faculty to meet at least annually, at the beginning of the school year, to review current articulation and dual/concurrent enrollment agreements, make any modifications or updates that are necessary, and both sign-off that the agreement is still in force.

Warren Tech principal Joe Shaw says "raising the credibility of Warren Tech programs and raising the level of rigor is a big part of why we've come as far as we have in such a short period of time."

Leadership Support and Staffing

The extensive dual/concurrent enrollment between Warren Tech and RRCC would not be possible without strong support from the respective leadership teams of each institution. This support includes the counselor time necessary to execute the agreements and get the students dually enrolled, and the teacher and faculty time necessary for collaboration and workshops to create and keep the dual/concurrent enrollment agreements up to date.

Results

By giving students a chance to earn college credit while they are still in high school, many students are encouraged to stay in the education pipeline. In 2007-2008, 960 Warren Tech (Jefferson County) high school students earned a combined total of 4,171 college credits through RRCC. Sixty-seven percent of Warren Tech students go on to postsecondary education, and, in some cases, students can earn an associate's degree simultaneous to earning a high school diploma.

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This Innovation Profile was created by **Meeder Consulting, LLC** (www.meederconsulting.com), a firm specializing in leadership and aligning education systems with workforce needs, on behalf of the Colorado Community College System (CCCS). CCCS administers and leads career and technical education in Colorado on behalf of secondary education, community colleges and other CTE providers. Information about CTE in Colorado can be found at www.ccs.edu and www.ColoradoStatePlan.com.