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NEWS RELEASE
GOVERNOR STEVE BULLOCK
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Governor Bullock, Lt. Gov. McLean and Commissioner Christian Introduce Pilot Program to Increase Number of College Credits Offered in High School

HELENA – Today, Governor Steve Bullock, along with Lt. Gov. Angela McLean, and Commissioner of Higher Education Clayton Christian announced a new incentive pilot program to help expand concurrent dual enrollment opportunities for Montana high school students.

The program, which is being funded using existing resources from the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, contains two key aspects:

- Starting in the fall of 2014, any Montana teacher who teaches a concurrent dual enrollment class with at least four students receiving dual credit, will receive a credit-for-credit coupon that can be used towards classes for themselves at any Montana university, college or Tribal college.
- This credit coupon that teachers receive will be transferable to students, friends, or family members, so that teachers who do not need additional education can help open doors of opportunity for others.

Dual enrollment courses are designed to provide Montana students the opportunity to earn high school and college credit simultaneously, and at half the price of tuition at a college or university.

“Encouraging students to earn college credits while in high school not only allows college bound kids to get a jump start on their college career, while saving themselves and their family substantial amounts of money, but also opens a world of opportunities in higher education to many students that never considered themselves college material,” Bullock said of the plan.

Concurrent dual enrollment classes are in-person classes where students earn both high school and college credit. These classes are shown to be the most effective methods for dual enrollment

instruction. Currently, only 30 percent of Montana students taking part in dual enrollment classes are doing so in-person, the remainder are taking classes online. A recent national study found that high school students who participated in dual enrollment programs were 23 percent more likely earn an associates or bachelor's degree.

"As a former teacher, I've seen students that might otherwise struggle to cover the costs enter college with full semesters under their belt," McLean said. "This program will help to expand opportunities for all Montana students, especially those in our rural communities."

In his State of the State address, Bullock laid out the ambitious goal of increasing the number of Montanans with a college degree or career certificate from 40 to 60 percent within the next decade. He has also made it a priority to reduce the time to degree for Montana college students.

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

The pilot project announced today will go into effect in fall of 2014 and run through the spring of 2016. Any high school teacher with a Master's Degree that teaches at an accredited public or private school is eligible to receive these coupons for teaching concurrent dual enrollment classes. Each teacher can earn up to 24 credit coupons over the two year period.

More information about this pilot project can be found at:

<http://governor.mt.gov/Portals/16/docs/2014PressReleases/MontanaDualEnrollmentIncentiveProgram.pdf>

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