

**Helping Students By Providing
Opportunities**

Thank you for this opportunity to address the board. I would like to share a little bit of my personal story, and then ask you to consider putting something on a future agenda.

My name is Zara Dhar. I am currently a sophomore at Burroughs High School and a part time Cerro Coso Community College student. For the earlier part of this school year, I was at a different school in Stevenson Ranch, California where true concurrent enrollment was an option. True concurrent enrollment means that students get high school and college credit for taking a class at community college. Once I started at Burroughs again, I was disappointed to learn this opportunity was no longer available to me. I would like to request that the option that many other students in California already have, be applied to Burroughs too.

I believe the existing school protocol should be altered to allow Burroughs High School students to take Cerro Coso Community College classes for both college and high school credit. While dual enrollment is admissible when a Burroughs High School instructor with a master's degree in the subject teaches the course during the school day, the scope of dual enrollment needs to be broadened so that students can take courses at the college for high school credit. Currently, students are given the choice of limited concurrent enrollment, the ability to take community college courses for college credit only.

Many school districts across California already allow students to take dual enrollment courses, including school districts in the Cerro Coso service area. The Kern High School District already has a policy in place with Cerro Coso Community College concerning dual enrollment.

Changing the current policies at Burroughs High School would have numerous benefits. Students would have the chance to broaden their horizons, receive exposure to diverse topics and prepare for college and the workforce. Students could challenge themselves when they feel like they are ready for more rigorous work, and they could efficiently complete high school graduation requirements with college classes.

Every student is different and displays interest in a variety of different topics. Some students are interested in psychology while others are interested in digital media arts. There is no way for Burroughs to offer enough classes that would meet every student's interests, because there would simply not be enough students interested in each subject for a class to be feasible. Taking classes at Cerro Coso would allow students to explore their interests.

According to the California School Dashboard website, Burroughs currently prepares 53.8% of the student body for a college or a career. That's higher than the state average by a good amount, but we are striving for growth. If students are given the ability to take a college course and be introduced to a college environment, more students would be prepared for college and the workforce. More students would leave Burroughs High School ready to live their adult lives regardless of where they decide to go after graduation.

Many students at Burroughs are capable of handling a college course and want more challenging courses than those that are available to them. There are not enough students or

qualified teachers to create AP courses for every subject, so college classes would remedy the problem. Many students find dual enrollment a better choice since AP classes provide no guarantee that one will pass the exam that determines whether or not one gets credit. Plus, several 4-year colleges do not accept some or all AP courses for credit, and students watch their hours of studying and hard work go down the drain.

Also, according to the California School Dashboard website, the Burroughs graduation rate declined by 3% last year. This implies students struggle to complete their graduation requirements. Being able to take courses at Cerro Coso would help because students would be able to recover credits for graduation. At the same time they would be earning college credit from an accredited community college. Students who have difficulty finding a place in their schedule to complete A-G requirements could benefit from dual or concurrent enrollment.

I am a part of my school's WASC group and I know our school is striving for growth. What better way to achieve that than by giving students more opportunities to grow?

There is an opportunity in our community for students to decrease the cost of going to college by taking classes at Cerro Coso community college while still in high school. This could be done either through dual enrollment classes during the school day, or by Burroughs High School honoring and awarding credits toward graduation for college classes taken outside of the school day. I therefore request that Sierra Sands Unified School District support the introduction of true concurrent enrollment in addition to dual enrollment at Cerro Coso Community College

for Burroughs High School or at least add the discussion topic of increasing and supporting more dual enrollment classes, and, on awarding credit toward graduation for college classes taken concurrently to a future agenda. Thank you for your consideration and support of my efforts to provide more opportunities for Burroughs High School students.