

RCW 28A.600.310 Running start program—Enrollment in institutions of higher education—Student fees—Fee waivers—Transmittal of funds.

(1) Every school district must allow eligible students as described in subsection (2) of this section to participate in the running start program.

(2) In addition to the eligibility provided for in subsection (6) of this section, student eligibility for the running start program is as follows: Eleventh and 12th grade students or students who have not yet received the credits required for the award of a high school diploma and are eligible to be in the 11th or 12th grade, including students receiving home-based instruction under chapter 28A.200 RCW and students attending private schools approved under chapter 28A.195 RCW, may apply to a participating institution of higher education to enroll in courses or programs offered by the institution of higher education.

(3) Students receiving home-based instruction under chapter 28A.200 RCW enrolling in a public high school for the sole purpose of participating in courses or programs offered by institutions of higher education shall not be counted by the school district in any required state or federal accountability reporting if the student's parents or guardians filed a declaration of intent to provide home-based instruction and the student received home-based instruction during the school year before the school year in which the student intends to participate in courses or programs offered by the institution of higher education.

(4) Participating institutions of higher education, in consultation with school districts, may establish admission standards for eligible students. If the institution of higher education accepts a secondary school student for enrollment under this section, the institution of higher education shall send written notice to the student and the student's school district within 10 days of acceptance. The notice shall indicate the course and hours of enrollment for that student.

(5) The course sections and programs offered as running start courses must be open for registration to matriculated students at the participating institution of higher education and may not be a course consisting solely of high school students offered at a high school campus.

(6) Rising 11th grade students, defined as students who have completed their 10th grade year and not yet begun their 11th grade year, may enroll for up to 10 quarter credits, or the semester equivalent, during the summer academic term.

(7) (a) In lieu of tuition and fees, as defined in RCW 28B.15.020 and 28B.15.041:

(i) Running start students shall pay to the community or technical college all other mandatory fees as established by each community or technical college and, in addition, the state board for community and technical colleges may authorize a fee of up to 10 percent of tuition and fees as defined in RCW 28B.15.020 and 28B.15.041; and

(ii) All other institutions of higher education operating a running start program may charge running start students a fee of up to 10 percent of tuition and fees as defined in RCW 28B.15.020 and 28B.15.041 in addition to technology fees.

(b) The fees charged under this subsection (7) shall be prorated based on credit load.

(c) Students may pay fees under this subsection (7) with advanced college tuition payment program tuition units at a rate set by the advanced college tuition payment program governing body under chapter 28B.95 RCW.

(8) (a) The institutions of higher education must make available fee waivers for low-income running start students. A student shall be considered low income and eligible for a fee waiver upon proof that the student meets federal eligibility requirements for free or reduced-price school meals. Acceptable documentation of low-income status may also include, but is not limited to, documentation that a student has been deemed eligible for free or reduced-price lunches in the last five years, or other criteria established in the institution's policy.

(b) (i) By the beginning of the 2020-21 school year, school districts, upon knowledge of a low-income student's enrollment in running start, must provide documentation of the student's low-income status, under (a) of this subsection, directly to institutions of higher education.

(ii) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the office of the superintendent of public instruction, in consultation with the Washington student achievement council, shall develop a centralized process for school districts to provide students' low-income status to institutions of higher education to meet the requirements of (b) (i) of this subsection.

(c) Institutions of higher education, in collaboration with relevant student associations, shall aim to have students who can benefit from fee waivers take advantage of these waivers. Institutions shall make every effort to communicate to students and their families the benefits of the waivers and provide assistance to students and their families on how to apply. Information about waivers shall, to the greatest extent possible, be incorporated into financial aid counseling, admission information, and individual billing statements. Institutions also shall, to the greatest extent possible, use all means of communication, including but not limited to websites, online catalogues, admission and registration forms, mass email messaging, social media, and outside marketing to ensure that information about waivers is visible, compelling, and reaches the maximum number of students and families that can benefit.

(9) The student's school district shall transmit to the institution of higher education an amount per each full-time equivalent college student at statewide uniform rates for vocational and nonvocational students. The superintendent of public instruction shall separately calculate and allocate moneys appropriated for basic education under RCW 28A.150.260 to school districts for purposes of making such payments and for granting school districts seven percent thereof to offset program related costs. The calculations and allocations shall be based upon the estimated statewide annual average per full-time equivalent high school student allocations under RCW 28A.150.260, excluding small high school enhancements, and applicable rules adopted under chapter 34.05 RCW. The superintendent of public instruction, participating institutions of higher education, and the state board for community and technical colleges shall consult on the calculation and distribution of the funds. The funds received by the institution of higher education from the school district shall not be deemed tuition or operating fees and may be retained by the institution of higher education. A student enrolled under this subsection shall be counted for the purpose of meeting enrollment

targets in accordance with terms and conditions specified in the omnibus appropriations act.

(10) This section governs school operation and management under RCW 28A.710.040 and 28A.715.020 and applies to charter schools established under chapter 28A.710 RCW and state-tribal education compact schools established under chapter 28A.715 RCW to the same extent as it applies to school districts. [2024 c 159 s 2; 2023 c 350 s 2. Prior: 2019 c 252 s 115; 2019 c 176 s 2; 2015 c 202 s 4; 2012 c 229 s 702; 2011 1st sp.s. c 10 s 10; 2009 c 450 s 8; 2005 c 125 s 1; 1994 c 205 s 2; 1993 c 222 s 1; 1990 1st ex.s. c 9 s 402.]

Finding—2024 c 159: "The legislature believes it is in the best interest of the state to create opportunities to help ease students into running start prior to their 11th grade academic year. Affirming the opportunity for running start during the summer term following the 10th grade academic year will improve access to higher education opportunities and increase the likelihood of postsecondary degree attainment." [2024 c 159 s 1.]

Intent—2019 c 252: See note following RCW 28A.230.710.

Findings—Intent—2015 c 202: See note following RCW 28A.320.196.

Effective date—2012 c 229 ss 101, 117, 401, 402, 501 through 594, 601 through 609, 701 through 708, 801 through 821, 902, and 904: See note following RCW 28B.77.005.

Findings—Intent—Short title—2011 1st sp.s. c 10: See notes following RCW 28B.15.031.

Findings—Intent—2009 c 450: See note following RCW 28A.600.280.

Effective date—1993 c 222: "This act shall take effect September 1, 1993." [1993 c 222 s 2.]

Finding—Severability—1990 1st ex.s. c 9: See notes following RCW 28A.225.220.