

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2396

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to addressing barriers for students to participate in the running start program.

Brief Description: Addressing barriers for students to participate in the running start program.

Sponsors: Representatives Orwall, Bergquist, Seaquist, Ryu, Roberts, Riccelli, Tarleton, Gregerson, Pollet and Habib.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 1/22/14, 1/31/14 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Washington Student Achievement Council to conduct an analysis of the Running Start program (Program) and to submit a report to the Legislature by January 1, 2015.
- Requires certain school districts to meet with higher education institutions in their district that have over 50 Running Start students and to develop participation plans to increase enrollment of underrepresented students in the Program.
- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to collect and compare current demographic data with data collected after two years of collaboration, and to submit a report of this comparison to the Legislature by December 1, 2017.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Seaquist, Chair; Pollet, Vice Chair; Gregerson, Hansen, Johnson, Reykdal, Sawyer, Sells, Tarleton, Walkinshaw and Wylie.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Haler, Ranking Minority Member; Zeiger, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Magendanz, Muri, Scott, Smith and Walsh.

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

The Running Start program (Program), administered by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), allows high school juniors and seniors to enroll in college courses for dual credit. Institutions of higher education test high school students' college readiness before the students are admitted to the Program.

Students in the Program do not pay for tuition, but do pay for educational materials, course fees, and transportation costs. The school districts pay the higher education institutions an amount equal to the statewide average basic education allocation, minus 7 percent, which is retained by the districts.

In the fall of 2013, 18,698 students participated in the Program, primarily through community or technical colleges.

The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) is a state agency that provides strategic planning, oversight, and advocacy to support increased student success and higher levels of educational attainment in the State of Washington.

Summary of Bill:

Student Achievement Council Report.

The WSAC must conduct an analysis of the Program, including barriers to participation, degree completion outcomes, and best practices. The WSAC must submit its report to the Legislature by January 1, 2015. This section expires August 1, 2015.

Participation Plan Development and Reporting.

Certain school districts must meet with higher education institutions within their district that have over 50 Running Start students to develop participation plans to increase enrollment of underrepresented students in the Program and submit the plans to the OSPI by November 1, 2014. The plans must include a focus on:

- identifying and implementing strategies to provide outreach to underrepresented populations at middle schools and high schools to ensure that students and families have information on the Program; and
- ensuring better coordination between middle schools, high schools, and participating Running Start institutions to provide academic guidance to students who have been underrepresented in the Program.

By January 1, 2015, the OSPI must provide the Legislature with guidelines for improving outreach to students who have been underrepresented in the Program, and for collaboration among schools based on the participation plans.

The OSPI must collect current demographic data on student participation in the Program and compare it with data collected after two years of school district collaboration with participating institutions. The OSPI must submit this report to the Legislature by December 1, 2017.

This section expires August 1, 2018.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) There was a high school student who was discouraged from participating in the Program. She was incredible and articulate, but was encouraged to go to a technical college. The Program is fantastic. The intent was not for the Program to work for only some students. Most people want the program to work for all students, so it is important to figure out why it is not working for all students, currently. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges is the biggest player in the Program, but the Program is also available at baccalaureate and tribal colleges. It would be appropriate to have a work session focused on how to increase underserved students and increase achievement. It is important to start early in high school and tell students about the Program. This bill is a great step to begin the pipeline. Eastern Washington University is the largest provider of the Program throughout the state, so it is important to look at its structure. Another underserved group is students in rural areas. This bill is closely aligned with the WSAC's Ten-Year Roadmap. The Program is a great way to earn and apply credits to a postsecondary degree, which can reduce a student's time to degree. Washington high school students have a variety of dual credit options, and there are many differences between the options, especially across state.

(In support with amendment(s)) Increasing enrollment of underrepresented students in the Program is a good idea. Some community colleges are doing interesting programs exactly suited to bill. These programs are targeted to increase all students', and particularly minority students', participation in the programs. There are a large number of colleges, specifically around Native American populations, working with the school districts on Running Start issues. It might be a good idea to beef up the study part of the bill and have the WSAC look at where programs encouraging minority student participation are already happening, where the best practices are already developed, and funding possibilities. Then use the results of this study as the first focus to guide next steps. Students spend time with school counselors getting into the Program, so counselors are integral to the success of the Program in

minimizing barriers and access to the Program. An amendment should be made to the bill to have school counselors as part of the discussion between the school districts and the OSPI.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Tina Orwall, prime sponsor; Scott Copeland, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; David Buri, Eastern Washington University; and Rebecca Kenna-Schenk, Washington Student Achievement Council.

(In support with amendment(s)) Wendy Rader-Konofalski, Washington Education Association; and Amy Brackenbury, Washington School Counselors Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.