

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5719

As of January 17, 2022

Title: An act relating to dual credit costs.

Brief Description: Concerning dual credit costs.

Sponsors: Senators Mullet and Gildon.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/17/22.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to create and administer a grant program to cover up to \$35 per credit of the per credit tuition fee for College in the High School program courses, subject to appropriation.
- Removes language requiring Running Start students to pay mandatory fees to institutions of higher education.
- Allows institutions of higher education to charge Running Start students reasonable fees for textbook costs.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

Background: Running Start. Running Start allows eleventh- and twelfth-grade high school students to take courses at community colleges, technical colleges, and various four-year institutions of higher education. Upon completion of a course, students earn both high school and college credit.

Running Start students and their families do not pay tuition, but students must pay for

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college fees, purchase textbooks and other materials, and provide their own transportation to and from the institution. Since 2011, higher education institutions that are not community or technical colleges may charge up to 10 percent of tuition costs to students.

Institutions are reimbursed by local schools districts for costs of Running Start students. Current law requires districts to reimburse the institutions at a per student rate allotted for basic education funding, with the districts retaining 7 percent of these funds. Vocational students are funded at an additional rate.

College in the High School. College in the High School (CHS) programs provide college level courses in high schools or high school environments to qualified students who are in or are eligible for enrollment in grades 9 through 12. Students who participate in a CHS program are able to earn both high school and postsecondary credit by completing postsecondary level courses with a passing grade. Programs are established in individual agreements between the schools and colleges or universities.

The maximum per college credit tuition fee for a program course is \$65 per college credit, adjusted for inflation. High schools that offer CHS programs must provide general information about the program to all students in grades 8 through 12 and their guardians, as well as provide certain program information in course catalogues.

State funding for CHS programs does not include funding for students who are in or eligible for enrollment in grades 9 or 10. For students in grades 11 or 12, funding is prioritized according to statute with a limit of ten credits, although a lower limit may be established in the Omnibus Appropriations Act.

Subsidies may also be provided for students who meet financial aid requirements. The maximum annual number of subsidized credits that a student may receive through these provisions is limited by statute to five, but the Omnibus Appropriations Act may establish a lower limit.

Summary of Bill: Credit Tuition Fee Grant Program. Subject to appropriation, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction must create and administer a grant program for providing funds to school districts, charter schools, and state-tribal compact schools to cover a portion of the credit tuition fee for CHS program courses.

School districts, charter schools, and state-tribal compact schools receiving funds under the grant program must cover the per college credit tuition fee for a program course either at the full per credit amount set, or at \$35 per credit, whichever is lower.

Running Start Fees. Language is removed requiring Running Start students to pay mandatory fees to community or technical colleges, as well as language allowing all other institutions of higher education to charge Running Start students a fee of up to 10 percent of tuition and fees in addition to technology fees.

Institutions of higher education may charge Running Start students reasonable fees for textbook costs. Current statutory language on fee waivers for low-income Running Start students is modified to address textbook fee waivers.

All referenced changes to Running Start fees are subject to appropriation in the Omnibus Appropriations Act by June 30, 2022.

Appropriation: The bill contains a section or sections to limit implementation to the availability of amounts appropriated for that specific purpose.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 13, 2022.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2022. Includes a null and void clause.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Washington State students should not have to pay in order to take courses while in high school. Dual credits allow students to potentially save costs while attending an institution of higher education. More students should be able to access higher education courses. Reducing higher education costs will help students with lesser means achieve their academic goals. The majority of jobs in Washington State require some sort of postsecondary education; cost can be a barrier for many students to these opportunities.

OTHER: Community and technical colleges do provide financial aid to one-third of their students. There are some concerns on funding and if these changes would hurt institutions of higher education financially.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Mark Mullet, Prime Sponsor; Steve DuPont, Central Washington University; Charlie Brown, Tacoma School District; Natalya Yudkovsky, Washington State PTA; Kristin Murphy, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

OTHER: Jamie Traugott, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Juliet Schindler, College Success Foundation.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.