

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1302

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to college in the high school programs.

Brief Description: Concerning college in the high school programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Berg, Ybarra, Johnson, J., Sutherland, Eslick, Morgan, Bergquist, Paul and Callan.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/5/21, 2/12/21 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows students eligible for the ninth grade to participate in college in the high school (CHS) programs.
- Requires specified information about CHS program courses to be included in the high school catalogue or equivalent.
- Sets the maximum per college credit tuition fee for a CHS program course at \$65, annually adjusted for inflation as specified.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Ybarra, Ranking Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berg, Bergquist, Callan, McCaslin, McEntire, Ortiz-Self, Rude, Steele and Stonier.

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

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

Background:

College in the high school (CHS) programs include both academic and career and technical education, and are taught at a participating high school, by high school teachers, with college curriculum, college textbooks, and oversight by college faculty and staff. Students eligible for the tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades may participate in a CHS program. If a student passes a CHS course, then the student must receive both high school credit and college credit.

State statute permits school districts to offer CHS programs. State rule permits charter schools and state-tribal compact schools to offer CHS programs.

If a high school has a CHS program, then general information about CHS must be provided to students in grades nine through twelve and to their parents and guardians.

The institution of higher education participating in a CHS program may charge tuition fees per credit to CHS students. When the state provides subsidies for CHS credit fees, the maximum per credit fee may not exceed the amount of the per credit subsidy.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Ninth grade students are made eligible for CHS. General information about CHS must be provided to students in eighth grade and to their parents and guardians. A high school that offers a CHS must include the following information about program courses in the high school catalogue or equivalent: (1) there is no fee for students to enroll in a program course to earn only high school credit; (2) a description and breakdown of the fees charged to students to earn college credit, and fee payment and financial assistance options; and (3) a notification that paying for college credit automatically starts an official college transcript and that college credit earned may count only as elective credit if transferred to another institution of higher education.

Charter schools and state-tribal compact schools are allowed to offer CHS programs, to the same extent as school districts.

The maximum per college credit tuition fee an institution of higher education may charge for a CHS course is \$65, annually adjusted for inflation as specified. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction must calculate and post the maximum fee on its website, by July 1 annually. Language specifying that the minimum CHS program allocation and subsidy is \$65 per quarter credit and that specified entities must review funding levels for the program every 4 years and recommend changes is removed.

Cross-references are corrected and other nonsubstantive changes are made, for example consistently referring to "college credit," rather than "postsecondary credit."

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill adds that specified information about CHS program courses must be included in the high school catalogue or equivalent. It also removes language specifying that the minimum CHS program allocation and subsidy is \$65 per quarter credit and that specified entities must review funding levels for the program every 4 years and recommend changes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on February 12, 2021.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The bill addresses equity issues of access. As the state has moved to 24 credits, middle schoolers are taking more advanced classes earlier, so that they can front-load high school credits. This means that ninth graders are sitting in CHS courses, but they can't get college credit, like their older peers, even if they receive an A in the class.

More than 22,000 ninth grade students enrolled in CHS courses in the 2017-18 school year, 94 percent of these students completed the course, but zero received college credit. This bill is a priority for many families with ninth grade students who are taking CHS classes.

This bill is necessary to reduce the costs of college for students. It also saves the state money. For many high school students, the less expensive, on site CHS program is more accessible than other college courses. Many families are struggling financially, and this bill would help address these costs. The move to an annual system of adjusting the maximum tuition rate is better than the current system of negotiating every four years. The bill allows tuition costs to increase and the bill includes scholarships to help families meet the costs.

The CHS program and Running Start program are the only forms of dual credit that are not open to ninth grade students. There should also be equitable access to the other dual credit programs, so that students can access family sustaining wages. All CHS courses must meet accreditation standards for both systems and there must be a contract between the high school and the college.

The opportunity to take early college courses stimulates learning capabilities and provides access to resources and additional support. Being able to take classes on non-core subjects broadens students' outlook and show them how they can control their education. There should also be more CHS courses available, otherwise school districts might not allow some

students who want to take these courses enroll in them.

All CHS courses must meet accreditation standards for both systems and there must be a contract between the high school and the college. It is a great program, but families are not receiving information about it. The bill should be strengthened so that families and students are provided more information about the courses and options available to them. The bill should be amended so that information is provided that will help students know how to pay, enroll, get a transcript, and get college credit.

The law should not discriminate against advanced students by denying them equal credit for their work. Removing the grade limit would not cost very much, but will make a difference to highly capable students. The grade limit should be removed entirely for students who are taking dual credit courses if they are ready for them.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) The bill expands CHS to ninth grade. If they are academically ready to take a college course, then they should be eligible to earn college credit. While many students elect to attend Running Start, it is not the best or most desired preparation and credit earning opportunity for all students. Many students want to remain connected to their high school for a variety of reasons. The decision to limit low-income students access to the grant within 20 miles of a community college is short sighted. This decision eradicates the viability of CHS on some high school campuses because their students will not be able to access these courses without experiencing financial hardships.

While preserving the current process for increasing the maximum fee that institutions of higher education can charge to students enrolled in CHS courses, the bill also introduces a second way, which is an annual increase based on inflation. Taken together, these two processes will make sure that the maximum fee is evaluated and increased appropriately.

The rigor of students' high school coursework is directly related to their college success. The CHS allow high school teachers to teach college courses and students are able to receive more personal support on a longer timeframe. The bill fails to address barriers and inconsistencies. Earning college credit in high school may result in students not being eligible for federal financial aid later. There should not be a 20-mile radius limit in the subsidy program. There is not consistency among the higher education institutions in how they operate CHS programs.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Berg, prime sponsor; Angela Jones, Washington STEM; Isaac Yi and Lily Villa, Legislative Youth Advisory Council; Jason Boatwright, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Natalya Yudkovsky, Washington State PTA; Vivian Tidwell; Erin Wagner Tidwell; Madisyn Ross; and Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association.

(Other) Tim Stetter, UW in the High School - University of Washington; Roz Thompson, Association of Washington School Principals; and Jacqueline Downey, Evergreen High School - Highline Public Schools.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.