

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5289

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to the running start program.

Brief Description: Disregarding from federal accountability reporting those students receiving home-based instruction who participate in running start.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 3/28/05 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Clarifies the exclusion of home-schooled students from the students who are counted in a school district's reporting requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.
- Clarifies the eligibility of students to participate in Running Start; students may participate if they lack the credits necessary to earn a high school diploma.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; P. Sullivan, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Haigh, Hunter, McDermott, Santos, Shabro and Tom.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

The Running Start program was established by the Legislature in 1990 to provide students with the opportunity to earn high school and college credit simultaneously through taking college courses in community colleges, technical colleges, or certain public baccalaureate institutions. Under current law, students in the 11th and 12th grades who have not yet received their high school diplomas and who meet entrance criteria established by participating colleges and universities may participate in the program. Students who first enroll in the program in 11th grade may participate in the program for the coursework equivalent to two academic years. Students who first enroll in the program in grade 12 may participate for the coursework equivalent to one academic year.

State rules established by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges allow a student to continue to participate in the Running Start program beyond grade 12 due to the student's absence, failure of one or more courses, or another similar reason as long as the student takes only the course or courses required to meet high school graduation requirements.

During the 2003-04 school year, about 10 percent of public school juniors and seniors participated in Running Start. The 15,610 students served equaled 9,007 full time equivalences, an increase of about 6 percent over the previous year. Research suggests that Running Start students perform as well as other college students. During the 2003-04 school year, Running Start students enrolled in courses at Central Washington University earned a 3.44 grade point average (GPA), while those at Eastern Washington University earned a 3.25 GPA. In the same year, Running Start students who transferred to the University of Washington earned a 3.14 GPA.

The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires that the state, school districts and high schools report the percentage of students who graduate from high school with a regular diploma in four years as a provision of making Adequate Yearly Progress. In addition, the state Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission has established statewide graduation rate performance goals for the state, school districts, and schools.

Summary of Bill:

A provision is added to the Running Start enrollment criteria to clarify that 11th and 12th grade students who meet entrance criteria established by participating colleges and universities are eligible to participate in the Running Start as long as they have not earned the credits required for a high school diploma.

Students receiving home-based instruction who enroll in a public high school for the sole purpose of participating in the Running Start program will not be counted in state and federal accountability reporting as long as the parents or guardians of the students file a declaration of intent to provide home-based instruction and the students receive home-based instruction during the school year before the school year in which the students intend to participate in the Running Start program.

Students receiving home-based instruction and attending private schools are not required to take the Washington Assessment of Student Learning, earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement or a Certificate of Individual Achievement to graduate from high school, nor master the Essential Academic Learning Requirements.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The legislation helps clarify the way home-schooled students in Running Start are counted for federal accountability purposes. It is a helpful clarification that will assist school districts in their efforts to follow the federal law. It is also helpful to home-schooled parents to have the issue clarified.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: DiAnna Brannan, Christian Homeschool Network; and Bob Butts, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.