

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5289

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education, February 10, 2005

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.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe, Hargrove, Stevens, Regala, Mulliken and Benton.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 1/27/05, 2/10/05 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING, K-12 & HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5289 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; Carrell, Delvin, Eide, Pflug, Rasmussen, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Shin.

Staff: Brian Jeffries (786-7422)

Background: The Running Start program was established by the Legislature in 1990 as part of the Learning By Choice Act (Chapter 9, Laws of 1990, First Extraordinary Session) to provide students a program option consisting of attendance at institutions of higher education and the earning of dual high school and college/university credit. Under current law, students in the eleventh and twelfth 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 Running Start program. Students who first enroll in the program in eleventh grade may participate in the program for the coursework equivalent to two academic years. Students who first enroll in the program in grade twelve 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 twelve 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.

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. The state Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission (A+ Commission) has established state-wide graduation rate performance goals for the state, school districts, and schools.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A provision is added to the Running Start enrollment criteria to clarify that eleventh and twelfth 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 filed a declaration of intent to provide home-based instruction and the students received 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.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Language is added to exempt students receiving home-based instruction and those attending private schools from the requirements of public school standards and assessments.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Because of No Child Left Behind, home-school parents are reporting that some school districts are requiring that home-school children wishing to participate in Running Start declare their intention to earn a high school diploma, or the school district refuses to enroll home-school students for Running Start. This bill would add clarity for school district administrators who may be concerned that home-school students participating in Running Start that these students would not count in the federal reporting requirements.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Senator Rosemary McAuliffe, prime sponsor; DiAnna Brannan, Christian Homeschool Network; Janice Hedin, Washington Homeschool Organization.