
Education Committee

HB 1760

Brief Description: Expanding access to dual credit programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Paul, Berg, Johnson, J., Valdez, Fey, Ramel, Santos, Sullivan, Slatter, Bergquist, Pollet, Stonier, Ormsby and Taylor.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Lowers dual credit program costs for low-income students, a defined term, by creating a new state subsidy program, among other things.
- Makes the Running Start Summer School Pilot Program a permanent program and increases both the number of community colleges that may participate and the number of college credits that may be earned by high school graduates.
- Expands requirements to notify students and their parents or legal guardians about dual credit programs.

Hearing Date: 1/21/22

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

Dual Credit Programs. Dual credit programs allow high school students to earn high school and postsecondary credit at the same time. Dual credit programs can be course-based or exam-based. Course-based dual credit programs can be offered at an institution of higher education, for example running start (RS) courses, or at a high school, for example college in the high school (CHS) courses and career and technical education (CTE) dual credit courses.

Students in grades 9 through 12 are eligible to enroll in CHS courses, which are taught by high

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school teachers, with college curricula, and oversight by faculty and staff at public institutions of higher education. Dual credit is awarded to students who pass a CHS course. The maximum per college credit tuition fee an institution of higher education may charge for a CHS course is \$65, annually adjusted for inflation.

Students in grades 11 and 12 are eligible to apply for admission to a participating public institution of higher education to enroll as a RS student. Students in the RS Program do not pay tuition, but do pay for educational materials, mandatory fees, and transportation costs. Institutions of higher education must make fee waivers available for low-income RS students. The waiver is funded out of each institution's operating budget, not additional state funding. In addition, many RS students receive book loan funds through college foundations.

In 2020, legislation was enacted that created a two-year RS Summer School Pilot Program (RS Pilot) to evaluate interest in and barriers to expanding the RS Program to include the summer term. Three community colleges are participating in the RS Pilot. In addition to students eligible for the RS Program, people who graduated from a participating high school in the current school year and who have five or fewer college credits to earn before meeting associate degree requirements are eligible to earn a maximum of five college credits through the RS Pilot. A report to the Legislature with findings and recommendations regarding the RS Pilot, including recommending whether to expand the RS Program to include the summer term, is required by November 10, 2022.

State Funding for Dual Credit Program Costs. The Washington Dual Enrollment Scholarship Pilot Program (Scholarship Pilot) was established in 2019 to provide eligible students with scholarships to participate in RS or CHS programs. An eligible student is a student who: qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch; is enrolled in one or more dual credit programs; and has at least a 2.0 grade point average. Under the Scholarship Pilot, a RS student may receive a scholarship to cover: mandatory fees, prorated based on credit load; course or laboratory fees; and a textbook voucher worth \$10 per enrolled credit, up to a maximum of 15 credits per year. Under the Scholarship Pilot, a CHS student may receive a scholarship for college credit tuition fees. The Scholarship Pilot is funded at \$750,000 per year. The Scholarship Pilot expires July 1, 2025, pending sunset review by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee.

The 2021-23 State Omnibus Operating Appropriations Act appropriated to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) \$4,894,000 for fiscal year 2022 and \$4,894,000 for fiscal year 2023 to administer programs and grants to increase equitable access to dual credit programs, including subsidizing or eliminating student costs for dual credit courses or exams.

While not specifically required, these funds may be used to implement the following programs:

- Legislation enacted in 2013 established the Academic Acceleration Incentive (AAI) Program to support school districts with costs associated with offering dual credit courses to high school students. When the state specifically funds the AAI Program, which it has not done since the 2019-20 school year, half of the funds must be allocated on a competitive basis as one-time grants for high schools to expand the availability of dual credit courses; and the other half of the funds must be allocated as an incentive award to

school districts for each student who earned dual credit in specified courses offered by a high school in the previous year.

- Legislation enacted in 2015 established requirements for state-funded CHS per credit allocations and per credit subsidies. When the state provides funding specifically for these purposes, which it has not done since the 2017-18 school year, high schools with CHS programs may qualify to receive allocations or subsidies per college credit for CHS students in grades 11 and 12.

Dual Credit Program Notifications. School districts are required to notify students and their parents or guardians about advanced courses or programs available to students, including dual credit courses or programs.

High schools that offer CHS programs must provide general information about the CHS program to all students in grades eight through 12 and to their parents and guardians. In addition, specific information must be included in the high school catalog or equivalent, for example, a description and breakdown of the fees charged to students who choose to enroll in a CHS course to earn both high school and college credit.

School districts must provide general information about the RS program to all students in grades 10 through 12 and their parents and guardians, including information about the opportunity to enroll in the RS program through online courses available at institutions of higher education.

Washington College Grant. The Washington College Grant Program provides postsecondary education grants to students who demonstrate financial need and meet other criteria. Financial need is based on the state's median family income (MFI) and the student's family size. Beginning with academic year 2020-21, students with family incomes between zero and 55 percent of the state MFI, adjusted for family size, must receive the maximum grant amount.

Summary of Bill:

Subsidy Program for Students' Dual Credit Course Costs. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must administer a program to subsidize certain dual credit course costs for low-income students. "Low-income students" means students who demonstrate the financial need to qualify to receive the maximum Washington college grant. For low-income students enrolled in college in the high school (CHS) courses, the program must subsidize permitted tuition fees. For low-income students enrolled in career and technical education dual credit courses, the program must subsidize transcription fees assessed by the institution of higher education.

For low-income students enrolled in running start (RS) courses, the program must subsidize: (1) any student-voted fees, technology fees, course fees, laboratory fees, or other fees required for enrollment, up to 18 credits per quarter, that were not required to be waived by the institution of higher education; and (2) textbooks and other required course materials. To subsidize these RS costs, the OSPI must transmit to each public institution of higher education \$1,000 per full-time

equivalent low-income RS student per academic year. At the end of the academic year, any unused funds must be returned to the OSPI.

The statutes establishing the Academic Acceleration Incentive Program, the CHS per credit allocations and per credit subsidies, and the Washington Dual Enrollment Scholarship Pilot Program are repealed.

College in the High School. For low-income students, as defined for the subsidy program described above, the maximum per college credit tuition fee for a CHS course is \$42.50, annually adjusted for inflation as specified.

Running Start. The definition of "low-income students" used for the subsidy program described above is made applicable to fee waivers for RS students. The RS Summer School Pilot Program is made a permanent program, with the number of community colleges that may participate in the program increased from three to six, the number of college credits that a high school graduate may earn per summer academic term increased from 5 to 10, and the date of the required report on findings and recommendations for the program changed from November 10, 2022, to November 1, 2024.

Dual Credit Program Notifications. Each quarter or trimester, public schools that serve students in any of grades nine through 12 must provide, via email and other methods, to students and their parents or legal guardians information on each available dual credit program. To the extent feasible, the dual credit program information must be translated into the primary language of each parent or legal guardian.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 11, 2022.

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