
Education Committee

HB 1316

Brief Description: Expanding access to dual credit programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Paul, Ortiz-Self, Stonier, Bergquist, Lekanoff, Ramel, Santos, Reed, Pollet, Leavitt, Timmons, Chapman and Ormsby.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Lowers dual enrollment program costs for eligible students with financial need by creating a subsidy program, incentivizing reduction of per college credit fees charged to college in the high school students, and revising eligibility for the Running Start (RS) program tuition fee waiver.
- Allows students participating in RS programs to be funded up to a combined maximum enrollment of 1.6 full-time equivalents, including enrollment during the summer academic term.
- Expands requirements to notify students and their parents or legal guardians about dual credit programs and available financial assistance.

Hearing Date: 1/23/23

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

Dual Enrollment Program Overview.

Dual, or concurrent, enrollment programs allow high school students to earn high school and postsecondary credit at the same time. These programs can be offered at an institution of higher education (running start [RS] courses) or at a high school (college in the high school [CHS] courses and career and technical education dual credit courses).

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.

College in the High School.

Students in grades 9 through 12 are eligible to enroll in CHS courses, which are taught by high school teachers with college curricula and overseen by public institutions of higher education. Dual credit is awarded to students who pass a CHS course. The maximum fee an institution of higher education may charge for a CHS course is \$65 per college credit, adjusted annually for inflation as specified.

Running Start.

Program Description. Students in grades 11 and 12 are eligible to apply for admission to a participating public institution of higher education to enroll as an RS student. Students in the RS program do not pay tuition, but do pay for educational materials, mandatory fees, and transportation costs. Public 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.

Enrollment Limits. The state's operating budget specifies that students participating in RS programs may be funded up to a combined maximum enrollment of 1.2 FTE, including school district and institution of higher education enrollment. In calculating the combined 1.2 FTE, the operating budget allows the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to average an RS student's September through June enrollment to account for differences in the start and end dates for courses provided by the high school and institution of higher education.

The 2022 Supplemental Operating Budget directed the OSPI to adopt rules to fund a participating RS student's enrollment in RS courses during the summer term.

Annual Reporting. The state's operating budget directs the OSPI, in consultation with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), and the Education Research and Data Center, to annually track and report to the Legislature on the combined FTE experience of students participating in RS programs, including course load analyses at both the high school and community and technical college system.

Summer Pilot Program. 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 academic 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, was required in November 2022. The report included recommendations related to: (1) full and consistent RS funding; (2) funding to support summer staff at the high schools; (3) student eligibility; and (4) integrated electronic tracking and reporting.

Historical Agreements. The statutes governing the RS program are in addition to and not intended to adversely affect agreements between school districts and public institutions of higher education in effect on April 11, 1990, and in the future.

State Funding for Dual Credit Program Costs.

Since at least 2018, the state has appropriated \$4,894,000 per fiscal year to the OSPI to support the administration of dual credit programs and to provide grants to subsidize student fees. While not specifically required, these funds may be used to implement the following programs:

- The Academic Acceleration Incentive (AAI) Program, enacted in 2013, supports 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 2017-19 biennium, 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.
- A program to provide state-funded CHS per credit allocations and per credit subsidies was enacted in 2015. When the state provides funding specifically for these purposes, which it has not done since the 2017-19 biennium, high schools with CHS programs may qualify to receive allocations or subsidies per college credit for CHS students in grades 11 and 12.

In addition, the 2022 Supplemental Operating Budget appropriated to the OSPI:

- \$500,000 for the administration of a pilot program to subsidize costs for high school students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals and are participating in CHS or RS through three designated community colleges. For RS fees, the OSPI must transmit to the community colleges \$1,000 per full time equivalent student during the 2022-23 academic year to cover students' required textbook, course material, and enrollment fees, up to 17 credits per quarter. Any remaining funds may be used to subsidize waived fees or transportation costs for eligible students enrolled in RS courses. The OSPI must report to the Legislature by June 30, 2023, on the results of the pilot program; and
- \$3,000,000 for grants to school districts that identify RS students that have exceeded maximum enrolment under RS funding formulas and high school graduates who have 15 or fewer college credits to earn before meeting associate degree requirements. For the high school graduates, grants are for fees to earn up to 15 college credits during the summer academic term following high school graduation.

Notifications about Dual Credit Programs.

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 8 through 12 and to their parents and guardians. In addition, specific information must be included in the high school catalog, 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 public institutions of higher education.

Washington College Grant.

The Washington college grant program is a state financial aid program, administered by the WSAC, that 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. Students with family incomes between zero and 55 percent of the state MFI, adjusted for family size, must receive the maximum grant amount.

Dual Credit Task Force Report.

In 2021 the WSAC was directed to convene a task force to propose strategies to eliminate barriers to low-income students participating in dual credit programs. As directed, the task force issued a report in December 2021. The 42-page report includes specific recommendations related to addressing financial barriers, improving communication, and other topics.

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, or concurrent enrollment course costs for eligible students. "Eligible students" means students: (a) who meet federal eligibility requirements for free or reduced-price school meals based on the income of the students' household; (b) who are categorically eligible for free school meals without an application and not subject to income verification; and (c) whose parent or legal guardian attests that they demonstrate financial need equivalent to the financial need required to receive the maximum Washington college grant, using the attestation form developed as described below.

For eligible students enrolled in college in the high school (CHS) courses who are charged a per college credit tuition fee of \$45.50 plus inflation, the program must subsidize the per college credit tuition fees. For eligible students enrolled in career and technical education dual credit courses, the program must subsidize transcription fees assessed by the institution of higher education.

For eligible students enrolled in running start (RS) courses, the program must subsidize: (1) any fees required for enrollment, up to 18 credits per quarter or the semester equivalent, 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 RS student per academic year. At the end of

the academic year, any unused funds must be returned to the OSPI.

The Washington Student Achievement Council, in consultation with the OSPI, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, public four-year institutions of higher education, and other interested parties must develop and publish an income attestation form to be used to determine student eligibility for the dual credit subsidy program, reduced per college credit tuition fees for CHS courses, and fee waivers for RS courses.

The OSPI must collaborate with the public institutions of higher education to facilitate the identification of eligible students who qualify for reduced per college credit tuition fees for CHS courses or fee waivers for RS courses.

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.

Notifications about Dual Credit Programs.

Prior to course scheduling or course registration for the next school term, public schools that serve students in any of grades 9 through 12 must provide all students and their parents or legal guardians with information on each available dual credit program and any financial assistance available to reduce dual credit course and exam costs for students and their families. The information must be provided via email and other communication methods, and, to the extent feasible, must be translated into the primary language of each parent or legal guardian. Public schools are encouraged to include in this notification other information about advanced course taking that is required to be provided to parents and legal guardians.

College in the High School.

A public institution of higher education is eligible for the subsidy program if, for eligible students, the maximum per college credit tuition fee for a CHS course is \$42.50 per college credit, adjusted for inflation as specified.

With regard to the information that must be included in the high school catalog or equivalent, the statement "college credit earned upon successful completion of a program course may count only as elective credit if transferred to another institution of higher education" is changed to "most but not all institutions of higher education may recognize and accept this credit."

Running Start.

Applicability. It is explicitly stated that every school district, charter school, and state-tribal compact school must allow eligible students to participate in the RS program.

Eligibility. High school graduates who have 15 or fewer college credits to earn before meeting associate degree requirements may continue participation in the RS Program and earn up to 15 college credits during the summer academic term following their high school graduation.

Waivers. The definition of "eligible students" used for the subsidy program described above is made applicable to fee waivers for low-income RS students.

Enrollment Limits. Students participating in RS programs may be funded up to a combined maximum enrollment of 1.6 full-time equivalents (FTEs), including school district and institution of higher education enrollment. In calculating the combined FTEs, the OSPI must adopt rules to fund a student's enrollment in RS courses provided by the institution of higher education during the summer academic term.

It is declared that the RS programs as a service delivery model, associated funding levels beyond 1.0 FTE per student, and funding for high school graduates enrolled in RS courses, are not part of the state's statutory program of basic education.

Reporting. The report on the combined FTE experience of students participating in RS programs must include enrollments by high school and participating public institutions of higher education.

Historical Agreements. The provision stating that the statutes governing the RS program are in addition to and not intended to adversely affect agreements between school districts and public institutions of higher education in effect on April 11, 1990, no longer applies to agreements in effect "in the future."

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 18, 2023.

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