

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 1977

Title: *An act relating to high school students' options.*

Brief Description: *Allowing arrangements for running start students to attend out-of-state community colleges.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Honeyford, Boldt and Dunn.*

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Meeting Date: *January 22, 1998.*

Bill Analysis Prepared by: *Suz Morrissey (786-7111).*

Background: The 1990 Legislature created the Running Start program as part of the Learning by Choice— law. The law was designed to expand educational options for students in public high schools. Through Running Start, qualified eleventh and twelfth grade students may take college level courses in any of the state's 32 community and technical colleges. Running Start students earn both high school and college credit for successfully completed college courses.

The 1994 Legislature expanded the program to include Central, Eastern, and Washington State universities. One reason for the expansion - to provide high school students with additional educational opportunities in communities in which no community colleges or technical colleges were located. School districts may choose whether to permit their students to attend the three participating state universities.

Running Start students are not charged tuition. However, they must provide their own transportation, books, and class materials. The school districts in which the students are enrolled must reimburse the colleges and universities for their students' participation in the program. The rate for reimbursement is uniform statewide. In 1996, the reimbursement rate was about \$79 per credit for academic programs and \$95 for vocational programs. School districts retain 7 percent of the funds for counseling and other overhead expenses.

About 5 percent of Washington's public high school students are enrolled in Running Start. During the 1996-97 academic year, 10,250 Running Start students were enrolled in community and technical colleges. Almost 60 percent of the students were female, 14.4 percent were students of color, and about 1.2 percent were students with disabilities. In that year, 70 percent of the students attended college full-time. Forty-one percent of the students worked part-time. During the 1996-97 school year, Running Start saved taxpayers about \$18.3 million dollars.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature finds that it may be advantageous to permit some students in border counties to attend community colleges in neighboring states. Under the authority permitted through the Interlocal Cooperation Act, school districts may enter cooperative agreements with out-of-state community colleges. The agreements will permit 11th and 12th grade students enrolled in Washington high schools to earn high school and college credit concurrently.

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Requested on January 15, 1998.*

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