
Education Committee

SB 6561

Brief Description: Strengthening linkages between K-12 and higher education systems.

Sponsors: Senators Carlson, McAuliffe and Kohl-Welles.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs selected education and higher education agencies to expand, strengthen and create high school and college enrollment dual programs on high school campuses.
- Directs the agencies to continue to examine the use of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning for college admissions and placement decisions.

Hearing Date: 2/23/04

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

Dual Credit Programs

A variety of programs allow high school students to earn post secondary course credit while earning credit toward high school graduation. Examples include Running Start, College in the High School, Tech Prep, advanced placement and International Baccalaureate. Students who participate in these dual enrollment programs have the opportunity to graduate from high school with all or a portion of their intended college course work already completed.

The dual enrollment programs generally take different forms and have different funding streams. In Tech Prep for example, students have had the option to take a set of courses that begin in high school and are completed in a community or technical college. In College in the High School, advanced placement, and International Baccalaureate programs, students may complete some college level work while staying on their high school campuses. Students must pay tuition to take College in the High School courses. In advanced placement classes, students take courses in high schools and may receive college credit if they pay for and pass a standardized examination at the end of the course. The colleges they attend determine the amount of credit they will receive for the advanced placement work. In most of these models, the students take classes in their high schools from high school teachers who have been permitted by the colleges to offer college level work since the teachers meet college teaching credentials.

Running Start is a somewhat different model. Through the program, students have an opportunity to study on a college campus while acquiring credits that count toward both high school and college graduation. The students take courses from college faculty and do not pay tuition for Running Start classes. If the student passes the college course, he or she receives the same amount of credit as any other student taking the course. The state provides funding that covers the amount of time the students spend in either high school or college. School districts retain seven percent of the amount that would otherwise be provided to colleges for the districts' counseling and administrative expenses.

Statutory Task Force for Discussing Curriculum Issues that Transect Education and Higher Education

The 1994 Legislature directed the State Board of Education and the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) to convene a task force that would act as a forum for ongoing discussion of curriculum issues that transect K-12 and higher education. The first issue that the taskforce was asked to tackle was the issue of how to award appropriate K-12 credit to Running Start courses. In addition, the taskforce was asked to be a vehicle for ongoing discussion about three other issues, including articulation agreements between high schools and institutions of higher education; options for students to enroll in programs and institutions that will best fit those students' needs; and a way to appropriately award high school and college credit for skills and knowledge learned in a variety of ways. The task force was successful in finding a way to ensure that all school districts and institutions of higher education had a common understanding of the appropriate amount of K-12 credit to be awarded for completed Running Start courses.

Summary of Bill:

The HECB, Council of Presidents, State Board for Community and Technical College, and Superintendent of Public Instruction will:

- Strengthen, expand, and create dual enrollment programs available on high school campuses by removing barriers that inhibit the availability of such programs, and by creating incentives for offering these programs; and
- Continue to examine the feasibility of using the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) as a factor in higher education admissions and placement.

By December 15, 2004, the agencies will report to the Legislative Education and Higher Education Committees on actions taken to reduce barriers and on incentives that have been created. The report will include recommendations on the actions the Legislature should take to encourage the availability of dual enrollment and programs on high school campuses.

The legislation expires on December 31, 2004.

Differences between SHB 2956 and SB 6561

In SHB 2956, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, secondary school principals, and school superintendents are added to the list of agencies that will participate in the action and reporting requirements of the legislation.

The provision directing the group to examine the feasibility of using the WASL as a factor for admissions and placement at higher education institutions is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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