
Education Committee

HB 1164

Brief Description: Concerning dual credit programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Bergquist, Jinkins and Ortiz-Self; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes qualifying high schools to receive competitive grants from the Academic Acceleration Incentive Program (Program) more than once.
- Discontinues a reporting requirement obligating the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to annually inform the Legislature about students earning dual credits from schools receiving grants through the Program.
- Makes numerous changes to the funding provisions for College in the High School programs, including making per college credit funding available to students in grade 10, rather than only grades 11 and 12, and conditioning student funding upon eligibility for free or reduce price lunches.

Hearing Date: 1/14/20

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

Academic Acceleration Policy and Incentive Program. Under an academic acceleration policy, a student who meets or exceeds a specified threshold is automatically enrolled into the next most rigorous level of course, with the objective being to eventually enroll the student in courses that offer the opportunity to earn dual credit for high school and college. In 2013 the Legislature encouraged school districts to adopt an academic acceleration policy for high school students and established the Academic Acceleration Incentive Program (Program). The intent of this Program is to support teacher training, curriculum, technology, examination fees, textbook fees, and other costs associated with offering dual credit courses to high school students.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) awards school districts state funds appropriated for the Program. Half of the funds must be awarded as competitive one-time grants for eligible high schools to expand the availability of dual credit courses. The other half of the funds must be awarded as an incentive for each student who earned a dual credit in specified course types offered by a high school in the previous school year. The OSPI must annually report to the Legislature with the demographics of the students earning dual credits from schools receiving the Program grants.

College in the High School Programs. College in the High School (CHS) programs provide college level courses in high schools to students who are in, or are eligible for enrollment in, grades 10, 11, and 12. Students who participate in a CHS program are able to earn both high school and college credits by completing postsecondary level courses with a passing grade.

The CHS programs are established in contract a between a high school and a college or university. Among other provisions, the contracts must: define the criteria for a student's eligibility for the program; specify whether the student or the high school pays for tuition fees; provide that students who successfully complete a CHS program course will receive both high school credit and college credit; and provide general information about the CHS program to students in grades 9 through 12.

The maximum annual number of allocated credits that a student can receive through a CHS program is limited by statute to 10, but the omnibus appropriations act, the enacted legislation that establishes the state's two-year budget, may establish a lower limit. State funding for CHS programs, which is subject to legislative discretion, does not include funding for students who are in or eligible for enrollment in grade 10. For students in or eligible for enrollment in grades 11 or 12, the state funding is prioritized as follows: the first priority is students whose residence, or the high school in which they are enrolled, is located 20 driving miles or more as measured by the most direct route from the nearest eligible institution of higher education offering a running start program, whichever is greater; and the second priority is high schools that are eligible for the small school funding enhancement in the omnibus appropriations act.

In school year 2015-16, high schools offering a running start program in the previous year were the first funding priority. If the priorities specified above are funded, and if the Legislature provides monies for this specific purpose, a subsidy may be provided per college credit for students in or eligible for enrollment in grades 11 or 12 who are enrolled in CHS courses and also meet financial need requirements. The maximum annual number of subsidized credits that a student may receive through these provisions is limited by statute to five, but the omnibus appropriations act may establish a lower limit.

Summary of Bill:

Academic Acceleration Incentive Program Grants. A provision making high schools eligible to receive a one-time competitive Program grant to expand the availability of dual credit courses is changed to allow high schools to receive the grant multiple times. A reporting requirement obligating the OSPI to annually inform the Legislature about the demographics of students earning dual credits through schools receiving a Program grant is repealed.

College in the High School Programs. Numerous changes are made to funding provisions for CHS programs. Funding may be allocated at an amount per college credit for all students enrolled in a CHS program, not just for those who are in or are eligible to be enrolled in grades 11 or 12, who are eligible for free or reduced price lunches. The maximum annual number of allocated college credits per participating student in the general funding provisions for CHS programs is increased from 10 to 15.

Additionally, current and expired provisions establishing funding prioritizations are removed and provisions establishing per college credit subsidies for students in, or eligible for enrollment in, grades 11 or 12 who are enrolled in CHS courses and meet financial need requirements are repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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