

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6505

As of February 6, 2020

Title: An act relating to expanding access to dual credit opportunities by eliminating direct costs to students and families.

Brief Description: Expanding access to dual credit opportunities by eliminating direct costs to students and families.

Sponsors: Senators Mullet, Wellman, Hunt, Braun, Holy, Pedersen, Wagoner, Rolfes, Salomon, Padden, McCoy, Liias, Wilson, C., Hawkins, Rivers, Conway, Nguyen and Van De Wege; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/31/20.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires institutions of higher education to waive most fees for Running Start students beginning in the 2022-23 school year, and ensure Running Start students are not charged for course books, fees, and supplies beginning in the 2023-24 school year.
- Gives institutions of higher education the sole jurisdiction in determining whether a student is competent to benefit from the Running Start program.
- Establishes that the maximum per-credit tuition fee for College-in-the-High School (CiHS) is to be adjusted by inflation.
- Allows ninth grade students to be eligible for the CiHS program.
- Requires school districts to cover direct costs for exam-based dual-credit courses and CiHS courses beginning in the 2021-22 school year, and career and technical education dual credit courses beginning with the 2022-23 school year.
- Creates a dual credit task force to be convened by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

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.

Staff: Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

Background: Running Start. Running Start allows eleventh- and twelfth-grade high school students to take courses at community colleges, technical colleges, and various four-year institutions of higher education. Upon completion of a course, students earn both high school and college credit.

Running Start students and their families do not pay tuition, but students must pay for college fees, purchase textbooks and other materials, and provide their own transportation to and from the institution. Since 2011, higher education institutions that are not community or technical colleges may charge up to 10 percent of tuition costs to students.

Institutions are reimbursed by local schools districts for costs of Running Start students. Current law requires districts reimburse the institutions at a per student rate allotted for basic education funding, with the districts retaining seven percent of these funds. Vocational students are funded at an additional rate.

College-in-the-High-School Programs. CiHS programs provide college level courses in high schools or high school environments to qualified students who are in or are eligible for enrollment in grades 10, 11, and 12. Students who participate in a CiHS program are able to earn both high school and postsecondary credit by completing postsecondary level courses with a passing grade. Programs are established in individual agreements between the schools and colleges or universities.

State funding for CiHS programs does not include funding for students who are in or eligible for enrollment in grade 10. For students in grades 11 or 12, funding is prioritized according to statute.

Subsidies may also be provided for students who meet financial aid 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. The current maximum allocation and subsidy is \$65 per quarter credit, with a maximum annual number of subsidized credits of five credits per participating student.

Other Dual Credit Courses. Additional dual credit programs allow students to earn both high school and postsecondary credit by successfully completing a dual-credit course or passing a standardized examination. Examples of these programs include Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Cambridge International. Students may earn postsecondary credit upon enrollment at an institution based on the institution's credit-granting policy. Students may be required to pay direct costs for some programs, such as exam fees.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): Running Start Costs. Beginning in the 2022-23 school year, institutions of higher education must waive all fees for Running Start students, except for fees voted on by an institution's student body. Beginning in the 2023-24 school year, institutions of higher education must also ensure that Running Start students are not

charged for the costs of any books, fees, and supplies required for the courses in which a student is enrolled.

Institutions of higher education have sole jurisdiction over the determination of whether a student is competent to benefit from the Running Start program. School districts may not apply requirements beyond those of the institutions that have the effect of preventing or delaying a student's enrollment in Running Start.

College-in-the-High-School. The maximum per quarter credit tuition fee for the CiHS program is set at \$65 per quarter credit, adjusted for inflation using the implicit price deflator for that fiscal year. By July 1st of each year the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must calculate the maximum per quarter credit tuition fee and post the fee on its website.

Ninth grade students may participate in the CiHS program.

Beginning July 1, 2022, students may not enroll in more than ten postsecondary credits through the CiHS program. School districts, using state, local, or appropriate federal funds, must ensure that tuition fees and any other direct costs for participating in the program are not charged to students.

Other Dual Credit Courses. Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, any school district that offers an exam-based dual credit course must use state, local, or appropriate federal funds to ensure students are not charged any direct costs associated with the course or the related exam. School districts must also ensure students are not charged direct costs for career and technical education dual-credit courses beginning with the 2022-23 school year.

Direct costs for these programs includes fees, books, or supplies required for participation.

Dual Credit Task Force. OSPI must convene a dual credit task force by August 1, 2020. The Superintendent of Public Instruction or the Superintendent's designee must serve as chair of the task force. The task force must contain specified members, including members of the Legislature, various educational agencies and organizations, and persons with knowledge on education system finances.

By January 1, 2021, the task force must provide a report describing each direct charge incurred by a student when participating in dual credit programs, disaggregated by each institution of higher education and by each school district providing dual credit programming.

By August 1, 2021, the task force must submit a report describing recommendations for increasing the number of high school teachers qualified to teach CiHS courses; using existing funding to increase rural, remote, and small school access; and ensuring students' earned dual credit is accurately transcribed on high school and college transcripts.

By August 1, 2022, the task force must submit a report describing recommendations for expanding access to dual credit opportunities for students in career and technical education pathways.

By August 1, 2023, the task force must submit a final report summarizing proposed statutory or rule changes to ensure the full implementation of the requirements under this bill.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: Yes.

Effective Date: The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Proposed Substitute: PRO: There is mutual support in helping to financially support dual-credit programs, and all groups should come together to ease the burden on students. Washington State residents have approximately \$25 billion in student loans. We have to structurally rethink how to address the amount of student loans, which will save taxpayer money in the future. Shrinking the time to degree will lead to savings down the road. The growth in Running Start alone will outpace the costs. Dual credit saves everyone resources and addresses equity system-wide. Many students are not even aware of the opportunities that exist. This bill would reduce some of the barriers that exist for low-income students. Recent legislation has codified the importance of dual-credit courses in our education system, and the policy would set the tone to make sure that all students have access to rigorous coursework. Current grade requirements prohibit younger students from earning college credits, and discriminate against these students based solely on age.

CON: CTCs currently support dual-credit programs and reducing equity through fee waivers, but state dollars should not be used to cover books and supplies for all students, as many have the financial ability to pay these costs. State funding could be used to provide better supports elsewhere. There already is a shortfall in the funding of dual-credit programs. The bill would require to reduce services for CTC students who need them.

OTHER: While there is support for greater equity, there is some concern about the costs being absorbed at the local level. The connection between basic education and dual-credit opportunities needs state-level support. The lack of funding in implementation could lead to a reduction in services elsewhere, as districts may be forced to use enrichment levies, which could lead to the rationing of courses. The dual nature of the program necessitates having both sides come together to obtain solutions, and the current nature of the task force does not reflect this.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Mark Mullet, Prime Sponsor; Dori Luzzo Gilmour, citizen; Libuse Binder, Stand For Children; Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction; Vivian Tidwell, student.

CON: Jan Yoshiwara, Executive Director, State Board for Community Colleges; Dr. Timothy Stokes, President, South Puget Sound Community College; Melissa Gombosky, Spokane, Evergreen and Vancouver Public Schools.

OTHER: Marissa Rathbone, Washington State School Directors' Association; Ruben Flores, Council of Presidents; Austina De Bonte, Washington State PTA; Steve Dupont, Central Washington University.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: PRO: Juliette Schindler Kelly, College Success Foundation; Tim Knue, Washington Association for Career and Technical Education; Erin Wagner Tidwell, citizen.

CON: Dr. Ivan Harrell, President, Tacoma Community College; Lori Christmas, Grays Harbor College; Simone Boe, Washington Education Association; Carolyn Brotherton, AFT Washington.

OTHER: J. Lee Schultz, State Board of Education; Neil Strege, Washington Roundtable; David Buri, Eastern Washington University; Charlie Brown, Tacoma Public Schools; Rosalind Thompson, Association of Washington School Principals.