

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 2602

Title: *An act relating to the running start program.*

Brief Description: *Changing running start provisions for home school and private school students.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Quall, Talcott, Carlson and Thompson.*

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Meeting Date: *January 29, 1998.*

Bill Analysis Prepared by: *Susan 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 high school students. 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.

By law, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and the Higher Education Coordinating Board were directed to adopt rules governing the program. The three agencies were also directed ensure that the rules encouraged maximum use of the program and did not narrow or limit enrollment options presented to students. SPI has adopted rules that permit eligible students who are home schooled or enrolled in either public or private schools to participate in the program.

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 laws governing the Running Start program do not prohibit participation by home schooled students or students enrolled in approved private schools. These students may apply directly to a college or university that is participating in the program. Colleges, universities, and approved private schools may enter agreements to award students with both high school and college credit for classes taken through the program.

The SPI will transmit funds directly to colleges and universities for the enrollment of eligible home schooled students and students enrolled in approved private schools. With one exception, the per student funding formula will be the same one used for Running Start students from public schools. The formula may include an additional seven percent that is now retained by local school districts for Running Start students enrolled in the public schools. State funds may not be transmitted to private schools through the program.

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Requested on January 23, 1998.*

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