
Education Committee

HB 2582

Brief Description: Expanding high school completion programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Upthegrove, Hunter, Appleton, Hasegawa, Quall, Clibborn, Simpson, Green, Ormsby, Kenney, Hudgins and Kagi.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows students under 21 who have completed all state minimum graduation requirements except the Certificate of Academic Achievement to enroll at no charge at a community or technical college in a program to earn a high school diploma.
- Allows colleges to contract with high schools to offer the program or deliver the program directly.
- Authorizes colleges that deliver the program directly to receive funding under the Basic Education Act, Learning Assistance Program, and Bilingual Program for each full-time equivalent student.

Hearing Date: 1/16/06

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

High School Graduation Requirements. The State Board of Education (SBE) establishes minimum high school graduation requirements for public schools. Students must complete at least 19 credits in specified content areas, do a culminating project, and prepare a high school and beyond plan. Beginning with the class of 2008, students will also need to earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) by meeting the state academic standards in reading, writing, and mathematics on the high school Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). Local school districts may establish additional requirements. Students can enroll in public schools until they complete a diploma or turn 21.

High School Programs in Community and Technical Colleges. Washington's community and technical colleges have a broad mission that includes workforce training, academic degrees, and adult education. The colleges also offer three types of high school programs:

1) High School Completion. High School Completion enables adults to earn a regular high school diploma issued by the college. Students can take both high school and college level

courses to complete their requirements. The SBE graduation requirements apply, except that students over the age of 21 are exempt from the CAA under SBE rules.

The programs serve approximately 3,500 students per year, most of whom are over 21. Students under age 18 need a release from their high school to enroll. Students over the age of 19 are eligible for a tuition waiver; those under 19 pay tuition. The programs are funded with state funds through the community and technical college budget. State funding for all types of college programs is \$4,400 per full-time equivalent (FTE) student, on average.

2) ***Drop-Out Retrieval.*** Seven colleges offer high school programs under contract with a local school district for students aged 16 to 21 to make up the credits they need to graduate. Students who complete the school district's graduation requirements earn their diploma from the district. About 1,700 students participate in these programs. The school district pays the college for the program under the terms of the contract using funds from the Basic Education Act (BEA) and other resources.

3) ***Technical High Schools.*** Bates, Lake Washington, and Clover Park Technical Colleges each operate a program for juniors and seniors that offers career-technical training and courses necessary to receive a diploma from the college. Approximately 950 students are enrolled. The colleges bill the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) for BEA funding and are prohibited from charging tuition.

Running Start. The Running Start program provides a way to use BEA funds to support students who are dually enrolled in high school and college and are earning both high school and college credits for their courses. The BEA allocation for Running Start is \$4,166 per FTE student.

Although the BEA represents the largest allocation of state funds for K-12 education, there are other funding programs. For example, school districts receive \$764 for each student in the Transitional Bilingual Program. Funding for the Learning Assistance Program (LAP) is \$188 per student.

Summary of Bill:

Students under age 21 who have completed all minimum state graduation requirements except the CAA or the Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA) can enroll in a high school completion program at a community or technical college and earn a high school diploma.

Colleges must make the program available to any eligible student, but can implement it in the following ways:

- Contract with a local school district to offer the program at locations other than a high school. In this case the school district issues the diploma;
- Deliver the program and courses directly and the college issues the diploma; or
- Offer some combination of contracted program and direct delivery.

If the college delivers the program directly, it is reimbursed by OSPI for each FTE student enrolled in high school completion courses. Funding is provided from the following programs:

- The BEA funding allocation, where reimbursement is calculated using a statewide average per FTE student, similar to the Running Start program.
- An amount per FTE student based on the state allocation for the LAP program.

- For bilingual students, an amount per FTE student based on the state allocation for the Transitional Bilingual Program.

Colleges cannot charge students in the program tuition or fees for courses that lead to a diploma.

Student learning plans for high school students include this high school completion option, if applicable. School districts must provide information to 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students and their parents about this option. Any student who completes all state and local minimum graduation requirements except the CAA or CIA can participate in high school graduation ceremonies.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 10, 2006.

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