
Education Committee

HB 1546

Brief Description: Concerning dual credit opportunities provided by Washington state's public institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Representatives Reykdal, Pollet, Springer, Bergquist, S. Hunt, Lytton, Tarleton, Wylie and McBride; by request of Office of Financial Management.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires rules for the College in the High School (CHS) programs to be updated by September 1, 2015.
- Requires a comparable course to be offered to matriculated students of the participating CHS institution of higher education.
- Adds a per credit subsidy for CHS students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and implements a per credit fee limit, subject to appropriation.
- Requires Running Start courses to be open to matriculated students of the participating institution of higher education.

Hearing Date: 2/5/15

Staff: Robin Hammond (786-7291).

Background:

The 2011 Launch Year Act requires all public high schools in Washington to work toward increasing the number of dual credit courses offered to high school students. Dual credit programs allow high school students to earn post-secondary course credit while also earning credit toward high school graduation. From 2011-13, the number of dual credit courses increased 19 percent and the number of students taking dual credit courses increased 4 percent. In the 2012–13 school year, 173,867 high school students were enrolled in dual credit courses. Dual programs include Tech Prep, Advanced Placement, College in the High School (CHS), Running Start, and Running Start for the Trades.

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.

Running Start Programs

Running Start students enroll in courses or programs offered by participating institutions of higher education. Students take Running Start courses on the campus of the institution of higher education, online, and in their high schools. The high school students do not pay tuition for Running Start classes unless they exceed the 1.2 full-time equivalency limitation, but may be charged fees. The institution of higher education must provide fee waivers for low-income students, including those who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

College in the High School Programs

The CHS programs provide college level courses in high schools to qualified 11th and 12th grade high school students. The CHS programs are defined in contract between a high school and institution of higher education. The contracts must, among other things, define eligibility criteria and specify whether the student or the high school pays for tuition fees. The CHS teacher employed by the participating institution of higher education is required to determine the number of credits and whether the course satisfies general or degree requirements when no comparable course is offered at the institution of higher education. The school district superintendent is required to determine the number of credits for a course when no comparable course is offered by the school district.

Summary of Bill:

Running Start Programs

A Running Start course may not consist solely of high school students at a high school and must be open to matriculated students at the institution of higher learning.

College in the High School

The Student Achievement Council is added to the list of entities that jointly develop and adopt rules governing the College in the High School (CHS) program. The rules must be updated so that CHS courses meet the standards for transferable college credit and satisfy general education or degree requirements. To be considered a program course, a comparable course must be offered to matriculated students of the participating institution of higher education. The number of high school credits must be determined prior to enrollment in a course. Neither the CHS teacher employed by the participating institution of higher learning nor the school district superintendent are required to determine the number of credits for undesignated courses.

CHS Credit Fees

A district or student may pay CHS tuition fees, and districts are encouraged to pay the costs for students who are ineligible for the per credit subsidy. If the omnibus appropriations act provides funding for per credit subsidies, the maximum per credit fee for all students is the amount of the state per credit subsidy. A per credit subsidy is available to students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, subject to appropriation. In order to participate, districts must annually apply to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and report the projected numbers of participating students and credit hours. The Superintendent of Public Instruction may prioritize district applications and determine priority factors, which must include the number of dual credit opportunities available to low income students.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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