

FINAL BILL REPORT

E2SHB 1546

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Synopsis as Enacted

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

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Reykdal, Pollet, Springer, Bergquist, S. Hunt, Lytton, Tarleton, Wylie and McBride; by request of Office of Financial Management).

House Committee on Education

House Committee on Appropriations

Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background:

Dual credit programs allow high school students to earn postsecondary course credit while also earning credit toward high school graduation. There are a variety of dual credit programs, including: Tech Prep; Advanced Placement (AP); College in the High School (CHS); Running Start (RS); International Baccalaureate (IB); Cambridge International; and Running Start for the Trades.

College in the High School.

The CHS programs provide college level courses in high schools for qualified students in grades 11 and 12. Each CHS program is defined in a local contract between a high school and an institution of higher education. Costs to students vary with each institution. The teacher employed by the participating institution of higher education determines 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 determines the number of credits for a course when no comparable course is offered by the school district.

Participating school districts must provide general information about CHS to students in grades 10 through 12, as well as to parents and guardians.

Running Start.

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 students enroll in courses or programs offered by participating institutions of higher education. Students take RS courses on the campus of the institution of higher education and online. Some institutions and school districts also offer RS courses in the high school. High school students do not pay tuition for RS classes 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.

Academic Acceleration Incentive Program.

The Academic Acceleration Incentive Program (Program) was created in 2013. School districts are encouraged to adopt an Academic Acceleration Policy (Policy), pursuant to which students who meet the state standard on the high school state assessment are automatically enrolled in the next most rigorous advanced course offered by the high school. Students who are successful in that course are then automatically enrolled in the next most rigorous course, with the objective that these students will eventually be automatically enrolled in dual credit courses. Districts that adopt such Policy are eligible for funding from the Program.

Half of the appropriated Program funds are allocated on a competitive basis as one-time grants for high schools to expand the availability of dual credit courses. The other half of the appropriated funds are allocated as an incentive award to school districts for each student who earned dual credit in specified courses offered by a high school in the previous year. The funds may be used to support teacher training, curriculum, exam fees, and other costs of dual credit courses. Students enrolled in RS do not generate an incentive award.

Guaranteed Education Tuition Credits.

Washington's prepaid college tuition program, named the Guaranteed Education Tuition program, is governed by federal Internal Revenue Service rules and Washington law. Parents contribute after-tax money, the money grows tax-free, and all withdrawals are tax-free when used for tuition, room and board, and other qualified higher education expenses. The state guarantees that the value of the account will keep pace with the cost of resident undergraduate tuition and state-mandated fees at the most expensive public university in Washington.

Summary:

College in the High School.

College in the High School is explicitly defined as a dual credit program located on a high school campus or in a high school environment in which a high school student is able to earn both high school and postsecondary credit by completing postsecondary level courses with a passing grade. College in the High School programs may include both academic and career and technical education.

Subject to appropriation, funding may be allocated at an amount per college credit. The maximum annual number of allocated credits per participating eleventh or twelfth grade students may not exceed 10 credits. Funding is prioritized in the following order:

1. High schools that offered a Running Start in the High School program in the 2014-15 school year. (This priority is only for the 2015-16 school year.)

2. Students whose residence, or the high school in which they are enrolled, is located 20 driving miles or more from the nearest eligible institution of higher education offering a RS program.
3. High schools eligible for small school funding enhancement.

Subject to appropriation, and only after the priorities above are funded, a subsidy may be provided per college credit for eleventh and twelfth grade students who have been deemed eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and are enrolled in CHS. The maximum number of subsidized credits per participating student may not exceed five credits.

Districts wishing to participate in the subsidy program must apply to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) by July 1 of each year and report the preliminary estimate of subsidy-eligible students and the total number of projected credit hours. The OSPI must notify a district by September 1 of each year if the district's students will receive the subsidy. If more districts apply than funding is available, the OSPI must prioritize applications according to the OSPI-developed prioritization factors. One such factor must be the number of dual credit opportunities available for low-income students in the district.

The following applies with respect to both allocations and subsidies:

- Districts must remit any allocations or subsidies received to the participating institution of higher education. Those students for whom the allocations and subsidies have been received are not required to pay for the credits.
- The minimum allocation and subsidy is \$65 per quarter credit. The OSPI, the Student Achievement Council (SAC), the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), and the public baccalaureate institutions must review funding levels for the program every four years, beginning in 2017, and recommend changes.
- If specific funding is appropriated in the operating budget for the per credit allocations and per credit subsidies, the maximum per credit fee charged to any enrolled student may not exceed the amount of the per credit allocation or subsidy.

Students in tenth grade are made eligible for CHS. However, the allocations and subsidies are only applicable to students in the eleventh and twelfth grades. Participating school districts must provide general information about the CHS program to all students in grades nine through 12.

The OSPI must adopt rules for administration of CHS. These rules must be jointly developed by the OSPI, the SBCTC, the SAC, and the public baccalaureate institutions. The Association of Washington School Principals must be consulted. The rules must outline quality and eligibility standards that are informed by nationally recognized standards or models, must encourage the maximum use of the program, and may not narrow or limit enrollment options.

Running Start.

Courses and programs offered as RS must also be open for registration to matriculated students at the participating institution of higher education and may not be a course consisting solely of high school students offered at a high school campus.

Academic Acceleration Incentive Program.

Incentive award funds may be used for textbook fees and for transportation for RS students to and from the institution of higher education. The provision that explicitly excepted RS students from generating an incentive award is eliminated.

Guaranteed Education Tuition Credits.

Guaranteed Education Tuition credits may be redeemed to pay for CHS or RS fees.

Recommendations for Improving Dual Credit Programs.

By September 15, 2016, the SAC, in collaboration with the SBCTC, the OSPI, and the public baccalaureate institutions, must make recommendations to the Legislature for streamlining and improving dual credit programs. Particular attention should be paid to increasing participation of low-income students and students who are currently underrepresented in RS, AP, IB, and Cambridge International programs.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	53	45	
Senate	32	16	(Senate amended)
House	87	11	(House concurred)

Effective: July 24, 2015