

SENATE BILL REPORT

E2SHB 1546

As of March 20, 2015

Title: An act relating to dual credit opportunities provided by Washington state's public institutions of higher education.

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).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/10/15, 53-45.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/23/15.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Matthew Lemon (786-7405)

Background: College in the High School (CHS). CHS programs are dual-credit programs in which school districts contract with institutions of higher education to offer college-level courses at high school campuses to qualified high school students. The programs are available to eleventh or twelfth grade students or students who have not yet received a high school diploma or its equivalent and are eligible to be in the eleventh or twelfth grades. The high school and the participating institution of higher education together must define the criteria for student eligibility and the institution of higher education may charge tuition fees to participating students. School districts participating in CHS must provide general information about the program to all students in grades 10–12 and the parents or guardians of those students. In the 2013-14 school year, 147 high schools and over 17,000 students participated in CHS programs.

Running Start (RS). RS is a dual-credit program in which eligible eleventh and twelfth grade students may 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, online, and in their high schools. Participating institutions of higher education, in consultation with school districts, may establish admission standards for RS students. Typically, RS students do not pay tuition unless they exceed the 1.2 full-time equivalency limitation, but the institutions of higher education may charge students up to 10 percent of

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.

tuition and fees. The institution of higher education must provide fee waivers for low-income students, including those who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. Districts must provide general information about RS to all students in grades 10–12 and to the parents or guardians of those students. In the 2013-14 school year, more than 20,000 students participated in RS.

Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) Program. Washington's prepaid college tuition program, known as the GET program, is established to help make higher education affordable and accessible to all citizens of the state. Parents or other individuals may purchase tuition units, and 100 units represent the cost of one year of resident undergraduate tuition at the highest-priced public university in the state. The state guarantees that the value of the account will keep pace with the cost of resident undergraduate tuition and state-mandated fees. Units may be redeemed for tuition, room and board, books, and other qualified expenses at most institutions of higher education. Over 157,000 GET accounts have been opened and more than 38,000 students have used the accounts to attend institutions of higher education.

Summary of Bill: CHS. Eligibility for CHS is extended to students in tenth grade. The Student Achievement Council is added to the list of entities that must jointly develop and adopt rules governing the CHS program. The rules must be updated by December 1, 2015, and must ensure that CHS courses meet the standards for transferable college credit and satisfy general education or degree requirements at institutions of higher education.

To be considered a CHS course, a comparable course must be offered for college credit to matriculated students at the college and must satisfy a general education or degree requirement. The number of high school credits a student may earn must be determined prior to enrollment in the course.

Subject to appropriations, a minimum per-quarter credit subsidy of \$65 is created for CHS students who have been eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch at least once in the past five years. The per-credit subsidy must be adjusted annually for inflation. The maximum annual number of subsidized credits must be specified in the Omnibus Appropriations Act and may not exceed ten credits. If the subsidy is funded, per-credit CHS fees charged by participating institutions of higher education may not exceed the amount of the subsidy.

In order to receive the subsidy, districts must annually apply to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and report estimates of the number of eligible students and the number of projected credit hours. OSPI must prioritize district applications and must develop priority factors which must include, but are not limited to, the number of dual-credit opportunities available to low-income students in the district. Districts are encouraged to pay the costs for students who are not eligible for the subsidy.

RS. Beginning September 1, 2015, an RS course must be open to matriculated students at the participating institution of higher education and may not be offered at high schools and consist solely of high school students.

GET. Students may use GET units to pay for CHS and RS fees.

Dual-Credit Notification. Districts participating in CHS must provide information about the program to all students in grades 8–12 and their parents and guardians. All school districts must provide general information about RS to all students in grades 8–12 and their parents and guardians.

OSPI must notify schools with students in grades 8–12 of entities offering dual-credit programs if the cost of reporting these entities is minimal, and every school with students in grades 8–12 must provide parents with information on the availability and entrance requirements of dual credit programs in the local area.

Null and Void Clauses. If the CHS per-credit subsidies are not funded by June 30, 2015, then the following are null and void:

- the intent section;
- the CHS per-credit subsidies and provisions related to the subsidy; and
- the requirement that RS courses must be open to matriculated students at the participating institution of higher education and may not be offered at high schools and consist solely of high school students.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on March 20, 2015.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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