

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5080

As of January 26, 2015

Title: An act relating to dual credit options.

Brief Description: Concerning dual credit options.

Sponsors: Senators Dammeier, Rolfes, Fain, Frockt, Litzow and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/15/15.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Matthew Lemon (786-7405)

Background: Running Start and College in the High School (CHS). Running Start and CHS provide opportunities for high school students to earn up to two years of college credit while enrolled in advanced high school programs. CHS courses are typically offered on a high school campus or similar setting through a contract with an institution of higher education, while Running Start courses are typically college-level courses offered on the campus of an institution of higher education, but may be offered on a high school campus or online. Both programs are currently open only to students in grades 11 and 12. Institutions of higher education may charge tuition fees for CHS courses, negotiated when entering into CHS contracts. Running Start students may be charged up to 10 percent of the total tuition and fees for their course at the discretion of the offering institution, but pay in full for textbooks and transportation costs to and from the Running Start course site.

Academic Acceleration Incentive Program. The Academic Acceleration Incentive Program (AAIP) was created in 2013 pursuant to 2SHB 1642. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) distributes incentive awards to high schools based on the number of students at the school that earned dual high school and college credit in the previous year. When calculating the number of students earning dual credit in a given year, schools may count their CHS students but not their Running Start students. In June 2014, 337 high schools in 189 districts received the first round of incentive awards from the \$550,000 set aside in the 2013-15 operating budget, averaging \$1,409.50 per grant award.

Summary of Bill: CHS and Running Start Fees. The intent of the Legislature is specified as increasing dual-credit opportunities for students by creating a new funding model for CHS

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tuition payments, expanding eligibility for CHS, and granting flexibility to use incentive awards from AAIP to cover fees that Running Start students are currently responsible for covering. Schools are given authority to use incentive awards to pay textbook fees and transportation costs for their Running Start students, and those students may now be counted for the purpose of calculating a school's incentive award provided they earn dual credit in the program.

Beginning in school year 2015-16, districts are allocated money per college credit for students in CHS courses, adjusted annually for inflation. The minimum allocation is set at \$70 per quarter credit hour, to be reviewed every four years by OSPI, the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), and the public baccalaureates for recommended changes. Higher education institutions may no longer charge tuition and fees to CHS students. The districts will instead transmit an amount per credit to the institution for each full-time equivalent CHS student in lieu of tuition and fees. OSPI must work with SBCTC, WSAC, the public baccalaureates, private nonprofit colleges, and the Association of Washington School Principals to design quality and eligibility standards that are informed by nationally recognized standards or models and encourage maximum use of CHS without narrowing or limiting enrollment options.

Distinguishing CHS and Running Start. CHS is explicitly defined in statute as a dual-credit program located at a high school campus or similar environment, and may include both academic and career and technical education courses. Running Start is distinguished as a dual-credit program occurring on a university campus or similar environment.

Eligibility for CHS. Eligibility for CHS is expanded to students in grades nine and ten. Districts must distribute information on the program to students as early as grade eight.

Report on Streamlining Dual-Credit Programs. By September 15, 2016, WSAC must make recommendations to the Legislature on streamlining and improving dual-credit programs, with particular attention to increasing participation among low-income and underrepresented student populations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 9, 2015.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Dual credit opportunities are breaking down the silos between K-12 and higher education and allows highly individualized education plans for students. The goal is to clarify and streamline definitions of CHS and Running Start programs and to better address the needs of underrepresented students by making the programs more affordable. Dual credit offers a jump start for students to begin to find a career path. These bills will help academically advanced students access STEM courses, especially underserved student populations that cannot afford to pay for CHS tuition. This

bills helps school districts meet their goals to graduate career and college-ready students. This bill does clarify that career and technical education courses can also be CHS courses. CHS has been very successful, even though it receives no state support, unlike Running Start. This bill expands eligibility for CHS classes to ninth and tenth graders. Expanding dual credit opportunities is part of the WSAC's strategic plan.

OTHER: Adequate funding is needed for teacher training and curriculum development. Covering transportation costs for Running Start students could become very expensive for districts, particularly for rural districts that must provide transportation to institutions that may be very far away. Central Washington University (CWU) and Eastern Washington University (EWU) offer a program called Running Start in the High School that allowed rural students to participate in the Running Start program without having to travel to far-away institutions of higher education. Running Start is preferable to districts and students because the tuition costs of the dual-credit programs are funded by the state. CWU and EWU have started Running Start in the High School programs in at least 100 high schools across the state. This bill would prevent both institutions of higher education from offering Running Start program courses on high school campuses and make the Running Start in the High School program impossible to administer. The Evergreen State College does not have standardized general education or degree requirements, so the requirement that CHS credits must meet one of those requirements is impossible for the school to meet.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Dammeier, prime sponsor; Maddy Thompson, WSAC; Riley Gervais, OSPI; Tom Fitzsimmons, Independent Colleges of WA; Mark Vetter, Mark Knight, Puyallup School District; Todd Baddley, Richland School District; Nova Gattman, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board; Genesee Adkins, University of WA.

OTHER: Ann Anderson, CWU; Alicia Kinne-Clawson, David Buri, EWU.