

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5086

As of January 26, 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: Senators Litzow, McAuliffe and Kohl-Welles; by request of Office of Financial Management.

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. Running Start and College in the High School (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. Currently the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), and the public four-year institutions are responsible for jointly developing and adopting rules for the CHS program, in consultation with the Association of Washington School Principals.

Summary of Bill: Transferability of CHS Credit. The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) is added to the group of agencies responsible for creating rules for the CHS program. To ensure that students can transfer CHS credits to another institution of higher education, WSAC, SBCTC, OSPI, and the public baccalaureates must adopt rules ensuring

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the transferability of CHS credit by September 1, 2015. CHS courses must meet a general education requirement or degree requirement, and institutions of higher education must offer a comparable course on their campus that counts toward either general education or degree requirements.

CHS Tuition Subsidy. Subject to appropriation, districts may pay the CHS tuition fees charged by the host institution of higher education. The state will provide a per-credit subsidy to cover tuition fees for eligible students in grades 11 and 12. To be eligible to receive a subsidy, a student must be enrolled in the CHS course by September 1 of the school year and eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch. Districts must apply for the subsidy by July 1 of each year. OSPI must prioritize awards to districts if more districts apply than funding is available and to notify if districts will receive a subsidy by September 1 of each year. Districts are encouraged to pay for CHS students who are not eligible for the subsidy.

Institutions of higher education may set the tuition and fees per credit, but if the state pays a subsidy per credit, the subsidy rate is the maximum amount that can be charge to any student per credit.

Running Start. It is clarified in statute that Running Start programs are only for students participating in colleges courses along with other matriculated college students. Running Start programs are not to be offered on a high school campus and consist only of enrolled high school students. A statute requiring SBCTC and OSPI to identify, assess, and report on alternatives for providing ongoing and adequate financial support for the Running Start program by September 1, 2010, is repealed.

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: The bill distinguishes Running Start and the CHS programs better in statute. CHS has been very successful, even though it receives no state support, unlike Running Start. The bill creates options for academically accelerating students into courses that match their abilities and makes the programs more accessible for underrepresented students. Earned dual credit shortens the time students require to complete their degree and makes it more likely they will graduate. Clear and easily accessible information on the transferability of dual credit needs to be available to students and parents, and this bill encourages the development of uniform rules. This bill prioritizes the tuition subsidy for low-income students who need assistance the most.

OTHER: 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 institutions are concerned that this bill will exclude many students from CHS because the subsidy for tuition would only be available to free and reduced-lunch eligible students. The enrollment dates on this bill should be modified to better fit actual enrollment dates.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Maddy Thompson, WSAC; Riley Gervais, OSPI; Tom Fitzsimmons, Independent Colleges of WA; Jene Jones, League of Education Voters; Scott Copeland, SBCTC; Paula Moore, Office of Financial Management.

OTHER: Ann Anderson, CWU; Alicia Kinne-Clawson, David Buri, EWU; Genesee Adkins, University of WA.