

HOUSE BILL REPORT

E2SSB 5670

As Passed House:
February 29, 2024

Title: An act relating to permitting 10th grade students to participate in running start in online settings.

Brief Description: Providing summer running start for rising juniors.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Hawkins, Randall, Holy, Kuderer, Nguyen, Nobles, Saldaña and Wilson, L.).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/15/24, 2/19/24 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/29/24, 92-1.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill

- Allows students who have completed their tenth grade year and not yet begun their eleventh grade year to enroll in Running Start courses during the summer academic term.
- Requires information about Running Start summer enrollment opportunities to be provided to students in grades 10 through 12 and their parents and guardians.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Shavers, Vice Chair; Rude, Ranking Minority Member; McEntire, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Couture, Eslick, Harris, McClintock, Nance, Ortiz-Self, Pollet, Steele, Stonier and Timmons.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

Running Start Program Generally.

Every school district, charter school, and state-tribal education compact school must allow eleventh and twelfth grade students to participate in the Running Start (RS) program.

The RS program allows students in grades 11 and 12, and students who have not yet received the credits required for the award of a high school diploma and are eligible to be in the eleventh or twelfth grade, to enroll in college courses at certain institutions of higher education and to simultaneously earn both high school and college credit.

Students choosing to participate in the RS program are responsible for applying for admission to the institution of higher education. Students do not pay for tuition, but do pay for educational materials, course fees, and transportation costs.

School districts must provide general information about the RS program to all students in grades 10 through 12, and the parents and guardians of those students.

Summer Running Start.

In 2020 legislation was enacted that created a two-year Running Start Summer School Pilot program to evaluate interest in and barriers to expanding the RS program to include the summer academic term. Legislation enacted in 2023 codified a requirement that the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) adopt rules for state funding of RS student enrollment during the summer academic term. The 2023 legislation also required that the rules limit funding for RS summer enrollments to 10 college credits per student per summer academic term.

In September 2023, the OSPI filed emergency rules for the RS program. Among other policy changes, the emergency rules permit students who have completed the tenth grade at the end of the standard school year to enroll as RS students in up to 10 credits at an institution of higher education during the summer academic term prior to their eleventh grade.

Summary of Bill:

Students who have completed their tenth grade year and not yet begun their eleventh grade year (known as rising eleventh grade students) may enroll in Running Start courses for up to 10 quarter credits, or the semester equivalent, during the summer academic term.

Along with otherwise required information about the Running Start program provided to students in grades 10 through 12 and their parents and guardians, school districts must provide information about Running Start enrollment opportunities during the summer

academic term.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Students in grades 11 and 12 are able to access Running Start (RS) during summer term. Due to this expansion, the community and technical colleges enrolled more RS students last summer. This allowed students to explore pathways, recover high school credits, and complete on-time degrees and credentials.

This bill codifies rising junior eligibility for RS by allowing students who have completed their tenth grade year to enroll in RS the summer before their junior year. The operating budget included some language that started the RS expansion on a temporary basis and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction issued some memos describing it. The bill originally allowed tenth grade students to enroll in RS courses online, but this year the bill was amended.

It is a big adjustment for students that start in their junior year to be on a college campus and a full load of college courses. Providing students with the opportunity to take college coursework in the summer before their junior year may help ease them into the college experience and grow the self-discipline they need to take college courses. Allowing rising juniors access to the RS program gives them an opportunity to build their success, establish relationships on the college campus, and may allow students to take a lighter load later in the year. Even if students do not enjoy going to college, they got to try it.

When students have opportunities to engage with college as early as possible, they are more likely to finish high school and continue to earn a post-secondary degree. When students are on a college campus, they can receive wraparound services, build connections, and understand the available resources, such as mentorship. There is value in allowing students to earn college credit and high school credit, while minimizing debt. The bill allows high school students to attend college in person or remotely.

This bill gives future students an easy and affordable introduction to college education. Small high schools do not have access to many electives. Running Start allows students from these high schools to have opportunities to pursue their college goals without worrying about cost. This bill allows more students to get ahead in core subjects so that they can take the other classes they are interested in taking.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Brad Hawkins, prime sponsor; Faimous Harrison, Wenatchee Valley College; Jamie Traugott, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; EllaBeth Crawford; and Anthony Zavala.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: Anna Hernandez-French, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.