

RCW 28A.320.196 Academic acceleration incentive program—Dual credit courses—Allocation of funds—Reports. (1) Subject to funds appropriated specifically for this purpose, the academic acceleration incentive program is established as provided in this section. The intent of the legislature is that the funds awarded under the program be used to support teacher training, curriculum, technology, examination fees, textbook fees, and other costs associated with offering dual credit courses to high school students, including transportation for running start students to and from the institution of higher education as defined in RCW 28A.600.300.

(2) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall allocate half of the funds appropriated for the purposes of this section on a competitive basis to provide one-time grants for high schools to expand the availability of dual credit courses. To be eligible for a grant, a school district must have adopted an academic acceleration policy as provided under RCW 28A.320.195. In making grant awards, the office of the superintendent of public instruction must give priority to grants for high schools with a high proportion of low-income students and high schools seeking to develop new capacity for dual credit courses rather than proposing marginal expansion of current capacity.

(3) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall allocate half of the funds appropriated for the purposes of this section to school districts as an incentive award for each student who earned dual high school and college credit, as described under subsection (4) of this section, for courses offered by the district's high schools during the previous school year. School districts must distribute the award to the high schools that generated the funds. The award amount for low-income students eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced-price meals program who earn dual credits must be set at one hundred twenty-five percent of the base award for other students. A student who earns more than one dual credit in the same school year counts only once for the purposes of the incentive award.

(4) For the purposes of this section, the following students are considered to have earned dual high school and college credit in a course offered by a high school:

(a) Students who achieve a score of three or higher on an AP examination;

(b) Students who achieve a score of four or higher on an examination of the international baccalaureate diploma programme;

(c) Students who successfully complete a Cambridge advanced international certificate of education examination;

(d) Students who successfully complete a course through the college in the high school program under RCW 28A.600.287 and are awarded credit by the partnering institution of higher education; and

(e) Students who satisfy the dual enrollment and class performance requirements to earn college credit through a career and technical education course.

(5) If a high school provides access to online courses for students to earn dual high school and college credit at no cost to the student, such a course is considered to be offered by the high school.

(6) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall report to the education policy committees and the fiscal committees of the legislature, by January 1st of each year, information about the demographics of the students earning dual credits in the schools

receiving grants under this section for the prior school year. Demographic data shall be disaggregated pursuant to RCW 28A.300.042. [2022 c 75 § 4; 2021 c 71 § 4; 2015 c 202 § 2; 2013 c 184 § 3.]

Findings—Intent—2015 c 202: "The legislature finds that Washington has been a front-runner in dual credit innovation through the establishment of the running start and college in the high school programs, and has continued to expand student choices in dual credit programs.

In Washington, a range of dual credit or dual enrollment programs are available to students. Dual credit programs, such as running start, college in the high school, tech prep (course completion options), and AP and international baccalaureate and Cambridge (standardized exam options) offer academically prepared students the opportunity to earn college credits while still in high school. Students who participate in these programs achieve improved high school graduation rates and are more likely to continue on to college and complete a degree. In addition, dual credit and dual enrollment programs support students' individual college and career pathways.

The legislature further finds that through the development and implementation of the 2013 road map the student achievement council has identified key barriers that limit access to dual credit programs, particularly for low-income students. Removing these barriers is a critical step toward achieving the state educational attainment goals outlined in the road map.

The legislature recognizes that the decision to enroll in a dual credit program should be made by the student and the student's parents or guardians, in consultation with counselors or academic advisors, and based on the academic, cultural, and developmental needs and college and career goals of the student. The decision to choose one dual credit option over another should not be based on the difference in the costs of one option over another.

In the college in the high school program, credit is awarded based on successful course completion and ability to pay tuition and fees. Under the current college in the high school system, some students may successfully complete the course but do not receive credit because they are unable to pay. Students in the running start program face a different but equally challenging situation. Students in the running start program do not receive funding for books and transportation costs. These financial barriers decrease opportunities for lower income students to benefit from dual credit programs.

Therefore, the legislature intends to increase opportunities for academically prepared high school students to earn up to two years of college credit through dual credit programs, and to reduce disparities in access to, and completion of, these programs. This act provides a new funding model to support tuition in the college in the high school program, and provides flexibility in the academic acceleration incentive program to assist students with transportation and book expenses associated with the running start program. It is the intent of the legislature, once this new funding model is enacted and operational, to establish a distinction between the college in the high school program as a program occurring in high schools and the running start program as a program occurring on a college campus.

The legislature finds that dual credit opportunities are a valuable means of supporting students on their way to successful completion of college and career pathways. The legislature seeks

additional recommendations to mitigate financial and other barriers for students enrolled in the running start program, and dual credit programs based on standardized exams." [2015 c 202 § 1.]

Contingency—2013 c 184 § 3: "If specific funding for purposes of section 3 of this act, referencing section 3 of this act by bill or chapter and section number, is not provided by June 30, 2013, in the omnibus operating appropriations act, section 3 of this act is null and void." [2013 c 184 § 5.] The omnibus appropriations act provided funding for "this act" by bill and chapter but not section number. See section 513(21), chapter 4, Laws of 2013 2nd sp. sess.

Findings—2013 c 184: See note following RCW 28A.320.195.