

Cover books & transportation

Support and improve outcomes for low-income Running Start students

FY 2019

\$5 million to help 6,700 low-income students

Help low-income high school students get the education they need to meet workforce demand.

In less than 10 years, over 70 percent of the jobs in our state will require a postsecondary credential. Students who participate in dual credit programs like Running Start are more likely to graduate from high school and complete a postsecondary program. Improving outcomes for low-income students is a key strategy to meet Washington's statewide educational attainment goals.

Running Start can save high school students time and money when they go to college. High school students in Running Start can earn high school and college credit at the same time by taking courses at public community and technical colleges. In 2016-17, over 26,000 students participated in Running Start. Of these, 12 percent completed an associate degree by the end of the academic year. Running Start students get a tuition waiver, but they still have to pay for books and transportation.

Books and transportation costs can be a prohibitive barrier for high-achieving low-income students.

Low-income students are 43 percent of the high school student population but account for only 29 percent of Running Start students. In fiscal year 2019, we estimate that 6,700 low-income high school students will attempt to earn dual credit in Running Start.

Students in programs like Running Start are more likely to graduate high school and complete a postsecondary program.

A \$5 million investment would cover the costs of books, supplies, and transportation for many low-income students in Running Start. These are the largest non-tuition expenses for students. And whereas low-income college students might get state or federal financial aid to help with these costs, low-income high school students aren't eligible for financial aid programs. This proposal allocates funding based

on prior-year enrollment of students who are eligible for free and reduced price lunch. It would give WSAC authority to provide oversight and distribute funding to colleges offering Running Start. Participating colleges would use the funds to provide book vouchers and transportation assistance, based on student need and existing campus resources.

This proposal will increase educational attainment for low-income and underrepresented students in the Running Start program. If successful, we expect to see:

- More high school graduates.
- More recent high school graduates enrolling in postsecondary education.
- More postsecondary degrees and certificates awarded.

To measure success, we will monitor the percent of Running Start students eligible for free and reduced price and overall enrollment in Running Start.



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