



REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

UPDATE: Combined FTE Experience of Students Participating in Running Start 2018

Authorizing legislation:

[ESSB 6032, Sec. 502 \(18\) \[2018 Supplemental Operating Budget\]](#)

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Executive Summary

Before the 2011–12 school year, eligible students in the 11th and 12th grades were funded by the state for a combined maximum of 2.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) in both high school and the Running Start program each year. In 2011, the Legislature established a limit to this funding for a combined maximum enrollment of 1.2 FTE over one school year.

Consequently, the Legislature directed the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), working with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), the Higher Education Coordinating Board (now the Washington Student Achievement Council [WSAC]), and the Education Research and Data Center (ERDC) to annually report to the Legislature on the combined FTE experience of students participating in the program. This report summarizes what, if any, impact the reduction in FTE to 1.2 has had on student course enrollment patterns in Running Start.

Efforts to provide a full-time equivalent analysis are confounded by the challenges in cross-walking credit reporting between the SBCTC and OSPI student information systems. Consequently, this report relies on the collection and analysis of data reported in the K–12 Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS).

Data reported in this update show a persistent increase in Running Start participation. After a nominal increase in the year following the implementation of the 1.2 FTE limit, overall Running Start participation has increased from 12,089 in 2010 to 27,832 students completing at least one Running Start course in 2018.

Background

The 2011–13 Operating Budget (House Bill 1087), reduced funding for the Running Start program by lowering the maximum combined FTE that would be funded by the state. The Running Start program allows 11th and 12th grade students who are academically ready to take courses through institutions of higher education using state K–12 basic education dollars to cover the cost of tuition.

Prior to the 2011–13 Operating Budget, Running Start students could be claimed for basic education dollars at a combined high school and college FTE of 2.0, although neither the high school nor the institution of higher education enrollment could individually exceed 1.0 FTE. Beginning with the 2011–12 school year, students participating in Running Start could only be claimed for a combined high school and college enrollment of 1.2 FTE. Students exceeding 1.2 FTE could be charged tuition by the college for the additional credits.

In response to the 1.2 FTE limits, OSPI collaborated with SBCTC and WSAC to develop enrollment verification forms to address this change in the program. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction annually issues a bulletin to school districts explaining the 1.2 FTE limitation, providing schools and colleges with supportive documents for use in student and family guidance, and for calculating FTE distributions ([Bulletin 060-18](#)).

Update Status

The analysis of possible impacts of the 1.2 FTE limitation continues to be based on data from the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS). Neither SBCTC's Statewide Enrollment nor Reporting System (SERS) nor the CEDARS system are designed to capture FTEs, but are based instead on course credits. There is no well-defined conversion between the systems.

Utilizing CEDARS data, Table 1 illustrates the total growth in the number of 11th and 12th grade students who have completed at least one Running Start course in each school year since 2010. Despite the 1.2 FTE limitation, student enrollment in Running Start courses continues to grow in both headcount and share of all 11th and 12th grader students accessing the program.

Table 1: Total Number of 11th and 12th Grade Students completing at least one Running Start Course, by School Year

School Year	Total Student Enrollment in Grades 9–12*	Total Student Enrollment in Grades 11–12	# of Students in Grades 11–12 Completing at least one Running Start Course	% of Students in Grades 11–12 completing at least one Running Start Course
2010	294,801	143,250	12,089	8.4%
2011	323,767	159,057	16,950	10.7%
2012	321,885	158,551	16,974	10.7%
2013	324,576	160,270	17,025	10.6%
2014	324,360	159,702	19,305	12.1%
2015	328,769	163,252	22,184	13.6%
2016	326,292	162,720	22,871	14.1%
2017	333,368	167,566	25,842	15.4%
2018	337,428	170,305	27,832	16.3%

Source: Comprehensive Education Data and Research System, Dec. 3, 2018.

Conclusion and Next Steps

There is a strong indication the 1.2 FTE limitation is not negatively impacting overall student participation in the Running Start program. With the inclusion of dual credit as a School Quality and Student Success Measure for the Washington School Improvement Framework, overall system improvement and equity of access is a focus across the state. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction will be specifically analyzing data for overall increased enrollment, as well as equitable access for all students who are academically prepared and interested.



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