

RUNNING START FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DATE: October 2024

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Council of Presidents (COP)
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)
State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC)
State Board of Education (SBE)

SUBJECT: Running Start Program – Questions and Answers

The Legislature initiated the Running Start Program as a component of the 1990 parent and student “Choice Act” (Chapter 9, Laws of 1990, 1st Ex. Session, [RCW 28A.600.300](#) to [RCW 28A.600.400](#)). Running Start provides students an opportunity to enroll at certain institutions of higher education and earn high school and college/university credit.

Running Start is offered through Washington’s 34 community and technical colleges and the following public, four-year universities:

- Washington State University (Pullman and Tri-Cities Campuses)
- Central Washington University
- Eastern Washington University

And the following public tribal colleges:

- Northwest Indian College
- Spokane Tribal College

11th and 12th grade students, as determined by the local public school district, charter school or tribal compact school, have a right granted by the Legislature to participate in Running Start. The exercise of that right is subject only to minimal eligibility and procedural requirements as described in state administrative rules. The Washington Legislature has charged OSPI with adopting rules to fund students’ participation in summer quarter Running Start through [Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5693\(504\)\(18\)](#) (2022) and [Substitute House Bill 1316](#) (2023). [Bulletin 027-24](#) provides additional information on summer quarter Running Start specifically, and is available on the [OSPI Bulletins webpage](#).

A variety of K-12 and higher education representatives and the Office of the Attorney General developed this document. The answers reflect how schools, including public high schools, private schools, homeschools, tribal compact schools, school districts, community and technical colleges and baccalaureate colleges and universities need to implement or administer various elements of Running Start to maintain compliance with state statutes. This document does not provide legal guidance. If there are legal questions, an institution should reach out to the appropriate institutional legal contacts.

In this document the following references are used.

- College refers to Washington’s community and technical colleges and public, four-year universities unless otherwise noted.
- Term refers to 15 quarter credits for colleges on the quarter system or 15 semester credits for colleges/degree programs on the semester program. This is not inclusive of summer term.

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. What is a Running Start program?

Running Start is a dual credit program through which students enroll in college courses at a community or technical college or public, four-year university. The course is taught by college faculty. Students earn college and high school credit when they complete the course. The credit and grades students earn will be transcribed on their permanent college transcript. All of Washington's public four-year colleges and universities accept Running Start credit.

2. What is the difference between Running Start and College in the High School (CiHS)?

There are five main differences between Running Start and CiHS.

- *Where the course is offered.* Running Start is taught on a college campus in-person or online. CiHS is taught or delivered (if online) on a high school campus or through an approved online school.
- *Who teaches the course(s).* Running Start courses are taught by college faculty. CiHS courses are taught by a college-approved high school teacher.
- *Who is eligible to enroll in the course.* For the standard school year, students eligible to be in the 11th and 12th grades are eligible to enroll in Running Start. For the summer term, students who have successfully completed the 10th grade or are eligible to be enrolled in the 11th grade in the following fall term may participate. Students in the 9th, 10th, 11th or 12th grades are eligible to enroll in CiHS.
- *Credit transcription:* Students may take CiHS courses for high school credit without enrolling in the corresponding college class to earn the college credit. They may choose whether or not they wish to establish a college transcript through CiHS. On the other hand, enrollment in Running Start requires students to take courses for both high school and college credit and automatically establishes a college transcript.
- *Funding.* Running Start students may enroll tuition-free up to a maximum of 1.40 full-time equivalent (FTE) each college term, and for a maximum annual average FTE (AAFTE) of 1.40 per year. (See OSPI's [Running Start Technical Guide](#) for further information on FTE/AAFTE and credit calculations for college quarters, semesters, and trimesters.) CiHS students attending a public Washington high school may register and enroll at no cost to the student in CiHS courses offered by eligible institutions of higher education, as defined in [RCW 28B.10.016](#) and as defined in [RCW 28B.10.063](#) Students attending: (1) a public Washington high school that partners to offer CiHS with an institution not defined in the RCWs cited or (2) a private Washington high school may be required to pay a CiHS fee.

3. Is Running Start considered dual credit or dual enrollment?

In Washington, the term dual credit broadly refers to programs where students have the potential to earn high school and college credit for the same course. Running Start is dual credit. Students enroll in college courses at a community or technical college or public, four-year university. Students earn college and high school credit when they complete the course. The credit and grades students earn will be transcribed on

their permanent college transcript.

Dual enrollment, in Washington, is generally defined as a student enrolled concurrently in two different institutions of higher education.

Concurrent enrollment, in Washington, is a partnership between K-12 schools and postsecondary education institutions through which credit-bearing college courses offered by a public or private institution of higher education and taught by higher education faculty or college-approved high school teachers, are taken by high school students who have not yet received the credits required for the award of a high school diploma. Courses may be offered either in high school or at a public or private institution of higher education, and earned credits are recorded on a college or university transcript.

Dual credit, in Washington, is credit awarded through one of the six dual credit programs in Washington. These include Advanced Placement (AP), Cambridge International (CI), College in the High School (CiHS), Career and Technical Education (CTE) Dual Credit, International Baccalaureate (IB), and Running Start.

4. Do students travel for Running Start courses?

Maybe. Running Start courses are taught on a college campus but may also be offered online or in formats that require a mix of on-campus and online learning. Travel may be required of students to attend the course on the college campus.

ATTENDANCE

5. May a high school or school district require that one of its public high school students attend the high school for the purpose of completing non-credit requirements such as a High School & Beyond Plan or other local district non-credit graduation requirement?

It depends. Students who are seeking a high school diploma from a public school district, charter school or tribal compact school must meet all requirements of the state and the requirements of the local district/school.

The intent of Running Start law is to encourage maximum student access to the Running Start program. Districts/schools cannot adopt policies and procedures that intentionally create barriers to student participation in the program. For example, requiring daily or weekly attendance in a High School and Beyond Plan class would logically hinder Running Start participation. Districts that have such requirements are strongly encouraged to offer accommodations to students participating in Running Start.

Students who are not specifically seeking a high school diploma from a public school district, charter school or tribal compact school may choose to refrain from completing the district's/school's specific graduation requirements and focus on earning the credits needed to receive a diploma through the college. Also see the Graduation Requirements section.

6. If a student is full-time at the college and not taking any courses at the high school, but qualifies for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL), can the student come to the high school for breakfast and/or lunch even though they are not attending any classes at the high school?

Based on the federal Food and Nutrition Service rules and OSPI's Child Nutrition Program, to be eligible to

receive a school meal, the student must be enrolled in a school and participate in an integral part of the high school curriculum at a time that requires the student to be in the school when meal service is provided. (See federal legal citation [7 CFR 210](#).) A student must attend a class at the high school before and/or after the high school's meal service period to have access to the meal service.

However, some schools have worked through local avenues, such as AVID classes or bus systems to provide sack lunches before or after school. Districts are encouraged to work with colleges and universities offering Running Start to identify opportunities to address this issue.

7. May Running Start students utilize high school resources for Running Start coursework or occupy high school facilities when not enrolled in a specific high school course at that time?

It depends. While Running Start students should be embraced and treated as valued members of the high school community, each high school must adopt policies to ensure good stewardship of their resources and the safety of all students. [RCW 28A.600.035](#) makes access to high school facilities when Running Start students are not currently enrolled in a class a local decision. To the extent practicable, students should be encouraged and supported in seeking out additional services through college resources to meet their needs.

Allowing students to access high school resources and facilities when they are not attending classes at the high school requires safety and supervision measures that are not always available. As each school has its own policies pertaining to campus resources and facilities, students and families are encouraged to consult student handbooks or inquire with staff in advance about policies pertaining to Running Start students or accommodations that could be made to support them. Schools and districts are encouraged to adopt policies that are responsive to the needs of all students but consider the unique needs of those participating in Running Start and consider reasonable exceptions to eliminate barriers to access pertaining to transportation, technology, student connectedness, and more. Policies restricting access (and the rationale for them) should be clearly communicated, and they should be enforced in a fair, equitable, and compassionate manner by which students do not feel discriminated against or alienated from their peers.

8. If a student has completed state graduation requirements, but has not yet graduated, and drops out of any courses being taken through Running Start, is the student considered truant?

No. Technically, meeting state graduation requirements with or without a diploma satisfies the compulsory attendance requirement in accordance with [RCW 28A.225.010](#). Also see the Eligibility and Limitations section.

9. May students routinely miss or be dismissed early from high school classes to attend Running Start?

No. While students participating in Running Start are not considered absent when attending at the college according to [WAC 392-121-107](#), they are expected to attend the high school classes in which they are enrolled. High school class attendance expectations must be applied uniformly and equitably to all students, and high schools are not obligated to release a student from scheduled classes to accommodate Running Start. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their Running Start courses are scheduled in a way that accounts for travel time and minimizes interference with their high school classes. Furthermore, if the student is missing or leaving their high school classes early on a regular basis, the FTE that the high school is claiming for the student must be reduced based on the student's actual enrolled weekly minutes.

10. Can a student withdraw from a class taken through Running Start without the permission of the high school or school district?

Yes. However, the student is responsible for following the college's Add/Drop policies and should let the high school know to ensure they remain on track for graduation. School districts and/or high schools should closely coordinate with colleges to ensure that the student does not become truant due to the withdrawal from a Running Start class. Colleges may only claim students who are enrolled in the college classes on the monthly count day (first instructional day of the month) and participated in instructional activity sometime during the prior month. The high school or district's notification of a student's withdrawal from the Running Start class ensures that the college does not incorrectly over-claim these students.

11. Can a student taking an online course through Running Start access the course via the high school campus?

Possibly. A local high school, charter school or tribal compact school could choose to offer students the opportunity to access their online Running Start class(es) on the high school campus. However, the time the student spends accessing their Running Start instruction on the high school campus cannot be claimed as a high school FTE. Allowing Running Start students to access computers on a high school campus without having them enrolled and supervised presents a liability risk (see question #7 above).

CREDIT AND FINANCIAL AID ELIGIBILITY

12. May a high school or district elect to reduce the rate of credit granted a Running Start student for five quarter (credit) hours of college work to less than one high school credit?

No. [RCW 28A.230.090](#) established that five quarter or three semester college credit hours shall equal 1.0 high school credit. School districts and high schools are required to grant a full 1.0 high school credit for every five quarter, or three semester credit hours of work successfully completed by a Running Start student.

13. May high schools or school districts split the corresponding high school credits between required and elective courses?

Yes. However, based on a case-by-case evaluation of the extent to which a college course is the equivalent of required high school coursework, an arbitrary uniform rate is squarely at odds with the course-by-course comparison and judgment required by [WAC 392-169-050](#).

It is permissible for the school district superintendent or similar administrator in a private school or tribal compact school, on an individual course basis, to split the credit for a course that is not comparable, following consultation with a college representative. The total credit awarded must still equate to the five-quarter or three-semester college credits to 1.0 high school credit conversation established in [RCW 28A.230.090](#).

14. Can a district refuse to establish dual credit equivalencies in particular subject areas?

Yes. School district administrators and boards of directors have the authority to adopt course equivalencies for Running Start courses offered to students. However, while decisions about equivalencies are made locally, the Legislature has made it clear that its intent "is to encourage maximum student access" to the Running Start program. School district administrators, boards and/or other staff leaders in charter and tribal

compact schools are encouraged to establish all appropriate equivalencies, reflecting legislative intent for this program.

15. May a high school restrict Running Start students from taking two like subjects in the same academic year (Example: English 101 and 102)?

No.

16. Are Running Start students allowed to take online college classes for dual credit?

Yes. However, in order to claim Running Start funds, the college must be considered an eligible institute of higher education as described in [WAC 392-169-033](#).

17. May a Running Start student "challenge" a course and be claimed for full state funding?

No. State funding for Running Start is based on monthly enrollment counts. To challenge a course would require a student to challenge the outcomes of a course by participating in a formal assessment process, rather than taking the course. Students can only be claimed for state funding if they are enrolled in the college course on the monthly count day, had participated in instructional activities during the month prior to the count day, and will not exceed the combined 1.40 FTE monthly limitation.

Accelerated completion of a course is likely to exceed a student's monthly enrollment limits and could result in a tuition charge by the college for the student. Students are also responsible for paying fees associated with the "challenge" course.

18. May a student audit a Running Start course?

No. The FTE claimed for a Running Start course is based on the number of college credits that would be awarded after successfully completing the class. If a student is auditing a college course with no intention of earning a college credit, then the enrollment in this class would not be eligible to be claimed for Running Start funding.

19. Which college courses may a Running Start student take?

The entire college catalog is available to Running Start students if they have met any enrollment requirements or specific course prerequisites that the college requires of all students. Students should work closely with high school and college counselors/advisors, however, to ensure that their chosen courses align with their graduation requirements, High School and Beyond Plans, or education and career goals, as appropriate. Running Start courses may include both academic and professional-technical courses.

20. Do Washington Running Start credits transfer to out-of-state colleges or universities?

Studies and surveys consistently indicate that most students can successfully transfer credits earned through Running Start programs, both in-state and around the country. Parents and students are encouraged to educate themselves about the transferability of college credits to another college. The receiving institution has the right to determine which and how many college credits it will accept, and whether they will count toward specific college degree courses, general college course requirements, or as electives.

Most Washington colleges have transfer credit equivalencies listed on their "Transfer Credit" webpages to assist students with determining how college credits and exam scores will transfer. Students and families are also encouraged to review the Washington Student Achievement Council's [transfer webpage](#) and

["Student Transfer Rights and Responsibilities"](#) document to familiarize themselves with the college's credit transfer policies and procedures.

21. Could a statewide high school equivalency guide for Running Start be developed?

Each school district develops their own graduation requirements within the larger state graduation framework. If a school district is struggling with what might work as an equivalent, they can reach out to the OSPI Graduation and Pathway Preparation Office or Dual Credit Program Supervisor to ask for example equivalency guides that have already been established which may guide local discussions about appropriate equivalent courses.

22. Do credits earned through dual enrollment programs like Running Start affect a student's NCAA eligibility?

No. [NCAA Bylaw 12.8.2.3](#) Joint College/High School Program states: "A student-athlete's eligibility under the five-year rule does not begin while a student is enrolled in a collegiate institution in a joint high school/college academic program for high school students in which the courses count as both high school graduation credit and college credit, provided the student has not officially graduated from high school and does not participate in intercollegiate athletics while enrolled in the joint program." (Revised: 11/01/2001 effective 8/01/2002, 7/31/2014)

College courses may be used to satisfy NCAA core-curriculum requirements if the courses are accepted and awarded credit by the high school for any student and meet all other requirements for core courses. College courses must be placed on the student's high school transcript.

23. How do credits earned through concurrent enrollment programs impact a student's financial aid eligibility?

Students with questions about the effect of Running Start on their student aid or scholarship packages should always check directly with the college's admissions, financial aid, and scholarship offices.

Washington College Grant

Dual credit courses do not apply to the WCG maximum usage timeframe unless the student completes a bachelor's degree before the limit is up. Some types of financial aid have a maximum timeframe for eligibility that limits the length of time students can receive aid. The limit depends on the state, federal, and/or institutional policy. While there are some ways that dual credit participation can affect a student's access to financial aid, due to recent changes to Washington's [maximum timeframe rules](#) with the Washington College Grant (WCG) expansion (formerly State Need Grant, SNG), student accumulation of college credit through dual credit programs will NOT impact their ability to access state financial aid. The new rules for the Washington College Grant (WCG) expansion eliminate the SNG [maximum timeframe](#) of 125% of the length of a program and replace it with maximum terms of eligibility. A maximum timeframe policy limits the length of time students are eligible to receive aid. This policy depends on the policies and practices for state, federal, and/or institutional aid.

The WCG maximum is attending a full time for a maximum of five-years limit (15 quarters/10 semesters or the equivalent of full-time enrollment). The WCG maximum This fulltime limit only applies to the quarters in which a student received the WCG.

Because dual credit students cannot receive state financial aid to pay for college credits earned through

dual credit, no coursework taken in dual credit programs will apply to the WCG full-time limit. Students who earn an associate degree through dual credit programs can use WCG toward another associate degree.

Students who already have an associate degree can use WCG toward a second associate degree if they are enrolled in an aid-eligible program. This means students who earn an associate degree or who earn college credit toward an associate degree through dual credit programs may apply for WCG to pursue a second aid-eligible associate degree.

College Bound Scholarship

The College Bound Scholarship (CBS) differs from the WCG's maximum timeframe policy and has a different length of eligibility requirement than the WCG. CBS recipients may be eligible to receive four years of funding to use within five years of high school graduation. Students must enroll in a college or university within one year of high school graduation. The four-year limit (12 quarters/8 semesters or the equivalent of full-time enrollment) applies regardless of whether students choose to enroll part- or full-time, or if they choose to take time off from school. The CBS maximum terms of eligibility are 12 quarters/8 semesters or the equivalent of full-time enrollment (15 quarters/10 semesters or the equivalent of full-time enrollment). Like WCG, this full-time limit only applies to the quarters in which a student received the CBS. In other words, no coursework taken in dual credit programs will apply to the CBS full time limit. CBS Scholars must also enroll in college or university within one academic year following their high school graduation to be eligible for CBS consideration. For example, a CBS Scholar who graduated high school in the spring of 2021 is required to enroll in college or university by the fall term of 2022. CBS Scholars who do not enroll in college within a year of high school graduation are not eligible to receive the scholarship – unless they completed transcribed college credit prior to high school graduation through a dual credit program such as CTE Dual Credit, College in the High School (CiHS), or Running Start (RS). In this case, dual credit participation helps students access state financial aid because it fulfills the CBS enrollment deadline. For example:

- A CBS student completes a Running Start (RS) course their senior year.
- The student graduates in the spring of 2021 having already met the CBS enrollment deadline because they were enrolled at a college for their RS course.
- The student does not enroll in college until the fall term of 2023.
- The student is still eligible for CBS consideration because they met the enrollment deadline through RS participation. However, the student still only has five years after high school graduation to use CBS funding, meaning they would only have three years of remaining funding left.

Federal and Institutional Aid

For federal financial aid, including the Pell Grant, the maximum timeframe policy limit is 150% of the published length of the student's program. Every credit on a student's college transcript is eligible to be counted towards the federal 150% maximum timeframe. This includes credits earned through dual credit programs.

Federal policies do allow for exceptions to be granted in the calculation of the limit and provide grant college/universities flexibility in determining which credits are to be applied to an individual student's maximum timeframe.

The term “published length of program” is an important one. It allows registrars and financial aid offices to implement a policy that counts only those credits that apply to the student’s current program of study. However, how credits are applied is entirely at the discretion of the college/university’s credit transfer policy.

Specific institutional aid may also have differing maximum timeframe policy rules. Students who get close to the maximum timeframe will need to work closely with the financial aid representative at their college/university to maintain eligibility for federal and institutional aid. This issue is most likely to occur for students who graduate with a high number of college credits.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

For both state and federal and institutional financial aid, it is important to note that there is a requirement that students maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). SAP is a measurement of academic performance in terms of GPA and completed credits. It differs slightly for state and federal aid.

Washington requires a per term SAP review. Recipients of state financial aid must earn at least one-half of the credits enrolled that they received aid for to demonstrate academic progress. This is known as the cumulative academic progress percentage. The federal SAP has a “pace” requirement instead where students must earn 67% of the credits attempted.

Though specific SAP review standards may vary by institution, all SAP policies consider the maximum timeframe rules and evaluate the successful completion of a minimum number of credits or clock hours. For example, full time enrollment is successfully completing 12 credits or 300 clock hours.

It is critical for dual credit students to understand all prior postsecondary coursework that generated a college transcript, including that taken through dual credit, will potentially be evaluated for SAP. Depending on the college/university’s SAP policy, they may apply prior credits, including those earned through dual credit, towards the cumulative academic progress percentage.

The SAP evaluation may find that students are not meeting the Satisfactory Academic Progress standards. Depending on the student’s cumulative academic progress percentage the student may be placed on:

- Warning Status: The student can continue to receive state aid.
- Unsatisfactory or Denied Status: The student can no longer receive any state aid. This status is often given to students who remain in warning status for more terms than the college’s policies allow.

If a student struggled in their dual credit coursework and it hurts their SAP evaluation, 100% of Washington’s colleges and universities have an SAP appeals process in place. Appeals and reinstatement policies vary by institution.

Private Donor and Institutional Scholarships

Policies surrounding private scholarships rest with the donor. How institutional scholarships are awarded is controlled by each college. It is up to each private donor or each college to determine how CIHS college credits impact consideration for scholarships that are reserved for first-year students.

Many four-year colleges and universities allow Running Start students to apply for scholarships. Students should check with the scholarship office of the institution in which they are enrolling to understand the college or university policy.

24. Are Running Start students able to take college success courses without an impact to their overall FTE and ability to complete an associate degree?

If the college success course is numbered 100 or higher, Running Start students would be eligible for the tuition to be covered by the Running Start program. Eligibility for enrollment is decided by the prerequisites, if any, on the course. Impact to FTE would be the same as any other course the student enrolls in.

25. If a college created a college success course for Running Start students, would the institution of higher education offer the course to 10th graders to prepare them for Running Start?

Access to Running Start is for students enrolled in or eligible for grades 11 and 12 for the standard school year (September-June). For the summer college term, a student who has completed 10th grade or would be eligible to enroll in the 11th grade in the fall would be eligible to enroll for up to 10 college credits and take a college success course. It should be noted, too, that college success courses cannot be offered exclusively to Running Start students pursuant to [RCW 28A.600.310](#), which states, "(5) The course sections and programs offered as Running Start courses must be open for registration to matriculated students at the participating institution of higher education and may not be a course consisting solely of high school students offered at a high school campus."

DISABILITY SERVICES

26. What should a high school student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan do to seek accommodations from the college as part of their participation in Running Start?

Unlike students in K-12 schools, Running Start students have a responsibility to request any necessary accommodations from their college directly. The student should contact the college's disability services office well in advance of any published deadlines to make the request. The college may require documentation in support of a request for accommodations.

For students with an IEP: If Running Start has not previously been contemplated in the formulation of your IEP, parents/students may wish to discuss with their school district whether the IEP should be modified to reflect Running Start enrollment.

Note: Institutions of higher education are required to make all programs and services physically accessible to all students, and to accommodate the academic participation of students with disabilities in college classes and activities. This does not include modifications to admission nor academic requirements if the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the course or program.

27. Who is responsible for covering the costs associated with ADA or Section 504 accommodations for Running Start students?

Institutions of higher education are responsible for providing reasonable accommodations to qualified students under the ADA and Section 504. As with any other enrolled qualified student, colleges must cover

the costs of complying with ADA or Section 504 for Running Start students who are enrolled in classes located at the college.

28. Who is responsible for covering the costs associated with special education services outlined in a student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP)?

School districts, charter schools, and tribal compact schools are responsible for providing the services outlined in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for an eligible student. Colleges and high schools should work together to ensure that a student’s needs are being met, including, where appropriate, entering into an interagency agreement to ensure that each agency is complying with its respective duties to provide appropriate accommodations to the eligible student under state and federal law. See [WAC 392-169-080 for more information.](#)

Schools providing special education services to a student can claim eligible students on the P223H form for special education funding. The enrolled hours of special education services that are part of a high school program may be claimed as a partial FTE on the P223 form for basic education funding, provided that the combined high school and Running Start FTE does not exceed 1.40 FTE.

29. How long is a student with an IEP or Section 504 plan eligible for Running Start?

Running Start may provide the equivalent of two academic years of full-time eligibility for dual credit. An IEP or Section 504 plan, however, may indicate a student’s need to extend the length of time required to complete their secondary education program. The academic and calendar year may not coincide under the IEP or Section 504 plan.

Eligibility for Running Start may continue, if appropriate to the IEP or Section 504 plan, while the student continues work toward completing the district’s graduation requirements so long as the student is otherwise eligible, does not exceed the 63-credit Running Start maximum for all senior years combined, and courses being taken continue to address specific credit requirements necessary for high school graduation.

30. Does an IEP automatically qualify a student for Running Start if identified in the student’s transition plan?

No. The student must be eligible for Running Start to be claimed as a Running Start student. The IEP does not override the eligibility requirements. Under the law, a transition plan is simply a course of instruction that is part of a student’s IEP.

31. Is a school district required to provide transportation to a student with disabilities who wants to take classes through Running Start?

A school district would be responsible for necessary transportation of a Running Start student to and from college if the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) provides for Running Start enrollment in an institution of higher education.

32. How does the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruling (May 2024) extending special education services to a student’s 22nd birthday impact Running Start?

Until further notice, it does not. Running Start has its own eligibility requirements established in [WAC 392-169-020](#). For a student receiving special education services, the IEP team determines the student’s graduation plan and date based on what is in the best interest of the student for continuing their secondary education. If a student is 21 and has not yet graduated, they are eligible for special education services until

age 22, if special education and transition services are determined to be needed by the IEP team. The IEP, however, does not override the requirements of the Running Start program. More information on this topic is available at [Questions and Answers: Providing Special Education Services Until Age 22](#).

ELIGIBILITY and LIMITATIONS

33. What are the definitions of a Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) and Annual Average Full-Time Equivalent (AAFTE)?

Full Time Equivalent is the measurement of a student's instructional monthly enrollment. For high school and skill center classes, 1.0 FTE is equal to 27 hours and 45 minutes of instruction per week or 1,665 weekly minutes. For part-time enrollment, FTE is calculated by dividing the student's enrolled high school and/or skill center weekly minutes by 1,665. For Running Start college courses, FTE is based on the number of enrolled college credits. 1.0 FTE is equal to 15 quarter or semester college credits. The formula to calculate a student's Running Start FTE ($\# \text{ of enrolled credits} \div 15$) is in accordance with [WAC 392-169-025](#).

Annual Average Full Time Equivalent is the annual average of the monthly FTE. For high school and skill center classes, AAFTE is the 10-month average of reported enrollment from September through June. For Running Start courses, AAFTE is the 9-month average of reported enrollment from October through August.

34. Why do high schools operate on a 10-month count and Running Start on a 9-month count during the standard school year?

High school enrollment is counted for 10 months - from September through June. Since most colleges start later in September, Running Start enrollment is a count for the months October through June which is a total of nine months. For Washington State University, their monthly counts are based on enrolled students for the months September through May but are reported as October through June. For the summer college term, colleges count students for the months of July and August.

35. Can a school district limit access to Running Start for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) eligible students?

No, school districts are not allowed to limit access to Running Start for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) eligible students.

Qualifying for FRPL provides students with additional support and financial resources to help remove barriers to post-secondary attainment. It is not designed to limit students' opportunities to participate in the Running Start Program.

Colleges/universities and high schools should make every attempt to ensure all qualified students access fee waivers. Fee waivers cover most fees and, depending on the college/university, may cover tuition that extends beyond the 1.40 FTE limit. Additionally, many colleges/universities also offer funds to cover books in addition to bus passes and food pantry items when needed.

While FRPL does provide additional resources, students must consider how to access lunch when they are not on their high school campus. Based on the federal Food and Nutrition Service rules ([7 CFR 210](#)) and the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) [Child Nutrition Program](#), to be eligible to receive a school meal, the student must be enrolled in a school and must participate in an integral part of the high school curriculum at a time that requires the student to be in the school when meal service is

provided. In other words, a student must attend a class at the high school before and/or after the high school's meal service period to have access to the meal service.

However, some schools have worked through local avenues, such as AVID classes or bus systems to provide sack lunches before or after school. Additionally, some colleges/universities are partnering with school districts to determine how to provide this necessary service for full-time RS students.

36. May school counselors or district staff disclose FRPL-eligibility to institutions of higher education for the purposes of establishing eligibility for fee waivers?

Yes. In fact, [RCW 28A.600.310\(b\)\(i\)](#) requires school districts to provide documentation of students' low-income status directly to institutions of higher education. Under the National School Lunch Act (NSLA), LEAs may share name and eligibility status only for the purposes of federal and state education programs, like Running Start. Access to eligibility information must be limited to those who are directly responsible for the administration of Running Start and LEAs should have a data sharing agreement with any institution of higher education that receives free and reduced-price eligibility data to ensure they understand the confidentiality of the information. More information is available on OSPI's [Disclosure of Free and Reduced-Price Meal Eligibility Information Reference Sheet](#).

Note: School counselors or other staff who verify Running Start enrollment will need access to students' FRPL status to complete the RSEVF.

37. Are there other options that colleges can use to qualify Running Start students for waivers?

Although receiving FRPL documentation from the high school is the most seamless way to qualify for waivers there are other options that colleges can use for qualifying students.

Please see below:

A Running Start student is considered low income and eligible for a fee waiver upon proof that the student meets federal eligibility requirements for free or reduced-price school meals.

Acceptable documentation of low-income status may also include:

- Student has been deemed eligible for free-reduced-price lunches in the past five years.
- Family income is equal to or less than 50 percent of the state median.
- Family income is less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level.
- Student receiving any state or federal assistance funds.
- Youth in Care

Consumable supplies, textbooks, and other materials retained by the student are not within the definition of fees and therefore not subject to the mandatory low-income waiver provisions.

38. Are Running Start students required to follow the same academic policies as the general college student population?

Yes. Except for financial aid, Running Start students are required to follow the same policies as the general student population. Once a student is admitted, registered and enrolled, they are a college student and must meet all college requirements as stated in [RCW 28A.600.310 \(1\)\(b\)](#).

39. May a Running Start student be enrolled full-time at a participating college and enroll in a class at the high school?

Yes. A Running Start student may be claimed up to a combined 1.40 FTE between the high school and the participating college. A student attending Running Start full-time and taking up to 15 credits can also attend the high school and be claimed for up to a 0.40 FTE at no cost to the student. A student enrolling for more than the combined 1.40 FTE may be required to pay tuition to the college for the additional college credits or may qualify to receive a low-income tuition waiver from the college. Rising 12th grade students and non-graduating 12th grade students that choose to enroll in Running Start during the summer term should work closely with their high school and/or district office and their college advisor to ensure they have available AAFTE for summer.

40. Can a student complete both Running Start and a skills center program?

Yes. Students enrolled at skills centers can participate in Running Start. The key is to track the overall FTE if a student is also enrolled in a regular public high school in addition to the skills center. Total combined FTE between the high school, skills center and the college cannot exceed the 2.0 FTE limitation for students enrolled at skills centers. See Questions #87-89.

41. If a student takes a “college success” class or any course in August, will it be funded through Running Start?

Yes, provided it is 100-level or above. Running Start enrollment is now available during the summer term if there is FTE available. A class that occurs in August only, however, can be claimed for just one month of funding.

42. Can the college claim and bill for a compressed class completed prior to the October “count” date?

Running Start FTE is based on the student’s enrolled credits on the monthly “count” day. Compressed classes that occur in September and end before the October monthly count day cannot be claimed for October, since the student is not enrolled in this class on the October count day. Running Start does not have a September count, so a September college course cannot be claimed for Running Start funding.

43. May a student participate in Running Start at a college with which the high school does not have a local agreement or memorandum of understanding (MOU)?

Yes. Eligible students may access Running Start through any participating college to which they have been admitted. They may also enroll in online Running Start courses at colleges across the state. Local agreements and MOUs between school districts and neighboring Running Start colleges can be helpful for communication and enrollment management purposes, but they are not required.

44. Can school districts or high schools limit a student’s enrollment in Running Start?

No. A school/district cannot limit a student’s enrollment in Running Start by requiring the student to be enrolled full-time in high school classes and restricting the student’s enrollment at the college to 0.40 FTE. Likewise, a school/district cannot require students to attend Running Start full-time at the college or restrict enrollment to specific terms. According to [RCW 28A.600.310\(1\)](#), “Every school district must allow eligible students as described in subsection (2) of this section to participate in the Running Start program.” Students who qualify for Running Start can enroll in up to 21 college credits, provided that they satisfy the college’s prerequisite requirements and do not surpass the combined 1.40 FTE and AAFTE limitations.

45. May a school district or high school condition a student’s eligibility for enrollment in the Running Start program upon a determination by school district or building personnel that the

student is academically qualified to take college or university course work?

No. The determination of whether a student meets the requirements to enroll in Running Start is within the jurisdiction and authority of the college or university. The college or university is to establish eligibility requirements for Running Start students that are the same as the requirements applied to other students enrolling in the college in accordance with [WAC 392-169-045](#).

46. May a school district or high school condition a student's eligibility for enrollment in the Running Start program upon the maintenance of a particular grade point average?

No. The eligibility requirements for participation in the Running Start program are set forth in statute and rule to the exclusion of any GPA requirement. Nothing in statute or rule implies any authority for school districts or high schools to impose additional requirements or conditions upon a student who meets the minimum requirements established by the college and imposed by current Running Start statute.

47. Can a high school prohibit a student from enrolling in a Running Start course they have already failed?

No, schools may not deny access to an eligible student ([RCW 28A.600.310\(2\)](#)) who has been admitted to the college. Determinations of college readiness for Running Start purposes are the purview of the IHE ([RCW 28A.600.310\(4\)](#)). If LEAs have concerns with their students' academic performance, they should address those proactively and constructively with the college. While it is understandably challenging to see students struggle and re-enroll in Running Start, prohibiting them from retaking classes to improve their college transcript will have a long-lasting adverse impact on their college aspirations and persistence.

48. How is 11th or 12th grade standing determined?

It is the responsibility of the school district, charter school or tribal compact school to establish 11th and 12th grade standing. Any criteria used to establish grade placement must be applied uniformly in accordance with district policy to students irrespective of their status as Running Start students in accordance with [WAC 180-51-035](#). Also see Graduate Requirements and Home School/Private School/Choice Transfer/Online Academy Students sections.

49. May a student start the Running Start program mid-year?

Yes. Students may begin to take Running Start classes at the start of any term during their 11th or 12th grade academic year which includes the summer college quarter for rising 11th grade students, current 11th grade students, and non-graduating 12th grade students.

Passed in 2023, [SHB 1316](#) stipulates, "(1) Every school district must allow eligible students as described in subsection (2) of this section to participate in the Running Start program." If a student is otherwise eligible, they should not be prohibited from enrolling mid-year, provided they adhere to college registration deadlines. However, staff should ensure that students and parents/guardians are aware of potential credit and course completion impacts of choosing to start at the college in the middle of a high school academic term.

Note: To receive the full benefit of the Running Start program allowable in statute, students should start at the beginning of the first term of their 11th grade year in high school in accordance with [WAC 392-169-055](#). Also see Eligibility and Limitations section.

50. May a second-year senior enroll in the Running Start program?

A second-year senior may enroll in the Running Start program if they have been enrolled in Running Start previously as an 11th or 12th grade student but may only take those specific courses needed to meet the school district, charter school or tribal compact school graduation requirements. Additionally, a student enrolled in Running Start for more than one senior school year is limited to a maximum of 63 total credits for all senior years combined. A second-year senior is generally understood as being a student who has failed to meet high school graduation requirements by the end of the student's 12th grade academic year in accordance with [WAC 392-169-055](#).

Homeschool students wishing to extend Running Start eligibility into a third year may only do so if accessing Running Start through a school district or public high school, whereby their outstanding graduation requirements may be identified. They, too, may take only those courses needed to satisfy the district's graduation requirements and are limited to 63 total credits in their senior years. This limitation applies even if the student does not intend to graduate from the public high school.

51. Can a student begin Running Start as a second-year senior or beyond?

No. Per current rules in [WAC 392-169-055](#), a student "may continue" Running Start enrollment into a second senior year, but it does not provide for the option to begin the program after the student's first senior year.

52. If a student meets all state and local credit requirements for high school graduation before the end of their senior year, can they continue to access Running Start?

It depends. Per [WAC 392-169-020](#), if a student has begun their senior school year without having earned the state and locally required credits mandated by the school district for the award of a high school diploma, they may continue to access Running Start under the limits set forth in [WAC 392-169-055](#). A student who completes all required credits to graduate before the beginning of their 12th grade year, on the other hand, may not enroll in Running Start, even if they have not completed non-credit-bearing activities (e.g. graduation application, HSBP, etc.). Also see Eligibility and Limitations and Graduation Requirements.

53. Can a student participate in Running Start in a sixth high school year (beyond that of a "second-year senior")?

Yes, under the following conditions:

- a) The student is eligible to participate in Running Start pursuant to [WAC 392-169-020](#);
- b) The student previously participated in Running Start;
- c) The student is under the age of 21;
- d) The student has not received the credits required to earn a high school diploma from their school district;
- e) The student has not exceeded the 63-credit limitation for all senior years combined; and
- f) The student is enrolling for only the courses required to complete their high school graduation requirements.

54. Can a student with a GED participate in Running Start?

Yes, provided the student is still enrolled through a district, charter school, or tribal compact school; has not met high school graduation requirements; and is otherwise eligible by age, grade level, and enrollment limits pursuant to [RCW 28A.600.330](#) and [WAC 392-169-020](#), which reads, "A general education development certificate is not considered to be the equivalent of a high school diploma for purposes of this

subsection.”

55. Can a student in second-year senior status stay in Running Start just to complete an associate degree?

No. The pursuit of an associate degree is not the intent of the Running Start program. Running Start is intended to advance students toward completing a district’s high school graduation requirements as stated in [RCW 28A.600.360](#) and [WAC 392-169-015](#).

56. May a student who has already earned an associate degree participate in or continue Running Start?

No. Per [WAC 392-160-020](#), Running Start is available to students who have not earned “a high school diploma or its equivalent.” As high school diplomas may be awarded upon completion of an associate degree, students who have achieved this are not eligible for Running Start. Professional certificates, industry-recognized credentials, and General Education Development (GED) credentials are not considered equivalent to a diploma and do not preclude students from taking advantage of Running Start.

57. Can a 10th grade student who has completed 11th grade-level courses start Running Start as a sophomore?

No, not for the standard school year’s college term. It is required in [statute](#) that students have 11th or 12th grade class standing as defined by the high school to participate in Running Start. For the summer term, however, a student who has completed the 10th grade or is eligible to begin the 11th grade in the fall may enroll in Running Start for a maximum of 10 credits.

58. Can a student apply 11th grade eligibility to a 12th grade year by taking fewer college credits in the 11th grade and more college credits in the 12th grade?

No. 11th grade eligibility would be complete. However, the student would still be eligible for the three quarters of 12th grade. If a 12th grade student has not met the district’s graduation requirements by June, they would also be eligible to enroll in the summer quarter. An additional year of Running Start as a second-year senior is restricted to only the courses that will meet the district, charter school, or tribal compact school’s graduation requirements in accordance with [WAC 392-169-055\(4\)](#) and is limited to 63 total college credits for the 12th grade academic year(s) combined. Running Start eligibility is not based on college terms, but rather 11th and 12th grade academic years.

59. May students completing the 10th grade participate in summer Running Start as “rising juniors”?

Yes, [SHB 1316](#) opened summer quarter Running Start with the intention of allowing students to participate upon completion of 10th grade. In the following year (2024) [SSB 5670](#) codified Running Start eligibility for “rising juniors” in the summer quarter following completion of the 10th grade. Non-graduating students, including “rising juniors,” are limited to 10 college credits in the summer quarter.

60. May students access Running Start prior to the 11th grade if their school does not have sufficiently advanced coursework in a particular subject?

The earliest a student can enroll in Running Start is the summer quarter preceding their 11th grade year provided they are admitted by the college. Running Start funding is otherwise limited to students eligible to be in the 11th and 12th grade as described in [RCW 28A.600.310](#). If students require more advanced coursework prior to their 11th grade year, students and families are encouraged to inquire about [Highly](#)

[Capable Program](#) funding at their school district, investigate [Choice Transfer](#) options to schools with more rigorous offerings, or work with their school to determine if an independent study would be possible and appropriate.

61. May a high school deny Running Start participation to students under the age of 21?

No. A student who is under the age 21 as of September 1st of the new school year is eligible to participate in Running Start for that school year, provided they are an 11th or 12th grade student and have not met their district's graduation requirements. As a second-year senior, a student would be limited to no more than 63 total college credits for both senior academic years combined. An eligible student who turns 21 during the school year may continue to participate for the remainder of that school year. However, they may only enroll in classes specifically needed for high school graduation and cannot exceed the maximum allowable Running Start enrollment in accordance with [WAC 392-169-020](#) and [RCW 28A.600.330](#). After a student turns 21, they cannot access college courses through Running Start during the next school year.

62. Can a Running Start student take above 200 level courses?

Yes, provided the student meets the prerequisite or requirements to take the course. Courses above 200 level fall under the same Running Start reimbursement rates. If a student enrolls in a 200-level course or higher and exceeds the 1.40 AAFTE limit, a student may be responsible for paying the higher tuition rate associated with the higher level course.

63. Can a Running Start student retake a course to improve their grade?

Yes, provided both a local high school or school district and a local college allow repeating the course. Both the original course and the retaken course, as well as the corresponding grades earned, will show on both the college and high school transcripts. Whether or not the original grade is removed from the grade point average calculation for the high school is determined by the local school district policy regarding grade replacement. Grade replacement on the college transcript is determined by the college's policy.

64. Are Running Start students subject to the compulsory attendance laws?

Yes. Running Start students are subject to the compulsory attendance statute in accordance with [RCW 28A.225.010](#).

65. May a student expelled from high school for a serious offense continue to be enrolled in Running Start?

Yes. Students who have been suspended or expelled from their high school for a violation of school district policies may continue to participate in college classes through the end of the college's academic term. Colleges may not discipline Running Start students who have been suspended or expelled from high school unless the college determines that the student has violated the college's own student conduct code. Districts and colleges should address the applicability of their respective discipline policies in contractual agreements or memoranda of understanding.

66. May a student who has been previously expelled from high school enroll in a college course through Running Start?

Yes. A student who re-enrolls in a high school and meets all other eligibility requirements may enroll in Running Start courses.

67. If a currently enrolled Running Start student moves out of the high school district, can the student continue Running Start through the original district?

Yes. A student who moves to a new school district in Washington after enrolling in Running Start and takes no classes at any high school in the new district, shall be deemed to have retained his or her residence in the school district in which they originally enrolled in Running Start. This retention is for high school graduation, funding, and other purposes under the Running Start Program in accordance with [WAC 392-169-020\(2\)](#).

68. May a student skip a grade to access Running Start?

It depends on the district's grade-level placement policy. While colleges have their own policies about accepting underage students, in order to access Running Start funds, the student must have completed 10th grade or be eligible to enroll in 11th grade. Per [WAC 392-169-020](#), eligibility for 11th grade is subject to the grade placement policies of the school district through which the student intends to enroll in Running Start. This policy must be uniformly applied to students irrespective of their Running Start status. Private school, homeschool, and transfer students are subject to the same district grade placement policies regardless of whether they intend to pursue a diploma through the district.

69. Is a student who completes 12th grade in one district, then transfers the following year to another district where the student is placed in 12th grade (not as a second-year senior), eligible to be coded as a first-year senior in Running Start?

No. The student is limited to second-year senior standards in accordance with [RCW 28A.600.330](#). Also see Eligibility and Limitations section.

70. Do Running Start students need to meet all district and state graduation requirements to earn a high school diploma from a district, charter school or tribal compact school?

Yes. However, students do have the option of seeking a high school diploma issued through their local community and technical college. They do not need to meet district and state requirements but must graduate with an associate degree to obtain a high school diploma through their local community and technical college.

71. May Running Start students earning a high school diploma be excused from the required statewide proficiency tests because the testing conflicts with college classes?

No. Running Start students who have not yet met standard on their 10th grade ELA and/or Math assessments should check with their home high school to see what options are available for retaking one or both exams or using an alternative assessment option. For the 11th grade Science exam, arrangements should be made at the college or high school to accommodate the student who is taking the high school test required by the state.

72. If a student who resides outside of the district but attends through a Choice Transfer and enrolls in Running Start, but later withdraws from the college, can the high school prohibit the student from enrolling in classes in the high school?

No. It is the duty of the district who has accepted the student through a Choice Transfer to provide them all the educational services they require as provided by law until the Choice Transfer has been rescinded.

73. What is the responsibility of the school district to inform potential Running Start students about the Running Start program?

In accordance with [WAC 392-169-070](#), a school district shall provide general information about Running Start and how to become eligible to all students in grades ten, eleven, and twelve, and to the parents/guardians of those students. To the extent practicable, this information should be delivered in multiple formats and languages accessible to students with disabilities and English language learners. Dual credit information should also be included in students' High School and Beyond Plans (HSBP) as described in [RCW 28A.230.090](#)(1)(c)(v). The district must share information about the opportunity to enroll in the program through online courses available at state institutions of higher education and including the college high school diploma options in accordance with [RCW 28B.50.535](#).

In 2024, the legislature passed [SHB 1146](#), requiring all public schools serving students in 9th through 12th grade to provide annual notification of all dual credit options available to students and financial assistance associated with them. This notice must be provided by email and other means prior to course registration or scheduling for the next school term and, to the extent feasible, made available in the primary language of the student's parent or legal guardian.

To assist the high school in planning, a student shall inform the high school of their intent to enroll in courses at an institution of higher education for credit. Students are responsible for applying for admission to the institution of higher education in accordance with [RCW 28A.600.320](#).

74. Who determines which college the student will attend?

The students and their families. Although students will generally attend the college closest to their high school or district, they may attend or enroll for online courses at any eligible state institution of higher education if admitted. Running Start is offered through Washington's 34 community and technical colleges; select public, four-year universities (Washington State University, Central Washington University and Eastern Washington University); and two tribal colleges (Northwest Indian College and Spokane Tribal College) in accordance with [WAC 392-169- 033](#).

75. May a Running Start student attend more than one institution of higher education at the same time?

Yes. Students may attend more than one institution of higher education in any college term or switch to another institution of higher education for a new college term. A different RSEVF needs to be completed for each institution attended, however, and students should be mindful of credit transferability and equivalency and ensure they are not exceeding the 1.40 FTE/AAFE limitation. Students should also work with college counselors to understand residency requirements that often require a certain percentage of credits to be taken at the institution through which they plan to obtain a degree.

76. Can a high school or district deny a student's application to enroll in Running Start if the student does not want a diploma from the district or the high school?

No. If the student meets all eligibility requirements, the high school or district cannot keep a student from participating in Running Start. [SHB 1316](#) (2023) reinforced this, amending [RCW 28A.600.310](#) to read, "Every school district must allow eligible students as described in subsection (2) of this section to participate in the Running Start program."

77. Can a college limit the proportion of Running Start students in any individual class?

No. A college cannot deny access to Running Start students for participation in any single course or program. Under the law, any policy adopted which limits Running Start enrollment must be generally

applicable and related to physical facility limitations, operating funds limitations, academically appropriate class size, or a student's ability to benefit from a particular class, course or program.

78. Can a high school impose a registration deadline or otherwise limit registration times for Running Start?

No. If a student meets the eligibility requirements and can register for college classes within a college's registration deadline, they should be allowed to enroll. However, the college can impose a registration deadline. It is recommended that high schools and colleges work together to define a mutually understood process for registration.

Schedules must include enough flexibility not to impose barriers on students' Running Start participation. Each term, a complete Running Start Verification Form (RSEVF) must be in place prior to the start of the Running Start class.

79. Must students disclose their social security or Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN) on Running Start application forms?

No. However, colleges may ask all students, including Running Start students, to provide their social security numbers or ITIN for federal tax reporting purposes. Under federal law, colleges must have a legally permissible need to collect this information, must inform individuals that disclosure is voluntary, and must explain the legal basis for seeking the numbers and how the college intends to use them.

80. Can a student at a charter or tribal compact school enroll in Running Start?

Yes. Students enrolled in a charter or tribal compact school can enroll in Running Start without enrolling in a public high school. The charter or tribal compact school would complete the Running Start Enrollment Verification Form (RSEVF) each term for their students.

The monthly enrollment report (P223RS) completed by the college should be sent to the charter or tribal compact school, the school should include this Running Start enrollment on their electronic P223, and the state funding generated by their student(s) would be paid directly to the charter or tribal compact school. Based on the appropriate monthly enrollment reports, the charter or tribal compact school would then remit up to 93% of the funds for the Running Start students to the college.

81. Can a student residing outside of Washington take online courses with Washington colleges through Running Start?

No. To meet the definition of an enrolled student, the student must be a resident of a Washington district in accordance with [WAC 392-121-106](#). Running Start funding is only available to Washington residents enrolled in a Washington public high school, charter school or tribal compact school and physically living a majority (+50%) of their time in Washington. Establishing residency is also based on the expectation that the student will physically reside in Washington for a minimum of 20 consecutive days in accordance with [WAC 392-137-115](#).

82. When do residency determinations need to be made for Running Start Students?

Residency determinations must be made for students who exceed the 1.40 FTE and AAFTE limitations or enroll in non-college level courses during the regular term. These situations would not be covered under the Running Start reimbursement and would be subject to residency for tuition determination in accordance with [RCW 28B.15.012](#).

83. Must students disclose their immigration status on Running Start application forms?

No. Provided that the student meets the definition of an enrolled student in accordance with [WAC 392-121-106](#), a student's immigration status does not impact their eligibility nor prohibit them from enrolling in classes that receive basic education funding, including Running Start in accordance with [WAC 392-137-115](#).

However, residency determinations must be made for students who exceed the 1.40 FTE and AAFTE limitations or enroll in non-college level courses during the regular term. These situations would not be covered under the Running Start reimbursement and would be subject to residency for tuition determination in accordance with [RCW 28B.15.012](#).

1.40 FTE/AAFTE RUNNING START LIMITATION and RSEVF

84. What is the Running Start Enrollment Verification Form (RSEVF)?

The RSEVF is an OSPI form that must be completed for each student enrolling in Running Start and for each college term. It is a communication tool that outlines how the student's 1.40 FTE will be split between the high school and the college, provides the free and reduced-price lunch (FRPL) status of a student to the college, informs the high school of the classes the student will be taking at the college, and explains the 1.40 FTE limitation to the student and parents and why tuition may be due to the college.

85. What is the Full-Time Equivalent for high school courses and Running Start courses?

The Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) is the measurement of a student's monthly enrollment.

For high school classes:

1.00 FTE is equal to 27 weekly hours and 45 minutes or 1,665 weekly minutes. For part-time high school enrollment, FTE is calculated by dividing the student's enrolled weekly minutes by 1,665. The Annual Average FTE (AAFTE) for high school classes is the 10-month average of reported enrollment from September through June.

For Running Start college courses:

1.00 FTE equals 15 enrolled college credits or 12 semester college credits per term. For part-time Running Start enrollment, FTE is calculated by dividing the student's enrolled college credits by 15. AAFTE is the nine-month average of reported enrollment from October through August.

See OSPI's [Running Start Technical Guide](#) for further information on FTE/AAFTE and credit calculations for college quarters, semesters, and trimesters.

86. What is the FTE Limitation for Running Start?

The FTE limitation for Running Start is 1.40 FTE. A student enrolled in high school and RS classes can be claimed up to a combined 1.40 FTE in any month. The high school is limited to a 1.0 FTE. The college can exceed the 1.0 FTE.

An exception is allowed for December and January but only when the following occurs:

For December, when the high school's second trimester overlaps with the college's fall quarter.

For January, when the high school's first semester overlaps with the college's winter quarter.

When a student exceeds the 1.40 FTE for these months, they may be at risk of exceeding the 1.40 AAFTE and may need to have their spring quarter available RS FTE reduced.

87. May a student elect to take more than a combined 1.40 FTE of combined high school and college classes in a college quarter/semester?

Yes. A student may elect to take additional college classes above the 1.40 FTE but must pay for the additional college credits and possibly complete a course overload petition at their local college. See Fees and Tuition section.

88. Students enrolled in a high school and skill center can be claimed for up to a 1.60 FTE. Can a student taking high school and skill center classes attend Running Start?

Yes, a student enrolled in high school and skill center classes can attend Running Start. There are two distinct and separate times when a student can exceed 1.0 FTE. Often these are called Super FTEs.

A student enrolled in high school and skill center can be claimed in any month up to a 1.60 FTE. For the school year, up to a 1.60 annual average FTE (AAFTE). Neither the high school nor skill center can exceed 1.0 FTE/AAFTE.

A student enrolled in a high school and Running Start can be claimed in any month up to a combined 1.40 FTE. And for the school year, up to a 1.40 AAFTE. The high school is limited to a 1.0 FTE. The college can exceed the 1.0 FTE.

When a student who is attending a high school and skill center and wishes to attend Running Start, first determine what the combined high school/skill center FTE is. If the number is over 1.0, then the student has a 0.40 FTE available for Running Start. If the number is less than 1.0, subtract the combined high school/skill center FTE from 1.40 to determine the FTE available for Running Start.

89. A student is only taking one skill center course and no courses at the high school, is the student eligible for 1.0 (15 credits) at the college?

Most likely, the skill center is claiming a 0.54 FTE for the skill center class. Based on this, since the number is less than 1.0, you would subtract the skill center FTE from 1.40. In this case, the student would have a 0.86 FTE available for Running Start or 12 credits.

90. Does the 1.40 combined FTE/AAFTE increase mean that students can exceed 1.0 FTE and AAFTE at the high school level?

No. The 1.40 FTE/AAFTE reflects a "combined maximum enrollment." Students may not exceed 1.0 FTE for any month or a 1.0 AAFTE for the school year at the high school level. High schools are limited to 1.0 monthly FTE and AAFTE.

91. Does the 1.40 combined FTE/AAFTE increase mean that students can exceed 1.0 FTE at the postsecondary level?

Yes. Students may be claimed for up to 1.40 FTE/AAFTE at the college, depending on the high school course load. It should be noted, however, that most colleges have a maximum credit limitation and require prior approval before enrolling more than full-time (15 quarter/12 semester college credits per term). FTE/AAFTE limitations also apply to the summer, so students intending to participate in the summer quarter should be

mindful of their FTE capacity during the standard school year. Students who exceed a full-time course load during the school year may not have AAFTE available in the summer.

92. If a student attends Running Start full-time during the school year, will they be able to participate in Running Start in the summer quarter?

It depends on the high school FTE. A full-time (15 quarter/12 semester college credits per term) Running Start student who is not claimed for high school FTE would have capacity under the 1.40 AAFTE limit to participate in the summer, but a student who reached the 1.40 AAFTE limit at the college or between the high school and college combined would not. Regardless of the available FTE, it should be noted that the statute limits summer term enrollment to 10 quarter college credits. Graduating students would be subject to the provisions of "after-exit" Running Start funding, if available.

93. May students who have met graduation requirements by June of their 12th grade year still access Running Start in the summer quarter if they have available FTE?

Yes. The summer term is considered an extension of the traditional school year, so consistent with [WAC 392-169-020](#), students who begin the school without having earned the credits required for high school graduation may continue to access Running Start through the summer at participating colleges and four-year universities. However, students wishing to access Running Start funds to participate in the summer quarter cannot be formally graduated until the end of the Running Start term. For these seniors, the high school transcript will reflect an August graduation date, and they will not be able to request official high school transcripts until they have completed the summer term. High school and college counselors should be clear with students about these conditions as they advise them of the opportunity to participate in the summer quarter and the potential delay in being able to verify all earned college credits prior to beginning a new fall college term, if applicable.

94. What happens if a student exceeds 1.40 FTE?

If the student exceeds 1.40 FTE, the college will charge tuition for any FTE that they cannot claim. High schools are unable to charge student's tuition. Accordingly, the high school FTE is claimed and then any remaining FTE is available for Running Start. A student exceeding 1.40 FTE would pay the tuition to the college.

95. Who is responsible for communicating to students and families about the charges associated with going over 1.40 FTE?

The Running Start Enrollment Verification Form (RSEVF) is the communication tool used to inform students and their families when the student's FTE will exceed 1.40, when tuition may be due to the college, and whether AAFTE remains to enroll for summer term.

96. Who is responsible for monitoring the AAFTE?

If the student does not exceed the 1.40 FTE in any month, they will not exceed the 1.40 AAFTE by the end of the standard school year (June). A student can exceed the 1.40 FTE in either the month of December or January. When this occurs, the student could be at risk of exceeding the 1.40 AAFTE. The high school registrar or district business office should complete the Spring Quarter Eligibility Adjustment Form (SQEAF) after the beginning of the winter college quarter. This form will calculate whether the student spring quarter Running Start FTE will need to be reduced. This form should be provided to the student and parents explaining why there is a reduction of their Running Start FTE for the spring quarter.

The RSEVF that will be available for the summer term will require the high school or district business office to complete a table that provides the high school and college FTE that was claimed for the standard school year. The table will calculate the available AAFTE for the summer term.

97. Can someone other than a high school counselor complete and sign the RSEVF?

It is strongly recommended that high school counselors guide students through the completion of the RSEVF; however, there is nothing prohibiting other qualified administrators at the school or district level from signing the RSEVF if a school counselor is unavailable. Especially with the opening of summer quarter Running Start, it is acceptable for school and district leaders to identify alternative signatories who are adequately equipped to review and approve the RSEVF, especially when school buildings close for the summer months.

98. If a student retakes a course, or requires a 5th year, are they eligible for an additional 1.40 FTE for the 5th year?

No, they would only be eligible to take the courses needed to meet their district's graduation requirements. Additionally, a second-year senior would be limited to taking a maximum of 63 college credits for both senior academic school years combined. For example, if there is one class that the student needs to retake to meet their district graduation requirement, they would be limited to just that one class as a second-year senior.

99. If a student fails or withdraws from a Running Start class, will they have additional Annual Average FTE (AAFTE) capacity for subsequent terms?

It depends. The available AAFTE is dependent upon how many months the student was claimed for funding. AAFTE is not based on the number of credits earned. If a student drops a course prior to the monthly count day, they cannot be claimed by the college for Running Start for that month. A student who failed a Running Start course was likely enrolled for the entirety of the term and would not regain AAFTE since they were claimed each month of the term as an FTE. For a student who withdrew, it depends on how many months the student was counted. A student who withdrew early in a term may retain some AAFTE capacity while one who withdrew at the very end may not. School district business offices can confirm whether a student was claimed for state funding after withdrawing from a Running Start course.

100. Must the high schools/districts and colleges use the RSEVF?

Yes. [WAC 392-169-050](#) establishes, "(1) The student shall notify the school district through which the student seeks to obtain the award of running start program high school credit of the specific college or university courses he or she intends to take and shall request confirmation of the amount of high school credit that will be awarded upon successful completion of the courses." This is what the RSEVF submission is intended to accomplish. Consequently, the RSEVF must be completed for all students, including those who attend private schools and are home-based, prior to registering for a Running Start class each term and for each college. Completion would include the student, parent/guardian (for students under 18 years of age), high school, and college signatures. Copies of each student's completed form should be retained at the high school and college, as well as a copy given to the student.

101. How frequently will the RSEVF be updated by OSPI?

The RSEVF is updated by OSPI at least annually in consultation with SBCTC and the Council of Presidents. The current year's RSEVF is available on [OSPI's Course-Based Dual Credit webpage](#).

102. May a student change their high school or college course schedule after the RSEVF has been signed?

Yes. If a student changes their high school or college schedule after the RSEVF has been signed, a new RSEVF must be completed and submitted immediately, reflecting the revised Running Start FTE eligibility. This informs all parties of the effect of the schedule change on the claimable FTE and gives the college the opportunity to contact the parents/student for tuition.

103. Would an electronic signature from a Running Start advisor be acceptable for the RSEVF?

There is no legal requirement that prohibits colleges from using digital signatures on enrollment verification forms. However, colleges are responsible for ensuring the validity and authenticity of any electronic signatures used in accordance with [RCW 19.34.310](#).

104. Is the college required to give a copy of the RSEVF back to the high school after the college counselor meets with the student and the student selects classes?

Yes. A completed RSEVF should be sent back to the high school and provided to the student/parents/guardians, too. Doing so ensures the high school is aware of the classes that the student will be enrolling in at the college and the FTE that the college will claim.

105. Are the institutions of higher education and high school required to keep physical/hard copies of the RSEVF or any other documents?

It is best practice to keep a hard copy of the RSEVF to support the FTE the college is reporting for that student. Should there be any dispute over how the student's FTE will be split, the retained RSEVF can provide this information.

FEES & TUITION

106. May a high school or college seek reimbursement from a Running Start student for failure of a course?

No. Running Start is funded through the student's Basic Education Allocation (BEA). Therefore, from a funding standpoint, failing a Running Start course is equivalent to failing a traditional high school course and students should not be financially penalized.

107. Shall colleges charge fees to Running Start students?

Yes. Running Start students shall pay mandatory fees, including course and placement testing fees, technology fees, student-voted fees, and other fees as established by each college, in accordance with [RCW 28B.15.020](#) and [RCW 28B.15.041](#). Washington colleges and universities must make available fee waivers for low-income Running Start students in accordance with [RCW 28A.600.310\(2\)](#).

A Running Start student shall be considered low income and eligible for a fee waiver upon proof that the student meets federal eligibility requirements for free or reduced-price school meals.

Acceptable documentation of low-income status may also include:

- Student has been deemed eligible for free-reduced-price lunches in the past five years.
- Family income is equal to or less than 50 percent of the state median.
- Family income is less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

- Student receiving any state or federal assistance funds.
- A youth in care.

Consumable supplies, textbooks, and other materials retained by the student are not within the definition of fees and therefore not subject to the mandatory low-income waiver provisions.

108. What are the maximum credits a student can enroll in and receive state funding, and when do colleges charge tuition?

Running Start students may enroll tuition-free for a maximum of 21 college credits per college term but are limited to a combined 1.40 FTE when enrolled in both high school and Running Start courses. When a Running Start student seeks more credits, colleges should charge appropriate per-credit rates for any credits beyond the 21-credit maximum or beyond 1.40 FTE, up to the maximum credits allowed for all enrolled students by institutional policy.

See OSPI's [Running Start Technical Guide](#) for further information on FTE/AAFTE and credit calculations for college quarters, semesters, and trimesters.

109. Can school districts assess a fine or fee against students for failing Running Start courses, withdrawing from Running Start courses, or never showing up for Running Start courses?

No. As addressed in Question #105, Running Start is funded through the student's Basic Education Allocation (BEA). Therefore, from a funding standpoint, failing or withdrawing from a Running Start is equivalent to failing or withdrawing from a traditional high school course and students should not be financially penalized.

110. Can GET (Guaranteed Education Tuition) credits be used to pay for unsubsidized college tuition?

If enrolled in credits above and beyond those authorized for Running Start funding, Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) funds may be used to cover qualified expenses such as tuition charges, fees, and books/supplies. However, it may be more advantageous to use GET units for qualified expenses following Running Start enrollment in accordance with [RCW 28A.600.310\(2\)\(c\)](#).

111. Are low-income tuition waivers available for Running Start students who want to take additional credits above the combined 1.40 FTE/AAFTE limit?

Yes. However, there is no requirement for institutions of higher education to make available tuition or fee waivers for credits taken beyond the maximum allowable through Running Start in accordance with [WAC 392-169-060](#). Students are always encouraged to check with their high school, and the institution of higher education in which they are taking courses through Running Start, to see what additional financial assistance may be available.

112. How must the Running Start funding retained by the school district be utilized?

This is a district decision, provided the funding retained for Running Start students is utilized to address the administrative needs associated with the program. [WAC 392-169-090\(3\)](#) reads, "School districts may retain and expend for running start program counseling or other school district purposes up to 7% of the running start basic education moneys apportioned by OSPI," and [RCW 28A.600.310\(4\)](#) indicates that the funding should "offset program related costs." Neither statute specifies how it must be used nor whether it should be allocated at the district or building level. However, legislative intent is clear in expecting districts to use

the remaining funds to offset costs related to supporting student access to, and success within, the Running Start program.

113. Are school districts allocated any additional state funds to assist students with the costs of transportation, books and fees?

Sometimes. Through OSPI's Consolidated Equity and Sustainability Grant (FP 154), school districts may apply for funding to support initiatives aimed at expanding access to Running Start and other dual credit programs, which may include subsidies and other strategies to eliminate barriers for students.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE/INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS/STUDY ABROAD

114. Are foreign exchange students eligible to participate in Running Start?

It depends on the type of student visa. Foreign exchange students with an F-1 visa are required to pay tuition to the high school they plan to attend in the United States. Evidence of this payment must be provided prior to the issuance of the visa. A student with an F-1 visa who chooses to enroll in Running Start cannot be claimed for state funding by the school district or the college.

Foreign exchange students with a J-1 visa or students with visas in other categories who are enrolled as an 11th or 12th grade student are eligible to participate in Running Start. J-1 visa students must comply with all eligibility requirements, be mindful of any restrictions on enrollment established by the student's exchange program sponsor and comply with all federal requirements.

115. Can Running Start students participate in Study Abroad programs offered by their college?

Yes. Running Start students have access to all the classes offered in the college catalog and may participate in Study Abroad. Each college has specific policies and procedures governing Study Abroad experiences. Students must follow the institutional policies regarding student participation in Study Abroad programs as well as the policy and procedures within the institution's Study Abroad Office. These policies may or may not impact the Running Start student's ability to participate in these programs. When the student is abroad, the college can claim them for the standard Running Start reimbursement rate. Students are responsible for any additional costs. While the allowance for study abroad programs permit a student who is resident of a Washington school district to attend that college's student abroad program, it does not permit a student who is not ordinarily a resident of Washington to participate in a college's online program while living outside of Washington.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

116. Can the high school or district require progress toward the district's diploma and require that students not only earn credits, but complete other requirements for graduation, including meeting state assessment requirements and completing the High School and Beyond Plan? If so, may the high school or district require attendance at the high school to complete non-credit bearing activities?

It depends. Students who are seeking a high school diploma from a public school district, charter school or tribal compact school must meet all of the state and the local requirements of the district or school.

The intent of Running Start law is to encourage maximum student access to the Running Start program.

Districts/Schools should not adopt policies and procedures that intentionally create barriers to student participation in the program. For example, requiring daily or weekly attendance in a High School and Beyond Plan class would logically hinder Running Start participation. Districts that have such requirements are strongly encouraged to offer accommodations to students participating in Running Start.

Students who are not specifically seeking a high school diploma from a public school district, charter school or tribal compact school may choose to refrain from completing the district's/school's specific graduation requirements and focus on earning the credits needed to receive a diploma through the college. Also see Attendance, Graduation Requirements and Eligibility and Limitations sections.

117.Does a student seeking a Washington high school diploma through an associate degree at the college need to complete local high school and/or district requirements?

No. Running Start students who earn an associate degree may request a Washington high school diploma from the college. If a student fails to earn an associate degree, they would need to meet the requirements of the district to be awarded a high school diploma through the district in accordance with [RCW 28B.50.535](#).

118.Can a Running Start student who earns an associate degree from a college receive a high school diploma from that college?

Yes. The community and technical colleges are authorized to issue high school diplomas for Running Start students who enroll in the college and complete an associate of arts degree, associate of science degree, associate of technology degree or an associate in applied science degree. Students must provide a written request to the college registrar's office or designee to receive a Washington high school diploma from the college in accordance with [RCW 28B.50.535](#). Also see Admissions, Eligibility and Limitations and Home School/Private School/Choice Transfer/Online Academy Schools sections.

119.When can Running Start students who have completed their associate degree request the college-based high school diploma?

A Running Start student may request the college-based high school diploma when they apply for graduation with their associate degree or any time thereafter.

120.Should high schools or districts continue to track a student's graduation status if the student has indicated intent to pursue his or her high school diploma through a college?

Yes. All Running Start students are considered public high school students and as such should be served and treated like all other high school students. Providing all enrolled students with guidance as to graduation requirements and status is consistent with the guidance role of the high school, regardless of student intent relative to possible alternative graduation options.

For purposes of graduation rates, students who are successful in earning their high school diploma in accordance with [RCW 28B.50.535](#) will count as graduates of the home high school. Students who are unsuccessful in completing graduation requirements, either through the school district or in accordance with [RCW 28B.50.535](#), will be considered non-graduates.

121.If a student earns a high school diploma through the college, how would the high school document the student as a graduate of the school district for the purposes of graduation rates?

When the high school is informed by the college that the student has earned a high school diploma issued by the college in accordance with [RCW 28B.50.535](#), the high school may withdraw the student using the state withdrawal code "GA" - graduated through associate degree.

122.If Running Start students earn associate degrees after their expected graduation dates, can they be documented in their student records as an extended graduation student so they can count in the high school's extended graduation rate?

Yes. If students retain Running Start eligibility as a second-year senior student - enrolling only in classes that will meet the district's graduation requirements - and complete remaining requirements for an associate degree, the high school, if informed by the college, could code such students "GA" and include that student in the school's extended graduation rate for that school year.

123.Can Running Start courses count as a course-based dual credit graduation pathway?

Yes. For Running Start courses, students must earn at least 1.0 high school credit and be eligible to earn college credit at a 100 level or higher by meeting the course or program criteria established by the local school district and the institute of higher education. The high school must approve the dual credit course as an ELA or math option.

124.If a student has not passed the Smarter Balanced Math and/or ELA high school assessments and are enrolled in Running Start, do high schools accept credit from either a college level Math and/or ELA course as meeting the graduation pathway requirement?

Yes. SBA is one of eight pathways to graduation as well as completion of a college level math or English course. This should meet graduation pathway requirements.

125.If students can prove their readiness for college and the college agrees to take them as an 'underage' student, is it the responsibility of the school district to determine a policy for accepting college credits/courses as meeting high school requirements?

Under this scenario, and presuming the student is not eligible to be in 11th or 12th grade based on the district's grade placement policy, the student is not considered RS and is considered an "underage student". Colleges and universities have institutional policies to address this. Generally, a "release form" is completed by the student and the high school allowing the student to take courses at the college that will meet high school requirements. The student is responsible for tuition and fees.

HOME SCHOOL/PRIVATE SCHOOL/CHOICE TRANSFER/ALTERNATIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE/ONLINE SCHOOL PROGRAM STUDENTS

126.May home school and private school students enroll in the Running Start Program?

Yes. Any student seeking college credit through Running Start must enroll through the local public school district or high school, have a completed Running Start Verification Form (RSEVF) in place for each term and each college, and been granted 11th or 12th grade standing by the public school district's grade placement policy in accordance with [WAC 180-51-035](#). Also see the Eligibility and Limitations section.

A private or home school student is not required to attend classes in the public high school to participate in Running Start. Students receiving home-based instruction in accordance with [RCW 28A.200](#) and students attending private schools approved in accordance with [RCW 28A.195](#) are not required to meet the student

learning goals, obtain a certificate of academic achievement or a certificate of individual achievement to graduate from high school, or to master the essential academic learning requirements in accordance with [RCW 28A.600.310\(1\)\(c\)](#).

For state and federal accountability reporting purposes: A student receiving home-based instruction enrolling in a public high school for the sole purpose of participating in courses at the college shall not be counted by the school district if the student's parents or guardians filed a declaration of intent to provide home-based instruction and the student received home-based instruction during the school year before the school year in which the student intends to participate in Running Start.

Enrolling any student in the Running Start program means that the student is also enrolled as a public high school student to access state funding allocated for the Running Start program.

127. Do homeschool families need to have a Declaration of Intent on file for the year preceding Running Start participation?

No. Families may choose to move to home-based instruction after beginning Running Start and not lose their eligibility. For information on Home-based Instruction, refer to this [OSPI website](#).

128. Do homeschool students enrolled in Running Start need to complete local district graduation requirements if seeking a diploma through the associate degree?

No, in accordance with [RCW 28B.50.535\(2\)](#). Also see Graduation Requirements section.

129. How is 11th or 12th grade standing determined for private school and home school students who wish to participate in Running Start?

It is the responsibility of the school district, charter school or tribal compact school to establish junior/senior standing. Any criteria used to establish grade placement must be applied uniformly in accordance with district policy to students irrespective of their status as Running Start students in accordance with [WAC 180-51-035](#).

Once a grade placement is made and the student's eligibility is determined, a change to another school district, should the student move or a choice transfer is in place, does not alter the initial grade placement, consistent with [WAC 392-169-020\(2\)](#). Some schools consider age appropriateness, some review credits and prior learning, and some a combination of factors. A standardized achievement test may be used in the absence of adequate documentation of a student's home-based education.

Any district criteria used to establish grade placement must be applied uniformly to all students, regardless of intent to enroll in Running Start or intent to graduate from the high school. Also see Eligibility and Limitations.

130. Can parents appeal local school district grade placement eligibility decisions?

This is a local decision. Parents may appeal only if the district has a policy and procedure for such an appeal.

131. A homeschool Running Start student is in 11th grade but wants to take a year off from Running Start next year. Would this student be able to return after one year off and enroll in Running Start as a 12th grade student?

It is up to the resident district to establish and interpret grade placement for students who enroll. In this case, the student could potentially be a second-year senior, which would limit Running Start enrollment to only those courses needed to meet specific high school graduation credit requirements in accordance with [WAC 392-169-020](#)(3) (Laws defining student eligibility, section 3) and for no more than 63 college credits for all senior years combined. Also see Eligibility and Limitations and Graduation Requirements.

132. A homeschool student chooses not to utilize the third quarter (spring) of 11th grade eligibility. Can that third quarter be carried over so that the student can utilize the maximum six quarters of enrollment?

No. 11th grade eligibility would be complete. Running Start eligibility is based on the equivalent of full-time enrollment for two academic years for 11th and 12th grade standing only. However, the student would still be eligible for the summer quarter, the three quarters of 12th grade, and could also be eligible as a second-year senior year in accordance with [WAC 392-169-055](#)(4).

133. Does a school district have to post Running Start course grades in the grade history file of a homeschool student who is only enrolled for the purpose of taking Running Start classes?

Yes. All earned credit must be recorded on an official high school transcript.

134. May a school district or high school award a diploma to a private school student who enrolls in the public district, but takes classes only through Running Start?

Yes, only if all state and local school district graduation requirements are met.

135. How does the 1.40 FTE limitation apply to private school and home-based instruction students who are also enrolled in Running Start?

All students are eligible for up to a maximum of 1.40 FTE or 21 credits at the college and a combined public high school and college FTE of 1.40. A Running Start Enrollment Verification Form (RSEVF) should be completed for all students wishing to enroll in Running Start. A private school or home-based instruction student who is also taking courses in a public high school, charter school or tribal compact school must adhere to the combined 1.40 FTE limitation.

For a private school or home-based student who is not enrolled in a public high school, charter school or tribal compact school for any classes, the RSEVF should show that there is no FTE claimed by the high school. The student would be eligible for 21 credits of Running Start in addition to the courses being taken through their home school or private school.

136. Can a student who is attending a non-resident district pursuant to a Choice Transfer participate in Running Start at a college near their home district?

Yes. This can be accomplished in two ways. The choice district can complete the RSEVF with the college in the student's home district and the college would report the student's enrollment to the choice district. Or the choice district can enter into an inter-district agreement with the home district, releasing a portion of the student's FTE for the home district to use for the student's Running Start enrollment. Refer to OSPI's [Student Transfers: Choice Transfer, Interdistrict Agreements, and Standard Choice Transfer System \(SCTS\) Publication](#) for more information on Choice Transfers and inter-district agreements.

137. Can a student who is attending a non-resident district pursuant to a Choice Transfer be required to return to their home district and/or to take a course in the non-resident high

school if they choose to enroll full-time in Running Start?

Districts are required to have policies in place that establish rational, fair and equitable standards for acceptance and rejection of choice requests, as well as the conditions for which a Choice Transfer would be rescinded. Students and parents or guardians must be given written notification of the specific reason(s) for the rescindment as per the school district's policy and their right to appeal the rescindment to OSPI.

Districts should ensure that their Choice Transfer policies adhere to the Legislature's intent that districts provide maximum access to Running Start for interested and ready students.

Students and parent(s) or guardian(s) must also be notified of their right to appeal district decisions that reject choice requests or terminate existing Choice Transfers. Appeals can be made both to the district and to OSPI in accordance with [RCW 28A.225.220](#) – [28A.225.225](#) and [RCW 28A.225.230](#) . Also see OSPI [Bulletin 035-18](#) for additional information on choice transfers and inter-district agreements.

138. Who is responsible for providing Running Start access when a student is enrolled through a choice transfer or interdistrict agreement?

The district who has accepted the choice transfer is responsible for the entirety of the student's public education including access to Running Start for the duration of the transfer. If a student is dual enrolled in more than one school district through an interdistrict agreement, that agreement should specify which district will be responsible for Running Start. Absent that specification, the "primary" or initiating district will be responsible for all services not accounted for in the agreement.

139. May a school deny access to Running Start due to their unique curriculum or classification as a magnet, lottery, online, or ALE school?

No. [SHB 1316](#) reinforces that all eligible students must have access to Running Start. While a school may have a unique curriculum or graduation requirements, the increase to a 1.40 monthly FTE and AAFTE limit is intended, in part, to ensure that students have the flexibility to attend the school of their choosing without sacrificing the opportunity to participate in Running Start. A school or district may not condition a student's participation on enrollment in (or disenrollment from) a particular school.

140. Can students in online academies, Alternative Learning Experiences (ALE), or other choice options access Running Start?

Yes. Passed in 2023, [SHB 1316](#) stipulates, "(1) Every school district must allow eligible students as described in subsection (2) of this section to participate in the Running Start program." Students may not be prohibited from participation based on the school they attend nor required to disenroll to access Running Start. School districts contracting for school operations must establish whether the school district or the contracted organization will manage Running Start enrollment.

Public online school programs must be approved and supported by a Washington school district. As such, they are required to follow the same rules that apply to traditional, in-person high schools. This includes distributing information on the Running Start program and allowing students to choose to take Running Start courses.

141. Can a district hosting an Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) or approved online school program where nonresident students attend through a Choice Transfer refuse to process these students' Running Start requests or redirect them to their home districts for Running

Start support?

No. Passed in 2023, [SHB 1316](#) stipulates, "(1) Every school district must allow eligible students as described in subsection (2) of this section to participate in the Running Start program." Districts choosing to host ALE or online school programs accept all responsibilities associated with students that live outside of the district but attend through a Choice Transfer. These students remain the responsibility of the Choice district until their Choice Transfers are completed or rescinded. Accordingly, there should be no restrictions on or barriers to allow these students to access Running Start like any other high school student in the district.

Students attending the non-resident district through an interdistrict agreement remain the responsibility of the student's resident district. In these cases, the student should access Running Start through their resident district.

ALE schools with interdisciplinary and mastery-based approaches that would make Running Start a more challenging fit are encouraged to consult with OSPI to determine how a student can make Running Start work within their programs.

PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

142. Is the parent of a Running Start student entitled to review attendance and grade information held by the college or university?

Under federal law, students who attend postsecondary educational institutions hold the confidentiality rights to their education records. They have the right to consent prior to any disclosure of information from education records held by the postsecondary institution.

However, an exception to the consent requirement allows the parents of dependent students to review their student's education records without the consent of the student. Proof of dependency is usually verified via a copy of the most recent year's federal tax form showing that the parent claims the student as a dependent. Neither the age of the student nor the parent's status as a custodial parent is relevant. If a student is claimed as a dependent by either parent for tax purposes, then either parent may have access under this provision. In accordance with [34 CFR § 99.31\(a\)\(8\)](#).

143. Must students waive their FERPA rights to participate in Running Start?

No. While the RSEVF does include a checkbox that permits student records to be shared between educational institutions, the student or parent/guardian is not required to check it to participate in Running Start; however, it is highly recommended. Withholding permission for institutions to communicate Running Start progress and completion may delay or preclude information from being reflected on the student's high school and/or college transcripts.

144. May Running Start students participate in field trips that are scheduled as a part of the college course?

Yes. However, written parental permission should be obtained for all field trips for Running Start students under the age of 18. If parents do not give permission, faculty should consider providing alternative options to that student. Most Running Start Coordinators collect a blanket permission form early in the enrollment process.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND RECOGNITIONS

145. May Running Start students participate in college or university campus activities, such as student government, organizations, and clubs?

Yes, except for intercollegiate sports, Running Start students may participate in any activities on the college/university campus, consistent with the institution's general requirements for participation in extracurricular activities.

146. May Running Start students participate in high school activities including sports?

Yes. Running Start students may participate in any high school activities, including sports, consistent with the high school and school district's own eligibility requirements and [Washington Intercollegiate Activities Association \(WIAA\) Handbook](#).

WIAA guidelines allow participation by Running Start students. Students should work with their high school counselor to ensure they are taking the equivalent of a full course load to maintain eligibility with the WIAA.

147. Can a high school prohibit a student from participating in the high school graduation ceremony, taking classes at the high school, or participating in extracurricular activities if the student is choosing to receive a high school diploma from the college?

Running Start students and parents should be informed of existing district policies relative to a student's eligibility to enroll in classes at the high school and participate in extracurricular activities if they are not pursuing a high school diploma. Participation in the high school, charter school or tribal compact school's graduation ceremony is to be determined by local district policy, is not linked to state statute related to diploma requirements and should be covered in parent and student guidance.

148. Can a school district or high school preclude a student from being eligible to be senior class valedictorian or senior class salutatorian if the student enrolls in one or more classes via Running Start?

No. A 12th grade Running Start student and a traditional 12th grade high school student are entitled to participate equally in a high school graduation ceremony. A school should have criteria, other than mere status as a Running Start student, for these honors. In addition, such preclusion could violate equal protection principles.

For example, if the sole criterion for a specific honor was a high grade point average (GPA), a Running Start student with a high GPA would be just as eligible as a non-Running Start student with a high GPA. On the other hand, if the criteria included a high GPA, coupled with a certain level of participation in class or school activities (e.g., serving as class officer or other leadership activity), it is possible that a Running Start student would have a more difficult time qualifying for such honors and recognitions.

The intent of Running Start law is to encourage maximum student access to the Running Start program. Districts/Schools should not adopt policies and procedures that intentionally create barriers to student participation in the program, nor other disincentives for student participation.

TRANSCRIPT INFORMATION

149. Do courses that do not meet high school graduation requirements need to be reflected on the high school transcript?

Yes. Since courses taken through Running Start are funded as part of the student's Basic Education Allocation (BEA), they must be transcribed with the grade achieved at the college. Even though the credit may not be required for graduation, it must still be included on the high school academic record.

150. Do Running Start courses have to be on the high school transcript if the student asks for it not to be included?

Yes. According to OSPI's [Transcript FAQ](#), "If the student took the course as part of Running Start (i.e., district received running start apportionment, course was paid for by Running Start, etc.), then this needs to be part of the student's transcript. If the student took a course on their own that wasn't considered Running Start (i.e., paid for the course, enrolled independently of the running start program, etc.), then the student can choose to not give their college transcript for that course to the high school."

151. Is there a Pass/Fail option for Running Start?

There is no prohibition on P/F grades for Running Start, but students should be advised that it may not be advisable from a college admissions perspective if they are presumed to be using a P/F option to preserve their GPA due to poor performance. Students should also ensure that the P/F option can be applied to their high school transcript. If it is not available, OSPI's [Transcript FAQ](#) provides, "Whatever method your district/school decides to use, it should be what is determined to be the most fair, accurate representation of the student's performance, and should be used consistently for all students." This may require the district to seek additional information from the college to determine what grade is most appropriate.

152. When a student in Running Start drops a class at the college, and receives a "W" on their college transcript, should the high school post the grade as an "F" on the high school transcript?

No. It must be posted as a "W" on the high school transcript.

153. If a Running Start student fails to pay their fees to a college, but otherwise completes the coursework satisfactorily, can the college withhold their grades? Can the student be prevented from graduating from high school?

The answer to the first question lies in the applicable policy of the institution. It is possible for a student to receive high school credit, but not college credit, in this situation.

The answer to the second question is no. The failure to pay college fees related to the earning of college credit via Running Start is separate from the issue of whether the student satisfactorily met the course requirements to pass and apply the earned credits toward high school graduation. The college is limited to withholding the student's grades only pertaining to issuing the student's college transcript. In the situation described above, the high school counselor and the Running Start coordinator at the college must communicate with one another for the high school to be apprised of the student's grade.

154. Are all Running Start courses shown on the high school transcript?

Yes. Running Start courses need to be recorded on the high school transcript. The standardized transcript

must contain a designation of "R" for courses completed and credit earned through Running Start in accordance with [WAC 392-415-070](#).

155. Are colleges required to send individual transcripts to high schools or districts to provide evidence of successful completion of courses taken through the program?

No. Nothing in statute or administrative code mandates that a high school or district must receive an official transcript from the college. The college must supply "evidence" of successful completion of courses. Evidence may include college-generated spreadsheet in accordance with [WAC 392-169-085](#).

156. How do 12th grade students participating in summer quarter Running Start access official high school transcripts?

Final high school transcripts cannot be generated until the district has received all summer credits/grades and the student has been officially graduated. Consequently, students participating in summer quarter Running Start will have to rely on unofficial transcripts until the summer term is over, grades are posted, and the student is formally graduated. Students and families must be advised of this and encouraged to provide college Admissions offices with unofficial transcripts and an explanation of the circumstances. LEAs are encouraged to provide students and/or IHEs with formal letters verifying the students' participation in summer quarter Running Start, if needed.

157. How does the high school transcribe a grade from a college class through Running Start if the college uses a different grading scale than the high school (e.g., the college bases a B- on a 2.6 and the high school uses 2.7)? Will the student have different grades on the high school and college transcripts?

It is possible that the respective transcripts will show different grades. However, the high school transcript needs to record the grade in accordance with [WAC 392-415-050](#). The high school would transcribe the grade appropriate to the rules for K-12 and the college would transcribe the grade appropriate to its policy in accordance with [WAC 392-415- 050](#).

158. Can schools or districts weigh Running Start grades?

Washington allows for local autonomy in weighing high school grades on unofficial district transcripts and for purposes of establishing "quality points," class rankings, eligibility for graduation honors, etc., but standardized high school transcripts must adhere to the grade reporting and calculation standards in [WAC 392-415-050](#). Running Start grades may be weighted locally, and when weighted grading practices are employed, Running Start grade calculations should be equivalent to those of other dual credit programs. In other words, Running Start grades should not have a higher or lesser value than grades earned through College in the High School, Advanced Placement, or any other dual credit program.

Washington's public universities and colleges do not use weighted GPAs in the admissions process.

159. Who and how are grades determined for Running Start courses?

Grades and credit earned through Running Start courses are transcribed to both the high school and college transcript. School districts are responsible for ensuring student grades on the high school transcript reflect the district's grading practices and policies. Colleges and universities are responsible for ensuring student grades on the college transcript reflect the higher education institution's grading practices and policies. Grades earned through completion of a Running Start course are determined by the college or university.

Running Start courses must comply with college or university grading policies. The college or university grading policy - including the grading scale and grade options - is solely up to the college or university and cannot be altered or modified by the school district's grading policy.

If there is a difference in the grading policies between the college or university and the school district, the district must adhere to their local policies for the high school transcript while, when required, providing grading information to the college or university which adheres to the college or university's grading policy.

CONTACTS

For additional information contacts are listed below. Questions related to higher education should be directed to one of the higher education sector leads and questions related to K-12 should be directed toward the Office of Public Instruction.

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