WASHINGTON DUAL CREDIT

RUNNING START FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DATE:	October 2026
TO:	Interested Parties
FROM:	Council of Presidents (COP) Independent Colleges of Washington (ICW) Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC)
SUBJECT:	**Running Start Program – Questions and Answers**

ABOUT RUNNING START

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 institutions:

- Washington State University (Pullman and Tri-Cities Campuses)
- Central Washington University
- Eastern Washington University
- Northwest Indian College
- Spokane Tribal College

PROGRAM AUTHORITY AND ELIGIBILITY

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 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).

ABOUT THIS FAQ

A variety of K-12 and higher education representatives have 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.

Disclaimer: 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.

Revision key: yellow highlight indicates text that has been substantially updated or added this year.

Contents

PART I: UNDERSTANDING AND ACCESSING RUNNING START **3**
1. About Running Start 3
2. Eligibility, Enrollment, and the RSEVF 6
   a. Eligibility and Access 6
   b. FTE and AAFTE 10
   c. Running Start Enrollment Verification Form (RSEVF) 12
3. Attendance and Student Responsibilities 19
4. Courses, Credits, Graduation, and Extended Eligibility 23
   a. Courses and Course Enrollment 23
   b. High School Credit and Course Equivalencies 27
   c. Graduation Requirements and the HSBP 30
   d. College Based High School Diploma 31
   e. Fifth Year Seniors and Circumstantial Eligibility 33
5. Summer Running Start 37

PART II: COSTS, SERVICES, AND STUDENT SUPPORT **44**
6. Fees and Funding 44
7. Financial Aid and Student Need 46
8. Disability Services and Accommodations 52
9. Student and Family Rights 55

PART III: SPECIAL ENROLLMENT CIRCUMSTANCES **58**
10. Home-Based Instruction and Private School Students 58
11. Choice Transfer, ALE, and Online School Students 61
12. International Students, Immigration, and Study Abroad 64

PART IV: RECORDS AND REFERENCE **66**
13. Transcripts and Academic Records 66

PART V: AGENCY AND SECTOR CONTACTS **69**

PART I: UNDERSTANDING AND ACCESSING RUNNING START

1. About Running Start

1.1. 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 courses are 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 high school and college transcripts. All of Washington's public four-year colleges and universities as well as Independent Colleges of Washington member campuses accept Running Start credit.

1.2. 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: 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 1.30 full-time equivalent (FTE) each college term, and for a maximum annual average FTE (AAFTE) of 1.30 per year, summer term included. (See OSPI's Running Start Technical Guide for further information on FTE/AAFTE and credit calculations for college quarters, semesters, and trimesters.) They are responsible for fees and textbook/materials costs. CiHS students attending a public Washington high school may register and enroll at no cost in CiHS courses offered by eligible institutions of higher education, as defined in RCW 28B.10.016 and RCW 28B.10.063. Students attending: (1) a public Washington high school that partners with an institution not defined in the RCWs cited or (2) a private Washington high school may be required to pay a CiHS fee.

1.3. 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 high school and college transcripts.

"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 college and taught by 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 through a CiHS program or at a public college through Running Start, and earned credits may be recorded on a college or university transcript.

"Dual credit," in Washington, is credit awarded through one of the six dual credit programs. 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.

1.4. 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. Pursuant to RCW 28A.600.380, the school district is not required to provide transportation for Running Start students unless Running Start is incorporated into a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). (See Disability Services section.)

1.5. 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. OSPI has published and translated a dual credit notification template, which is available on OSPI's Dual Credit Programs webpage, to assist schools and districts in meeting this requirement.

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

No. NCAA Bylaw 12.6.2.3 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." 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.

1.7. Is the Graduation Alliance program through the American Council of Education (ACE) dual credit?

No. In Washington, ACE Learning Evaluations are not considered a dual credit program. Students may receive college credit at some institutions of higher education, but they are not universally recognized nor often used to fulfill core program requirements. To learn more, students should reach out to the college or university of interest.

2. Eligibility, Enrollment, and the RSEVF

a. Eligibility and Access

2.1. 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. (See the Graduation Requirements and Home School/Private School/Choice Transfer/Online Academy Students sections.)

2.2. 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.

2.3. May a student begin 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.

RCW 28A.600.310 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 (or in the summer following the 10th grade) in accordance with WAC 392-169-055. (See the Eligibility and Limitations section.)

2.4. 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.

2.5. 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 1.30 FTE/AAFTE 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.

2.6. 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.

2.7. Can school districts or high schools limit or condition 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 or restricting the student's enrollment at the college to a particular 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 up to the established AAFTE limit, provided that they satisfy the college's prerequisite requirements and do not surpass the combined FTE and AAFTE limitations.

2.8. 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.

2.9. 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.

Local education agencies (LEAs) may not impose strict RSEVF deadlines, require information session attendance, or add enrollment steps inconsistent with college procedures. Because colleges may permit enrollment well after the high school term begins or use multi-term registration, eligible students may not be required to decide on enrollment or course-taking months in advance. LEAs may use "soft" internal deadlines to balance workload, master scheduling, and budgeting demands, but may not refuse RSEVF signatures, student meetings, or registration aligned with college timelines. The scarcity of seats in high-demand courses is a natural consequence of late enrollment and one schools may use to encourage students to meet "soft" internal deadlines. It is recommended that high schools and colleges work together to define a reasonable and mutually understood process for registration.

2.10. 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.

2.11. 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.

A student who re-enrolls through a school district after a prior expulsion may also enroll in Running Start if they meet all other eligibility requirements.

Districts and colleges should address the applicability of their respective discipline policies in contractual agreements or memoranda of understanding.

2.12. 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).

2.13. 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."

2.14. 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.

2.15. 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.

2.16. 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 credits required 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, even if they complete the required credits mid-year. This also applies to the summer term, as explained in the Summer Running Start section. If a student is formally graduated mid-year (or in June in relation to summer Running Start), they may not continue Running Start. A student who completes all required credits to graduate before the beginning of their 12th grade year may not enroll in Running Start, even if they have not completed non-credit-bearing activities (e.g. graduation application, HSBP, etc.). (See the Eligibility and Limitations, Graduation Requirements, and Summer Running Start sections.)

b. FTE and AAFTE

2.17. 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 (# of enrolled credits ÷ 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.

2.18. What is this year's FTE/AAFTE limitation and why has it been changing? For the 2026-27 school, students enrolled in Running Start and high school can be claimed for up to a combined 1.30 FTE in any month and 1.30 annual average FTE (AAFTE) for the school year. The high school is limited to a 1.00 FTE/AAFTE but the college could claim a student for up to a 1.30 FTE/AAFTE. See questions to follow for additional information.

FTE and AAFTE limitations are established by the Legislature through its operating appropriations bills. In 2023, the limitation was increased from 1.20 to 1.40 to provide additional FTE for summer Running Start. In 2026, state budget constraints brought the limit down to 1.30. This does not eliminate summer Running Start, but it does impact the FTE available for students to take full advantage of it. While there is hope for greater

certainty about the annual FTE/AAFTE limitation in years to come, as the fiscal landscape changes, so too will the available FTE for Running Start.

2.19. 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.

2.20. What and when is the Running Start "count day"?

The count day is the day each month where districts and colleges count the students that can be claimed for funding. For Running Start, colleges determine on that day which students are enrolled in college class(es), have participated in the class(es) on or before that day but within the prior month, and their total enrolled credits.

Except for Washington State University (WSU), the count day is the fourth college instructional day of the month in October, January, April, and July. For all other months between November and August, it is the first college instructional day of the month. For WSU, it is the fourth instructional day of September, January, and June, and the first instructional day for all other months between October and July.

Colleges report their monthly count to the student's district on the P223RS form which is due by the eighth calendar day of the month. If colleges are unable to provide the actual count by this date, they should report an estimate and then send a revised P223RS when the actual count is known. Districts cannot require colleges to submit this form earlier than the eighth day of the month.

2.21. 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 1.30 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 0.30 FTE at no cost to the student. A student enrolling for more than the combined 1.30 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. Students who intend 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.

2.22. 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 the FTE/AAFTE Running Start Limitation and RSEVF section.)

2.23. 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.

2.24. 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.

c. Running Start Enrollment Verification Form (RSEVF)

2.25. 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. The most up-to-date version of the RSEVF is available on OSPI's Course-Based Dual Credit webpage. It is a communication tool that verifies a student's class standing and eligibility to participate in Running Start, outlines how the student's 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, documents the high school credit equivalencies of college classes, and explains the FTE limitation to the student and guardians and why tuition may be due to the

college.

2.26. May a high school or school district require a student to sign a separate Running Start contract or agreement before completing or signing the Running Start Enrollment Verification Form (RSEVF)?

No. A high school or school district may provide students and families with information about Running Start responsibilities, expectations, and potential consequences, but it may not condition participation in Running Start—or the completion or signing of the RSEVF—on a student or parent/guardian signing a separate contract or agreement. The critical elements of Running Start are already outlined in the RSEVF.

Schools may provide need-to-know information about established Running Start policies, requirements, and success strategies to students and families via handouts, flyers, meeting exit tickets, or electronic platforms. Signatures may be requested as an acknowledgement of a student's and/or family's understanding of Running Start policies, procedures, and responsibilities as long as it is not a requirement to complete the enrollment or RSEVF process and does not add expectations that are not supported by statute. An agreement or contract requiring signatures with deadlines, GPA requirements, and other disqualifying elements would not be acceptable. An acknowledgement or checklist tool confirming a student's understanding of Running Start policies, procedures, and responsibilities would be acceptable as long as it did not halt or delay the student's enrollment.

The intent of Running Start law is to encourage maximum student access to the program. Districts and schools cannot adopt policies or procedures that intentionally create barriers to student participation.

2.27. When completing the winter quarter RSEVF, which high school term schedule should districts use to determine FTE availability?

Districts on semesters should use the second high school semester schedule to determine winter quarter FTE availability, recognizing that the student can exceed the monthly FTE limitation in the month of January. If they do, however, the student's available FTE for the spring quarter may need to be reduced with a Spring Quarter Eligibility Adjustment Form (SQEAF). Trimester districts use the second trimester.

2.28. 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.

<u>For high school classes:</u>

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.

2.29. What is the FTE Limitation for Running Start?

The FTE limitation for Running Start is 1.30 FTE. A student enrolled in high school and RS classes can be claimed up to a combined 1.30 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 1.30 FTE for these months, they may be at risk of exceeding the 1.30 AAFTE and may need to have their spring quarter available Running Start FTE reduced.

2.30. May a student elect to take more than a combined 1.30 FTE of high school and college classes in a college quarter/semester?

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

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

Yes, a student enrolled in high school and skills 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 skills 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 skills 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 1.30 FTE. And for the school year, up to a 1.30 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 skills center wishes to attend Running Start, first determine what the combined high school/skills center FTE is. If the number is over 1.0, then the student has a 0.30 FTE available for Running Start. If the number is less than 1.0, subtract the combined high school/skills center FTE from 1.30 to determine the FTE available for Running Start.

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

Most likely, the skills center is claiming a 0.54 FTE for the skills center class. Based on this, since the number is less than 1.0, you would subtract the skills center FTE from 1.30. In this case, the student would have a 0.76 FTE available for Running Start.

2.33. Does the 1.30 combined FTE/AAFTE limit mean that students can exceed 1.0 FTE and AAFTE at the high school level?

No. The FTE/AAFTE limit 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.

2.34. Does the 1.30 combined FTE/AAFTE limit mean that students can exceed 1.0 FTE at the postsecondary level?

Yes. Students may be claimed up to the established FTE/AAFTE limit 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.

2.35. What happens if a student exceeds the FTE limitation?

If the student exceeds the FTE limitation, 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 the FTE limitation would pay the tuition to the college.

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

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 the limit, when tuition may be due to the college, and whether AAFTE remains to enroll for summer term.

2.37. Who is responsible for monitoring the AAFTE?

If the student does not exceed the FTE limitation in any month, they will not exceed the AAFTE limitation by the end of the standard school year (June). A student can exceed the FTE limitation in either the month of December or January. When this occurs, the student could be at risk of exceeding the AAFTE limitation. 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.

2.38. 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, particularly when school buildings close for the summer months.

2.39. Is a parent/guardian signature required on the RSEVF? What if a parent/guardian is unavailable, refuses, or wishes to rescind their signature?

A parent/guardian signature is required for students under the age of 18. If a parent/guardian refuses to sign the RSEVF or asks to rescind their signature, that must be honored. There are many liabilities at play – transportation, financial responsibility, college transcripts, graduation progress, etc. – that require adult oversight. It is imprudent to allow a student to participate in Running Start if the college is aware the parent does not want them to. If students wish to enroll independently outside of Running Start, colleges should adhere to their institutional policies pertaining to enrolling underage students with or without adult consent.

Only when a parent/guardian is unavailable – not when they refuse – should colleges thoughtfully accept the signature of another responsible adult, such as a family member, social worker, case manager, etc. Any co-signer should carefully read the "Student & Parent/Guardian

Acknowledgement" before submitting the RSEVF to understand the financial and academic responsibilities associated with Running Start.

2.40. 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.

2.41. 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.

2.42. 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.

2.43. 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.

2.44. 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.

2.45. 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.

3. Attendance and Student Responsibilities

3.1. 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).

3.2. 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.

3.3. 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.

3.4. Are students who have not completed an RSEVF by the beginning of the high school term meeting compulsory attendance requirements if they are not attending high school classes?

No, unless they are over 18 or have already met high school graduation requirements. Running Start students are subject to compulsory attendance laws pursuant to RCW 28A.225.010. From an attendance perspective, the program in which a student is enrolled determines the calendar they are accountable to. If the student has filed an RSEVF demonstrating their intent to enroll in the Running Start program before the first instructional day of the high school term, they would be accountable to the college calendar and would not be considered truant. Students who have not completed an RSEVF by the start of the high school term, however, are expected to be enrolled in and attending a high school program until they are enrolled in Running Start. Unexcused absences between the time the high school term begins and the time a student is enrolled in Running Start may require a district to take truancy remediation steps outlined in OSPI's Guidance on Attendance Laws and Rules.

3.5. Can Running Start students take college terms off or do they need to enroll in and attend high school classes between college terms?

It depends. State attendance statute does not define the number of credits or instructional hours for determining full or partial enrollment status. For Running Start, however, 15 credits are equivalent to fulltime high school enrollment, so a fulltime Running Start student would not be required to enroll in or attend high school classes between **consecutive** college terms, provided they have a signed RSEVF on file prior to the first high school instructional day. For part-time Running Start students, it depends on local attendance policy. Because enrollment models, bell schedules, course scheduling, and graduation requirements vary by district, attendance expectations are largely matters of local control rather than attendance law.

Students under 18 who have not met district graduation requirements are subject to compulsory attendance requirements outlined in RCW 28A.225.010, so whether full- or part-time, these students may not simply take a college term off or drop Running Start courses without re-enrolling in high school classes. If not enrolled in Running Start, students under 18 who have not met graduation requirements must be enrolled in a high school or submit a declaration of intent to homeschool. Pursuant to subsection (f)(ii) of RCW 28A.225.010, students 16 or older who have met graduation requirements may take a college term off and return to Running Start, provided they are otherwise eligible.

3.6. 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 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.

3.7. 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.

3.8. 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.

3.9. Can students be restricted from using district devices, technology, or resources (e.g. Chromebooks, printers, labs, etc.) to complete Running Start coursework?

Technically, yes, the district has a right to safeguard its students and equipment by deploying technology and establishing acceptable use policies designed to secure devices and prohibit abuses of district resources, which may include firewalls, web restrictions, printing limitations, and prohibitions on software or hardware. However, Running Start is part of students' basic education and the credits they earn through it are moving them closer to graduation. If restrictions on school technology adversely impact students' performance in Running Start, it would be in the district's best interest to adjust them. Limitations on district-issued devices can be especially detrimental to rural, low-income, and disabled students without the means to access technology elsewhere. Colleges and school districts should work in partnership to whitelist websites, apps, software, and tools required by Running Start courses and establish data sharing agreements and/or acceptable use policies (AUP) outlining expectations of Running Start students in utilizing district devices and technology.

3.10. 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. (Refer to RCW 28A.600.035 for more information.)

3.11. If a student has a minimal number of credits to complete to fulfill graduation requirements, can they disenroll and return to Running Start for a later term?

Yes, provided neither truancy rules nor enrollment limitations apply based on the student's age. In this case, the student would be withdrawn from the district and exited as a non-graduate. The student may be reenrolled in the term they wish to continue Running Start and, upon completion of high school graduation or college degree requirements, exited with the appropriate school withdrawal code. It is important to note that the student should be advised that such a delay adds pressure to be successful in completing their requirements later in the year, while remaining continuously enrolled gives them additional opportunities to complete coursework if they are unsuccessful.

4. Courses, Credits, Graduation, and Extended Eligibility

a. Courses and Course Enrollment

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

With some exceptions (see below), the entire college catalog of courses 100-level and above 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 and/or degree requirements, High School and Beyond Plans, or education and career goals, as appropriate. Running Start courses may include both academic and professional-technical courses.

4.2. 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.

4.3. 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 AAFTE limit, a student may be responsible for paying the higher tuition rate associated with the higher level course.

4.4. 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 established combined 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.

4.5. 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.

4.6. May a student take self-paced courses through Running Start?

No. Typically, self-paced courses do not include direct instruction. Even when they do, attendance and/or participation in Running Start needs to be reported each month for funding purposes and the course must fit within the pre-defined start and end dates of the college term. Self-paced courses do not often follow the established count dates and colleges cannot typically demonstrate consistent participation for reporting purposes. Since each college's self-paced courses will function and be administered differently and most do not align with Running Start policies and procedures, students may not enroll in self-paced courses through Running Start.

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

No. Students may take any course for which they have met college enrollment requirements or prerequisites. Students should be provided guidance on how courses apply to high school graduation requirements and influence their graduation timeline, but they may not be prohibited from taking specific courses. Running Start course selection should be informed by the student's High School and Beyond Plan and postsecondary goals.

4.8. 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 college (RCW 28A.600.310(4)). If school/district staff have concerns about their students' academic performance, they should address those proactively and constructively with the student, family, and 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.

4.9. 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.

4.10. Is there a limit on how many times a Running Start student can retake a failed class?

There is nothing that explicitly prohibits students from retaking a class multiple times through Running Start, provided the college's policy allows it and would accept/replace the grade. However, some colleges have institutional policies that prohibit students from taking a class

more than a set number of times or apply a higher tuition rate to repeated courses. The student should be well informed of whether the grade is replaced in this situation or if another poor grade will negatively impact the college transcript. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) must also be a consideration, as the student may run a risk of financial aid penalties upon entering the same college if they are perpetually repeating the same class.

Students re-enrolling in failed classes should have a plan in place to ensure they will be successful, as they may be running the risk of falling behind in credits, dragging down their college GPA, exhausting their available Running Start FTE, and landing on SAP probation. In short, the student ***MAY*** repeat the class through Running Start but needs to be fully informed of the ramifications.

4.11. May school districts apply different graduation requirements to Running Start students, such as requiring them to take additional, higher-level, or uniquely sequenced courses?

No. Running Start students pursuing a high school diploma through the school district must meet local graduation requirements, but these must be uniformly applied to all students. Districts cannot impose unique or additional requirements on Running Start students. Running Start students may be provided with alternative options for satisfying local graduation requirements such as an asynchronous course covering financial literacy, High School and Beyond Planning, or other topics, but they cannot be required to take it if there are other means of satisfying those requirements. Likewise, Running Start students who meet credit requirements for graduation may not be required to take additional or more rigorous courses in particular subject areas.

Policies requiring Running Start students to take additional or higher-level courses have the potential to cost students in the long run. If they are expected to accrue credits they don't need for either college or high school, they are missing out on the opportunity to earn more meaningful credits that will shorten the time to degree completion or apply to their college and career goals. There may also be an impact on financial aid eligibility if students enter college with an excessive amount of unnecessary credit. Finally, such policies have the potential to disproportionately impact a Running Start student's GPA and class standing since they are required to take ***more*** and/or ***more rigorous*** courses. This can have significant ramifications with respect to college acceptance and eligibility for scholarships.

4.12. Can a district require that students (including Running Start students) complete a specific number of credits or complete a certain number of classes at a high school to graduate from it?

No. Districts have the authority to establish local graduation requirements but cannot prohibit a student from graduating based on where or how they are met. This would disproportionately impact Running Start and transfer students. WAC 180-51-020 reads, "Nothing within this chapter shall preclude the board of directors of any district offering a high school diploma from

establishing such additional course, credit, and test requirements as deemed desirable. A district may not adopt any policy which requires enrollment for either (a) a minimum number of semesters or trimesters or (b) a minimum number of courses in a semester or trimester which exceeds the enrollment time or courses necessary for a student to meet established course, credit, and test requirements for high school graduation."

b. High School Credit and Course Equivalencies

4.13. 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. Impact to FTE would be the same as any other course the student enrolls in. With the transition to a universal High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP) platform, SchooLinks, college success courses will not satisfy the HSBP graduation requirement moving forward but may support the completion of HSBP activities, be required at some colleges, and are always valuable for Running Start students.

4.14. 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."

4.15. 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.

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

No. RCW 28A.230.740 and WAC 180-51-050 establish 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. OSPI's College-to-High School Credit Conversion guidance provides additional information on this practice.

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

Yes, if based on a case-by-case evaluation of the extent to which a college course is the equivalent of required high school coursework. Districts have autonomy in establishing most local academic/crediting policies, but an arbitrary uniform split of credit 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. Course alignment should be based on learning standards, however, not a specific curriculum. If a particular course offered through Running Start meets the equivalent learning standards of high school class, students should receive the appropriate number of credits (adhering to the College-to-High School Credit Conversion guidance) for that subject area. The district should be able to provide a sound justification – rooted in learning standards – if only partial credit is being applied for a particular course.

If credit is split, the grade and GPA impact cannot be. Running Start grades are absolute, so whatever grade is earned in the course must be applied in both subject areas.

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

Yes. School district administrators and boards of directors have the responsibility 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 based on high school learning standards, reflecting legislative intent for this program. School districts should work closely with colleges in thoughtfully drafting credit equivalency guides but should not expect the colleges to make determinations on credit equivalencies for them.

Note: Colleges determine how Running Start credits apply toward college programs and degree requirements. As a result, the way credits are used to meet high school graduation requirements may differ from how they are applied at the college level.

4.19. 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 and, pursuant to RCW 28A.600.360 and WAC 392-169-050, is responsible for establishing Running Start course equivalencies grounded in high school learning standards. 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 equivalency guides that have already been established which may guide local discussions about appropriate equivalent courses.

A strong foundation for promoting Running Start and developing Running Start equivalencies is a review of the Washington 45. The Washington 45 is a list of commonly numbered college courses that would be most likely to transfer to public baccalaureate institutions and in-state private colleges. All of the courses are guaranteed to transfer among Washington's community and technical colleges. Although not a credential, it is a good guide for school counselors, administrators, and students, especially those earning dual credit who want reassurance that they can take those courses with them if they attend a four-year institution in Washington state.

4.20. 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 Running Start 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.

4.21. 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.

c. Graduation Requirements and the HSBP

4.22. 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, as explained in RCW 28B.50.535. 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.

4.23. Do Running Start students have to complete the HSBP?

Running Start students pursuing a high school diploma through a public school district or tribal, charter, or direct funded technical high school must complete the HSBP graduation requirement. By 2027-2028, all students must fully complete this requirement through the universal HSBP platform, SchooLinks, adopted in 2025. Schools transitioning to SchooLinks in the 2025-26 and 2026-27 school years will have flexibility in how they demonstrate seniors' HSBP completion. Juniors in both implementation years may transfer any HSBP-aligned assignments completed in a "College Success" or similar course, such as a resume, into the SchooLinks platform. Students who are not pursuing a public high school diploma are not subject to completing the HSBP graduation requirement in SchooLinks. Additional Guidance on supporting Running Start students' completion of the HSBP is available on the Course-Based Dual Credit and HSBP webpages.

4.24. 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 (HSBP) 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. When fully implemented, this will include completion of HSBP requirements in the state's universal HSBP platform, SchooLinks. Guidance on supporting Running Start students' completion of the HSBP is available on the Course-Based Dual Credit and HSBP webpages.

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 HSBP 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.

4.25. Can Running Start courses count towards 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 college. The high school must approve the dual credit course as an ELA or Math option. For more information on graduation pathways, see the appropriate year's Graduation Toolkit, available on the OSPI Graduation webpage.

4.26. 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. For more information on graduation pathways, see the appropriate year's Graduation Toolkit, available on the OSPI Graduation webpage.

4.27. 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.

d. College Based High School Diploma

4.28. 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. (See the Admissions, Eligibility and Limitations, and Home School/Private School/Choice Transfer/Online Academy Schools sections.)

4.29. 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.

4.30. 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, as explained in RCW 28B.50.535. 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.

4.31. 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 should be served and treated like all other high school students. Plans change, and students may eventually decide to pursue the district-issued high school diploma. Providing all enrolled students with guidance pertaining to graduation requirements and status is consistent with the role of the high school and intent of the High School and Beyond Plan, regardless of student's intent.

With respect to 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.

4.32. 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 tracking 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.

4.33. 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 fifth-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.

e. Fifth Year Seniors and Circumstantial Eligibility

4.34. May a fifth-year senior enroll in the Running Start program?

A fifth-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 58 total credits for all senior years combined based upon the 1.30 AAFTE limitation. A fifth-year senior is generally understood to be 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 58 total credits in their senior years. This limitation applies even if the student does not intend to graduate from the public high school.

4.35. Can a student begin Running Start as a fifth-year senior or beyond?

No. Per 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.

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

Yes, under the following conditions:

- The student is eligible to participate in Running Start pursuant to WAC 392-169-020;
- The student previously participated in Running Start;
- The student is under the age of 21 (or 22 for those receiving Special Education services);
- The student has not received the credits required to earn a high school diploma from their school district;
- The student has not exceeded the AAFTE-based credit limitation for all senior years combined; and
- The student is enrolling for only the courses required to complete their high school graduation requirements.

4.37. When is a student no longer eligible to participate in Running Start in relation to high school or degree completion?

Whether for the summer or any other term, a student is considered formally graduated and no longer eligible for Running Start when they are:

- Withdrawn or exited from the district's student information system (SIS) – effectively "closing" the student record – with a designation signifying that the student has graduated;
- Issued a diploma;
- Issued an official high school transcript, at which point no additional credits (including Running Start credits) can be added to the record; or
  Conferred an associate degree at the college level.

Students should not be issued a diploma or an official transcript until they are exited from the district's SIS as a graduate. The act of walking in a graduation ceremony does not constitute "graduation" if the student did not receive a diploma at the ceremony. If the student has not received a diploma, official transcript, or associate degree and their high school record remains open, the student can be reenrolled to generate Running Start funding. Students who continue to participate in Running Start after satisfying high school graduation or associate degree requirements should not be issued diplomas, degrees, or official transcripts until their final Running Start grades are transcribed.

4.38. Can a student in fifth-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.

4.39. If a student retakes a course, or requires a fifth year, are they eligible for additional FTE for the fifth year?

No, they would only be eligible to take the courses needed to meet their district's graduation requirements. Additionally, a fifth-year senior would be limited to taking a maximum of 58 college credits for all 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 fifth-year senior.

4.40. 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 fifth-year senior), eligible to be coded as a first-year senior in Running Start?

No. The student is limited to fifth-year senior standards in accordance with RCW 28A.600.330. (See the Eligibility and Limitations section.)

4.41. 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 ends at the conclusion of the 11th grade summer term. Running Start FTE does not carry over from 11th to 12th grade. However, the student would still be eligible for the three quarters of 12th grade and, with FTE capacity, the summer terms of their 11th and 12th grade years. If a 12th grade student has not met the district's graduation requirements by the end of the year and has not fully utilized their 12th grade FTE, they may continue as a fifth-year senior. Running Start eligibility is not based on college terms or credits, but rather the combined AAFTE limitation applied to the 11th and 12th grade academic years.

4.42. May students access Running Start prior to the 11th grade if they have completed higher-level coursework or 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.

4.43. 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."

4.44. May a high school deny Running Start participation to students approaching age 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 fifth-year senior (or beyond), a student would be limited to the AAFTE-based credit limitation for all senior years combined. An eligible student who turns 21 during the school year may continue to participate for the remainder of that school year. After a student turns 21, they cannot access college courses through Running Start during the next school year. For students receiving Special Education

services, this allowance, and the limitations associated with it, extend to age 22.

4.45. May a student who has already been awarded 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.

Like those who complete high school graduation requirements mid-year, students who complete associate degree requirements mid-year may continue to participate in Running Start until the end of the year, provided their degree is not conferred. As with high school graduation, once a degree is awarded, the student's Running Start eligibility ends. Withholding only a college-issued high school diploma while awarding a degree will not extend a student's Running Start eligibility.

5. Summer Running Start

5.1. Who can participate in summer Running Start?

For Running Start-eligible students who have not met the AAFTE enrollment limitation, the summer quarter is accessible at all colleges and universities offering Running Start for a maximum of 10 credits. This applies to the following students:

- Rising Juniors: Students completing the 10th grade or eligible to enroll in the 11th grade in the fall based upon the district's grade placement policies.
- Rising Seniors: 11th grade students, regardless of whether they have participated in Running Start previously.
- Non-graduating Seniors: 12th grade students who will not have completed the credits required for graduation, regardless of whether they have participated in Running Start previously. These students would not be considered fifth-year seniors until the fall, so they are not limited to taking only college courses that satisfy high school graduation requirements.
- Non-Graduating Fifth-Year and Beyond Seniors: Current fifth-year seniors who have not reached the college credit limit for all senior years combined and have not met the credit requirements to earn a high school diploma. These students must have participated in Running Start previously and are limited to specific college courses that would satisfy high school graduation requirements within their remaining FTE capacity.
- Seniors Delaying Graduation: Seniors who have met high school graduation requirements but choose to delay graduation. These students cannot be formally graduated in June and must be advised that their records cannot be closed, official transcripts cannot be generated, diplomas cannot be provided, and they will not be reflected as graduates until the completion of the summer Running Start term.
- Home and Private School Students: These students must be eligible to be in the 11th or 12th grade in the fall based on the grade placement policies of the school district, regardless of whether they intend to pursue a diploma through the district.

5.2. How do students enroll for summer Running Start?

The enrollment process is similar to that of standard Running Start, except students must use the Summer RSEVF. Students are encouraged to begin the process early to ensure they have the form completed before schools close for the summer. For students delaying graduation, the Summer RSEVF must be accompanied by the Summer Running Start Assurances for Delaying Graduation form demonstrating that the student has formally requested that the district postpone graduation. For more information, consult the Running Start Technical Guide.

5.3. May a school or district "opt out" of summer Running Start?

No. The recent FTE/AAFTE adjustments were intended to permit students to participate in summer Running Start. Summer Running Start is an extension of current Running Start statute/funding, and therefore, eligible students must be allowed to participate.

5.4. How is summer Running Start funded?

Summer Running Start is funded in the same manner as traditional Running Start; however, the summer term includes only two counts in July and August. Enrollment is reported through the P223 process. Districts generate funding and colleges bill them like any other term. Districts are encouraged to report the summer quarter enrollment in the month the form is received from the college, which will then guarantee payment in their July and August apportionment. Enrollment may be retroactively reported after August 15 and until November 25; however, payment will then be delayed until the January apportionment. Districts are reminded that they retain 7% of the Running Start funding, which can be used to support summer Running Start administration and staffing. See the Running Start Technical Guide for additional information.

5.5. How does a student enroll after school buildings have closed for the summer?

Students should make every effort to enroll in summer Running Start well before the end of the school year. If they are unable to complete the summer RSEVF with a school counselor, however, they should consult another school administrator or contact the district office if the school building has closed.

It is the district's responsibility to ensure that eligible students are provided with an opportunity to enroll in summer Running Start. High schools must collaborate with the school district and higher education partners to establish and communicate a process for students to enroll in summer Running Start when buildings have closed for the summer. They may not deny students access to summer Running Start simply because the school will be closed.

5.6. When completing the summer RSEVF, what if the high school counselor does not know the student's combined monthly FTE?

This has been reported monthly through the P223 process, so it is available. If the information is not readily available to the counselor, they should contact the district Registrar or business offices.

5.7. What do colleges do if they believe the RSEVF is incomplete or inaccurate?

Colleges are encouraged to address minor mistakes or missing fields without returning forms to the school counselor. The college can first contact the counselor who completed the RSEVF to discuss their observations and/or concerns. Either party should be able to review past RSEVFs that were completed and submitted. If the matter cannot be remedied or the counselor is

unavailable, the district Registrar or business office should be able to verify the information provided.

5.8. 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.

5.9. 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 and how the term "full-time" is being used. 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 AAFTE limit to participate in the summer, but a student who reached the 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.

5.10. 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, but there are caveats. The summer term is considered an extension of the traditional school year, so consistent with WAC 392-169-020, students who begin the school year 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, graduation-eligible students wishing to access Running Start funds to participate in the summer quarter must have available FTE, must delay their graduation, and must provide evidence that the high school or district is aware of their intentions using the Assurances for Delaying Graduation Form available on OSPI's Course-Based Dual Credit webpage. **They cannot be formally graduated, have their record closed, or obtain an official transcript or diploma 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.

5.11. What happens when a graduated senior submits a signed RSEVF and enrolls for summer Running Start?

Districts cannot receive nor pass through state funds for officially graduated seniors to attend Running Start; it would be considered a gift of public funds to pay for their enrollment. Students who were officially graduated and still enrolled in summer Running Start must either pay for the course(s) or withdraw unless the college is willing to waive or reduce their tuition/fees. Even if the summer RSEVF was signed or the district failed to delay the student's graduation, districts do not have the authority to send funding to the colleges that they cannot receive. This is not the same as an error in FTE calculation on the RSEVF, which a district can correct or address by reducing a student's high school FTE. Districts are not permitted to re-enroll graduated students to generate the funding needed to reimburse colleges for Running Start.

It is important for college staff to verify with the district that the student was ***officially*** graduated in CEDARS, as many students may not understand that walking in a graduation ceremony is not the same as being graduated in CEDARS. They may ***think*** they graduated because they participated in a ceremony but may still have an open record allowing them to continue Running Start. If it is not possible to confirm the student's status, colleges must decide whether to request payment or waive or reduce their tuition, ideally prior to the withdrawal date so students can drop their class(es) if they cannot pay.

5.12. For seniors who postponed graduation to access Summer Running Start, how and when should districts officially graduate them if the college's summer term ends after the district's new academic year begins?

Seniors who've met high school graduation requirements before the summer Running Start term but choose to postpone their graduation to access summer classes should still be counted as on-time graduates for the current year, even when there's a slight overlap in high school and college calendars. To complete the graduation process and maintain seniors' status as members of their graduating class, districts may establish a graduation date for these students just before the first day of the new academic year. For instance, if the new school year begins on Monday, August 25, the students may officially graduate on Friday, August 22.

Since the Running Start classes these seniors are taking are not satisfying high school graduation requirements nor impacting their eligibility to graduate, final summer term grades may be retroactively applied to the high school transcript. Students must understand that final/official transcripts may not be generated until after the grades have been added.

Important note: Using the early graduation date is not permitted for seniors who are enrolled in summer Running Start to satisfy unmet high school graduation requirements. These students may not graduate until final grades are received and should be reflected as the next year's graduates.

5.13. Why is summer Running Start allowed for graduating seniors?

The summer term is an extension of the current school year. WAC 392-169-020 defines an eligible student as one who "has not as of the beginning of the school year earned the credits required for the award of a high school diploma." Therefore, if the student began the school year short of credits, they may participate for the balance of the school year – including the summer – regardless of when they met their credit requirements.

5.14. If a student meets their graduation requirements, doesn't the district have to graduate them?

There is nothing in statute or rule requiring a district to formally graduate a student or issue a diploma upon completion of their high school graduation requirements. A graduating senior's summer participation is no different than that of a senior who met graduation requirements in December and continued to access Running Start through June.

5.15. If a senior is formally graduated, can they participate in summer Running Start?

Not with the elimination of "after-exit" Running Start, which was separately funded as a legislative proviso. For funding and transcription purposes, students who wish to participate in summer Running Start may not be formally graduated until the conclusion of the summer college term. Graduated students cannot be enrolled and will not generate funding, and the transcript cannot be reopened to reflect summer Running Start credits and grades retroactively.

5.16. How do graduating seniors participating in summer Running Start obtain official transcripts for college applications?

Official transcripts cannot be issued until the conclusion of the summer term. This is important for students and families to understand. OSPI has recommended in past bulletins and guidance (Bulletin 027-24 and Running Start Technical Guide) that schools or districts provide an unofficial transcript accompanied by a form letter indicating that the student is taking summer college courses through Running Start. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) and the Council of Presidents (CoP) have indicated that their admissions counselors are aware of this opportunity and concur with this approach.

Under most circumstances at Washington colleges and universities, admissions decisions are made well before the summer term and official transcripts are not required before the fall term. Therefore, the need for official transcripts is unlikely to impact the majority of students. Students pursuing admission to out-of-state, private, or highly selective institutions are strongly encouraged to contact them directly to be fully informed of their expectations and requirements. See the "Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) Reporting Requirements" in the Running Start Technical Guide for additional details.

5.17. What if final college course grades are not issued until the fall term has begun?

If the student completes the Running Start courses prior to the start of the next school year, they

are considered the previous year's graduates. Regardless of the date grades are submitted, the end date of the summer Running Start term would be the date of graduation.

Summer Running Start credits and grades may be retroactively applied to the high school transcript. They should be submitted to CEDARS in the prior year's submission. See the "Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) Reporting Requirements" in the Running Start Technical Guide for additional details.

5.18. Are seniors participating in summer quarter Running Start still graduates of the Class of 2027?
Yes, these students remain graduates of the Class of 2027; however, their transcripts will reflect an August graduation date rather than a June one. See the "Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) Reporting Requirements" in the Running Start Technical Guide for additional details.

5.19. Will delaying graduation for summer Running Start impact school graduation rates or funding?
It will not. Participating seniors are still graduates of the same cohort, and the distinction between a June and August graduate has no bearing on on-time graduation rates or school funding.

5.20. Should students pending graduation be allowed to walk at graduation or be considered for graduation honors?
Yes, absolutely. Seniors who have met all high school graduation requirements before participating in summer Running Start should not be prohibited from participating in graduation ceremonies or being considered for graduation honors. See the "Running Start Access" section of Bulletin #067-24 for additional details.

5.21. What is the difference between "12th but not graduating," "12th delaying graduation," and "5th Year Senior" on the summer RSEVF?
For current first-year seniors who are not eligible to graduate, check "12th but not graduating." These students are traditional seniors who have not met graduation requirements, but they do not become fifth-year seniors until the fall term. They may enroll in Running Start for the first time in the summer term because it is an extension of the current school year. By doing so, they establish their eligibility to participate in the following year as a fifth-year senior provided they have not met their district's graduation requirements at the beginning of the new school year. These students are not limited during the summer term to taking courses that fulfill high school graduation requirements.

"12th delaying graduation" refers to current first-year seniors who are eligible to graduate but wish to postpone graduation to participate in Running Start. These students must take all necessary steps to formally request a delayed graduation and submit an Assurances for Delaying

Graduation form along with the RSEVF. Additional considerations for seniors delaying graduation are addressed above.

“5th Year Senior” refers to a student currently in their second or third senior year. Current fifth-year (or beyond) seniors may enroll in summer quarter Running Start only if they have participated in Running Start previously AND have not reached or exceeded the credit limit for all senior years combined. They may not begin Running Start in a second or third senior year and are limited to taking only courses that will fulfill their district's high school graduation requirements.

PART II: COSTS, SERVICES, AND STUDENT SUPPORT

6. Fees and Funding

6.1. May colleges charge fees to Running Start students?

Yes. Running Start students are expected to 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). (See the Eligibility and Limitations section for additional information on fee waivers.)

6.2. 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 58 college credits per academic year but are limited to a combined 1.30 FTE when enrolled in both high school and Running Start courses. When a Running Start student seeks more credits, colleges will charge appropriate per-credit rates for any credits beyond the maximum or beyond the combined FTE/AAFTE limit, 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.

6.3. 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 an earlier question, 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.

6.4. 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.

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

Sometimes. Historically, OSPI's Consolidated Equity and Sustainability Grant (FP 154) allowed school districts to apply for funding to support initiatives aimed at expanding access to Running Start and other dual credit programs. The dual credit proviso that funded the CES Grant was eliminated in the 2025 legislative session, however, and the grant has been suspended through the 2025-2027 biennium.

6.6. 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.

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

Residency determinations must be made for students who exceed the 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.

7. Financial Aid and Student Need

7.1. 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, as students who have already obtained a bachelor's degree are no longer eligible for WCG. 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.

The WCG maximum is equal to full time attendance for a maximum of six years (18 quarters/12 semesters or the equivalent combination of the two at a full-time rate of enrollment). This usage limit only applies to the quarters in which a student received 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 usage 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

College Bound (CBS) recipients may be eligible to receive six years of funding to be used within six years of first enrolling after high school graduation or receipt of approved high school equivalency (for example: GED). Please note that students who receive an approved high school equivalency, like the GED, have to have received it by their 21st birthday. Students must enroll in a college or university within one year of high school graduation or receipt of an approved high school equivalency. The six-year limit (18 quarters/12 semesters or the equivalent) 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 18 quarters/12 semesters or the equivalent of full-time enrollment. Like WCG, this limit only applies to the quarters in which a student received the CBS, however students do have to be aware of the six-year limit for receipt of funds from first enrollment after high school graduation or approved high school equivalency

receipt. In other words, no coursework taken in dual credit programs will apply to the CBS usage limit.

CBS students must also enroll in college or university within one academic year following their high school graduation or approved high school equivalency receipt to be eligible for CBS consideration. For example, a CBS student who graduated high school in the spring of 2025 is required to enroll in college or university by the fall term of 2026. CBS students who do not enroll in college within a year of high school graduation are not eligible to receive the scholarship.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

For federal and most state financial aid programs, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). SAP refers to the academic standards students must meet to remain eligible for federal and most state financial aid programs. Please note, starting in the 2024-2025 academic year, state SAP standards aligned with federal SAP standards.

It is critical for dual credit students to understand all prior postsecondary coursework that generated a college transcript, including credits taken through dual credit, may 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 completion rate and maximum timeframe progress percentage.

While specific SAP policies vary by institution, SAP reviews include two key measures:

- Qualitative Measure: assesses the quality of the student's academic work
- Quantitative Measure: evaluates the student's pace of progression, which includes
    - Completion Rate (Pace of Progression)
    - Maximum Timeframe

The qualitative measure is usually based on a review of a student's Grade Point Average (GPA), conducted either at the end of each term or annually. Institutions typically require students to maintain a minimum GPA to demonstrate satisfactory academic performance.

The completion rate for the quantitative measure is calculated by comparing the number of credits a student has earned to the number of credits they have attempted. Students must have successfully earned at least 67% of all attempted credits to meet this standard. This calculation includes credits earned through dual credit programs.

The maximum timeframe quantitative measure requires students to complete their academic program within 150% of the published length of program. For example, if a program requires 90 credits to complete, a student must complete the program within 135 attempted credit hours. Dual credits earned may be included in the maximum timeframe calculation, depending on the institution's SAP policy. Please note, some institutions may have a stricter maximum timeframe policy than the federal 150% standard.

Federal regulations allow institutions to develop their own policy to calculate maximum timeframe limits and provide Pell Grant college/universities flexibility in determining which credits are counted toward a student's maximum timeframe. This 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 when calculating maximum timeframe. However, how credits are counted is entirely at the discretion of the institution's credit transfer policy.

Many institutions also apply SAP standards to their institutional aid programs, though requirements for institutional aid can vary by college/university and may not always align exactly with federal and state SAP standards.

The SAP evaluation may determine that students are not meeting SAP standards. Depending on the student's cumulative academic progress percentage, students who do not meet SAP standards may initially be placed on one of the following statuses:Warning Status: The student can continue to receive federal and state aid.

- Not Meeting or Denied Status: The student is no longer eligible for federal and state aid. This status is often assigned to students who remain in warning status for longer than the number of terms allowed by the college's policies.

Students who are approaching or not meeting SAP standards, including those near or exceeding the maximum timeframe limit, should work closely with a financial aid representative at their college or university to ensure continued eligibility for both federal and state aid programs.

If a student's dual credit coursework negatively impacts their SAP evaluation, it is important to know that all colleges and universities in Washington have an SAP appeals process in place. Appeals and reinstatement policies vary by institution, so it is also recommended that students work closely with a financial aid representative

<u>Private Donor and Institutional Scholarships</u>

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.

7.2. 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).

7.3. Can military dependent Running Start students use their WA Tuition Waiver (W72) to cover credits in excess of their available FTE?

Yes. Credits allowed under the AAFTE limitation would be covered under Running Start and billed to the student's home district. Students can use the W72 waiver to cover the cost of additional credits after Running Start charges and applicable fees are adjusted.

7.4. Are low-income tuition waivers available for Running Start students who want to take additional credits above the combined 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.

7.5. 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.

7.6. 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 effort 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 1.30 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 eligibility does provide additional resources, students must consider how to access lunch when they are not on their high school campus.

7.7. Are all Running Start students from Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) schools entitled to fee waivers at the institution of higher education?

No. SHB 1316 (2023) revised RCW 28A.600.310 to require that waivers be made available to students "upon proof that the student meets federal eligibility requirements for free or reduced-price school meals." This was intended to ensure that students were not denied waivers simply because they were not participating in the FRPL program and to clarify that eligibility could be established through the Family Income Survey or other methods.

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

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

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:

- The student has been deemed eligible for free or 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.
- The student is receiving any state or federal assistance funds.
- The student is classified as 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.

7.9. 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, requires school districts to provide documentation of students' low-income status directly to institutions of higher education. Under the National School Lunch Act (NSLA), local education agencies (LEA) 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 FRPL 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.

School counselors or other staff who verify Running Start enrollment will need access to students' FRPL status to complete the RSEVF. As addressed in OSPI , disclosure of FRPL eligibility for Running Start students is authorized and doesn't require additional parental consent. Schools are highly encouraged to work with district staff who process meal applications and conduct direct certification to obtain FRPL information for Running Start students. If school counselors cannot verify students' FRPL eligibility on the RSEVF, RCW 28A.600.310 requires school districts to provide documentation of all Running Start students' low-income status directly to institutions of higher education.

8. Disability Services and Accommodations

8.1. 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 their IEP, students/guardians 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.

8.2. 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.

8.3. 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 the established FTE/AAFTE limitation.

8.4. 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. As districts generate funding through Running Start enrollment and may only be billed for months in which a student is enrolled, they do not ***lose*** funding when students fail or withdraw from a course.

8.5. 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 58-credit Running Start maximum for all senior years combined, and courses being taken continue to address specific credit requirements necessary for high school graduation.

Beginning in 2025-26, students receiving Special Education Services may access Running Start through the end of the year they turn 22, provided they were enrolled in Running Start prior to their first 12th grade year. Pursuant to WAC 392-169-055, students may continue Running Start after their first 12th grade year, but may not begin Running Start in a fifth-year or beyond. More information on this topic is available at Questions and Answers: Providing Special Education Services Until Age 22.

8.6. May a district provide paraeducator or other staff support to a student with an IEP or Section 504 plan enrolled in Running Start?

It depends. Disability accommodation is determined on a case-by-case basis for each student using an interactive process of determination with disability service professionals at the college. The college is not required to fundamentally alter or lower the standards of the course.

For example, if the paraeducator assists with turning pages in a textbook, setting up or manipulating classroom materials, or providing scribing assistance, these activities are examples of reasonable accommodation. The paraeducator should not answer test questions for the student, complete their homework, or communicate on their behalf to instructors, staff, or other students without the student present.

Colleges are not responsible for covering the costs of personal devices, medical equipment, or personal aid services for students receiving accommodation, so it would be incumbent upon the district to cover the costs associated with such services.

If you are unsure about the presence of a paraeducator for a particular student, the best course of action is to request a meeting between the college's disability services team and district team for further discussion.

8.7. 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.

8.8. 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.

8.9. Is there guidance about the transition from high school to college for students with IEPs or 504s and families and educators?

Yes. The Washington Association of Postsecondary Education and Disability (WAPED) is an organization of community and technical college and university disability service providers in Washington. WAPED provides resources to support high school students with disabilities in the transition from high school to college. Resources include a transition guide, student one-pager and family/educator one-pager

9. Student and Family Rights

9.1. 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).

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

No. There are exceptions, however, based on the student's dependency status as explained above. In addition, per the U.S. Department of Education, "If a student is attending a postsecondary institution - at any age - the rights under FERPA have transferred to the student. However, in a situation where a student is enrolled in both a high school and a postsecondary institution, the two schools may exchange information on that student. If the student is under 18, the parent[s] [or guardian(s)] still retain the rights under FERPA at the high school and may inspect and review any records sent by the postsecondary institution to the high school. Additionally, the postsecondary institution may disclose personally identifiable information from the student's education records to the parent[s] [or guardian(s)], without the consent of the eligible student, if the student is a dependent for tax purposes under the IRS rules."

9.3. 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.

9.4. 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.

9.5. 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.

9.6. 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.

9.7. Can Running Start students be prohibited from walking in graduation ceremonies if they have met high school graduation requirements?

No. While the criteria for graduation awards and participation are in the purview of the school district, Running Start students are basic education students first and foremost and should not be penalized for seeking to advance their academic pursuits. Policies that discourage participation or diminish recognition of Running Start students' academic success are inequitable and can negatively impact students' opportunities to obtain scholarships and engage in further education after high school. Running Start students who have met the same graduation requirements as their senior class peers are entitled to participate equally in all graduation and senior class activities.

9.8. Can Running Start students be prohibited from participating in senior class activities or walking at graduation if they are taking spring Running Start courses for which grades will not be issued prior to graduation?

It depends. Criteria for participation in senior class activities or walking at graduation are in the purview of school districts. If a school district cannot verify that a student will have completed their high school graduation requirements through Running Start prior to graduation, the district does not have to allow them to participate. If the Running Start classes do not satisfy high school graduation requirements, however, the student should be allowed to participate if graduation requirements have been met.

Schools and districts are strongly encouraged to work with colleges to establish methods for tracking seniors' progress as they approach graduation and may permit students to walk with assurances from college faculty that the students are on track to pass their Running Start courses.

9.9. 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 academic and graduation 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

PART III: SPECIAL ENROLLMENT CIRCUMSTANCES

10. Home-Based Instruction and Private School Students

10.1. 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 have 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.

10.2. Can students in home-based instruction enroll through a non-resident district solely for the purposes of participating in Running Start?

Yes, however, it requires a Choice Transfer to the district through which they intend to enroll. Only the student's resident district or a district where the student has a Choice Transfer in place can process the RSEVF to enroll the student in Running Start. For more information, visit OSPI's Student Transfers webpage.

10.3. 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.

10.4. 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). (See the Graduation Requirements section.)

10.5. 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 or intent to graduate from the high school in accordance with WAC 180-51-035. Some schools consider age appropriateness, some review credits and prior learning, and some consider a combination of factors. A standardized achievement test may be used in the absence of adequate documentation of a student's home-based education.

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).

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

This is a local decision addressed at the district level. Parents may appeal only if the district has a policy and procedure for such an appeal. Neither OSPI nor the State Board of Education consider local grade placement appeals.

10.7. 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 fifth-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 the college credits allowed for all senior years combined based on the AAFTE limitation. (See Eligibility and Limitations and Graduation Requirements.)

10.8. 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.

10.9. 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.

10.10. How does the 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 1.30 FTE at the college and a combined public high school and college FTE of 1.30. 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 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 to enroll in Running Start up to the FTE limitation in addition to the courses being taken through their home school or private school.

11. Choice Transfer, ALE, and Online School Students

11.1. If a student who resides outside of the district but attends and enrolls in Running Start through a Choice Transfer 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.

11.2. 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.

11.3. 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?

No. 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's Student Transfers: Choice Transfers, Interdistrict Agreements, and Standard Choice Transfer System publication for additional information on choice transfers and inter-district agreements.

11.4. 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.

11.5. 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 recent adjustments to the 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.

11.6. 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.

11.7. 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 allowing 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.

12. International Students, Immigration, and Study Abroad

12.1. 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 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.

12.2. 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 cannot be claimed for state funding by the school district or the college. Students on an F-1 visa could be violating the terms of their visa if they enroll in a school/college other than the one the visa was granted for.

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.

Federal guidance (Nonimmigrants: Who Can Study?) states that a student with an F-2 or M-2 visa can enroll full time in an elementary or secondary school. Additionally, they can enroll in a SEVP-certified school, provided they are not taking a "full course of study at the postsecondary level." All Washington community and technical colleges are SEVP-certified schools.

From a K-12 perspective, districts should be aware of state laws and their internal policies regarding international students and immigration/visa status. In general, a public school district cannot prohibit a student from enrolling due to their immigration status and typically may not even inquire about immigration status, including visa status. However, districts often have policies regarding how many foreign exchange program students they will accept in a given year in each school and have requirements regarding the exchange organization. None of those policies authorize a school district to require information or inquire about specific visa status.

Colleges and universities have different responsibilities, policies, and procedures regarding immigration and visa status. Those may require the college to inquire about visa status, so they

can ensure, among other things, students do not inadvertently violate their visa conditions. When the college is aware that a student has an F-2 or M-2 visa, it is not advisable that the student enroll full-time through Running Start because doing so may present a risk to the student and the college. Limiting such students to part-time enrollment will protect the student's ability to live and study in the U.S. To be clear, school districts do not have this responsibility and should not inquire about visa status when working with students or when assisting them in developing their schedules.

12.3. Can a student residing outside of Washington, including dependents of military families, 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. These expectations apply to all students, including military dependents.

12.4. 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 Study 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.

PART IV: RECORDS AND REFERENCE

13. Transcripts and Academic Records

13.1. 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.

13.2. 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."

13.3. 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.

13.4. 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.

13.5. 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 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.

13.6. 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.

13.7. 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.

13.8. 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.

13.9. 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?

Whenever possible, it is recommended that the high school transcribe the exact grade earned at the college. If letter grades are awarded, a B at the college should be reflected as a B on the high school transcript. However, when numerical grades are assigned, it is possible that the respective transcripts will show different grades. The high school transcript needs to record the grade in accordance with the grading scale established in WAC 392-415-050. In this case, 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.

13.10. 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.

13.11. 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. Grades earned through completion of a Running Start course are determined by the college or university.

Colleges and universities are responsible for ensuring student grades on the college transcript reflect the higher education institution's grading practices and policies.
If there is a difference in the college and district grading policies and/or scales, the district must adhere to WAC 392-415-050 and/or their local policies for the high school transcript.

PART V: AGENCY AND SECTOR CONTACTS

For additional information, sector 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 to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Julie Garver
Washington Public Four-Year Institutions
Director of Policy and Academic Affairs Council of Presidents
360-292-4102
jgarver@councilofpresidents.org

Jamie Traugott
Director of Student Services & K-12 Alignment
State Board of Community & Technical Colleges
360-704-3929
jtraugott@sbctc.edu

Stephanie Wahl
Policy Associate, Student Services & K-12 Alignment
State Board of Community & Technical Colleges
360-704-1002
swahl@sbctc.edu

Rathi Sudhakara
Associate Director, Strategy & Partnerships
Washington Student Achievement Council
360-485-1212
rathis@wsac.wa.gov

Tim McClain
Dual Credit Program Supervisor
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
360-725-4465
tim.mcclain@k12.wa.us

Becky McLean
Program Manager, Enrollment Reporting & Categorical Funding
Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
360-725-6306
Becky.McLean@k12.wa.us

Alissa Muller
Senior Director of Policy
State Board of Education
360-725-6501
Alissa.Muller@k12.wa.us

Sheila Steiner
Independent Colleges of Washington
Senior Director, Policy & Community Engagement
206-623-4494
sheila@icwashington.org