



# Washington Office of Superintendent of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

## *After-Exit Running Start Grants*

### 1. **Purpose:**

Since the inception of Running Start, state funding to support student access to the program has been available for the three quarters coinciding with the standard K–12 school year calendar. Despite the program's track record of success, students have been precluded from accessing Running Start funding during the summer term.

Available to graduating students within 15 credits of earning an associate degree, the after-exit Running Start proviso was intended to provide students with the opportunity to complete their degree by participating in Running Start in the summer quarter following their graduation.

### 2. **Description of services provided:**

In the summer quarter of 2022, the after-exit Running Start proviso funding was made available to seniors who had met their Running Start enrollment limitations for the previous school year and who were eligible to graduate from high school but were also within 15 college credits of earning an associate degree at a community and technical college. To support districts with getting eligible students access to this new summer quarter opportunity, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) partnered with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) to produce [Bulletin 027-22](#) on summer Running Start, hosted multiple webinars and trainings, and established an eligibility verification and enrollment process. Via the new Summer Quarter Running Start Form (SQRSF), high schools provided the colleges with names and eligibility for students who wished to participate, and colleges returned the form to OSPI once student registration and enrolled courses were confirmed. Following enrollment verification, OSPI reimbursed the colleges for the credits attempted by eligible students directly through apportionment.

### 3. **Criteria for receiving services and/or grants:**

After-exit proviso funding was available to eligible students from any school district participating in the summer quarter at any community and technical college. To be eligible, a student would have:

- Met their Running Start enrollment limitation during the standard school year (15 credits per quarter/45 credits per year).
- Planned to graduate in June with the Class of 2022.
- Finished high school within 15 college credits of an associate degree.
- Enrolled in a community and technical college for up to 15 credits towards their degree.



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## **Beneficiaries in the 2022–23 School Year:**

Number of School Districts:	102
Number of Schools:	114
Number of Students:	792
Number of Educators:	0
Other:	20 community and technical colleges participated

## **4. Are federal or other funds contingent on state funding?**

☒ No

## **5. State funding history:**

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2023	\$3,000,000	\$1,213,323

## **6. Number of beneficiaries (e.g., school districts, schools, students, educators, other) history:**

Fiscal Year	Number of Schools
2023	114

## **7. Programmatic changes since inception (if any):**

After-exit Running Start funding was first made available in 2022, so there were no changes implemented in the proviso's inaugural year.

## **8. Program evaluation or evaluation of major findings:**

After-exit proviso funding served over 792 seniors in 2022. With the exception of a three-college summer pilot in 2021, this was the first opportunity for students to access Running Start in the summer quarter. While there were many challenges associated with the opportunity, staff and instructors at the secondary and postsecondary levels were overwhelmingly supportive of the efforts to make Running Start available to students in the summer quarter.

With the availability of both Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) and after-exit funding, 2,879 students participated in the first-year summer Running Start was made available statewide. 28% of these students were seniors funded through the after-exit proviso, and of those, 313 (40%) were within 15 credits of an associate degree. While



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information on degree attainment is not available to OSPI, it is likely that around 10% of all students participating in the summer of 2022 completed an associate degree because of the availability of after-exit funding. As some students eligible for after-exit funding may have been shifted to ESSER funding for reasons described below, it is possible that degree attainment rates in 2022 were even higher.

## 9. **Major challenges faced by the program:**

Launching summer Running Start statewide through a combination of proviso and ESSER funding sources highlighted the challenges of bringing a summer program to scale on a short timeline. The implementation of this proviso mirrored and further elevated challenges identified in the original 2021 pilot, including:

- **Funding:** The coincidental availability of state and ESSER funds to support summer quarter enrollment caused a significant degree of confusion about which source to use for each student. Even when the distinction was made clear by SBCTC, many colleges shifted students from after-exit to ESSER funding because the latter funding source was more permissive and could cover additional costs. OSPI did not learn until the end of summer that a significant number of students were covered with ESSER funding that were eligible for after-exit funding.  
In addition, uncertainty about the availability and source of future funding presented challenges in communication and the establishment of a consistent process for sustaining and marketing summer quarter Running Start. Reimbursement processes inherent in the after-exit proviso depend on the funding source and amount available, as do the number and type of students who can participate.
- **Implementation Timeline:** The timeline necessary to implement summer programs is substantial due to the need to establish new procedures and market opportunities to students before schools close for summer in early- to mid-June. Following the adoption of the budget, OSPI and SBCTC had to develop processes and guidance in a few short weeks to advise students, families, schools, and colleges of the opportunity to participate in summer quarter Running Start. Secondary and postsecondary staff had little time to learn the processes and eligibility requirements while simultaneously providing outreach to students. The short timeline for implementation severely limited collaboration and stakeholder engagement. Some schools and colleges did not wish to participate, and additional time would have minimized confusion and errors with the new process.
- **Misalignment of Academic Calendars:** District and college academic calendars are not well suited for summer program collaboration. Planning opportunities were limited as high schools were adjourning for summer while colleges still had two to three weeks left in spring quarter. Not only did the timeline and misalignment of calendars preclude intentional collaboration, but they also left participating students and colleges in need of



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additional Local Educational Agency (LEA) support that was unavailable when high schools staff were already on leave for summer break.

- **Enrollment Tracking and Transcription:** Without adequate summer staffing, traditional methods of tracking student enrollment with the Running Start Enrollment Verification Form (RSEVF) and monthly P223 report were not feasible. OSPI and its postsecondary partners had to create new methods of administering Running Start in the summer to ensure accurate record keeping. Graduating seniors' enrollment in the district's student information system had to remain open through the summer, for instance, which presented challenges in obtaining official transcripts for college admission. Student eligibility needed to be verified at a time when most school-based staff were unavailable, and some relevant information was held in the K–12 system while some was at within the college system. Some seniors even enrolled directly through the colleges after high schools adjourned, creating additional challenges for LEAs to track enrollment, grades, and credits earned.
- **Eligibility:** The coincidental availability of ESSER and after-exit funding provided summer access to significantly more students, but complicated registration, reporting, and reimbursement. The after-exit eligibility criteria was clear, but ESSER funding was more permissive so colleges often shifted after-exit students to ESSER to spend it down and provide students with a more generous support (often covering fees and textbooks). Since ESSER funds were managed by SBCTC, seniors were also permitted to enroll directly through the colleges after high schools adjourned, increasing the difficulty of accurately tracking eligibility and enrollment, and requiring secondary and postsecondary institutions to continually compare information on each participant. The opening of summer quarter was also marked by a lack of clarity pertaining to the eligibility of rising juniors, graduating and fifth- or sixth-year seniors, and students in various alternative learning environment (ALE) programs such as Open Doors.

## 10. **Future opportunities:**

OSPI, SBCTC, and most schools, districts, and colleges support the expansion of the Running Start program into the summer months, as evidenced by the absence of opposition to the rule changes and legislation that took effect in the spring of 2023. Summer Running Start is in demand and leads to positive outcomes for the students who participate. In addition, it supports both OSPI's Strategic Goal #2 ("Equitable access to dual credit courses.") and SBCTC's Strategy #3 ("Increase participation in dual-credit programs for all students, but especially students of color, including technical education dual-credit programs.").

Since the passage of [Substitute House Bill 1316](#) increased the Running Start FTE limit from 1.20 to 1.40 and guarantees access to 10 college credits per summer term, most of the concerns raised above were addressed and there is sufficient time for OSPI, SBCTC, and the



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Council of Presidents to collaboratively explore and advocate for solutions to remaining systemic challenges that include:

- **Funding to Support Summer LEA Staffing:** Student enrollment in summer quarter college courses cannot be effectively supported without the availability of district staff required to manage monthly Running Start enrollment reporting and communication between high schools and colleges with respect to student eligibility, enrollment, support services, grade and credit transcription, etc. Dedicated funding for summer staffing is needed to effectively implement summer quarter Running Start. Without it, the resulting lack of communication between high schools and colleges will undoubtedly impede accurate enrollment reporting and funding allocations to the college system.
- **Integrated Electronic Tracking and Reporting:** With the transition into the summer months when in-person staff availability is limited, the current enrollment verification and reimbursement processes will need to be revisited and possibly redesigned. OSPI, SBCTC, and the Council of Presidents (CoP) should evaluate and, if possible, adopt one of several electronic platforms being explored (DualEnroll, Canusia, etc.), which ensure the most efficient and timely transfer of information. Between the K-12 and higher education systems. The transition to new technology and data system development may require additional financial support.
- **Running Start Funding Formula:** SBCTC and CoP have expressed concerns about the summer funding formula, as it is currently based on a two-month count (July and August) and generates only two-thirds the tuition of a traditional academic quarter. Since summer quarter generates the same operating and instruction costs, they have advocated for either a third monthly count or an enhanced summer rate to match Running Start reimbursement in other terms.  
School districts, on the other hand, have reported that the 7% of BEA retained for Running Start students is insufficient for work required to support the program and its students. At the building level, staff have noted that districts are now retaining more of that funding to manage summer enrollment when schools are closed, resulting in the removal of those funds as support for the added workload during the school year.
- **Transcription After Graduation:** With many colleges requiring official high school transcripts for admission, many seniors utilizing the after-exit funds have had to decide whether to forego transcribing summer Running Start courses to acquire a final transcript or request and hope that colleges accept an unofficial transcript since their official academic records cannot be shared until the summer Running Start term has concluded.

While some of these issues relate to the opening of summer Running Start, in general, all of these challenges apply to after-exit funding. However, with summer Running Start now broadly available and the FTE limitation raised to 1.40, it's likely the after-exit funding will not be necessary moving forward. Students now have the opportunity to earn 21 college credits per standard academic term (63 credits per year) and, with the option of taking 10 summer credits after their 10<sup>th</sup> grade year, a total of 136 credits in their two years of



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eligibility (summer following 10<sup>th</sup> grade to June of senior year). With these momentous shifts in access, an associate degree should be attainable to any student well before the summer following their graduation.

## **11. Statutory and/or budget language:**

\$3,000,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2023 is provided solely for the office to distribute after-exit running start grants to school districts that identify running start students that have exceeded maximum enrollment under running start formulas and high school graduates who have 15 or fewer college credits to earn before meeting associate degree requirements for instruction not funded under section 504(18) of this act. High school graduates who meet these requirements are eligible to receive funds from these grants for fees to the community and technical college to earn up to 15 college credits during the summer academic term following their high school graduation.

## **12. Other relevant information:**

N/A

## **13. Schools/districts receiving assistance:**

[preliminaryfy23state-fundedprovisograntawardsupdated-42823.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

## **14. Program Contact Information:**

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