



## Sunset review:

# Dual Enrollment Scholarship pilot program

## Legislative Auditor’s conclusion

Over five years, colleges provided scholarships to over 13,000 recipients. Pilot sites awarded 64% of available funds, leaving \$1.3 million unspent. WSAC offers limited guidance and oversight.

### Key points

- The scholarship gives financial aid to low-income students who enroll in a dual enrollment program like Running Start.
- By helping students pay for books, materials, and fees, the scholarship reduced financial barriers as intended. The median award was \$60 (2023-24 school year).
- It is unclear whether the scholarship increased enrollment of low-income Running Start students.
- Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) does not provide sufficient program oversight or guidance for pilot sites. As a result, student eligibility decisions and covered costs vary.

**Scholarship pilot program will end in 2025 unless reauthorized by the Legislature.**

RCWs 43.131.427 and 43.131.040

## Recommendations

1. The Legislature should continue the Dual Enrollment Scholarship.
2. WSAC should provide consistent and documented guidance and technical assistance to pilot sites and improve its oversight.

## Contact

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## The scholarship gives financial aid to low-income students who enroll in a dual enrollment program like Running Start

To qualify for the scholarship, students must:

- Be eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch.
- Have at least a 2.0 GPA.
- Enroll in Running Start at a pilot site.

### Administrator:

Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) operates the scholarship program.

### Pilot sites:

13 community and technical colleges and universities currently offer the scholarship.

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### Scholarship pays for course and lab fees, textbooks, apprenticeship tools, materials, and other costs

It cannot pay for other student costs like transportation, technology, and required pre-college courses.

In the 2023-24 school year, 75% of scholarships were under \$140

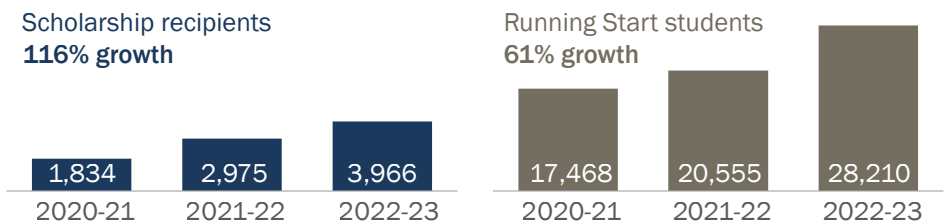


### Pilot sites awarded \$2.4 million (64% of available funds). They left \$1.3 million unspent.



### Scholarship has unclear effect on access and enrollment

Enrollment increased. But students often enroll before they know about the scholarship or their award amount.



## Sunset reviews must answer five questions

- To what extent has the pilot program complied with legislative intent?**
  - Has reduced financial barriers by awarding scholarships to over 13,000 recipients.
  - Pilot sites awarded 64% of available funds, leaving 36% unspent.
  - Scholarship has unclear effect on access and enrollment.
- Has WSAC administered the program in an efficient and economical manner, with adequate cost controls in place?**
  - WSAC spends an average of \$33,000 per year to administer the program.
  - WSAC's oversight is insufficient to ensure consistency and compliance with law. For example, pilot sites interpreted the requirements for GPA, income eligibility, and allowed costs differently.
- To what extent does the program duplicate the activities of other entities or the private sector?**
  - Does not replace or directly duplicate other scholarships. WSAC requires that a college's other scholarship funds be applied before these funds.
- To what extent is WSAC meeting its performance measures for the program?**
  - Scholarship provides financial support to eligible students.
  - Effect on enrollment for low-income Running Start students is unclear.

### 5. What are the possible effects of terminating or changing the program?

Termination: Eligible low-income students would need to pay for expenses now covered by the scholarship.

Change: Spending all available funds by changing eligible expenses, increasing availability, or taking other actions could better meet legislative goals.