



October 28, 2024

Eric Thomas, Legislative Auditor  
 Washington State Legislature  
 106 11<sup>th</sup> Ave SW, Suite 2500  
 PO Box 40910  
 Olympia, WA, 98504-0910

Subject: Agency response to the Sunset Review of the Dual Enrollment Scholarship Recommendations (2024)

Dear Mr. Thomas:

Thank you for the opportunity to officially respond to the recommendations of the Joint Legislative & audit Review Committee report on the sunset review of the dual enrollment scholarship pilot program. We appreciated the opportunity to work with the JLARC team over the course of the sunset review where they were detailed and methodical.

Our response and comments are captured below.

RECOMMENDATION	AGENCY POSITION	COMMENTS
The Legislature should continue the Dual Enrollment Scholarship (DES)	Concur	<p>The DES pilot served College in the High School (CiHS) and Running Start (RS) students in need. Once the legislature funded the CiHS program, this program continued to serve RS students with financial need. However, two suggestions that WSAC would like to provide to move toward the goal of fully supporting low-income students pursuing dual credit opportunities in the state of WA in a systemically aligned manner are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. RS students in WA are provided subsidies/ grants through multiple entities. Colleges have different reporting requirements for each of those grants. WSAC recommends streamlining the various subsidies/grants and either having one state entity as the</li> </ol>

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		<p>administrator or directly providing funds to the colleges with the college being the administrator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. OSPI – administers the Consolidated Equity and Sustainability Grant which has a larger scope of allowable use of funds, one of which is outreach to underrepresented populations with subsidies/ waivers on fees and textbooks. However, starting this year colleges are not allowed to use this fund for textbooks or fee waivers that are considered one-time expenses.</li><li>b. Colleges themselves – Colleges are required to waive mandatory fees for low-income students, some do and others don't due to internal processes established to identify low-income students that is burdensome to students. Streamlining this will help with better utilization of grants for other needs of students. Additionally, some colleges have institutional funding they use to support students' other needs such as textbooks and apprenticeship materials. The need for colleges varies and aligning the language across various grants to the needs of the colleges will lead to better utilization of funds and ultimately better supports for students.</li><li>c. WSAC – administers the DES program which also allows fees and textbook costs to be reimbursed. DES is also a "last dollar" program and so it is really difficult to track the utilization without knowing all the funds being used by the college to support the needs of students. The scope of this pilot is much smaller</li></ul>
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		<p>compared to say OSPI's consolidated equity and sustainability grant.</p> <p>2. Increase flexibility and meet the demands of students in alignment with all other grants/ subsidies - One specific cost this pilot allowed was textbook costs which was restrictive at only \$150 maximum per quarter per student. Allowing greater flexibility for textbook costs and including other basic needs costs such as food, transportation would be highly beneficial to students in need.</p>
<p>WSAC should provide consistent and documented guidance and technical assistance to pilot sites and improve its oversight</p>	<p>Partially Concur</p>	<p>Guided by the statute which established both eligibility requirements of students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FRPL eligible</li> <li>- 2.0 GPA</li> <li>- Enrolled in at least one RS course.</li> </ul> <p>And allowable expenses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Apprenticeship materials</li> <li>- Textbook vouchers at \$10 per credit up to a max of 15 credits per quarter</li> <li>- Mandatory fees prorated based on credit load.</li> <li>- Course or lab fee as determined appropriate by college or university.</li> </ul> <p>WSAC provided a program manual and guidance document with further clarification on the various elements. Additionally, WSAC provided technical assistance on a case-by-case need basis. WSAC would like to note that for specifically the FRPL eligibility, some institutions that had adopted policies for FRPL determination beyond WSAC's guidance chose to adhere to their institutional policies. Overall, the ability to provide technical assistance on a case-by-case basis with a high-level guidance document worked well for this pilot. Oversight here can be improved with better reporting requirements (more disaggregated data) and adding additional program evaluation criteria.</p>

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WSAC would like to express gratitude to the JLARC staff for bringing to light opportunities with this pilot and highlighting some of the successes as well. We are happy to provide more context or information to the legislature if asked.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Meotti". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Michael Meotti  
Executive Director