

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5243

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As of February 6, 2013

**Title:** An act relating to establishing policies to support academic acceleration for high school students.

**Brief Description:** Establishing policies to support academic acceleration for high school students.

**Sponsors:** Senators Litzow, Dammeier, Tom, Harper, Hobbs, Delvin, Hewitt, Padden, Mullet and Shin.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/30/13, 2/01/13.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Staff:** Eric Wolf (786-7405)

**Background:** Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs allow students to take college-level courses while staying on their high school campuses. For both of these programs, students complete courses taught by high school teachers and take standardized examinations at the end of each course. College credit is awarded dependent upon a student's score on the exam. Minimum scores to qualify for college credit vary by college and by subject area. Alternatively, high school students may earn college credit by successfully completing a Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education, by completing a course through the College in the High School program, or through a tech-prep course.

In November 2010, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) released a report regarding student participation in dual credit programs. Dual credit programs allow high school students to begin earning college credits while still in high school. An analysis of students' schedules for the 2009-10 school year, as reported in the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System show that 10.9 percent of all high school courses taken can earn dual credit. Whether or not a student will leave high school with a full year of postsecondary credit will vary depending on the subject matter and program requirements in each apprenticeship program or institution of higher education.

**Summary of Bill:** Academic Acceleration Policy. By September 1, 2013, each school district board must adopt an academic acceleration policy that automatically enrolls any

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student meeting the state standard on the high school statewide student assessment in the next most rigorous level of advanced courses offered by the high school. Upon completion of that course, students must then enroll in the next most rigorous level of advanced course, with the objective that students will eventually automatically enroll in dual credit courses. The district must notify students and their parents or guardians of the academic acceleration policy, and provide the parents or guardians the opportunity to opt out of the program on behalf of the student.

Determination of Advanced Course Track. Students who meet the state standard on assessments related to mathematics may enroll in advanced courses in mathematics. Students who meet the state standard on both the reading and writing assessments may enroll in advanced courses in English, social studies, humanities, and other related subjects.

Academic Acceleration Incentive Program (Program). The Program is established, subject to the appropriation of funding. Awards from the Program may be used to support teacher training, curriculum, technology, examination fees, and other costs associated with offering dual credit courses to high school students. OSPI will direct awards from the Program to school districts for each student who earned dual high school and college credit. The districts in turn award individual schools for their proportional share of students earning dual credit. Students enrolled in the Running Start Program and students taking online courses at no cost to the student do not generate incentive awards.

Collection of Data on Dual Credit Courses. The proposed legislation directs OSPI to post on the Washington State Report Card website the rates at which high school students earn college credit through dual credit courses.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Music students need rigorous mathematics and English training in addition to their music studies. In the 21st century economy and workforce, it is essential that American students get a head start. This bill sets students on a pathway to meet those challenges. In Federal Way, policy was enacted with great success, doubling enrollment in dual credit programs and reflecting the diversity of the district. Of minority students, 76 percent more enroll in dual credit programs and 94 percent receive a C or better in their first semester grades. The effort in Federal Way rises above others and achieves remarkable results. Advanced courses improve students' confidence by exposing them to advanced work thereby better preparing them for college. For a lot of kids whose families aren't engaged with school, this program will help reengage the students. The accelerated program is actually a tremendous parental engagement tool. The program is wildly successful, and enrollment has increased 200 percent from 2009, and 1400 percent among the minority population. We are sending the message that we believe in the students and that we believe they can succeed. We have had institutional sorting, elitism, and racism

in our schools for years, favoring Caucasian and Asian kids for enrollment into advanced classes.

CON: This bill leaves behind kids in nontraditional programs, and limits the other programs for those students because the school day is too short. The school day should be lengthened by a period to accommodate both the alternative programs and dual-credit programs. English language learners, special needs, and challenged kids need options, not to be forced into state-mandated education regimes. Local school boards should retain the ability to determine how to best serve their students. The Legislature should focus instead on fully funding ESHB 2261 and the *McCleary* decision. The challenge is getting teachers prepared to teach the course and realizing higher enrollment numbers. There are significant startup costs on the front end. Automatically enrolling students into Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate will reduce enrollment in electives and technical programs. This forces students into a course track that will not allow them to develop career and technical education expertise. To make this a non-local choice is not a good option. If this bill goes forward, more technical and Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses should be included in the bill.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Dave Powell, Stand for Children; Robert Neu, Tony Moore, Federal Way Public Schools; Rosalund Jenkins, League of Education Voters, Black Education Strategy Roundtable; Frank Ordway, League of Education Voters; Anne Luce, Partnership for Learning, WA Roundtable.

CON: Tim Knue, WA Assn. for CTE; Jerry Bender, Assn. of WA School Principals.