



OREGON STATE SENATE

Accelerated learning
SB 418
Sen. Mark Hass

We have been working on this issue for four years. The dilemma is this: Oregon does a pretty good job with dual credits, but it seems the higher achieving, more motivated kids are the ones who end up with them.

This population is college bound already, and frankly, not the kids I'm worried about.

Research suggests that earning college credits in high school is a critical indicator of helping kids get into and out of college on time.

We tried to put together a comprehensive dual credits bill in 2013. Unfortunately we couldn't get there and ended up with some funding for existing programs and a task force to take a harder look at how to make this work technically and financially.

Fortunately, that task force spent more than a year on this and unanimously came up with a plan that is embodied in SB 418. The task force included legislators, educators and business leaders. Chief Education Officer Nancy Golden chaired it. We heard from other states and went through mountains of research on how to allow high school students to start earning credits early.

Summary:

1. Each school district must provide high school students with the opportunity to earn college credits at no cost to the student.
2. An Accelerated College Credit Program must include:
A minimum of three college courses or nine quarter credit hours
The credits must be transferable to a post-secondary institution
3. If a course is provided exclusively online it must include a student support component to enhance the likelihood of success.

4. School districts may enter into agreements with postsecondary institutions to provide the courses.

5. A student may not be charged tuition, student fees or related books for the first 3 courses/9 credits.

The financing is obviously the key here

These things aren't free. But the world changes when a high school student graduates with ten or twenty credits under his belt. Research clearly shows these students are much more lucky to enter college and finish. Plus, they and their family have saved thousands of dollars in higher education costs.

When I look at ways to get us closer to 40-40-20 ... earning more college credits in high school is the lowest hanging fruit I've seen.