

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE  
BILL ANALYSIS**

**Bill Number:** CS/HB 424

**51st Legislature, 1st Session, 2013**

**Tracking Number:** .193496.1

**Short Title:** Early College High Schools

**Sponsor(s):** Representative Mary Helen Garcia

**Analyst:** Travis Dulany

**Date:** March 2, 2013

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**HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL 424**

**Bill Summary:**

CS/HB 424 enacts a new section of the *Public School Code* to allow for the establishment of early college high schools. The bill requires each early college high school to have:

- a commitment to:
  - provide each student the opportunity to graduate from the early college high school with a New Mexico Diploma of Excellence and an Associate of Arts degree; and
  - prepare students to enter the workforce upon graduation from the early college high school;
- documentation of the areas of employment for which there is a local or state workforce need;
- a proposed curriculum that includes:
  - articulated areas of study and courses aligned with local or state workforce needs;
  - workforce preparation courses; and
  - work-study or workplace mentorship opportunities;
- an agreement with one or more institutions of higher education that offer students of the early college high school:
  - dual credit courses aligned with local or state workforce needs; or
  - an Associate of Arts degree upon completion of required coursework;
- documentation from one or more for-profit or nonprofit entities agreeing to:
  - provide work-study or workplace mentoring opportunities to students;
  - donate materials or provide classroom instruction;
  - donate money or property;
  - enter into financing or other agreements with the school district; or
  - provide other financial support;

- an identified, existing facility or funding source for constructing or acquiring a proposed facility for the school; and
- a plan for:
  - receiving donated support; and
  - taking any additional measures to operate and sustain the early college high school for three or more years.

Finally, CS/HB 424 states that early college high schools established under the provisions of the bill, including state-chartered and locally chartered charter schools, will not be eligible for size adjustment program units under certain provisions of the *Public School Finance Act* or public school capital outlay grant assistance under certain sections of the *Public School Capital Outlay Act*.

**Fiscal Impact:**

CS/HB 424 makes no appropriation.

**Fiscal Issues:**

In the Public School Facilities Authority (PSFA) analysis of the original bill, the PSFA reported:

- school districts may lease facility spaces and may apply to the Public School Capital Outlay Council for lease assistance under certain other provisions of the *Public School Capital Outlay Act*; and
- early college high schools may have a positive impact on the Legislative Lottery Scholarship by awarding an associate degree upon the successful completion of a high school curriculum.

**Substantive Issues:**

At least three early college high schools similar to those provided for in CS/HB 424 are currently operating in New Mexico:

1. opened in 2010 by the Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS) district, the Arrowhead Park Early College High School (APECHS) graduates students with a New Mexico High School Diploma of Excellence and an associate degree simultaneously (see “Background,” below);
2. the Middle College High School in Gallup, a charter school with an enrollment of approximately 60 students, is located on the UNM-Gallup campus and allows students to earn a number of college credits in addition to their high school diploma, which provides them a head start when attending college; and
3. the Albuquerque Public Schools district operates the Early College Academy, which provides students with morning high school classes so that students may take college-level courses during the afternoon.

In its analysis of CS/HB 424, the Public Education Department cites nationwide data from the Early College High School Initiative ([www.earlycolleges.org](http://www.earlycolleges.org)) stating that:

- 5,414 students graduated from early college high schools in 2010;

- more than 250 early college high school graduates earned merit-based college scholarships, four of whom were Gates Millennium Scholarship recipients;
- 23.3 percent of graduates earned an associate degree or technical certificate;
- 77 percent of graduates went on to some form of postsecondary institution;
- 80 percent of early college high schools had a graduation rate equal to or higher than their school district; and
- the average graduation rate for early college high schools was 84 percent.

### **Background:**

During the 2012 interim, the Legislative Education Study Committee heard testimony from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of The Bridge of Southern New Mexico (Bridge). The Bridge CEO testified about the APECHS in Las Cruces, noting that the high school:

- was created by a collective group of community stakeholders;
- provides the opportunity for students to graduate with a New Mexico High School Diploma of Excellence and an associate degree simultaneously;
- addresses “at-risk” students;
- maximizes education assets through collaborations with:
  - LCPS (owns and operates the school);
  - Doña Ana Community College (provides the dual credit courses); and
  - New Mexico State University (donated the land for the school);
- has 342 students, with demographics of:
  - 78 percent Hispanic;
  - 63 percent first generation college attendees;
  - 43 percent eligible for free or reduced-price meals;
  - 11 percent identified as gifted and talented; and
  - 4.0 percent English language learners; and
- had a zero percent dropout rate and a 100 percent promotion rate, as of July 2012.

In addition to currently operating early college high schools, dual credit provisions in higher education law allow junior and senior<sup>1</sup> high school students to enroll in higher education classes and earn both secondary and postsecondary credit simultaneously. According to the *Dual Credit Annual Report for School Year 2010-2011*:

- dual credit enrollment for school year 2010-2011 was 12,263 unique students,<sup>2</sup> an increase of 1,278 students over the previous school year;
- a majority of dual credit students are female, at approximately 57 percent of enrollment;
- the subject areas that experienced the highest enrollment of dual credit students were:
  - English Language and Literature/Letters; and

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<sup>1</sup> Freshman and sophomore high school students are allowed to take dual credit courses; however, formula funding to cover their tuition is not provided by the Higher Education Department. At most institutions, this fact requires the freshman or sophomore student to pay the tuition and fees at the postsecondary institution.

<sup>2</sup> The report defines unique students as “distinct students that were taking dual credit courses in any semester.”

➤ Health Profession and Related Clinical Services;

- the majority of dual credit students (60 percent) limit themselves to a single course during the school year, while 25 percent of students enroll in two dual credit courses;
- the most popular dual credit programs at postsecondary institutions were at Central New Mexico Community College, Doña Ana Community College, and New Mexico Junior College;
- online delivery of dual credit courses has grown in popularity since the inception of dual credit, with the spring semester of 2011 experiencing the highest percentage of online course delivery (17 percent) in recent years; and
- an increasing percentage of dual credit courses are being taught on college campuses, rather than on high school campuses.

**Committee Referrals:**

HEC/SEC/SFC

**Related Bills:**

HB 283 *Tribal College Dual Credit Program Fund* (Identical to SB 303)

SB 303 *Tribal College Dual Credit Program Fund* (Identical to HB 283)

SB 363 *Early College High Schools* (Identical)