

New Running Start Financial Charges

As of May 2009, Washington State's legislature has passed a law (attached) that mandates that every RS student must pay all college and course fees required of other students at the same institution. This could include, but is not limited to fees for application, lab, technology, graduation, recreation, etc. Each of our area colleges (EWU, SFCC & SCC) has been directed to begin collecting these fees as soon as the 2009 Fall Quarter. All three area colleges have posted information on their web sites, explaining their specific institution's costs.

For some of you, this may make RS financially challenging. However, all three colleges have created a 'loop-hole' for eligible families. Any student who has applied for and been approved for the free and reduced lunch program (a federal program administered by Spokane Public Schools) WILL HAVE ALL OF THE NEW CHARGES AND FEES TOTALLY WAIVED. As Home Schoolers, I am aware that many of you would never utilize a lunch program in a school building. By applying and being approved for the Federal Lunch program, you will still never need to eat a school lunch. However, taking the approval/acceptance letter into your college of choice may save your family several hundreds of dollars per year of RS fees. Additionally, I know that many of you object to the Federal Lunch program as a 'public assistance' handout; please put this philosophy into perspective. All of Running Start is attending college and having the tuition paid by taxpayer funds. This would only add fees and charges to the total RS bill paid by the tax paying public. For the majority of TEC's home schooling RS population (who would be eligible for free or reduced lunch) this option is the difference between being able to participate in RS and not having the opportunity. Below, I have included a link to the online application for Spokane Public School's Free & Reduced Lunch Form. By 'clicking' on this link, you are able to fill out the form on line and submit it directly. This application will be applicable until October 2009; when a new form will need to be completed. By completing the form now, it will waive all of the initial fees and charges that will be applied for the fall quarter. Please consider using this money-saving option.

With the shortfall in the state's budget, it is highly unlikely that the legislature will reverse this decision. Each student, who participates in Running Start, is still receiving all of their tuition paid for each of the quarters they attend RS. For those attending six quarters of RS at a community college (taking a full load each quarter) that is \$8640.00 in tuition saved; at EWU it is a savings of \$24,750.00. This is unquestionably a fantastic bargain. It is just the unanticipated changes that are causing this new financial burden.