In our view

Efficient Education

Running Start program deserves support, even in tough economic times.

When public education is streamlined in Washington state, it helps everyone residually benefit. Teachers love it when high school students take college courses. They know it means fewer public dollars spent on teachers, classes and classrooms in high schools as well as colleges. Every product moves swiftly through the pipeline.

Parents of students love efficiency in public education because they too, save money. For example, about $50 million in college tuition savings was realized last year as a result of the Running Start program, which allows high school students to take college courses.

Teachers love streamlined education because it allows advantage students to proceed rapidly in the system, rather than the students being held back, taking college classes for a long time. They no longer need being taught lessons they already know. Finally, students love fast-paced learning because they more quickly reach their goals and realize their dreams.

Tri-county has defined about the “12 in K-12” in education. For some children, 12 is not enough; for others, it's too long to prepare for college. That’s why the Running Start program has been so successful. Unfortunately, the program is being threatened by its own success. Howard Hokkaido reported in Wednesday's Columbian, more than 1,900 students enrolled in Running Start courses at Clark College. Even before graduating from high school, these students are already completing classes, economics, history and math classes at the college level.

Clark has added more than 100 class sections for Running Star. Those students compose about 10 percent of total school enrollment. This is one of the many great services that Clark College provides to its region. It's the good news. But because of inadequate attention from the Legislature, a funding gap has developed. The State pays each college 93 percent of the K-12 full time equivalent rate for each Running Star student. Clark receives about $4,579 per Running Start student, but when all costs are included, the college is losing about $3,300 per student, in all about $3 million each year. Reducing Running Start opportunities, even in tough economic times, would be unwise. Clark and other community colleges are expected to take a 6 percent hit in the overall budget because of the state's projected deficit, but because Running Start benefits so many stakeholders, it deserves to continue and grow.

State Rep. Deb Wallace, D-Vancouver, is among legislators who are pursuing solutions to the problem. One solution would be to allow "clinch credits" to students to take college classes at their high school, rather than at the college sites. That would reduce transportation for students.

Another solution could be allowing students as college full-time equivalents. That would not only increase revenue for colleges, but also allow students to obtain funding for construction and expansion. "To the extent that Running Start fills unused capacity, it is an advantage," to Clark College President John Sullivan said. Sullivan said that the state's "failing" schools have had a "negative effect" on the state's ability to attract students.

It is too late to come up against it.

Those solutions, though, cost money — untold millions of dollars — and one perspective tells us "if you're not standing tallest, you are not standing tall." But just because we're in economic slump doesn't mean we should abandon any state funding. But just because we're in an economic slump doesn't mean we should abandon any state funding. But just because we're in an economic slump doesn't mean we should abandon any state funding. But just because we're in an economic slump doesn't mean we should abandon any state funding. But just because we're in an economic slump doesn't mean we should abandon any state funding. But just because we're in an economic slump doesn't mean we should abandon any state funding.

Karmic justice abounds at inaugual

Bad vibes

Despite his cheerful attitude, it can not be easy for President Bush to run the White House, people who had come to celebrate not only a new president but Bush's departure. Or to hear some in the crowd chant "Au-revoir, au-revoir, au-revoir." The new president of the United States, Barack Hussein Obama, mentioned his middle name only because Chief Justice John Roberts did this during his week's swearing-in ceremony, a proper time for it. It was a nice touch, which was widely karmic that those who have been analyzing "Bushism" as though it were a profound indictment of Obama's patriotism should have to hear it pronounced with dignity and respect in the presence of a largely approving world.

It has never been clear to less-levied minds why the name's association with Iran's Saddam was more compelling than with Jordan's royal family. King Hussein, now deceased, and his son, King Abdullah II, have been among our most valuable allies in the Middle East. But never mind. The name now belongs to the president of the United States, biracial leader of the free world. Kerry is back.

Another karmic image, both tragic and jarring,ingers from the inauguration ceremony. Vice President Joe Biden's son, Hunter, was being transported from the halls of power in a wheelchair. The Star was at the scene where his life has not been characterized by erect certainty.

Letters to the Editor

We encourage readers to express their views about public issues. Letters to the Editor are limited to 150 words and must include a name, address and daytime phone number for verification only.

Letters should be submitted by 4 p.m. on the day of publication.

E-mail: editor@coxnews.com

Mail: Letters to the Editor, The Columbian, P.O. Box 100, Vancouver, WA 98666

How administration stand is weak

World War II, which forced him to pave as crenuous and unpopular battles tried to salvage the banking industry and the automobile manufacturing. As for me, instead of saying "Thanks," I'll say "Goodluck!"

John S. Stimson

Replace only damaged license plates

If the state of Washington is truly interested in conserving material, have a suggestion: Years ago, the Leavenworth license plates was pressured to pass a law requiring into license plates to be replaced at intervals on the theory that plates become defaced by weather. This has cost

Jerry J. Lind

Bullies wound the people

People with personal

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"Why did you deprive your future children from being conceived and born?" the same answer would ring loud and clear is in Roe v. Wade, "We do not want to help them," Conception is a personal choice, either beginning it or ending it.

If free choice is-ended, criminalization all forms of interfering in the life process — abortion, asxenstics, Rafael logica and contraceptives. As Jesus said, "There is more than one bad thing that is worse than no bad thing."

The Columbian