

Running Start Program 2025-26

Get on the fast track to a college education!

Running Start allows highly-qualified high school juniors to earn a high school diploma from their local high school while simultaneously earning a transfer degree from Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC). While courses are offered at all SWIC campuses (Belleville, Sam Wolf Granite City, and Red Bud), specific programs and courses may be available only at the Belleville Campus. This is a two-year program and may not be completed early.

Running Start 1.0 allows highly qualified high school seniors to earn one year of college credit while simultaneously earning credit to earn their high school diploma from their local high school. At the end of the year, high school graduates may choose to return to SWIC to complete an associate degree or they may transfer to another college or university. This is a one-year program and may not be completed early.

Running Start students will be integrated into existing college classes with advanced rigor and subject matter. Students will have the opportunity to work in a challenging educational environment and to excel academically while completing high school and college requirements.

Get a running start on college!

As SWIC students, Running Start participants can transfer to a four-year institution in the same manner as other community college students. Always check with four-year colleges you are interested in to verify transferability of SWIC courses. Students may choose to participate in high school athletics and other after-school programs. Running Start students may participate in SWIC student clubs, organizations, and activities, but may not compete in intercollegiate athletics.

Program Requirements

To be eligible for the traditional Running Start program, students must meet the following criteria:

- Be currently enrolled as a high school sophomore, preparing to enter junior year
- Possess and maintain a 3.20/4.00 GPA
- Be in good standing with their high school institution
- Be on track to graduate on time
- Be recommended by their high school principal or counselor
- Have completed one year of high school algebra *and* geometry
- Take the SWIC placement assessment and test into college-level English and math courses
- Have completed all documents necessary for participation

To be eligible for Running Start 1.0, students must meet the following criteria:

- Be currently enrolled as a high school junior, preparing to enter senior year
- Possess and maintain a 3.20/4.00 GPA
- Be in good standing with their high school institution
- Be on track to graduate on time
- Be recommended by their high school principal or counselor

- Have completed two years of high school algebra and geometry
- Take the SWIC placement assessment and test into college-level English and math courses
- Have completed all documents necessary for participation

Students who qualify for the program by meeting all standards and criteria are identified by the high school and are subsequently invited to an informational meeting for parents and students during the spring of their sophomore/junior year(s). Southwestern Illinois College has established the minimum program requirements listed above (subject to change). Participation is limited to 29 students each year with preference given to sophomores whose Accuplacer results show they place into college level courses.

You Should Know

Through Running Start, students will have the following responsibilities and opportunities:

- Be subject to all college rules and regulations
- Student must complete ED 101, College Success Strategies, with a grade of an A
- Begin creating their college transcripts and records (students take 16 hours of college classes each semester/ 5 college classes minimum)
- Be considered as both a high school and college student
- Attend school according to the college calendar
- Maintain a minimum SWIC cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher to remain in Running Start
- Students must meet at least once per semester with a Collinsville High School Counselor and two times per semester with a SWIC staff member.

Tuition and Fees

The cost of the program will be the responsibility of the parents/guardians. Students will *not* be eligible for federal financial aid or scholarships. Tuition will be \$4318 for the 2023-2024 school year (subject to change each year), which includes up to 10 hours in the summer (between junior and senior year). Payments may be made within SWIC payment plan guidelines. Students are responsible for purchasing or renting their own textbooks. Students are expected to provide their own transportation to the college campus. They may drive to any SWIC campus with no charge for parking.

Need more information?

Contact CHS Counselors at 618-346-6320. Their emails are: Melissa Biebel at mbiebel@cusd.kahoks.org, Renee Kurtz at rkurtz@cusd.kahoks.org or Karen Olsen at kolsen@cusd.kahoks.org. CHS Assistant Principal, Mr. Dunn, at 618-346-6320 ext. 1135, bdunn@cusd.kahoks.org. The SWIC Running Start office at 618-235-2700 ext. 5064 or RunningStart@swic.edu. Or Visit: <https://www.swic.edu/students/high-school-students/running-start/>