



## THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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*An education system where students are engaged in personalized education pathways that prepare them for civic engagement, careers, postsecondary education, and lifelong learning*

### HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION AND OPEN DOORS UPDATE

Prepared for the March 2019 Board Meeting

Information item.

As related to:

- Goal One:** All students feel safe at school, and have the supports necessary to thrive.
- Goal Two:** All students are able to engage in their schools and their broader communities, and feel invested in their learning pathways, which lead to their post-secondary aspirations.
- Goal Three:** School and district structures and systems adapt to meet the evolving needs of the student population and community, as a whole. Students are prepared to adapt as needed and fully participate in the world beyond the classroom.

- Goal Four:** Students successfully transition into, through, and out of the P-12 system.
- Goal Five:** Students graduate from Washington State high schools ready for civic engagement, careers, postsecondary education, and lifelong learning.
- Goal Six:** Equitable funding across the state to ensure that all students have the funding and opportunities they need, regardless of their geographical location or other needs.
- Other**

Materials included in packet:

- Memo summarizing high school credentials

Synopsis and Policy Considerations:

A panel of educators will update the Board on different ways for students and adults in Washington to earn a high school credential. The panel will consist of OSPI staff from the Office of System and School Improvement, a representative of the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, and a representative of a high school partnership program of South Puget Sound Community College. The purpose of this agenda item is to inform the Board about the state's system of high school credentials, as well as state dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement programs. No SBE action is planned on this topic at the meeting.



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*An education system where students are engaged in personalized education pathways that prepare them for civic engagement, careers, postsecondary education, and lifelong learning*

## EARNING A HIGH SCHOOL CREDENTIAL IN WASHINGTON

Prepared for the March 2019 Board meeting

### Introduction

At the March 2019 State Board of Education (SBE) meeting, the Board will be updated on different ways for students and adults in Washington to earn a high school credential. The Board will hear from a panel of OSPI staff, a representative of the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, and a representative of a high school partnership program of South Puget Sound Community College. The purpose of this agenda item is to inform the Board about the state's system of high school credentials, as well as state dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement programs.

### Ways to Earn a High School Credential

In Washington, school districts and approved private schools may issue high school diplomas, as well as public community and technical colleges. Table 1 shows different pathways people may take to earn a high school credential.

Students may attend either public or private high school, meet the graduation requirements set by the SBE and local requirements established by the district or private school, and earn their high school diploma. In addition, under rules adopted by the SBE ([WAC 180-51-053](#)), community and technical colleges may also award high school diplomas to students who meet state graduation requirement set by the SBE. An alternative option to a high school credential is the high school equivalency certificate, by which students demonstrate their knowledge and skills through a series of tests. The State Board of Community and Technical Colleges has approved GED® tests as the high school equivalency test. The SBE has authority over the eligibility of students aged 16 to 19 to earn a high school equivalency certificate and has written rules regulating this ([WAC Chapter 180-96](#)).

SBE rule ([WAC 180-51-015](#)) states that the high school diploma awarded by private schools and by community and technical colleges must meet the requirements of the graduation requirements chapter. Community and technical college high school completion programs that wish to align graduation requirements with feeder school districts that have a waiver to delay the 24-credit graduation requirements ([WAC 180-51-068](#)) may apply for a waiver to delay as well. Such waivers may be business items at future SBE meetings.

**Table 1:** Pathways to a high school credential

Credential	How Students Earn the Credential	SBE Role
Diploma issued by a school district or private school	Students meet state and local high school graduation requirements through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High school courses.</li> <li>• Dual credit courses and programs.</li> <li>• Skills Centers.</li> <li>• Work-based learning.</li> <li>• Other high school credit opportunities recognized by the school or district.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish state credit graduation requirements (<a href="#">WAC 180-51-068</a>)</li> <li>• Identify scores for meeting standard on assessments required for graduation (<a href="#">RCW 28A.305.130</a>)</li> </ul>
Diploma issued by a community or technical college	Students may earn a high school diploma at a state community or technical college through a variety of ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Running Start students may earn a high school diploma when they complete an associate degree.</li> <li>• College students may earn a high school diploma when they complete an associate degree.</li> <li>• Students age 16 and older may meet state graduation requirements through a high school completion program (which may be part of an Open Doors program).</li> <li>• Adults who are at least 21 years of age may earn a diploma through a High School 21+ program that recognizes credit toward a diploma for work, life, and military experience.</li> </ul>	State credit graduation requirements established by the SBE apply to high school completion and High School 21+ programs. ( <a href="#">WAC 180-51-053</a> , and <a href="#">WAC 180-72</a> )
High School Equivalency	Students pass a high school equivalency test or series of tests (GED® has been approved at the high school equivalency test). Students prepare for the tests: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individually or through home-based instruction.</li> <li>• Through a program at a community or technical college (which may be part of an Open Doors program).</li> </ul>	SBE adopted rules for high school equivalency for students age 16 to 19 ( <a href="#">WAC 180-96</a> )

### Options Available to Students of Different Ages

Until a student is 21, they are entitled to earn a high school diploma through a public school district. Young people who are 16 or 17 years old may attend a community or technical college high school completion program, but the principal of a student’s home high school, in cooperation with an appropriate official at the college, must approve the student’s program. Adults over 21 may earn a high school diploma only through a public community or technical college, or they may earn a high school equivalency credential. Students who are 21 or older who earn their diploma through a community or technical college program must meet the credit graduation requirements set by the State Board of Education, but are not required to meet the assessment requirement that high school students must meet ([WAC 180-51-035](#)).

The graduation requirements that students must meet are assigned to students the year they start 9<sup>th</sup> grade, based on a projected 4-year graduation. The graduation requirements assigned to the student

generally remains the same regardless of the year the student actually graduates. The legislature occasionally removes a requirement, such as the culminating project (removed as a requirement for the Class of 2015 and beyond) or an assessment required for graduation, but avoids adding requirements to students who are already in high school. When a requirement is removed, students who earn a diploma subsequent to the removal are not responsible for meeting the requirement.

## Background on Dropout Prevention, Intervention, and Reengagement Legislation

OSPI's 2017-2018 dropout and graduation data indicated that of students who entered 9<sup>th</sup> grade in the 2013-2014 school year, 11,582 dropped out within five years (the five-year adjusted cohort dropouts). What happened to these young people? What options do they have to reengage in education?

In 2007 the Legislature created the Building Bridges grant program to begin a phase-in of a statewide comprehensive dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement system. Legislation passed in 2009 (SHB 1758) expanded the options of community and technical colleges to award high school diplomas under the conditions described in Figure 1. In 2010, ESSB 6403 directed OSPI to create a collaborative workgroup to advise and coordinate a comprehensive, integrated, multi-layered system of dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement. This led to the creation of the GATE advisory group (Graduation A Team Effort). (The [GATE Partnership Advisory Committee meetings](#) meet quarterly and provide information and an opportunity for discussion on a range of topics related to high quality implementation of dropout prevention, intervention and reengagement strategies; Board members may be interested in attending.)

Also in 2010, E2SHB 1418 created a statutory framework for a statewide dropout reengagement system focused on youth aged 16 to 21. The legislation directed OSPI to develop model inter-local agreements between Educational Service Districts, school districts, community or technical colleges, or community-based organization. Programs built around such partnerships or agreements are called Open Doors Youth Reengagement programs or 1418 reengagement programs (there may be unique names for local 1418 programs as well). HB 1541 tasked the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning with creating the Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol (WISSP). WISSP is an interdependent system of strategies for closing educational opportunity gaps and promoting the success of all students.

These bills have created a framework for addressing dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement in the state.

## Action

This agenda item is intended to update and inform the Board. No SBE action is planned on this topic at the March 2019 meeting.

If you have questions about this memo, please contact Linda Drake at [linda.drake@k12.wa.us](mailto:linda.drake@k12.wa.us), 360-725-6028.