AN ACT Relating to expanding options for students to earn high
school diplomas; amending RCW 28B.50.535, 28A.225.290, 28A.600.320, and
28A.655.061; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. The legislature has previously affirmed the
value of career and technical education, particularly in programs that
lead to nationally recognized certification. These programs provide
students with the knowledge and skills to become responsible citizens
and contribute to their own economic well-being and that of their
families and communities, which is the goal of education in the public
schools. The legislature has also previously affirmed the value of
dual enrollment in college and high school programs that can lead to
both an associate degree and a high school diploma. Therefore, the
legislature intends to maximize students' options and choices for
completing high school by awarding diplomas to students who complete
these valuable postsecondary programs.

Sec. 2. RCW 28B.50.535 and 2007 c 355 s 2 are each amended to read
as follows:
A community or technical college may issue a high school diploma or certificate as provided under this section.

(1) An individual who satisfactorily meets the requirements for high school completion shall be awarded a diploma from the college, subject to rules adopted by the superintendent of public instruction and the state board of education.

(2) An individual who enrolls in a college and satisfactorily completes an associate degree, including an associate of arts degree, associate of science degree, associate of technology degree, or associate in applied science degree, shall be awarded a diploma from the college, including students enrolled through the option established under RCW 28A.600.310 through 28A.600.400.

(3) An individual who has achieved at least the equivalent of eleventh grade who enrolls in a college and satisfactorily completes a professional-technical certificate program approved by the college board that requires forty-five or more credit hours or the clock hour equivalent shall be awarded a diploma from the college, including students enrolled through the option established under RCW 28A.600.310 through 28A.600.400.

Sec. 3. RCW 28A.225.290 and 1990 1st ex.s. c 9 s 207 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The superintendent of public instruction shall prepare and annually distribute an information booklet outlining parents' and guardians' enrollment options for their children.

(2) (Before the 1991-92 school year,) The booklet shall be distributed to all school districts by the office of the superintendent of public instruction and shall be posted on the web site of the office of the superintendent of public instruction. School districts shall have a copy of the information booklet available for public inspection at each school in the district, at the district office, and in public libraries.

(3) The booklet shall include:

(b) Information about the running start((community college or vocational-technical institute)) choice program under RCW 28A.600.300 through ((28A.600.395)) 28A.600.400; ((and))

(c) Information about the seventh and eighth grade choice program under RCW 28A.230.090; and

(d) Information about the college high school diploma options under RCW 28B.50.535.

Sec. 4. RCW 28A.600.320 and 2008 c 95 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

A school district shall provide general information about the program to all pupils in grades ten, eleven, and twelve and the parents and guardians of those pupils, including information about the opportunity to enroll in the program through online courses available at community and technical colleges and other state institutions of higher education and including the college high school diploma options under RCW 28B.50.535. To assist the district in planning, a pupil shall inform the district of the pupil's intent to enroll in courses at an institution of higher education for credit. Students are responsible for applying for admission to the institution of higher education.

Sec. 5. RCW 28A.655.061 and 2008 c 321 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The high school assessment system shall include but need not be limited to the Washington assessment of student learning, opportunities for a student to retake the content areas of the assessment in which the student was not successful, and if approved by the legislature pursuant to subsection (10) of this section, one or more objective alternative assessments for a student to demonstrate achievement of state academic standards. The objective alternative assessments for each content area shall be comparable in rigor to the skills and knowledge that the student must demonstrate on the Washington assessment of student learning for each content area.

(2) Subject to the conditions in this section, a certificate of academic achievement shall be obtained by most students at about the age of sixteen, and is evidence that the students have successfully met the state standard in the content areas included in the certificate.
With the exception of students satisfying the provisions of RCW 28A.155.045 or 28A.655.0611, acquisition of the certificate is required for graduation from a public high school but is not the only requirement for graduation.

(3) Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, with the exception of students satisfying the provisions of RCW 28A.155.045, a student who meets the state standards on the reading, writing, and mathematics content areas of the high school Washington assessment of student learning shall earn a certificate of academic achievement. If a student does not successfully meet the state standards in one or more content areas required for the certificate of academic achievement, then the student may retake the assessment in the content area up to four times at no cost to the student. If the student successfully meets the state standards on a retake of the assessment then the student shall earn a certificate of academic achievement. Once objective alternative assessments are authorized pursuant to subsection (10) of this section, a student may use the objective alternative assessments to demonstrate that the student successfully meets the state standards for that content area if the student has taken the Washington assessment of student learning at least once. If the student successfully meets the state standards on the objective alternative assessments then the student shall earn a certificate of academic achievement.

(4) Beginning no later than with the graduating class of 2013, a student must meet the state standards in science in addition to the other content areas required under subsection (3) of this section on the Washington assessment of student learning or the objective alternative assessments in order to earn a certificate of academic achievement. The state board of education may adopt a rule that implements the requirements of this subsection (4) beginning with a graduating class before the graduating class of 2013, if the state board of education adopts the rule by September 1st of the freshman school year of the graduating class to which the requirements of this subsection (4) apply. The state board of education's authority under this subsection (4) does not alter the requirement that any change in performance standards for the tenth grade assessment must comply with RCW 28A.305.130.
The state board of education may not require the acquisition of the certificate of academic achievement for students in home-based instruction under chapter 28A.200 RCW, for students enrolled in private schools under chapter 28A.195 RCW, or for students satisfying the provisions of RCW 28A.155.045.

A student may retain and use the highest result from each successfully completed content area of the high school assessment.

School districts must make available to students the following options:

(a) To retake the Washington assessment of student learning up to four times in the content areas in which the student did not meet the state standards if the student is enrolled in a public school; or

(b) To retake the Washington assessment of student learning up to four times in the content areas in which the student did not meet the state standards if the student is enrolled in a high school completion program at a community or technical college. The superintendent of public instruction and the state board for community and technical colleges shall jointly identify means by which students in these programs can be assessed.

Students who achieve the standard in a content area of the high school assessment but who wish to improve their results shall pay for retaking the assessment, using a uniform cost determined by the superintendent of public instruction.

Opportunities to retake the assessment at least twice a year shall be available to each school district.

(a) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall develop options for implementing objective alternative assessments, which may include an appeals process for students' scores, for students to demonstrate achievement of the state academic standards. The objective alternative assessments shall be comparable in rigor to the skills and knowledge that the student must demonstrate on the Washington assessment of student learning and be objective in its determination of student achievement of the state standards. Before any objective alternative assessments in addition to those authorized in RCW 28A.655.065 or (b) of this subsection are used by a student to demonstrate that the student has met the state standards in a content area required to obtain a certificate, the legislature shall
formally approve the use of any objective alternative assessments through the omnibus appropriations act or by statute or concurrent resolution.

(b)(i) A student's score on the mathematics, reading or English, or writing portion of the (Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT)) or the (American College Test (ACT)) may be used as an objective alternative assessment under this section for demonstrating that a student has met or exceeded the state standards for the certificate of academic achievement. The state board of education shall identify the scores students must achieve on the relevant portion of the SAT or ACT to meet or exceed the state standard in the relevant content area on the Washington assessment of student learning. The state board of education shall identify the first scores by December 1, 2007. After the first scores are established, the state board may increase but not decrease the scores required for students to meet or exceed the state standards.

(ii) Until August 31, 2008, a student's score on the mathematics portion of the (Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT)) may be used as an objective alternative assessment under this section for demonstrating that a student has met or exceeded the state standard for the certificate of academic achievement. The state board of education shall identify the score students must achieve on the mathematics portion of the PSAT to meet or exceed the state standard in that content area on the Washington assessment of student learning.

(iii) A student who scores at least a three on the grading scale of one to five for selected AP examinations may use the score as an objective alternative assessment under this section for demonstrating that a student has met or exceeded state standards for the certificate of academic achievement. A score of three on the AP examinations in calculus or statistics may be used as an alternative assessment for the mathematics portion of the Washington assessment of student learning. A score of three on the AP examinations in English language and composition may be used as an alternative assessment for the writing portion of the Washington assessment of student learning. A score of three on the AP examinations in English literature and composition, macroeconomics, microeconomics, psychology, United States history, world history, United States government and politics, or comparative
government and politics may be used as an alternative assessment for the reading portion of the Washington assessment of student learning.

(11) By December 15, 2004, the house of representatives and senate education committees shall obtain information and conclusions from recognized, independent, national assessment experts regarding the validity and reliability of the high school Washington assessment of student learning for making individual student high school graduation determinations.

(12) To help assure continued progress in academic achievement as a foundation for high school graduation and to assure that students are on track for high school graduation, each school district shall prepare plans for and notify students and their parents or legal guardians as provided in this subsection (12).

(a) Student learning plans are required for eighth through twelfth grade students who were not successful on any or all of the content areas of the Washington assessment for student learning during the previous school year or who may not be on track to graduate due to credit deficiencies or absences. The parent or legal guardian shall be notified about the information in the student learning plan, preferably through a parent conference and at least annually. To the extent feasible, schools serving English language learner students and their parents shall translate the plan into the primary language of the family. The plan shall include the following information as applicable:

(i) The student's results on the Washington assessment of student learning;

(ii) If the student is in the transitional bilingual program, the score on his or her Washington language proficiency test II;

(iii) Any credit deficiencies;

(iv) The student's attendance rates over the previous two years;

(v) The student's progress toward meeting state and local graduation requirements;

(vi) The courses, competencies, and other steps needed to be taken by the student to meet state academic standards and stay on track for graduation;

(vii) Remediation strategies and alternative education options available to students, including informing students of the option to
continue to receive instructional services after grade twelve or until the age of twenty-one;

(viii) The alternative assessment options available to students under this section and RCW 28A.655.065;

(ix) School district programs, high school courses, and career and technical education options available for students to meet graduation requirements; and

(x) Available programs offered through skill centers or community and technical colleges, including the college high school diploma options under RCW 28B.50.535.

(b) All fifth grade students who were not successful in one or more of the content areas of the fourth grade Washington assessment of student learning shall have a student learning plan.

(i) The parent or guardian of the student shall be notified, preferably through a parent conference, of the student's results on the Washington assessment of student learning, actions the school intends to take to improve the student's skills in any content area in which the student was unsuccessful, and provide strategies to help them improve their student's skills.

(ii) Progress made on the student plan shall be reported to the student's parents or guardian at least annually and adjustments to the plan made as necessary.