
SENATE BILL 5676

State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session

By Senators Roach, Rolfes, Jayapal, Hargrove, and Hasegawa

Read first time 01/28/15. Referred to Committee on Higher Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to the acceptance of additional high school
2 equivalency tests; amending RCW 28B.50.536; and creating a new
3 section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that:

6 (a) There are many reasons that adults who did not receive a
7 high school diploma on the traditional timeline want to earn a high
8 school diploma many years later, including to gain better employment
9 and to continue their education. These adults dropped out of high
10 school for many reasons, such as becoming incarcerated and joining
11 the military. These adults are looking for a second chance at a high
12 school diploma;

13 (b) Before 2014, the high school proficiency test, called the
14 general educational development test or GED test, was geared both
15 toward those who might want to transfer to college and those who
16 might want to improve their employment situation. The balance between
17 those two goals was part of the GED test philosophy; and

18 (c) As of 2014, a newly designed test, called the high school
19 equivalency test, replaced the GED test. Parts of the test were
20 designed to align with the rigorous common core state standards,
21 which contain college and career ready expectations. Many people

1 believe that the high school equivalency test has tipped too far in
2 the direction of college readiness, so is inappropriate for returning
3 adults who are not planning to go to college and who do not need
4 highly rigorous academic training to achieve their employment goals.
5 In addition, the test is more expensive, requires an internet-
6 connected computer, and has fewer retest options.

7 (2) The intent of the legislature is to assure that adults who
8 want to earn a high school equivalency certificate have access to a
9 variety of test options that are appropriate, low cost, and flexible.
10 These efforts will help the state move with fidelity toward the goal,
11 proposed by the student achievement council and adopted by the
12 legislature in 2014, that all adults in Washington ages twenty-five
13 through forty-four have a high school diploma or equivalent by 2023.

14 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28B.50.536 and 2013 c 39 s 9 are each amended to
15 read as follows:

16 (1) Subject to rules adopted by the state board of education
17 under RCW 28A.305.190, the state board for community and technical
18 colleges shall adopt rules governing the eligibility of persons
19 sixteen years of age and older to take a test to earn a high school
20 equivalency certificate, rules governing the administration of the
21 test, and rules governing the issuance of a high school equivalency
22 certificate to persons who successfully complete the test.

23 (2)(a) A high school equivalency certificate is a certificate
24 issued jointly by the college board and the office of the
25 superintendent of public instruction that indicates that the holder
26 has attained standard scores at or above the minimum proficiency
27 level prescribed by the college board on a high school equivalency
28 test.

29 (b) The college board must identify and accept ((a)) high school
30 equivalency tests that ((is)) are at least as rigorous as the general
31 educational development test. The high school equivalency tests
32 identified by the college board must cover reading, writing,
33 mathematics, science, and social studies subject areas.

34 (c) The college board must identify at least one test option that
35 is low cost to the student and at least one test option that does not
36 require computer proficiency. The college board must identify at
37 least one test option that is appropriate for students who have been
38 in the workforce, need a high school diploma for employment reasons,
39 have been incarcerated or in the military, have been removed from any

1 academic environment for four years or more, or are not planning to
2 pursue a college education.

3 (3) High school equivalency certificates issued under this
4 section shall be issued in such form and substance as agreed upon by
5 the state board for community and technical colleges and
6 superintendent of public instruction.

7 (4) The college board must communicate the menu of accepted test
8 options under subsection (2) of this section, to public and private
9 administrators of the high school equivalency tests.

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