H-4060.1

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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2743**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2016 Regular Session**

**By** House Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Reykdal, McBride, Rossetti, Santos, and Pollet)

AN ACT Relating to the issuance of a Washington state high school diploma; amending RCW 28B.50.536; creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature finds that a high school diploma demonstrates the accomplishment of a long-term academic goal, and a command of knowledge and proficiencies that are an invaluable part of a meaningful and financially productive life.

(2) The legislature finds that the GED test system, the system used for earning a Washington high school equivalency certificate, is aligned with career and college readiness expectations and includes requirements to demonstrate knowledge and skills equivalent to high school graduates in four categories: Reasoning through language arts; mathematics; science; and social studies.

(3) The legislature finds also that there is an unnecessary and inappropriate stigma associated with successfully completing a GED test and the earning of a high school equivalency certificate that may limit economic and academic opportunities for persons. The legislature therefore intends to establish a general Washington state high school diploma that is to be issued to persons who have attained standard scores on a high school equivalency test that are at or above a prescribed proficiency level.

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

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

(2) A high school equivalency certificate is a certificate issued jointly by the college board and the office of the superintendent of public instruction that indicates that the holder has attained standard scores at or above the minimum proficiency level prescribed by the college board on a high school equivalency test. The college board must identify and accept a high school equivalency test that is at least as rigorous as the general educational development test. The high school equivalency test identified by the college board must cover reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies subject areas.

(3) High school equivalency certificates issued under this section shall be issued ((~~in such form and substance as agreed upon~~)) by the state board for community and technical colleges and superintendent of public instruction as follows: If the recipient of the certificate is at least eighteen years of age or has completed eighteen or more credits in a twenty-four credit graduation system adopted in accordance with a resolution of the state board of education, the recipient's certificate must be issued as a Washington state high school diploma. For all other recipients, the certificate must be issued as a high school equivalency certificate. The Washington state high school diploma confers the same high school graduate status to the holder as a diploma issued to a student who satisfies high school graduation requirements in accordance with RCW 28A.230.090.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The superintendent of public instruction, in collaboration with the state board for community and technical colleges, must develop recommendations for modifying state and school district graduation rate data collection and tabulation requirements and processes to reflect Washington state high school diplomas issued under RCW 28B.50.536. Recommendations required by this section must, in accordance with RCW 43.01.036, be submitted to the appropriate committees of the house of representatives and the senate by December 31, 2016.

(2) This section expires August 1, 2017.

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