
Education Committee

SB 6248

Brief Description: Granting of high school diplomas by community or technical colleges.

Sponsors: Senators Wellman, Zeiger, Kuderer, Hasegawa, Mullet, Keiser, Lias and Conway; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands the category of students who may receive a diploma from a community or technical college to include: individuals enrolled in a statewide dropout reengagement program; and individuals aged 16 to 21 who are not enrolled in a publicly funded K-12 program.
- Specifies that students issued a high school diploma by a community or technical college may be counted in a school district's graduation rate if the student is funded and enrolled in a public K-12 school.

Hearing Date: 2/19/18

Staff: Katie Choate (786-7296) and Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

High School Diplomas.

The Legislature has declared that the purpose of the diploma is to declare that a student is ready for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment, citizenship, and is equipped with the skills to be a lifelong learner. A high school diploma is awarded to students who satisfy all state and local graduation requirements.

Community and Technical Colleges Issuance of High School Diplomas.

Students who meet the requirements for high school completion at a community or technical college must be awarded a diploma from the community and technical college (CTC), subject to rules adopted by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board of

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Education. Only after students meet all of the designated state and local requirements do they earn a diploma. By law, only school districts and CTCs may issue a high school diploma.

Upon written request of a student, CTCs are required to grant high school diplomas and certificates:

- students enrolled in a Running Start program who complete an associate degree;
- individuals 21 years or older who complete an associate degree program; and
- high school students enrolled in technical colleges who complete an associate degree program.

High School District Graduation Rates.

School district graduation rates are calculated by following a single cohort of students over four and five years, as outlined by the United States Department of Education. The calculation adjusts for students who transferred into a Washington public high school for the first time and joined the cohort. Similarly, students who are confirmed transfers out of a public school in Washington are removed from the calculation.

Students are permitted to take additional time to graduate, but will not be counted as on-time graduates if meeting graduation requirements takes longer than four years. Students will not be considered five-year graduates if meeting graduation requirements requires more than five years.

Dropout Reengagement Programs.

In 2010, the Legislature created a statutory framework for a statewide dropout reengagement system. This system provides educational access and opportunities to students aged 16 to 21 who have either dropped out of high school or are not accumulating sufficient credits to earn their diploma before age 21. Programs in this system must offer academic instruction, academic and career counseling, and assistance with services and resources that support at-risk youth. School districts may enter into interlocal agreements with an educational service district, a CTC, or other public entity to provide this program.

Summary of Bill:

High School Diplomas.

The categories of individuals who shall be awarded a diploma from a CTC upon written request of the student has been expanded to include:

- students enrolled in a statewide dropout reengagement program who complete an associate degree program; and
- individuals aged 16 to 21 who are not enrolled in a publicly funded K-12 program and who complete an associate degree program.

Graduation Rates.

Students issued a diploma by a CTC may be included in district graduation rates if those students are funded and enrolled in a public kindergarten through twelfth grade school. Students who are not funded and enrolled in a public K-12 school may not be included in a district's graduation rate.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.