

WA High School Diplomas and SHB 1758

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Background to SHB 1758

Law effective July 26, 2009

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Quall, Hope, Wallace, Sullivan, Goodman, Kagi, Santos, Morrell, Hasegawa and Ormsby).

Votes on Final Passage: Unanimous for both Senate and House

Brief Description: Expanding options for students to earn high school diplomas.

Community and technical colleges are also authorized under state law to issue high school diplomas or certificates, based on rules adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE).

Students who are juniors or seniors in high school can earn both high school and college credit simultaneously by enrolling in a community or technical college and some four-year higher education institutions through the Running Start program. School districts redirect basic education funds to the college to pay the cost of attendance, and the student is not required to pay tuition. There are a number of laws requiring school districts to notify students about the Running Start program and other educational options.

In addition to high school completion diplomas issued under rules adopted by the SBE, community and technical colleges are authorized to issue high school diplomas, on written request of the student, to:

1. individuals enrolled in Running Start who enroll in the college and complete an associates degree; and
2. individuals over 21 who enroll in the college for the purpose of obtaining an associates degree and who complete the degree. School districts must include these options in various required notifications to students about available educational options.

Now 4 ways to a HS diploma in WA

1

- Regular high school (HS) diploma process through the student's local high school

2

- Have attended Running Start
- Earn an associates degree
- Request a HS diploma from the college

3

- Earn an associates degree
- Age 21 years or older
- Request a HS diploma from the college

4

- Earn a HS diploma from the college through the college's HS completion program

Question: Are ALL associate degrees offered by the community and technical colleges eligible for a student to request a HS diploma??

- **Answer:** All students who earn an associates degree of any type are eligible to request a HS diploma from the college. Certificates may NOT be used.



Question: Are Other College-High School Programs Eligible Besides Running Start??

- **Answer:** No, based on one of the three qualifiers for a HS diploma in the new law of SHB 1758, only Running Start students are eligible for receiving the HS diploma once they graduate with an associate degree – regardless of age. All others must wait until they are 21 years old to request the HS diploma.

Question: What if my college doesn't currently offer a HS diploma??

- **Answer:** All colleges must be able to issue the HS diploma. College districts may choose to issue a district-wide type diploma.



Question: Is SHB 1758 retroactive??

- **Answer:** The policy of the SBCTC is that our associate degrees are valid both before and after the law went into effect. All associate degrees earned at anytime may request a HS diploma if the student is 21 years and older or has been a Running Start student at any time prior to earning the diploma.



Colleges may want to change language on their high school diplomas to cite the new law as the basis for issuing the HS diploma.

- Using language from the new law: “has successfully completed the requirements for this high school diploma in compliance with high school graduation requirements as described in 28B.50.535 and 2007 c 355 s 2 as amended”

Questions ??

- See the SBCTC Running Start website – http://www.sbctc.edu/college/s_runningstart.aspx
- Contact Kayeri Akweks, Running Start Staffer, Student Services Policy Associate, SBCTC, kakweks@sbctc.edu, 360-704-4319 office

