



# Options for Students Not Graduating After Four Years of High School

Students who have not met their high school graduation requirements AND have not earned a regular high school diploma are eligible for a free public education through the school year in which they turn 21 years of age. This includes students under 21 who have earned a GED certificate or are enrolled in:

- Career and technical education programs including skills centers;
- Transitional bilingual instruction programs;
- Special education programs; or
- Migrant education programs.

High schools and school districts continue to receive Basic Education Allocation (BEA) and any other funding that these students generate.

Students who are not graduating after four years of high school also have paid options available if they choose not to return to high school. Those options are detailed following the free options.

## **FREE OPTIONS**

**Free options are available for students who are not graduating after four years of high school and want to meet their high school graduation requirements. The options are:**

1. **Continued Enrollment in High School:** All students are eligible to attend their resident high school through the school year in which they turn 21.
2. **Enrollment in a School District High School Completion Program:** School districts may contract with community colleges to offer tuition-free high school completion programs to students still enrolled in their resident school district. Upon completion of program, students would receive a high school diploma from that district.
3. **Continued Running Start:** Students who participated in Running Start during their 11th and 12th grade years but didn't complete the classes required for high school graduation may continue their Running Start participation to meet high school graduation requirements beyond 12<sup>th</sup> grade, but only to take those classes through Running Start that they failed or did not complete successfully. (The Running Start program allows eligible 11th and 12th grade students to take college classes tuition free and accrue both high school and college credit for those classes.)



# Options for Students Not Graduating After Four Years of High School (cont.)

## PAID OPTIONS

Paid options are available for students who are not graduating after four years of high school and want to meet their high school graduation requirements. The options are:

- 1. Enroll in a Community and Technical College High School Completion Program:** A number of community colleges in the state offer high school completion programs providing students with a high school diploma from the college. Students must drop out of their resident high school to enroll in these programs. In most cases students are charged tuition and fees for enrollment, although the colleges have the authority to waive tuition and fees for students 19 and older. Students 16 to 18 years of age must have a signed release from their resident school district in order to enroll in a community college high school completion program.
- 2. Pursue a General Education Development (GED) Certificate:** Students 16 and older may earn a GED certificate by passing all in a series of tests offered through a GED program. In order to take the tests, students must drop out of their resident high school. State community and technical colleges are the official testing centers for the GED. Students pay fees for the tests and may have to pay tuition and fees for GED preparation courses offered through community and technical colleges. The certificate is not equivalent to a high school diploma, and students who earn a GED certificate are considered dropouts for high school accountability purposes. However, students who are under 21 years of age and who have a GED certificate can still fulfill their high school graduation requirements and get their diploma. (See Free options No. 1 and 2 above.)
- 3. Enroll in a Public Two- or Four-Year College or University:** None of the public colleges and universities in Washington requires that students have a high school diploma in order to be admitted, although a high school diploma significantly increases the chances of admission to the state's four-year institutions. Students without high school diplomas who enroll in colleges and universities pay full tuition and fees like all other students. Students who do not have a high school diploma or GED certificate may not be eligible for certain federal, state and private financial aid.