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## Education Committee

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### HB 1758

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

**Sponsors:** Representatives Quall, Hope, Wallace, Sullivan, Goodman, Kagi, Santos, Morrell, Hasegawa and Ormsby.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides that individuals who enroll in a community or technical college and complete an Associate's Degree are awarded a high school diploma from the college, including students enrolled in Running Start.
- Provides that individuals who have achieved at least the equivalent of 11th grade, enroll in a college, and complete a professional-technical certificate program of 45 or more credit hours are awarded a high school diploma from the college, including students enrolled in Running Start.

**Hearing Date:** 2/11/09

**Staff:** Barbara McLain (786-7383)

#### Background:

The State Board of Education (SBE) establishes minimum statewide high school graduation requirements. Current requirements include 19 credits of a specified distribution of courses, a high school and beyond plan, and a culminating project. Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, an additional state requirement for graduation from a public high school is achievement of a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) or Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA). Through the class of 2012, there is an exception to this requirement for students who did not successfully meet the state standard on the high school mathematics assessment. Local school districts may adopt additional requirements. School districts issue high school diplomas to students who satisfactorily complete all state and local graduation requirements.

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Community and technical colleges are also authorized under state law to issue high school diplomas or certificates, based on rules adopted by the SBE. The current rules require individuals to meet the same credit requirements to earn a diploma from a college (also called a high school completion diploma) as are required for a diploma from a high school. For individuals over age 18, colleges have flexibility to award credit based on college courses, correspondence courses, independent study, testing, work experience, and other evidence of educational attainment. For individuals under 18, a high school principal must approve of the program of studies that will lead to the diploma. Students over the age of 21 are not required to earn a CAA or a CIA.

Community and technical colleges offer a wide range of certificate and degree programs, ranging from short-term certificates to multiple types of Associate's Degrees. Programs are subject to approval by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). Associate degrees typically require two years or 90 credits. Professional-technical certificates requiring 45 or more credits, or equivalent clock hours, must include general education instruction along with technical instruction.

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.

**Summary of Bill:**

In addition to high school completion diplomas issued under rules adopted by the State Board of Education, community and technical colleges are authorized to issue high school diplomas to:

1. Individuals who enroll in the college and complete an Associate's Degree, including students enrolled in Running Start; and
2. Individuals who have achieved at least the equivalent of 11th grade, enroll in a college, and complete a professional-technical certificate program of 45 or more credit hours or equivalent clock hours, including students enrolled in Running Start.

School districts must include these options in various required notifications to students about available educational options.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on 2/4/2009.

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