



# Improving the Odds: Preparing Washington's Students for Family-Wage Work

Presented to the Washington Association of School Administrators

May 4, 2009

# Framing Questions

- What is a “family wage” in Washington state?
- Where are the future family-wage jobs in Washington?
- What level of preparation does it take to get a family-wage job?
- Are Washington State students being prepared to compete for family-wage jobs?

# Family Wages in Washington

- A family wage provides enough income to pay for basic living expenses – rent, food, child care, health care and transportation.

Family of 3 (1 worker, 2 children)	Family of 4 (2 workers, 2 children)
<b>\$46,372 per year</b> \$22.29 per hour	<b>\$52,966 per year</b> \$12.73 per hour/worker

- A family wage is not a middle-class income.

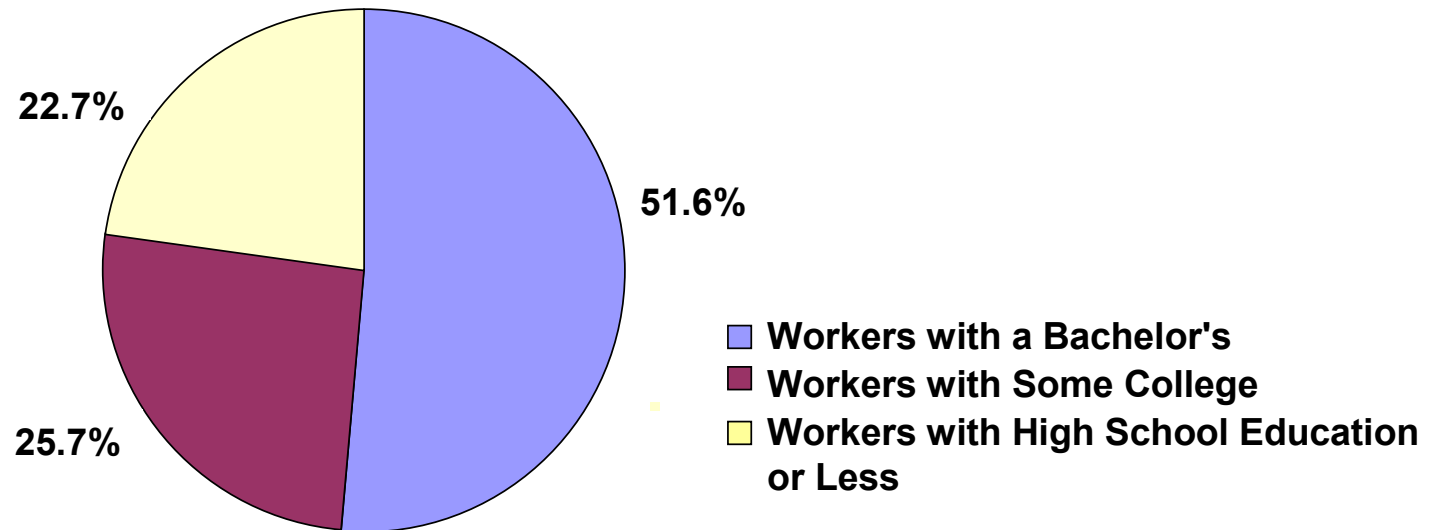
# What Jobs Will Pay a Family Wage?

Examples of family-wage jobs expected to have large numbers of openings through 2014 in Pierce County:

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Average Annual <u>New</u> Openings</b>	<b>Mean Hourly Wage</b>	<b>Percentage of Workers With Some College or Bachelor's</b>
<b>Registered Nurses</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>\$32.95</b>	<b>98.3%</b>
<b>Sales Representatives, Wholesale &amp; Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>\$29.69</b>	<b>76.5%</b>
<b>Electricians</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>\$23.86</b>	<b>48.6%</b>
<b>Accountants and Auditors</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>\$29.58</b>	<b>93.2%</b>
<b>Business Operations Specialists, All Other</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>\$31.01</b>	<b>80.0%</b>
<b>Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>\$24.48</b>	<b>66.6%</b>

# Education Beyond High School Improves the Odds

- By 2014, 77% of job openings paying a family wage will be held by workers with education or training beyond high school.\*



- More than half of family-wage jobs will be held by workers with four-year college degrees.
- **More than half of the jobs the federal stimulus package will help save are jobs requiring two or more years of postsecondary education.**

*\*For a single worker, family of three*

# What is College in Today's World?

College takes many forms today:

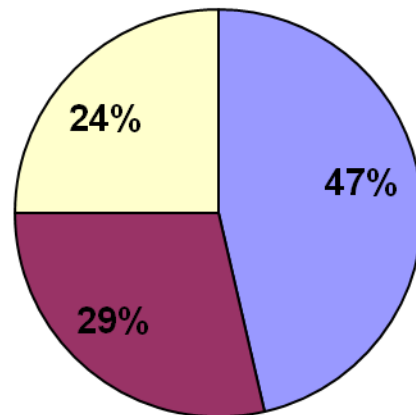
- Technical and vocational certificates and training
- Two-year degrees from a community or technical college
- Four-year degrees from a baccalaureate institution

*Bottom line: College cannot be just for an elite few.*

# Majority of Graduates Are College-Bound

## 76% of Washington Graduates Go on to College

College-Going Rates of Washington State Graduates  
Within Two Years of Graduation



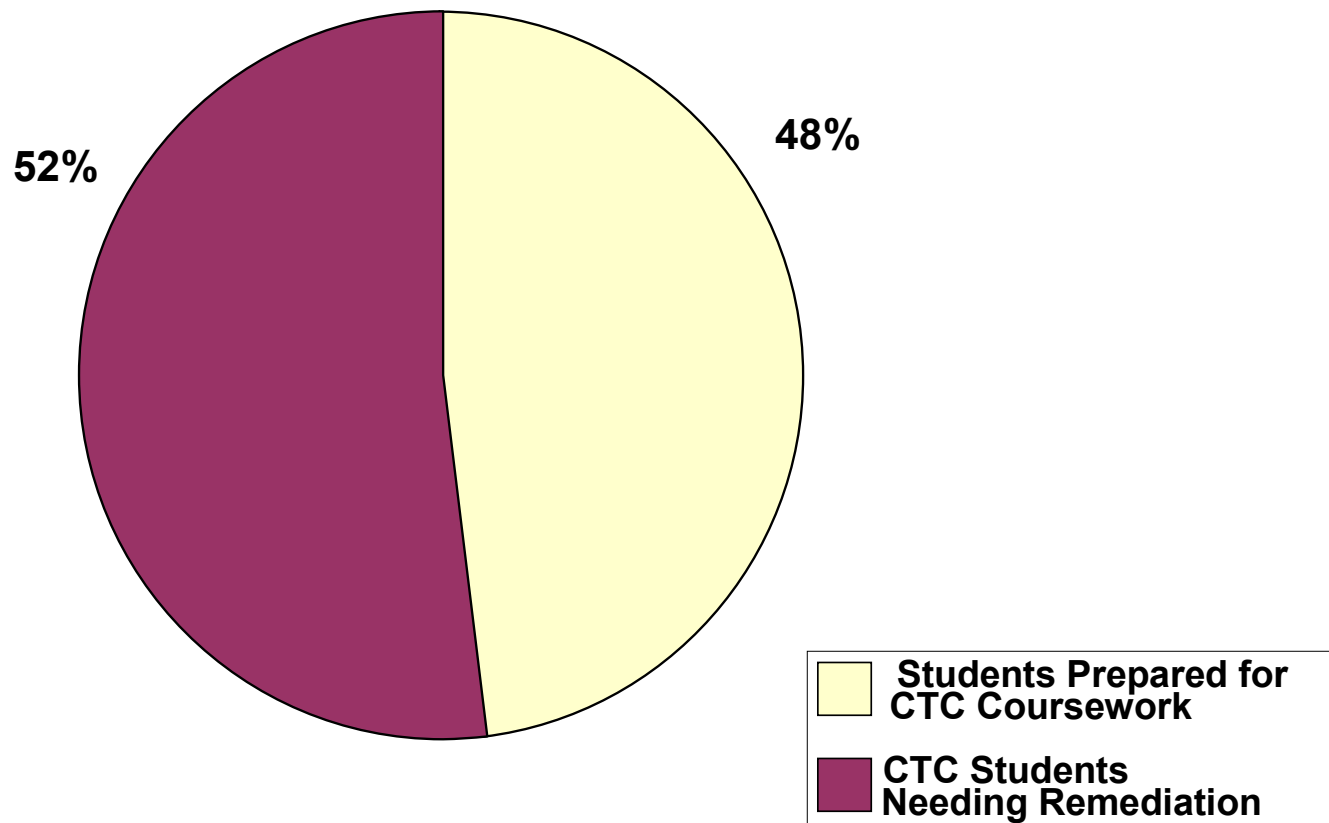
- Community / Technical College Within 1-2 Years
- Baccalaureate Institution
- Other Graduates

## Community/Technical Colleges Have an “Open Access” Policy But...

- Students must pass math and language placement tests before they can take credit-bearing courses.
- Students who are unprepared must take (and pay for) pre-college, remedial courses which do not count toward their degree or certificate.

# Remedial Classes= High School Level Work

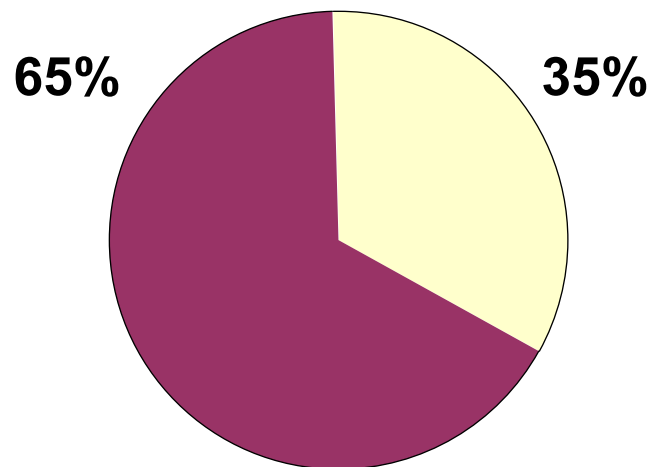
***Remediation Rates for 2005 Graduates Who Went Directly to a Two-Year Community or Technical College After High School***



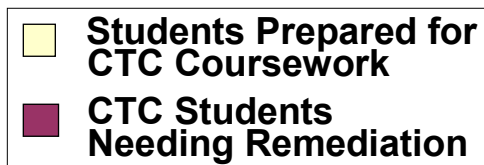
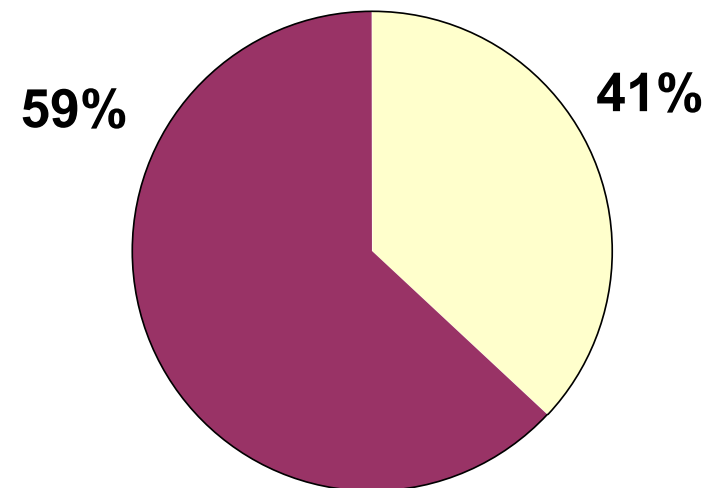
# Remediation Rates Even Higher for Students of Color

*Remediation Rates for 2005 Graduates Who Went Directly to a Two-Year Community or Technical College After High School*

**Latino Students**



**African American Students**



# Access to Higher Education: Who Decides?

Currently, the K-12 system practically guarantees that if students do what they're told and meet the minimum graduation requirements...

**...They won't be prepared for a two-year college...**

**Or even eligible to apply to a four-year college.**

# Mismatches Between Diploma and College Requirements

## Minimum HS Graduation Requirements

- **3 credits English**
- **2 credits Math (soon to be 3 credits, including Algebra II)**
- **2 credits science (one lab)**
- **2.5 credits social studies**
- **0 credit world language**
- **1 credit visual/performing arts**
- **2 credits health & fitness**
- **1 credit occupational ed**
- **5.5 elective credits**

## Minimum 4-year College Entry Requirements

- **4 credits English**
- **3 credits Math (Algebra II or higher)**
- **2 credits science (soon to be all lab, one credit algebra-based)**
- **3 credits social studies**
- **2 credits world language**
- **1 credit visual/performing arts**
- **0 credits health & fitness**
- **0 credit occupational education**
- **5.5 elective credits**

**Red: diploma lower than 4-yr, Black: diploma equals 4-yr, Green: diploma higher than 4- yr**

# Course-Taking Patterns Limit Opportunities

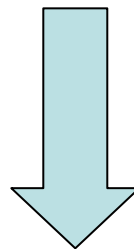
Percentage of 2006 graduating seniors\* who took the classes needed to apply to four-year colleges:

- Asian students: 58%
- White students: 42%
- African American students: 36%
- Latino students: 28%
- Native American students: 28%

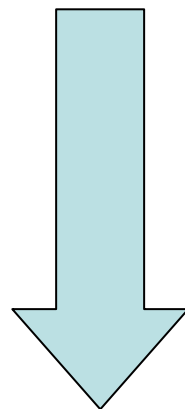
*\*Based on a study by Fouts & Baker using transcript data of graduating classes of 2005 and 2006.*

# Consequences of Low State Graduation Requirements

**Course Taking Gap**



**College Going Gap**



**Family-Wage Opportunity Gap**

# Closing the Preparation Gap

## CWRA Proposed High School Graduation Requirements

4 Credits English

3 Credits Math, *including Algebra II and 1 credit in senior year  
(additional year already planned)*

3 Credits Science  
*(two labs, one credit algebra-based)*

3 Credits Social Studies

1 Credit Visual or Performing Arts

2 Credits Health & Fitness

4 elective credits: students choose among CTE, foreign language and/or additional math, science and arts credits

***RESULT: Students with a Washington State diploma will be prepared for coursework at a two-year community/technical college and will have the opportunity to apply to a four-year baccalaureate institution.***

# Conclusions

**Washington's K-12 education system should give students the opportunity to compete for family-wage jobs.**

- The State Board of Education has taken steps to change course-taking requirements for high school graduation to give all students this opportunity.
- This session, the Washington Legislature redefined basic education to ensure that a Washington diploma means students are prepared for college and work.
- These are big victories, but the challenge of implementation lies ahead.