



Find papers on your table.

Respond to the questions to the best of your knowledge.

Be prepared to share with your table mates early in the session.

Regular Diploma Changes for Students with IEPs

November 4, 2019

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Agenda

Overview of the Change

Options/Implications

Questions

Application/Examples

Questions

Overview

Rationale/background

- ESSA-required
- Former rules - no longer permissible to award a regular diploma solely based on IEP goal attainment

General guidance

- 4.3.3.3 at a minimum
- District requirements
- Alternate pathways must be board approved
- Class of 2022



Options



Standard Diploma-Single Criteria

A Standard Diploma or more rigorous options (e.g. honors diploma) is available to all students. All must meet the same criteria for earning the diploma.



Standard Diploma-Multiple Criteria

Some students are allowed to meet one or more of the requirements in different ways from other students (e.g., different courses, fewer standards, different requirements).



Certificate

Certificates for attendance, completion, achievement, etc. are available to all students. Graduation requirements can vary or may not allow students with IEPs to meet them in different ways.

Questions to ponder

- How will districts ensure that students with special education services have the opportunity to engage in an appropriate level of rigor in all 4-3-3-3 courses required?
- How will it be clearly communicated with parents about what their child knows, understands, and can do in relation to the 4-3-3-3 course credit?
- Will there be inequitable access to a regular diploma?
- Will the district issue a larger number of certificates?
- Will this impact drop out/graduations rates for the district?
- How will the district ensure that graduates meet post secondary pre-reqs?
- Boundaries set to achieve a regular diploma may be arbitrary and rigid?



Implications

Standard Diploma-Single Criteria

A Standard Diploma or a more rigorous option (e.g., honors diploma) is available to all students. All must meet the same criteria for earning the diploma.

Advantages

- Provides students the “key” to entry into postsecondary institutions or employment
- Meaning of earning a diploma is clear because there is only one set of criteria
- Maintains high expectations and a focus on the general education curriculum across all student groups

Disadvantages

- Does not recognize the different learning styles of students with disabilities
- May result in a significant number of students not receiving any kind of exit document from high school
- May result in more students with disabilities staying in school to age 21

Implications

Standard Diploma-Multiple Criteria

—
Some students are allowed to meet one or more of the requirements in different ways from other students (e.g., different courses, fewer standards, different requirements).

Advantages

- Recognizes that students have different learning styles and skills that may not align with typical graduation criteria
- Ensures that more students will get a diploma than would with a single set of criteria

Disadvantages

- Reduces quality control on the knowledge and skills of students leaving schools
- Results in non-standard sets of knowledge and skills among students, all of whom have the same diploma

Implications

Certificate

Certificates for attendance, completion, achievement, etc. are available to all students. Graduation requirements can vary or may not allow students with IEPs to meet them in different ways.

Advantages

- Maintains the integrity of the requirements for earning a standard diploma
- Provides other exit options for students not meeting the requirements for a standard diploma
- Continues eligibility for FAPE

Disadvantages

- Provides exit document that is typically not useful for entering post-secondary schooling or gaining employment.
- Flags those students receiving special education services
- Does not promote access to the general education curriculum

Collaboration!!!!



School Districts

Districts should consider providing guidance to their IEP Teams on the ways in which District Policies permit IEP teams to determine how students with IEPs may meet the District's 4-3-3-3 requirements



IEP Teams

It is the IEP Team's responsibility, beginning in 8th grade to develop a pathway to 4-3-3-3 that meets the student's unique needs and results in a regular diploma.



Students and Parents

Students and parents need to understand their School District's Graduation Requirements and chart a pathway to earning a diploma that is consistent with what the student envisions for their future living, learning, and working that is also meaningful to employers and postsecondary educators.

District A

- Started immediately after ESSA-IDEA Webinar
 - Committee formed
 - Population defined
 - Options considered
 - Foundational/basic standards already identified
 - Math alternate pathways first
 - Reviewed by math PLC
 - Will be presented to School Board in Spring
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District A



District A

New Reality

- Standards work continues in content areas
 - Special Education teacher, curriculum teacher, special education consultant
 - Individual students, at this point
 - Math and English alternate pathways first
 - Google doc.for notes/communication
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District B

- Student moves into school district with alternate pathway identified in previous school
 - Standards shared
 - Work begins on Science/Social Studies Standards
 - Committee (?)
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Questions for The Real World

What is going well in your schools?

What needs further clarification?

What do you need for further support?

Thank You!



https://educateiowa.gov/pk-12/special-education/special-education-programs-services/secondary-transition#Graduation_Changes_for_Individuals_Eligible_for_Special_Education

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essagradrateguidance.pdf>