

**SUBJECT: DIPLOMA OR CREDENTIAL OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The District will provide students with disabilities appropriate opportunities to earn a diploma or other exiting commencement credential in accordance with Commissioner's regulations. Students who have not earned a high school diploma are entitled to attend the District through the age of twenty-one (21) years. During the student's annual review, the District will evaluate graduation opportunities and identify the means to achieve them. As part of this process, the District:

- a) Will coordinate activities with guidance personnel and BOCES staff to ensure that students meet credit and sequence requirements and to consider them for vocational opportunities.
- b) May modify instructional techniques and materials. Any modifications will be included on a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) so that they can be implemented consistently throughout the student's program.
- c) Will review special education instructional programs to ensure students with disabilities are included in general education classes to the maximum extent possible and with appropriate support and accommodations.
- d) Will coordinate communication between special and general education staff so that all staff members understand required skills and competencies, and to ensure students with disabilities are included in general education classes to the maximum extent possible and with appropriate support and accommodations.

Graduation and transition plans will take into account the various pathways available to students. For students with IEPs, the District will plan transition services for post-secondary life as early as possible, but no later than the school year in which the student turns age 15. The transition activities will be focused on improving both the student's academic and functional achievement. The plan will explore post-secondary opportunities and employment options and, if applicable, connection with adult service agencies that may provide the student with services after exiting school.

The District may award these diplomas or credentials, or both:

- a) Local diploma: available to students with an IEP or a Section 504 accommodation plan that specifies a local diploma. Students must comply with credit requirements. The available assessments to earn a local diploma include:
  - 1. Low-pass safety net option: students must achieve a score of 55 or higher on five required Regents exams.
  - 2. Low-pass safety net and appeal: available to students who score 52-54 on a Regents exam, successfully appeal that score, and meet all appeal conditions.
  - 3. Regents Competency Test (RCT) safety net option: a student who enters grade 9 before September 2011 must pass a corresponding RCT if he or she does not attain a score of 55 or higher on the Regents examination.

(Continued)

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4. Compensatory safety net option: except for scores on ELA and math exams, students may use one Regents exam score of 65 or above to compensate for a Regents exam score of 45-54. Students must score at least 55 (or successfully appeal a score of 52-54) on both the ELA and a Regents math exam.
  5. Superintendent's determination: students who are unable to demonstrate their proficiency on standard state assessments because of one or more disabilities may be able to graduate upon the Superintendent's review and written certification of their eligibility. The Superintendent must review every student who does not meet graduation standards through the appeal and safety net options for potential eligibility under this determination.
- b) Career Development and Occupational Studies commencement credential (CDOS): any student who is not assessed using the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) may earn the CDOS commencement credential as a supplement to a Regents or local diploma or as his or her only exiting credential if the student attended school for at least 12 years, excluding kindergarten. The student must meet criteria specified by the State Education Department (SED) confirming that he or she has attained the standards-based knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for entry-level employment.
- c) Skills and Achievement commencement credential: students with severe disabilities who are assessed using the NYSAA may earn the SA commencement credential. They must attend school for at least 12 years, excluding kindergarten. The District must document the student's skills, strengths, and levels of independence in academic, career development, and foundation skills needed for post-secondary life.

Education Law §§ 3202 and 4402  
8 NYCRR §§ 100.1, 100.2, 100.5, 100.6, 200.4, and 200.5

NOTE: Refer also to Policy #7220 -- Graduation Options/Early Graduation/Accelerated Programs  
Policy #7130 – Entitlement to Attend – Age and Residency

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