

UCLA Tarjan Center Webinar Series

California Community College System

New Pathway to High School Diploma Raises College Expectations for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

May 2, 2023

Presenter: Sue Sawyer, M.S.

President, CA Transition Alliance



Goals of the Presentation

- Explore the Value of the Diploma for the Student
- Analyze New and Emerging Expectations and Outcomes
- Identify Diploma Requirements for All Youth
- Explore the Impact of Changes on Community Colleges
- This presentation is based on current federal and state legislation
- Alternative Pathway to a Diploma Workgroup Report
https://www.scoe.net/media/2tla0rk5/ca_alternative_pathways_workgroup_report.pdf
- California Education Code Research
- Resources at CDE Website

Why Is the
Diploma
Important For
All Students?



How Are We Doing? Let's Examine 2022 data

High School Graduation with a Diploma: State Rate for 4th and 5th year cohort: 87.4%
Students with Disabilities 75.2%
Drop out rate for students with disabilities 14 %

Employment Rates for	Youth with Disabilities	No Disabilities	(Source ODEP)
Ages 16 -19	29%	37%	
Ages 20-24	50%	72%	

Postsecondary Education Enrollment	Community College	CSU	UC
College Going Rate for all students	63%	19%	12%
For students with Disabilities	41%	8%	2%

Opportunity Youth – Not in school or the workplace 11%

The Community Colleges play a significant role in transition for students with disabilities.

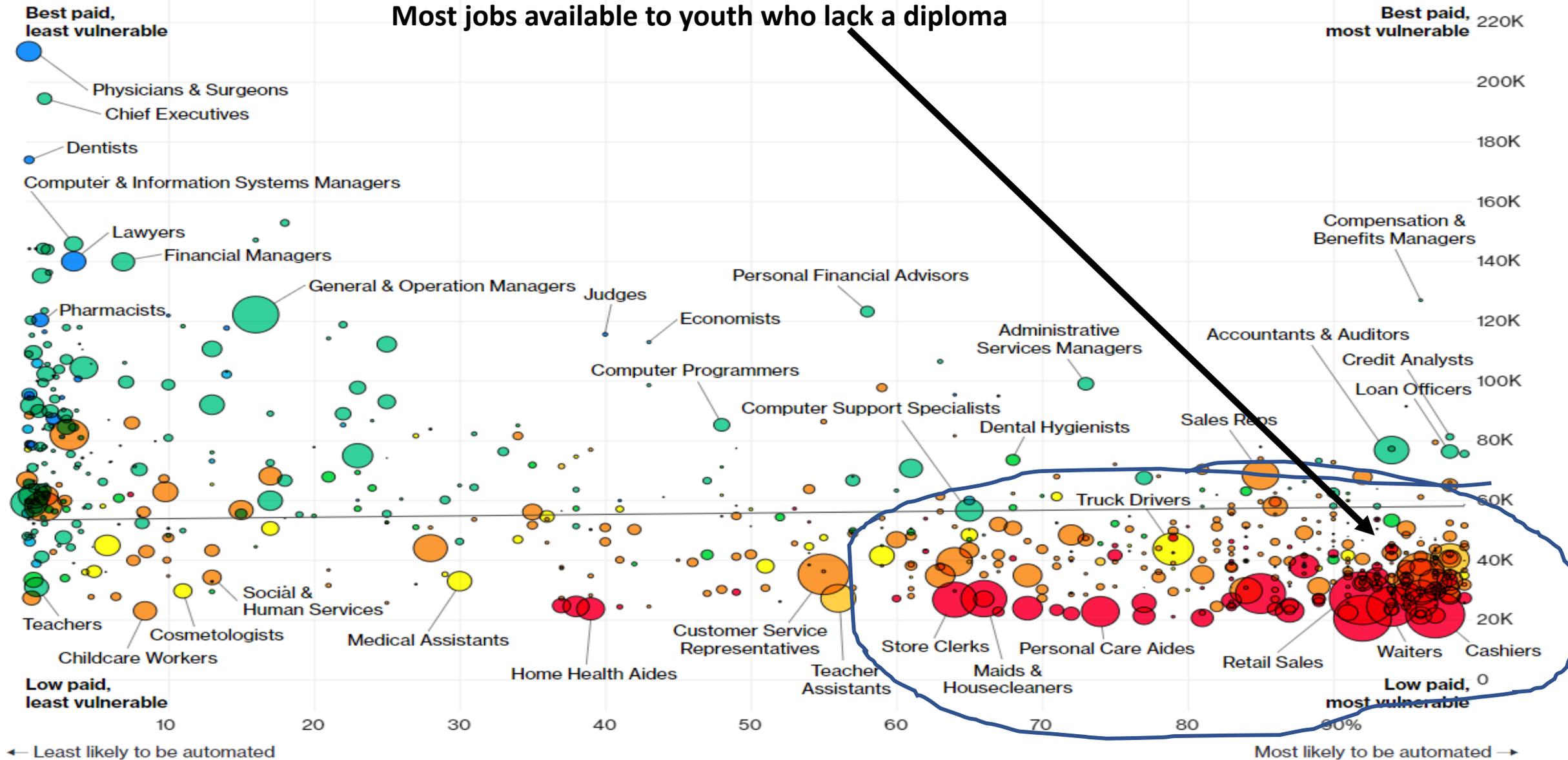


What Happens to You When You Lack a Diploma?

- **The Personal Impact** – loss of confidence and optimism
- You may experience doubts, negative perceptions of self worth
- You lack the minimum qualifications for jobs and face employer bias
- You don't qualify for some types of financial aid for post-secondary education
- You don't meet minimum qualifications for post-secondary education and training
- You question why you should stay in school if you can't earn a diploma, like most of your peers

You face barriers to achieve successful outcomes and end up in jobs that are in danger because of automation and artificial intelligence

Most jobs available to youth who lack a diploma



← Least likely to be automated

Most likely to be automated →

The Lack of A Diploma is a Barrier to Employment and Post-Secondary Education

A Diploma is a Ticket!



90% of employers prefer to hire youth with a diploma
30% of jobs are low skilled and susceptible to automation
66% of jobs require a diploma **and** post-secondary education and training



College and University entry criteria includes a high school diploma. FASFA eligibility requires a high school diploma or a GED type diploma, unless you are a student with significant intellectual disabilities and qualify for CTP (Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program).

College Programs Designed for I/DD Students

College2Career Programs”

- College of Alameda
- San Diego Community College*
- Shasta College*
- Fresno City College
- North Orange Community College
- Santa Rosa Jr. College*
- West Los Angeles College (TPSID)
- Sacramento City College

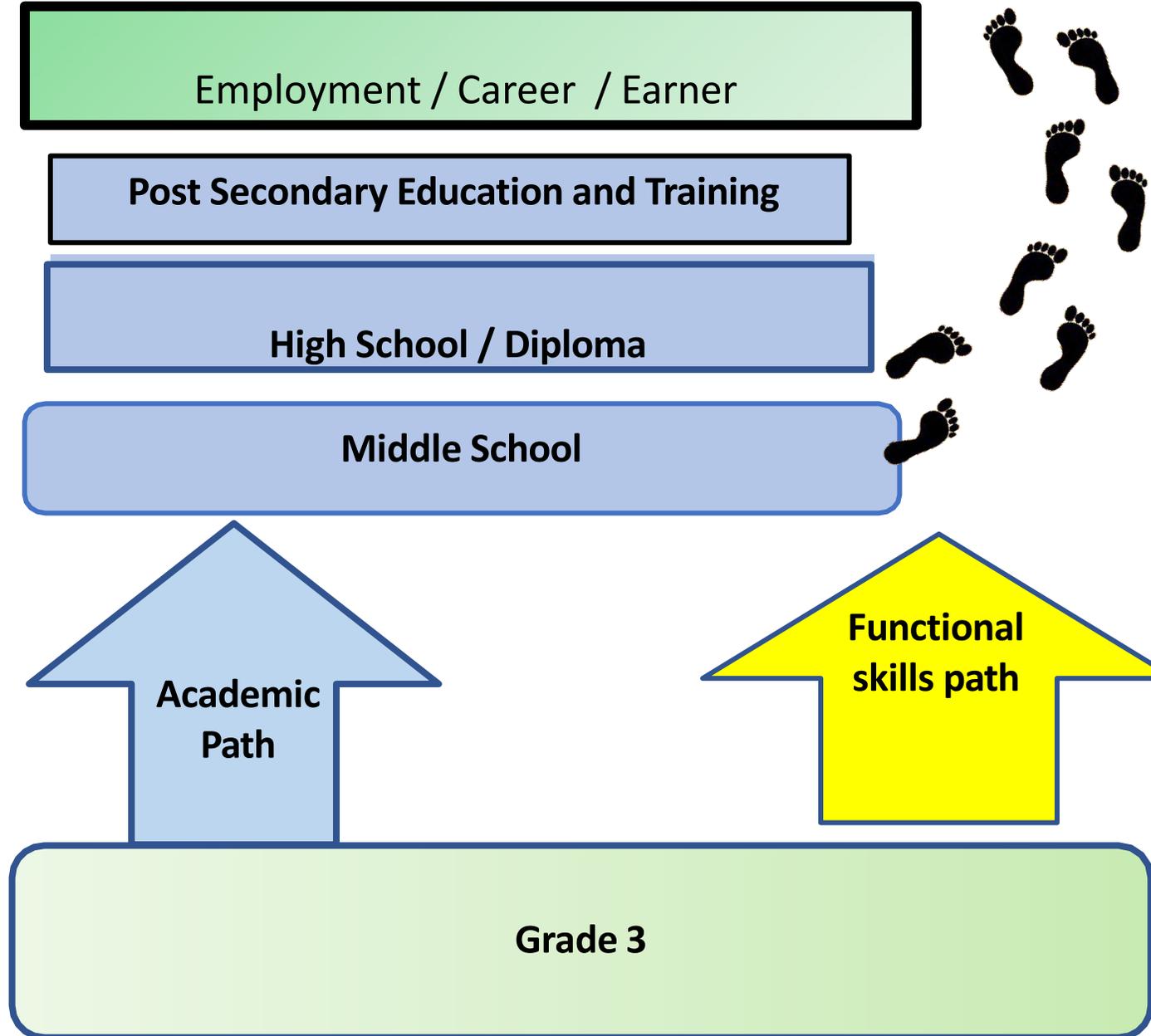
Other College/ University Programs:

- Wayfinders Fresno State University (TPSID)
- Cypress College
- Foothill College
- CA State University, Northridge
- I-Can Job Ventura College*
- Taft College (TPSID)
- Pathway at UCLA Extension
- San Francisco State University
- College of Adaptive Arts
- Tierra Del Sol Foundation
- UC Davis Redwood SEEDS Program (TPSID)

* CTP Program-Financial Aid is available

TPSID: Transition and Postsecondary Program for Students with ID

Current Practice in Many LEAs



Parents are faced with choices related to academic curriculum by Grade 3.
That decision impacts earning a diploma.

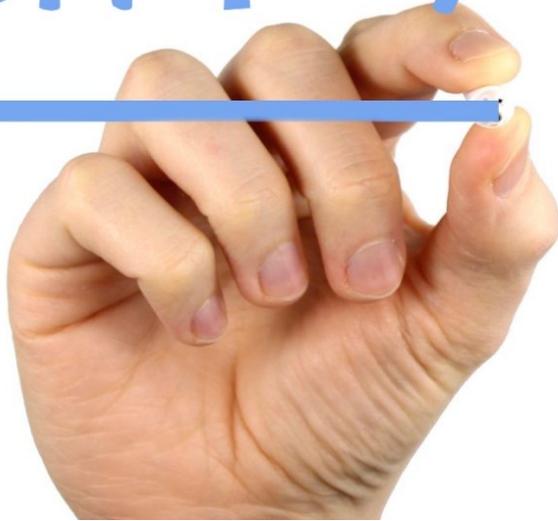
WARNING

Low expectations impact the students for their entire life
Students who lack an academic foundation lack the skills required to earn a diploma and struggle to be prepared for postsecondary education and work.

??? Food for Thought
Did this student have the opportunity to learn academic standards? Should they be denied a diploma because we had low expectations early in their education?

Recent Reports and A Supreme Court Ruling Tell Us All Students Need the Opportunity to Learn Academic Standards

EQUITY



- “if 85-90% of students with IEPs have average intelligence or higher why are only 65% earning the standard high school diploma?”
- Are all students granted the opportunity to learn academic standards?
- Are teachers adequately trained in the elements of universal design and MTSS?

[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)

Report: ***Almost All Students with Disabilities are Capable of Graduating. Here's Why They're Not*** Hechinger Report, October 2017

Supreme Court Ruling: Endrew F. v Douglas County School District Re-1 12/17¹⁰

**We Want All Students to Leave School
Prepared for Employment
Preparation needs to start young!**



Let's Reflect on Our Progress

We are experiencing a Tsunami of Change

K12 System

- Recognize preparation for transition begins in early childhood
- Person/Student Centered Planning
- Asset driven IEPs
- Diplomas for All-instead of a few
- Reading by third grade
- Early college / dual enrollment
- Value of Career-Technical Education

Community College System

- Moving away from remedial classes
- Focus-Transfer Degrees
- Career Technical Pathways
- Provide accommodations, not differentiated standards
- Multiple of measures of readiness

High School vs. College:

What's the difference?

High School	College
You had known many of your classmates for years	More diverse classmates in terms of race, age, religion, political opinions, and life experiences
Your parents and teachers made sure you were in school every day	Attendance may be up to you, and managing your time may be difficult at first
Tests and quizzes were given regularly to check your understanding of the material	College instructors give fewer tests
Parents and teachers gave a lot of guidance	Nobody treats you like a kid anymore
Reading assignments were generally short	You have to do much more reading now
Good grades were often easy to get, if you paid attention in class	Good grades are hard to get and require a lot of study
Classes were small with a lot of instructor-student interaction	Classes are larger, more complex, and more impersonal

When Should Students Begin to Develop the Skills for College?

Reflection / Discussion

When should students with ID be encouraged to think about college?

When / how should parents be engaged in conversations?

How do college readiness standards = life skills?

What are the biggest challenges your students face?

Let's Explore the K-12 System

How do Students Earn Diplomas?

It is important to understand how many students prepare for the community college.

1

Earn the local LEA diploma meeting LEA requirements

2

Earn the local LEA diploma with waivers and accommodations

3

Earn a high school diploma using state requirements

4

Create an alternative pathway for students with significant cognitive disabilities using ed. Code language related to alternative means for earning a diploma

Federal Definition of the High School Diploma

- awarded to the preponderance of students in the State
- fully aligned with State standards, or a higher diploma,
- not...aligned to the alternate academic achievement standards
- does not include... a GED, certificate of completion, certificate of attendance, or similar lesser credential, such as a diploma based on meeting IEP goals
- The vast majority of students with disabilities should have access to the same high-quality academic coursework as all other students in the State

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation, July 2017



The Certificate of Completion is Not a Diploma

Current practice is that many LEAs issue the certificate of completion as an alternative to the diploma.

- There are no student performance expectations related to the certificate
- It has little to no value in post-school environments



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)

Existing Diploma Pathways defined in Ed Code 51225.3

Courses	State	CTE Pathway	A-G Courses
English	3	3	4
Math	2	2	3
Science	2	2	2
Social Science	3	2	2
Visual Perform. Art	1		1
Foreign Language			2
Career Tech. Ed.		2	1
PE	2	2	---
Total	13	13	15
Plus Local Graduation Requirements			

The local governing board of the LEA with the active involvement of parents, teachers, administrators and pupils shall adopt **Alternative Means** for pupils to complete the prescribed course of study, which may include:

- Practical demonstration of skills, competencies, Supervised work experience or other outside experience,
- CTE classes
- Interdisciplinary / Independent Study
- Credit earned at a postsecondary institution

Students who are enrolled in alternative education utilize alternative means to earn the diploma.

Ed Code 51225.1 allows the LEA to waive local graduation requirements and issue a diploma based on state course requirements.

Foster Youth Members of Military Families Homeless Youth English Language Learner

How Do Students Earn a Diploma in California?

Courses	State Minimum Course Requirements	A-G Course Requirements (+Local Requirements by LEA)
English	3 years	4 Years
Math	2 years (Including Algebra I	3 Years including Advanced algebra 2- and 3-dimensional geometry
Social Science	3 Years Including US History and geography World History and Culture And Geography 1 Semester American Gov. 1 Semester Economics	2 Years including World or European History, Cultures, geography. US History 1 Semester of Civics or American Government
Science	2 years including Biology and Physical Science	2 Years including biology, chemistry or physics
Foreign Language	1 year foreign language or Visual/Performing Art or Career Technical Education	2 Years of same language other than English, may include ASL
Visual or Performing Art		1 year including music, theatre, visual arts and interdisciplinary arts
Career Tech. Ed		May be used to meet elective requirement.
Physical Education	2 years	Not Applicable
Electives	Not Applicable	1 year
Total	13	15

The workgroup recommended that in addition to **maximizing** California’s **existing diploma pathways**, the state should create only one brand new pathway, specifically for students with significant cognitive disabilities, who currently do not have a pathway to a diploma. **It was also recommended that California provide better access to two existing traditional pathways to earning a high school diploma for the majority of students with disabilities.**

Existing Diploma Pathways defined in Ed Code 51225.3

Courses	State	CTE Pathway	A-G Courses
English	3	3	4
Math	2	2	3
Science	2	2	2
Social Science	3	2	2
Visual Perform. Art	1		1
Foreign Language			2
Career Tech. Ed.		2	1
PE	2	2	---
Total	13	13	15
Plus Local Graduation Requirements			

The local governing board of the LEA with the active involvement of parents, teachers, administrators and pupils shall adopt **Alternative Means** for pupils to complete the prescribed course of study, which may include:

- Practical demonstration of skills, competencies, Supervised work experience or other outside experience,
- CTE classes
- Interdisciplinary / Independent Study
- Credit earned at a postsecondary institution

Prior to 2022 who qualifies for State Requirements or Alternatives means of earning a diploma?

Foster Youth Members of Military Families Homeless Youth English Language Learner
 Adjudicated Youth Alternative Ed. Participant

Implications

- There is a difference in the definitions of “significant cognitive disability” between the K-12 system, Regional Centers, Community Colleges and the Department of Rehabilitation
- Students who are ID/DD have traditionally earned a certificate of completion- now there are multiple pathways to a diploma
- It is the recommendation of the workgroup report that all diplomas look the same- no “lesser than” alternative diploma is provided
- The students have the opportunity to earn a diploma by:
 - Meeting local requirements for a diploma
 - Completion of a Career-Technical Education Pathway
 - Earning a diploma based on state course requirements-with Board approval.
 - Participation in the Alternative High School Diploma Pathway for students with “significant cognitive disabilities

The high school diploma document should be the same for all graduates.

Eligibility for the University is found in the transcript, not the diploma.

Does the document signify:	High School Diploma	Transcript
The student has completed a specific course of study	Yes	Yes
The specific coursework a student completed?	No	Yes
Grades or Achievement Levels a student achieved?	No	Yes
The student has a disability or any exceptional learning needs?	No	No

“While a transcript may not disclose that a student has received special education or a related service or has a disability, a transcript may indicate that a student took classes with a modified or alternate education curriculum. This is consistent with **the transcript's purpose of informing postsecondary institutions and prospective employers of a student's academic achievements.** Transcript notations concerning enrollment in different classes, course content, or curriculum by students with disabilities would be consistent with any similar transcript designation for classes, such as advanced placement, honors, or remedial instruction, in which students without disabilities are enrolled, and thus would not violate Section 504 or Title II. These notations about modified or alternate education curriculum are permissible because they do not disclose that a student has a disability, are not used exclusively to identify programs for students with disabilities and are consistent with the purpose of a student transcript”. **Federal Clarification: Office of Civil Rights, 2006**

Every Student Succeeds Act

Only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities should receive alternative diplomas and only if they have taken the state's alternative assessments



No more than 1% of students graduating in a state should receive an alternative diploma

Federal Definition of an Alternative Diploma - Education Code

- Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in the cohort...assessed using the alternate assessment...and awarded a State-defined alternate diploma that is:
 - standards-based
 - aligned with the State requirements for the regular high school diploma; and
 - obtained within the time period for which the State ensures the availability of a free appropriate public education
 - shall not include any student awarded a...GED...certificate of completion, certificate of attendance, or similar lesser credential



New IEP Procedural Requirements Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) CA ED CODE 51225.3

Guidance Document: New Diploma for Graduation from High School Now Available for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities: New IEP Procedural Requirements

- Before the Student Commences Grade 10, the Student's IEP team must determine and notify the Student's Parent/Guardian whether the student may be eligible to graduate with a high school diploma. Based on ed. code
- The Pupil is required to take the CA Alternative Assessments in grade 11 **AND**
- Is required to complete state standards aligned coursework meeting the CA statewide minimum coursework requirements specified in Section 51225.31
(Common Core Connectors English Language Development Connectors for alternative ELPAC)
- We need to develop plans to offer all students in high school and the Adult Transition Age programs the High School Diploma that are compliant with IDEA

Supreme Court Ruling: Endrew F. v Douglas County School District Re-1 12/17

- In a [16-page decision](#), Chief Justice John G. Roberts, writing for a unanimous court, rejected the school district's *de minimis* standard. He wrote that IDEA aims for “grade level advancement for children with disabilities who can be educated in the regular classroom.” Therefore, a *de minimis* standard makes no sense:
- When all is said and done, a student offered an educational program providing “merely more than *de minimis*” progress from year to year can hardly be said to have been offered an education at all. For children with disabilities, receiving instruction that aims so low would be tantamount to “sitting idly ... awaiting the time when they were old enough to ‘drop out.’” The IDEA demands more. It requires an educational program reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child’s circumstances.
- This would apply, Roberts wrote, even to kids like Drew who aren’t integrated into general education classrooms:
- If that is not a reasonable prospect for a child, his IEP need not aim for grade-level advancement. But his educational program must be appropriately ambitious in light of his circumstances, just as advancement from grade to grade is appropriately ambitious for most children in the regular classroom. The goals may differ, but every child should have the chance to meet challenging objectives.
- He acknowledged that this was a “general standard, not a formula.” A lot will depend, he wrote, on each child’s unique needs:

Accommodations for Students with IEPs

Inclusive Practices are essential for all students with IEPs.

Many students with IEPs need accommodations to pass inclusive classes

- Alternative Instruction
- Use digital tools
- Testing Accommodations
- Breaks
- Seating
- Extra time
- Study skills training
- Sensory Tools
- Outline / Notetaking

Effective use of accommodations requires students understand their disability and how to accommodate themselves and how to ask for accommodations

A resource that defines accommodations and provides suggestions for various disabilities is www.askjan.org

Accessibility Tools-Do Students Know These Are Available on Their Devices? They Can Be Used to Accommodate Self?

2021-22 California Student Assessment Accessibility Graphic for English Language Arts/Literacy



Unless noted in parentheses, the listed resources may be used in all claims: Listening (L), Reading (R), and Writing (W).

Available to All Students

Universal Tools

Embedded		Non-Embedded
Breaks	Keyboard navigation	Breaks
Digital notepad	Line reader	English dictionary ¹ (W)
English dictionary ¹ (W)	Mark for review	Scratch paper
English glossary	Spellcheck (W)	Thesaurus ¹ (W)
Expandable items	Strikethrough	
Expandable passages	Thesaurus ¹ (W)	
Global notes ¹ (W)	Writing tools (specific items)	
Highlighter	Zoom (in/out)	

Designated Supports

Embedded	Non-Embedded	
Color contrast	Amplification	Noise buffers
Masking	Bilingual dictionary ¹ (W)	Read aloud (not reading passages)
Mouse pointer (size and color)	Color contrast	Scribe (L, R)
Streamline	Color overlay	Separate setting
Text-to-speech ² (not reading passages)	Magnification	Simplified test directions
Turn off any universal tool	Medical supports (restricted settings)	Translated test directions

Available to Students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan

Accommodations

Embedded	Non-Embedded
American sign language ² (L)	Alternate response options
Audio transcript ² (L) (includes braille transcript)	Braille (special form)
Braille ²	Large-print special form (as available)
Closed captioning ² (L)	Print on demand
Speech-to-text	Read aloud (R) (reading passages)
Text-to-speech ² (R) (reading passages)	Scribe (W)
	Speech-to-text
	Word prediction

Resources for the California Alternate Assessment

All eligible students shall have any instructional supports and/or accommodations, including the language of instruction, used in their daily instruction in accordance with each student's IEP.

The administration of the California Alternate Assessments (CAAs) to eligible students shall be one-on-one (test examiner to student), according to the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) manual. Depending on the student's disability or needs, the CAAs may or may not include the student's independent use of the testing interface. Because the CAAs are given to students one-on-one by a test examiner, some embedded resources are not provided. For example, while a braille version of the test is not provided, the test may be presented using an embosser or a refreshable display.

¹ Available only for full-write performance tasks.

² Resource not available for the CAAs.

Accommodations, Accessibility and Modification Modified Curriculum

- Universal Design for Learning teaching methodology
- Accommodations
- Accessibility features on phones, tablets, computers
- Differentiated instruction
- Multi-tiered system of support
- Modified curriculum as defined in Common Core Connector Standards and EL standards

A Challenge for the K-12 System Complete State Standards Aligned Courses

Develop strategies to align instructional goals with state standards

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/finalelaccsstandards.pdf>

- ✓ Methodology- Universal Design for Learning, Inclusion in general education
- ✓ Project-based Learning
- ✓ Consult with General Education Teachers / Curriculum- Inclusion in general education classes.

Use of tools such as <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/altassessment.asp>

Center State Collaborative CCSS, Prioritized English Language Arts CCCs and Essential Understanding

CTE Career Readiness Standards

Adopt standards-based curriculum resources

Ninth-Tenth Grade English Language Arts Standards: Writing

CCSS Grade-Level Standards	Common Core Essential Elements	Instructional Achievement Level Descriptors
<p>Text Types and Purposes.</p> <p>W.9-10.1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.</p> <p>a. Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.</p> <p>b. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.</p>	<p>EEW.9-10.1.a-b. Write about a personal opinion and give more than one reason supporting and rejecting the claim.</p>	<p>Level IV AA Students will: EEW.9-10.1.a-b. Write to express an opinion with supporting information about a topic or text and a concluding statement. Ex. Write an argument to support claims with clear reasons or evidence and introduce alternate or opposing claims. Ex. Write a claim about the class election (e.g., <i>Joe is the best</i>) and an argument to support the claim (e.g., <i>he is a friend</i>) and a reason (e.g., <i>he is good</i>) and introduce a counterclaim (e.g., <i>Jen is good, too</i>). Ex. Write a claim (e.g., <i>School uniforms are bad.</i>) and an argument to support it (e.g., <i>too hard</i>) with a reason (e.g., <i>lots of buttons</i>) and introduces a counterclaim (e.g., <i>uniforms easy to decide</i>). Ex. Write a claim (e.g., <i>No fighting at school.</i>), an argument to support it (e.g., <i>It is the rule.</i>), and a reason (e.g., <i>someone hurt</i>).</p> <p>Level III AA Students will: EEW.9-10.1.a-b. Write about a personal opinion and give more than one reason supporting and rejecting the claim. Ex. Given a statement (e.g., <i>Students should have more freedom.</i>), initially express agreement (e.g., <i>We are in 8th grade. We can make good choices.</i>) and then disagreement (e.g., <i>Sometimes we make mistakes. Sometimes we don't think ahead.</i>) and give more than one reason why, and then draw a conclusion (e.g., <i>Parents and teachers can help with freedom.</i>).</p> <p>Level II AA Students will: EEW.9-10.1.a-b. With teacher support and guidance, write an argument to support claims with one clear reason and a piece of evidence. Ex. Writes a claim about the class election (e.g., <i>Joe is the best</i>) with a peer, brainstorm arguments and reasons with the peer, and then write an argument to support the claim (e.g., <i>he is a friend</i>), and a reason (e.g., <i>he is good</i>). Ex. Write a claim (e.g., <i>School uniforms are bad.</i>) and, after teacher-led discussion, adds an argument to support it (e.g., <i>too hard</i>) with a reason (e.g., <i>lots of buttons</i>). Ex. Write a claim (e.g., <i>No fighting at school.</i>), an argument to support it (e.g., <i>It is the rule.</i>), and, after getting feedback on the draft from the teacher, adds a reason (e.g., <i>someone hurt</i>).</p> <p>Level I AA Students will: EEW.9-10.1.a-b. With guidance and support, write a claim and a reason. Ex. Use a ready-made set-up in multimedia software to choose words to write a claim. Ex. After a peer writes, state agreement or disagreement (e.g., <i>A peer writes, uniforms are bad, indicate "Yes" when asked, "Do you agree? Are uniforms bad?"</i>) and then using assistive technology, type letters or words providing a reason. Ex. Choose a claim from two options (e.g., <i>School uniforms are bad. School uniforms are good.</i>) and alternating turns with the teacher, uses assistive technology to type letters and words (e.g., <i>nice</i>) as the teacher models during her turn, short simple reasons (e.g., <i>Students look nice. Students look the same.</i>)</p>

Lessons We Have Learned

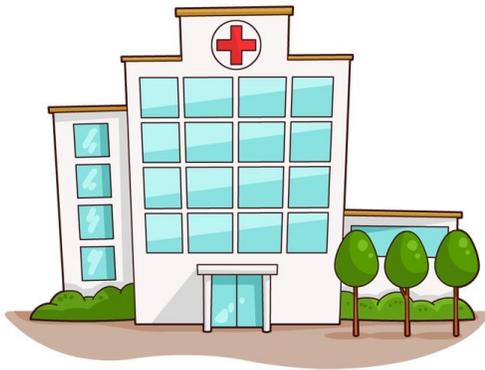
- National research has shown that youth with intellectual disabilities (ID) who have had a postsecondary education (PSE) experience are 26 times more likely to be successfully employed upon completing vocational rehabilitation services and earn a 73 percent higher weekly wage than their peers without a PSE experience. California's Department of Rehabilitation responded to this compelling data by allocating funding for College to Career (C2C) programs.
- Students who attend the C2C programs are passing college courses, earning industry certificates and going to work. They have one of the highest persistence rate of all student groups.
- They are offered personal support, guidance on selecting classes, accommodations, and sometimes, intensive reading instruction.

Implications for College and Career Readiness

- It is anticipated as the K-12 system changes to engage students with I/DD in standards focused curriculum, they will arrive at the college level with academic skills. However, this is a systems-change endeavor.
- They will continue to need accommodations and accessible resources
- California is closing sheltered work environments and increasing the need to prepare students for competitive, integrated employment—they will continue to benefit from engagement in career-technical pathways
- Communication and seamless transition between systems is increasingly important
- All students benefit from transition services, including pre-employment transition services
- Traditionally, students with I/DD are expected to stay in school to age 22—the end of mandatory education in the K-12 system ends at age 18
- There is a growing emphasis on person-centered planning
- Changes in employment expectations necessitate the need for apprenticeships, internships and work-based learning – and industry certifications



Steps to Inclusion: Let's look at Destinations



Each element of transition led to greater inclusion in the community and improved our understanding.

- Now we talk independence at work, home, community
- <https://youtu.be/PQgXBhPh5Zo>

Making the Case for Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)





Suggested Next Steps for Community College Partners

- Examine expectations and challenges for student groups
- Provide training for all faculty in the areas of inclusion and universal design for learning
- Collaborate with transition supports beyond high school (Regional Centers and Department of Rehabilitation). Community Colleges and universities are “destinations” for increasing numbers of students with disabilities
- Provide orientation and information to parents through Community Advisory Committees
- Review eligibility for financial aid
- Encourage participation in dual enrollment classes and/or early college programs
- Examine the application process to ensure access
- Encourage schools to adopt Thinkcollege.net College Readiness IEP goals
- Are Students with disabilities encouraged to participate in college fairs? Apply for financial aid? Visit the college campus? When should this outreach begin?

ThinkCollege.net IEP Goals for Readiness for College

- https://thinkcollege.net/sites/default/files/files/resources/TCcampaign%20resource%20booklet_R-fixed.pdf
- https://thinkcollege.net/sites/default/files/files/resources/TCResource_IEP%20goal%20ideas%202023_R_0.pdf





Q&A

Thank you for joining us!

- Please fill out a quick evaluation survey about the webinar through the link (in the chat) or via QR code.

https://uclahs.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bwKxXHgWvlls4aW

