



Pathways to a Diploma

There is a Course of Study that
Leads to a Diploma for **ALL** Students

Presenters:

Sue Sawyer, CA Transition Alliance

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Welcome

Introductions

Sue Sawyer, President, CA Transition Alliance

Vicki Shadd, Vice President, CA Transition Alliance

Moderator, Tracy Hurd

Our Expectations-Bias

All Students should have a pathway to a diploma.

We need to start early.

We want inclusion at school and the workplace.

Academic growth is essential

WE Should Expect Success

If the IEP is a backward map and the ultimate goal is employment

How do the words you can't earn a diploma affect the pupil? Family?

How do they affect their vision of their future?



Our Goals for This Presentation

Explore All Options for a High School Diploma

Learn about the Workgroup Report California Alternative Pathways to a High School Diploma Workgroup Report, October 2021

Explore Definition of the Alternative Diploma

Identify Strategies your LEA can implement to provide All students with Disabilities a Diploma



What are your expectations for this session.

Please complete this statement in the chat

I selected this presentation because I want to learn about.....



Background Information- Role of the CA Transition Alliance

Vicki and I have been working on this topic since 2013. We were concerned because only 65% of students with IEPs were earning a diploma.

We also found:

LEAs were not capitalizing the use of the IEP for accommodations.

LEAs were not utilizing the options for other groups of students

LEAs were not capitalizing using waivers

The Alliance developed two strategies.

We researched ED Code to define the high school diploma. We found that are multiple paths to the diploma for various student populations.

We researched strategies to offer a diploma and provided training throughout the state.

This is the summary of our findings + the Workgroup Findings



We were Alarmed by the Graduation Statistics

65% of Students with IEPs were graduating with a diploma, which means 35% of students with IEPs did not earn a diploma.

Many students were leaving high school without the academic foundation need for postsecondary education and employment.

A survey completed through SELPA verified the certificate of completion was given to a variety of students who struggled to meet the local graduation requirements.

Today- It is better but we have a long way to go!

2021 Graduation Rates: 4 and 5 year cohort

84% of all students graduate with a high school diploma.

72% of students with IEPs graduate with a high school diploma

84% of Students who are DASS (Dashboard Alternative School Status) receive a diploma.

Unlike the Four-Year Graduation Rate for non-alternative schools, students who earn a Special Education Certificate of Completion, a California High School Equivalency Certificate, or an adult education diploma are counted as graduating



Diploma Options Available Today in California

CDE Defines State Diploma Course of Study

Golden Seal Merit Diplomas

Local Education Agencies High School Diploma

Diploma Plus diplomas

High School Proficiency Exam

Adult Education Diplomas

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

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

This is What We Found All Students – One System???

I am in the CTE Pathway- I want to attend the community college and work

I have an IEP. I can't pass foreign language (or science) - so I can't graduate with a diploma

I am in foster care - I just moved here. Glad I qualify for a diploma that requires fewer classes

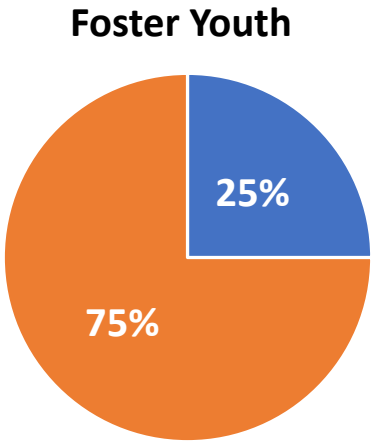
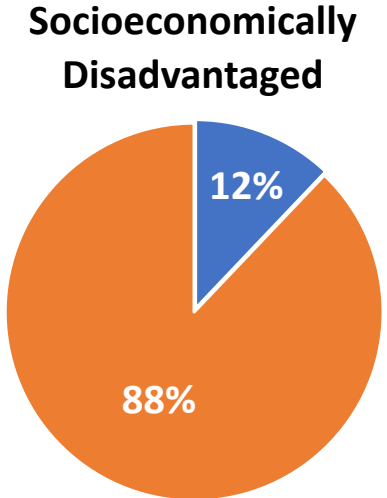
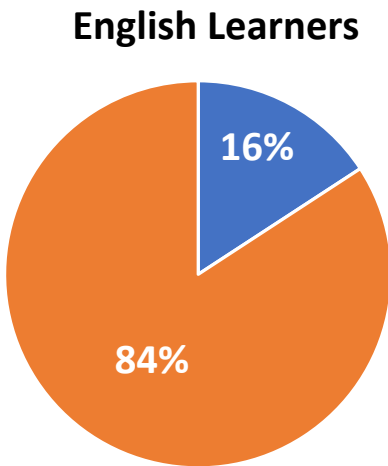
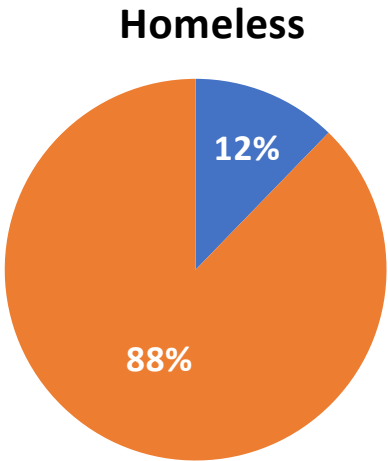
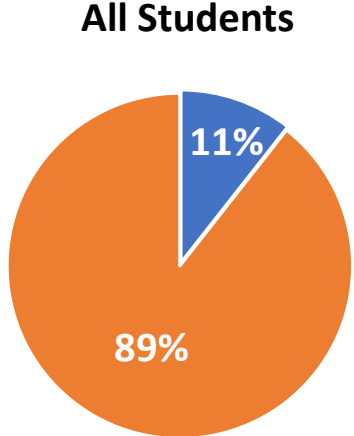
My EL classes are helping me qualify for a diploma

I am taking A-G classes and am going to the University

I am earning a diploma through independent study and work experience



Students with Disabilities Are Well Represented in the Local Control Funding Formula Student Groups



Source CALPADS data 2016—17
Total Student population = 6,228,235

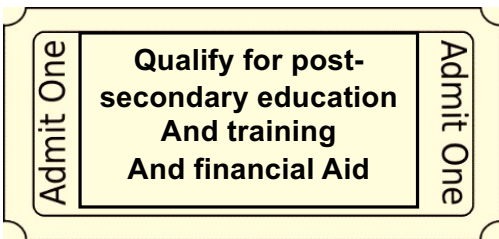
Blue= Students with IEPs
Orange= Students without IEPs

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.

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
- There is a need to define the certificate and set expectations for academic standards, a transition portfolio and/or industry certifications.



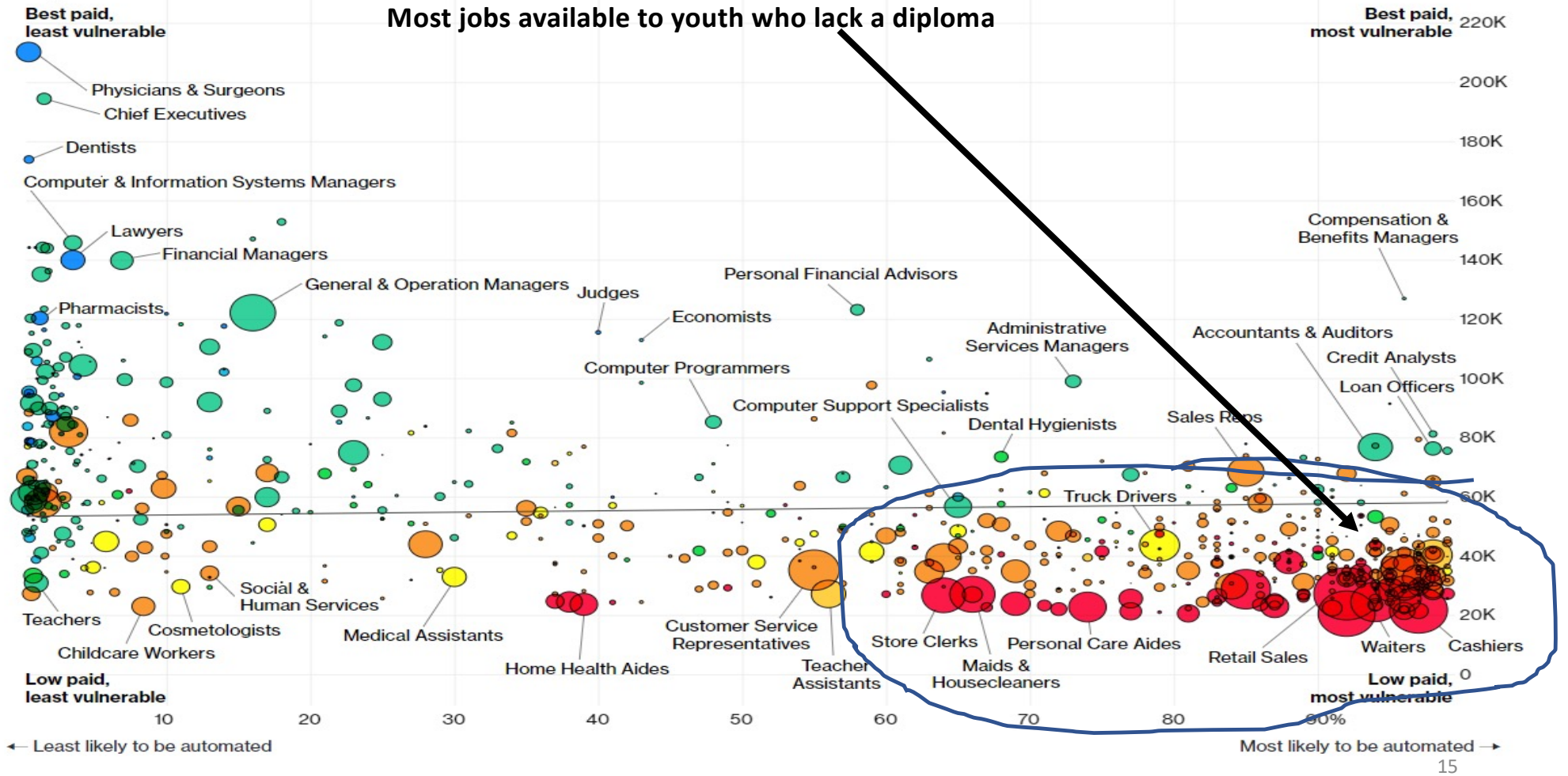
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What happens to you when you lack a diploma?

- **The Personal Impact** – loss of confidence and optimism
- Doubts- may experience doubts, negative perceptions of self worth and ability to get a job.
- 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 face barriers to achieve successful outcomes and end up in jobs that are in danger because of automation and artificial intelligence





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Quick Quiz

Q: When do we make the decision to put students off a diploma track?

Please respond in the chat.



The Alternative Diploma Workgroup

was convened to examine these issues and offer recommendations December 2020 and completed its report October 1, 2021

The workgroup envisioned a future in which:

- All students with disabilities in California enter high school knowing they have the opportunity to earn a high school diploma.
- Students with disabilities, including those with significant cognitive disabilities exit the K-12 educational system with both a high school diploma and a set of skills that prepares them for the opportunity to earn a family sustaining wage and meaningfully participate in their community.
- Students, families and teachers understand the requirements each individual student must meet to earn a diploma and collectively ensure, through the IEP process, that there is a clear path in place for supporting each student in achieving all of the requirements necessary to earn a diploma.



The Report Defines Three Student Groups

1. Students with significant cognitive disabilities who take the California Alternative Assessments (CAAS) who receive special education and related services and who require extensive support, including direct individualized instruction and significant academic support to achieve measurable gains in their grade level standards. These students traditionally receive the certificate of completion.
2. Students who receive special education and related services and who need a moderate level or more specialized support of support through individualized academic instruction and accommodations to meet grade level standard expectations. Some students in this group may be able to achieve proficiency if given more time.
3. Students who represent the majority of students with disabilities who receive special education and related services that will allow them to access and meet the same grade level academic standards and expectations and complete the same course requirements (state and local) for graduation as their non-disabled peers.



If 85% of students with IEPs have average or above average intelligence, why do only 73% earn a diploma????

What percentage of these students do **you** believe can achieve grade level academic standards?

How many achieve grade level academic standards in your LEA?

How many earn a diploma in your LEA?

What influences can you identify that impact student success? Policy? Procedures? Expectations?



Workgroup Recommendations

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.

Priorities

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

Outcomes to date

Continue to review, refine, expectations

Definition of Alternative Diploma is in Ed Code



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 of foreign language or American Sign Language (ASL)	2 Years of same language other than English, may include ASL
Visual or Performing Art	1 year foreign language or Visual/Performing Art or Career Technical Education	1 year including music, theatre, visual arts and interdisciplinary arts
Physical Education	2 years	Not Applicable
Electives	Not Applicable	1 year
Total	13	15



The Definition of the CA Alternative Diploma EC 51225.31

A local Education Agency shall exempt an individual with exceptional needs who has satisfied the eligibility criteria listed below:

Their Individualized Education Plan provides each of the following:

The pupil shall take the alternative assessment aligned with alternative achievement standards in grade 11.

The pupil shall complete state standards aligned with coursework requirements.

Prior to a pupil commencing grade 10, a pupil's IEP team shall determine and notify the parent or guardian whether the pupil will be allowed to graduate pursuant of the exemption defined in this section.

An individual with exceptional needs who meets the criteria described in this section shall be eligible to participate in graduation ceremonies and activities – but participation is not construed as termination of free and appropriate public education

Challenges and Suggestions

Academic

- The pupil shall complete state standards aligned with coursework requirements.
- Training and Practicing Differentiated Instruction and UDL
- Maximizing the IEP document and process
- Expanding the use of the CDE CA Assessment Accessibility Resources Matrix You will find this at cde.ca.gov under Testing and Accountability

CA Assessment Accessibility Resources Matrix

Part 1—Universal Tools

[Universal tools](#) are available to all students on the basis of student preference and selection.

Part 2—Designated Supports

[Designated supports](#) are available to all students when determined for use by an educator or team of educators (with parent/guardian and student input, as appropriate) or specified in the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan.

Part 3—Accommodations

[Accommodations](#) must be permitted on CAASPP and ELPAC tests to all eligible students if specified in the student's IEP or Section 504 plan.

Part 4—Instructional Supports and Resources for the Alternate Assessments

The [California Alternate Assessments](#) (CAAs) and the Alternate ELPAC are administered to students one-on-one by a test examiner. The operational field test Alternate ELPAC will begin in November 2021.

Myth and Facts

- Myth: Some students cannot learn
- Fact: All students can learn-teaching styles and methodology need to embrace Multi-tiered systems of Support and Universal Design





Myth and Fact

- Myth: Academic standards are too hard for some students to master.
- Fact: There are a variety of Resources for teachers to adapt curriculum.
- Common Core Standards
- EL Standards



Myth and Fact

- Myth: There is no need to provide a diploma to students who can't meet graduation standards
- Fact: We moving toward Competitive Integrated Employment earning a family supporting wage. You have a major barrier entering employment without a diploma.

Myth and Fact



Myth: All students need A-G Courses. These recommendations will water down the diploma

Fact: All students need a strong academic foundation.

A-G courses benefit students who enter the Universities directly out of high school.

Eligibility for the Universities are based on information on the transcript, not a diploma.

Universities take the top 33% based on G.P.A. ranking

Transcript and Diploma

Characteristics Does the document:	High School Diploma	High School Transcript
Signify the student has completed a course of study?	Yes	Yes
Outline the specific coursework completed?	No	Yes
Outline grades or achievement levels earned?	No	Yes
Indicate the Student has a disability or exceptional learning needs?	No	No



In conclusion.....

- It is recommended that the LEA set the policy that all students receive the same diploma. Pathways to the diploma may be different- but are also well established with the exception of the alternative diploma.
- Students who earn the diploma by meeting the alternative diploma requirements may continue in the K-12 system up to age 22- unless they elect to leave with a diploma sooner.
- Continued research and an analysis of the policies is highly recommended and is contingent on the final state budget.
- We will open the discussion to your questions. Please share your thoughts in chat.