



Pathways to A Diploma

Times They are A Changing My Crystal Ball tells me

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High School Diploma and Recent Ed Code 51225.3

- State Performance Plan Indicators redefined

Proposed Legislation- Special Ed.

We can see these as a forecast of the direction of special education in the future- share as Best Practices until legislation is final.

SB 1113 Credentialing Recommendations
Universal Design Value of Inclusion

AB 2427 Change Transition Age from 16 to 14
Bill update May 2022 - Held under Submission
Not enacted

IEP Template Workgroup Recommendations
Focus on assets-not deficits
Integrates transition into entire document

CA Dashboard College / Career Indicators and implications for **ALL** students who want to transition to the community colleges universities, specialized training, internships/apprenticeships and employment

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.

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



- “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?

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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 12/17¹⁶

Summary of the CDE Report to State Legislator

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/ac/altpathwayslegreport.asp>

...the workgroup concluded that in lieu of creating a set of new alternate pathways (other than creating a new pathway for students with significant cognitive disabilities), the state should increase access to the full range of pathway options already provided all students, and in some cases, currently afforded to specific named student groups. This includes better access and support for students with disabilities to meet existing state and local requirements for earning a regular diploma, and the allowance for some students with disabilities to earn a diploma through meeting state requirements for graduation only. **The workgroup warned that creating separate pathways for students with disabilities could lead to the perpetuation of existing siloes between general and special education and exclusion of students with disabilities in rigorous high school coursework and postsecondary opportunities.**

Diploma Options Available Today in California

CDE Defines
State
Requirements
for 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

Plus Local Graduation Requirements

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

CA Course Requirements also states

The local governing board of the LEA...**shall adopt alternative means** for pupils to complete the prescribed course of study, which may include:

Practical demonstration of skills and competencies

Career Technical Education classes offered in high schools

Supervised work experience or other outside school experience

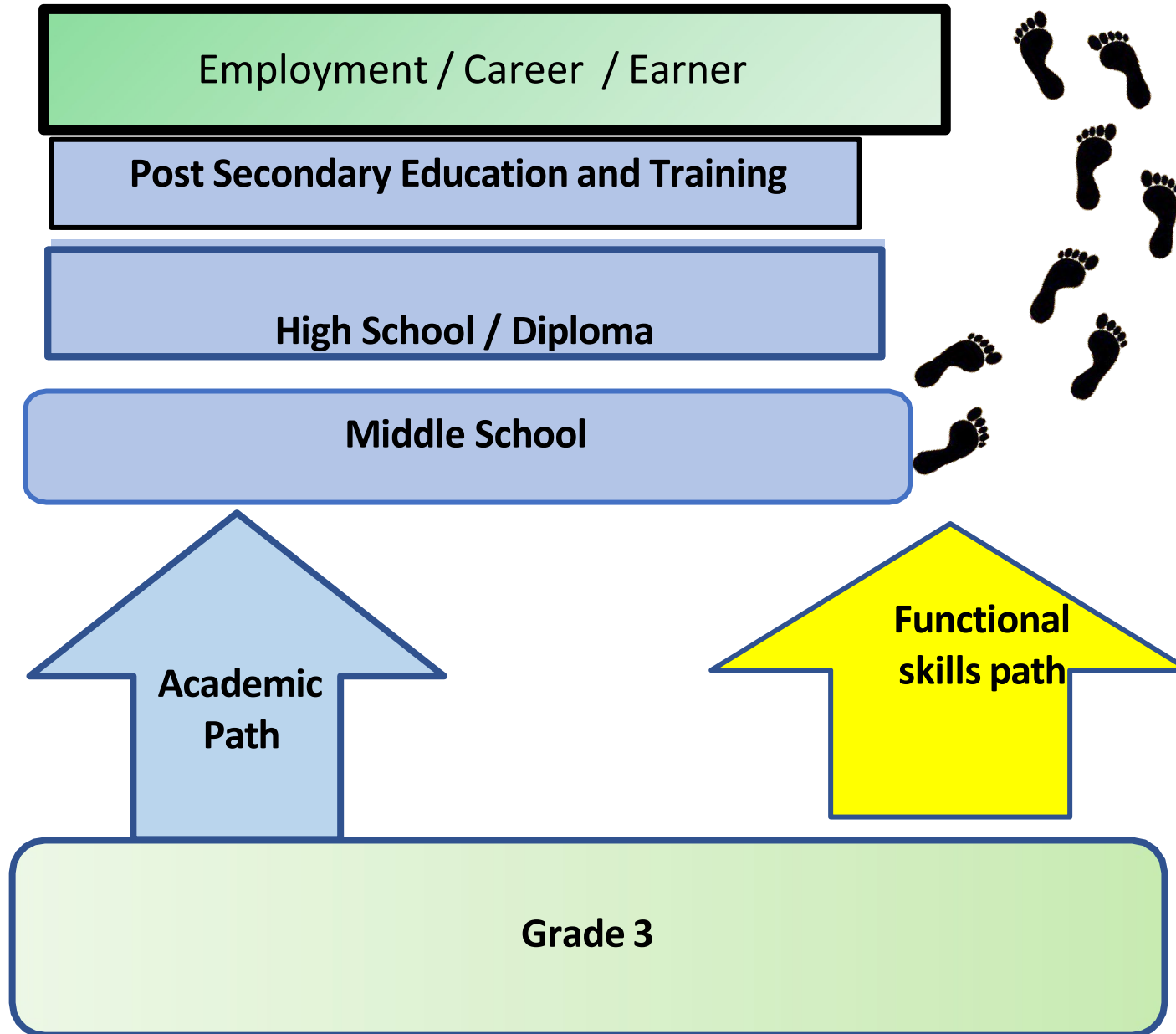
Interdisciplinary study

Courses offered by regional occupational centers or programs

Independent study

Credit earned at a postsecondary institution

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.

Lessons We Have Learned

- National research has shown that youth with intellectual disabilities (ID) who have had a postsecondary (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.

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:

They have an Individualized Education Plan that provides each of the following:

- They qualify with significant cognitive disabilities.
- The pupil shall take the alternative assessment aligned with alternative achievement standards in grade 11.
- The pupil shall complete state standards aligned 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

Requirements: Alternative Pathway to a diploma

1. This pathway is **only** provided to students with significant cognitive disabilities.
2. The students are required to take the alternative assessment that is aligned with alternative achievement standards in grade 11.
3. The student must complete state standards **aligned** coursework to meet statewide coursework requirements
4. The awarding of this diploma does not change the LEA's mandate to provide a free and appropriate education or indicate a change in placement.
5. The LEA is required to exempt the student with exceptional needs from all coursework requirements to achieve the diploma that are in addition to the statewide course requirements.
6. Parents must be notified of the diploma status before a student enters grade 10.

What Steps are Required to Implement the Alternative Pathway?

Local Policy is required to waive local mandates for earning the diploma and stipulate the Alternative Pathway is available to students with significant cognitive disabilities who take the CAA Alternative Assessment and are complete coursework that is aligned with academic content standards.

Suggestion: If the LEA takes the position there is only one diploma standard, reference policies for students in foster care, military families and who attend alternative education schools, such as continuation high schools.

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 CAA 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 ESSA and IDEA.

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

Suggestion: Note the pathway in the transcript. It documents the availability of FAPE to 22.

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**