

# Graduation Options for Students with Disabilities

Adapted from MDUSD Pathway Options for a Diploma or Certificate of Completion

Students with disabilities (SWD) may have differentiated graduation and competency standards, as determined by their Individual Education Program (IEP) and the LEA/District's school board policies.

All the pathways, except the Certificate of Completion, allow the student to graduate with a regular high school diploma. Each path has different implications for post-high school options that must be considered individually, discussed by the IEP team, and documented in the potential harmful effects section of the student's IEP.

Students should pursue the most rigorous pathway, and moving to a less rigorous path is an IEP team decision that is periodically revisited throughout the student's high school career to best address the student's individual needs.

| Pathways to a Diploma for Students with Disabilities |  |   |   | Certificate of Completion  |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| Graduation Pathway:                                  | LEA/District Regular Diploma   | Expanded Options for Specific Populations   | Alternative Pathway to a District Diploma   | Not a Diploma Pathway  |
| Minimum # of Credits                                 | Varies   | 130   | 130**   | Per LEA Policy   |
| Available to:  | All Students   | Qualifying Foster, Homeless, Migrant, Active Military, Newcomer   | SWD who qualify for the CAA through IEPs  | SWD through IEPs   |
| Subject Area Specifications                          |  |   |   |  |
| Graduation Pathway:                                  | Sample District Regular Diploma  | Expanded Options for Specific Populations   | Alternative Pathway to a District Diploma   | Certificate of Completion  |
| English  | 40 credits   | 30 credits  | 30 credits  | Satisfactorily completes a prescribed course of study as determined by the IEP team, |
| Social Science                                       | ~30 credits<br>* 10 World History<br>* 10 US History<br>* 5 Government<br>* 5 Economics<br>* 5 Ethnic Studies (29-30 SY) | ~30 credits<br>* 10 World Hist<br>* 10 US History<br>* 5 Government<br>* 5 Economics<br>* 5 Ethnic Studies (29-30 SY) | ~30 credits<br>* 10 World Hist<br>* 10 US History<br>* 5 Civics<br>* 5 Economics<br>* 5 Ethnic Studies (29-30 SY) |  |
| Mathematics  | ~30 credits<br>Must include Meet or Exceed Algebra 1<br>* 5 Personal Finance (30-31 SY)                                  | ~20 credits<br>Must include Meet or Exceed Algebra 1<br>* 5 Personal Finance (30-31 SY)                               | ~20 credits<br>Must include Meet or Exceed Algebra 1<br>* 5 Personal Finance (30-31 SY)                           | Satisfactorily completes a prescribed course of study as determined by the IEP team, |
| Science  | 20 credits<br>*10 physical<br>*10 biological   | 20 credits<br>*10 physical<br>*10 biological  | 20 credits<br>*10 physical<br>*10 biological  | Satisfactorily meets IEP goals   |

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|                                   |   |                |  |                |
|-----------------------------------|---|----------------|--|----------------|
| Physical Education                | 20 credits  | 20 credits     | 20 credits   | and objectives |
| World Language Or<br>VAPA Or *CTE | 20 credits<br><i>Student must complete 10 credits in 2 of the 3 areas</i> | 10 credits     | 10 credits   |                |
| Electives or other requirements   | 60 credits  | Not Applicable | Available and includes Transition Goals and Coursework |                |

|                                   | A-G Eligible High School Diploma  | Traditional High School Diploma  | Expanded Options for Specific Populations   | Alternative Pathway to a District Diploma   | High School Certificate of Completion   |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|---|---|
| Who is eligible?                  | All students, with and without disabilities, if the student meets the requirements outlined in the A-G criteria as established by the UC/CSU systems  | All students, with and without disabilities, if the student meets the requirements outlined in the LEA/District board policy   | Youth experiencing homelessness or in foster care or migrant, or are from active military families or newcomers may be eligible if they transfer schools after their second year and are unable to complete requirements within 4 years | Students with an IEP must meet the following requirements:<br><br>Eligible for the California Alternate Assessment (CAA) *<br><br>Entering grade 9 in the 22/23 school year or later *<br><br>Required to complete state standards-aligned coursework to meet the statewide coursework requirements | A student with a significant disability who is not able to earn the required credits needed to earn a diploma can earn a Certificate of Completion when the following has been satisfied:<br>1. Completed four years of high school.<br>2. Satisfactory achieved IEP goals and objectives.<br>3. Participated in instruction as the student's IEP and transition plan prescribes. |
| What are the requirements?        | The University of California and the California State University systems have established a uniform minimum set of courses required for admission as a freshman. Other requirements may also apply. | The High School Graduation Requirements include grade-level standards-based courses in core subjects as identified by the Board of Education in LEA/District Board Policy. | Eligible students, described in the cell above, are exempt from all courses and other additional requirements to the statewide minimum course requirements.   | Eligible students, described in the cell above, are exempt from all courses and other additional requirements to the statewide minimum course requirements.   | Students complete a recommended course of study. The IEP team develops and monitors students' courses. Specific courses and credits are not required.   |
| Accommodations allowed?           | Yes   | Yes  | Yes   | Yes   | Yes   |
| Curriculum modifications allowed? | Maybe. By changing what a student learns, modifications can impact a student's ability to earn a high school diploma.   | Maybe. By changing what a student learns, modifications can impact a student's ability to earn a high school diploma.  | Maybe. By changing what a student learns, modifications can impact a student's ability to earn a high school diploma.   | Not necessary as the coursework is aligned to the Core Content Connectors- known as the Alternate Achievement Standards.  | Yes   |

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| Accepted by the military?                                       | Yes: Student must also meet other entry criteria | Yes: Student must also meet other entry criteria                                 | Yes: Student must also meet other entry criteria | Yes: Student must also meet other entry criteria  | No  |
|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| Courses meet colleges/universities entrance requirements (A-G)? | Yes  | Maybe: It depends on the graduation requirements established by the LEA/District | No   | No, but other programs specifically designed for people with disabilities may be available. | No, but other programs specifically designed for people with disabilities may be available. |
| Eligible for Federal Student Aid                                | Yes  | Yes  | Yes  | Yes   | No  |
| Accepted by employers?  | Yes  | Yes  | Yes  | Yes   | Maybe, depending on the employer and the job qualifications.                                |
| Eligible for Post Secondary LEA/District Programs?              | No   | No   | No   | Yes   | Yes   |

## Other LEA/District-Specific Diploma Requirements

- May exceed state requirements
- Additional components may include:
  - Completion of community service hours
  - A senior thesis or capstone project
- Requires individualized consideration and potential accommodations for students with disabilities

Some LEAs/districts have also chosen to provide a differentiated diploma option. While functionally equivalent to a regular high school diploma, a school's governing board must also approve a differentiated diploma. This alternative could allow LEAs/districts a broader interpretation of how students demonstrate mastery of the prescribed set of courses within the differentiated diploma option for students with disabilities.

## HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA EQUIVALENCY ASSESSMENTS

California offers pathways for students to earn credentials equivalent to a high school diploma through the California Proficiency Program (CPP) and High School Equivalency Tests (GED). These options are available to students of certain ages and provide flexibility, including support for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Students with IEPs who pass equivalency assessments remain eligible for special education services at their LEA/District until the age 22.

Students earning the CPP Certificate or High School Equivalency Certificate can continue high school to meet additional requirements or exit high school with parental permission to pursue higher education, vocational training, or a career.

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## **ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES**

School districts or regional adult education consortia offer adult education programs in California to provide educational opportunities for adults aged 18 and older. These programs typically focus on basic skills, high school diploma equivalency, English as a Second Language (ESL), career training, and preparation for the workforce or higher education.

Adult students can earn a high school diploma by completing required coursework through adult education. Many programs also offer preparation for the General Educational Development (GED) or High School Equivalency Test (HiSET), which are alternatives to a diploma and are recognized as equivalent by most employers and educational institutions.