



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Superintendents, Special Education Directors/Contacts, and School Counselors

**FROM:** Dr. Janet Barresi, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

**DATE:** February 13, 2014

**SUBJECT:** Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Transcripts, Course Titles for Graduation, and Achieving Classroom Excellence (ACE) Requirements for Students with Disabilities.

The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE), Special Education Services (SES), is providing the following information intended to provide technical assistance to local educational agencies (LEA) regarding the above listed topics and how they pertain to students with disabilities.

**Q1:** May students with disabilities be exempted from core curriculum mandates set by the state?

**A1:** No, the minimum requirement set by the Oklahoma State Department of Education must be met by all students in order to receive an Oklahoma High School Diploma.

**Q2:** Who determines the graduation requirements for students with disabilities?

**A2:** Completion of a secondary education program and graduation with a high school diploma will be accomplished by the student meeting all minimum graduation requirements set by the Oklahoma State Department of Education. In accordance with the Special Education Handbook, a student's IEP team determines a goal for completion of an appropriate secondary education program.

**Q3:** Do students with disabilities have to meet graduation requirements to receive a diploma?

**A3:** Yes, students with disabilities have to choose either a **college preparatory/work-ready curriculum** or a **core curriculum** in order to meet graduation

requirements under the ACE legislation. Students entering the 9th grade in the 2008-2009 school year are automatically enrolled in the **college preparatory/work-ready curriculum** for high school graduation, unless a parent or legal guardian has opted out of these requirements, in writing. If opted out, the student would then be enrolled in the **core curriculum** for high school graduation.

**Q4:** What is the difference between college preparatory/work ready curriculum and the core curriculum?

**A4:** Students with disabilities who opt out of the **college preparatory/work-ready curriculum** have some flexibility in the courses required of them to graduate. For graduation (core curriculum) a student must have a total of 23 units or sets of competencies which include:

- 4 units of English, to include Grammar, Composition, Literature, or any English course approved for college admission;
- 3 units of Mathematics, to include Algebra I or Algebra I taught in a contextual methodology;
- 3 units of Science, to include Biology I or Biology I taught in a contextual methodology;
- 3 units of Social Studies;
- 2 units of Arts; and
- 8 electives.

**Q5:** What are the testing requirements for ACE?

**5A6:** A student must demonstrate mastery of the Oklahoma Academic Standards in the following subject areas in order to graduate from a public high school with a standard diploma: Algebra I; English II; and **two** of the following five: Algebra II, Biology I, English III, Geometry, and United States History.

**Q6:** What is considered to be a demonstration of mastery?

**A6:** In order for a student to demonstrate mastery, they must attain at least a satisfactory score on the end-of-instruction (EOI) criterion-referenced tests administered pursuant to Section 1210.508.

**Q7:** Does a student with disabilities have to take all of the EOI criterion-references tests?

**A7:** Section 1210.508 states, each student **who completes the instruction** for English II, English III, United States History, Biology I, Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II, when implemented, at the secondary level shall complete an end-of-instruction test to measure for attainment in the appropriate state academic content standards in order to graduate from high school. All students will take the

EOI assessment of the courses in which they were previously enrolled and completed the instruction; three of which **must** be Algebra I, English II, and Biology I.

**Q8:** Who determines the course of study for a student with a disability?

**A8:** For students with disabilities the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team determines the course of study for each student individually. For more guidance on appropriate alternate courses, please refer to the Oklahoma State Department of Education web site.

**Q9:** Can transcripts for students with disabilities indicate credit for an alternate course title?

**A9:** No, transcripts for students with disabilities must indicate the course title of the actual course the student is participating in. For example, if the student received Algebra I instruction, the course must be titled Algebra I.

**Q10:** Can students' with disabilities transcripts indicate they are a student with a disability?

**A10:** No, a student's transcript cannot contain any information which would be considered to be discriminatory based on their disability by referencing their special education placement or category, their special services, their special education test information, or any other reference to their disability

**Additional Clarification:** The nature of special education is that students with disabilities utilize accommodations and supplemental aids and services to aid them in the general education classroom. The course title is based on the curriculum that is instructed; not the specialized instruction provided to the student or the type of assessment the student is participating in. It should also be noted that the use of concepts and essentials as course titles should not be utilized on transcripts and excludes the student from being eligible for the Oklahoma's Promise, Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program (OHLAP) Scholarship.