

Alternate Diploma Collaborative

March 10, 2023



OKLAHOMA
Education



Alternate Diploma Collaborative Topics

- March 10 - The What and Why Behind the Alternate Diploma
- March 24 - What To Do For Students Graduating 22/23, 23/24, and beyond
- March 31 - Nuts and Bolts Of Developing an 18-21 Program
- April 7 - Next Steps
- April 14 - IDEA paperwork and EDPlan
- April 21 - To Be Determined
- April 28 - To Be Determined

Why Are We Implementing An Alternate Diploma?

FAPE

- All students with disabilities are entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). This includes students who are eligible for special education from the ages of 3 through the end of the school year in which they turn 22.

Obligation To Provide FAPE Ends

- 1. When the student meets the LEA requirements that apply to all students for receipt of a standard high school diploma; or**
- 2. When the student no longer meets the eligibility criteria for special education services on an IEP, as determined by the evaluation group after a reevaluation; or**
- 3. When a parent (or student at age of majority) revokes consent for special education and related services; or**
- 4. At the end of the school year in which the student turns 22 years of age.**

§300.102 Limitation - Exception to FAPE for Certain Ages.

- As used in paragraphs (a)(3)(i) through (iii) of this section, the term *regular high school diploma* means the standard high school diploma awarded to the preponderance of students in the State that is **fully aligned with State standards**, or a higher diploma,
- *except that* a regular high school diploma **shall not be aligned to the alternate academic achievement standards** described in section 1111(b)(1)(E) of the ESEA. A regular high school diploma does not include a recognized equivalent of a diploma, such as a general equivalency diploma, certificate of completion, certificate of attendance, or similar lesser credential.

Translation

- A regular diploma must be fully aligned with State standards.
- A regular diploma shall not be aligned with alternate academic achievement standards.
- Thus, students who are taught to alternate standards and assessed by OAAP shall not be given a regular diploma.

ESSA Language On State-Defined Alternate Diplomas

- Specifically designated for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities assessed using the alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards.
- This is not a Regular High School Diploma

How Is The State-Defined Alternate Diploma Different From A Regular Diploma?

- While this Alternate Diploma is standards-based (has coursework aligned with alternate academic standards) and it meets ESSA requirement of being aligned with the state requirements for the Regular High School Diploma, it is **not a Regular High School Diploma**.
- A State-defined Alternate Diploma **does not terminate a free appropriate public education (FAPE)** for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

What Does It Take To Have A State- Defined Alternate Diploma?

ESSA Language

The state-defined alternate diploma must meet three requirements:

- ✓ **Standards-based**
- ✓ **Aligned with the State requirements for the regular high school diploma**
- ✓ **Obtained within the same period for which the State ensures the availability of a free appropriate public education under section 612(a)(1) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(1))**

Also, the state-defined alternate diploma must meet the implied condition of being state-defined.

HB 1041 – Expands Graduation Opportunities For Students With Significant Cognitive Disabilities

- Defines course work required for graduation with a State-defined Alternate Diploma
- Mirrors requirements for a regular diploma
- Aligned to Alternate Standards/Essential Elements
- Includes new Career Readiness and Life Skills Courses

What Are The Requirements For Earning The State-Defined Alternate Diploma?

1. **Language Arts** – **Four units** or sets of competencies based on alternate academic achievement standards to consist of reading literature, reading informational text, writing, speaking and listening, and language in the following courses: **a. English 1 Alternate, b. English 2 Alternate, c. English 3 Alternate, and d. English 4 Alternate;**

2. **Mathematics** – **Three units** or sets of competencies based on alternate academic achievement standards to consist of number, quantities, algebra, functions/statistics, probability, and geometry in the following courses: **a. Math Alternate 1, b. Math Alternate 2, and c. Math Alternate 3;**

3. **Science** – **Three units** or sets of competencies based on alternate academic achievement standards to consist of life science, physical science, and earth science in the following courses: **a. Life Science Alternate, b. Physical Science Alternate, and c. Earth Science Alternate;**

4. **Social Studies** – **Three units** or sets of competencies based on alternate academic achievement standards to consist of United States History, United States Government, Oklahoma History, and Geography or Social Studies in the following courses: **a. Social Studies Alternate 1, b. Social Studies Alternate 2, and c. Social Studies Alternate 3,**

What Are The Requirements For Earning The State-Defined Alternate Diploma? 2

5. **Arts** – **One unit** or set of competencies which may include, but is not limited to, courses in Visual Arts and General Music;

6. **Computer Education or World Language** - **One unit** or set of competencies of computer technology, whether taught at a high school or a technology center school, including computer programming, hardware, and business computer applications, such as word processing, databases, spreadsheets, and graphics, excluding keyboarding or typing courses, or one unit or set of competencies of world or non-English language;

7. **Career Readiness** – at least **two units** of Career Readiness, including Career Readiness I, Career Readiness II, Career Readiness III, or Career Readiness IV. Each Career Readiness course may be substituted for Careers/Exploration, Internship I, or Internship II; and

8. **Life Skills** – at least **two units** of Life Skills, such as Life Skills I, Life Skills II, Life Skills III, or Life Skills IV. Each Life Skills course may be substituted for the Life Skills or Family and Consumer Science courses.

What Are The Requirements For Earning The State-Defined Alternate Diploma? 3

- Required:
 - Personal Financial Literacy <https://sde.ok.gov/personal-financial-literacy>
- Not Required: (If the IEP team decides it is not needed)
 - U.S. Naturalization
 - CPR/AED Requirements

Can Course Titles With the Word Alternate be included on Transcripts?

- Taken from U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, (October, 2008 Q&A)

8. May a transcript for a student with a disability indicate, either through specific notations or the use of asterisks or other symbols, that the student took classes with a modified or alternate education curriculum?

- In general, yes. While a transcript may not disclose that a student has a disability or has received special education or related services due to having 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 credentials and achievements. Transcript notations concerning enrollment in different classes, course content, or curriculum by students with disabilities would be consistent with similar transcript designations for classes such as advanced placement, honors, and basic and remedial instruction, which are provided for both students with and without disabilities, and thus would not violate Section 504 or Title II. This distinction may also be achieved by using an asterisk or other symbol meant to reference the modified or alternate education curriculum. These notations, asterisks, or other symbols indicating a modified or alternate education curriculum are permissible when they do not specifically disclose that a student has a disability, are not used for the purpose of identifying programs for students with disabilities, and are consistent with the purpose of a student transcript.

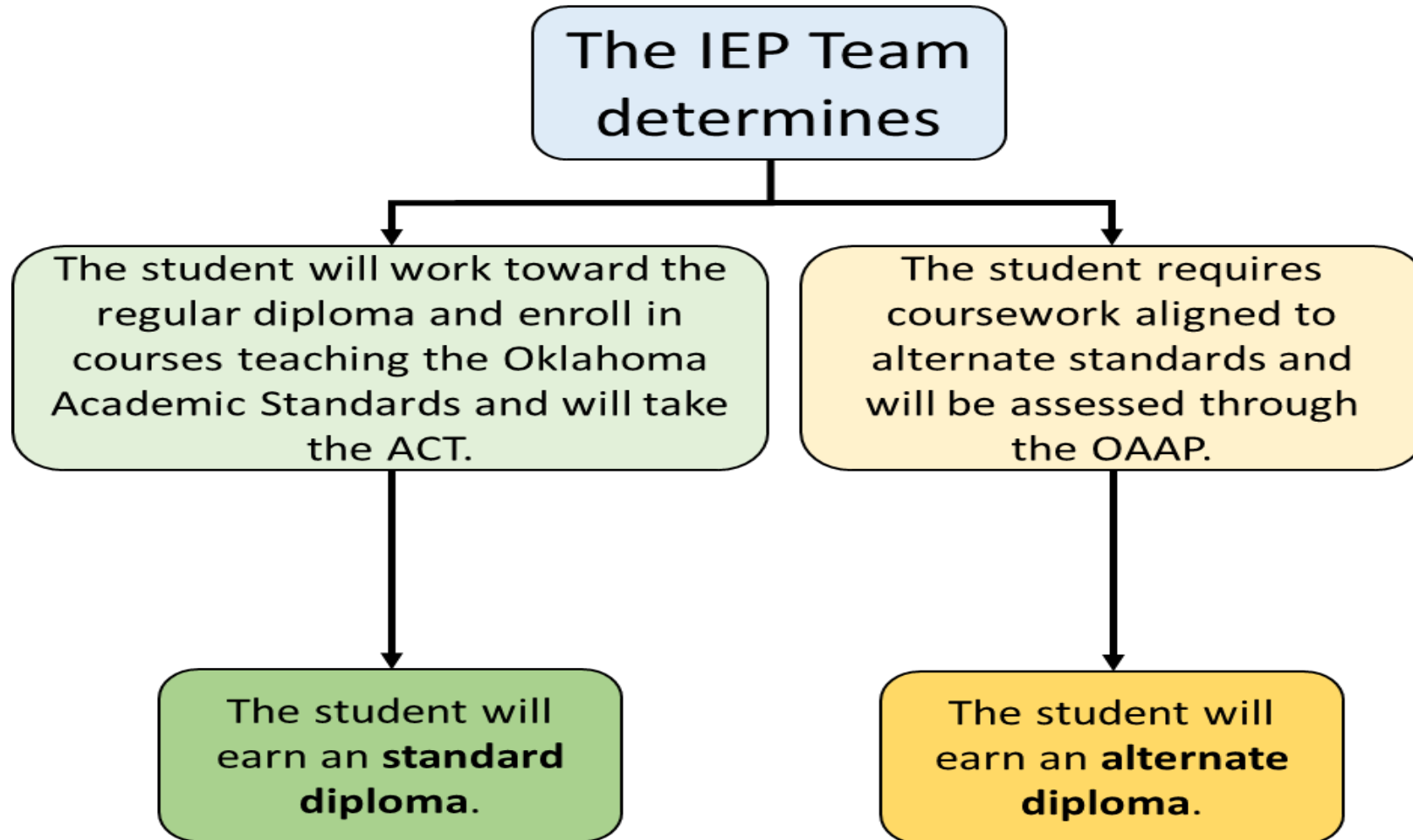
Can Course Titles With the Word Alternate be included on Transcripts? 2

- We are continuing to investigate this with TAESE and other states who are using this practice.
- Stay Tuned.....

Course Substitution for Credit Toward the Alternate Diploma

- Corresponding non-alternate title courses may be substituted to meet graduation requirements.
 - This includes courses taught to [Alternate Standards](#) (e.g., English I, Alg. I)
 - This includes courses taught to [Oklahoma Academic Standards](#) (e.g., Art, Music, FACS)
- Additional courses approved by the Oklahoma State Board of Education may also be substituted.

What Diploma Options Do Students With Disabilities Have?



What Happens After a Student Earns an Alternate Diploma?

When Is The Alternate Diploma Given?

- The Alternate Diploma is conferred when the student completes the required courses for graduation with an Alternate Diploma.
- Students will be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony with the other graduates from their cohort.
- The goal is that students eligible for the Alternate Diploma earn their credits at the same rate as their age peers, graduating in four years.

What If The Student Has Not Earned All Of The Required Credits At The Time Their Cohort Graduates?

- Students who have not earned all the required graduation credits will be allowed continued enrollment in order to earn all the required credits.
- A student working toward an Alternate Diploma who has not earned all of the required credits by the 12th grade may be reassigned to the next cohort, and will **not** be counted as “not graduated” for their 12th grade year.

What Happens Once A Student Has Earned An Alternate Diploma?

- Once a student has earned an alternate diploma, the districts' obligation to provide a FAPE **does not** end.
- If the student has not turned 22 on or before September 1st, the student will be offered continued enrollment to be provided a FAPE.
- Students who continue enrollment will participate in transition services that are focused on improving their functional and academic achievement to facilitate the movement to post school activities.

What Happens Once A Student Has Earned An Alternate Diploma? 2

- Districts should expand their programs to meet the obligation of a FAPE and meet the needs of students ages 18 through the year in which the student turns 22.
- Districts will offer additional courses beyond that which is required for graduation.
- OSDE-SES has developed committees to develop competencies, scope and sequence and new course titles. (More about this on 3/31).

Must A Student Return For A FAPE After Earning An Alternate Diploma?

- It is a decision of the IEP team (that relies heavily on the preferences of families and students) if the student will continue enrollment after earning an Alternate Diploma based on the post-secondary plans and goals of the student.
- The IEP team may determine that the student has adequate post-secondary plans and will not continue enrollment.
- The team may determine that a student will continue enrollment for 1 year or more, or until the student reaches maximum age.
- Continued enrollment does not need to be consecutive.

Let's Be Clear

- Districts **MUST offer** a FAPE to all students following graduation with an alternate diploma.
- Students are **not required** to return following graduation with an alternate diploma.

Examples- Student earns an Alternate Diploma at the end of 12th grade and the IEP team decides...

- Scenario 1

- The student will attend a New Leaf Program, Bridges Program or Opportunity Orange Scholars.

The student will not return for a FAPE.

(However, if the student changes their mind, a FAPE is still available until the student ages out.)

- Scenario 2

- The student will begin supported employment, but does not want to continue in school.

The student will not return for a FAPE.

(However, if the student changes their mind, a FAPE is still available until the student ages out.)

- Scenario 3

- The student will participate in Project SEARCH through the high school.

The student will return for a FAPE.

Tune In Friday, March 24 to hear more about....

- What To Do For Students Graduating 22/23, 23/24, and Beyond