

Understanding the State-Defined Alternate Diploma for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Directors' Webinar
February 6, 2024

When Did This Happen?

- State Board of Education approval was March 2020.
- Students beginning Fall 2020
- First potential graduates Spring 2024
- [State Board Rule 160-4-2-.48](#)



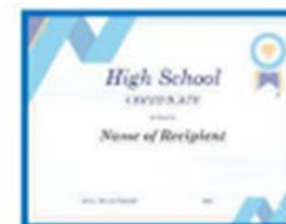
U.S. Department of Education

High School Credentials

- These are the credentials available to student in Georgia:
 - High School Diploma
 - Alternate Diploma
 - High School Certificate
 - Special Education Diploma
- Which of these credentials terminate a free appropriate public education (FAPE)?
 - High School Diploma

What is the Alternate Diploma?

- Credential for **students with the most significant cognitive disabilities**
- Standards-based and aligned with the state requirements for the regular high school diploma



What is the Alternate Diploma?

- Intended for students instructed on alternate content standards rather than the Georgia Standards of Excellence
- **Not** a regular high school diploma
- **Does not terminate** a free appropriate public education (FAPE)

What do LEAs call the alternate diploma?

- Each district will need to decide on the appropriate terminology, keeping in mind that it cannot indicate that the student receiving the diploma is a student with a disability.
- If you have referred to it as the alternate diploma in student specific documents, as long as the documents are confidential (such as an IEP), you do not need to amend those documents.
- [Understanding the State-Defined Alternate Diploma.pdf \(gadoe.org\)](#)
- [OCR Report Card and Transcript Memo](#)

What Else Should I Know?



- Alternate standard instruction and alternate assessment no longer leads to attaining a regular diploma
- Alternate diploma must be awarded prior to aging out
- A diploma based solely on meeting IEP goals does not meet the criteria for receiving the State-Defined Alternate Diploma.
- The alternate diploma and the regular diploma are not equivalent credentials.

Resources

- ESSA State-Defined Alternate Diploma for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities FAQs:
 - [For Practitioners](#)
 - [For Families](#)
- [Georgia Alternate Assessment 2.0](#)
- [Extended Content Standards](#)

Contact Information

Results Driven Accountability

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State-Defined Alternate Diploma and Transition for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

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