



# Myth-busting Deferment Webinar: The Sequel

**Identifying and debunking more of the most common myths associated with the process to defer receipt of a standard diploma for students with disabilities.**

This training was developed by Project 10: Transition Education Network, an Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funded state project through the Florida Department of Education (FDOE), Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BESS).



# Timeline: How We Got Here

- Legislation passed in Florida during the 2014 session (SB 840) repealed the special diploma statute effective July 1, 2015.
- Deferment of receipt of a standard diploma process began July 1, 2015  
([s. 1003.4282, F.S.](#)).
- Deferment-related technical assistance, resources (including a Deferment FAQ document) and trainings were developed (including multiple updates) by Project 10 as a result of 2015 legislation.
- January and May 2024: Project 10 facilitated statewide Myth-busting Deferment webinars. (PPT can be found at: <http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=188#NSI07>)
- December 2024: A “Part 2” Myth-busting Deferment webinar is facilitated by Project 10

## Regional Transition Representatives

Region 1: Tracy Dempsey, M.S., L.D.S.

[tracydempsey@usf.edu](mailto:tracydempsey@usf.edu)

Region 2: Leigh Ann Hale, M.Ed. Leadership

[hale37@usf.edu](mailto:hale37@usf.edu)

Region 3: Kim Thorne, B.S. SpEd.

[kthorne1@usf.edu](mailto:kthorne1@usf.edu)

Region 4: Federico Valadez, M.Ed.

[fvaladez@usf.edu](mailto:fvaladez@usf.edu)

Region 5: Lisa Friedman-Chavez, B.S. Psychology

[Lfchavez@usf.edu](mailto:Lfchavez@usf.edu)

Region 6: Nicole Klees, M.S. CCC-SLP

[enklee@usf.edu](mailto:enklee@usf.edu)

Project 10 Leadership:

■ Donna Phillips, Ed.D.

Director and Principal Investigator

[dphillips5@usf.edu](mailto:dphillips5@usf.edu)

■ Franklin Coker, Ed.S.

Assistant Director

[fjcoker@usf.edu](mailto:fjcoker@usf.edu)

■ Macy Radosevich, B.S. Family and Child Sciences

Program Planner Analyst

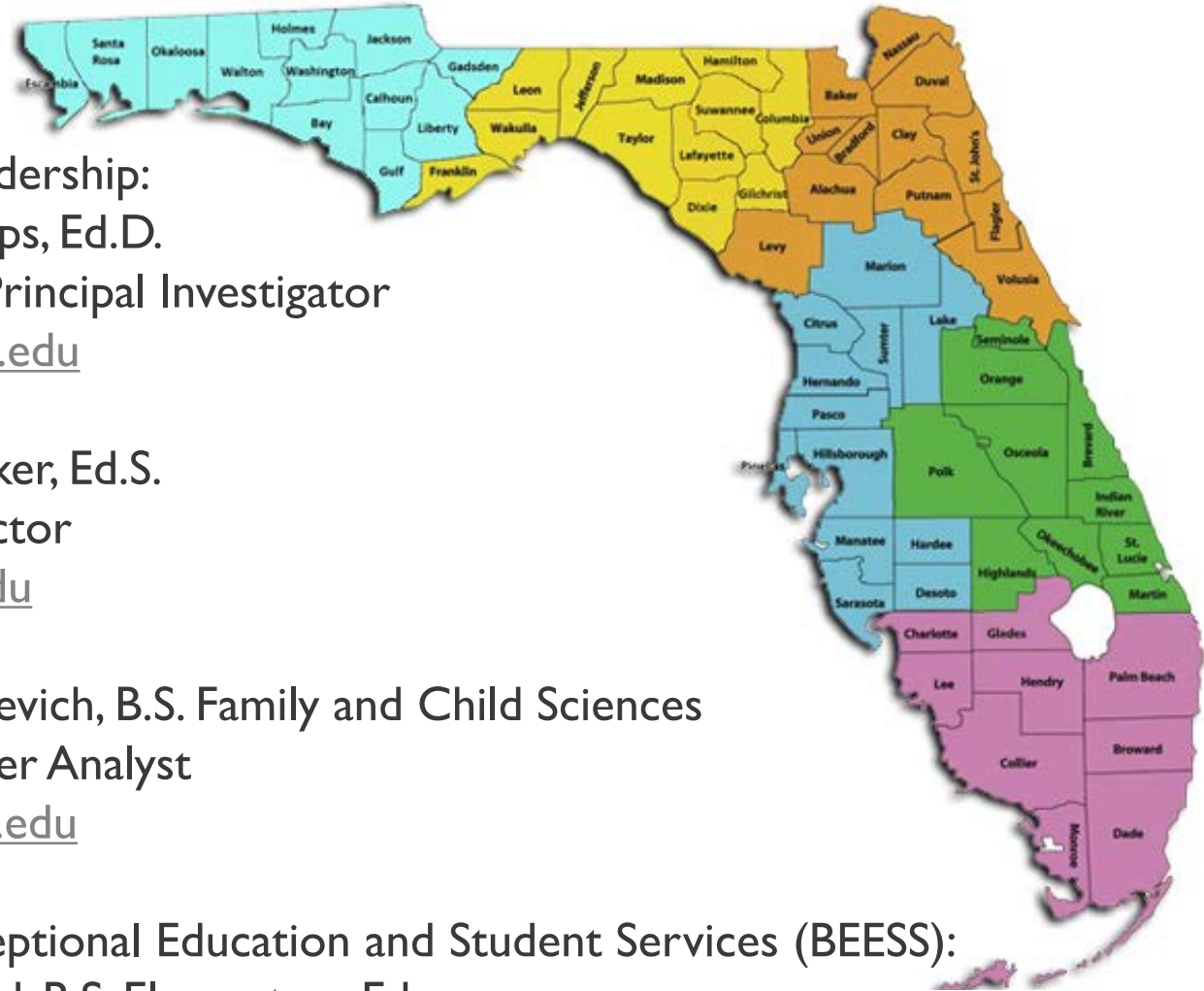
[mbentley@usf.edu](mailto:mbentley@usf.edu)

Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS):

■ Noal Weiland, B.S. Elementary Ed.

State Lead for Secondary Transition

[Noal.Weiland@fldoe.org](mailto:Noal.Weiland@fldoe.org)





# Deferment Belief

**MYTH!**

All students with disabilities with individual education plans are entitled to defer receipt of a standard diploma to enroll in a program of their choosing.



Section 1003.4282(9)(c), Florida Statutes (F.S.):

A student with a disability who meets the standard high school diploma requirements in this section may defer the receipt of a standard high school diploma if the student:

1. Has an individual education plan that prescribes special education, transition planning, transition services, or related services through age 21; and
2. ***Is enrolled*** in accelerated college credit instruction pursuant to s. 1007.27, F.S. industry certification courses that lead to college credit, an early college program, courses necessary to satisfy the Scholar designation requirements, or a structured work-study, internship, or pre-apprenticeship program.



A few important points related to deferment-eligible programs:

- Deferment program descriptions, including statutory references, can be found at <http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=376>.
  - Some deferment programs require prerequisites and other eligibility considerations
- A majority of students with disabilities who are eligible to defer do so in a structured work-study program.
  - For structured work-study programs, a continuum of support is required to provide free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for all students with disabilities.



A few more important points related to deferment-eligible programs:

- IEP amendments might be necessary prior to a student starting a deferment program.
- IEP teams use qualitative and quantitative data in a student's IEP to assist with appropriate deferment program recommendations.
  - Pertinent sections of an IEP related to a student's deferment program fit might include:
    - Present Levels of Performance
    - Course of Study
    - Annual Goals
    - Measurable Postsecondary Goals



# Deferment Myth

Enrollment in a deferment program

requires students to participate in a daily,  
**MYTH!**

Monday through Friday, full-time schedule.





- Flexibility and customization are at the heart of a student's IEP, particularly as it relates to a deferment program.
- The IEP team determines what individualized special education, transition planning, transition services and/or related services should be provided for a student with a disability.
- The IEP team determines a student's placement, time and setting in which the services will be provided.



- Students may participate in programs like structured work-study, internships, or pre-apprenticeships. These programs often involve non-traditional or part-time schedules.
  - For example, a student in a structured work-study program might only attend two days a week while focusing on job training the rest of the time.
- When planning student schedules, districts and IEP teams might consider incorporating secondary transition courses and career education courses to ensure the student generates the necessary and appropriate funding and that all free and appropriate public education (FAPE)-related instruction, services and supports are provided.

- [Florida Education Finance Program \(FEFP\)](#)



# Deferment Belief

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are not ideal candidates to defer receipt of a standard diploma and participate in a deferment program.

**MYTH!**



- It is necessary for school districts and LEAs to provide a continuum of support to ensure free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for all students with disabilities who require specially designed instruction, transition services, transition planning and/or related services.
- Students with the most significant disabilities may require skills related to pre-vocation, daily living and/or independent functioning as part of a structured work-study deferment program.
- Structured work-study programs can be tailored through Individual Education Plans to align with the student's strengths, interests, preferences, and needs.



- Participation in a deferment program allows students with the most complex needs to extend their educational experience and better prepare for postsecondary life, including community participation, supported employment and other tailored transitions.
- Additional considerations for an IEP team when supporting students with the most significant disabilities plan for deferment might include:
  - Measurable postsecondary goal attainment
  - Medical and/or health needs
  - Agency linkages and supports
  - Relevant community resources
  - Expanded IEP team participants, as appropriate, to support transition of the student from K-12 to post-school settings



# Deferment Belief

Students with disabilities must meet

**MYTH!** minimum independent living and work-  
readiness requirements to enroll in a

structured work-study program.



There is no provision in federal or state law that requires a minimum level of skill set in order for a student to enroll in, participate in, and/or benefit from a structured work-study program.

- School districts and local education agencies (LEAs) may provide one or more structured work-study program(s) to support the needs of diverse students with varying skill sets.



- Some structured work-study programs are specifically needed to support independent living and work-readiness skill sets, and as such, are a dominant focus of the program(s).
- Multiple data sources should be used when determining:
  - Student enrollment in a particular structured work-study (if a district or LEA offers more than one program); and/or
  - Designing a student's course of study, schedule, and instructional design within a structured work-study program



# Deferment Myth

A student with a disability who is receiving services through a Hospital-Homebound (H/H) only category may not defer receipt of a standard diploma to participate in a 18-22 deferment program.

**MYTH!**



- The requirements to defer receipt of a standard diploma per s. 1003.4282, F.S. do not specify inclusions or exclusions related to disability categories.
- A student that has met requirements for a standard diploma may defer receipt of a standard diploma if the student:
  - Has an individual education plan that prescribes special education, transition planning, transition services, or related services through age 21; and
  - Is enrolled in one of five deferment program categories



- For a student receiving hospital/homebound services considering deferral of receipt of a standard diploma, unique factors may need to be addressed by the IEP team to ensure services and program type match the student's needs
- Emphasis on the following needs may be warranted:

<b>Health Care</b>	<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Social-emotional Behavior</b>
<b>Mobility</b>	<b>Assistive Technology</b>	<b>Communication</b>



- Teams developing transition IEPs for students with disabilities classified as “Hospital/Homebound” should reference FDOE’s “Hospital/Homebound Policies and Procedures Manual (2008)”
- Page 7 of the manual provides guidance related to students:
  - Expected to recover and return to general education
  - Whose illness or injury prohibits return to the general education environment without special education services

• [Hospital/Homebound Policies and Procedures Manual \(2008\)](#)



# Deferment Myth

**MYTH!**

A school district (or LEA) can deny deferment to a student with disabilities who's IEP prescribes necessary specialized instruction and transition services through age 22 due to the district's existing structured work-study program not being the right "fit" for the student.



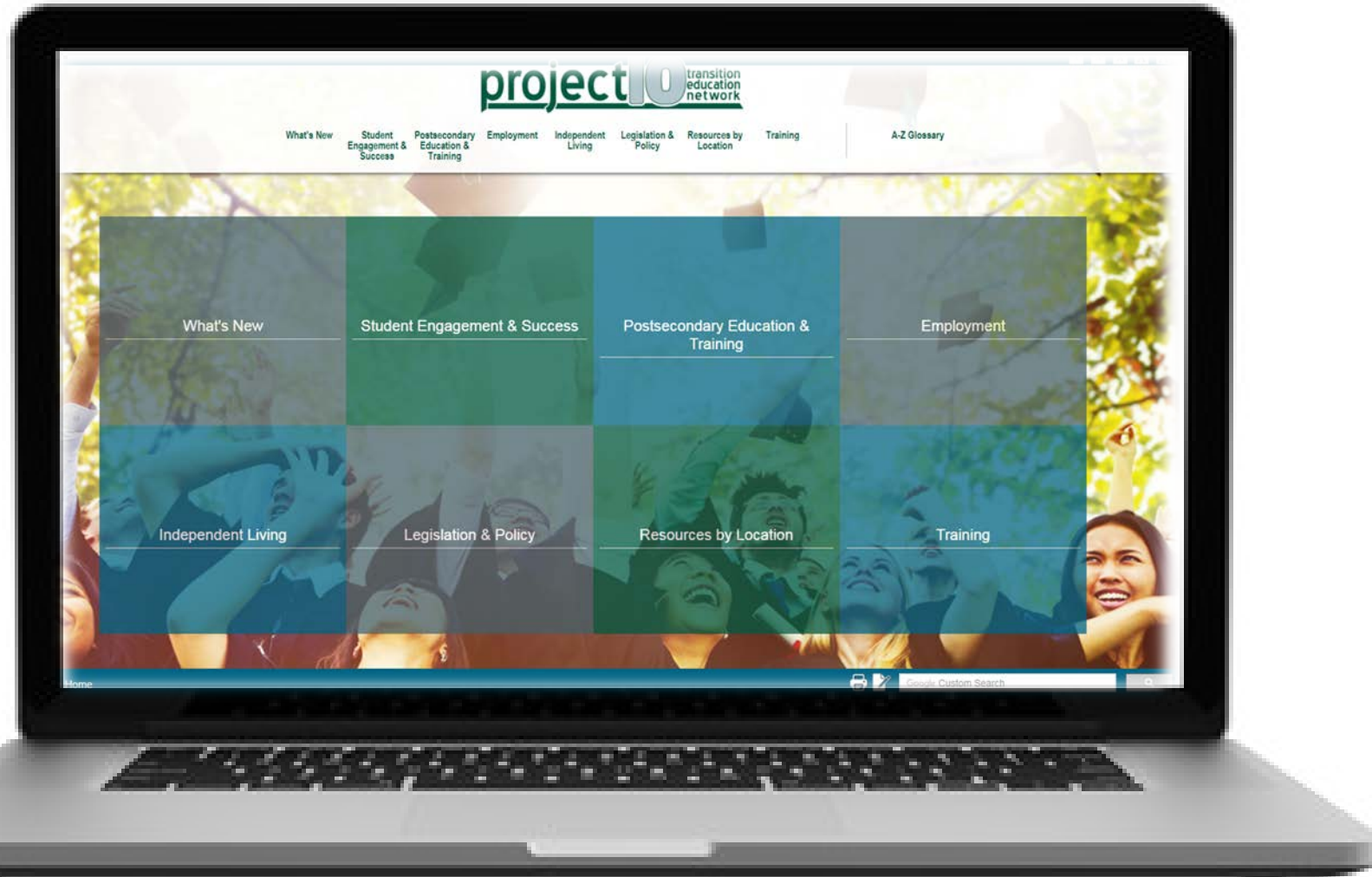
- Enrollment into a deferment program is necessary for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to receive FAPE and to receive identified special education, transition planning, transition services and/or related services needs.
- For a majority of students with more significant and/or unique needs, a school district/LEA-designed structured-work study program may be an appropriate deferment option that meets their outstanding special education and transition-related services needs.



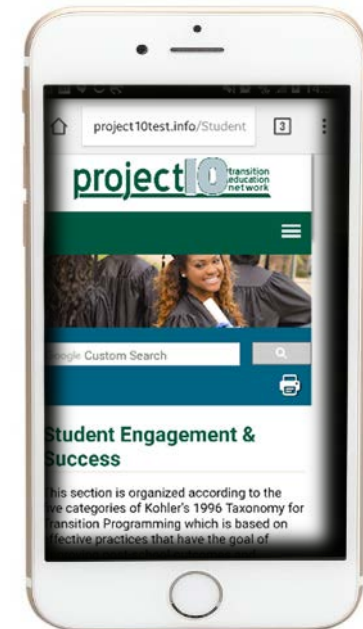
- Structured work-study programs can be designed to meet a wide range of individual student needs and abilities.
- A structured work-study program for students with significant disabilities could emphasize skills such as independent living, pre-vocational and pre-work readiness, self-determination, self-advocacy, and communication.
- In summation, since structured work-study programs can be uniquely and flexibly designed and offered by school districts/LEAs, they have the ability to meet the needs of students they serve.

# Project 10 Website:

<http://project10.info/>



## Mobile Friendly







# Project 10 Deferment-Related Trainings and Publications

## Trainings:

- Using Deferment and Extended Transition Programming (ages 18-22) to Support Postsecondary Readiness for Students with Disabilities (Updated)
- Deferment and Extended Transition Programming (ages 18-22): Information for Parents, Families and Community-Based Transition Stakeholders (Updated)
- Graduation Requirements (Updated)
- Writing Effective Transition IEPs (Updated)
- Know Your Secondary Transition Legislation 2021-2024

## Publications:

- Secondary Transition Roadmap for Families
- Graduation Options Charts
- Transition Requirements Checklist

Trainings can be requested on the Project 10 website, under “Training by Request”

<http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=3>

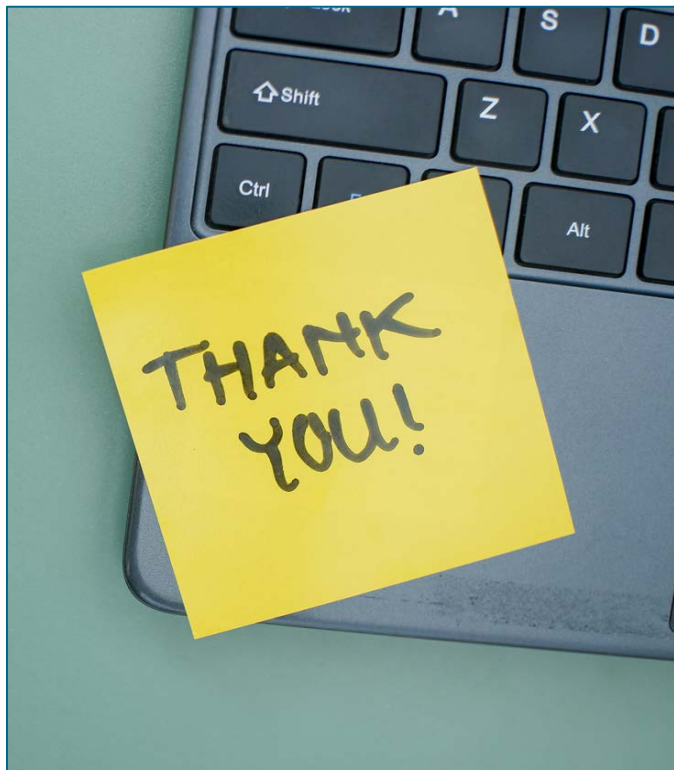
# New and Coming Attractions 2025

- ❑ Project 10 Winter Institutes  
February 2025 (Zoom)
- ❑ Statewide Transition Contacts Meeting (BEES & Project 10)  
April 8, 2025, Orlando, FL (Florida Hotel and Conference Center)
- ❑ VISIONS Conference  
April 8-10, 2025, Orlando, FL (Florida Hotel and Conference Center)
  - VISIONS Registration Page: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2025-florida-dcdt-visions-annual-conference-registration-873380744317?aff=oddtcreator>



Project 10 Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/project10usfsp>)

# Thank You and Brief Evaluation Request



Thank you for your kind attention!

We invite you to complete a brief survey. Your responses will help us to continue the development of our training skills and identify areas in which you would like to have more information and support.

