

Deferment and Extended Transition Programming (ages 18-22): Information for Parents, Families and Community-Based Transition Stakeholders


This training was developed by the Project 10: Transition Education Network, a discretionary project funded by the Florida Department of Education, division of public schools, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BESS), through federal assistance under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B.

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Objectives

After this training participants will be able to:


- Define deferment of receipt of the standard high school diploma according to Florida law.
- Describe the five deferment options available for students with disabilities (SWD).
- Identify postsecondary options and considerations.
- Review key transition individual education plan (TIEP) components and their essential role in successful deferment and postsecondary planning.
- Locate resources to support deferment planning and understanding.



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Deferment

Definition and General Considerations and Implications



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Deferment and Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Legislative Underpinning	Considerations/Implications
<p>Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) 2004:</p> <p>IDEA specifies that a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) must be available to all students with disabilities who have not reached age 22 AND who have not earned a standard diploma. If a student graduates with a special diploma, a certificate of completion, a special certificate of completion, or GED and has not reached age 22, the school district must make FAPE available to the student (at the student's option) until the student's 22nd birthday or until he or she earns a standard diploma.</p>	<p>All students with disabilities are on one of several pathways to earn a standard diploma.</p> <p>A standard diploma acquisition is considered a change of placement after which the state will no longer have to provide the student with FAPE.</p>

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Deferment and Florida Law

Legislative Underpinning	Considerations/Implications
<p>Section 1003.4282(9)(c), Florida Statutes (FS): 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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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, FS., 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. 	<p>Deferment is an additional period of time to support experiences and skill readiness to support successful postsecondary outcomes.</p> <p>Deferment services and programs should be specific, intentional and in alignment with students' needs and their postsecondary goals.</p> <p>Continue to consider Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).</p>

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Definition of "Is Enrolled"

- "Is enrolled" for the purposes of deferment eligibility could be interpreted as either:
 - A student is **expected** to successfully meet all entrance criteria for an eligible deferment program, including required program application deadlines, by the conclusion of the academic semester/year in which they meet graduation requirements, or
 - A student **actively** enrolled in a deferment eligible program prior to the conclusion of the academic semester/year in which they meet graduation requirements and remain eligible to continue enrollment in that program at the start of the following semester/year.
- The IEP for a student who will defer may require amendments prior to the start of the program.

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The Deferral Timeline and Florida Legislation

By age 14 or prior to beginning high school (whichever occurs first)
Section 1003.5716, F.S.

- A statement documenting discussion of deferral process

Prior to the year the student is expected to meet graduation requirements
Section 1003.5716, F.S. & Rule 6A-1.09963, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.)

- A signed statement by parent or adult student indicating the deferral process is understood and the choice to defer or not to defer


By May 15 of the year the student meets graduation requirements
Rule 6A-1.09963, F.A.C.

- School districts inform parent/student that:
 - FAPE obligations end if diploma is not deferred
 - Deadline for diploma deferral or acceptance is May 15
 - Failure to attend graduation ceremony does not constitute a deferral

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General Deferment Considerations & Implications


- No disability category/categories are excluded from potential eligibility of deferral.
- Families and students will begin receiving deferral information beginning at age 12 or during the student's 7th grade year, whichever occurs first.
- Deferment program options will vary by district.
- Deferment programming is developed to meet students' specific needs.
- IEP teams must be able to discuss the eligibility requirements and application process for deferral programs and incorporate any identified needs into the student's IEP as appropriate.
- Deferment may be a more restrictive setting for many SWD versus entry directly into postsecondary settings.



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Deferment Options

A Review of Florida's Five Categories of Eligible Deferment Programs



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	1. Accelerated College Credit	2. Early College Programs	3. Industry Certification Courses Leading to College Credit	4. Scholar Designation	5. Structured Work Study, Internships or Pre-Apprenticeships
Program Focus	Academic	Academic	Academic and/or Employment	Academic	Academic, Employment and/or Independent Living
Academic Rigor	High	High	Medium-High	High	Low-High
Setting	High School and/or Postsecondary Institution	High School and/or Postsecondary Institution	High School and/or Postsecondary Institution	High School	High School and/or Business/Community Site
Application Process	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Sometimes

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1. Accelerated College Credit

According to s. 1007.27 F.S., Articulated acceleration mechanisms:


- It is intended that articulated acceleration serve to shorten the time necessary for a student to complete the requirements associated with the conference of a high school diploma and a postsecondary degree, broaden the scope of curricular options available to students, or increase the depth of study available for a particular subject.
- Articulated acceleration mechanisms shall include, but are not limited to, dual enrollment and early admission as provided for in s. 1007.271, F.S., advanced placement, credit by examination, the International Baccalaureate Program, and the Advanced International Certificate of Education Program.
- Credit earned through the Florida Virtual School shall provide additional opportunities for early graduation and acceleration.



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Accelerated College Credit- Considerations

- Available accelerated college credit options will vary by school district.
- Requirements may vary depending on dual enrollment in an academic or vocational program.
- These programs may have rigorous eligibility requirements, such as GPA and previous coursework.
- Districts have flexibility in how to document participation and course completion (e.g., Pass/Fail, Letter Grades), but GPA is not impacted by deferral performance.



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2. Early College Programs

- Section 1007.273, F.S. defines Early College Programs:
 - ...The term "early college program" means a structured high school acceleration program in which a cohort of students is enrolled full time in postsecondary courses toward an associate degree. The early college program must prioritize courses applicable as general education core courses under s. 1007.25, F.S. for an associate degree or a baccalaureate degree...
- In addition:
 - ...Each student participating in an early college program must enter into a student performance contract which must be signed by the student, the parent, and a representative of the school district and the applicable Florida College System institution, state university, or other institution participating pursuant to subsection (4). The performance contract must include the schedule of courses, by semester; student attendance requirements; and course grade requirements...



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Early College Programs- Considerations

- Requires an articulation agreement between the district and college.
- Eligibility requirements vary by district, program and/or articulation agreement, and may include:
 - Assessment scores
 - GPA
 - Application
- Cohorts may begin as early as grade 9.



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3. Industry Certification Leading to College Credit

- Career Technical Education (CTE) helps learners develop the knowledge and skills they need to be prepared for college and careers.
- CTE emphasizes real-world skills and practical knowledge within a student's career of interest. CTE is a cost-effective way for students to start a career in as little as one or two years of school.
- The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) has a wide variety of CTE degree and certificate programs across 17 Career Clusters.
(<https://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/career-tech-edu/>)



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Industry Certification Leading to College Credit- Considerations

- Available courses and programs for industry certification will vary by school district.
- Some Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs may have eligibility requirements.
- Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities can benefit from CTE programs with modifications as allowable.
- Project 10 CTE resources
 - Career and Technical Education: Enhancing Educational Experiences in Middle School, High School and Postsecondary Education
 - Project 10 Topical Brief on CTE (January 2019)



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4. Courses for Scholar Diploma Designation

In addition to the requirements of s. 1003.4282, F.S., a student must satisfy the following requirements per s. 1003.4285, F.S.:

- Earn 1 credit in Algebra 2 or an equally rigorous course
- Earn 1 credit in Statistics or an equally rigorous math course
- Earn 1 credit in Chemistry or Physics
- Earn 1 credit in a course equally rigorous to Chemistry or Physics
- Earn 2 credits in the same World Language
- Earn at least 1 credit in AP, IB, AICE, or a dual enrollment course
- Pass Geometry, Biology* & U.S. History* EOCs
- Resource: <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/k-12-public-schools/sss/graduation-requirements/>

*A student is exempt from the Biology 1 or U.S. History EOC assessment if the student is enrolled in an AP, IB or AICE Biology 1 or U.S. History course; takes the respective AP, IB or AICE assessment; and earns the minimum score to earn college credit.

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Courses for Scholar Diploma Designation- Considerations

- The IEP team should consider the timeline for completion of the required components.
 - School counselors may need to be involved to support appropriate scheduling.
- The IEP team can review relevant past discussions and notations related to the student's intention to pursue a Scholar diploma designation.
- Required statewide testing results cannot be waived.
- Districts have flexibility in how to document participation and course completion (e.g., Pass/Fail, Letter Grades) but grade point average (GPA) is not impacted by deferment performance.



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General Considerations for the First Four Deferral Options

- Alignment of the program option with the student's transition assessment data, course of study and measurable postsecondary goals
- Documented IEP team discussions
- Modifications & accommodations
- Specially designed instruction, related services, and transition services
- Logistics
 - Staff/service delivery
 - Schedule
 - Setting
 - Transportation



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5. Structured Work-Study, Internship, or Pre-Apprenticeship Program

- Most students who defer will be enrolled in a structured work-study, internship, or pre-apprenticeship program.
- These programs can be very diverse to meet a wide range of students' needs.
- Availability will vary by school district.
- Some programs have an application process, eligibility requirements and/or enrollment caps.



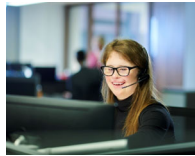
Let's take a **closer** look into these options!



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Internships

- Internships are exploratory or preparatory paid or unpaid work-site experiences where students work for an employer or agency for 40 or more hours to learn about a particular industry or occupation.
- Activities may include special projects, a sample of tasks for different jobs, or tasks from a single occupation. Internships may include community service (service learning) placements if they meet the above requirements and are related to the student's program of study or career goals.
- County governments and/or other community organizations, such as CareerSource, may offer internship opportunities to high school students.



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Internships- Project SEARCH

- Nine-month transition-to-work internship program for people with disabilities.
- Total immersion in a business-led setting with hands-on training and the acquisition of employability and marketable work skills.

Medical Facilities	Universities and Colleges	Large Retail Stores
Hotels, Resorts, Conv. Centers	School District Offices	Manufacturing
City and County Governments	Zoos	Distribution Facilities

- Project SEARCH interns work in three rotations and have support from a team that includes their family, instructors, skills trainers and local and state agencies.
- The outcome of this one-year program is competitive, integrated employment.



For more information, visit P10's Project SEARCH website page: <http://project10.info/DPPage.php?ID=357>

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Pre-Apprenticeship Programs

- Pre-apprenticeship programs provide training in work readiness and other foundational skills to prepare youth or adult workers to succeed in a registered apprenticeship program.
- Registered pre-apprenticeship programs provide an avenue for both adults and youth who are at least 16 years old to become qualified to enter registered apprenticeship programs.
- District school boards and community colleges are often involved in pre-apprenticeship programs, assisting sponsors in providing related technical instruction. Programs for high school students may begin in the junior year and may include on the job training with participating employers.



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Structured Work Study

- Structured work study provides work-readiness training through a combination of academic, employment, and independent living instruction. Structured work study can be provided in the following ways:
 - Pre-vocational skills
 - Community-Based Instruction (CBI)
 - Community-Based Vocational Education (CBVE)
 - On-the-job training
 - Work-Based Learning Experiences (VR)
 - School-Based Enterprise (SBE)



*Students may participate in more than one of these structured work study options.

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Components of Structured Work Study

- Prepare students for employment and may include:
 - Instruction to address students' transition services needs and special education services
 - Support as needed from related service providers (therapies, transportation, mental health counseling, etc.)
 - Staff that support employment (job coach/supported employment specialists, job developers, paraprofessionals, etc.)



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Skill Elements of Structured Work Study

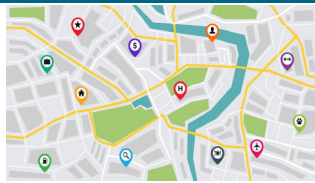
- Various skills, based upon student's needs, can be addressed during structured work study, such as:
 - Self-determination and self-advocacy
 - Social interaction
 - Pro-social behavior
 - Travel and mobility
 - Communication
 - Activities of daily living (ADL)
 - Independent living



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Setting and Transportation

- Multiple settings could be used to support student experiences in deferment.
- Transportation is considered a related service and is an IEP consideration in how a student accesses their specially designed instructional needs.
- Some deferment programs require independent student transportation.



School campus	Community provider	University/college campus	Government offices
Charter school	Regional cluster site	Business location	Faith-based organization

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Scheduling

- As with the previous deferment options, a student's school day may look differently when they are enrolled in structured work study, for example:
 - Partial or full day
 - A few days out of the week or Monday through Friday
 - The student may be on different campuses/sites
- The student's schedule may include services provided by community agencies (e.g., VR Pre-Employment Transition Services)
- The scheduling is an IEP team decision and is driven by the student's needs.

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Deferment and the TIEP

Transition IEP Requirements and Deferment Implications

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- STEP 1 Conduct age-appropriate transition assessment data.
- STEP 2 Establish postsecondary goals based on age-appropriate transition assessment data.
- STEP 3 Identify transition services, annual goals and agency linkages that support achievement of students' MPGs.

"A goal without a plan is just a wish"


TIEPs BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

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IEP/TIEP Requirements and their Deferment Implications

- IEP and TIEP components are reviewed annually to ensure students' successful current and future progress towards earning a standard diploma and achievement of their postsecondary goals.
- Some key components related to deferment planning and/or consideration likely involve:
 - Annual goals
 - Course of study
 - Agency linkages
 - Self-determination and self-advocacy



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Exercising Self-Determination Skills in Postsecondary Settings



- Once students with disabilities exit the K-12 system their rights are still protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Individuals with disabilities who would like to receive accommodations in institutions of higher education and through the employment process need to disclose their disability. This requires self-awareness and self-advocacy skills.
- There are pros and cons of disclosure; however, for many individuals, accessing accommodations may be critical for their post-school success.

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Transition Assessment- Deferment Implications

- Transition assessment data is the foundation for the transition IEP.
- Provides evidence of student's progress towards achieving their postsecondary goals.
- Determines the student's need for instruction/information in the areas of self-determination and self-advocacy.
- Assists with the following:
 - Determining if the student is eligible to defer
 - Planning/preparing the student for a particular deferment program
 - Monitoring progress towards achieving postsecondary goals while in a deferment program

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Measurable Postsecondary Goals- Deferment Implications

- A critical consideration when determining if a student will be eligible for deferment.
- Will drive the student's deferment programming in the following ways:
 - Selection of the deferment option
 - Determining the student's course of study leading up to the deferment program and while in the deferment program
 - Determining deferment program progress, and if any adaptations are needed
- Changes in a student's postsecondary goal(s) may impact their deferral program options, and other transition components that support the new postsecondary goal.

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Special Education	Transition Planning and Services	Related Services
Services provided by an ESE teacher that are required to help a student make progress towards their postsecondary goals.	Activities and supports that help a student prepare for postsecondary life, based on students' needs, preferences, and interests.	Supportive services that allow for students with disabilities to benefit from special education services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learning strategies ▪ Instruction delivered in community settings ▪ Instruction in self-determination and self-advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Travel training ▪ Job coaching ▪ Links to outside agencies that can assist with long-term supports for the student ▪ Instruction in budgeting and financial planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specialized transportation ▪ Language therapy ▪ Mental health counseling ▪ Occupational and/or Physical therapy

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Provision of Information

Beginning during the student's seventh grade year or when the student reaches the age of 12 (whichever occurs first):

- Information and referral forms, links, and contacts, must be provided to the students and families at IEP meetings regarding:
 - The school district's high school-level transition services, career and technical education, and collegiate programs available to students with disabilities and how to access these programs.
 - School-based transition programs
 - Information regarding programs and services available through:

Florida's Center for Students with Unique Abilities (FCSUA)	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR/VR)	Division of Blind Services (DBS)
Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD)		Florida Centers for Independent Living (CILS)

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The Deferment Years


Guiding Questions, Logistics, Considerations and Ending Deferment



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IEP Team Guiding Questions

- The following are sample questions that should be a part of the determination process:
 - Collectively, what do the student's postsecondary goals, course of study and present levels of academic and functional achievement indicate?
 - Will the student continue to need specially designed instruction and transition services provided by the school district after meeting graduation requirements in order to make progress towards and/or achieve their measurable postsecondary goals?



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Guiding Questions (continued)

- Could the student achieve progress towards their measurable postsecondary goals by taking receipt of their standard diploma and receive accommodations and services provided under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?
- What agency linkages and services have been part of the student's transition plan, and are these agencies and services available/needed in deferment and/or in postsecondary life?
- Are there program applications, prerequisites, deadlines and or eligibility requirements needed for a desired deferment program (and has/will the student meet those)?

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Initial Deferment Decision Declaration

For the IEP in effect prior to the beginning of the school year the student is expected to meet graduation requirements, two deferment actions are documented in a signed statement by the parent or adult student (whose rights have transferred):

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Understanding of the deferral decision process	Identification of whether the student intends to defer or not defer the receipt of a standard diploma upon meeting graduation requirements

The deferral decision may be revisited at any time up to May 15 of the school year the student is expected to meet graduation requirements.

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Deferral Logistics and Considerations


- Participation in Senior year and/or graduation ceremony/activities are district determined.
- The school year in which a student meets standard diploma requirements is the one associated with the date printed on a student's standard diploma.
- The IEP team will continue to collect data, document annual goal and deferment program progress and make appropriate adjustments as needed.
- The IEP team will use progress monitoring data to make decisions regarding deferment program completion and/or student diploma acquisition.

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Ending Deferment

- Deferment enrollment (and hence, FAPE) ends when one of the two actions formally occurs:
 - Student turns 22 (age 22 is defined by each Florida district's Policies and Procedures) or;
 - Student takes receipt of their standard diploma.

Note: Specific deferment program completion can be considered an expectation within an IEP for a student to take receipt of their standard diploma.



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Deferment Summary

Students with disabilities who meet their graduation requirements for a standard diploma:

A. May be ineligible to defer and thus, obtain receipt of their standard diploma, FAPE ends, and they immediately pursue postsecondary options; or

B. May be eligible to defer receipt of their standard diploma, and if the selection is to defer, FAPE continues and they immediately enroll in an extended transition program to:

Benefit from extra time	Accrue work and CCR skills	Increase communication skills	Work towards PS goals	Obtain marketable credentials
Increase self-determination and self-advocacy skills	Gain relevant work experiences	Complete a key course or requirement for PS readiness	Gain academic skills relevant to work	Engage with the community and gain independence skills

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Final Deferment Thoughts

- Preparation for deferment eligibility and enrollment begin well in advance of a student's meeting graduation requirements.
- Deferment is an opportunity and provides additional time for specific and intentional programs, services, experiences and skills to be afforded to students who need specialized instruction, transition services and related services to support meeting their unique measurable postsecondary goals.



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Deferment Resources

Project 10 Resources

- Secondary Transition Roadmap for Families (page 12): http://project10.info/Documents/Sec_Transition_Roadmap_FDOE_Fully_Vetted_1.12.2024.pdf
- Project 10 Topical Brief, December 2022, "Deferment Requirements and Procedures": http://project10.info/Documents/December_TB_2022.pdf
- Additional Project 10 Publications (e.g., Transition Requirements Checklist): <http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=77#NS138>

Legislation

- Section 1003.5716 FS.: http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=1000-1099/1003/Sections/1003.5716.html
- Rule 6A-1.09963, FA.C., High School Graduation Requirements for Students with Disabilities: <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleno.asp?id=6A-1.09963>

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Deferment Resources

FDOE Resources

- Accommodations: Assisting Student with Disabilities (2018): <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070069-accomm-educator.pdf>
- Career and Technical Education: <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/career-tech-edu/>
- Graduation Requirements web page: <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/k-12-public-schools/sss/graduation-requirements/>
- Registered Preapprenticeship Program contacts: <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/apprenticeship-programs/contacts.shtml>

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Questions and Thank You!

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Thank you for your attendance and participation!



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For more information visit our website at www.Project10.info

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