

Project 10 Region 4 Winter Institute
February 25, 2011
Questions and Answers

- 1) Have the revisions for the high school *Standing Up for Me* materials been completed, and if so, when can we expect them?
No. The materials are currently in draft form, and we hope to have them ready for a small pilot in April/May 2011.
- 2) What informal transition assessments are available for supported/participatory levels?
The best source of information is the spoke of the "Transition Wheel" on transition assessment that can be found on the Project 10 website at <http://www.project10.info/TransitionWheel.php?PageCategory=Transition%20Wheel>. This spoke contains a section that deals exclusively with transition assessment for students with significant disabilities.
- 3) Is the state pursuing any options to address concerns regarding special diploma not counting toward the graduation rate beginning 2011-12?
This is beyond the state's control. The National Governors Association (NGA) proposed a uniform rate, and all 50 states signed on to use the rate.
- 4) The time frames being given for receipt of end of course (EOC) exams could be after teachers have left for the summer. A waiver determination has to be made so that students could receive their final grade. What is FDOE's recommendation on remedying this situation?
There is nothing that would preclude the IEP team from making this decision upon the return of staff at the beginning of the next school year. However, the team would want to consider this promptly given the implications for the student's schedule for the new school year.
- 5) If locally we are replacing a semester exam for the EOCs for students who are in grades 10, 11, or 12, should a waiver be considered due to the impact on the students' grades?
Students are only eligible for waivers of the EOCs factored in as described in the Senate Bill 4 7-Year Timeline for Implementation. EOC assessment results do not factor into current grade 10-12 students. They must participate if enrolled in Algebra 1 or its equivalent.
An EOC assessment results waiver may be obtained for the purpose of determining the student's course grade and credit as required in s. 1003.428 (4)(a), F.S.
- 6) Since districts may not get EOC assessment results until after teachers are off for the summer, what recommendations are there for conducting IEP EOC assessment waiver meetings in a timely manner?
See Q/A 4 above.
- 7) We are hoping to know the timelines of the return of the EOC scores before the end of the year. We are contemplating trying to hire personnel for the summer to meet this mandate. Fiscally it is a challenging.
See Q/A 4 above.
- 8) In advance for next year, a middle school student taking algebra would have to take the exam for high school credit. Will the waiver be considered for middle school students in that scenario?
Yes. All students with disabilities are eligible for the EOC waiver.
- 9) Will Access Points be revised with the new common core standards? If so, what are the timelines?
Yes, the access points will be revised to align with the common core standards. Florida will be part of a federal project that will be developing formative assessment and other instructional tools that align with the alternate standards. One of the things this project will be involved with is the alignment of alternate standards to the common core. This work will begin in the fall of 2011.

- 10) Is the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) looking at working with Florida's Virtual School (FLVS) to design platforms for access points' courses to provide technology-based options, particularly at the independent level?
We are considering a number of different options.
- 11) Is the reauthorization of IDEA underway and what are speculative changes?
We have no information on the reauthorization of IDEA or speculative changes to date.
- 12) What about Indicator 14, is it being counted? Will the employment indicator be adjusted to reflect economic downturn?
New baseline data was set for Indicator 14 in the February 2011 submission of Florida's State Performance Plan, which can be accessed from the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services' home page at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/>. Additional information will be forthcoming from the Bureau.
- 13) Can students work for non-profits instead of working in the private sector, which must be minimum wage to earn a special diploma?
Assuming this relates to Special Diploma Option 2, students may work for non-profit organizations, but they must be paid minimum wage and meet all other requirements for Option 2. Otherwise, students may volunteer with non-profits in a true volunteerism capacity, but this would not meet the employment criteria for Special Diploma Option 2 or Florida's course descriptions for paid employment (e.g., Career Placement, Supported Competitive Employment).
- 14) While we understand the importance of designating a transition contact for purposes of correspondence, could consideration be given to include additional parties in e-mails and invitations to events that have responsibility towards meeting indicators pertaining to transition such as: dropout prevention contacts, general education curriculum supervisors, compliance contacts, staffing, etc?
This is an excellent idea, and we'll see how we may be able to address and facilitate better communication in the future.
- 15) What consideration is being given to exclude students with specific learning disabilities, EBD, that do not have significant cognitive disabilities from the language in the revised special diploma rule?
None. Pursuit of a special diploma should not be driven by the student's exceptionality, but by the student's needs.
- 16) Is further consideration being given to students who do not qualify for access courses, yet still qualify for special diploma and are recommended for courses other than level 1 as they still have to meet graduation requirements, (e.g., Algebra, Geometry, etc...)?
We are currently working on developing guidance to districts on this topic. Districts need to look at the course offerings and ensure that students have the supports they need in order to enroll in and be successful in courses.
- 17) With the push toward college prep curriculum in our high schools, are there any plans to help our struggling ESE regular education and IVE students obtain appropriate curriculum and gain the required experience for successful postsecondary placement?
Yes. A number of activities are being considered and underway. BEESS is meeting with various FDOE staff to ensure that students with disabilities are considered.
- 18) A number of states offer technical/vocational education diplomas. Will Florida be doing the same?
A high school career diploma has been proposed via 2011 Senate and House bills.
- 19) Can a student's transcript indicate that they received a special diploma? If not how would the students' academic credentials be verified that they were receiving services through a modified curriculum? It is a data element on the state's FASTER system, so clarification is needed.
Response will be forthcoming.

20) Does including special diploma on a student's transcript constitute disclosure of a student's disability status?

Response will be forthcoming.

21) Are K12 policies and procedures that may impede opportunities for students who are 18-22 years old being addressed?

Additional information is needed to answer this question. There are some Florida Statutes and rules that are already being considered for revisions to address certain opportunities for students who are 18-22 and enrolled in postsecondary programs.

22) My primary question is whether a student other than an "access points/alt assessment student" can receive a special diploma.

Yes.

For instance, a student that does not meet the criteria for access points/alt. assessment, but is unable to pass chemistry or physics. Can we award that student a special diploma since they cannot meet all of the credit requirements, or do they get absolutely no diploma at all?

Yes. There should be procedures for movement between diploma options for students with disabilities. The students would then need to meet the criteria for a special diploma.

Can the IEP team determine that the chemistry or physics course is not appropriate for that student and allow a different course instead to award the standard diploma? There was a tag line in the Course Code Directory that mentioned something along the lines of "or another course as deemed appropriate by the IEP team." We weren't sure where that came from, but we wondered if that was implying that the IEP team could allow the student to take different courses as long as they were regular education courses and the correct number of credits is earned.

The requirement for one credit in Chemistry or Physics also includes or "a series of courses equivalent to Chemistry or Physics." This applies to all students and is not specific to students with disabilities or the IEP team.

Who can earn a special diploma, Option 2? Any student in any disability category?

Students with disabilities who have been identified as a student with an intellectual disability; an autism spectrum disorder; a language impairment; an orthopedic impairment; an other health impairment; a traumatic brain injury; an emotional or behavioral disability; a specific learning disability, including, but not limited to, dyslexia, dyscalculia, or developmental aphasia; or students who are deaf or hard of hearing; or dual sensory impaired. Students who have been identified as visually impaired or speech impaired are not eligible for a special diploma unless they also have another identified disability.

Are the individual districts able to determine the criteria for Option 2, or is the state developing new guidelines?

Currently, the requirements for Special Diploma Option 2 can be found in 6A-1.09961, F.A.C., Graduation Requirement for Certain Students with Disabilities. Districts must follow State Board of Education Rules, but may have more stringent requirements. The state is currently working to propose new rules.