



# Graduation Requirements

## Family Network on Disabilities Postsecondary Educational Training Webinar 3.31.2026

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 (BEES).

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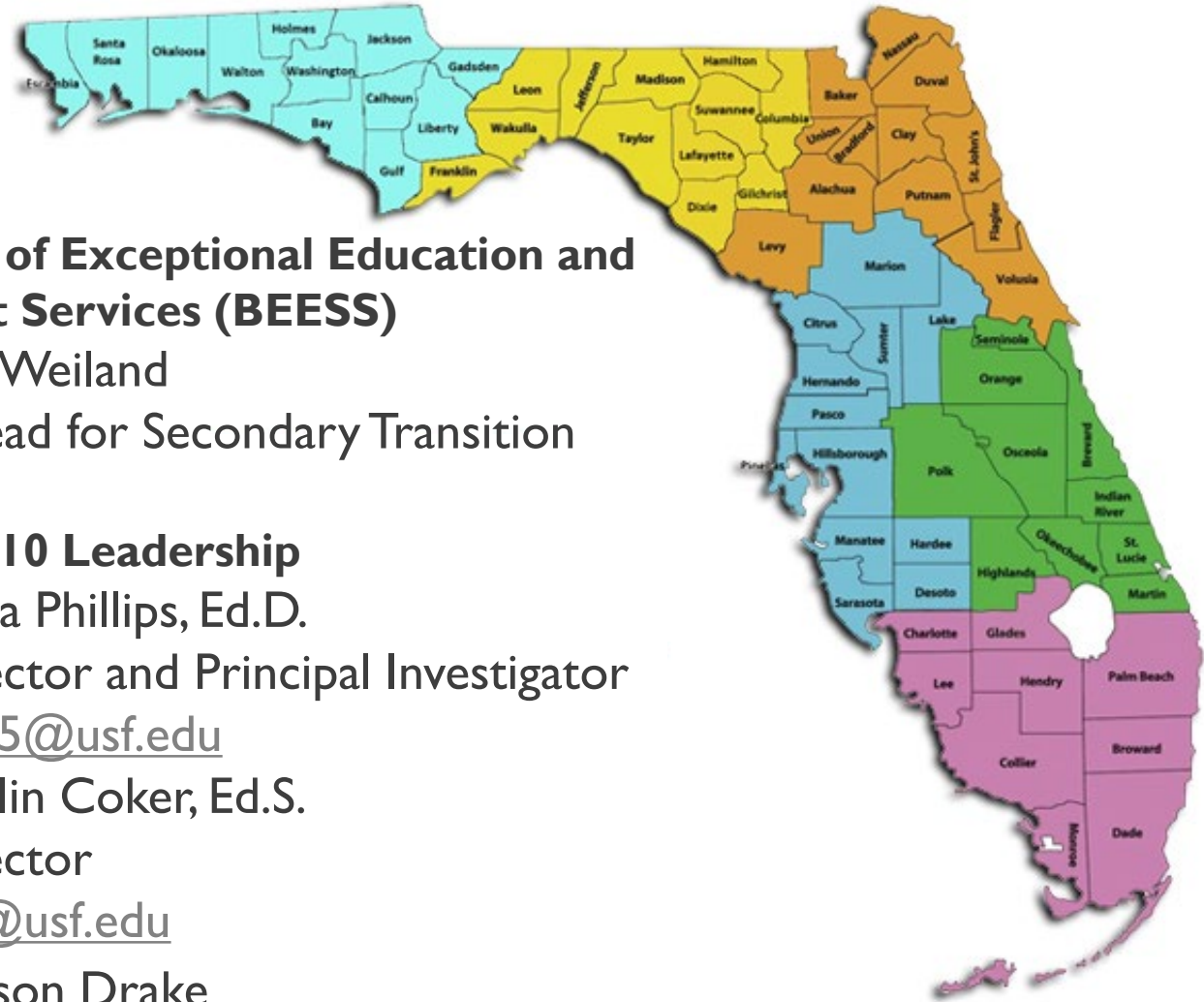
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# Objectives

After this training, participants will be able to:

1. Discuss graduation rates for Florida's students with disabilities.
2. Describe Florida's high school graduation options, including those restricted to students with disabilities.
3. Identify criteria for students with disabilities to defer receipt of the standard diploma.
4. List college and career readiness skills.



# High School Graduation Options

Reviewing Graduation Options that Lead to a Standard Diploma

# High School Graduation Options that Lead to a Standard Diploma

- ❑ 24-credit programs:
  - Standard
  - Standard via Access Courses
  - Standard via Employment and Academic-Based Courses
- ❑ 18-credit, Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning (ACCEL)
- ❑ Career and Technical Education (CTE) Graduation Pathway (min. of 18 credits)
- ❑ International program options
  - International Baccalaureate (IB)
  - Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE)

# Graduation Options Charts

Includes two editions, one for students in 9th grade cohort for the 2023-24 SY and thereafter, and one for 9th grade cohorts prior to 2023-24 SY.

<http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=77>

2023-24 Florida Graduation Options Chart: Students Entering 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Prior to 2023-24

| 24-Credit Standard Diploma Option<br>Available to all students, including students with disabilities   | 24-Credit Standard Diploma Option with Academic and Employment Requirements<br>Available only to students with disabilities   | 24-Credit Standard Diploma Option (Access Courses)<br>Available only to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, who take access courses and the alternate assessment   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>English Language Arts (4 Credits)</b>   |   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ELA 1, 2, 3, 4</li> <li>ELA honors, Advanced Placement (AP), Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE), International Baccalaureate (IB) and dual enrollment courses may satisfy this requirement.</li> </ul>  | Includes all requirements listed in column one <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May substitute a Career and Technical Education (CTE) course with content related to English for English 4</li> </ul>                     | Includes all requirements listed in column one <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May substitute access courses for general education courses</li> <li>May substitute a CTE course with content related to English for English 4</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Mathematics (4 Credits)</b>   |   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One of which must be Algebra 1 and one of which must be Geometry</li> <li>Industry certifications that lead to college credit may substitute for up to two mathematics credits (except for Algebra 1 and Geometry)</li> <li>An identified computer science* credit may substitute for up to one math credit (except for Algebra 1 and Geometry)</li> <li>*A computer science credit may not be used to substitute for both a mathematics and science credit.</li> </ul>   | Includes all requirements listed in column one <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May substitute a CTE course with content related to mathematics for one mathematics credit (except for Algebra 1 and Geometry)</li> </ul> | Includes all requirements listed in column one <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May substitute access courses for general education courses</li> <li>May substitute a CTE course with content related to mathematics for one mathematics credit (except for Algebra 1 and Geometry)</li> </ul>    |
| <b>Science (3 Credits)</b>   |   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One of which must be Biology 1, two of which must be equally rigorous science courses</li> <li>Two of the three required credits must have a laboratory component</li> <li>An industry certification that leads to college credit substitutes for up to one science credit (except for Biology 1)</li> <li>An identified computer science* credit may substitute for up to one science credit (except for Biology 1) *A computer science credit may not be used to substitute for both a mathematics and science credit.</li> </ul> | Includes all requirements listed in column one <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May substitute a CTE course with content related to science for one science credit (except for Biology 1)</li> </ul>                      | Includes all requirements listed in column one <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May substitute access courses for general education courses</li> <li>May substitute a CTE course with content related to science for one science credit (except for Biology 1)</li> </ul>                         |
| <b>Social Studies (3 Credits)</b>  |   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 credit in World History</li> <li>1 credit in U.S. History</li> <li>0.5 credit in U.S. Government</li> <li>0.5 credit in Economics</li> </ul>  | Includes all requirements listed in column one <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May substitute a CTE course with content related to social studies for one social studies credit (except for U.S. History)</li> </ul>     | Includes all requirements listed in column one <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May substitute access courses for general education courses</li> <li>May substitute a CTE course with content related to social studies for one social studies credit course (except for U.S. History)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Electives (8 Credits)</b>   |   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May include employment-based course/s</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must include 0.5 credit in an employment-based course</li> <li>May include exceptional student education (ESE) courses</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May include employment-based course/s</li> </ul>   |
| <b>1 Credit in Fine and Performing Arts, Speech and Debate, CTE or eligible Practical Arts (per Course Code Directory)</b>   |   |   |
| <b>1 Credit in Physical Education to include the integration of health</b>   |   |   |
| Students must earn a 2.0 unweighted grade point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale and pass statewide, standardized assessments or meet the criteria for a waiver of assessment results  |   |   |

2023-24 Florida Graduation Options Chart: Students Entering 9<sup>th</sup> Grade in 2023-24 and Thereafter

| 24-Credit Standard Diploma Option<br>Available to all students, including students with disabilities   | 24-Credit Standard Diploma Option with Academic and Employment Requirements<br>Available only to students with disabilities   | 24-Credit Standard Diploma Option (Access Courses)<br>Available only to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, who take access courses and the alternate assessment   |
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| <b>English Language Arts (4 Credits)</b>   |   |   |
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| <b>Mathematics (4 Credits)</b>   |   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One of which must be Algebra 1 and one of which must be Geometry</li> <li>Industry certifications that lead to college credit may substitute for up to two mathematics credits (except for Algebra 1 and Geometry)</li> <li>An identified computer science* credit may substitute for up to one math credit (except for Algebra 1 and Geometry)</li> <li>*A computer science credit may not be used to substitute for both a mathematics and science credit.</li> </ul>   | Includes all requirements listed in column one <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May substitute a CTE course with content related to mathematics for one mathematics credit (except for Algebra 1 and Geometry)</li> </ul> | Includes all requirements listed in column one <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May substitute access courses for general education courses</li> <li>May substitute a CTE course with content related to mathematics for one mathematics credit (except for Algebra 1 and Geometry)</li> </ul>    |
| <b>Science (3 Credits)</b>   |   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One of which must be Biology 1, two of which must be equally rigorous science courses</li> <li>Two of the three required credits must have a laboratory component</li> <li>An industry certification that leads to college credit substitutes for up to one science credit (except for Biology 1)</li> <li>An identified computer science* credit may substitute for up to one science credit (except for Biology 1) *A computer science credit may not be used to substitute for both a mathematics and science credit.</li> </ul> | Includes all requirements listed in column one <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May substitute a CTE course with content related to science for one science credit (except for Biology 1)</li> </ul>                      | Includes all requirements listed in column one <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May substitute access courses for general education courses</li> <li>May substitute a CTE course with content related to science for one science credit (except for Biology 1)</li> </ul>                         |
| <b>Social Studies (3 Credits)</b>  |   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 credit in World History</li> <li>1 credit in U.S. History</li> <li>0.5 credit in U.S. Government</li> <li>0.5 credit in Economics</li> </ul>  | Includes all requirements listed in column one <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May substitute a CTE course with content related to social studies for one social studies credit (except for U.S. History)</li> </ul>     | Includes all requirements listed in column one <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May substitute access courses for general education courses</li> <li>May substitute a CTE course with content related to social studies for one social studies credit course (except for U.S. History)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Electives (7.5 Credits)</b>   |   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May include employment-based course/s</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must include 0.5 credit in an employment-based course</li> <li>May include exceptional student education (ESE) courses</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May include employment-based course/s</li> </ul>   |
| <b>1 Credit in Fine and Performing Arts, Speech and Debate, CTE or eligible Practical Arts (per Course Code Directory)</b>   |   |   |
| <b>0.5 Credit in Personal Financial Literacy</b>   |   |   |
| <b>1 Credit in Physical Education to include the integration of health</b>   |   |   |
| Students must earn a 2.0 unweighted grade point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale and pass statewide, standardized assessments or meet the criteria for a waiver of assessment results.   |   |   |

# 24-Credit Standard High School Diploma Options



- ❑ Three 24-Credit Standard Diploma Options
  - Two options available **ONLY** to students with disabilities. Both allow for Career and Technical Education (CTE) course substitutions.
- ❑ The majority of students with disabilities will complete the option that is available to **ALL** students.

# Exceptional Student Education Academic to Employment Option

24-credit standard diploma option with academic and employment requirements:

- ❑ Available only to students with disabilities.
- ❑ Must include .5 credit in an employment-based course.
  - Employment Transition Plan
- ❑ May include ESE courses (as electives only).
- ❑ CTE course substitution availability.
- ❑ Certain state and end-of-course assessments may be waived.



# Exceptional Student Education – Access Points

24-credit standard diploma option available only to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who take access courses and the alternate assessments.

- Parental consent is required before a student may take access courses.
- Modifications to curriculum available.
- CTE course substitution availability.
- Certain state and end-of-course assessments may be waived.



<https://www.accesstofls.org/>

# 18-Credit ACCEL Option

ACCEL is meant to be an accelerated option to meet the unique needs of certain students.

- ❑ Available for all students, which includes students with disabilities.
- ❑ Can be adapted for all 24-credit diploma options, including Academic Employment and Access Points.
- ❑ Includes all graduation requirements needed for a 24-credit diploma, except:
  - Complete 3 elective credits instead of 8.
  - No physical education course requirement.
- ❑ Students with disabilities may be eligible to waive certain state and end-of-course assessments.



# Career and Technical Education Graduation Pathway

(minimum of 18 credits)

Students using this option must meet all of the requirements for a 24-credit standard diploma, with the following differences:

- ❑ Only four elective credits are required.
- ❑ Two elective credits in CTE Courses must result in a program completion and an industry certification.
- ❑ Two elective credits are required in a work-based learning program (students may substitute up to two credits of electives, including one-half credit in financial literacy, to fulfill the work-based learning requirement).
- ❑ Physical education credit is not required.
- ❑ One credit in fine arts, performing arts, speech and debate, **CTE**, or approved practical arts is not required (is met by the nature of the CTE diploma pathway requirements).

# Other High School Completion Options

## ❑ Performance-Based Exit Option

- ❑ Results in a State of Florida high school (or performance-based) diploma; available in some districts
- ❑ Targeted for students who are deficit in credits, GPA and below grade/age cohort
- ❑ FDOE's [Performance-Based Exit Option Testing Information](#) page has more information

# Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

- ❑ Instructional and assessment accommodations.
- ❑ Determined through IEP process:
  - Student's learning and behavior characteristics.
  - Uses comprehensive evaluation procedures.
- ❑ Disability category alone does not determine whether an accommodation is needed or what type of accommodation may be needed.



# When Considering Accommodations

## ACCOMMODATIONS



### Assisting Students with Disabilities



- ❑ Obtain input from parents, staff, teachers and students.
- ❑ Collect and use student data to measure the effect of the accommodations.
- ❑ Consider necessary adjustments to accommodation need, design, and/or implementation based on data and student performance.

*Accommodations: Assisting Students with Disabilities 2018*

# Accommodations vs. Modifications







## Accommodations

- ❑ Changes the **way** the student learns and/or is tested.
- ❑ No change in standards or expectations.
- ❑ Permitted under IDEA, ADA, 504
- ❑ Testing guidance:  
[http://www.ada.gov/regs2014/testing\\_accommodations.html](http://www.ada.gov/regs2014/testing_accommodations.html)

## Modifications

- ❑ Changes **what** the student is expected to learn.
- ❑ Permitted for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.
- ❑ Considered after all appropriate accommodations are in place.

# Which Core Course? Which Assessment?

| <b>Standards</b>  |   | <b>Courses</b>            |   | <b>Assessments</b>  |
|---|--|---------------------------|--|---|
| Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards in Florida |   | General Education Courses |   | Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) Assessments |
| Access Points   |  | Access Courses            |  | Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA)                        |



# Statewide Assessments and Diploma Designations

# Statewide Assessments

- ❑ Passing of all required statewide, standardized assessments, including:
  - Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) Assessments.
  - End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments.
  - FSA Retakes.
- ❑ Students with disabilities must participate at least once with appropriate accommodations.
  - May be eligible to have the results waived by their IEP team.



# Alternate Assessment



- ❑ Access courses → Alternate Assessment
- ❑ Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA)
  - Minimum score of 3 to demonstrate satisfactory level of success
- ❑ Alternate assessment results can be waived → Portfolio.

# Diploma Designations

## Facts about Diploma Designations:

- ❑ Optional
- ❑ Additions to a diploma, they are NOT diploma types
- ❑ Awarded to any student who meets all requirements listed in s. 1003.4285, F.S.
- ❑ Two designations available
  - Scholar
  - Industry Scholar





# High School Diploma Deferral

# Deferring Receipt of the Diploma

- ❑ 2014 – Florida Legislation allows students with disabilities to defer receipt of their standard diploma and continue to receive special educational services from their school district.
- ❑ Eligibility described in s. 1003.4282(9)(c), F.S.
- ❑ Process described in Rule 6A-1.09963(6)(a), F.A.C.
- ❑ Majority of students who earn a standard diploma via an option open to all students will not meet this criteria.
- ❑ Students who earn a standard diploma and do not defer are NOT eligible for any further services.

# Eligibility to Defer Receipt of Diploma

The student must meet the following criteria:

- ❑ Have an IEP prescribing special education, transition planning, transition services or related services through age 21; **AND**
- ❑ Is enrolled in one of several specific educational programs
  - Accelerated college credit.
  - Industry certification courses that lead to college credit.
  - Collegiate high school.
  - Courses necessary for Scholar designation.
  - Structured work-study, internships or pre-apprentice programs.

# 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

Continue annually until the year prior to when the student is expected to meet graduation requirements

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-109963, 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

# Planning for Deferral and Continued Services

- ❑ Effective planning for deferral relies on accurate and descriptive language in a student's IEP.
- ❑ Alignment of transition assessment data, present levels, measurable postsecondary goals, annual goals, instruction and transition services assist in determining possible deferral eligibility and/or deferral program needs for students.
- ❑ It is important for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to defer receipt of their standard diploma if they wish to remain eligible for services.
- ❑ Districts may allow a student who defers to participate in graduation activities.





# Questions?

Thank you for your attendance and participation!

# Presenters

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