

State Department of Education

Sooner Success

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OKLAHOMA
Education



Office of Special Education Services

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What does the Office of Special Education Services do?

- Provide **Guidance** to districts, educators, **families**, and community members about Special Education
- Provide **Technical Assistance** and **Professional Development** to Special Education teachers and administrators
- Provide **Monitoring and Accountability** for school districts across the state
- Assist with **Dispute Resolution** between families and school districts
- Oversee the implementation of IDEA in Oklahoma school districts

IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the federal law that **supports special education and related service programming for children and youth with disabilities.**

FAPE

- All students with disabilities are entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). This includes students who are eligible for special education from the ages of 3 through the end of the school year in which they turn 22.

Obligation to Provide FAPE Ends

- **1. When the student meets the LEA requirements that apply to all students for receipt of a standard high school diploma;**
- 2. When the student no longer meets the eligibility criteria for special education services on an IEP, as determined by the evaluation group after a reevaluation; or
- 3. When a parent (or student at age of majority) revokes consent for special education and related services.
- **4. At the end of the school year in which the student turns 22 years of age.**

§ 300.102 Limitation - exception to FAPE for certain ages.

- As used in paragraphs (a)(3)(i) through (iii) of this section, the term *regular high school diploma* means the standard high school diploma awarded to the preponderance of students in the State that is **fully aligned with State standards**, or a higher diploma,
- *except that* a regular high school diploma **shall not be aligned to the alternate academic achievement standards** described in section 1111(b)(1)(E) of the ESEA. A regular high school diploma does not include a recognized equivalent of a diploma, such as a general equivalency diploma, certificate of completion, certificate of attendance, or similar lesser credential.

Translation

- A regular diploma must be fully aligned with State standards.
- A regular diploma shall not be aligned with alternate academic achievement standards.
- Thus, students who are taught to alternate standards and assessed by OAAP shall not be given a regular diploma.

ESSA Language on State-Defined Alternate Diplomas

- Specifically designated for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities assessed using the alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards

ESSA Language, cont.

The state-defined alternate diploma must meet three requirements:

- ✓ **Standards-based**
- ✓ **Aligned with the State requirements for the regular high school diploma**
- ✓ **Obtained within the same period for which the State ensures the availability of a free appropriate public education under section 612(a)(1) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(1))**

Also, the state-defined alternate diploma must meet the implied condition of being state defined.

How is the State-defined Alternate Diploma different from a Regular Diploma?

- While the alternate diploma is standards-based and aligned with the state requirements for the Regular High School Diploma, it is **not a Regular High School Diploma**.
- A State-defined Alternate Diploma **does not terminate a free appropriate public education (FAPE)** for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

HB 1041 – Expanded Graduation Opportunities For Students With Significant Cognitive Disabilities

- Defines course work required for graduation with a State-defined Alternate Diploma
- Mirrors requirements for a regular diploma
- Aligned to Alternate Standards/Essential Elements
- Includes new Career Readiness and Life Skills Courses

What Are The Requirements For Earning The State-Defined Alternate Diploma?

1. **Language Arts** – **Four units** or sets of competencies based on alternate academic achievement standards to consist of reading literature, reading informational text, writing, speaking and listening, and language in the following courses: **a. English 1 Alternate, b. English 2 Alternate, c. English 3 Alternate, and d. English 4 Alternate;**

2. **Mathematics** – **Three units** or sets of competencies based on alternate academic achievement standards to consist of number, quantities, algebra, functions/statistics, probability, and geometry in the following courses: **a. Math Alternate 1, b. Math Alternate 2, and c. Math Alternate 3;**

3. **Science** – **Three units** or sets of competencies based on alternate academic achievement standards to consist of life science, physical science, and earth science in the following courses: **a. Life Science Alternate, b. Physical Science Alternate, and c. Earth Science Alternate;**

4. **Social Studies** – **Three units** or sets of competencies based on alternate academic achievement standards to consist of United States History, United States Government, Oklahoma History, and Geography or Social Studies in the following courses: **a. Social Studies Alternate 1, b. Social Studies Alternate 2, and c. Social Studies Alternate 3,**

What Are The Requirements For Earning The State-Defined Alternate Diploma? 2

5. **Arts** – **One unit** or set of competencies which may include, but is not limited to, courses in Visual Arts and General Music;

6. **Computer Education or World Language** - **One unit** or set of competencies of computer technology, whether taught at a high school or a technology center school, including computer programming, hardware, and business computer applications, such as word processing, databases, spreadsheets, and graphics, excluding keyboarding or typing courses, or one unit or set of competencies of world or non-English language;

7. **Career Readiness** – at least **two units** of Career Readiness, including Career Readiness I, Career Readiness II, Career Readiness III, or Career Readiness IV. Each Career Readiness course may be substituted for Careers/Exploration, Internship I, or Internship II; and

8. **Life Skills** – at least **two units** of Life Skills, such as Life Skills I, Life Skills II, Life Skills III, or Life Skills IV. Each Life Skills course may be substituted for the Life Skills or Family and Consumer Science courses.

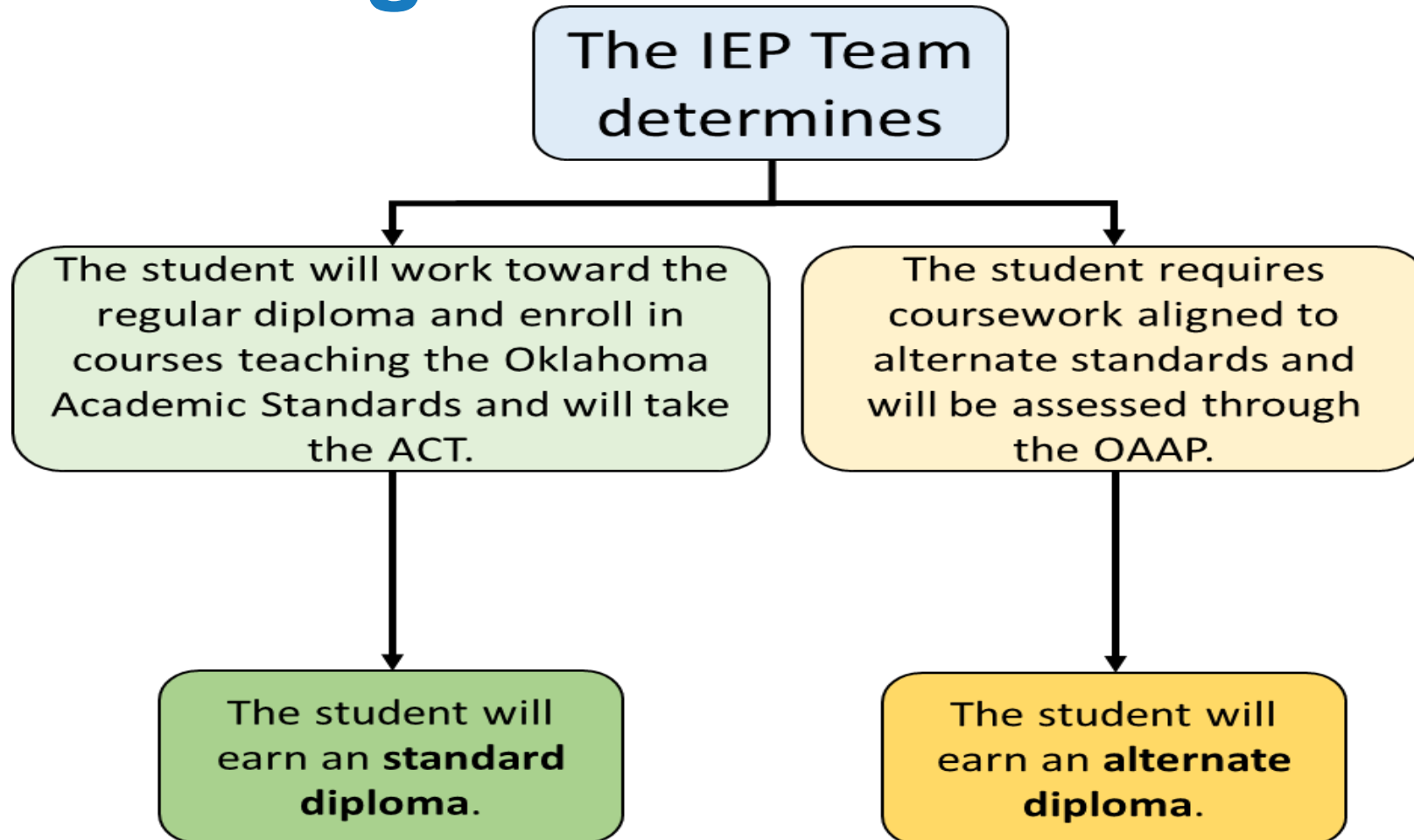
House Bill 1041

- Signed in to law by Governor Stitt on April 19, 2023
- Available for students graduating in May 2024

Course Substitution for Credit Toward the Alternate Diploma

- Corresponding non-alternate title courses may be substituted to meet graduation requirements.
 - This includes courses taught to [Alternate Standards](#) (e.g., English I, Alg. I)
 - This includes courses taught to [Oklahoma Academic Standards](#) (e.g., Art, Music, FACS)
- Additional courses approved by the Oklahoma State Board of Education may also be substituted.

What Diploma Options Do Students With Significant Cognitive Disabilities Have?



When Is The Alternate Diploma Given?

- The Alternate Diploma is conferred when the student completes the required courses for graduation with an Alternate Diploma.
- Students will be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony with the other graduates from their cohort.
- The goal is that students eligible for the Alternate Diploma earn their credits at the same rate as their age peers, graduating in four years.

What Happens Once A Student Has Earned An Alternate Diploma?

- Once a student has earned an alternate diploma, the districts' obligation to provide a FAPE **does not** end.
- If the student has not turned 22 on or before September 1st, the student will be offered continued enrollment to be provided a FAPE.
- Students who continue enrollment will participate in transition services that are focused on improving their functional and academic achievement to facilitate the movement to post school activities.

What Happens Once A Student Has Earned An Alternate Diploma? 2

- Districts should expand their programs to meet the obligation of a FAPE and meet the needs of students ages 18 through the year in which the student turns 22.
- Districts will offer additional courses beyond that which is required for graduation.
- OSDE-SES has developed competencies, scope and sequence and new course titles.

Must A Student Return For A FAPE After Earning An Alternate Diploma?

- It is a decision of the IEP team (that relies heavily on the preferences of families and students) if the student will continue enrollment after earning an Alternate Diploma based on the post-secondary plans and goals of the student.
- The IEP team may determine that the student has adequate post-secondary plans and will not continue enrollment.
- The team may determine that a student will continue enrollment for 1 year or more, or until the student reaches maximum age.
- Continued enrollment does not need to be consecutive.

Let's Be Clear

- Districts **MUST offer** a FAPE to all students following graduation with an alternate diploma.
- Students are **not required** to return following graduation with an alternate diploma.

Examples- Student earns an Alternate Diploma at the end of 12th grade and the IEP team decides...

- Scenario 1

- The student will attend a New Leaf Program, Bridges Program or Opportunity Orange Scholars.

The student will not return for a FAPE.

(However, if the student changes their mind, a FAPE is still available until the student ages out.)

- Scenario 2

- The student will begin supported employment but does not want to continue in school.

The student will not return for a FAPE.

(However, if the student changes their mind, a FAPE is still available until the student ages out.)

- Scenario 3

- The student will participate in Project SEARCH through their high school.

The student will return for a FAPE.