

Understanding Alternate Diplomas :

What Teachers, Parents, and Students Need to Know

The Need for an Alternate Diploma

Policy 2510: Assuring the Quality of Education: Regulations for Education Programs states that all boards of education shall award a high school diploma to every student who completes the standard graduation requirements. Students who meet the criteria for participation in the West Virginia Alternate Summative Assessment based on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards are presumed to be pursuing an alternate diploma. Only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are eligible for an alternate diploma.

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities typically have general intellectual functioning more than three standard deviations below the mean and exhibit concurrent deficits in adaptive functioning across multiple environments in conceptual, social, and practical domains. For more information, see WVBE Policy 2419: Regulations for the Education of Students with Exceptionalities, and the Eligibility Determination Checklist for Participation in the West Virginia Alternate Summative Assessment (WVASA).

IEP Team Decision

As stated in WVBE Policy 2419, beginning with the first IEP to be in effect when a student is 14 years old (or sooner at the discretion of the IEP team), the IEP team must address post-secondary goals, including the type of diploma the student will be working toward, as well as the implications of that decision. Every effort must be made to include both the parents and the student in this meeting as its primary purpose is to plan the student's post-secondary program.

IEP Team Procedures

The IEP Team annually reviews the student's eligibility for a regular or alternate diploma, and progress toward graduation. The IEP Team must carefully review the student's most recent summative and formative assessment data. Based upon the review of the student's assessment data, the IEP Team must complete the Eligibility Determination Checklist for Participation in the West Virginia Alternate Summative Assessment (WVASA).

During High School

Students pursuing an alternate diploma must complete the same graduation requirements (required credits) as their peers pursuing a regular diploma. Students pursuing an alternate diploma will receive credits and grades for all classes, just as their general education peers. Some students working toward an alternate diploma may require extended time to meet graduation credit requirements or meet individualized transition goals as determined by the student's IEP Team. FAPE ensures students working toward an alternate diploma can remain enrolled until the end of the school year following their 21st birthday, if needed. This is an individualized

Graduation Considerations

- È The alternate diploma is an alternate path to graduation determined by the IEP Team for students with the