

Course of Study Decisions

Decision: High School Diploma or Certificate of Completion

When to begin the conversation: It is important to start the conversation by the end of the eighth grade.

Student postsecondary goals and personal plans for their future.		
Diploma		Certificate of Completion
Employment goals : Employers require a diploma. Education/training goals require a diploma for eligibility for financial aid at community colleges. Universities and some branches of the military require a diploma.		Students who set the goal to achieve the certificate need a meaningful certificate that prepares them for the “next environment”
Academic history		
Student has participated in a course of study that meets district graduation requirements with/without accommodations or modifications		Student course of study focuses on earning a certificate: functional skills, life skills, vocational and community access skills
Tests and Scores		
Academic tests CAHSEE or Exemption		Academic tests Adaptive behaviors CAPA
Transition in the IEP		
Met High School Graduation goals. Adequate transition services were provided to prepare for postsecondary goals		Met transition goal to earn a certificate of completion
Meet District Diploma requirements		
Met district diploma/graduation requirements		Did not meet district diploma / graduation requirements.
Graduation Status at age 18		
Met all criteria to graduate based on District standards and IEP		Needs additional education to prepare for transition.
Credit Status		
Student Goal is diploma-behind in credits at age 18 . Options are stay in school Adult Education Community College GED Industry Certification		Students who are on the certificate track throughout high school and who do not complete the coursework required to earn a diploma can opt to stay in school up to age 22 in Transition age programs.

Other issues to discuss with students, parents and the IEP team

A diploma cannot be denied to a student who has earned it; has met all of the graduation requirements; and has been provided adequate transition services that prepare them for the transition goals.

Maturity and readiness for adulthood are not considerations for this issue. Few parents are convinced their 18 year old child is ready for adulthood. This issue speaks to having adequate post-school resources and programs in the community.

Districts need to carefully review their graduation requirements and the barriers that a lack of employment create in terms of employment and earnings.

There is increasing emphasis for students with Intellectual Disabilities to transition to integrated, competitive employment earning competitive wages.

