



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

**TO:** P-12 Education Committee  
**FROM:** Ken Slentz  
**SUBJECT:** High School Career Credential  
**DATE:** June 4, 2012

**AUTHORIZATION(S):**

*John B. Slentz*  
**SUMMARY**

### **Issue for Discussion**

Does the Board of Regents support the proposed principles and Department direction for the establishment of a high school career credential that could be awarded as a supplement to the regular high school diploma and, for those students with disabilities who are unable to earn a regular diploma, as a replacement to the individualized education program (IEP) diploma?

### **Reason(s) for Consideration**

Review of Policy.

### **Proposed Handling**

This issue will come before the P-12 Education Committee for discussion at the June 2012 meeting.

### **Procedural History**

At the January 2012 Board of Regents meeting, the Regents adopted an amendment to the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education that would repeal the IEP diploma for all students, effective beginning with the 2013-14 school year. At the same time, the Regents adopted regulations that would authorize school districts to award a Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential to students with severe disabilities taking the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA).

### **Background Information**

At their January 2010 meeting, the Board of Regents supported the development of a credential that documents student achievement of the Career Development and

Occupational Studies (CDOS) learning standards and acknowledges successful completion of academic and career and technical education (CTE) programs and coursework that is available to all students as a supplement to the regular high school diploma and as a replacement to the IEP diploma for students with disabilities who, because of their disability, are unable to earn a regular diploma.

In response to public concerns regarding the use of a single credential to document a wide range of student skills and in consideration of the Regents discussions regarding multiple pathways for a diploma, the Regents supported policy development in two phases:

Phase I: Development of a skills credential for students with severe disabilities.

Phase II: Development of a career readiness credential for all other students.

While there is considerable public support for the Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential for students with severe disabilities, there remains significant concern that the Phase II credential as a replacement to the IEP diploma for all other students, who, because of their disabilities, are not able to earn a regular diploma, is not evolving at the same time. In addition to widespread support for consideration of multiple pathways to a diploma so that more students would be able to earn a regular high school diploma, there was strong support that a credential that documents student achievement against the CDOS standards be available to all students, including those without disabilities.

In the development of the proposed policy framework and documentation requirements for the Phase II credential, Department staff has considered stakeholder input obtained through numerous public forums with parents, former students, administrators, educators, employers, and representatives from higher education and information on other states' career-related credentials. With the assistance of the New York Comprehensive Center funded by the U.S. Department of Education, staff also conducted a comprehensive review of four national work readiness credentials (see attached) that measure a student's career readiness skills. Department staff are also exploring options for a Department-developed measure of a student's achievement of the CDOS standards.

### **Policy Direction for Consideration**

The Board of Regents may wish to support the following to guide staff in establishing a credential that would recognize a student's work readiness potential:

- I. Core Principles
- II. Eligibility requirements
- III. Work and Career Preparation Activities
- IV. Documentation requirements

#### **I. Core Principles**

The following principles are proposed for the development of a meaningful work readiness credential.

1. In addition to academic preparation, students need to be able to demonstrate knowledge and skills relating to career development, integrated learning and universal foundation skills essential for success in the workplace (CDOS Learning Standards).
2. Students need to be actively engaged in career planning and preparation and their participation in career awareness, exploration and preparation activities should be valued, encouraged and recognized. Career Plans are an important mechanism to add relevance and meaning to learning experiences across subject areas.
3. Students should participate in meaningful career development opportunities that are developmentally and individually appropriate, in consideration of students' strengths, preferences and interests and that provide real world work experiences.

## II. Proposed Eligibility

- All students<sup>1</sup>, including those with disabilities who are awarded a high school diploma, would be eligible to earn this credential as a supplement to a local, Regents or high school equivalency diploma.
- A student with a disability who cannot, because of his/her disability, graduate with a high school diploma may also earn this credential provided that the student has also attended school or received a substantially equivalent education elsewhere for at least 12 years, excluding kindergarten, or, completed the school year in which s/he has attained the age of 21.
- Parents and students must be fully informed that the credential award does not terminate a student with a disability's right to a free appropriate public education and that the student continues to be eligible to attend school until the end of the school year in which the student turns age 21 or graduates with a regular diploma, whichever shall occur first.

## III. Proposed Work and Career Preparation Activities Requirements

- To earn this credential, the student must be involved in career planning. The New York State (NYS) Career Plan records a student's knowledge and skill attainment. It documents a history of achievement that students build from elementary school through high school. The Career Plan design has also incorporated the transition planning process that is highly desirable for all students and required for students with disabilities. Career Plans can be used as the employability profile that is required for students in programs approved under the 2001 Regents Policy on CTE. More importantly, the Career Plan is an effective graduation planning tool for all students. Students in grades 6-12 can

---

<sup>1</sup> Students with severe disabilities would be eligible to receive the Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential.

create individual Career Plans with the "My Portfolio" tool found at the New York State Department of Labor's *CareerZone* web site.

- Each student awarded the credential must have completed a minimum number of hours (e.g., 90 hours throughout his/her high school experience) in courses/activities related to career awareness, exploration and preparation (which could include volunteer and community experiences).

#### IV. Proposed Documentation to Accompany the Credential Award

- Students who are awarded this credential should have documentation, verified by designated school administrators, that they have completed a NYS Commencement Level Career Plan. (see Attachment 1 and <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/cte/careerplan/docs/SecondaryCommencLvl.pdf>)
- For students with disabilities, the credential must also be issued together with a summary of the student's academic achievement and functional performance, which must include recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting his or her postsecondary goals<sup>2</sup> (Student Exit Summary) as is currently required by federal and State regulations. Department-developed documentation for the credential would meet the requirements of the Student Exit Summary.
- At the option of the local school district, the award could be accompanied with documentation that the student has satisfactorily completed the requirements for one or more of the nationally recognized work readiness credentials (Attachment 2).

#### **Next Steps:**

With the support of the Board of the proposed core principles, eligibility, work readiness activities and documentation requirements, the following activities are recommended to further develop the proposed credential:

1. Develop model documentation that meets the requirements of the Student Exit Summary for students with disabilities and documents student attainment of the CDOS Standards as required for this credential.
2. Seek public comment from parents, students, teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators from public and private schools, employers, adult service agencies and college disability service coordinators on the proposed policy and related documents.
3. Propose regulations for discussion by the Board in October 2012 and adoption by December 2012.

#### Attachments

---

<sup>2</sup> 34 CFR §300.305(e)(3); 8 NYCRR §200.4(c)(4)

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

**Career Plan**  
*Commencement Level*

**1. Personal Data**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Identification Number: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Review of Student Career Plan**

Grade Level:	Date of Review:	Possible Participants (Initials)				
		Student:	Parent/ Guardian:	Teacher:	Counselor:	Other:

**3. Knowledge**

**A. Self-knowledge: Who am I?**

**Interests:** *List your top three choices for each of the following areas of interest:*

Grade Level:	1a. Personal: <i>Out-of-school activities that you enjoy</i>	1b. Academic: <i>Classes or subjects you enjoy the most</i>	1c. Work Preferences: <i>Working with people, ideas, and things</i>

**2. Abilities:** *List personal skills and talents that will be helpful in a career choice:*

<b>Grade Level:</b>	<b>My Personal Abilities . . .</b>	<b>Career areas where my abilities will be useful . . .</b>

**Personal and academic areas I need to strengthen:**

<b>Grade Level:</b>	<b>I need to strengthen . . .</b>	<b>Steps I will take to strengthen these areas . . .</b>

**B. Career Exploration:** *Where am I going?*

**1. School and/or Community Experiences:** *I have participated in the following school and/or community experiences:*

<b>Grade Level:</b>	<b>School and/or Community Experiences:</b>	<b>Skills Acquired Through Experience:</b>

**2. Work Experiences:** *I have participated in the following work experiences:*

<b>Grade Level:</b>	<b>Work Experiences:</b>	<b>Skills Acquired Through Work Experience:</b>

3. **Careers of Interest and Characteristics:** *I am interested in the following careers and have discovered the following information about these careers:*

Grade Level:	Careers of Interest:	Education Requirements:	Skills I Need to Acquire:	Work Environment:	Job Outlook:

C. **Future Goals and Decision-Making:** *How do I get there?*

1. **Career Goals and Action Steps:**

Grade Level:	Goals: <i>(resulting from career exploration activities)</i>	Education Plan: <i>(courses that relate to my career interests)</i>	Action Steps: <i>(what I need to do to accomplish my goals)</i>	Check Off Completed Steps

4. **Skills/Application:** *What do I need to know? What skills are important to me? What am I learning? Why am I learning it? How can I use it?*

**Directions:** *The following skills are needed to succeed in life, work, and education beyond high school. Using the scale provided, identify for each skill the level of achievement **you believe** you possess at the beginning of the commencement level and the level **you believe** you achieved by the end of your senior year. Briefly describe a classroom experience or an activity that helped you develop each skill and identify how each skill can be used in your life and future work experiences.*

Skills:	<u>Beginning Skill Level I Possess</u> (Check Off)	Experiences/Activities/Application:	<u>Final Skill Level I Have Achieved</u> (Check Off)
<b>Basic Skills:</b> Uses a combination of techniques to read, listen to, and analyze complex information; conveys information in oral and written form; uses multiple computational skills to analyze and solve mathematical problems.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Highly ↔ Least Developed Developed		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Highly ↔ Least Developed Developed
<b>Thinking Skills:</b> Demonstrates the ability to organize and process information and apply skills in new ways.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Highly ↔ Least Developed Developed		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Highly ↔ Least Developed Developed

<b>Skills:</b>	<b>Beginning Skill Level I Possess (Check Off)</b>	<b>Experiences/Activities/Application:</b>	<b>Final Skill Level I Have Achieved (Check Off)</b>
<b>Personal Qualities:</b> Demonstrates skills in setting goals, monitoring progress, and improving performance.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Highly ↔ Least Developed Developed</i>		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Highly ↔ Least Developed Developed</i>
<b>Interpersonal Skills:</b> Communicates effectively and helps others to learn a new skill.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Highly ↔ Least Developed Developed</i>		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Highly ↔ Least Developed Developed</i>
<b>Technology:</b> Applies knowledge of technology to identify and solve problems.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Highly ↔ Least Developed Developed</i>		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Highly ↔ Least Developed Developed</i>
<b>Managing Information:</b> Uses technology to acquire, analyze and organize data, and communicates information.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Highly ↔ Least Developed Developed</i>		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Highly ↔ Least Developed Developed</i>
<b>Managing Resources:</b> Allocates time and financial and human resources to complete a task.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Highly ↔ Least Developed Developed</i>		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Highly ↔ Least Developed Developed</i>
<b>Systems:</b> Demonstrates an understanding of the relationship between the performance of a system and the goals, resources, and functions of an organization.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Highly ↔ Least Developed Developed</i>		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Highly ↔ Least Developed Developed</i>

## 5. Culminating Activity

**Directions:** *Briefly describe the activity that you completed. Indicate the most important thing you learned about yourself through this activity. Describe how this self knowledge will influence your plans for the future.*

<b>Activity:</b>	<b>Self Knowledge/Future Plans:</b>

<b>SKILLS CREDENTIALS</b>				
<b>Specific Information</b>	<b>SkillsUSA</b>	<b>National Work Readiness Credential (NWRC)</b>	<b>National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) - WorkKeys (ACT)</b>	<b>Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) - Workforce Skills Certificate System (WSCS)</b>
<b>Skills Assessed (including but not limited to)</b>	Focuses primarily on industry- specific abilities and personal qualities.  Includes assessment of general employability skills.	General employability skills including nine communication, interpersonal, problem-solving and learning skills.	General employability skills such as reading for information, applied mathematics, listening for understanding, applied technology and soft skills. Includes 4 performance levels (bronze, silver, gold and platinum).	CASAS measures basic academic skills, critical thinking and problem solving. Includes continuum of skill levels, including skill descriptors for individuals with intellectual disabilities. WSCS, a supplemental credential to CASAS, assesses general employability skills.
<b>Career Specific</b>	Yes	No	No	No
<b>Curriculum/Instructional Materials</b>	Yes. Blueprint of competencies for each career area.	Yes. Three book series designed to model authentic, work-related experiences and activities.	Yes. Interactive learning tool for career readiness skills.	No single curriculum. Provides an extensive data base of instructional training materials including low level literacy curriculum modules and lesson plans in alternative formats.
<b>Test Administration</b>	Testing occurs online and can be administered at school.	Testing is internet based and delivered securely in wide range of authorized sites.	Individuals can be certified as administrators and schools can become certified test sites.	Testing is available online and in paper and pencil formats. Schools can administer assessments.
<b>Fee for Test/Materials</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Reading/Math Levels</b>	Reading - 8 <sup>th</sup> grade Math - 6 <sup>th</sup> through 8 <sup>th</sup> grades (depending on career assessment).	Reading – 7 <sup>th</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup> grade  Math - 7 <sup>th</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup> grade	Varies by performance level. Reading – 8 <sup>th</sup> grade through high school (HS)	Varies by performance level. Includes preliteracy and adult low level literacy skills. Reading and math

*Comparison of National Employability Skills Credentials - Phase II of the Alternate Exiting Credential*

*Attachment 2*

			Math - 5 <sup>th</sup> grade through HS	level is comparable to GED® test for CASAS certification.
<b>States/districts using Credential</b>	Approximately 44 states. Some districts in NYS use these assessments through the Career and Technical Education program approval process.	Credential was developed in partnership with five states (Florida, New Jersey, NY, Rhode Island, and Washington), the District of Columbia and JA Worldwide. NYS Department of Labor endorses credential.	Five states have funded WorkKeys and 12 have funded the EXPLORE program for middle school students. Used by Center for Workforce Education and Development at Syracuse University and some BOCES adult education programs.	CASAS is affiliated with National External Diploma Program (NEDP) which provides unique ways for adults to earn HS diploma based on life experiences. Eleven states, including NY use NEDP. NEDP is used by 18 BOCES adult education programs. California is primary user of WSCS.
<b>For additional information</b>	<a href="http://www.workforcereadysystem.org">http://www.workforcereadysystem.org</a>	<a href="http://www.workreadiness.com">http://www.workreadiness.com</a>	<a href="http://www.act.org/certification">http://www.act.org/certification</a>	<a href="https://www.casas.org">https://www.casas.org</a>

**May 2012**