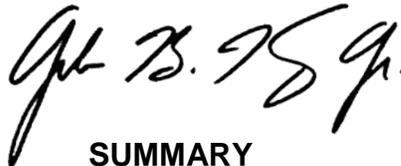




THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

**TO:** P-12 Education Committee  
**FROM:** Ken Slentz   
**SUBJECT:** Alternate Credential for Students who Formerly Earned IEP Diploma  
**DATE:** August 27, 2012

**AUTHORIZATION(S):**

  
**SUMMARY**

### **Issue for Discussion**

Does the Board of Regents wish to develop a commencement credential for students with disabilities who are unable to earn a regular diploma?

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

Review of Policy.

### **Proposed Handling**

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

### **Background Information**

At their January 2010 meeting, the Board of Regents discussed 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 as a replacement to the IEP diploma for students with disabilities who, because of their disability, are unable to earn a regular 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 preparation and skills credential for other students with disabilities.

Attached is a chart summarizing and distinguishing Regents actions to date on diploma and non-diploma exiting credential options for students with disabilities.

**Expansion of Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential: Policy Direction for Consideration**

In the development of the proposed policy framework and documentation requirements for the career preparation and skills credential, Department staff has considered stakeholder input obtained through numerous public forums with parents, former students, administrators, educators, employers, representatives from higher education and information on other states' career-related credentials. Staff also conducted a comprehensive review of various national work readiness credentials that measure a student's career readiness skills.

The following policy framework is proposed to guide staff in establishing a credential that would recognize a student's career preparation and skills:

- 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 career preparation and skills credential.

- 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).
- As a critical component of transition planning, 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.
- 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

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

## III. Proposed Work and Career Preparation Activities Requirements

- Career Planning: To earn this credential, the student must be involved in career planning which 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 and can be used as the employability profile for students in given programs.
- Instructional Requirements: 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 <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 (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.

## **Next Steps**

With the support of the Board, the following activities are recommended to further develop the proposed credential:

1. 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.
2. Propose regulations for discussion by the Board in December 2012 and adoption by April 2013.

### Alternate Credential (Non-Diploma) Options

Topic	Status	Eligibility	Key Components
<b>Individualized Education Program (IEP) Diploma</b>	<b>Action Taken:</b> Repealed the IEP diploma for all students with disabilities effective June 30, 2013	All students with disabilities who do not earn a regular diploma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not considered a regular high school diploma</li> <li>Based on student achievement of educational goals as specified in student's IEP</li> <li>Requires completion of 12 years of school, excluding Kindergarten</li> </ul>
<b>Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential for Students with Severe Disabilities</b>	<b>Action Taken:</b> Replaced the IEP diploma with the Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential effective July 1, 2013	Only students with severe disabilities taking the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not a diploma option</li> <li>Documents student skills, strengths and levels of independence in academic, career development and foundation skills needed for post-school living, learning and working.</li> </ul>
<b>Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential for other students with disabilities who cannot earn a regular diploma</b>	<b>Proposed:</b> Develop a career preparation and skills credential for students with disabilities who are unable to graduate with a high school diploma. Seek public comment on the proposed policy and proposed regulations to the Board of Regents in December.	Students with disabilities (other than those who take NYSAA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not a diploma option</li> <li>Documents student attainment of Career Development and Occupational Studies standards (career development, integrated learning and universal foundation skills) and completion of Career and Technical Education coursework and related work experiences and assessments</li> </ul>

### Local High School Diploma Options (Safety Net)

Topic	Status	Eligibility	Key Components
<b>55-64 Pass Score Option</b>	<b>Current Policy:</b> Students with disabilities may graduate with a local diploma if they obtain a 55-64 on one or more Regents examinations	Students with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students with disabilities must take and pass the five required Regents examinations or Regents Competency Tests (RCT)</li> <li>May graduate with a local diploma if the score(s) on one or more of the required Regents examination(s) is between 55-64</li> </ul>
<b>Regents Competency Test (RCT)</b>	<b>Current Policy:</b> Student with disabilities may graduate with a local diploma by passing one or more of the RCTs	Students with disabilities who entered grade 9 prior to September 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available only to those students who entered grade nine prior to September 2011</li> <li>Students must take required Regents examinations.</li> <li>If they fail one or more of the required Regents examinations, but pass the RCT in that subject area, student may graduate with a local diploma</li> </ul>
<b>Compensatory Option</b>	<b>Proposed:</b> Proposed regulations to add to the safety net options for students with disabilities	Students with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students with disabilities who score less than 55 on one or more of the required Regents examinations may graduate with a local diploma if they compensate with scores higher than 65 on other Regents examinations</li> <li>English and Math scores must be at a 65 score or higher</li> <li>Attendance and course grade requirements</li> </ul>