

ALTERNATIVE PATHWAY TO A DIPOLMA

A family resource to understand the new alternative pathway to a high school diploma for students with significant cognitive disabilities



WHAT IS IT?

A new pathway has been established to provide students with significant cognitive disabilities the opportunity to earn a high school diploma. Traditionally, many students in this population receive a certificate of completion upon graduation or turning 22. Eligible students can now earn a diploma, participate in graduation ceremonies, and continue to receive special education services under the IDEA until the age of 22.

WHO IS IT FOR?

The alternative pathway is intended for students with significant cognitive disabilities, as defined by California's eligibility for the California Alternative Assessments (CAA). Students only need to be eligible for the CAA to qualify for this pathway and are not required to participate in statewide testing to earn a high school diploma.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Three courses in English
- Two courses in Mathematics, including one year of Algebra
- Two courses in Science, including biological and physical sciences
- Three courses in Social Studies, including US history; world history; a one-semester course in American government and civics, and a one-semester course of economics
- One course in Visual or Performing arts, World Language, or Career Technical Education
- Two courses in PE, unless the pupil is exempt
- One semester of Ethnic Studies, starting with pupils graduating in 2029-30 school year

ELIGIBILITY

- ▶ The student was or is in high school for the 22-23 school year or later
- ▶ The student is eligible for the California Alternative Assessment as determined by the IEP team
- ▶ The student is taking standards-aligned course work to meet statewide course requirements for graduation with a diploma

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- ▶ Is my child eligible for the California Alternative Assessment?
- ▶ Is my child on track to earn a diploma through either the traditional or alternative pathway? If not, how can we help them get on track?
- ▶ How will my child be able to meet statewide course requirements that are aligned to the standards?
- ▶ Will my child have the opportunity to learn other functional and adaptive skills during the school day and how?