

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Graduation Requirements

It is critical that high school students, including students with disabilities, are given the opportunity to successfully graduate from high school and receive a Standard High School Diploma.

Students who graduate with a Standard High School Diploma will most likely:

- Earn more money
- Have better career opportunities
- Be able to further their education at a college or a trade school

Requirements for a Standard High School Diploma

- Students must meet all attendance, course, and high school testing requirements.
- Regular attendance is needed to learn the academic subjects that are needed to succeed.
- Students need to have at least 23 credit units to graduate. The subjects include 4 units of Math, 4 units of English/Language Arts, 4 units of Science, and 3 units of Social Studies.
- Students must pass the GA Milestones tests, including End of Course (EOC) assessments in Math, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies.

Key things you should know about the Standard High School Diploma

- For some students, earning a Standard High School Diploma can take longer than 4 years. Students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) can stay in school until the standard diploma requirements are met or their 22nd birthday.
- When given the proper supports, many students with disabilities will be able to meet the graduation requirements and earn the Standard High School Diploma.

In Georgia, there are 3 alternatives to the Standard High School Diploma

- Special Education Diploma
- State-Defined Alternate Assessment
- High School Certificate of Performance

Key Points You Should Know about Graduation Requirements

- The IEP team will help a student decide what they want to do after graduation and plan which courses and supports are needed to reach that goal.
- The IEP team will look at the skills the student needs to access the standards.
- The IEP, which includes the transition plan, should be a guide to graduation.
- Transition plans should include goals for achieving the desired diploma, and need to be in place before 9th grade or age 16, whichever comes first.



Special Education Diploma

- Awarded to students with disabilities who have not met the requirements for the Standard High School Diploma or the State-Defined Alternate Diploma but have met their IEP goals.

State-Defined Alternate Diploma

- Awarded to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who have taken the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA).
- There are 2 federal laws [The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the Individuals with Education Act (IDEA)] that require states to teach specific subjects to all students, including students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- The IEP team decides if the student is unable to reasonably participate in the regular assessment program.
- The GAA gives students access to the general curriculum, and gives them the opportunity to show progress toward meeting the state standards. Students are evaluated on what they learn.
- Students are required to have at least 23 credit units to graduate.
- While the Alternate Diploma meets the state requirements for the Regular High School Diploma, it does not meet the federal requirements for a Regular High School Diploma.
- The Alternate Diploma is available to students who entered 9th grade during the 2020-2021 school year and beyond. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who were in high school before the 2020-2021 school year who take the GAA and complete other requirements will receive the Regular Diploma.
- GAA is not for students who are simply performing below grade level or need remediation to meet grade level skills.
- In most cases, an alternate diploma does not meet the requirements for many types of jobs, the military, or admission to colleges or universities.

High School Certificate of Performance

- Awarded to students who do not have an IEP and do not meet all of the course or state assessment requirements for a Standard High School Diploma.

Dual Enrollment

- Dual Enrollment programs allow students to take high school and college or university courses at the same time. It gives students a head start towards college.
- If students pass the college class, they receive credit towards both their high school diploma and a college degree or certificate.
- High school students who have an IEP and are getting services under the IDEA can participate in Dual Enrollment.
- Just like all students, students with disabilities have to meet the college's academic requirements to take the class.

Where to go for more information:

Parent to Parent of Georgia

770 451-5484 or 800-229-2038

www.p2pga.org

GA Department of Education, Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports

404 656-3963 or 800-311-3627 and ask to be transferred to Special Education

http://www.gadoe.org/ci_exceptional.aspx

Additional resources: Contact the Special Education Director for your school system.



The contents of this factsheet were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education, #H235F200001 and the Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC). However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer.

