

# DIPLOMA OPTIONS IN GEORGIA

The State of Georgia currently has 4 diploma options for students with disabilities. Each option has different criteria and requirements that must be met by the time a student graduates.

## **Option 1: High School Diploma (Standard)**

This diploma is awarded to students, including those with disabilities, who have satisfied attendance requirements, unit requirements and the state assessment requirements.

## **Option 2: Special Education Diploma**

This diploma is awarded to students with an Individual Education Program (IEP) who have completed their IEP goals but have not met all the requirements of Option 1.

## **Option 3: High School Certificate**

This diploma is awarded to students, including those with disabilities, who have earned the required minimum 23 units, but have not satisfied attendance or state assessment requirements.

## **Option 4: State-Defined Alternate Diploma**

This diploma is awarded to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who have demonstrated competency using the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA).

*Note: Option 4 will be available for students who entered the ninth grade starting the 2020-2021 school year. Students who entered the 9th grade prior to the 2020-2021 school year will be awarded one of the other 3 options depending on their satisfaction of the requirements.*

## **Tips for Families:**

- Start planning for transition early. Be involved in IEP/transition process. Students should be part of all Transition and IEP meetings beginning no later than 9th grade and/or the age of 16 (as applicable).
- Be knowledgeable about the requirements of post-secondary options.
- Make sure that the Transition Plan includes appropriate courses that align with the student's goals.
- Include the School Counselor in transition planning.



## Points to Consider:

- All students are eligible for the High School Diploma and High School Certificate, but only those with an IEP are eligible for (Option 2) Special Education Diploma and (Option 4) State-Defined Alternative Diploma.
- Only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are eligible for Option 4.
- If your child is receiving services through an IEP or 504 Plan, they may need accommodations for regular instruction sessions and/or testing sessions. Accommodations should be discussed, agreed upon and documented in the IEP or 504 Plan before any testing session.
- Diploma paths should be discussed and outlined in the Transition Service Plan. Be aware that all diplomas are not equal and may affect transition to post-secondary and employment options.
- Parents wishing to switch their child from one diploma option to another must discuss with the IEP team by the 9th grade or by age 14 to ensure that the child is eligible based on credits needed to qualify for the selected diploma path. Some students may need to stay in school until age 22 to ensure all requirements are met for the chosen option.
- Students who are at least 16 years of age are eligible for the General Education Development (GED) or High School Equivalency Test (HiSET). Those aged 16 and 17 are subject to additional requirements to apply for these tests. Both GED and HiSET offer accommodations for individuals with disabilities.



## RESOURCES

You can find information on transition planning in the Transitions section of the **Roadmap to Success** (<https://www.p2pga.org/roadmap/>).

### Where to go for more information:

**Parent to Parent of Georgia**

770 451-5484 or 800-229-2038

[www.p2pga.org](http://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](http://www.gadoe.org/ci_exceptional.aspx)

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



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