



# Alternate Academic Diploma

Overview of the alternate academic diploma policy and implementation

# Why are we proposing a new diploma?

- The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) has made this an option.
- Pursuant to legislation passed during the 2017 legislative session (i.e., Public Chapter 177) the state board of education (SBE) must approve an alternate academic diploma (ADD) for students with significant cognitive disabilities who participate in the alternate assessment.
- The department understands the importance of recognizing the instruction, supports, and intervention provided to students.
- Students who are engaging in rigorous instruction should be able to celebrate their accomplishments.

# ESSA Diploma Policy Requirements

ESSA has made this an option in Section 1801(23)(A)(ii)(I) relative to graduation rate.

- (bb) all students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in the cohort, as adjusted under clause (i), assessed using the alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards under section 1111(b)(2)(D) and awarded a State-defined alternate diploma that is—
  - (AA) standards-based;
  - (BB) aligned with the State requirements for the regular high school diploma; and
  - (CC) obtained within the time period for which the State ensures the availability of a free appropriate public education under section 612(a)(1) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(1));

# Updated High School Policy

Beginning with students entering the ninth (9th) grade in 2018, an alternate academic diploma may be awarded to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities at the end of their fourth (4th) year of high school who have:

- (1) participated in the high school alternate assessments,
- (2) earned the prescribed twenty-two (22) credit minimum,
- (3) received special education services or supports and made satisfactory progress on an IEP,
- (4) have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct, and
- (5) have completed a transition assessment(s) that measures, at a minimum postsecondary education and training, employment, independent living, and community involvement.

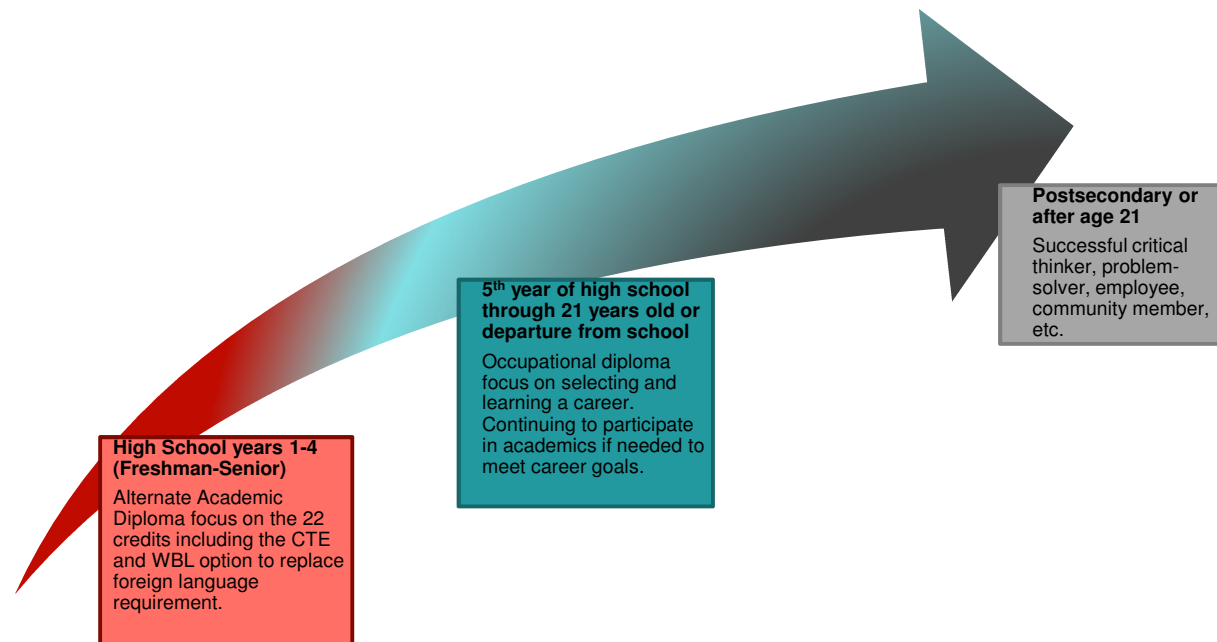
The required credits may be earned either through the state-approved standards or through alternate academic diploma modified course requirements approved by the State Board. A student who earns an alternate academic diploma shall continue to be eligible for special education services under IDEA until the student receives a regular high school diploma or through the school year in which the student turns twenty-two (22).

# Comparison of Diplomas

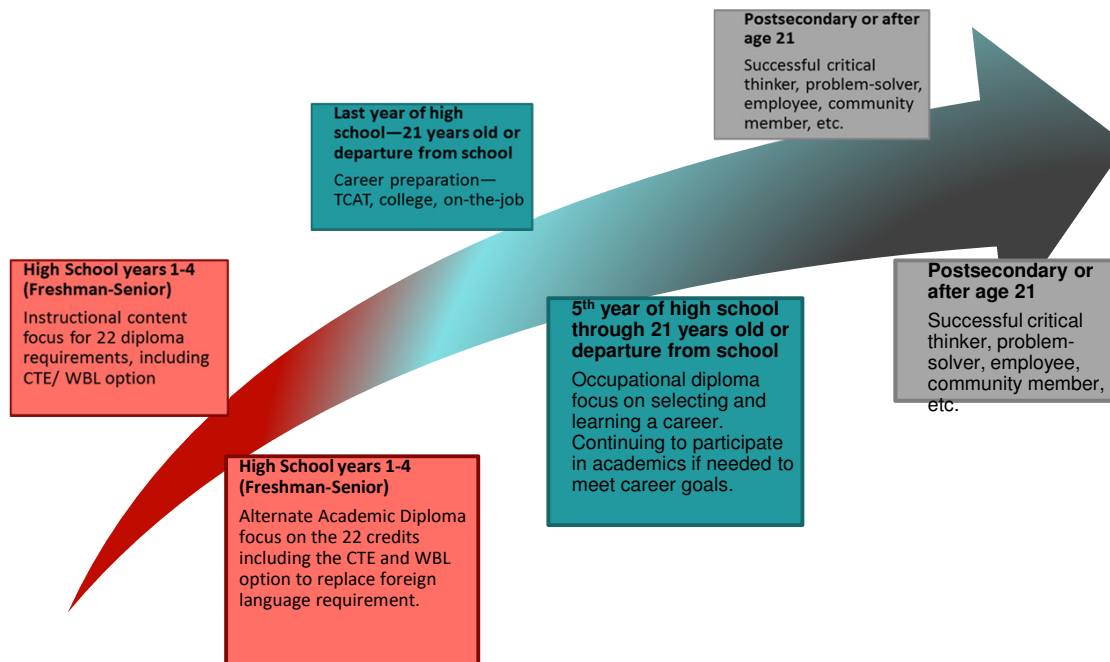
Diploma	Who Is Eligible?	Terminal (Yes or No)	Included in Graduation Rate?
Regular Diploma	Everyone	Yes—terminates eligibility for IDEA services	Yes
Alternate Academic Diploma	Students assessed on the alternate assessment	No—student is still eligible for IDEA services through 21	Yes*
Occupational Diploma	Students with an individual education program (IEP) who will not be able to earn the regular diploma	No—student is still eligible for IDEA services through 21	No
Special Education Diploma	Students with an IEP who will not be able to earn the regular diploma	No—student is still eligible for IDEA services through 21	No

\*Included in graduation rate if completed within the four years plus one summer time limit.

# Possible Student Trajectory



# Compared to Students without Disabilities



# Requirements

To receive the AAD, a student must:

1. Participate in the alternate assessments,
2. Earn the prescribed 22 credit minimum,
  - To count within the graduation rate this must occur within the four years plus one summer timeline
  - Course requirements are outlined to support schools in the instructional expectations for the 22 credits
3. Receive special education services or supports and make satisfactory progress on an IEP,
4. Have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct, and
5. Complete a transition assessment(s) that measures, at a minimum postsecondary readiness in the areas of postsecondary education and training; employment; independent living; and community involvement.

Number 3 and 4 are the same requirements for all three special education diplomas.



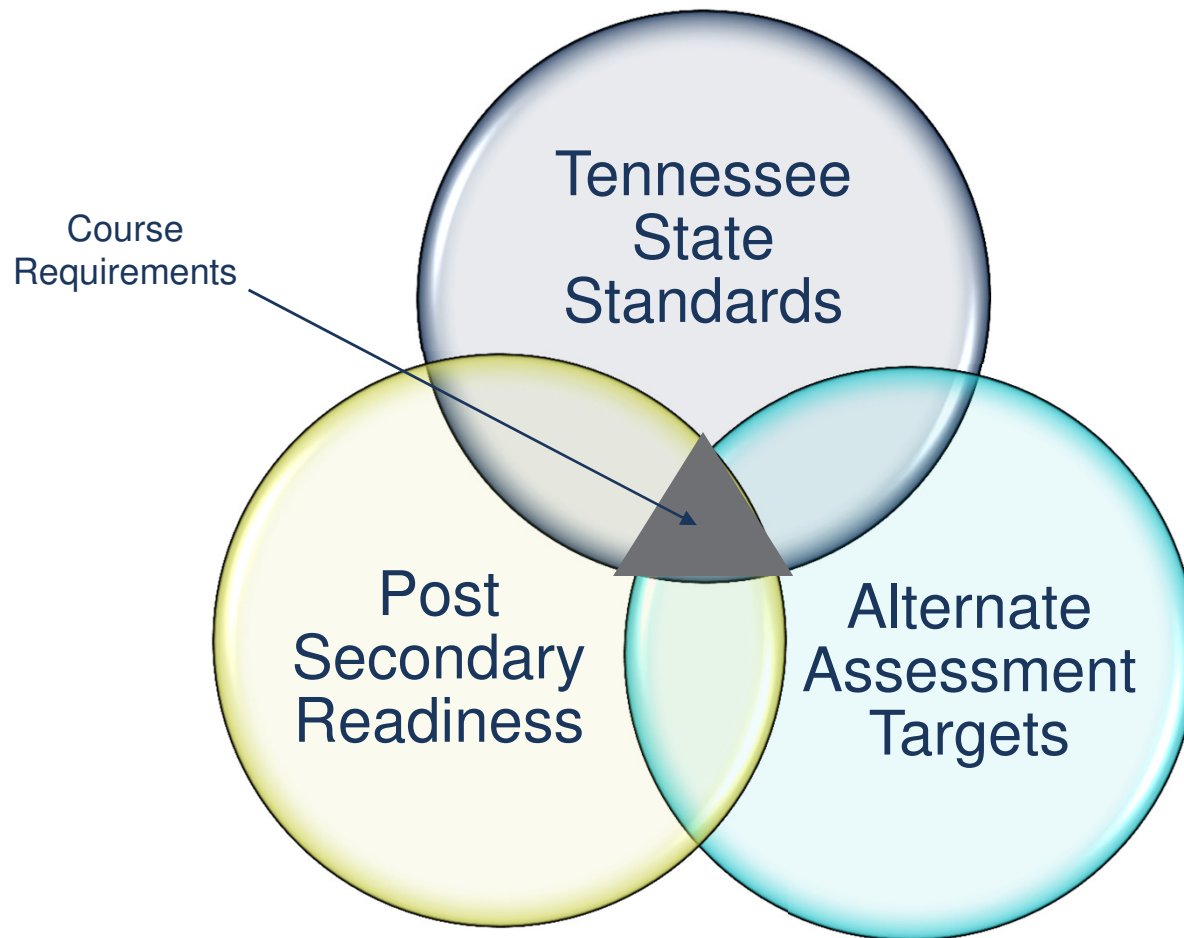
# Course Requirements

- The department has developed course requirements based on alternate assessment targets to guide educators in the development of grade-level, standards-based modified instruction.
  - Alternate assessment targets were developed with input from Tennessee educators.

# Course Requirements Continued



# Course Requirements Continued



# Comprehensive Education

Shift from choosing if a student will participate in:

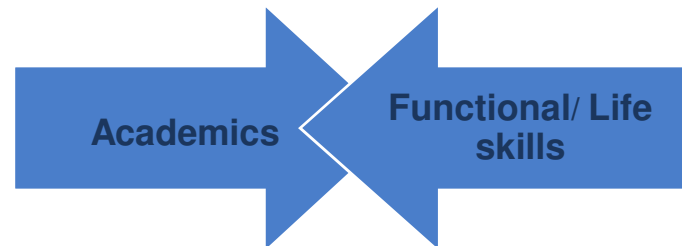


# Comprehensive Education

Shift from choosing if a student will participate in:



To a comprehensive and inclusive:



# Sample Course Requirements

From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes (LS1)	
AAD.BIO1.LS1.1	Recognize that all living things are composed of cells and basic cell structures. (i.e. plant cell vs. animal cell)
AAD.BIO1.LS1.2	Use a model to identify how growth occurs when cells multiply.
AAD.BIO1.LS1.3	Recognize that a system of cell work together to form tissue or organs that have specialized body functions. (i.e. digestive system).
AAD.BIO1.LS1.4	Identify essential functions of a cell from maintaining life (i.e., breakdown and absorption of fats, proteins, and carbohydrates).
AAD.BIO1.LS1.5	Describe the feedback mechanisms used by a living system to maintain internal conditions. (Ex. Identify how different organisms react to changes such as during exercise (e.g., heart rate, body temperature)).
AAD.BIO1.LS1.6	Recognize the process of photosynthesis as related to the storing of energy and respiration as the release of that energy.
AAD.BIO1.LS1.7	Recognize the importance of oxygen within a cell in order to produce energy from food (aerobic cellular respiration).
Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics (LS2)	
AAD.BIO1.LS2.1	Recognize that an ecosystem is defined by physical factors such as light, temperature, water, soil and shelter required

# Sample Course Requirements

Language Standards		
	AAD.L.CSE.28	Use capitalization at the beginning of sentences, I, personal names, days of the week, and months of the year and ending punctuation correctly.
Anchor Knowledge of Language (KL): Apply knowledge of language to comprehend more fully when reading or listening		
Standards		
ELA IV	AAD.L.KL.1	Understand complex sentences and figurative language heard and/or read.
	AAD.L.KL.2	Use non-verbal cues and tone to determine the intent of a speaker when listening.
	AAD.L.KL.3	Use context cues and text features such as diagrams, photos, and charts to determine and clarify meaning.
	AAD.L.KL.4	Distinguish between declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences heard and/or read.
	AAD.L.KL.5	Respond appropriately to declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences heard and/or read.
ELA III	AAD.L.KL.6	Understand compound sentences and figurative language with graphic or non-verbal supports heard and/or read.
	AAD.L.KL.7	Use non-verbal cues and tone to determine the intent of a speaker when listening.
	AAD.L.KL.8	Use text features (i.e. charts, diagrams, photos) and/or reference materials (i.e. dictionary, internet) to determine and clarify meaning.
	AAD.L.KL.9	Distinguish between declarative, interrogative, and exclamatory sentences heard and/or read.
	AAD.L.KL.10	Respond appropriately to declarative, interrogative, and exclamatory sentences heard and/or read.
ELA II	AAD.L.KL.11	Understand simple and compound sentences within a context heard and/or read.

	Courses taught during a class period			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Class 1	ELA I ELA II ELA III ELA IV	ELA I ELA II ELA III ELA IV	ELA I ELA II ELA III ELA IV	ELA I ELA II ELA III ELA IV
Class 2	Algebra I Algebra II Applied Math	Algebra I Algebra II Applied Math	Geometry	Algebra I Applied Math
Class 3			Algebra II Applied Math	Geometry
Class 4	Earth and Space Science	Biology I	Physical Science	Biology I
Class 5	US History and Geography	World History and Geography	US Government and Civics (0.5 credits) Economics (0.5 credits)	Personal Finance (0.5 credits)
Student would also enroll in the following	CTE	CTE	CTE	WBL
	PE	Fine Art	Elective	PE (0.5 credits)



# Benefits

- Counts within the graduation rate as long as it is earned in the four years plus one summer timeline.
  - Students may earn the diploma after this timeline, it will just not be reflected in the graduation rate.
- Schools are able to use the course requirements to guide the current work in providing all students with rigorous academic instruction.
- The AAD policy and course requirements can be supported within each student's least restrictive environment (LRE) as determined by their IEP team.
- Students will have a diploma that accurately reflects achievement with high expectations and standards.

# Summary Points

- First AAD courses will be offered in August 2018
- It will probably be a full 4 years after implementation before our first graduate.
- Students will need to be scheduled into courses all four years of high school to earn this within the same 4 year + summer that is needed for the graduation rate. However, they may pursue the AAD diploma beyond the four years if they choose.
- Should “add-to” a student’s experience and skills, not “take away from” any opportunities such as the Occupational Diploma
- **We will post the course requirements as a draft and will finalize in the summer after considering your thoughts and suggestions.**

# Next Steps

- Virtual and/or regional trainings:
  - Policy trainings—policy, implications, requirements, expectations, benefits, etc.
    - Directors of schools and high school principals
  - Implementation trainings—course requirements, instructional design, scheduling, etc.
    - Special education directors and high school special education teachers
- Course codes will be available for the 2018-19 school year
- Anticipated implementation within schools beginning in August 2018.

# Contact Information

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# Resources

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## Parent Guide TENNESSEE DIPLOMA AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION OPTIONS




Diploma Option	Requirements/Details	Postsecondary Options
<b>Regular Education Diploma</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Earn the prescribed twenty-two (22) credit minimum</li> <li>Complete the ACT or SAT</li> <li>Satisfactory record of attendance and discipline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4-year colleges: Each school has its own admissions requirements.</li> <li>Community College</li> <li>Tennessee College of Applied Technology or Trade Schools</li> <li>College Support Programs (See list with contact information on back)</li> </ul>
<b>Special Education Diploma *</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful completion of an Individualized Education Program (IEP)</li> <li>Satisfactory record of attendance and conduct</li> <li>Students can continue receiving services through an IEP until they receive a regular education diploma or age 22 (21 inclusive)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment in job field most closely related to skills acquired.</li> </ul>
<b>Occupational Diploma *</b>	<p>In addition to the special education diploma requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students must have a strong vocational and career focus</li> <li>It is an IEP Team decision made on or after the conclusion of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade or 2 years prior to exiting high school</li> <li>Students must successfully complete the Skills, Knowledge, and Experience Mastery Assessment (SKEMA)</li> </ul> <p>This is <b>not</b> a regular education diploma but students may continue to work toward their regular high school diplomas while pursuing occupational diplomas or after receiving an occupational diploma.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tennessee College of Applied Technology: TCAT offers programs that both require a high school diploma and programs that <b>do not</b> require a high school diploma. <a href="https://www.tbr.edu/institutions/colleges-applied-technology">https://www.tbr.edu/institutions/colleges-applied-technology</a></li> </ul>
<b>Alternate Academic Diploma (AAD) *</b>	<p>Designed to provide access to rigorous and meaningful instruction for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. It is aligned to the coursework and ACT requirements of the regular diploma.</p> <p>In order to earn the AAD, a student must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>have participated in the high school alternate state assessments;</li> <li>earned the prescribed 22 credit minimum;</li> <li>received special education services or supports and made satisfactory progress on an individualized education program (IEP);</li> <li>have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct; and</li> <li>completed a transition assessment(s) that measures, at a minimum, postsecondary education and training, employment, independent living, and community involvement</li> </ul> <p><i>Students can receive an Occupational Diploma as well as an Alternate Academic Diploma</i></p> <p>More info: TN Department of Education FAQ <a href="http://bit.ly/2uJNNrJ">bit.ly/2uJNNrJ</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TRC – TN Rehabilitation Center: Residential program designed to help participants gain independence and meaningful employment. Participants must be eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation Services to participate. <a href="http://tn.gov/humanservices/topic/trc-smryna">http://tn.gov/humanservices/topic/trc-smryna</a></li> <li>Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP): Degree, certificate, or non-degree programs for students with intellectual disabilities. (See list with contact information on back)</li> </ul>

<https://goo.gl/Ho5mZV>

# Resources



## Transition to Adulthood Guides




**TN** Department of Education

A collaborative project with the Tennessee Department of Education and their family partner Support & Training for Exceptional Parents (STEP, Inc.).


STEP, Inc. (Support and Training for Exceptional Parents) Special Education Assistance for Tennessee Families  
 (800) 280-7537 • Español al (800) 975-2019 • www.tnstep.org • information@tnstep.org  
 May 2018

## Transition Guide: Further Education



### College and Post High School Educational Opportunities for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

#### Can I Go to College Without a Diploma?



The answer is "YES"! The last few years have brought some wonderful new programs to college campuses near you. These programs are specifically for students with developmental and intellectual disabilities for whom a general education diploma wasn't possible. But that doesn't mean college is impossible. Check out these programs that are geared for students with certificates of completion.

#### Different Paths to Further Education

- Tennessee Rehabilitation Center at Smyrna <http://tn.gov/humanservices/topic/trc-smyrna>
- Adult college classes
- Adult education classes
- 2-year college associate degree programs
- Apprenticeships
- Programs for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities

#### Specially Designed Postsecondary Programs

Postsecondary education programs for students with developmental and intellectual disabilities in Tennessee are two-year courses of study which empower students to achieve gainful employment in the community.

They are comprehensive transition programs for unique learners and highly motivated young adults whose disability is characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Most students typically received special education services while in high school, graduating with either a regular diploma or a special diploma.

These programs enable young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to make a successful transition from high school to adult life by providing them with career counseling and developing their academic, vocational, and decision-making skills. Some programs offer campus housing, while others do not. Upon successful completion of the program a vocational certificate is awarded.

#### Resources for College Life

Some students may be eligible for support from Vocational Rehabilitation to support their college endeavors. Look under the Disability Services heading for eligibility and service information: [www.tennessee.gov/humanservices#](http://www.tennessee.gov/humanservices#).

A summary of the best colleges for students with disabilities including services available on campus: [www.bestcolleges.com/resources/disabled-students/](http://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/disabled-students/)

Photo credit: <https://thehopefulscholarship.files.wordpress.com/>

<https://goo.gl/Zk3rdo>

# Tennessee's Parent Training & Information Center

## STEP, Inc. (Support and Training for Exceptional Parents)

Call 800-280-7837 or your local office



### West Tennessee

Memphis and Shelby/Fayette/Tipton counties  
westrtc@tnstep.org

(901) 726-4334

### All other West counties

Deborah.mcbride@tnstep.org

(731) 225-6034

### Middle Tennessee

middlertc@tnstep.org

(615) 463-2310

### East Tennessee

eastrtc@tnstep.org

(423) 639-0125 x17

### Español

(800) 975-2919

### Business Office

712 Professional Plaza, Greeneville, TN 37745

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