



Alternative Pathways to a Diploma

El Dorado Charter SELPA

Purpose

The purpose of the Alternative Pathway to a Diploma guidance is to provide LEAs with a reference document when developing an instructional program for eligible students to receive a high school diploma through a new alternative pathway. This document is comprised of four sections. Each section includes a non-exhaustive list for LEAs to consider when developing a robust transition program for students who meet the alternative pathway for a high school diploma requirement. The SELPA suggests that LEAs identify eligible students as early as middle school to begin appropriately developing schoolwide supports to ensure educational benefit.

Developing A Board Approved Diploma Pathway

1. School leaders meet to discuss students with disabilities (SWD) population and determine appropriate, inclusive supports and next steps.
2. School leaders draft and propose inclusive graduation and course of study options for students with disabilities to school board agenda.
3. School leaders present to the school board for approval of school-wide policies aligned with inclusive graduation and course of study options for students with disabilities. LEA's school board approves policies for inclusive graduation options for students with disabilities.

Key Resources

- [A New Pathway to a High School Diploma for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Alternative Pathways Workgroup Report](#)
- [Community of Practice High School Diploma Presentation](#)
- [School Transformation Guide](#)
- [What is Inclusion? IRIS Video](#)



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Developing and Implementing the Course of Study

1. The special education director works with the general education administration to develop a proposed master calendar that **may** include the following:
Coteaching Model, Foundational/Functional Courses, Aligned Grading Definitions/Rubrics/Expectations, New Course of Study
2. General education administration and special education leaders incorporate educational specialists, general education department leads, transition specialists, and guidance counselors for feedback on the proposed draft of master calendar and alternative pathway implementation.
3. School leaders communicate the new pathway to general education administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, and prospective, eligible students.
4. School leaders dedicate time and space for ongoing collaboration for inclusion, alternative pathway, and students with disabilities graduation options to measure success.
5. Education specialists work with general education teachers to determine general education courses, co-taught courses, and foundational and/or functional courses aligned to common core standards for eligible students.
6. School leaders develop a meaningful transition program for continuing adult 18-22-year-old students who graduate with a 51225.31 diploma since the alternative pathway to a diploma does not eliminate the school's obligation to provide FAPE.

Key Resources

- [SELPA Forward Thinking Mindset Through MTSS Padlet](#)
- [Master Scheduling Process](#)
- [Sample Course of Study \(LACOE\)](#)
- [Supporting Inclusive Practices Resources](#)
- [Transition of Students With Disabilities To Postsecondary Education](#)
- [Transition Planning](#)



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Communication to Eligible Students and Families

1. Special education leaders send alternative pathway to a high school diploma eligibility notification letters to qualified students and guardians. **Use SEIS to establish a potential student list.**
2. Students and guardians are informed about student progress toward a diploma by the case manager through routine, clearly defined progress reporting and communication

Key Resources

- [Engaging with Families Training Module](#)
- [Top 10 Tips for Youth Engagement](#)
- [Sample Eligibility Letter](#)
- [SEIS Searches Video](#)



“All students with disabilities, including students with significant cognitive disabilities, should enter high school knowing they have the opportunity to earn a high school diploma. California’s education system must both provide clearly articulated pathways for every student to earn a high school diploma, and ensure students, families, and educators clearly understand and are able to plan for how each individual student can access all of the learning and necessary requirements a to earn a high school diploma.”

Alternative Pathways Workgroup Report, 2021



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The IEP

1. Maintain the “I” in IEP and ITP planning. Think outside the box. Identify students who may qualify for Section 51225.31 diploma.
 - In grade 9, the IEP team shall determine and notify the parent that the student may be eligible to earn a high school diploma on this alternative pathway.
 - Student is eligible to take the California Alternate Assessment in grade 11
 - Complete state standards-aligned coursework to meet state-defined coursework requirements for graduation.
2. Case managers schedule and draft an IEP to propose changes to IEP, including statewide testing, ITP, and course of study. Use thoughtful transition assessments, observations, and conversations to guide students’ post-secondary planning.
3. In the IEP meeting, general education teacher and educational specialist partner to describe the proposed student courses, structure, and benefit to the student and family. Define and converse robustly with the IEP team about course by course accommodations and modifications.
 - Clearly define support on the IEP
 - Gain agreement on support from all IEP team members
 - The IEP team *may* investigate the need for an Algebra 1 waiver from CDE
 - Post-Secondary placement, options and planning are discussed

Key Resources

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| • <u>Algebra I/Mathematics I Graduation Requirements</u> | • <u>NTACT Transition Planning Resources</u> |
| • <u>California Alternate Assessment</u> | • <u>SELPA Teacher Academy High School Padlet</u> |
| • <u>Competitive Integrated Employment Tool Kit</u> | • <u>SELPA Extensive Support Needs Padlet</u> |
| • <u>Transition Planning: The Basics</u> | • <u>SELPA College, Career, and Civic Life Padlet</u> |



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