

# ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

Explaining the Three Pathways for a Student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to earn an Alabama High School Diploma



# THREE DIPLOMA PATHWAYS FOR A STUDENT WITH AN IEP

- General Education Pathway
- Essentials Pathway
- Alternate Achievement Standards Pathway



# GENERAL EDUCATION PATHWAY

- A 'regular high school diploma' means the standard high school diploma awarded to the preponderance of students in the State that is fully aligned with State standards, or a higher diploma, except that a regular high school diploma shall not be aligned to the alternate academic achievement standards described in section 1111(b)(1)(E); and does not include a recognized equivalent of a diploma, such as a general equivalency diploma, certificate of completion, certificate of attendance, or similar lesser credential.
- A student receives accommodations and support as outlined in the IEP to support completing the requirements of the general education courses.
- Upon earning the 24 credits required for graduation, a Free Appropriate Public Education ceases with receipt of a regular diploma and the student exits school.



# ESSENTIALS PATHWAY

- Content standards and requirements are modified so that what the student is expected to learn is different from non-disabled peers.
- The Essential standards are reduced in complexity and depth from the State content standards therefore, the content is modified.
- A student receives accommodations as outlined in the IEP to support completing the requirements of the Essential courses.
- Upon earning the 24 credits required for graduation, a student who earned credits from courses with modified content may participate in graduation activities and ceremony.
- The student may return to school after meeting the requirements of the AHSD to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education until the age of 21.



# ALTERNATE ACHIEVEMENT PATHWAY

- A student who has met the criteria for a student with a significant cognitive disability receives instruction from alternate standards aligned to the State content standards.
- Alternate Achievement Standards are significantly reduced in complexity and depth therefore the standards are not fully aligned to the State content standards.
- Alternate Achievement courses have a prefix of AAS for the course code. Example: AAS Reading 10
- Upon earning the 24 credits required for graduation, a student who earned credits from courses with aligned content may participate in graduation activities and ceremony.
- The student may return to school after meeting the requirements of the AHSD to receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education until the age of 21.



# DEFERRED GRADUATION FOR STUDENTS WHO EARN THE AHSD VIA THE ESSENTIAL OR ALTERNATE PATHWAY

- If a student's IEP Team determines the continuation of special education services, secondary transition services, and/or related services beyond the point of meeting the requirements for graduation, then the diploma may be deferred so that the student will receive special education services.
- A student with an IEP who has met the requirements for graduation but deferred the diploma may return to school beyond his or her cohort year and receive a diploma at the time of exit or age 21.



# MEMOS RELATED TO THE ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

MEMO FY17-2040 – Calculating the U.S. Department of Education 2016 Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate

MEMO FY17-2049 – Updated Graduation Information

MEMO FY17-2059 – *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* Guidance for Students With Disabilities Graduating in May 2017

FORM – Selecting the Highest Most Appropriate Alabama High School Diploma Pathway

AAC- Special Education Services Chapter 290-8-9.10(9)(f-h)  
Graduation Activities and Diplomas

