



## Exemptions From Diploma Assessment Requirements for Major Life Events



Attn: DDC, Superintendent, Guidance Dept., PPS Dept., Principals, District Admins

FYI

Helpdesk: [DWTShelp@esboces.org](mailto:DWTShelp@esboces.org)

Dept. of Standards & Instruction:  
[P12StandardsInstruction@nysed.gov](mailto:P12StandardsInstruction@nysed.gov)

The New York State Education Department (NYSED), [following the recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Commission on Graduation Measures](#), has acknowledged that significant life events—such as medical issues, the loss of a family member, or other traumatic experiences—can severely impact our students. In light of this recommendation, the Board of Regents has approved an emergency action to revise the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, allowing for greater discretion by school leaders.

This amendment permits the superintendent, principal, or head of school to locally decide on granting exemptions from diploma assessment requirements for students who have faced a major life event.

- A major life event includes any severe illness, severe medical condition, or life-altering incident that significantly impacts or prevents a student's participation in a required diploma assessment.
  - Severe illnesses and severe medical conditions are acute or chronic illnesses or health conditions that carry a high risk of mortality, detrimentally impact students' quality of life and daily function, and/or are significantly burdensome in symptoms and/or treatments.
    - Examples of major life events include, but **are not limited to**, cancer treatment, hospitalization, an accident causing serious injury, a destructive house fire, the death of a parent or person in parental relation, homelessness, or trauma related to deportation or detainment.
- Exemptions must be granted before the scheduled administration of a required diploma assessment (including Regents Examinations, NYSED-Approved Regents Examination Alternatives, or NYSED-Approved Pathway Assessments).

### Resources

- [Original Memo \(3/11/25\)](#)
- [Suggested Major Life Event Exemption Form](#)
  - A copy must be kept with the student's permanent record
  - A copy must be presented to the Parent/Guardian
- [Major Life Event FAQ](#)