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FAPE

TRANSITION AND GRADUATION COMPOSITE

SANTA FE ISD

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Transition Services

What is Required

Transition services are the coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student with a disability to facilitate the student's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.Transition services are based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's strengths, preferences, and interests; and includes instruction, related services; community experiences; the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and the acquisition of daily living skills and provision of a functional vocational evaluation, if appropriate. Transition services may be special education, if provided as specially designed instruction, or a related service, if required to assist the student with a disability to benefit from special education. See [FAPE - SUPPLEMENTARY AIDS AND SERVICES, SPECIAL EDUCATION, RELATED SERVICES].

Transition planning is done by the ARD Committee and must include the input of the student. If the student does not attend the ARD Committee meeting, the Campus Special Education Personnel must take other steps to ensure the student's preferences and interests are considered during the transition planning. See [FAPE - ARD COMMITTEE MEETING] and [FAPE – ARD COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP].

By Age 14

Not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student turns 14, the ARD Committee must annually consider and, if appropriate, address the following in the student's IEP during transition planning:

- appropriate student involvement in the student's transition to life outside of the public school system;
- appropriate involvement in the student's transition by the student's parent and other persons invited to participate by the parent or the Campus Special Education Personnel;
- appropriate postsecondary education options, including preparation for postsecondary-level coursework;
- appropriate functional vocational evaluation;
- ·appropriate circumstances for facilitating a referral of a student or the student's parent to a governmental agency for services or public benefits, including a referral to place a student on a waiting list for public benefits; and

- the use and availability of appropriate supplementary aids, services, curricula, and other opportunities to assist the student in developing decision-making skills and supports and services to foster the student's independence and self-determination, including a supported decision-making agreement.

Furthermore, the ARD Committee must address the following in the student's IEP during transition planning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student turns 14 and annually thereafter:

- appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills; and
- transition services, including courses of study needed to assist the student in reaching those postsecondary goals.

By Age 16

During the first ARD Committee meeting in which the student is 16 years old, and annually thereafter or until the student turns 21, the ARD Committee will provide information, created by the Texas Education Agency, regarding the Driving with Disability Program. This information must be provided to each student with a health condition or disability that may impede the student from effectively communicating with a peace officer.

By Age 17

Not later than one year before the student's 18th birthday, the Campus Special Education Personnel must comply and provide notification in writing to the student and the student's parent of the transfer of rights to the adult student. See [ADULT STUDENT AND TRANSFER OF RIGHTS].

By Age 18

For an adult student, the ARD Committee must consider and, if appropriate, address involvement in the student's transition and future by the adult student's parent and other persons, if the parent or other person is invited to participate by the adult student or the Campus Special Education Personnel or has the adult student's consent to participate pursuant to a supported decision-making agreement or other legal document. See [ADULT STUDENT AND TRANSFER OF RIGHTS].

Other Issues Relevant to Transition

When determining the course of study, the ARD Committee must consider the student's graduation plan and post-secondary goals. See [GRADUATION]. In addition, the district must ensure that students with disabilities have access to career and technical education (CTE) classes. When determining placement in a CTE class, the ARD Committee must consider the student's graduation plan, the content of the student's IEP, including the consideration of transition services, and classroom supports. If a participating agency fails to provide the transition services described in the student's IEP, the ARD Committee must identify alternative strategies to meet the transition objectives set out in the IEP.

Transition and Employment Guide

The district must post the Texas Transition and Employment Guide (the "Guide") on the district's website. The ARD Committee will provide written information and, if necessary, assistance to the student or parent regarding how to access the electronic version of the Guide at the first meeting of the student's ARD Committee at which transition is discussed and again at the first ARD Committee meeting at which transition is discussed that occurs after the date on which the Guide is updated. In addition, on request, the Campus Special Education Personnel will provide a printed copy of the Guide to the student or parent.

Transition and Employment Designee (TED)

The district must designate at least one employee to serve as the district's designee on transition and employment services for special education students. This person is the District's Transition and Employment Designee or TED and will participate in all trainings required by TEA for this responsibility. The TED is the district's primary contact for transition and employment services for students with disabilities. This employee must also be able to provide information and resources about effective transition planning and employment services to school staff, parents, and agency providers, including the following:

- ·Student involvement
- ·Parent involvement
- ·Adult Student Support
- ·Postsecondary Education
- ·Functional Vocational Evaluation
- ·Employment
- ·Age-Appropriate Instructional Environments
- ·Independent Living
- ·Referral to State Agency Services
- ·Self-Determination
- ·Supported Decision-Making Agreements

In addition, the TED must also help identify contacts at the following state agencies and ensure communication between local staff a regional or local staff at the following agencies:

- ·Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)
- ·Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)
- ·Department of State Health Services (DSHS); and
- ·Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS).

The district will determine which employee will serve in the role of the TED. In determining who will serve as the TED for the District, the District Special Education Director will consider whether the employee is able to lead training and communicate effectively about transition planning and transition assessment, 18-21 services, work-based learning and career experiences, and self-determination. In addition, does the employee feel comfortable answering questions and facilitating discussions with staff, students and parents about agency support and collaboration, supported decision-making agreements, community connections and outreach, and postsecondary education and training. The employee who serves as the TED must have effective communication skills and must continually work to develop partnerships among school staff, students, parents, and local and regional representatives of state agencies. The employee designated at the TED for the District will be inputted into the AskTED and into the Legal Framework website by the District Special Education Director or designee. [PLEASE INCLUDE THE JOB TITLE OF TRANSITION/EMPLOYMENT SERVICES DESIGNEE FOR YOUR DISTRICT]

Additional Procedures

Transition planning provides the focus for the development of the IEP for students aged 14 (or younger if deemed appropriate by the ARD Committee) and older. For students with autism, transition planning can be considered at any age. Transition planning is intended to be flexible, dynamic, and appropriate. Transition services emphasize the acquisition of functional skills and hands-on knowledge, enabling students to enter the workforce or continue their education or training. Such services also allow students to live as autonomously as possible, given the extent of their disabilities. At a minimum, the ARD Committee must review the transition information in a student's IEP at least once annually, or more as needed, and update the IEP as necessary. This may be done in the annual or revision ARD Committee meeting as needed.

The student's individual transition plan should be individually designed and based on the student's interests, strengths, and preferences. Students should be encouraged and coached to advocate for themselves during the transition planning, at the ARD Committee meeting, and in future environments. The transition planning should always include the student, and it is preferable that the student attend at least that portion of the ARD Committee meeting that focuses on transition planning. If the student cannot attend for behavioral and/or cognitive reasons, the student's general education teacher (if appropriate), CTE teacher (if appropriate) and special education teacher should collaborate on providing feedback regarding the student's interests, strengths, and preferences.

The ARD Committee shall document the reason that the student did not attend the meeting, as well as the decisions made on the student's behalf, in the IEP. In addition, if the student's interests are difficult to ascertain, the ARD Committee should consider recommending a functional vocational evaluation to be conducted, if appropriate, to be considered by the ARD Committee during transition planning.

- Transition planning is documented by the ARD Committee on the Transition Supplement/Section of the IEP and should include:
- ·appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based upon age-appropriate transition assessment;
- ·transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals;
- ·annual IEP goals related to the student's transition service needs;
- ·evidence that the student was invited to the ARD Committee meeting where transition services are discussed or documentation that the student's input was obtained and considered if the student is unable to attend the ARD Committee meeting; and
- ·if appropriate, evidence that a representative of any participating agency was invited to the ARD Committee meeting with the prior consent of the parent or adult student.

The ARD Committee will determine appropriate measurable postsecondary goals and transition services to assist the student in meeting those postsecondary goals by reviewing the student's special education eligibility folder, evaluation(s), transition assessments, classwork and assignments, assessments, progress documentation, observations, input from teachers, parent(s), and student, etc. These goals are updated, at a minimum, during the annual ARD Committee meeting to ensure they continue to reflect the student's postsecondary needs.

Campus Special Education Administrator will designate one person on the campus responsible for contacting the outside agencies that are identified as part of the student's transition plan to invite them to the ARD Committee meeting with the consent of the parent and to gather information regarding the agency's services for the ARD Committee to consider during transition planning. This individual is also responsible for identifying the Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor who works with the district and/or campus. If the ARD Committee determines that connecting with a

participating agency is inappropriate for the student, the decision will be documented in the student's IEP either in the Transition section or in the deliberations, including the rationale for the decision and the data considered when making the decision.

Training

At least once annually, Campus and District Special Education Administration and Campus and District Special Education Personnel who work with students in grades 6 through 12 must participate in training about state transition requirements that must be in place for students by age 14 or younger if determined appropriate by the ARD Committee. Additionally, Campus and District Special Education Administration and Campus and District Special Education Personnel who work with students in grades 9 through 12 must participate in training about the federal transition requirements (courses of study, age-appropriate transition assessments, and postsecondary goals) that must be in place by age 14[1] if determined appropriate by the ARD Committee. This may be the same training for those who work with students in grades 9 and up. [ADD ANY ADDITIONAL TRAINING PROVIDED TO STAFF ABOUT TRANSITION REQUIREMENTS]

In addition, the district will provide training to families about transition services for children of all ages, including children younger than age 14, to include information about graduation endorsements, the distinguished level of achievement, appropriate class and course offerings, career-related training, self-determination resources, opportunities for community participation, and agency resources. The parent will also be provided the name and contact information of the District's TED and the TED's role in facilitating transition services connections between school staff, student, parents, and agency representatives.

Documentation Requirements

The district will maintain documentation requirements of compliance associated with Texas Student Data System (TSDS), Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), State Performance Plan (SPP), and required training for the District's Transition and Employment Designee (TED). District staff will provide annual training, with follow up, to ensure the documentation required is in place and compliant.

Specifically for Secondary Transition, District Special Education Administration will comply with the documentation requirements for State Performance Plan Indicator 13 (SPPI 13). SPPI 13 measures the percent of youth with IEPs aged 16 and above with an IEP in compliance with 7 items:

(1) appropriate measurable postsecondary goals

(2) annually updated postsecondary goals

[1] While federal law requires this for students ages 16 and older, Texas now requires it by age 14 to align with other transition requirements.

(1) postsecondary goals based on age-appropriate transition assessment(s)
(2) transition services, including courses of study, that reasonably enable the student to meet post-secondary goals
(3) IEP goal(s) related to student's transition services needs
(4) If appropriate, evidence student invited to ARD Committee meeting; and
(5) If appropriate, evidence agency representative invited to ARD Committee meeting.

Transition Assessments and Functional Vocational Evaluations

Prior to an ARD Committee meeting to discuss transition planning, District or Campus Transition Personnel and/or Campus Special Education Personnel will assess the student using a variety of transition assessments involving the continual collection of information about a student's strengths, needs, preferences, and interests. The ARD Committee then uses the results to identify appropriate measurable goals and transition services to include in the student's IEP. District or Campus Transition Personnel and/or Campus Special Education Personnel shall determine which assessments are appropriate on a case-by-case basis and ensure that all transition assessments are focused on measurable post-secondary goals. Using a variety of formal and informal assessments that test a student's skills and uses in education/training, employment, independent living/personal allows District or Campus Transition Personnel and/or Campus Special Education Personnel to obtain information on a student's current performance and identify those skills needed for the future. The most commonly administered assessments address student interests (i.e., topics or subjects relating to vocations), aptitudes (i.e., job-related knowledge and abilities), or preferences (i.e., working individually or in groups, working inside or outside, physical activity or sedentary work, etc.).

Transition assessments will be age-appropriate, nondiscriminatory, and sensitive to a student's cultural background. Additionally, transition assessments will consider the student's disability-related needs, including the student's abilities, communication barriers, and need for various accommodations. Professionals who conduct transition assessments will be knowledgeable and experienced in administering and interpreting a wide range of assessment tools. At least once annually, District or Campus Transition Personnel and/or Campus Special Education Personnel will receive training on the process of conducting transition assignments, as well as the various transition assessments available.

Campus or District Transition Personnel and/or Campus Special Education Personnel will communicate the results of the transition assessments to parents at least annually during ARD Committee meetings and make reasonable efforts to obtain parent input and encourage engagement in transition planning.

. In addition to annual ARD Committee meetings, Campus or District Personnel and/or Campus Special Education Personnel will attempt to contact the parent prior to conducting transition assessments to obtain relevant information regarding appropriate assessments for the student. Should the parent's primary language be a language other than English, the District will provide an interpreter to ensure the parent is able to effectively communicate in the process.

A functional vocational evaluation (FVE), which is an ongoing process that identifies a student's interests, work-related aptitudes and skills, and need for training, may also be conducted. A FVE may be considered when a student has difficulty communicating their career interests, when a student has completed training at multiple job sites, but there is not a clear direction for next steps; and/or when a transition assessment has not provided enough information to develop a comprehensive transition plan. An FVE should include information from multiple sources, including student and parent input, and include recommendations related to career interests, aptitudes, and skills.

Transition Planning for Students with Significant Needs

Students with severe and multiple developmental disabilities demonstrate diverse skills, strengths, limits, and support needs, and generally have associated health conditions of various severity. These students usually present with multiple system impairments that impact the student, family, and community participation. The transition services and supports needed for these students are usually pervasive and extensive in order to achieve community living, employment, and self-sufficiency. As such, transition planning for students with complex or more significant needs should start early, as soon as the student is identified as eligible for special education services.

For students below age 14 with significant needs, the ARD Committee may discuss age appropriate transition planning at the student's initial ARD Committee meeting and at every subsequent annual ARD Committee meeting to ensure that the needs of the student are met, specifically in situations where the student will benefit from services with lengthy wait lists. By age 14, the ARD Committee must address transition as described above.

Self-Determination Skills

Self-determination is a combination of skills, knowledge, and beliefs that enables a student to engage in goal-directed, self-regulated, and autonomous behavior. Self-determination allows a student with disabilities to understand the student's strengths and limitations together with a belief in oneself as capable and effective. As part of the self-determination curriculum, students will be able to identify areas of strength, difficulties, interests, and values. Additionally, students will understand their disabilities and be able to explain them to others.

Self-determination instruction is typically provided through embedded TEKS and supplemental lessons as needed. Students will be taught the skills associated with self-determination including choice making, decision making, problem solving, goal setting, planning, goal attainment, self-management, self-advocacy, self-awareness, and self-knowledge. They will then be provided opportunities to use and practice those skills, and be provided supports and accommodations, as necessary, in order to lead self-determined lives.

Outside Agencies

Students transitioning from high school to adulthood may require services and supports from outside agencies to live independently. At least annually in ARD Committee meetings, Campus and District Transition Personnel shall provide information to students with disabilities and their parents regarding the services and supports available within the community to assist in the transition process.

Many services are available through waiver programs, meaning certain Medicaid requirements do not apply. Some of the services available through these waivers include personal care services, nursing care, home modifications, car modifications, respite care, and various therapies. Texas has seven waivers, and each one has its own interest list. Waivers are managed by the Health and Human Services Commission ("HHSC") and the Department of State Health Services ("DSHS"). Parents should be encouraged to add students to as many waiver interest lists as soon as possible and preferably as soon as the child is diagnosed with a disability or special health care need. Students will be added to these programs once there is availability. District and Campus Personnel will inform parents of the HHSC waiver list and the process for enrollment in annual ARD Committee meetings as early as Early Childhood Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education.

Prior to a student turning 14, Campus and District Transition Personnel will encourage parents to identify any needs for long-term services and supports and the type of long-term services and supports needed. Additionally, Campus and District Transition Personnel will encourage parents to explore the community and long-term services and supports that are available and provide contact information for community and long-term services and support agencies. Campus and District Transition Personnel shall be available to assist parents in applying for long-term services and supports as appropriate.

When or before a student turns 14 and every year after that the student is enrolled in the district, if necessary, Campus and District Transition Personnel will encourage parents to identify natural supports for students and routinely contact HHSC for updates in positions on waiver lists. If the parent and/or adult student has not already done so when or before the student turns 18, Campus and District Transition Personnel will provide parents and/or adult students information on applying for long-term services and supports, if appropriate.

Evidence of Implementation

- ·ARD/IEP
- ·Transition Supplement/Section of ARD/IEP
- ·Documentation of Student Participation in Transition Planning
- ·Course of Study
- ·Transition/Vocational Assessments
- ·Contacts with Outside Agencies
- ·Consent to Invite Outside Agency Representative to ARD Committee Meeting
- ·Prior Written Notice
- ·Document Acknowledging Receipt of Texas Transition and Employment Guide
- ·Document Acknowledging Receipt of Texas Driving with Disability Information provided by TEA
- ·Transition Services Training
- ·Transition and Employment Designee
- ·Transition and Employment Designee Certificates for Required Trainings
- ·Self-Determination Curriculum/Instruction
- ·Documentation for the state in TSDS, PEIMS, and SPP

Resources

The Texas Legal Framework for the Child Centered Special Education Process: Transition Services Framework - Region 18
Secondary Transition Guidance (TEA)
Pathways: The Texas Transition and Employment Guide
Driving with a Disability - State of Texas
Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities (OCR)
OSERS Questions and Answers on Secondary Transition (2011)
Navigate Life Texas - Medicaid Waivers Overview

Citations

34 CFR 300.43(a)-(b), 300.320(b), 300.321(b)(2), 300.324; Texas Education Code 28.025, 29.011, 29.0111, 29.0112(e); Texas Estates Code Ch. 1357; 19 TAC 75.1023, 89.1055(j)-(l)

GRADUATION

What is Required

Pursuant to state and federal law, FAPE must be made available to all eligible students with disabilities age 3 (or birth for students with visual impairments or who are deaf or hard of hearing) through age 21. See [EVALUATION-DISABILITIES]. An eligible student receiving special education services who is 21 years of age on September 1 of a school year will be eligible for services through the end of that school year. The obligation to make FAPE available to children until age 21 does not apply to children with disabilities who have graduated from high school with a regular high school diploma. The term "regular high school diploma" means the standard high school diploma awarded to the preponderance of students in that State that is fully aligned with State standards, or a higher diploma, not one that is aligned to alternate academic achievement standards.

In Texas, only graduation and receipt of a diploma pursuant to section (1) below (i.e. mastery of TEKS, completion of all high school credits without modification and satisfactory performance on end-of course exams) or meeting maximum age eligibility terminates a student's eligibility to receive special education services or FAPE under the IDEA and terminates a student's entitlement to the benefits of the Foundation School Program as provided in the Texas Education Code. If a student graduates and receives a diploma under any other provision other than section (1) below, the student may return to school and is entitled to continue to receive special education services upon request of the student or parent, for as long as the student meets the age eligibility requirements.

Graduation Requirements

A student who receives special education services may graduate and be awarded a diploma if the student meets one of the following conditions:
(1)The student has demonstrated mastery of the required state standards, the TEKS, (or District standards if greater); satisfactorily completed credit requirements for graduation under the Foundation High School Program applicable to students in general education; and demonstrated satisfactory performance as established for students in general education in Texas Education Code Chapters 28 and 39 on the required end-of-course assessment instruments, which could include meeting the requirements of 19 TAC 89.1070(d). 19 TAC 89.1070(d) states that a student receiving special education services classified in Grade 11 or 12 who has taken each of the state assessments required by Chapter 101, Subchapter CC, of this title (relating to Commissioner's Rules Concerning Implementation of the Academic Content Areas Testing Program) or Subchapter DD of this title (relating to Commissioner's Rules Concerning Substitute Assessments for Graduation) but failed to achieve satisfactory performance on no more than two of the assessments is eligible to receive a diploma under this section.

(2)The student has demonstrated mastery of the required TEKS (or District standards if greater); satisfactorily completed credit requirements for graduation under the Foundation High School Program applicable to students in general education; and the student's ARD Committee has determined that satisfactory performance on the required end-of-course assessment instruments is not required for graduation.
(3)The student has satisfactorily completed credit requirements for graduation under the Foundation High School Program, one or more of which contain modified curriculum that is aligned to the standards applicable to students in general education; demonstrated mastery of the required TEKS in accordance with the modified content and curriculum expectations established in the student's IEP; and demonstrated satisfactory performance on the required end-of-course assessment instruments, unless the student's ARD Committee has determined that satisfactory performance on the required end-of-course assessment instruments is not required for graduation. The student must also successfully complete the student's IEP and meet one of the following conditions:

(A)consistent with the IEP, the student has obtained full-time employment, based on the student's abilities and local employment opportunities, in addition to mastering sufficient self-help skills to enable the student to maintain the employment without direct and ongoing educational support of the district;

(B)consistent with the IEP, the student has demonstrated mastery of specific employability skills and self-help skills that do not require direct ongoing educational support of the district; or

(C)the student has access to services or other supports that are not within the legal responsibility of public education, including employment or postsecondary education established through transition planning.

Distinguished Level of Achievement or Endorsements

Special education students may earn the distinguished level of achievement or an endorsement by successfully completing, with or without modification of the curriculum:
(1) the curriculum requirements for graduation under the Foundation High School Program,
(2) for the distinguished level of achievement, the additional curriculum requirements required by Texas Education Code 28.025(b-15);
(3) for an endorsement, the additional endorsement curriculum requirements required by Texas Education Code 28.025(c-2); and
(4) successfully completing all curriculum requirements for the distinguished level of achievement or that endorsement without modification of the curriculum or with modification of the curriculum, provided that the curriculum, as modified, is sufficiently rigorous as determined by the student's ARD Committee and documented in the student's IEP.

The student's ARD Committee will determine whether the student is required to achieve satisfactory performance on an end-of-course assessment to earn the distinguished level of achievement or an endorsement on the student's transcript.

Substitutions under the Foundation High School Program

A student in special education who is unable to complete two credits in the same language in a language-other-than-English ("LOTE") due to the student's disability, may substitute a combination of two credits that are not being used to satisfy another specific graduation requirement selected from English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies or two credits in career and technical education for the LOTE credit requirements if the ARD Committee determines that the student is unable to complete the LOTE credit requirements.

A student who, due to student's disability or illness, is unable to participate in physical activity, may substitute an academic elective credit (English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies) or a locally-designed course that meets the state criteria for substitution under state law for the physical education credit requirement if the ARD Committee determines that the student is unable to participate in the physical activity.

A substitute credit for LOTE or physical education may not be used to satisfy any other graduation requirement.

Students Eligible to Return to School and Continue Receiving Services After Graduation

A special education student who meets the age requirement for eligibility for continued services—i.e., who has not reached age 21 on September 1 of a school year—will be eligible for services and may return to school after graduation as long as the student was awarded a diploma on one of the following conditions:

(1) The student has demonstrated mastery of the required TEKS (or District standards if greater); satisfactorily completed credit requirements for graduation under the Foundation High School Program applicable to students in general education; and the student's ARD Committee has determined that satisfactory performance on the required end-of-course assessment instruments is not required for graduation.

(2)The student has satisfactorily completed credit requirements for graduation under the Foundation High School Program, one or more of which contain modified curriculum that is aligned to the standards applicable to students in general education; demonstrated mastery of the required TEKS in accordance with the modified content and curriculum expectations established in the student's IEP; and demonstrated satisfactory performance on the required end-of-course assessment instruments, unless the student's ARD Committee has determined that satisfactory performance on the required end-of-course assessment instruments is not required for graduation. The student has also successfully completed the student's IEP and met one of the following conditions:

(A)consistent with the IEP, the student has obtained full-time employment, based on the student's abilities and local employment opportunities, in addition to mastering sufficient self-help skills to enable the student to maintain the employment without direct and ongoing educational support of the district;

(B)consistent with the IEP, the student has demonstrated mastery of specific employability skills and self-help skills that do not require direct ongoing educational support of the district; or

(C)the student has access to services or other supports that are not within the legal responsibility of public education, including employment or postsecondary education established through transition planning.

The ARD Committee must determine student's educational service needs upon the request of the student or parent to resume services.

Certificates of Attendance and Participation in Graduation Ceremonies

Campus Administration will issue a certificate of attendance to a special education student who has completed four years of high school but has not yet completed any of the above graduation requirements for a diploma. Campus Administration must allow students in special education receiving certificates of attendance to participate in a graduation ceremony with other students receiving high school diplomas. A student in special education may participate in only one graduation ceremony to receive a certificate of attendance. The student will then return to school to complete his/her graduation requirements before receiving a diploma. A student receiving a certificate of attendance is not prevented from receiving a diploma if the student completes the graduation requirements. However, the student will not be entitled to participate in another graduation ceremony. A student who has reached maximum age eligibility without meeting the graduation requirements is not eligible for a diploma but will receive the certificate of attendance.

Financial Aid Application Requirements

Beginning with students enrolled in grade 12 during the 2021-22 school year, each student will complete and submit a free application for federal student aid ("FAFSA") or a Texas application for state financial aid ("TAFSA") before graduating from high school.

A student is not required to submit a FAFSA or TASFA if:

- The student's parent submits a signed form indicating that the parent authorizes the student to decline to complete and submit the financial aid application;
- The student signs and submits a form declining to complete and submit the financial aid application, if the student is 18 years of age or older or the student's disabilities of minority have been removed for general purposes; or
- A school counselor authorizes the student to decline to complete and submit the financial aid application for good cause, as determined by the school counselor.

District Administration must adopt a form to be used for purposes of documenting a waiver to submit the FAFSA or TASFA, and the form must be approved by the Texas Education Agency and made available in English, Spanish, and any other language spoken by a majority of the students enrolled in a bilingual education or special language program in the District or on a campus. If a school counselor notifies District Administration that a student has complied with the financial aid application requirement for the purpose of determining whether the student meets high school graduation requirements, the school counselor may only indicate whether the student has complied and may not indicate the manner in which the student complied.

Personal Graduation Plan for Junior High and Middle School

Campus Personnel must develop and implement a personal graduation plan for each student in junior high or middle school who has not performed satisfactorily on the STAAR or who is unlikely to receive a high school diploma before the fifth school year following the student's enrollment in the ninth grade. The personal graduation plan must:

- ·Identify educational goals for the student;
- ·Include diagnostic information, appropriate monitoring and intervention, and other evaluation strategies;
- ·Include an intensive program of instruction;
- ·Address participation by the student's parent or guardian, including consideration of educational expectations for the student; and
- ·Provide innovative methods to promote the student's advancement, such as flexible scheduling, alternative learning environments, online instruction, and other interventions scientifically proven to improve learning and cognitive ability.

For students with disabilities who receive special education services through an IEP, the IEP may serve as the Personal Graduation Plan.

Personal Graduation Plan for High School

Every high school student in the district must have a personal graduation plan. District Administration must publish in English and Spanish on the District website the information provided by TEA that explains the benefits of choosing a high school graduation plan that includes the distinguished level of achievement under the Foundation High School Program and includes one or more endorsements to enable the student to achieve a class rank in the top 10 percent of students at the campus and encourages parents, to the greatest extent practicable, to have the student choose these options. This information must be available to all high school students and their parents in the language in which the parents are most proficient, only if at least 20 students in a grade level speak that language.

Each high school principal must choose a school counselor or school administrator to discuss personal graduation plan options with each student entering ninth grade, along with the student's parent. This plan must be confirmed and signed by both the student and the student's parent before the end of the student's ninth grade school year.

A personal graduation plan for a student in high school must identify a course of study that promotes college and workforce readiness and career placement and advancement. The personal graduation plan must also help the student transition from secondary to postsecondary education, where applicable. Campus Personnel cannot prevent the student and the student's parent or guardian from choosing a distinguished level of achievement or an endorsement.

The personal graduation plan can be amended by the student as the student progresses through high school, but Campus Personnel must send written notice to the student's parent regarding the change.

Summary of Performance

A summary of performance ("SOP") refers to a summary of the student's academic achievement and functional performance, which must include recommendations on how to assist the student with a disability in meeting the student's postsecondary goals. A SOP is required for all students in special education prior to graduation from high school or upon exceeding the age of eligibility for FAPE. Students who meet graduation requirements but who are eligible to continue enrollment in public school to continue to receive special education services due to age eligibility will be provided the SOP upon their exit from the district.

The SOP must consider, as appropriate, the views of the parent, the views of the student, and written recommendations from adult service agencies (such as the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services) on how to assist the student in meeting postsecondary goals.

An evaluation as described in 34 CFR 300.305(e)(1) must be included as part of the SOP unless the student is graduating and being awarded a diploma under 19 TAC 89.1070(b)(1) [i.e., completion of all credit requirements without modified curriculum and satisfactory performance on all end-of-course assessments – section (1) under Graduation Requirements] or the student has exceeded the maximum age eligibility. See [EVALUATION PROCEDURES] and [REVIEW OF EXISTING EVALUATION DATA].

Definitions

"Regular high school diploma" means the standard high school diploma awarded to the preponderance of students in Texas that is fully aligned with Texas 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) of the ESEA. A regular high school diploma 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.

"Employability and Self-Help Skills" are those skills directly related to the preparation of students for employment, including general skills necessary to obtain or retain employment.

"Modified curriculum" and "Modified content" refer to any reduction in the amount or complexity of the required Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. Substitutions that are specifically authorized in statute or rule must not be considered modified curriculum or modified content.

<u>Additional Procedures</u>

The above graduation requirements are designed to ensure students finish high school with skills designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and/or independent living. Because graduation is a change of placement, the ARD Committee decides whether a student has met graduation requirements under the above framework.

In order for the ARD Committee to determine whether a student has met his/her graduation requirements, the following questions may be considered:

- For a student graduating in accordance with his/her IEP by obtaining full-time employment and mastering sufficient self-help skills to enable the student to maintain the employment without direct and ongoing educational support, the ARD Committee may consider:
  - What is the student's postsecondary goal in the areas of employment, education/training, and independent living (if applicable)?
  - What are the disability related needs of the student relative to their transition plan and their postsecondary goals for transition?
  - What courses, if any, has the student completed that have prepared them with the employment skills and/or self-help skills necessary to obtain or retain a job?
  - What jobs (paid or unpaid) has the student held during high school?
  - Is the student currently employed? If so, where and for how long?
  - Is the student successful in this job(s)? How do you know?
  - Did the student require any support from special education in order to obtain or retain the job?
  - If so, who will the student contact once they graduate from high school to access the same type of support to retain their job or obtain a new job?
  - If so, is the student already in contact with this person/agency?

- For a student graduating in accordance with his/her IEP by demonstrating mastery of specific employability skills and self-help skills that do not require direct ongoing educational support, the ARD Committee may consider:
    - What is the student's postsecondary goal in the areas of: employment, education/training, and independent living (if applicable)?
    - What are the disability related needs of the student relative to their transition plan and their postsecondary goals for transition?
    - What courses, if any, has the student completed that have prepared them with the employment skills and/or self-help skills necessary to obtain or retain a job?
    - What jobs (paid or unpaid) has the student held during high school?
    - Is the student currently employed? If so, where and for how long?
    - Is the student successful in this job(s)? How do you know?
    - Did the student require any support from special education in order to obtain or retain the job?
    - If so, who will the student contact once they graduate from high school to access the same type of support to retain their job or obtain a new job?
    - If so, is the student already in contact with this person/agency?
    - If the student has never held a job or been competitively employed, what courses has the student taken that have prepared them to obtain or retain a job (as identified in their postsecondary employment goal), including courses that have provided instruction for self-help skills that the student would need in order to be successful in that job (based on their individual disability-related needs in the PLAAFP)?
    - Was the student successful in these courses? How do you know (ex. IEP goal was created, and the student mastered the goal)?
- For a student graduating in accordance with his/her IEP by being involved with an agency that can provide services that are no longer the responsibility of the District, the ARD Committee may consider:
    - What is the student's postsecondary goal in the areas of: employment, education/training, and independent living (if applicable)?
    - What are the disability related needs of the student relative to their transition plan and their postsecondary goals for transition?
    - What courses, if any, has the student completed that have prepared them with the employment skills and/or self-help skills necessary to obtain or retain a job?
    - What jobs (paid or unpaid) has the student held during high school?
    - Is the student currently employed? If so, where and for how long?
    - Is the student successful in this job(s)? How do you know?
    - Did the student require any support from special education in order to obtain or retain the job?
    - If so, who will the student contact once they graduate from high school to access the same type of support to obtain or maintain a new job or support in a postsecondary education program?
    - If so, is the student already in contact and receiving services with this person/agency?
    - If not, what should be the next steps for the student to complete in order to access this support or service?

- For a student who no longer meets age eligibility requirements, the ARD Committee may consider:
    - Is this student currently 22? If so, they will not be eligible for services through special education during the next school year.
    - Will this student turn 22 on or before September 1 of next year? If so, they will not be eligible for services through special education during the next school year.

In regard to state assessments, the ARD Committee will determine whether the state assessment or an alternate assessment is appropriate. The ARD Committee will also determine whether a student is required to achieve satisfactory performance on an end-of-course assessment instrument to earn the distinguished level of achievement or an endorsement on the student's transcript. See [STATE AND DISTRICTWIDE ASSESSMENTS].

A student dismissed from special education services must complete the requirements for high school graduation and perform satisfactorily on any remaining assessments taken after the student is dismissed from special education. Therefore, the ARD Committee should carefully consider whether the student is capable of completing the requirements and passing the statewide exit-level assessment before dismissing the student.

Students who have completed four years of high school but have not completed the graduation plan requirements in accordance with their IEP may be allowed to participate in a graduation ceremony with their peers and receive a certificate of attendance. Campus Special Education Personnel determine which students meet this requirement and will contact and notify the parent and the adult student that they have an opportunity to participate in the ceremony. Campus Special Education Personnel will tell the parent and adult student that the student may only participate in one graduation ceremony and if the student were to participate now, that when the student completes his/her graduation plan, he/she will receive a diploma, but will not be allowed to participate in another graduation ceremony.

A student in special education who has completed his/her graduation requirements and received a diploma through either his/her IEP or by an exception to the end-of-course exams as determined by the ARD Committee may, upon the request of the parent or the student, return to school after graduation and receive special education services, as long as the student meets the age eligibility requirements. Therefore, upon request of the parent or student, the ARD Committee must determine needed special education services for the student aligned to their IEP and transition plan.

Campus Special Education Administration and Personnel will participate in training regarding the graduation requirements for students with disabilities at least once annually.

Personal Graduation Plan for Junior High and Middle School
Campus Special Education Personnel will be responsible for implementing a personal graduation plan for each student in junior high or middle school receiving special education services who has not performed satisfactorily on statewide assessments or who is unlikely to receive a high school diploma before the fifth school year following the student's enrollment in the ninth grade.

The student's ARD Committee is responsible for developing and making decisions related to the student's personal graduation plan. The student's IEP itself will include all of the required elements of the personal graduation plan for general education students and will be used as the personal graduation plan for special education students. The ARD Committee will discuss and review the personal graduation plan annually at the ARD Committee meeting. The Campus Counselor will attend the ARD Committee meeting to discuss and share information about the Foundation High School Program, courses of study, the distinguished level of achievement, and endorsements.

Personal Graduation Plan for High School
The Campus Special Education Administrator will be responsible for reviewing the personal graduation plan options for each ninth-grade high school student receiving special education services, including the distinguished level of achievement option and endorsements. See [GRADUATION]. For a student with an IEP, the student's ARD Committee will develop and make decisions related to the student's personal graduation plan, with the input of the parent and the student and such information will be included in the student's IEP in a separate section related to graduation. The ARD Committee will work together to identify a course of study that promotes college and workforce readiness, promotes career placement and advancement, and facilitates the student's transition from secondary to post-secondary education.

The personal graduation plan will be discussed and reviewed at each annual ARD Committee meeting, as well as upon request by the ARD Committee at any time, with the student's input. Campus Special Education Personnel will provide Prior Written Notice to the parent or guardian when any change to the student's personal graduation plan is made. The Campus Counselor will attend the ARD Committee meeting to discuss and share information about the Foundation High School Program, courses of study, the distinguished level of achievement, and endorsements.

Summary of Performance (SOP)
When the SOP will be completed may vary depending on the student's post-secondary goals but must be completed no later than the student's final year in secondary education. The SOP is critical as a student transitions from secondary

education to higher education, training, and/or employment. Students may share their SOP with colleges, adult agencies, vocational and rehabilitative centers, employers, and others. The SOP helps entities identify services and accommodations the student may require in the classroom, the workplace, or the community. In some instances, it may be most appropriate to wait until the spring of a student's final year to provide an entity, agency, or employer the most updated information on the performance of the student.

The completion of the SOP may require the input of the student's special education teacher, general education teacher, school psychologist, and/or related service personnel. The SOP should include information about the student, including the most recent formal and informal assessment reports that document the student's disability and provide information to assist in post-secondary planning. Except for those students who are graduating with a regular high school diploma (completion of all credit requirements with no modified curriculum and satisfactory performance on end-of-course assessments) and who are not aging out, the student is entitled to an evaluation under the IDEA as part of the SOP. The SOP should also provide information about the student's performance in at least three areas: functional, academic, and cognitive. The SOP should identify, if applicable, the accommodations, modifications, assistive technology, or general areas of need that were essential in secondary school to assist the student in making progress and which are needed for the student to be successful in a post-secondary environment.

Campus Special Education Personnel will meet with the student and parent prior to the student's annual ARD Committee to explain and discuss the SOP and solicit the student and parent's input. The student's contribution to the SOP can help the student better understand the impact of his/her disability on academic and functional performance in the postsecondary setting. The SOP will then be completed at the student's annual ARD Committee meeting that occurs no later than the final year of a student's exit from secondary education. The student will be given a copy of the SOP at the student's final annual ARD Committee meeting.

Documentation Requirements

The district will maintain documentation requirements of compliance associated with Texas Student Data System (TSDS), Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), and State Performance Plan (SPP). District staff will provide training, with follow up, to ensure the documentation required is in place and compliant. As part of this documentation, the Campus Administrator will ensure that the number and graduation type code for students with disabilities graduating based on ARD Committee decisions is accurately reported through the TSDS/PEIMS system.

Evidence of Implementation

- ·FIE
- ·ARD/IEP
- ·Personal Graduation Plan
- ·Summary of Performance
- ·State and Districtwide Assessments
- ·Prior Written Notice
- ·Summary of Performance
- ·Copy of Accelerated/Supplemental Instruction Plan and/or Copy of Accelerated Education Plan
- ·Graduation ARD Document
- ·Documentation for the state in TSDS, PEIMS, and SPP

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Resources

The Texas Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process: Graduation - Region 18
The Texas Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process: Transition Services – Region 18
The Texas Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process: Parent Notification and Personal Graduation Plan - Region 18
The Texas Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process: Summary of Performance - Region 18
Graduation Guidance - Texas Education Agency
Graduation and Special Education: Frequently Asked Questions
Secondary Transition Guidance - Texas Education Agency
State Graduation Requirements - Texas Education Agency
Minimum Middle/Junior High School Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) Standards and Guidance Associated with Intensive Programs of Instruction (IPI)

Citations

Board Policy EHBAA; Board Policy EHBAB; Board Policy EHBAD; Board Policy EIF; 20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(1)(A); 34 CFR 300.101(a), 300.102(a)(3), 300.305(e)(1-3); Texas Education Code 28.0212, 28.02121, 28.022, 28.025, 28.0256, 39.023, 39.024, 39.0241, 39.025, 39.034, 39.302-39.304, 42.003(a), 74.1021, 74.1025(n), 74.12, 74.13; 19 TAC 89.1035, 89.1070, 89.1414(c)(5)(A), 101.3022(f), 101.3023; Texas Family Code Chapter 31; HB 3 Sec. 5.001(c)