

Louisiana Believes

Overview of Pathways to Graduation for Students with Disabilities

Objectives

- Provide a general overview of opportunities available for all *students with disabilities who have an IEP** to pursue a high school diploma, including:
 - Traditional pathways
 - Alternate pathway for students who are Act 833 eligible
 - Alternate pathway for students who are eligible for Louisiana Alternate Assessment Level 1 (LAA 1) participation (beginning on slide 20)

***NOTE:** These opportunities do not apply to students who have an IEP because they are identified as gifted or talented.

GRADUATION PATHWAYS



Diploma Pathways for Students with Disabilities: Initial Considerations



- What career might the student want to pursue after high school?
- Has the student considered what type of preparation is required for that career?
- IEP teams should focus on supporting high school students through the pathway that best aligns to students' needs and post secondary goals.

Current High School Culminating Credentials

Diploma pathways in Louisiana include:

- **TOPS University**
 - Exit high school prepared to attend a 4 year college with opportunities to earn TOPS
- **Jump Start TOPS Tech**
 - Exit high school with a credential that will prepare him/her for employment and/or to engage in additional postsecondary educational opportunities
 - Within the Jump Start TOPS Tech pathway there alternate pathway options for students eligible under Act 833 and students who take the LAA 1.

Note: Although IEP teams are encouraged to focus on diploma pathways, a Certificate of Achievement remains an exit option for students with disabilities who participate in alternate assessment.

Traditional High School Graduation Requirements

TOPS University Diploma: Students must earn *24 Carnegie Units* and meet the required benchmarks on the End of Course tests (EOC).

Jump Start TOPS Tech Career Diploma: Students must earn *23 Carnegie Units* and meet the required benchmarks on the EOC tests.

Students must score Fair, Good, or Excellent on one EOC test in each of the following three categories:

- i. English II or English III*
- ii. Algebra I or Geometry*
- iii. Biology or U.S. History*

Opportunities for Students with Disabilities

In Louisiana we now have various pathways for **all** students with disabilities to pursue a high school diploma, including:

- Students eligible under Act 833 (2014) can pursue a standard high school diploma by meeting standard graduation requirements through **alternate means**.
- Students who take the LAA 1 assessment can pursue a diploma pathway by meeting **alternate requirements**.

Act 833 Eligibility

Act 833 High School Student Group

Students may become eligible for Act 833 performance criteria if:

- They enter high school having not achieved at least a combination of basic/approaching basic on math and ELA in two of the three most recent years (6th, 7th, and 8th grades)

-or-

- They do not achieve a score of Fair, Good, or Excellent after two attempts of the same EOC test.

-or-

- *Applicable only to students who entered a HS cohort during or prior to the 12-13 school year:* Student did not achieve state benchmark scores on a combination of one EOC test and either: 1) another EOC test, 2) a High School LAA2 assessment, or 3) an EOC retest.

High School Graduation Requirements Act 833 Eligible Students

Requirement 1: Students eligible under Act 833 are required to meet *all graduation requirements* necessary to receive a standard diploma. This includes the key academic components:

- Earning all Carnegie Credits for the diploma pathway they are pursuing
- Demonstrating proficiency in each of the three areas traditionally assessed with EOCs.
 - *If the student is unable to meet the assessment requirements through traditional means (i.e., a score of Fair, Good, or Excellent on the required EOCs), they are able to meet this requirement through an **alternate means as determined by their IEP team.***

High School Graduation Requirements Act 833 Eligible Students

Requirement 2: In addition to meeting IEP goals and objectives, students pursuing the standard high school diploma through Act 833 must meet at least one of the following criteria to graduate:

- Employment in inclusive integrated environments
- Demonstrating mastery of specific employability skills
- Access to services that are not provided by the school, employment, or education options

All information regarding a student's progress towards their Act 833 exit criteria should be documented in the student's IEP.

Eligibility Clarifications

- Once a high school student meets Act 833 eligibility for an alternate pathway to graduation, he or she **remains eligible** throughout their high school experience.
 - The student does not have to “re-qualify” each year.
- The Act 833 eligibility applies across all content areas, regardless of how the student met the criteria.
- When and how to *appropriately apply* the alternate performance criteria option is made on at least an annual basis by the IEP team.
 - If the IEP team determines to apply the alternate performance criteria, the team will develop IEP goals and objectives aligned to the course/content area(s) in which the criteria is applied.

Student Example (Vivian): Act 833 Eligible

Student:

Vivian is a student with a disability (Autism) who is entering the 9th grade. She participated in general statewide assessments throughout her elementary and middle school years.

Act 833 Eligibility:

Vivian's assessment results from the previous three years are as follows:

- 6th grade: Unsatisfactory on ELA and Basic on Math
- 7th grade: Unsatisfactory on ELA and Basic on Math
- 8th grade: Unsatisfactory on ELA and Approaching Basic on Math

Because Vivian did not attain at least a basic/approaching basic on math and ELA in two of the three most recent years (6th, 7th, and 8th grades), she does meet Act 833 eligibility.

Pathway Opportunities:

Vivian is eligible to pursue a standard Jump Start TOPS Tech diploma via an alternate pathway. While she may select any Jump Start pathway option, there are [specific pathways](#) available *only* to Act 833 eligible students which may best prepare her for a meaningful high school experience and successful postsecondary outcomes.



Student Example (William): Act 833 Eligible

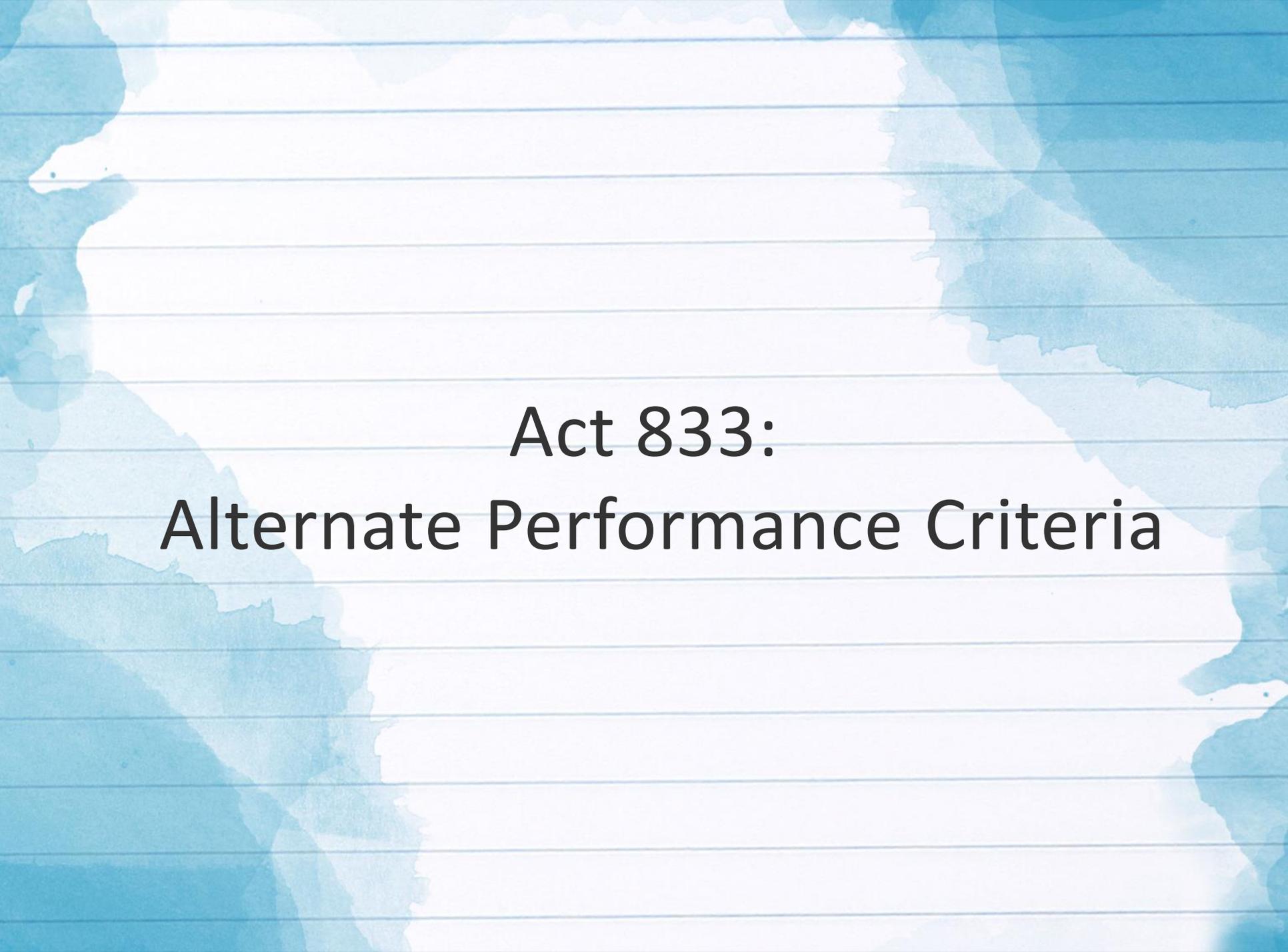
The Student:

William is an 11th grade student with a disability (Other Health Impaired) who receives special education services. He participated in the general statewide assessment throughout elementary and middle school, and he was not eligible for Act 833 when he entered high school.



Act 833 Eligibility Determination:

The IEP team reviewed William's recent assessment results and found that he scored *Needs Improvement* on two attempts of the English II End of Course (ELA II EOC) assessment. Because of this, William is eligible for the alternative pathway to a diploma as outlined in Act 833 for the remainder of his high school experience.



Act 833: Alternate Performance Criteria

Implementation

If an IEP team determines that pursuing a diploma through alternate means is an appropriate option for a student, then:

1. Within 30 days of enrollment in a course, the IEP team may set performance criteria for a course based on grade-level standards, including any applicable End-of-Course tests or Industry Based Certification (IBC) tests (teacher of record must be involved in this discussion)
2. Student fully participates in the course, is given access to all course content, makes progress in achieving the state content standards, and takes any applicable EOC tests
3. Teacher of record determines whether to award course credit

High School IEP Meeting: Application of Act 833 alternate performance criteria

During the IEP meeting the team must:

1. Identify the student's strengths and weaknesses relative to the student's disability.
2. Review the student's schedule to determine what course(s) and End of Course tests may be impacted by the student's disability.
3. In conjunction with the teacher of record for the courses where Act 833 is being applied, review the state standards and determine the appropriate performance criteria for the student that outlines what the student needs to learn and how they will demonstrate achievement of grade level expectations as demonstrated on benchmark assessments.
4. Develop annual goals, objectives, and a plan for monitoring and assessing student progress throughout the duration of the course that will be incorporated when the teacher of record awards course credit.

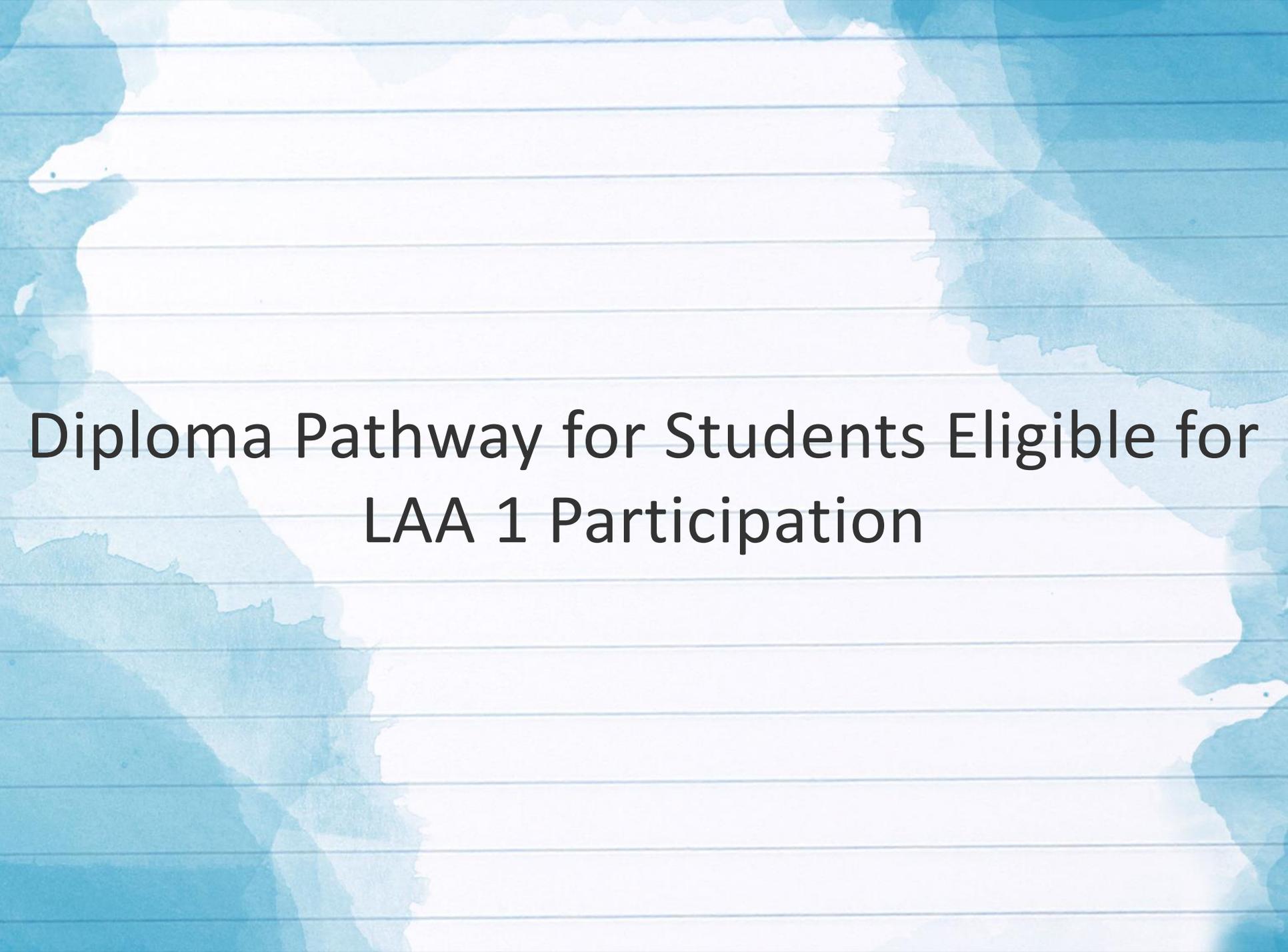
Role of IEP Team and Teacher of Record (High School)

Per Act 833, IEP teams may establish individual performance requirements for a student that are aligned to the grade-level standards for the specific course(s) of enrollment and shall be incorporated by the teacher of record when awarding course credit.

Responsibilities	IEP Team	Teacher of Record
Determine if it is appropriate for the student to pursue a diploma through alternate means of demonstrating performance	X	
Develop an education plan that includes how the student will demonstrate individual performance requirements necessary to receive course credits, including but not limited to applicable EOC tests	X	X
Determine whether to award Carnegie credit		X

Developing an Educational Plan: Progress Monitoring

- When developing individual performance criteria, the IEP team should specify how/when the student and team will be informed of the student's progress toward the goals/objectives and the extent to which the student is making sufficient progress.
- Student progress should be monitored and assessed through a variety of activities such as:
 - Classroom Participation
 - Classwork
 - Homework
 - Observation
 - Special Projects
 - Tests and Quizzes
 - Written Reports



Diploma Pathway for Students Eligible for LAA 1 Participation

New Graduation Pathway Options for Students with Disabilities

- Students eligible under Act 833 (2014) can pursue a standard high school diploma by meeting standard graduation requirements through **alternate means**.
- Students who take the LAA 1 assessment can pursue a diploma pathway by meeting **alternate requirements**.

LAA1 Eligibility Criteria

- LEAP Alternate Assessment, Level 1 (LAA1) was developed for students for whom there is evidence of a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact cognitive functioning and/or adaptive behavior.
- The IEP team determines eligibility for LAA1 participation based upon the [LAA1 Eligibility Criteria](#).
- Students who meet this criteria are eligible for the diploma pathway.

Student Example (Ellen): LAA1 Eligible

The Student

Ellen is a 9th grade student with a disability (Multiple Disabilities) who receives special education services.



Assessment History

She participated in LEAP Alternate Assessment Level 1 (LAA1) throughout elementary and middle school and continues to meet the LAA1 eligibility criteria.

Pathway Opportunities

Because Ellen is a LAA 1 participant, she is eligible for the Jump Start TOPS Tech Career Diploma – LAA1 pathway.*

* While this is the ideal pathway for Ellen, a Certificate of Achievement remains an option if she is not able to meet the requirements of the Career Diploma pathway.

Diploma Pathways for Students with Disabilities: Initial Considerations

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- Has the student considered what type of preparation is required for that career?
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LAA1 Pathway to a High School Diploma

- 4 component requirements in pathway
 - Academic
 - Assessment
 - Workforce - Readiness and Career
 - Transition Services
- The student should exit when the IEP team thinks it is appropriate (or when the student is no longer age eligible to attend school).
- A student who receives a diploma via this pathway is technically eligible to return to school to receive services until she/he reaches the age of 22. However, the diploma should not be awarded until a student has met all requirements for the diploma, including transition services in preparation for postsecondary opportunities.

Accountability

- When a student assessed on the LAA 1 achieves a career diploma it is counted as 100 points in the graduation index.
- Points are awarded when there has been a successful exit:
 - Student met diploma pathway requirements
 - IEP team thinks exit is appropriate and student no longer needs services from the school system

High School Cohort 2014-2015 or Prior

Students who take the LAA1 and entered a high school cohort in 2014-2015 or prior may earn a high school diploma by meeting the requirements for a Certificate of Achievement and one of the three transition requirements outlined in Act 833. Students earning a diploma by meeting these requirements will not be awarded accountability points.

Career Diploma Pathway for Students Assessed on the LAA 1

Component: Academic (focus on access)

Student assessed on the LAA 1 will be required to complete at least 23 course credits in either applied courses¹ or Carnegie credit courses²:

- 12 core subject course credits
 - 4 courses in ELA
 - 4 courses in Math
 - 2 courses in Social Studies
 - 2 courses in Science
- 2-4 elective credits
 - At least 2 of these credits must be earned in electives
- 7-9 career credits
 - At least 7 credits must be earned in workforce-readiness or career courses

¹ The Applied course are being expanded to signify student progress. For example, Applied Math I will expand to Applied Math I, Applied Math II, Applied Math III, and Applied Math IV.

² IEP teams should determine the least restrictive environment and most appropriate course content for the students. Students may be enrolled and/or placed in either Carnegie credit courses or applied courses. For example, a student may 1) receive instruction in a regular English course but be enrolled in Applied ELA, 2) be enrolled and receive instruction in a Carnegie credit course, or 3) be enrolled and receive instruction in an applied course.

Career Diploma Pathway for Students Assessed on the LAA 1

Component: Assessment (focus on performance and/or growth)

Students will be required to participate in the LAA 1 assessment and must meet the requirements for this component in both ELA and math in one of two ways:

1. Students may achieve “*Exceeds Standards*” or “*Meets Standards*” on the LAA 1 assessment
2. Students unable to achieve the standard of proficiency on the LAA 1 may meet this component through a portfolio of student achievement in that subject evaluated by the special education director or his/her designee
 - Portfolio must include student data demonstrating growth on the extended standards during high school and attainment of IEP goals
 - The portfolio must contain evidence of student learning in all core subject areas over at least four years of high school academics

Career Diploma Pathway for Students Assessed on the LAA 1

Component: Workforce-Readiness and Career

Eligible students will be required to complete 7-9 career course credits

- The career program and course sequence must include:
 - Interest assessment
 - Career-focused courses including, but not limited to, foundational workplace skills (including transitional courses)
 - Hands-on workplace experiences appropriate to their interest (community-based, where practicable)
- Students will be required to achieve an IEP-determined rating on a workforce readiness survey or specific career task analysis. The Department will be posting suggested resources and encourages districts who may have resources to share them with LDE staff. (See example [here](#))
- Students must meet at least one work-or-career-related IEP goal

Career Diploma Pathway for Students Assessed on the LAA 1

Component: Transition Services

The IEP team must complete an Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) prior to the student entering a Louisiana high school (or upon entering for out-of-state transfers)¹ that includes:

- Post-secondary career goals aligned with the student's interests and skills
- Independent living goals
- A high school experience and course schedule that aligns with post-secondary goals
- Access to an environment and experiences whereby the student gains the skills and competencies necessary to achieve his/her post-secondary goals

The Department has created a LAA 1 specific IGP that may be accessed [here](#). IGPs should be developed by the special education teachers, in consultation with a counselor, and approved by the IEP team.

Prior to the student exiting the school system, the IEP team must create a student's postsecondary readiness and create a detailed plan of action (Summary of Performance) that meets one of the following (from Act 833):

- a) Employment in integrated, inclusive work environments, based on the student's abilities and local employment opportunities, in addition to sufficient self-help skills to enable the student to maintain employment without direct or continuous educational support from the school district*
- b) Demonstrated mastery of specific employability skills and self-help skills that indicate that he does not require direct and continuous educational support from the school district*
- c) Access to services that are not within the legal responsibility of public education or employment or educational options for which the student has been prepared by the academic program*

Resources

- [Special Education Guidance for High School Students](#)
- [Implementation Guide: Alternative Pathways to a High School Diploma](#)
- LDOE contact information
 - specialeducation@la.gov