

LOUISIANA

SPECIAL EDUCATION GUIDANCE

for High School Students



This document outlines how special education policies impact students with disabilities and serves as a reference guide for LEA administrators and high school staff who work with students with disabilities. It begins by outlining policies that impact all students with disabilities and follows the same framework to show how recent policy changes (Act 833 & Alternate Assessment) impact smaller subgroups of students with disabilities.



STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (IEP)

STUDENT POPULATION	
Students who meet the eligibility criteria for one of the 13 disability categories ¹ as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)	
COURSE OF STUDY	
The vast majority of students with disabilities are accessing the regular standards and Carnegie Unit courses just like their non-disabled peers. The student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) should identify the child's strengths and needs, academic goals, and accommodations necessary to support success with the academic standards and coursework.	
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS	
TOPS University Diploma ²	Jump Start Career Diploma ³
<p>COURSES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English = 4 Units • Math = 4 Units • Science = 4 Units • Social Studies = 4 Units • Health/Physical Education = 2 Units • Foreign Language = 2 Units • Arts = 1 Unit • Electives = 3 Units <p>ASSESSMENTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of Course (EOC)⁴: (A score of <i>Fair</i> or higher in Algebra I or Geometry, English II or English III, and Biology or U.S. History⁵) 	<p>COURSES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English = 4 Units • Math = 4 Units • Science = 2 Units • Social Studies = 2 Units • Health/ Physical Education = 2 Units • Jump Start Career Education = 9 Units <p>ASSESSMENTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of Course (EOC): (A score of <i>Fair</i> or higher in Algebra I or Geometry, English II or English III, and Biology or U.S. History) • Credentialing assessments as defined by the chosen Jump Start Pathway
CONNECTION TO ACCOUNTABILITY	
<p>There are four components that create high school school and district performance scores⁶, each weighted as 25% of the final score. The components consist of 1) EOC assessments; 2) ACT scores; 3) Graduation rate (students who received a standard high school diploma); and 4) Graduation Index (a scale that allows schools to earn 100 points for all students graduating with a diploma but additional points for student attainment of college credit or statewide Jump Start credentials). The graduation index is found in §613 of Bulletin 111, The Louisiana School, District, and State Accountability System⁷.</p> <p>Statewide assessment scores: All students must take all End of Course (EOC) tests corresponding to the courses in which they are enrolled. Points are awarded for scores of <i>Good</i> or higher.</p> <p>ACT scores: All students, with the exception of students with the most significant cognitive and/or adaptive disabilities must take the ACT by the end of their junior year. They may additionally take the WorkKeys assessment. The higher score of the two assessments will be factored into the formula.</p> <p>Graduation Rate and Graduation Index: Students with disabilities pursuing a diploma through traditional TOPS University or Jump Start Career Pathways are factored into the accountability system based on the same criteria and with the same weights as their non-disabled peers.</p>	



STUDENTS WITH PERSISTENT ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES RESULTING FROM A DISABILITY (ACT 833 APPLIED)

STUDENT POPULATION

Students with disabilities that persistently impact their ability to progress in the general education curriculum per [Act 833 of the 2014 Legislative Session](#)⁸, become eligible when they meet one of the following criteria:

- A. do not meet the required benchmark scores on state assessments in two out of three most recent years: 6th, 7th, or 8th
- B. do not receive a score of Fair, Good, or Excellent on two administrations of the same EOC test

COURSE OF STUDY

Though these students demonstrate persistent academic difficulties, they must:

- continue to be taught and assessed based on the regular academic standards, and
- be enrolled in Carnegie Unit bearing courses, just as their non-disabled peers

Their IEP should identify:

- individual performance criteria for courses and associated EOC test that include the student’s strengths and weaknesses
- academic goals and objectives aligned to the standards for the course
- accommodations necessary to support success with the academic standards and coursework(s) in which Act 833 eligibility will be applied

Individual performance criteria developed by IEP teams may be incorporated when awarding Carnegie credits provided the student has full access to, shows involvement in, and makes progress in achieving the state content standards. More information on IEP goal setting and individual performance criteria under Act 833 may be found in the following LDE-produced guidance:⁹

- [Act 833 Individual Performance Criteria Guidance Public](#)
- [Preparing for Post Secondary Success December Webinar](#)

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

[Jump Start Career Diploma](#)¹⁰

COURSES:

- English = 4 Units
- Math = 4 Units
- Science = 2 Units
- Social Studies = 2 Units
- Health/Physical Education = 2 Units
- Jump Start = 9 Units

ASSESSMENTS:

- End of Course (EOC): (A score of Fair or higher in Algebra I or Geometry, English II or English III, and Biology or U.S. History)¹¹
- Credentialing assessments as defined by the chosen [Jump Start Pathway](#)¹²

[Jump Start Pathways](#)¹³ require a student to achieve sets of industry recognized credentials comprised of a package of skills and competencies. If the IEP team determines an Act 833 eligible student is not progressing successfully toward completion of a traditional Jump Start culminating credential, they have the ability to determine the appropriate exit point the student must achieve.

The Jump Start: [Students with Disabilities Implementation Guidance](#) and [Jump Start Industry Credentials for Students with Disabilities](#) provide further details.

CONNECTION TO ACCOUNTABILITY IMPACT

There are four components that create [high school school and district performance scores](#)¹⁴, each weighted as 25% of the final score. The components consist of 1) EOC exam scores; 2) ACT scores; 3) Graduation rate (students who received a standard high school diploma); and 4) Graduation Index (a scale that allows schools to earn 100 points for all students graduating with a diploma but additional points for student attainment of college-credit or statewide Jump Start credentials).

Statewide assessment scores: All students within this student population must take all EOCs corresponding to the courses in which they are enrolled. Points are awarded for scores of Good or higher.

ACT scores: All students within this student population must take the ACT by the end of their junior year. They may additionally take the [WorkKeys assessment](#). The higher score of the two assessments will be factored into the formula.

Graduation Rate and Graduation Index: A Diploma earned through an alternative pathway earns the same number of points as a Diploma earned through a traditional Regional Pathway for the purpose of Cohort Graduation Rate and Graduation Index.



STUDENTS WITH SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE AND/OR ADAPTIVE DISABILITIES (ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT ELIGIBLE)

STUDENT POPULATION	
<p>Students with disabilities that significantly impact cognitive functioning and/or adaptive behavior</p> <p>In high school, an eligible student¹⁵ is functioning 2.3 or more standard deviations below the mean in cognitive functioning and/or adaptive behavior¹⁶. Students who are functioning 2.0 to 2.29 standard deviations below the mean in cognitive functioning and/or adaptive behavior may be eligible for alternate assessment participation if the IEP team provides additional empirical evidence¹⁷ that the alternate assessment identification is appropriate for the student.</p>	
COURSE OF STUDY	
<p>Students who meet the alternate assessment participation criteria require extensive modification to their curriculum and their assessment is aligned with the Louisiana Extended Standards. Students are not required to meet the Carnegie credit graduation requirement and may take courses focused on applied learning and career preparation as outlined in diploma policy for students assessed on the LAA ⁴¹⁸. Course decisions for alternate assessment eligible students should be driven by the least restrictive environment determined by the IEP team.</p> <p>Students who meet the participation criteria must take either the LEAP or the alternate assessment administered in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 3-8 and 10: English Language Arts and Math • Grades 4, 8 and 11: Science. <p>High School students who do not score “Meets Standards” or “Exceeds Standards” on the alternate assessment may complete a growth portfolio approved by the district Special Education Director (or their designee) to fulfill the assessment component for the purposes of graduation.</p>	
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS	
<p>COURSE EXPERIENCES (can be applied courses or Carnegie credit courses):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English = 4 Credits • Math = 4 Credits • Science = 2 Credits • Social Studies = 2 Credits • Electives = 2-4 Credits • Career Preparation = 7-9 Credits <p>ASSESSMENTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of Course (EOC): While not required, EOC assessments are taken if students are enrolled in an EOC course. • ACT: Students who take the alternate assessment are not required to take the ACT series of assessments. 	<p>Students assessed on the alternate assessment are able to pursue an alternative pathway to a high school diploma. This pathway consists of academic, assessment, workforce readiness/career preparation, and transition components that the student must meet in order to receive a diploma and mirrors the requirements of the traditional graduation pathway.</p> <p>A student who takes the alternate assessment may be awarded a diploma when they have met all pathway requirements including evidence that there is a plan for the student to successfully transition away from services provided by the school system. The diploma awarded will look identical to a regular high school diploma and the student’s transcript will identify whether the student took Carnegie unit courses or applied credit courses. Students may also receive a Certificate of Achievement.</p>

ACCOUNTABILITY IMPACT

There are four components that create [high school school and district performance scores¹⁹](#), each weighted as 25% of the final score. The components consist of 1) EOC exam scores; 2) ACT scores; 3) Graduation rate (students who received a standard high school diploma); and 4) Graduation Index (a scale that allows schools to earn 100 points for all students graduating with a diploma but additional points for student attainment of college-credit or statewide Jump Start credentials).

Statewide assessment scores: Proficient scores on the alternate assessment are factored into the school and district performance score at the same weight as proficient scores on EOCs, however, there is a one percent cap on the number of scores that may be counted. All alternate assessment eligible students are required to participate in the alternate assessment or LEAP to meet the federal mandate that all students enrolled in public school are assessed on their academic knowledge.

ACT scores: Alternate assessment eligible students are not expected to participate in the ACT and are not factored into this component.

Graduation Rate and Graduation Index: Diplomas earned by students on this alternate pathway are traditional Louisiana diplomas and are eligible to earn 100 points for a successful exit regardless of whether the student exited within their cohort in the graduation index. However, diplomas earned by students taking the alternate assessment are not defined as standard high school diplomas under Federal definition and cannot be counted as a diploma in the cohort graduation rate.

FOOTNOTES & RESOURCES

1. <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/a/300.8>
2. <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/course-choice/college-diploma-requirements-with-course-codes.pdf?sfursn=10>
3. <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/jumpstart/career-diploma-requirements-with-course-codes.pdf?sfursn=4>
4. <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/teacher-support-toolbox/end-of-year-assessments>
5. EOC assessments are taken at the end of each corresponding course. However, all high school students, with the exception of alternate assessment eligible students, must take the Algebra I and English II EOC tests by the end of their third year. Students with disabilities may use testing accommodations as determined by their IEP team.
6. <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/performance-scores>
7. <http://doa.louisiana.gov/osr/lac/28083/28083.doc>
8. <http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=916099>
9. <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/academics>
10. <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/jumpstart/career-diploma-requirements-with-course-codes.pdf?sfursn=4>
11. Act 833 (2014) allows IEP teams to determine whether EOC passage is required for eligible students.
12. <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/courses/all-things-jump-start>
13. <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/jump-start-graduation-pathways>
14. <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/performance-scores>
15. <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/links-for-newsletters/laa-1-criteria-form-updatefinal.pdf?sfursn=2>
16. Students who have not successfully completed fifth grade must be functioning 3 or more standard deviations below the mean to be eligible for the alternate assessment.
17. <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/links-for-newsletters/leap-alternate-assessmentcriterion-1-c.pdf?s>
18. <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/students-with-disabilities/overview-of-pathways-to-graduation-for-students-with-disabilities.pdf?sfursn=4>
19. Students who take the alternate assessment 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.