



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

High School Credential Options for Students with Disabilities

New York State has created two new credential options only for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) who are finishing high school: the Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential (SACC) and the Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential. These credentials replace the “IEP Diploma,” which is no longer being offered to students with disabilities when they finish high school. They do NOT provide the same benefits as a high school diploma.

Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential

What is the CDOS Commencement Credential?

The Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential is a certificate that is intended to indicate a student's readiness for entry-level jobs. The CDOS Commencement Credential can be awarded either in addition to a Regents or Local diploma or to a student with a disability who is unable to earn a Regents or Local diploma.

Who is eligible for the CDOS Commencement Credential?

The CDOS Commencement Credential is available to students with IEPs who do not take the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA). To receive the credential, students must have attended school for at least 12 years (excluding kindergarten) or reached the end of the school year in which they turned 21. The CDOS Commencement Credential is not available to general education students.

How do you earn a CDOS Commencement Credential?

Students earn the CDOS Commencement Credential in one of two ways:

- 1) A student completes a Career Plan, shows that he or she has achieved the New York State CDOS standards, completes at least two units of study in career and technical education (CTE) courses and/or work-based learning experiences, and has an employability profile completed by his or her school.
 - A student's Career Plan must be filled out on a form provided by the school district and document a student's career interests and goals, career-related strengths, and the coursework and activities the student plans to pursue in order to reach his or her goals.
 - Work-based learning experiences can include participation in state-approved programs, job shadowing, community service, and internships.

2) A student meets the requirements for a nationally recognized work readiness credential. Examples of nationally recognized credentials include:

- SkillsUSA Workforce Ready Employability Assessment: <http://www.workforcereadysystem.org/assessments.shtml>
- National Work Readiness Credential (NWRC): <http://www.workreadiness.com/>
- ACT National Career Readiness Certificate: <http://www.act.org/products/workforce-act-national-career-readiness-certificate/>
- CASAS Workforce Skills and Certification System: <https://www.casas.org/product-overviews/assessments/WSCS>

Can the CDOS Commencement Credential be used to apply to college, trade schools, or the military?

NO. The CDOS Commencement Credential is NOT a diploma and cannot be used to apply to college, the military, or trade schools.

Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential (SACC)

What is the SACC?

The SACC is a certificate available to graduating students with severe disabilities who take the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) and do not meet the requirements for a Regents or Local diploma. Students will receive a certificate and a Student Exit Summary, which documents the following:

- The student's skills, strengths, and interests;
- The student's level of achievement of the New York State CDOS standards; and
- The student's level of academic achievement, measured by the NYSA.

Who is eligible for the SACC?

Only students with severe disabilities who take the NYSA are eligible to receive the SACC. To receive the credential, students must have attended school for at least 12 years (excluding kindergarten) or reached the end of the school year in which they turned 21.

Can the SACC be used to apply to college, trade schools, or the military?

NO. The SACC is **NOT** a diploma and cannot be used to apply to college, the military, or trade schools.

How do these changes impact my child?

The SACC and CDOS Commencement Credential are high school exit options that may be included in your child's transition plan. By the time your child turns 15, his or her IEP must include a transition plan. If your child is 15 or older and you have not had a meeting with your child's school to create a transition plan, you should request one from your child's school. For more information on transition planning, visit: www.advocatesforchildren.org/sites/default/files/library/transition_guide.pdf.

If your child pursues the CDOS Commencement Credential, he or she should NOT see any changes to his or her academic classes. Your child should continue to be given the opportunity to take the classes and exams needed for a Regents or Local diploma.

Can my child stay in school after he or she receives a credential?

If your child receives a credential before turning 21, he or she may stay in school until the end of the school year in which he or she turns 21 or until receiving a Regents or Local diploma, whichever comes first.

Who do I talk to at my child's school to learn more?

If you would like to learn whether the SACC or CDOS Commencement Credential is appropriate for your child, speak to your child's IEP team and/or the school transition planning coordinator. You may want to have this conversation as soon as your child starts high school.

Where can I find out more information?

- NYSED Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential:
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/SACCMemo.htm>
- NYSED Career Development and Occupational Studies Commencement Credential:
<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2013Meetings/April2013/413p12access1Revised.pdf>

Advocates for Children of New York, Inc.

151 West 30th Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10001

Phone: (212) 947-9779, Fax: (212) 947-9790

Jill Chaifetz Education Helpline: 1-866-427-6033 (toll free)

Monday through Thursday, 10am to 4pm

This fact sheet does not constitute legal advice. This fact sheet attempts to summarize existing policies or laws without stating the opinion of AFC. If you have a legal problem, please contact an attorney or advocate.

Copyright © August, 2013 by Advocates for Children of New York, Inc.