

# Graduation: *Considerations and Implications for Students with Disabilities*

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Education & Disability Policy  
Webinar Series

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## Graduation: *Considerations and Implications for Students with Disabilities*

Presenters

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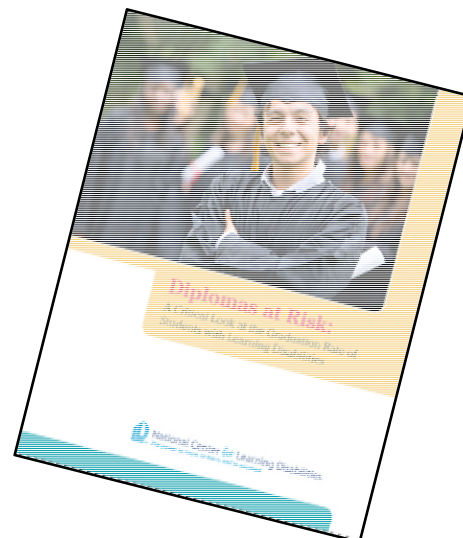
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## Graduation: *Considerations and Implications for Students with Disabilities*



[www.achieve.org](http://www.achieve.org)



[www.NCLD.org](http://www.NCLD.org)

Graduation: *Considerations and Implications for Students with Disabilities*

## AGENDA

- Graduation rate for students with disabilities;
- Graduation policies across states;
- Connection between rates and policies;
- Considerations for students and parents.

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### Graduation rate for students with disabilities

#### Methods of calculation

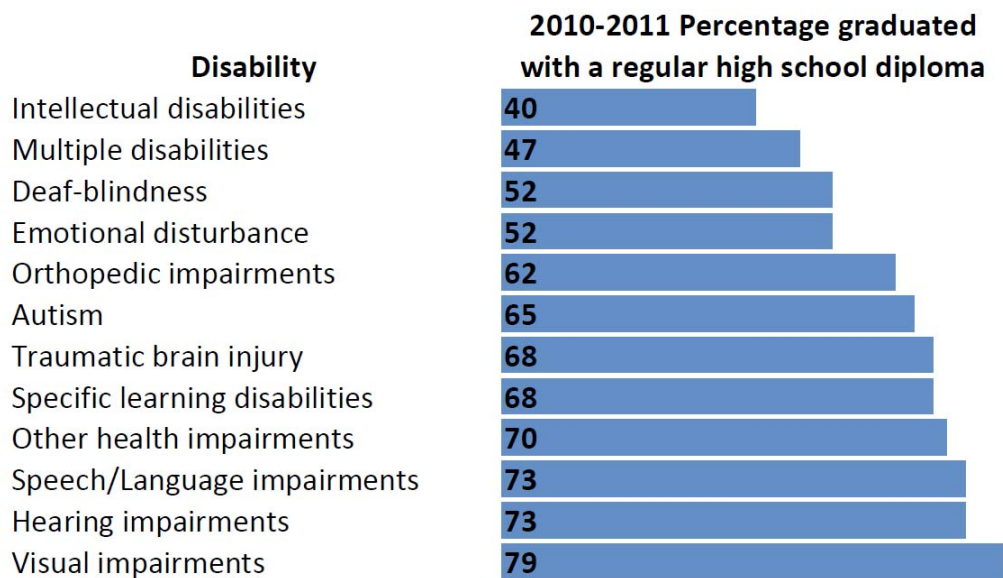


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## Leaver Rate

- Least reliable measure of graduation rate, really an “event rate” or “snapshot;”
- Available by disability category;
- Available by race/ethnicity;
- Data also provides SWDs getting certificates, aging out.

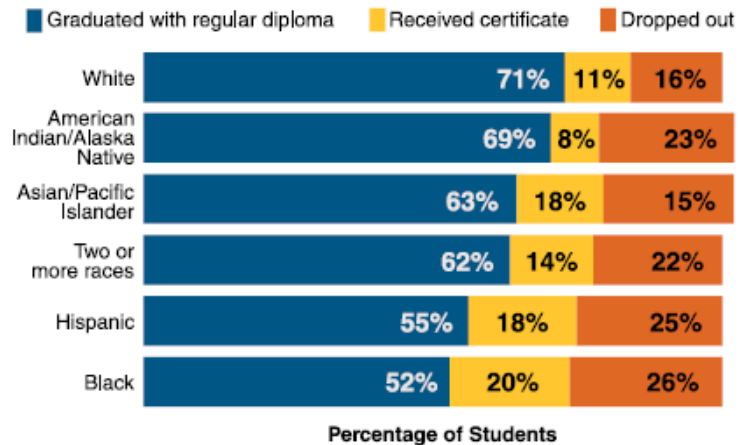
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Source: 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Report to Congress on Implementation of the IDEA, Exhibit 37

## Graduation: *Considerations and Implications for Students with Disabilities*

### How Students With Disabilities Exited High School by Race/Ethnic Group: School Year 2010–2011



Source: IDEAdata.org, Exiting by Race/Ethnicity and Basis of Exit, Ages 14–21, 2010

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### Graduation rate for students with disabilities Methods of calculation

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \text{Number of students who} \\
 \text{GRADUATE} \\
 \text{IN FOUR YEARS} \\
 \text{with a} \\
 \text{REGULAR} \\
 \text{high school} \\
 \text{DIPLOMA}
 \end{array}
 \div
 \begin{array}{c}
 \text{Number of students who} \\
 \text{ENTERED} \\
 \text{high school} \\
 \text{FOUR YEARS} \\
 \text{EARLIER} \\
 \text{(adjusted for transfers,} \\
 \text{emigrés and} \\
 \text{those who died)}
 \end{array}
 =
 \begin{array}{c}
 \text{Four-Year} \\
 \text{Adjusted} \\
 \text{Cohort} \\
 \text{Graduation} \\
 \text{Rate} \\
 \text{(ACGR)}
 \end{array}$$

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## Four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate

The four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) is the number of students who graduate in four years (or less) with a **regular high school diploma** divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class.

From the beginning of 9th grade (or the earliest high school grade), students who are entering that grade for the first time form a cohort that is “adjusted” by adding any students who subsequently transfer into the cohort and subtracting any students who subsequently transfer out, emigrate to another country, or die.

All states are required to report ACGR data for all student subgroups; to date 3 years of ACGR data are available at <http://eddataexpress.ed.gov/data-elements.cfm/sgid/397/>

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## Limitations of ACGR

- States can set their own definitions for which students with disabilities get counted in ACGR,
  - *Those beginning with IEP*
  - *Those exiting with IEP*
  - *Those with IEP throughout 4 years*
  - *Other*
- Not available by disability category

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## ACGR

### Definition of a “regular high school diploma”

The standard high school diploma awarded to students in a state that is fully aligned with the state’s academic content standards and does not include a high school equivalency credential, certificate of attendance, or any alternative award. The term also includes a “higher diploma” that is awarded to students who complete requirements above and beyond what is required for a regular diploma.

34 C.F.R. §200.19(b)(1)(iv)

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### Highlights for ACGR 2012-2013

- Rates range from a high of 80 percent in Arkansas to a low of 22 percent in Mississippi
- Gaps between All Students and Students with Disabilities range from high of 53 points in Mississippi (75% vs. 22%) to a low of 3 points in Alabama (80% vs. 77%)

| State | Regulatory Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate, Students with Disabilities: 2012-13 | State | Regulatory Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate, Students with Disabilities: 2012-13 | State | Regulatory Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate, Students with Disabilities: 2012-13 |
|-------|---|-------|---|-------|---|
| AR    | 80%   | WI    | 69%   | RI    | 59%   |
| TX    | 78%   | IN    | 69%   | WY    | 59%   |
| KS    | 78%   | OH    | 69%   | MN    | 58%   |
| OK    | 78%   | VT    | 68%   | WA    | 55%   |
| AL    | 77%   | MA    | 68%   | MI    | 54%   |
| NJ    | 76%   | TN    | 67%   | CO    | 54%   |
| MT    | 76%   | UT    | 67%   | KY    | 52%   |
| PA    | 74%   | CT    | 65%   | FL    | 52%   |
| IA    | 73%   | AZ    | 63%   | VA    | 51%   |
| MO    | 73%   | NC    | 62%   | NY    | 47%   |
| NE    | 71%   | WV    | 62%   | SC    | 43%   |
| NH    | 71%   | CA    | 62%   | AK    | 43%   |
| ND    | 70%   | HI    | 61%   | DC    | 41%   |
| ME    | 70%   | MD    | 60%   | LA    | 37%   |
| IL    | 70%   | SD    | 60%   | OR    | 37%   |
|       |   | DE    | 60%   | GA    | 35%   |
|       |   | NM    | 60%   | NV    | 26%   |
|       |   |       |   | MS    | 22%   |
|       |   |       |   | ID    | Not Available   |

| ACGR Gaps by State ranked highest to lowest |                 |   |   |       |                 |   |   |
|---|-----------------|---|---|-------|-----------------|---|---|
| State                                       | Gap SWD vs. ALL | Regulatory Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate, All Students: 2012-13 | Regulatory Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate, Students with Disabilities: 2012-13 | State | Gap SWD vs. ALL | Regulatory Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate, All Students: 2012-13 | Regulatory Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate, Students with Disabilities: 2012-13 |
| MS  | -53             | 75%   | 22%   | WV    | -19             | 81%   | 62%   |
| NV  | -45             | 71%   | 26%   | VT    | -19             | 87%   | 68%   |
| GA  | -37             | 72%   | 35%   | WY    | -18             | 77%   | 59%   |
| LA  | -36             | 73%   | 37%   | IN    | -18             | 87%   | 69%   |
| SC  | -35             | 78%   | 43%   | CA    | -18             | 80%   | 62%   |
| KY  | -34             | 86%   | 52%   | ND    | -17             | 87%   | 70%   |
| VA  | -33             | 84%   | 51%   | IA    | -17             | 90%   | 73%   |
| OR  | -32             | 69%   | 37%   | MA    | -17             | 85%   | 68%   |
| NY  | -30             | 77%   | 47%   | NE    | -17             | 88%   | 71%   |
| AK  | -29             | 72%   | 43%   | ME    | -16             | 86%   | 70%   |
| MD  | -25             | 85%   | 60%   | NH    | -16             | 87%   | 71%   |
| FL  | -24             | 76%   | 52%   | UT    | -16             | 83%   | 67%   |
| MI  | -23             | 77%   | 54%   | OH    | -13             | 82%   | 69%   |
| CO  | -23             | 77%   | 54%   | IL    | -13             | 83%   | 70%   |
| SD  | -23             | 83%   | 60%   | MO    | -13             | 86%   | 73%   |
| MN  | -22             | 80%   | 58%   | PA    | -12             | 86%   | 74%   |
| HI  | -21             | 82%   | 61%   | AZ    | -12             | 75%   | 63%   |
| DC  | -21             | 62%   | 41%   | NJ    | -11             | 87%   | 76%   |
| WA  | -21             | 76%   | 55%   | NM    | -10             | 70%   | 60%   |
| RI  | -21             | 80%   | 59%   | TX    | -10             | 88%   | 78%   |
| CT  | -20             | 85%   | 65%   | MT    | -8              | 84%   | 76%   |
| DE  | -20             | 80%   | 60%   | KS    | -8              | 86%   | 78%   |
| NC  | -20             | 82%   | 62%   | OK    | -7              | 85%   | 78%   |
| WI  | -19             | 88%   | 69%   | AR    | -5              | 85%   | 80%   |
| TN  | -19             | 86%   | 67%   | AL    | -3              | 80%   | 77%   |



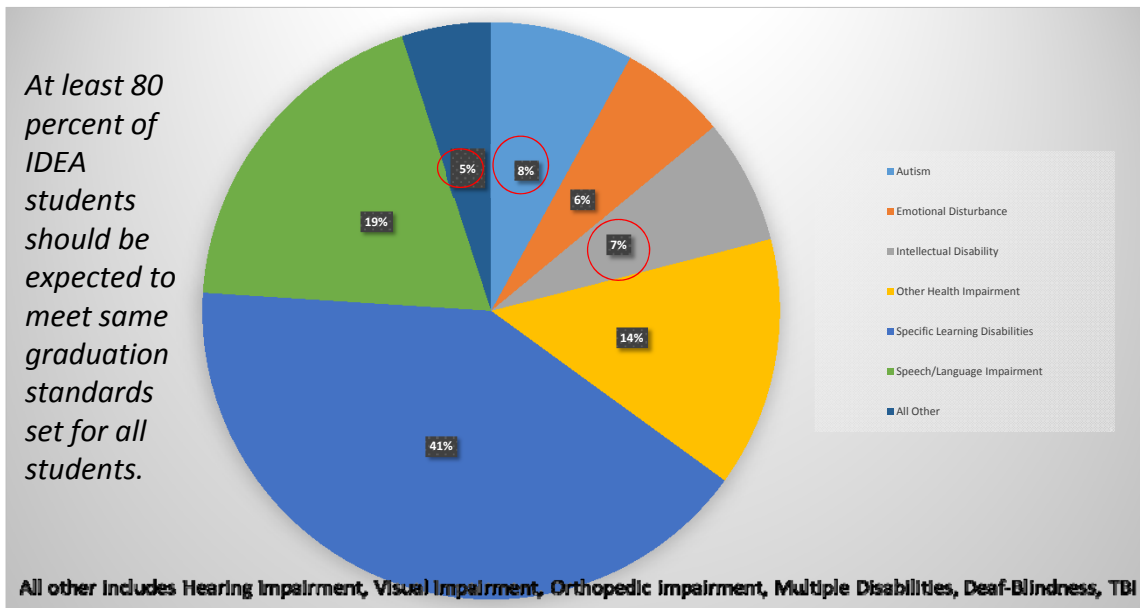
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*“It is critical that high school graduates, including students with disabilities, receive a diploma that means something — that they are prepared for postsecondary education and careers. All students deserve access to the academic skills they need so that they can make their own career decisions. They should not have those decisions made for them because they did not have the academic preparation they needed or, worse, left high school with a diploma believing they had been prepared.”*

## Graduation: Considerations and Implications for Students with Disabilities

*At least 80 percent of IDEA students should be expected to meet same graduation standards set for all students.*



Source: 2012 IDEA Part B Child Count, Ages 6-21. Does not include Developmental Delay (allowable to age 9).

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## State Policy Landscape

Significant variations across states in options for diplomas available to SWDs (33 states)

- IEP or special education diplomas;
  - Occupational diplomas;
    - Skills certificates;
    - Modified diplomas;
  - Extended diplomas; and
    - Special diplomas.



See table in Diplomas at Risk for state-by-state options.

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## State Policy Landscape

- State with highest number of options has one of lowest grad rate (Nevada)
- States with Occupational/Vocational diplomas have lower rates of regular diplomas (Alabama, Florida, Mississippi)
- Most states with IEP/Spec Ed diplomas have lower rates of regular diplomas



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## State Policy Landscape

- 17 states offer only the standard diploma to all students;
- Higher rates of standard diploma in states with few options (PA has 2 options and a 74% ACGR for SWDs)



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## State Policy Landscape

### Bottom line on alternative diplomas !

- Promote early decisions to track students on alternative track;
- Confusing to IEP Teams, postsecondary institutions and business community;
- Developed with little stakeholder input;
- Don't count in ACGR.



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## State Policy Landscape

Significant variations across states in allowances made for SWDs to receive a standard diploma, such as

- reduce credit requirements;
  - substitute courses;
- lower performance criteria;
  - grant extensions;
- use IEP to set grad requirements.



(36 states permit the IEP team to address graduation requirements with varying limitations)

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## State Policy Landscape

States need to:

- Collect and report on the numbers and percentages of students seeking modifications to the standard diploma;
- Ensure that students understand impact of modifications on readiness.



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## State Policy Landscape

### Bottom line on Course of Study allowances

- Diplomas awarded via substantial modifications to requirements for a standard diploma may not reflect level of readiness required for postsecondary education and/or career;
- Mislead students and families;
- May result in loss of continued special ed services as allowable by IDEA.



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## State Policy Landscape

### Exit Exams

#### **25 states had high stakes exits exams in 2011-2012**

Array of policies regarding SWDs:

- Use of different tests or passing scores
  - Exempted from passing altogether
- Accommodations allowed during test-taking

See MAP in Diplomas at Risk for state details



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## State Policy Landscape

### Bottom line on Exit Exams !

- Research has found that students with disabilities are more likely to receive **alternative diplomas** in states with high school exit exam requirements for graduation;
- Receiving a standard diploma via exemption of exit exam requirements results in lack of student readiness.



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## What Families Need to Know and Do

- Understand the requirements for a standard diploma;
- Understand alternative diplomas, including value to postsecondary institutions and employers;
- Understand impact of accommodations and modifications to required course of study, including impact on standards;
- Request parent-friendly information about criteria and decision-making process;

**ASK QUESTIONS !**



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**Additional Resources from NCEO**

- **Technical Report 62: Diploma Options, Graduation Requirements, and Exit Exams for Youth with Disabilities: 2011 National Study, NCEO, April 2012**
- **Graduation Policies for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities Who Participate in States' AA-AAS, in press**

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***QUESTIONS***