



# Diploma vs. Alternate Diploma

LIFE Conference

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# Why Two Diplomas

- There was a concern for students filling out job applications that couldn't check the "I have a high school diploma" box.
- There was a feeling that issuing a Certificate of Performance created a negative impact on students' employment and education opportunities.
- HB 287 – April 18, 2018
- State of Delaware High School Diploma
- State of Delaware - Diploma of Alternate Achievement Standards (DAAS)

# Other Options

- **Can a student receive something other than a regular diploma or a DAAS?**
- No. Those are the only options. It is possible for a student's education to end when they age out of high school at age 22 and not receive any documentation of completion.

# What's the difference

- A regular “State of Delaware High School Diploma” is awarded to a student graduating from a Delaware public high school who has successfully completed the prescribed course requirements established by the State, or the district or charter school, if district or charter school credit requirements are higher than those of the State.
- The “State of Delaware – Diploma of Alternate Achievement Standards” is awarded to a student who has met the requirements of that student’s Individualized Education Program but will not complete the high school graduation course credit requirements established by the State, district or charter school for the regular diploma.
  - Before the 2018-19 School Year, students who met this criteria received a Certificate of Performance; the DAAS replaced the Certificate of Performance.

# Students with IEPs

- **Do all students with IEP's automatically receive DAAS's?**
- No. Most students with IEP's will earn a regular diploma.
  - The decision of a student's diploma option is discussed and determined each year at the annual IEP meeting beginning with the initial transition IEP.

# Are they equal?

- **Are the regular diploma and DAAS equal/equivalent to each other?**
- No. The Diploma of Alternate Achievement Standards is not considered an equivalent to the regular State of Delaware High School Diploma.
  - Students who have received the DAAS have not completed the high school graduation course credit requirements established by the State, district or charter school.
  - The DAAS means the student has met the requirements stated in their IEP.

# Students on Alternate Assessment

- **Can students taking the alternate assessment receive a Diploma of Alternate Achievement Standards?**
- Yes. That is the only diploma option for those taking the alternate assessment.
- One of the Criteria for a student participating in the Alternate Assessment - The student requires extensively modified instruction with less complex and depth of skills and uses the Delaware Alternate Achievement Standards to access the Delaware Content Standards.

# Requirements for Diploma

- A State of Delaware diploma shall be awarded to students who successfully complete the prescribed course requirements established by the State, or the district, if district credit requirements are higher than those of the State.
- Requirements established by the State are a minimum of twenty four (24) credits including:
  - four (4) credits in English Language Arts,
  - four (4) credits in Mathematics,
  - *the student shall earn credit upon completion of mathematics course work that includes no less than the equivalent of the traditional requirements of Geometry, Algebra I and Algebra II courses. The student shall complete an Algebra II or Integrated Mathematics III course as one of the Mathematics credits,*



# Requirements for Diploma – cont'd

- three (3) credits in Science, *the student shall complete a Biology course as one of the Science credits,*
- three (3) credits in Social Studies, *the student shall complete a U. S. History course as one of the Social Studies credits,*
- two (2) credits in a World Language, *Students may fulfill the two (2) credit World language requirement by either:*
- *Earning a minimum of two (2) World Language credits in the same language or, demonstrating Novice-high or higher proficiency level on a nationally recognized assessment of language proficiency, except English, in the skill areas of oral or signed expressive and receptive communication, reading and writing, that uses the levels of proficiency as identified by the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Language, or as approved for use by the Delaware Department of Education.*

# Requirements for Diploma – cont'd

- one (1) credit in physical education,
  - one half (1/2) credit in health education,
  - three (3) credits in a Career Pathway, and
  - three and one half (3 ½) credits in elective courses.
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- *During the senior year the student shall maintain a credit load each semester that earns the student at least a majority of credits that could be taken that semester. A credit in Mathematics shall be earned during the senior year.*
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- ***LEAs may adopt additional graduation requirements. Check with your LEA about additional requirements.***

# Requirements for DAAS

- A Diploma of Alternate Achievement Standards shall be awarded to a student who has met the requirements of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), but has not completed the high school graduation course credit requirements established by the State, or the district, if district credit requirements are higher than those of the State.
- An IEP team determines the type of assessment a student will take. For students who are on the DeSSA-Alt, the standards assessed are not the same as in the DeSSA general assessments. The standards assessed in the DeSSA-Alt are less complex than the Delaware Content Standards assessed in the DeSSA general assessments, therefore students taking the DeSSA-Alt will not be eligible to earn credits towards a regular State of Delaware Diploma. Thus, if a student is on the DeSSA-Alt the only diploma option available to the student will be State of Delaware Diploma of Alternate Achievement Standards.

# Additional Information for DAAS

- A Diploma of Alternate Achievement Standards is not an academic credential and there are no state course or grade requirements necessary to earn a Diploma of Alternate Achievement Standards. A student successfully working toward his/her IEP goals is generally eligible to receive a Diploma of Alternate Achievement Standards.

# Accommodations Allowed?

- Diploma
  - Yes – an **accommodation** is a tool or procedure that provides equal access to instruction and assessment for students with disabilities.
- DAAS
  - Yes

# Curriculum modifications allowed

- Diploma
  - Maybe. A **modification** is a change in what a student is taught or expected to learn. By changing what student learns, modifications can hurt a student's ability to earn a high school diploma.
- DAAS
  - Yes. A **modification** is a change in what a student is taught or expected to learn. This term is used in Individualized Education Programs and is often paired with accommodations, which are changes that allow a student to more fully participate in learning.

# Accepted by the military

- Diploma
  - Yes. However, student must meet the requirements set forth by the specific United States Military branch. Acceptance is contingent upon testing, clearance through Military Entrance Processing Stations, and with the recruiter.
- DAAS
  - No.



# Accepted by colleges

- Diploma
  - Yes.
- DAAS
  - Maybe. Depends on the college and/or program. Many community colleges will accept students who receive a Diploma of Alternate Achievement Standards; however, placement is determined based on an entrance exam (i.e. Accuplacer for DTCC).



# Eligible for federal student Financial Aid for college

- Diploma
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- DAAS
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  - Yes. There are students who may receive a DAAS, be accepted into a USED approved TPSID program and receive financial aid.
- **Is a student receiving a DAAS eligible for SEED and/or Inspire?**
  - Student interested in applying for SEED (Delaware Technical Community College) and/or Inspire (Delaware State University) should work with the institution directly.

# Accepted by Employers

- Diploma
  - Yes.
- DAAS
  - Yes. An individual will be able to check the “Diploma” box on an application.
  - *Note: Adult agencies (e.g. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Division on Developmental Disabilities) may be able to assist with employment.*

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# Continuing in Secondary Education

- **Can a student continue their academic studies after receiving the DAAS?**
- Yes, for secondary education, services do not end until a student completes the school year in which the student turns 22.

# Questions to Consider

1. What does your child want to do after leaving high school?
2. What impact could this decision potentially have on those goals?
3. Why does the IEP team believe your child cannot meet the standards to earn a regular high school diploma?
4. What supports and accommodations has the team provided to help your child earn a regular high school diploma?
5. What help does your child need so they can meet the same expectations as other students?

# Questions to Consider

6. Can your daughter/son complete the requirements for a regular diploma by the end of the school year in which the student turns 22.? A student with a disability can receive services until the end of the school year in which the student turns 22 or until she/he graduates with a **regular high school diploma**, whichever comes first.
7. Will a Diploma of Alternate Achievement Standards allow your child to lead a productive and independent life?
8. Is the Diploma of Alternate Achievement Standards appropriate for your child's level of functioning?

**Consider using the transition plan to address her/his needs for a regular diploma.**

# Contact Information

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