

From: Bishop, Cathy
Sent time: Wednesday, March 14, 2012 6:10:41 PM
To: Lowell Mathews (Lowell@excelined.org) <Lowell@excelined.org>; Mary Laura Bragg (MaryLaura@excelined.org) <MaryLaura@excelined.org>
Cc: Polland, Michele; Verra-Tirado, Monica; Denbroeder, Karen; Tappen, Mary
Subject: RE: your email today

Hi Lowell,

You are correct, the current rule does not include any reference to course credit requirements for either option. However, the employment and training competencies requirements have been a component of Rule 6A-1.09961, F.A.C., found at <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleNo.asp?id=6A-1.09961> and there is very little change in that section of the rule.

One of the primary effects will be greater consistency across all districts with regard to the requirements for a special diploma. Because of the variability across current district requirements, it is difficult to project whether there will be any students who will not meet the criteria proposed under the new rule, that would have met requirements under the old rule. An important consideration is that students with disabilities with an IEP may remain in school until their 22nd birthday, or until they attain a standard high school diploma. This additional time gives these students the opportunity for continued access to courses and the opportunity to earn credits.

The data has stayed very consistent with regard to the number of special diplomas awarded (we are not able to distinguish between option 1 and 2 since this data is not collected in the state student database). Here are the numbers for the past 3 years

Special diplomas awarded

2008-09 – 5,536
2009-10 – 5,227
2010-11 – 5,519

Additionally, Section 1003.438, F.S. provides that a special certificate of completion may be awarded to those students who are unable to meet the special diploma requirement. Those numbers are also very consistent over the past 3 years, and represent a very small group of students.

Special certificates of completion awarded

2008-09 – 91
2009-10 – 101
2010-11 – 99

Again, for option 1, we used the credit requirements for standard diploma as a guide; for option 2, that recommendation was based on what the committee believed was a reasonable expectation based on current district practices. Hope this helps.

 Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail.

Sincerely,

Cathy Bishop

Administrator, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
325 West Gaines Street, Room 614
Tallahassee, FL 32399
850.245.0478; 850.245.0953 (fax)
cathy.bishop@fldoe.org

From: Lowell Mathews (Lowell@excelined.org) [mailto:Lowell@excelined.org]
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2012 3:31 PM
To: Bishop, Cathy; Mary Laura Bragg (MaryLaura@excelined.org)
Cc: Polland, Michele; Verra-Tirado, Monica; Denbroeder, Karen; Tappen, Mary
Subject: RE: your email today

Cathy,

Thank you for your response. If I recall correctly, the old rule did not specify the credit requirements for either option. I don't recall the work requirement for option 2 either. I could be mistaken. In any event, what is the overall effect of the proposed rule?

How many students would not receive a special diploma under the proposed rule who would have without the proposed rule's adoption?

What data or research did the workgroup use to determine the criteria for each option?

Thanks.

Lowell

From: Bishop, Cathy [mailto:Cathy.Bishop@fldoe.org]
Sent: Thursday, March 08, 2012 5:53 PM
To: Lowell Mathews (Lowell@excelined.org); Mary Laura Bragg (MaryLaura@excelined.org)
Cc: Polland, Michele; Verra-Tirado, Monica; Denbroeder, Karen; Tappen, Mary
Subject: RE: your email today

Hi Lowell,

Here is a little more background to help. During 8th grade or by a student's 14th birthday, the IEP team must make a determination whether a student will pursue a course of study leading to a standard diploma or a special diploma. The goal is clearly that most students with disabilities will continue to pursue a standard diploma and that supports and services will be provided to help make that happen. Students with disabilities pursuing a standard diploma have to meet all the same course, credit and assessment requirements that are established for students without a disability.

In general, those students receiving a special diploma are those with the most significant disabilities - for example, students with significant cognitive disabilities who are enrolled in access courses and are receiving instruction on alternate standards (access points).

In framing the course credit requirements for special diploma option 1, we looked at the requirements for the standard diploma in terms of the subject areas that are stipulated and the number of credits required and crafted something similar. You mention the EOC waiver and why algebra, geometry, etc. would not still be required of special diploma students. Students who are capable of completing those courses should not be pursuing a special diploma – but rather should continue to pursue a standard diploma. The statutory authority for special diploma is s. 1003.438, F.S. That law does not require that students pursuing a special diploma take algebra, geometry, biology, etc. in order to attain a special diploma.

With regard to option 2, the language in the proposed rule with regard to employment, the training plan, the requirement to identify employment and community competencies – are essentially the same as the current rule. What is different is the requirement for 8 credits in specific courses. Prior to this proposal, all such decisions were made by each district.

The workgroup was composed of district personnel with specific expertise in secondary populations, discretionary project staff, and parent representative from our state advisory group.

Let me know if this helps.

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Sincerely,

Cathy Bishop

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From: Lowell Mathews (Lowell@excelined.org) [<mailto:Lowell@excelined.org>]
Sent: Thursday, March 08, 2012 9:40 AM
To: Bishop, Cathy; Mary Laura Bragg (MaryLaura@excelined.org)
Cc: Polland, Michele; Verra-Tirado, Monica
Subject: RE: your email today

Cathy,

Can you please assist me with some additional clarification?

On option #1 – With respect to the career and technical education credits that are replacing the credits in social studies and the arts, are those tied to any industry certifications or do they include the old version of career and technical education (i.e., CISCO vs. woodshop). In other words, does the IEP or the ePep move a child with a disability into the industry certification, if appropriate? If not, who or what does?

On option #1 – Why are the Algebra, Geometry and Biology credits removed? If the IEP indicates that an end-of-course assessment is not appropriate, the student does not have to pass the end-of-course assessment to earn the credit. What math and science courses will they take in lieu of these courses?

On options #1 and #2 – How did you arrive at the minimum credits? You indicate that there was a workgroup that looked at these issues. What was the workgroup? Who was on it and what data did the workgroup have to indicate the appropriateness of the credits?

On option #2 – Same question above concerning the work component.

Lowell

From: Bishop, Cathy [<mailto:Cathy.Bishop@fldoe.org>]
Sent: Wednesday, March 07, 2012 4:50 PM
To: Mary Laura Bragg (MaryLaura@excelined.org)
Cc: Polland, Michele; Verra-Tirado, Monica; Lowell Mathews (Lowell@excelined.org)
Subject: RE: your email today

See below

 Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail.

Sincerely,

Cathy Bishop

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From: Mary Laura Bragg (MaryLaura@excelined.org) [<mailto:MaryLaura@excelined.org>]
Sent: Wednesday, March 07, 2012 1:46 PM
To: Bishop, Cathy
Cc: Polland, Michele; Verra-Tirado, Monica; Lowell Mathews (Lowell@excelined.org)
Subject: RE: your email today

Cathy,

Thanks so much for the quick response and information. Welcome, Monica. Tallahassee is really pretty in Spring you moved up at a nice time.

Just a few questions...

1. How did you come up with the #/areas of credits? For Option 1, it is parallel to standard diploma in terms of number of credits and subject areas – but of course the specific course requirements (e.g. algebra 1, geometry, biology) are not required. For both options, the workgroup's recommendations were strongly considered by staff as the rule was drafted.
2. Is there any possible way to review data to see how many students would and wouldn't qualify for option 2? In 2010-11, 5,519 students received a special diploma. We do not collect data that makes a distinction between option 1 and 2 and there would be no way for us to know the number of students that would meet the employment component for option 2.

Thanks for any help...
Mary Laura

From: Bishop, Cathy [<mailto:Cathy.Bishop@fldoe.org>]
Sent: Wednesday, March 07, 2012 12:34 PM
To: Mary Laura Bragg (MaryLaura@excelined.org)
Cc: Polland, Michele; Verra-Tirado, Monica
Subject: your email today

Hi Mary Laura,

Michele forwarded your email regarding the special diploma rule to me.

We actually have not received any comment since the posting on February 24th in advance of the March Board meeting. A couple of months ago, we received one comment based on the what was posted for the rule development workshop held in August.

We started work on this in 2008. Then put that work on hold and returned to it in January 2011 by bringing together a work group in the context of a rule development workshop. Based on their work, we developed a draft and had another workshop via phone in late August. There were very few comments on that call in August.

The current rule is extremely out-of-date and much of the language is obsolete. So essentially, as things stand now, the requirements for graduation with a special diploma are up to each district to determine. As a result, there is variability across the state. We currently have provision for the two options. While option 2 is not required right now, all but 4 or 5 districts provide for option 2.

So, the primary change with the proposed rule is that we have established minimum course credit requirements for both option 1 and 2 and we will require that district provide for both options.

Let me know if you have additional questions.

Also, by way of email, I would like to introduce Dr. Monica Verra-Tirado who is our new Bureau Chief. Monica was most recently the ESE director in Pasco; we are very happy to have her with us.

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Sincerely,

Cathy Bishop

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