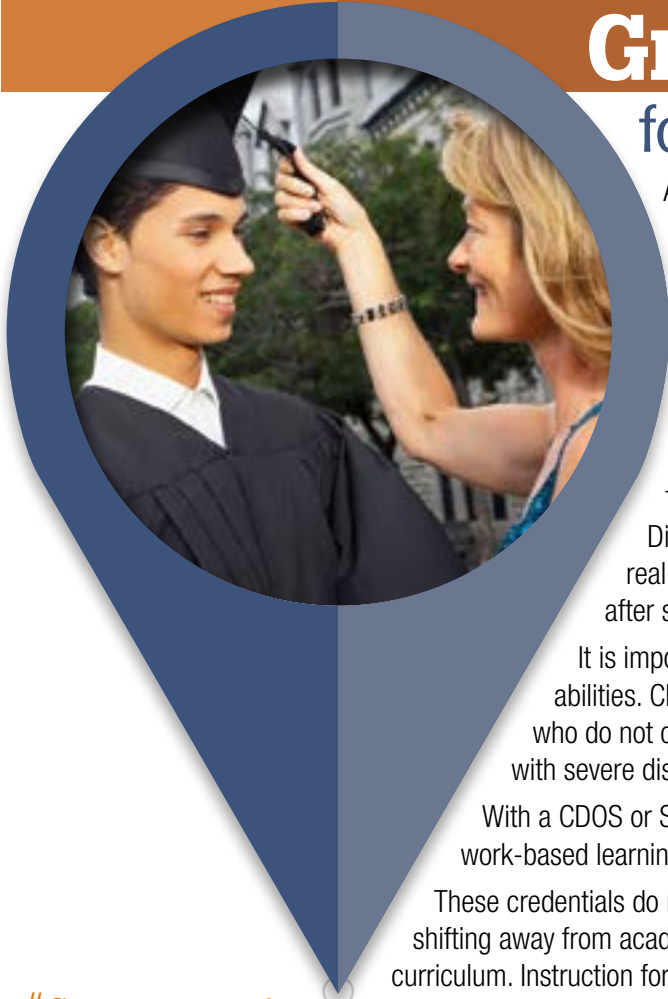


Graduation Pathways for Students with Disabilities



All students should leave high school prepared for living, working and future learning. In New York, there are more ways than ever for students with disabilities to leave school with a meaningful credential that represents how much they have accomplished — and what they are prepared for.

The Career Development and Occupational Studies Commencement Credential (CDOS) and the Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential (SACC) certificates were first awarded to students in the 2013-14 school year. They were introduced as the state was phasing out IEP Diplomas and Regents Competency Tests in favor of pathways that emphasize real-world skills and experiences to help students be successful in their lives after school, based on their individual needs and goals.

It is important to note that these credentials are available to students with different abilities. CDOS can supplement a high school diploma or it can be earned by students who do not complete diploma requirements due to their disability. SACC is for students with severe disabilities who are eligible for New York State Alternate Assessments.

With a CDOS or SACC credential, students will leave school with documentation of their work-based learning experiences, skills, strengths and level of independence.

These credentials do not mean that instruction for high school students with disabilities is shifting away from academics. All students must be provided with access to the general education curriculum. Instruction for students pursuing either CDOS or SACC is based on the state's Career Development and Occupational Studies Learning Standards, which emphasize skills such as reading, writing and math.

"This credential will recognize each individual student's preparation and skills for post-school employment," New York State Education Department Assistant Commissioner James DeLorenzo wrote about CDOS. "Where in the past, many students graduated with an individualized education (IEP) diploma, this credential provides a more meaningful substitute for these students."

"Career preparation and work-based learning experiences are essential in order to form and develop aspirations and to make informed choices about careers."

*U.S. Office of Disability
Employment Policy*

CDOS Career Development and Occupational Studies Commencement Credential

A graduation certificate that shows students are ready for entry-level work. Students participate in career and technical (CTE) courses or work-based learning experiences and develop a career plan.

SACC Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential

A graduation certificate for students with severe disabilities that shows they have completed at least 12 years of school, with instruction and services designed to help them meet their goals for living, learning and working after school.

REGENTS & LOCAL DIPLOMAS

The CDOS and SACC credentials are not tracks and cannot be pursued as an alternative to a high school diploma. All students must be provided the opportunity to access the general curriculum and earn a high school diploma. As in the past, students with disabilities are eligible to attend school until they are 21 years old or until they graduate with a Regents or local diploma. There are safety net options for students with disabilities pursuing their high school diploma. Please call your child's school for more information.



○ **CDOS** Career Development and Occupational Studies Commencement Credential

What is it? A graduation certificate that shows students are ready for entry-level work. This can supplement a high school diploma or be earned by students who do not complete diploma requirements due to their disability. Students explore careers and learn technical skills. They must complete two CTE courses or 54 hours of work-based learning experiences. Students also develop a career plan each year and leave with an employability profile.

CDOS Learning Standards

- **Standard 1: Career Development**
Example activity: Preparing a research paper with details about specific jobs
- **Standard 2: Integrated Learning**
Example activity: Participating in a simulated job interview
- **Standard 3a: Universal Foundational Skills**
Example activity: Role playing how to respond effectively to a dissatisfied customer
- **Standard 3b: Career Majors**
Example activity: Working cooperatively in a group to solve a problem

○ What's involved in a Career Plan?

As students develop their required Career Plans they:

- Reflect on the activities, classes and types of work that they enjoy;
- Work with parents, teachers and/or counselors;
- Identify abilities, as well as areas they would like to improve;
- Document their school, community and work experience;
- Establish career goals and action steps; and
- Undertake a culminating activity to help shape plans for the future.

○ **SACC** Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential

What is it? A graduation certificate for students with severe disabilities showing they have completed at least 12 years of school, with instruction and services designed to help them meet their goals for living, learning and working after leaving school. SACC is for students who are eligible to take the New York State Alternative Assessment. Students can participate in school- and community-based work preparation experiences. Instruction is based on the CDOS standards.

SACC certificates are accompanied by an “exit summary” that documents achievement in areas identified as important for post-secondary living, including:

- Career development and the ability to apply skills at home, school and the workplace;
- Reading, writing, literacy, speaking, problem-solving, technology and interpersonal skills;
- Academic achievement as measured by the New York State Alternate Assessment; and
- Strengths, interests and other accomplishments.

○ **RESOURCES** for parents and students

U.S. Department of Labor: Disability Employment Policy Resources for Work-Based Learning
<http://www.dol.gov/odep/categories/youth/career.htm>

New York State Education Department CDOS Questions & Answers <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/gradrequirements/CDOS-QA-1113.htm>

Advocates for Children of New York, Fact Sheets on High School Graduation Options
<http://www.advocatesforchildren.org/node/648>

New York State Department of Labor “CareerZone”
<https://www.careerzone.ny.gov/>

