

## Guidance Regarding Graduation Requirements and Transcripts for Special Education Students

ALGEBRA 1- According to the California Department of Education (CDE), “In order to earn a high school diploma, students in special education are required to pass a course or combination of courses based on all Algebra I content standards. The Algebra I content standards are the same for all students; however, some students in special education may require accommodations or modifications to instruction. The individualized education program (IEP) team determines the type of instruction appropriate for each student.”

From: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/g/hs/algebrafaq.asp>

This means that students with mild/moderate disabilities may take algebra courses that are considered to be “Accommodated” or “Modified,” of any length (including over multiple years.) As long as the course has the word “Algebra” in the title, and it covers the algebra standards and the student receives a passing grade in the course(s) needed to cover all the standards, he or she may receive BOTH credit toward graduation requirements as well as meet the state algebra standard, WITHOUT a waiver.

OTHER CONTENT AREA COURSES- Students must take the required number of courses in content areas as required by local School Board policy. As above, the course titles should include the same course names as those required for graduation in the districts, and should cover the same standards as the general education course. If the student passes the course, even with modifications to instruction, the student may achieve credit for the course.

TRANSCRIPTS - The transcript of a student who passed a high school course using *accommodations* (that do not fundamentally alter the standards or construct of the course) may not note that the student passed the course with accommodations. However, according to the CDE, “If *modifications* have been made to the curriculum of any course, it is important that the student’s grade reflect the student’s achievement in the modified curriculum, as long as modified grades are available to all students. However, any modifications to programming, instruction, and grading must be documented in the student’s IEP and be directly related to the student’s disability. To automatically give modified grades to all special education students would be discriminatory and potentially violate Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.”

If districts are going to use the term “modified” on the transcript, there should be Board Policy noting that students with and without disabilities may have modified curriculum available to them. The decision for a non-Special Education student to receive modified coursework may be made by the Language Acquisition team or 504 Plan team.

From: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/sr/promoretntn.asp>

**STUDENTS WITH MODERATE/SEVERE DISABILITIES** - Students with moderate or severe disabilities who participate in CAPA may take a combination of course at the CAPA standards level, for which the district may grant credits. These credits may be used to fulfill the requirements for a Certificate of Completion: “The individual has satisfactorily completed a prescribed alternative course of study approved by the governing board of the school district in which the individual attended school or the school district with jurisdiction over the individual and identified in his or her individualized education program” as per 30 EC 56390.

The IEP should be clear that the student will *not* be attaining a regular high school diploma.

**“COLLEGE PREP” vs “GENERAL EDUCATION” or “BASIC” COURSES-** Some districts do not have actual general education or basic courses, which requires that a Special Education student take the College Prep course, but with different standards. The school should have course descriptions which describe the basic standards and competencies for each course, to assist the IEP team in determining to which course requirements the student will be held accountable. In this case, the student would receive credit for “general education” or “standard” coursework in the subject.