Our Challenge: California Graduation Statistics
85% of All Youth earn a high school diploma.
72% of Youth with Disabilities earn a high school diploma
14% of Youth with Disabilities Drop Out of High School.

We formed a Workgroup to do research and make recommendations to the
California Department of Education and to local education agencies (LEAs) across the state.

First, the parameters:

Federal Definition of a Diploma
The term “regular high school diploma:”
• (A) means the standard high school diploma awarded to the
preponderance of students in the State that is fully aligned with
State standards, or a higher diploma, except that a regular high
school diploma shall not be aligned to the alternate academic
achievement standards; and
• (B) does not include a recognized equivalent of a diploma, such
as a general equivalency diploma, certificate of completion,
certificate of attendance, or similar lesser credential, such as a
diploma based on meeting IEP goals.
• The vast majority of students with disabilities should have
access to the same high-quality academic coursework as all
other students in the State that reflects grade-level content for
the grade in which the student is enrolled and that provides for
assessment against grade-level achievement standards.
   -Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation, July 2017

Federal Definition of an Alternative
Diploma (51223)
• (bb) all students with the most
significant cognitive disabilities in the
cohort, as adjusted under clause (i),
assessed using the alternate assessment
aligned to alternate academic
achievement standards under section
1111(b)(2)(D) and awarded a State-
defined alternate diploma that is—
• (AA) standards-based;
• (BB) aligned with the State requirements
for the regular high school diploma; and
• (CC) obtained within the time period for
which the State ensures the availability
of a free appropriate public education
under section 612(a)(1) of the Individuals
with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C.
1412(a)(1)); and
• (II) shall not include any student
awarded a recognized equivalent of a
diploma, such as a general equivalency
diploma, certificate of completion,
certificate of attendance, or similar
lesser credential

The federal student aid website (www.fafsa.gov) specifies students
are eligible for financial aid for college and career schools if they
have a high school diploma or a General Educational Development
degree (GED). There is also the option of taking an “ability to
benefit” test to qualify without a diploma/GED.

The exception to requiring the diploma or GED is if youth have an
intellectual disability and are enrolled, or accepted for enrollment
in a comprehensive transition and postsecondary (CTP) program for
students with disabilities at an institution of higher
education (a college/career school) that participates in the federal
student aid programs.

How are we doing?

| Students who have achieved college and career readiness standards, by category: |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| All Students    | English Learners | Foster Youth   | Students with Disabilities | Homeless |
| 42.4%           | 14.5%           | 10.4%          | 9.2%                  | 23.3%        |

Only 33% of students who pass A-G courses are eligible to enter the university system directly out of high school.
The CSU system admits the top 33% of graduates. The UC system admits the top 9% of graduates.
There are Multiple Ways to Earn a Diploma in CA

- Meet State Course Requirements
- Meet University Course Requirements (A-G)
- Gold Seal Merit Diploma
- Career-Tech Pathways
- Alternative means for specific categories of students
- Local Education Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard Diploma</th>
<th>Alternative Diploma</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-G</td>
<td>CTE Pathway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Youth</td>
<td>All Youth</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Why can’t we include “students with IEPs if they are unable to meet A-G or participate in CTE Pathway?”
## Education Code Citations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Groups</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Ed Code Legislation (EC)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Technical (CTE) Pathway</td>
<td>Include CTE courses as path to a diploma</td>
<td>Meet state diploma requirements with an emphasis on CTE</td>
<td>CTE 51225.3</td>
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<td>SB 1123 amendment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foster Youth Homeless Juvenile Justice leavers Military family members</td>
<td>Students move in a high school setting in grades 11-12 cannot meet LEA requirements.</td>
<td>LEAs are required to exempt students from local coursework requirements for a diploma and utilize state standards</td>
<td>AB 167 Newcomer programs extends exemption to recent immigrants AB 2121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth in jeopardy and not thriving in high school</td>
<td>Students fall behind in classes and credits</td>
<td>Calculate credits differently. Allow independent Study Use alternative means to earn a diploma</td>
<td>Alternative education EC 58500 Continuation Ed. EC 44865 Diploma Plus EC 48480 Independent Study EC 51005 Alternative Means to earn a diploma EC 51225.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Diploma Cohort</td>
<td>Expand time to earn a local graduation diploma to a fifth year for youth in foster care, juvenile court systems, military families Add Newcomers to the list of students</td>
<td>Current law requires Students who are part of the graduation data to complete the diploma in four years.</td>
<td>AB 2121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learners</td>
<td>Requires students who are English Language Learners to participate in general education</td>
<td></td>
<td>AB 2735 EC60811</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### California School Dashboard: Career Measures collected for College/Career Indicator
- CTE Pathway Completion
- Leadership / Military Service
- Work Readiness (Strategic Skills) Certificate program completer
- Food Handler Certification program completion
- Pre Apprenticeship Certification Program Completion / and non-certified
- State or Federal Job Program Completion
- Work-Based Learner Completion through WorkAbility or Transition Partnership Program