

This document serves to assist IEP teams and district staff in determining the 2014-2015 exit opportunities for seniors impacted by the changes in special education policy and state law in the last year.

### **STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR THE LOUISIANA ALTERNATE ASSESSMENTS, LEVEL 1 (LAA 1)**

In December 2014, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education increased the flexibility an IEP team has when deciding whether the LAA 1 assessment is appropriate for a student. After fifth grade, students may be assessed using the LAA 1 if they are functioning 2.3 or more standard deviations below the mean in cognitive functioning and/or adaptive behavior. Students who are functioning 2.0 to 2.29 standard deviations below the mean in cognitive functioning and/or adaptive behavior may be eligible for LAA 1 participation if the IEP team provides additional empirical evidence showing the LAA 1 assessment is appropriate for the student.

#### ***LAA 1 Eligible Senior (identified prior to December eligibility shift)***

- The student may receive a diploma if he or she meets the qualifications for a Certificate of Achievement and achieves one of the same transition requirements specified for non-LAA 1 eligible students in Act 833:
  - Employment in integrated, inclusive work environments, based on the student's abilities and local employment opportunities, in addition to sufficient self-help skills to enable the student to maintain employment without direct and continuous educational support from the school district.
  - Demonstrated mastery of specific employability skills and self-help skills that indicate that he does not require direct and continuous educational support from the school district.
  - Access to services that are not within the legal responsibility of public education or employment or education options for which the student has been prepared by the academic program
- Act 833 of the 2014 Legislative Session impacts the awarding of Carnegie credit and EOC passage, neither of which are diploma requirements for students taking the LAA 1 assessment. Therefore, if a student is taking the LAA 1 assessment, it is not necessary to identify them as Act 833 eligible in SER.
- Although diplomas for students who take LAA 1 are not considered to be regular diplomas for accountability purposes, per federal regulations, the diploma awarded will look identical to the diploma awarded to their peers. The transcript, however, will identify that the student did not earn the Carnegie units for a standard high school diploma.
- Since this is not considered a standard high school diploma, the provision of FAPE does not end for students who receive this document until they reach maximum school age.

#### ***LAA 1 Eligible Senior (identified after December eligibility shift)***

- The student may receive a diploma if he or she meets the qualifications for a Certificate of Achievement and achieves one of the same transition requirements specified for non-LAA 1 eligible students in Act 833:
  - Employment in integrated, inclusive work environments, based on the student's abilities and local employment opportunities, in addition to sufficient self-help skills to enable the student to maintain employment without direct and continuous educational support from the school district.
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### **STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR ACT 833 ALTERNATE PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

Act 833 of the 2014 Legislative Session allows students with disabilities who meet specific eligibility criteria outlined in the law and are accessing the general education curriculum and earning Carnegie credit to meet graduation requirements through individualized performance criteria. The new law and corresponding policy should be employed to grant standard high school diplomas to students who have, due to their disability, failed to meet the graduation requirements. Seniors who have not earned Carnegie credit throughout high school cannot meet graduation requirements this year solely due the implementation of the new law.

#### **Act 833 Eligible Senior Lacking Carnegie Credits (student did not take all courses required for graduation)**

- Act 833 did not take effect until August 1, 2014 and does not allow for retroactive Carnegie credit for students who did not participate in Carnegie credit bearing courses in the general education curriculum. Therefore, a diploma may not be awarded until the student has met the mandated Carnegie credit requirement defined for his or her cohort.
- The student may earn a Certificate of Achievement (if the alternate assessment was taken) and return to high school to earn the remaining Carnegie credits necessary to graduate with a diploma. Schools are encouraged to utilize summer school and accelerated course opportunities.
- Act 833 individual performance criteria may be used in all courses taken in 2014-15 and after.

#### **Act 833 Eligible Senior Lacking Carnegie Credits (student did not pass all courses required for graduation)**

- A diploma may not be awarded until the student has met the mandated Carnegie credit requirement defined for his or her cohort.
- The student may earn a Certificate of Achievement (if an alternate assessment was taken) and return to high school to earn the remaining Carnegie credits necessary to graduate with a diploma. Schools are encouraged to utilize summer school and accelerated course opportunities.
- Act 833 individual performance criteria may be used in all courses taken in 2014-15 and after.

**Act 833 Eligible Senior Lacking End of Course (EOC) Assessment (student did not take the required EOCs)**

- A diploma may not be awarded until the student has participated in an administration of an EOC in ELA (English II or III), Math (Algebra I or Geometry), and either Biology or US History.
- Seniors not earning the required score on the EOC may take the assessment over the summer or during the following year.
- It is unlikely that a student would have met the Carnegie credit requirement and not met the assessment participation requirement.

**Act 833 Eligible Senior Lacking EOC Assessment (student did not pass the required EOCs)**

- A diploma may be awarded if the IEP team determines that the student has demonstrated knowledge of the standards through alternate means during their high school experience.
- STS will allow a school to override the assessment requirement by identifying the student as Act 833 eligible. The override is the same process used any time a graduation date is entered for a student that does not meet one or more graduation requirements.
- As in the past, LEAs may continue to apply to the LDE for a waiver of one of the three EOC requirements if they are able to demonstrate that the student's disability has prevented the student from achieving proficiency. Also, if the student is eligible for the LAA 2 and entered a high school cohort prior to 2014-2015, he or she may meet graduation requirement by passing the LAA 2 equivalent subject test.