

MEMORANDUM

To: Glenna Gallo, Director of Special Education Services
From: Utah Special Education Advisory Panel
Subject: Diploma Options for Students with Disabilities
Date: December 15, 2016

In our role as an advisory panel, we would like to provide input and recommendations to the State Director of Special Education of the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) to improve services for students with disabilities and provide appropriate school completion options.

Recommendations:

- Continue availability of a regular high school diploma for students with disabilities meeting the requirements in USBE R277-700 and R277-705. We request that the USBE consider clarifying in rule the expectations that IEP substitutions be with the same “intensity and rigor” as IEP teams are applying inconsistently due to lack of understanding. We also request that following clarification by the Board, that professional development and technical assistance be provided to LEAs and IEP teams, including parents.
- Do not make a second regular high school diploma option available that allows IEP substitutions reflecting different content or rigor as that required for all students.
- Continue availability of a certificate of completion for students not meeting graduation requirements, regardless of whether or not the student has a disability.
- Consider adding a second diploma option (i.e., alternate diploma) for students with significant cognitive disabilities receiving instruction on alternate standards and participating in an alternate assessment.
- The USBE Special Education Services section solicit additional input from universities, university disability resource centers, and businesses on diplomas for students with disabilities, and specifically, the potential impact of a new alternate diploma for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Thank you for your time and consideration in reviewing these recommendations. We as a panel appreciate all of your efforts on behalf of children with disabilities throughout the State of Utah.