

# Alternate Diploma:

## Tip Sheet for School Personnel

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- » Effective SY 2020-2021, after a short transition period from the modified diploma, West Virginia moved to the option of an **alternate diploma** for graduation. The **alternate diploma** has **replaced** the modified diploma. The **modified diploma is no longer an option**. All students earning diplomas must have completed grade-level standards-based instruction.
  - » The alternate diploma is an alternate path to graduation determined by the IEP Team for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.
  - » Students pursuing an alternate diploma must complete the **same** graduation requirements (credits) as their peers pursuing a regular diploma. Students pursuing an alternate diploma will receive credits and grades for all classes, just as their general education peers.
  - » When determining class rankings, consider that county school boards have the final determination as to whether any course will be calculated in a student's GPA. WVEIS course pages have the option available regarding whether a course can be used in calculating a student GPA or not. Refer to WVEIS 2.0 guidelines on Calculating GPAs and Class Rank.  
**Districts should have local policies to address class rank for students working toward an alternate diploma.**
  - » Students pursuing an alternate diploma will have course codes indicated on their transcripts for all classes, just as students pursuing a regular diploma. Transcripts for students working toward an alternate diploma will reflect the course codes associated with either the College and Career Readiness Standards or Alternate Academic Achievement Standards where appropriate. Please refer to the WVEIS course code manual for appropriate alternate standards course codes. Consider the following:
    - Course codes are available in the WVDE Course Code Manual under the WVEIS Support tab.
    - If a district creates a course, standards must be county-created and locally approved.
    - Students may not receive credit for the same course more than once.
    - According to Office for Civil Rights guidance (October 2008), "transcripts may not disclose that a student has a disability or has received special education or related services due to having a disability."
  - » Alternate standards are only created for **credit bearing courses** required for graduation in Policy 2510. Students who participate in the alternate standards courses receive an alternate diploma.
    - The only alternate standards course codes that will be utilized are already created and are in the current course code manual.
    - Counties have the ability to utilize elective course codes in the manual or create their own courses and request codes; however, they will not be labeled "alternate." None of these general elective courses currently have state approved standards so counties will have to create local standards.
    - LEAs may utilize the "School Use" 9th and 10th digit in the extension portion of the code for internal purposes (found in the extension after the initial 4-digit course code). The 9th and 10th digits will be individually developed by LEAs. The 9th and 10th digits of extensions are not state approved or mandated as there are no statewide codes to identify special education schedules.
    - Alternate course codes are not created for grades K-8 or any elective courses.
  - » Students pursuing an alternate diploma may be enrolled in general education classes. It is not uncommon for students working toward an alternate diploma to take general education electives and/or Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses. Any student enrolled in CTE must be able to pass the required safety test. If a student pursuing an alternate diploma is consistently successful in general education classes, the diploma option may need to be revisited by the IEP Team. IEP Teams should review eligibility for the alternate diploma at each annual review.
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- » Some students working toward an alternate diploma may require extended time to meet graduation credit requirements or meet individualized transition goals as determined by the student's IEP Team. FAPE ensures students working toward an alternate diploma can remain enrolled until the end of the school year following their 21st birthday, if needed. This is an individualized decision as remaining in high school until age 21 may not be appropriate for all students working toward an alternate diploma. If a student remains in school until age 21, the following guidance applies:
  - Transition goals should align with transition plans based on individualized assessments.
  - Students should be enrolled in high school full time.
  - Students will adhere to attendance policies.
  - For students with disabilities, the Personalized Education Plan (PEP) and the transition section of the IEP should align to ensure the student is working on a consistent set of goals that will facilitate movement from school to post-school activities in accordance with Policy 2419.
- » If a student remains in school until age 21, the student shall be allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies with the student's original cohort if requested by the parent/adult student per Policy 2419, and should be retained in the 12th grade in their enrollment record as well as on the IEP until they are not returning for services. If a student remains in school, they should not be exited from services.
- » The diploma (paper certificate) awarded to students at the graduation ceremony shall look identical and contain the same language for all students. Disabilities shall not be indicated on the credential. Alternate courses codes, however, will be listed on official student transcripts.
- » Student enrollment and special education service codes must match the services the student is receiving. The following status codes should be used in the **special education services screens in WVEIS 2.0**:

**Code 30:** Students pursuing an alternate diploma who are remaining until age 21. These students will continue in the 12th grade for enrollment and continue receiving special education services.

**Code 40:** All students exiting special education services due to receiving a regular diploma. These students should be marked as graduates in enrollment only after all requirements for graduation are met.

**Code 55:** Students exiting special education services due to receiving an alternate diploma. These students should be marked as graduates in enrollment only after all requirements for graduation are met.

## Alternate Diploma Course Elective Examples

*2024-2025 Course Code Manual: Miscellaneous: Instructional (Local)*

|      |                     |                                    |
|------|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| 7557 | LRN STRATS I        | LEARNING STRATEGIES I              |
| 7558 | LRN STRATS II       | LEARNING STRATEGIES II             |
| 7559 | LRN STRATS III      | LEARNING STRATEGIES III            |
| 7560 | LRN STRATS IV       | LEARNING STRATEGIES IV             |
| 7610 | DAILY LIVING SKILLS | DAILY LIVING SKILLS                |
| 7561 | DLY LIV SKILLS II   | DLY LIV SKILLS II                  |
| 7562 | DLY LIV SKILLS III  | DLY LIV SKILLS III                 |
| 7563 | DLY LIV SKILLS IV   | DLY LIV SKILLS IV                  |
| 7603 | AL PRC/WRKPL        | ALTERNATE PROCESS/WORKPLACE SKILLS |
| 7611 | SOCIAL SKILLS       | SOCIAL SKILLS                      |
| 7613 | WORKPLACE SKILLS    | WORKPLACE SKILLS                   |
| 7653 | LRN SKILLS          | LEARNING SKILLS                    |
| 7678 | CAREER SKILLS       | CAREER SKILLS                      |

*These courses are located under the Miscellaneous: Instructional (Local) section of the Course Code Manual.  
The standards for these courses are county created and locally approved.*