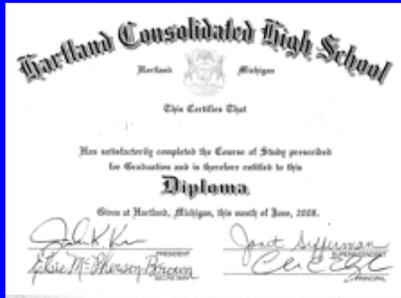


# Hartland Consolidated Schools



## Snippets from the Office of Special Education

## HS Diploma or Transition Certificate?



Michigan Department of Education (MDE) provides school districts with specific criteria that must be met before a district can award a high school diploma. Most students are able to meet Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and rigorous requirements with or without accommodations and others access a personal curriculum to support them in their pursuit of a high school diploma. However, a few students take an alternative path, which leads them to a transition certificate instead of a high school diploma.

IEP teams make course of study decisions based on individual needs, including course work and post-secondary goals. IEP team considerations must include realistic exit outcomes for each student. Discussion points include:

- Goals to prepare the student for post-secondary life;
- Alignment of student abilities to his/her goals;
- Other academic/performance data (i.e. state assessment, student's performance with the CCSS, student's ability to meet course objectives with accommodations and individualized goal-setting).

### ***Transition Certificate***

Students who qualify for special education supports and services, regardless of disability, may earn a transition certificate in lieu of a diploma when graduation requirements cannot be met. The decision to pursue the transition certificate is made by the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team when determining course of study. To earn a transition certificate, the student must be enrolled in an education program for at least four years beyond grade eight.

At the very latest, discussion should begin during the freshman year. If an IEP team feels it necessary to deviate from the diploma track, the team must discuss the transition certificate option.

Students receiving a transition certificate are eligible to participate in graduation activities to the same extent as their peers who receive a diploma. The IEP team should ensure students are preparing for transition to post-secondary life. It is important to determine the student's transition activities based on his/her post-secondary goals, educational progress, assessment information, IEP goals/objectives, and appropriate career plans identified in the Educational Development Plan (EDP).

The transition certificate program is likely to include courses in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies with emphasis on functional objectives, and career exploration.

If a student is working toward a diploma and unable to meet the criteria for reasons related to his/her disability, the IEP team must consider the:

- Appropriateness of the diploma and certificate of transition;
- Ability of the student to earn the necessary credits with an additional semester or year.

# Post-Graduation Options

Students may:

- Enroll in a General Education Development (GED) program;
- Participate in high school completion classes through an Adult Education Program;
- Attend a career and technical institute (i.e. Michigan Career & Technical Institute);
- Take classes at a community college;
- Take online courses under the seat-time waiver option (according to district guidelines).

Students who graduate with a transition certificate may apply for admission to any community college. Michigan community colleges offer a wide variety of credit and noncredit courses. To enroll in credit-bearing courses, students are required to take placement exams, such as the Compass, to provide evidence of ability to profit from college instruction. Students not meeting the minimum scores on assessment tests may be required to enroll in noncredit developmental courses until they are reassessed for placement in credit-bearing courses. Students should contact the admissions office of the college for specific school requirements.

## What are Adult Transition Services?

Livingston Educational Service Agency offers a program called Adult Transition Services for some students who earn a transition certificate. (Note: Students who earn a diploma are not eligible for this program). Programming is designed to support students' efforts to develop functional skills needed to live, work, and access their community, as independently as possible. Emphasis is placed on learning practical skills and providing community-based opportunities to develop a sustainable schedule of activities consistent with the individual's abilities, interests, and preferences. Students continue to have an IEP with goals/objectives developed using a person centered planning process. Students may be eligible for services until the age of 26 or until the supports are no longer required.

## Will potential employers hire students who have earned a certificate rather than a diploma?

Employers want workers who are reliable, can get along with others, and demonstrate good work habits. Employers realize that persons with varying degrees of academic skills can be valuable and effective employees. Both students who earn a diploma and those who earn a certificate answer "yes" when asked if they completed high school. Most applications do not ask whether a student earned a certificate or a diploma. If asked specifically, students who earned a certificate should indicate they completed an approved high school program of studies earning a certificate.

## Who can help with planning after a student leaves high school?

There are two main community resources that may provide support for students to make post-high school plans:

- Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) can help develop vocational plans. A MRS counselor, after determining eligibility for services, can help develop a plan that may include training, continued schooling and/or job placement.
- Michigan Works is a local agency that provides supports for adults looking for training, retraining and help in securing employment.

## Sources

Sources for this information include Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Transition Services in Livingston County.



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