

Which Tennessee Diploma Option is Best for You?

Regular Education Diploma

- Must be earned within four years plus a summer to count towards graduation rates
- A student with an IEP can return to school to pursue a regular diploma until they receive the diploma or until they age out of school at 21 inclusive, whichever comes first. "Twenty-one inclusive" means if a student is 21 at the beginning of their final year of high school, they can stay in school and continue to receive special education services during the school year in which they turn 22.
- Must complete 22 units of credit, take an ACT or SAT, and have a satisfactory record of attendance and discipline. Special Education within the school system is complete once a regular education diploma is earned.

Alternate Academic Diploma

- Recognizes the learning and success of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The Diploma aligns with the coursework and ACT requirements of students earning a Regular Education Diploma. It helps ensure that all students have access to rigorous and meaningful instruction.

IEP = Individualized Education Program or Plan

Occupational Diploma

- Awarded to a student who has successfully: Completed a Skills, Knowledge, and Mastery Assessment (SKEMA) with a performance level of "3" or higher on all four Required skills or a performance level of "3" or higher on 8 of 10
- Critical skills Completed their IEP
- Attended school regularly
- Completed two years of work experience, paid or unpaid
- Choosing the Occupational Diploma is an IEP Team decision made on or after the conclusion of the 10th grade or two years before exiting high school.
- Students may work toward both the Occupational Diploma and a Regular Education Diploma.
- View the full SKEMA Assessment: <https://bit.ly/3AfuFzh>

Special Education Diploma

- Awarded to a student who does not meet the requirements of a regular diploma but has completed an IEP and has a satisfactory record of attendance and discipline



For more information on diploma options, please access the TNSTEP Parent Guide to Tennessee Diploma and Post-Secondary Options at www.tnstep.org.

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