



# In the Spotlight

*Monthly Issues of Interest Presented by the Learning Disabilities Association of New York State / October 2011*

## Regents Consider Phase-In of New Educational Exiting Credential

The New York State Board of Regents and staff at the State Education Department have been working for two years on a plan to replace the IEP (Individualized Education Program) Diploma with a more meaningful document for students with disabilities. Since the IEP Diploma was put into regulation in 1999, it has become nothing more than a document indicating a student has accomplished their IEP goals and has misled many students and families who were of the erroneous belief that an IEP Diploma was indeed a regular high school diploma. A concurrent discussion about revising graduation standards for all students in New York has also been occurring with no specific course of action yet defined.

*LDANYS has been an active participant in this debate voicing the position that the IEP diploma needs to be phased out, and that a replacement for the IEP diploma needs to be a real diploma..*

LDANYS has been an active participant in this debate voicing the position that the IEP diploma needs to be phased out, and that a replacement for the IEP diploma needs to be a real diploma that is acceptable to employers, colleges and other entities such as the military and professional trade schools. LDANYS has maintained the position that multiple pathways to a real high school diploma needed to be developed as part of any overall graduation changes, in order to allow those who learn differently to appropriately demonstrate their knowledge and readiness for post-secondary life and achieve a suitable high school diploma.

LDANYS has also joined with other advocates in voicing these concerns.

In January of 2010, the Regents directed staff at NYSED to begin working on an alternative to the IEP Diploma. What emerged was a credential that would document a student's achievement against the Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Learning Standards and be available to all students as a supplement to the regular high school diploma, and, for some students with disabilities, replace the current IEP diploma. Heeding the comments received from the public and numerous concerned organizations that this credential would have implications for all students, and not just students with disabilities, and concerns that as yet unspecified changes will soon be proposed for changing overall graduation standards, staff at NYSED proposed a two phase plan.

Phase I of the implementation process would involved replacing the IEP diploma with this alternate credential that would be designed specifically for students with severe disabilities who have taken the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA). Phase II would defer discussion of an optional credential that documents attainment of CDOS standards and acknowledges a student's successful completion of academic and career and technical education programs and coursework for other students until the Regents reach decisions on any changes to the high school graduation requirements.

Following is a summary of when and how the credential will be implemented:

### LDANYS

1190 Troy-Schenectady  
Rd.  
Latham, NY 12110  
Ph: 518-608-8992  
Fax: 518-608-8993  
E-Mail:  
[statelda@ldanys.org](mailto:statelda@ldanys.org)  
Website: [www.ldanys.org](http://www.ldanys.org)

### LDA Regional Affiliates

LDA of the Capital District  
(a.k.a.) Wildwood  
Programs  
2995 Curry Road  
Extension  
Schenectady, NY 12303

LDA of Central New York  
722 West Manlius St.  
East Syracuse, NY 13057

LDA Life & Learning  
Services  
339 East Ave., 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Rochester, NY 14604

LDA of Long Island  
44 South Elmwood Ave.  
Montauk, NY 11954

LDA of the Mohawk Valley  
401 Columbia St.  
Utica, NY 13502

LDA of New York City  
27 West 20<sup>th</sup> St., Rm. 303  
New York, NY 10011

LDA of the Southern Tier  
112 Nanticoke Ave.  
Endicott, NY 13760

LDA of Western New York  
2555 Elmwood Ave.  
Kenmore, NY 14217

*The Learning Disabilities  
Association of New York State  
(LDANYS) was chartered by  
the New York State Board of  
Regents in 1958 and is a  
statewide 501c3 nonprofit,  
parent-driven organization that  
advocates on behalf of children  
and adults who have learning  
disabilities.*

*Our regional affiliates located  
throughout the state provide a  
variety of programs and services  
for children and adults with  
learning disabilities and their  
families.*

*For more information about our  
organization or about the  
content contained here, please*

**VISIT US ON THE WEB  
AT:  
[WWW.LDANYS.ORG](http://WWW.LDANYS.ORG)**

## **EXITING CREDENTIAL PHASE-IN- continued**

The proposed amendment would, effective beginning with the 2013-14 school year, establish a new credential to replace the current IEP diploma option.

- Only students with disabilities who have been instructed and assessed on the alternate performance level for the State learning standards are eligible for this credential award.
- The credential may be awarded any time after such student has attended school for at least 12 years, excluding kindergarten or received a substantially equivalent education elsewhere; or at the end of the school year in which a student attains the age of 21.
- The credential would not be considered a regular high school diploma in accordance with State standards or for federal accountability purposes.
- The credential must be issued together with a summary of the student's academic achievement and functional performance (i.e., the Student Exit Summary) and must include documentation of the student's level of achievement and independence against the

CDOS Learning Standards; the student's level of academic achievement as measured by the NYSAA; and the student's skills, strengths, interests and, as appropriate, other student achievements and accomplishments.

- Procedural safeguards are proposed to ensure that parents are properly notified prior to the award of the credential that the student continues to be eligible for a free appropriate public education until the end of the school year in which the student turns age 21.

A Notice of Proposed Rule Making was published in the State Register on October 5, 2011. Public comment on the proposed amendment is now being accepted for 45 days from the date of publication in the State Register. The Regents will likely take action on the proposed plan to implement the credential for eligible students in January 2012.