



## **OCCUPATIONAL DIPLOMA INFORMATION SHEET**

### **What is the Occupational Diploma?**

- The Occupational Diploma is one of three diploma options for students graduating/exiting high school; the other two options include a regular high school diploma (full diploma) or a special education diploma
- The Occupational Diploma IS NOT the equivalent of a regular high school diploma (full diploma) nor is it the equivalent of any certification; a student receiving one will not be eligible for standard four-year university programs or entrance into the military
- The Occupational Diploma *is* intended to have a stronger focus on vocational/career outcomes and may be useful for students with disabilities who pursue employment after exiting high school

### **Who is eligible to receive it?**

- High school students with disabilities who have
  - Not met the requirements for a regular high school diploma (full diploma)
  - Have satisfactorily completed an individualized education plan (IEP)
  - Have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct
  - Have completed the occupational diploma Skills, Knowledge and Experience Mastery Assessment (SKEMA), and
  - Have two years of paid or non-paid work experience as defined in the student's IEP

### **What are the requirements to be awarded it?**

- Successful completion of an individualized education plan (IEP)
- Satisfactory records of attendance
- Satisfactory records of conduct
- Mastery of the Skills, Knowledge and Experience Mastery Assessment (SKEMA)
- Completion of two years of paid or non-paid work experience as defined in the student's IEP

### **How do I request this option?**

- The occupational diploma option must be requested at an IEP team meeting
- The IEP team must recommend the occupational diploma as the best option
- The decision must be recorded in the IEP
- If the IEP recommends an occupational diploma for a student, the school is required to implement the option for that student

*The Disability Coalition on Education is a group of disability advocacy organizations and family members committed to best practices in education for students with disabilities*

### **When must the decision be made to choose the Occupational Diploma option?**

- The decision that the occupational diploma is the goal for student with a disability may be made no sooner than:
  - The conclusion of that student's 10<sup>th</sup> grade year, or
  - Two (2) academic years prior to the expected graduation/exit date\*

\*Students who obtain an occupational diploma may continue to work towards the regular high school diploma (full diploma) through the end of the school year in which they turn twenty-two (22) years old

### **For additional information or a copy of the SKEMA, contact:**

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