

In May 2011, The Rhode Island Board of Regents released the RI Secondary Guidance documents which state the following: <http://www.ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/RIPublicSchools/DiplomaSystem.aspx>

Rhode Island Alternate Assessment (RIAA)

The RIAA is not designed to be a measure of the minimum student achievement levels on the state assessment necessary for graduating with a high-school diploma. The RIAA is based on Alternate Assessment Grade Span Expectations (AAGSEs), which are an extension of the state content standards.

The RIAA cannot be used to meet the state-assessment requirement for earning a diploma. Upon determination of eligibility for RIAA, parents and students must be notified that the RIAA cannot be used to meet the state-assessment requirement for earning a diploma. RIDE will provide samples of communications (letters, notifications, etc.) that can be used by LEAs to notify families and student, (L-6-3.3(b)pg. 14).

As a result of this change, students who participate in the RIAA will not be in a position to earn the RI diploma, however students may earn certificates that are stackable and recognized. LEA's may establish policies on issuing certificates and establish the required knowledge & skills to obtain certificates, the Regulations state:

L-6-3.5 (b) Certificates

"LEAs are authorized to award certificates of academic and technical skill achievement and work readiness and life skills to any student who has satisfactorily completed specific course work or other standards-based activities that indicate a recognized level of knowledge and/or skills." L-6-3.5 (b)

In the fall of 2011, the special education directors asked RIDE to lead a statewide conversation in the design of certificate options for the students participating in the RIAA. RIDE organized a work group composed of adult service agencies (Office of Rehabilitation Services, the Division of Developmental Disabilities and the Department of Labor and Training), special education directors, parents and teachers of students who participate in the RIAA. This group worked through the fall of 2011 and provided feedback sessions through February of 2012 in developing a structure for certificates for students participating in the RIAA.

The group has recommended certificate options based on research and input from critical stakeholders. The certificates recommended include:

- Certificate of Academic Achievement (based on achievement on the RIAA and other PBGR Requirements)
- Certificate of Work Readiness
- Certificate of Self-Determination
- Certificate of Citizenship and Community

In addition, the group developed transcripts that accompany and captures the student's skill attainment and level of support. The certificates are designed to provide critical information to adult service providers and families for determining appropriate supports as student exits high school (typically at age 21).

The certificates are offered as options for Local Education Agencies to use in the development of certificates established under L-6-3.5(b). During the 2012-2013 SY three districts (pilots) implemented the certificate options and provided formal feedback and outcomes at a statewide debrief for Special Education Directors and Teachers of Life Skills Network (TLS) held on June 7, 2013.

The certificates are now available for implementation, should districts choose to utilize them.

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