



High School Diploma vs Certificate Track~ *What's the big deal?*

Sheila Reilly, Head of School
Star Academy

What is needed to earn a high school diploma:

1. Completion of credit requirements of the institution
2. Passage of Algebra 1 coursework
3. CAHSEE requirement waived in 2009 for students with an IEP or 504 plan

Why is there such an emphasis on Algebra?

Starting with the 2003-04 school year, all Special Education students are required to take and pass a course or combination of courses based on all Algebra 1 math content standards. The content standards are the same for all students, however, special education students may require accommodations and/or modifications to instruction which they will have access to in the Algebra 1 course.

How does Star help kids get through the Algebra course?

- Making Math Real curriculum designed to support students with learning differences
- Multi-sensory approach
- Highly skilled teachers
- Slower pacing
- Small class sizes
- Full accommodations in place
- Working in partnership with tutors and families



What about a waiver?



SELPA's can request a waiver from the state but such a request would undergo stringent review and it is rarely exercised.

What types of diplomas are there:



1. A-G diploma
2. Non A-G diploma - not all districts offer this option

Star can issue a non A-G diploma as we are a WASC accredited institution

A-G graduation requirements



UC and CSU system have established a uniform minimum set of courses required for freshman admissions

None of Star's courses are A-G certified so our students will not go directly from Star to a UC or CSU setting

A-G subject requirements:

A: History/social science (“a”) - *Two years*

B: English (“b”) - *Four years*

C: Mathematics (“c”) - *Three years of college-preparatory math, including or integrating the topics covered in elementary and advanced algebra and two- and three-dimensional geometry.*

D: Laboratory science (“d”) - *Two years of laboratory science in at least two of the three disciplines of biology, chemistry and physics.*

E: Foreign Language (“e”) - *Two years of the same language other than English or equivalent to the second level of high school instruction.*

F: Visual and performing arts (“f”) - *One year*

G: College-preparatory elective (“g”) - *One year, electives.*

Pacing and rigor are significantly greater than Star’s version of these courses

Star graduation requirements:

- English - 40 units (4 years)
- Math - 20-30 units, including Algebra 1, (3 years)
- History - 30 units, (3 years)
- Science - 30 units, 20 being lab credits (3 years)
- Physical education - 20 credits (5 credit per semester)
- Creative Arts - 20 credits (5 credit per semester)
- *Vocational skills (Transitions/Living Skills, Community Training course) and electives such as digital arts, Maker Space, Garage Band, Living Skills, internships, PE, Art, etc. - 60 credits*
- *Completion of a document detailing disability awareness and needed supports to be successful in future educational, vocational and living skills settings*

Total credits needed: 230

**Star offers leveled academic groupings for all Math, Language Arts, Science and History courses ~ we will meet students where they are academically and give them what they need*



What does earning a Star diploma or non A-G diploma mean for my student in terms of accessing higher education?

- *Students cannot go straight into a UC or CSU*
- *Students can go to a California Junior College as well as some private colleges that specialize in students with learning differences*
- *Students can work toward degree pathways, if appropriate*

What does a certificate of completion at Star mean?



Student met credit requirements for graduation but was unable to take and pass Algebra 1*

**may vary from diploma credit requirements*



Who decides when a student is placed on the diploma vs certificate track pathway?

- *Team decision of which parents are a significant part as are students*
- *Diploma until proven otherwise - important to hold high expectations*
- *May not know student's track until mid-high school*

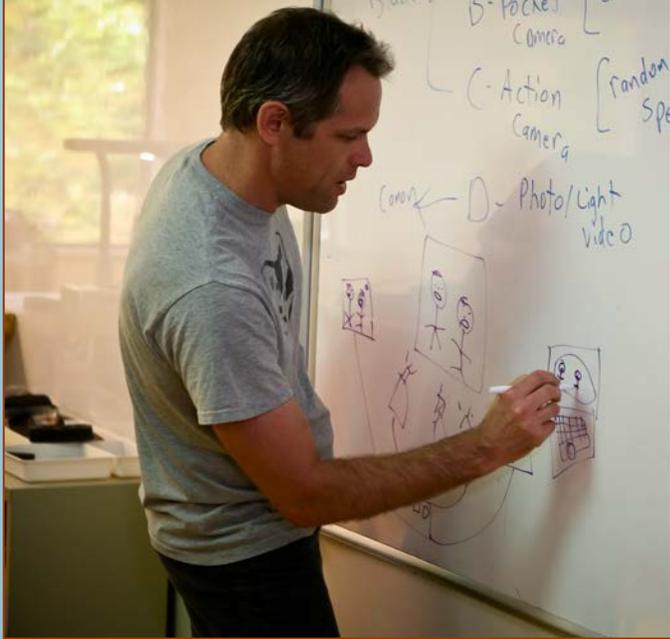
Questions to be considered before moving a student off of the diploma pathway:

- *Why do we think the student cannot meet the diploma requirements?*
- *What supports and accommodations are in or have been, in place to support them meeting the requirements?*
- *Can they meet the diploma requirements by the time they are 22?*
- *Will the certificate of completion allow the student to lead a productive, gratifying and independent life?*



What are the implications of earning a certificate of completion vs a diploma?

- District is responsible for educating the student until age 22. Students have that time to continue working on their diploma, [if appropriate.](#)
- Students will have access to post-secondary programs offered through their districts (which may include Star's program)
- Student cannot directly enter the military*
- Student not eligible for federal student aid for college but may be eligible for aid via agencies i.e. Regional Center and Department of Rehab.



Will earning a certificate of completion prevent my student from accessing higher education?

- *No. Junior colleges in California recognize a certificate of completion and students can enroll in academic courses after earning their certificate.*
- *Student accessibility offices provide incredible accommodations and supports to students.*
- *Some private schools may also recognize certificates i.e. Landmark College*

Will earning a certificate of completion prevent my student from accessing meaningful employment?

No. Many employers will accept a certificate of completion. Vocational training agencies report that this is not a deterrent to meaningful employment.



Integrated
Community
Services



Will my student get to participate in graduation if they earn a certificate of completion vs a diploma?

Yes, by all means. Earning a certificate of completion is a significant milestone for students and worthy of celebration!

Student/person centered planning is the foundation of making this important decision.



The runway for each student may look different and may not resemble what had initially been hoped for, but the pathway needs to best reflect a student's needs, capacities and dreams.

Resources to explore:

1. www.thinkcollege.net
2. www.understood.org
3. Star Parent education offerings
Explore Your Options - Transition Fair - March 2019
4. Parent Advocacy Groups
5. SELPA course offerings and CAC meetings



Untapped Potential

PREPARING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FOR MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT

Educational Presentation & Star Academy Fundraiser

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2018

STAR ACADEMY 4470 REDWOOD HWY SAN RAFAEL

6:30 - 7:30PM COCKTAIL RECEPTION

7:30 - 9:00PM PROGRAM & PRESENTATION

ONE IN FIVE CHILDREN are affected by learning or attention issues. How can we prepare them to reach their potential as productive, contributing members of society? How can employers benefit from this untapped and diverse workforce?



Carolyn Jeppsen, Co-Founder, CEO & President of BroadFutures, will join us to share her experience and passionate commitment to addressing pressing workforce issues for young adults with learning disabilities. She will speak about her vision of a promising future for the employment of young people with disabilities, and how we can all think innovatively and intentionally about supporting employers and preparing students to live as successful and independent adults.

Carolyn is a mother of twins with learning disabilities, an attorney and co-founder of BroadFutures, a training, mentoring, and paid internship program located in Washington, DC.



Purchase tickets at www.staracademy.org. Seats are limited!

General: \$45/ea or \$75/couple Reserved: \$60/ea or \$100/couple

For more information, contact Susan Todaro at (415) 456-8727 ext 501 or susan.todaro@staracademy.org.