



Graduation Protocol for DCD Students:

- Determining graduation is a team decision and should be discussed starting in 9th grade and each year thereafter. For the student's last annual IEP, make sure to include a statement on the team meeting notice stating; "the team will discuss student's proposed graduation date of"
- Best practice is to have all students graduate with their same age peers, however, some students may need more time and are eligible stay in school until age 21 (until July 1 after the student becomes 21 years old). However, the team can determine if the student needs to just complete 1 or more additional years after their 12th grade year.
- Determine as an IEP team the path the student will need to complete in order to graduate, more times than not it is based on IEP goals, making sure to discuss the students measurable postsecondary goals.
- It is extremely important to include all outside agencies to all IEP meetings, but especially the last annual IEP meeting so they may add their input and begin developing their transition plans.

Walking vs. Graduating

- If teams determine a student is not ready to graduate by the end of 12th grade, per district policy, the student may participate in the graduation ceremony, also known as "walking." However, the student has not yet graduated and should not receive their diploma until the team determines they are ready to graduate and/or met their IEP goals. *Be cautious with utilizing the verbage of "graduating" as this can be confusing for students and/or families when in fact they have not graduated but only participated in the ceremony.*

***For some students, participating in the graduation ceremony may be too stressful or overwhelming. In those cases, please feel free to create an alternative ceremony, if parents prefer.*

Required Documentation to Complete:

- Final IEP which includes “anticipated graduation date,” service end dates reflective of graduation date and completed progress reports stating the student has met their goals.
- PWN stating the team is proposing the student will be graduating, see [example](#) for specific language.
- [Summary of Performance](#) (slides 14-17) which is an explanation of the students academic and functional performance throughout high school. Teams are required to complete the “recommendations” portion of the SOP for each of the student’s measurable postsecondary goals. Outside agencies including post secondary institutions utilize this form.
- Teams are encouraged to conduct an “exit” meeting to finalize all paperwork and celebrate this amazing accomplishment.
- Provide the student/family with a folder/packet with the following paperwork; evaluation, IEP, progress reports from current school year, PWN, and Summary of Performance. You can also give them a copy of the [Secondary Transition Resource Booklet](#).

Questions? Contact Jessica Knutsen, NLSEC Secondary Transition Coordinator via email at jknutsen@nlsec.org.