



# Students with IEPs Graduation Decision-Making Tool

This tool can assist the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team to determine if a student with an IEP has met or will meet graduation requirements following a typical pathway and when the student must exit secondary school.

A free and appropriate public education must be made available to all children residing in Ohio who are the ages of 3 through 21 (IDEA, [34 CFR 300.101](#) and Ohio Administrative Code [3301-51-02 \(A\)](#)). Unless eligibility is discontinued sooner, a child may remain eligible for special education and related services until graduating from secondary school (by receiving a regular high school diploma) or exceeding the age of 21 [IDEA, [34 CFR 300.305\(e\)\(2\)](#) and Ohio Administrative Code [3301-51-06 \(F\)\(5\)\(b\)](#)].

To graduate with a regular diploma<sup>1</sup>, a student must follow a typical pathway to meet the state-identified graduation requirements in addition to any requirements adopted by their district of residence for the student's four-year graduation cohort. All students in Ohio can follow a typical pathway to graduation. However, a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in Ohio also may also graduate via additional options based on an Individualized Education Program Team decision. These include:

1. Using IEP goals to meet curricular requirements;
2. Participating in the Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities; and
3. Being exempt from obtaining the required score to demonstrate competency on the English Language Arts II and Algebra I/Integrated Math I end-of-course exam or English Language Arts and Mathematics Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities.

When a student follows one of these additional options, they are no longer following a typical pathway. Until a student with a disability earns a high school diploma by following a typical pathway to graduation or reaches his or her 22nd birthday, the student is entitled to remain in high school and continue receiving special education and related services in accordance with the IEP.

**The Graduation Decision-Making Tool will assist an Individualized Education Team answer these two questions:**

- 1. Has the student with an IEP followed a typical pathway to meet graduation requirements?**
- 2. When must the student with an IEP exit secondary school?**

## Guiding Legislation:

Each school district of residence shall make a free and appropriate public education available (FAPE) to all children with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21, inclusive. The obligation of the school district of residence to make FAPE available to all children with disabilities does not apply to children with disabilities who have graduated from high school with a regular high school diploma. [Ohio Administrative Code, Free and Appropriate Public Education [3301-51-02 \(A\) \(C\)\(1\)](#)].

A regular high school diploma, as defined by Every Student Succeeds Act, is the "standard high school diploma awarded to the preponderance of students in the State that is fully aligned with State standards, or a higher diploma, except that a regular high school diploma shall not be aligned to ... alternate achievement standards..." [20 U.S.C § 7801 43](#); [34 C.F.R. § 300.102 \(a\)\(3\) \(iv\)](#).

<sup>1</sup> There is one diploma in Ohio. Whichever pathway a student takes, they will still receive the same diploma. However, if the student does not follow the typical pathway, the state cannot count the student as a graduate in the Federal Special Education Graduation Rate.



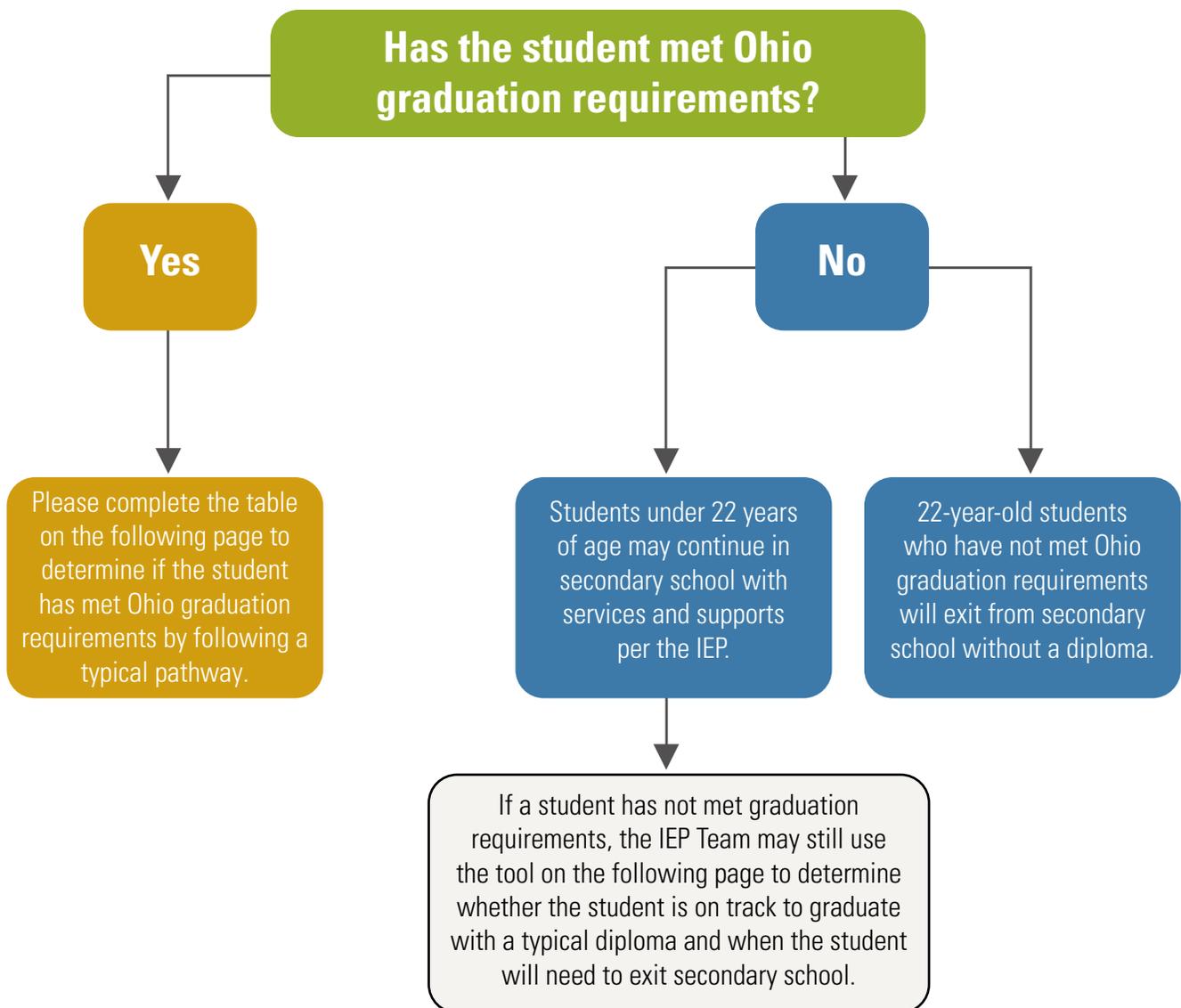
# Graduation Decision-Making Tool

To assist Individualized Education Program (IEP) Teams to determine if a student with an IEP has met/will meet graduation requirements following a typical pathway and when the student must exit secondary school.

## Directions

IEP Teams should use this Tool:

- At least annually when the student has turned 14;
- Whenever the IEP Team determines data support a need; and
- When the student meets Ohio graduation requirements and/or reaches his/her 22nd birthday.





Has the IEP Team determined the student will:	YES	NO
Use IEP goals to meet curricular requirements?		
Take the Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities per Ohio's Alternate Assessment Participation Decision-Making Tool?		
Be exempted from obtaining end-of-course exam or Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities competency score requirements?		

**Have you answered "yes" to any of the questions in the above table?**

**Yes**

**No**

The student is eligible for a diploma.

The student is not meeting Ohio graduation requirements by following a typical pathway.

22-year-old students will exit from secondary school with a diploma.

Does the student who has reached 18, the age of majority, along with parent/guardian, understand that the student has the right to special education and related services until the student meets graduation requirements by following a typical pathway or reaches age 22, whichever comes first?

With this understanding, does the student who has reached 18, the age of majority, along with the parent/guardian, wish to consider the student for graduation from secondary school?

The student is eligible for a diploma.

The student is meeting Ohio graduation requirements by following a typical pathway.

