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**SPECIAL EDUCATION CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION POLICY**

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The Pathways Academy Adult Education Board of Directors (the “Board”) has adopted this policy to articulate how students with Individualized Education Plans (“IEP”) who have exceptional needs (i.e., significant cognitive disabilities) may earn a Certificate of Completion (“COC”) from Pathways Academy Adult Education (the “School”) in accordance with applicable law.

Not all students in California public schools are able to meet graduation requirements. California public school students have the option to pursue a non-diploma track that will earn an alternative form of certification that will permit participation in graduation and graduation related activities.

#### Mandatory Exemption for Students with Exceptional Needs

Under Education Code Section 51225.31, Pathways shall waive the local graduation requirements and award a high school diploma to a student with an IEP if the IEP provides that: (1) the student is required to take the California Alternative Assessments for ELA and Math; and (2) the student is required to meet the statewide minimum graduation requirements under Education Code Section 51225.3. The IEP team must determine and notify the parent/guardian whether the student will be eligible for this exemption before the student begins 10th grade.

#### Certificate of Completion for Students with Exceptional Needs

Under Education Code Section 56390, if a student with an IEP does not meet Pathways’ local graduation requirements or the statewide minimum graduation requirements and does not qualify for a mandatory exemption as discussed above, Pathways may award the student a COC if any of the following requirements are met:

- The student has satisfactorily completed a prescribed alternative course of study approved by Pathways and identified in their IEP;
- The student has satisfactorily met their IEP goals and objectives during high school as determined by the IEP team; or
- The student has satisfactorily attended high school, participated in their instruction as prescribed in their IEP, and has met the objectives of the statement of transition services.

Students and families who are considering opting for a COC should consider the following limitations may and/or will apply:

1. A COC is not equivalent to a high school diploma or GED graduation equivalency test.
2. A COC is not usually accepted at higher institutions of learning; most colleges and

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trade schools require a high school diploma or its equivalent for entrance.

3. The Armed Services limits the number of COC and GED candidates allowed to enlist in the military each year (generally between 1% and 10% depending on the branch) and the minimum requirements for the Armed Forces Qualification Test may be higher for COC holders as opposed to those with high school diplomas.
4. A COC may affect the student's ability to gain employment where a high school diploma is a job requirement.
5. A COC may limit the student's eligibility to receive federal student aid.

Curriculum will be individualized to meet the student's unique needs, with access to grade level general education curriculum and standards.

Students with disabilities who qualify for a COC are eligible to participate in any graduation ceremony and any school activity related to graduation in which students of similar age without disabilities would be eligible to participate.

Completing the COC requirements and exiting high school with that certificate does not terminate Free Appropriate Public Education ("FAPE") eligibility and does not serve to exit a student from special education.

Students who receive a COC may continue to receive special education and related services through the age of 22, pursuant to Education Code Section 56026, unless and until any of the following occurs:

1. Student earns and receives a high school diploma
2. Student turns 22 (in accordance with Education Code 56026)
3. Student is determined to no longer need special education
4. Student refuses special education services (decision is voluntary and knowingly made)