

Leading for Meaningful Access

Using the Graduate Positioning System



ALL IN

**This
moment
matters.**



Arkansas's Accountability System

Indicator	Description
Achievement	Are students achieving Level 3 or 4 on the new ATLAS assessment in ELA, Math, and Science?
Growth of All Students & Growth of Lowest Quarter	Are students achieving their individualized growth targets ?
	Are the students who are farthest behind their peers growing?
Success Ready Graduate (HS only)	Are students graduating on time in four years?
	Are students demonstrating postsecondary readiness for enlistment, enrollment, or employment?

Laying the Foundation



ESSA: Graduation

ESSA defines a “*regular high school diploma*” as the “standard high school diploma awarded to the preponderance of students in a State that is **fully aligned with the State’s standards.**”

ESSA also states that **no more than 1%** of all students in each tested subject may participate in **alternate assessments** designed for those with significant cognitive disabilities.

- [Arkansas Graduation Requirements](#)
- [Licensure requirements for required courses](#)



Why Course Options Are Changing



Meaningful Access Implementation Timeline

Timeline: 2021-2030 (Alternative View)

Special Education services should be determined on an individual student basis to include frequency, duration, and location of such services.

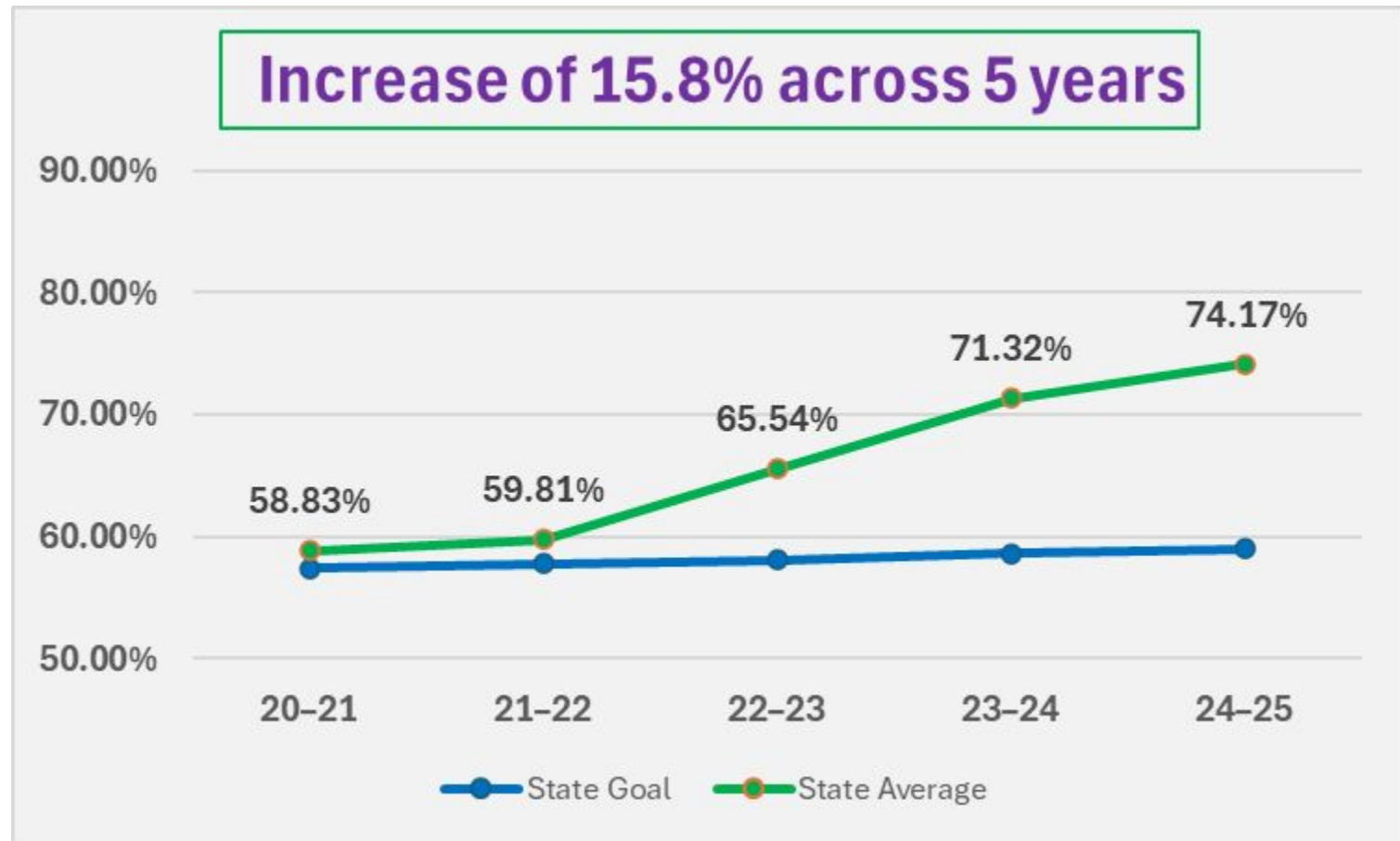
2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030
Building Awareness Statewide trainings	Planning Year Schools are asked to make plans for moving forward. Any needed training should be provided.	6 th and lower	7 th and lower	8 th and lower	In order to earn credits on the regular pathway	In order to earn credits on the regular pathway	In order to earn credits on the regular pathway	In order to earn credits on the regular pathway
		It is recommended that students receive core instruction in general education courses with the appropriate supplementary aids, services, and supports to prepare them for fulfilling the regular diploma requirements for graduation. Programming decisions are determined by the IEP team.			9 th graders must have licensed content teachers	9 th and 10 th graders must have licensed content teachers	9 th , 10 th , and 11 th graders must have licensed content teachers	All high school students must have licensed content teachers

*Students with significant cognitive disabilities may have core instruction in general education classes, or in special classes taught by teachers licensed in special education. In high school, these students would be working toward graduating via the Alternate Pathway to Graduation.

Green indicates students working towards fulfilling the regular diploma requirements for graduation.



Least Restrictive Environment - Arkansas



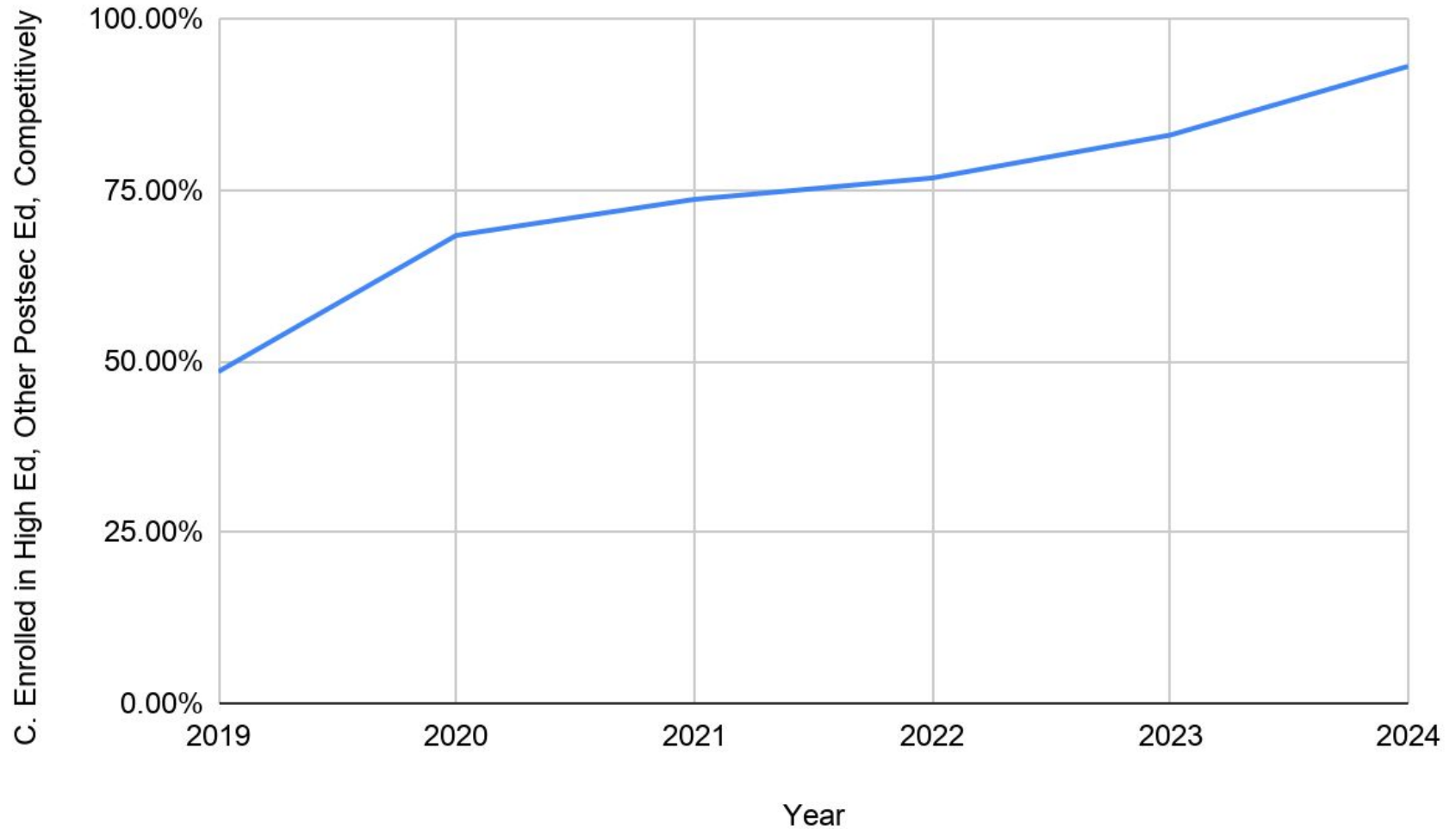
Indicator 1: Graduation Rates for SWD

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Graduation Rate	82.58%	90.86%	89.76%	88.97%	89.95%	89.57%

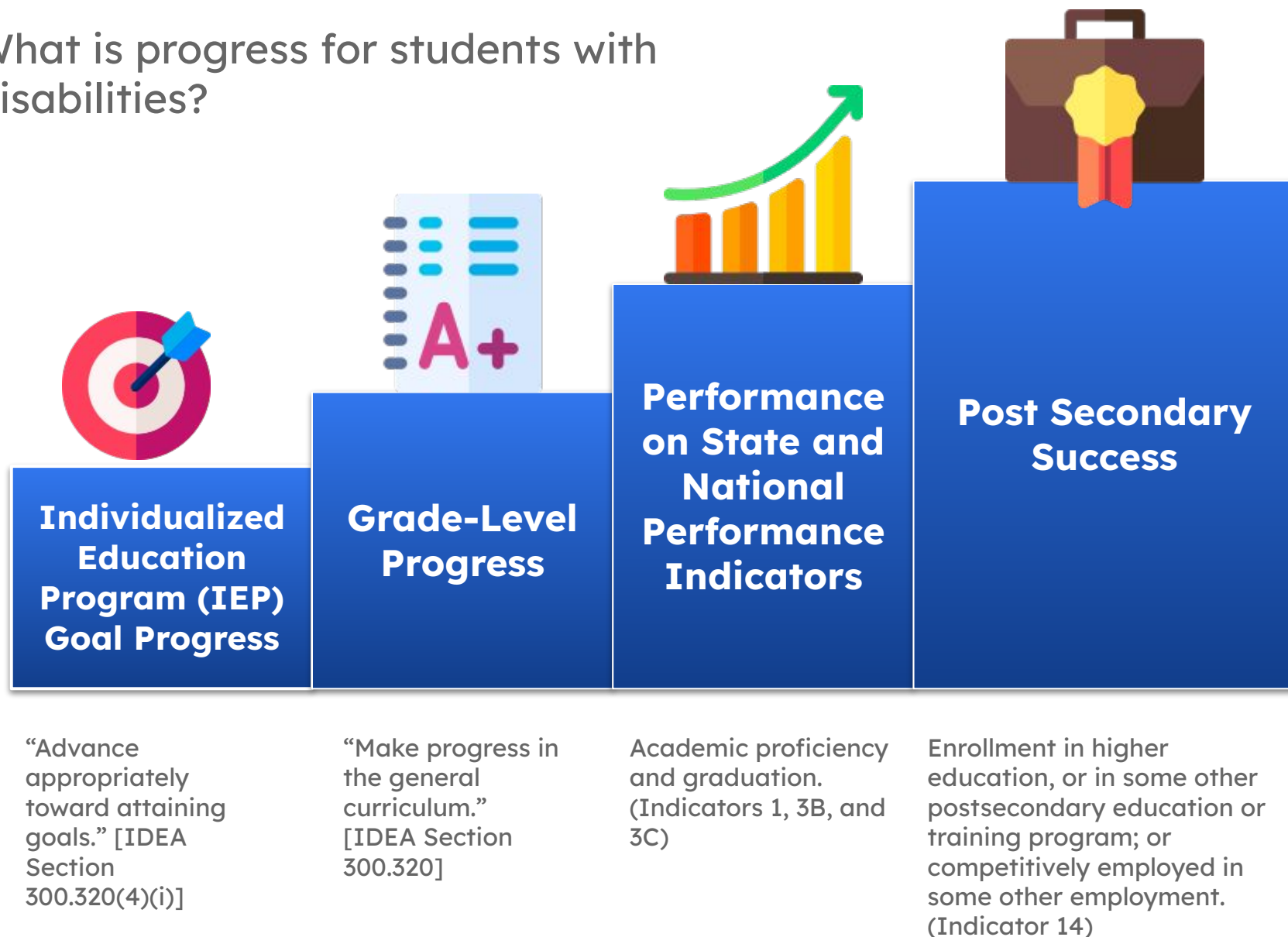
*Target is typically 88%



Indicator 14c: Post School Outcomes

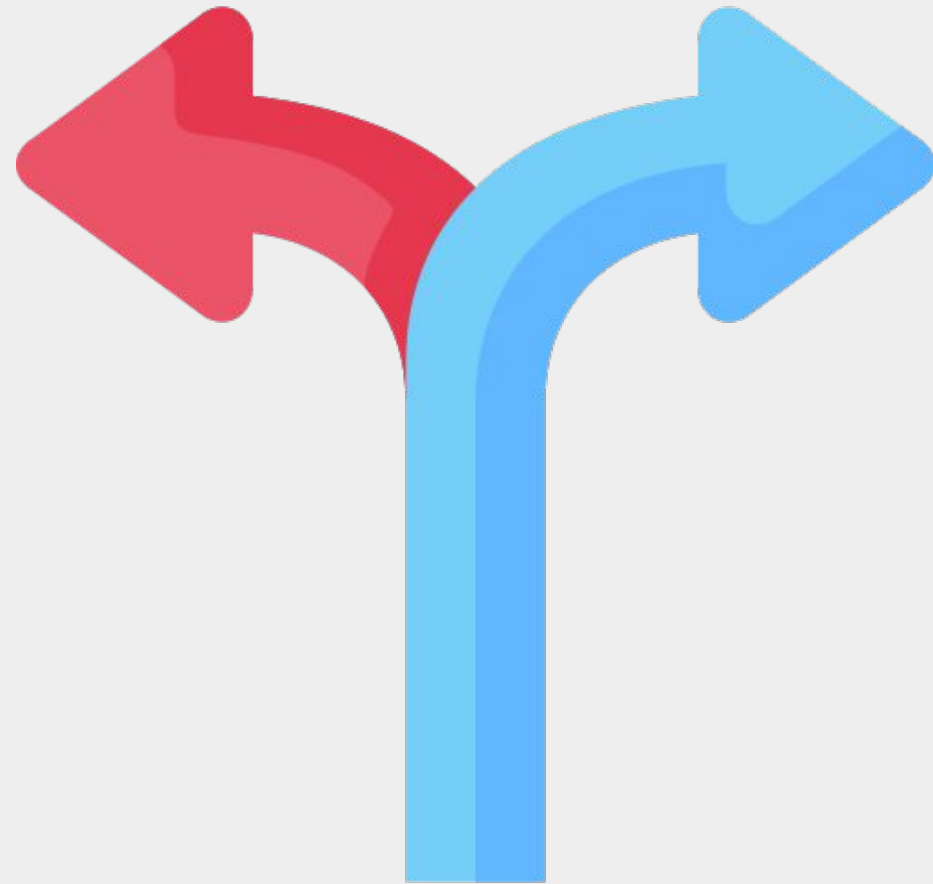


What is progress for students with disabilities?

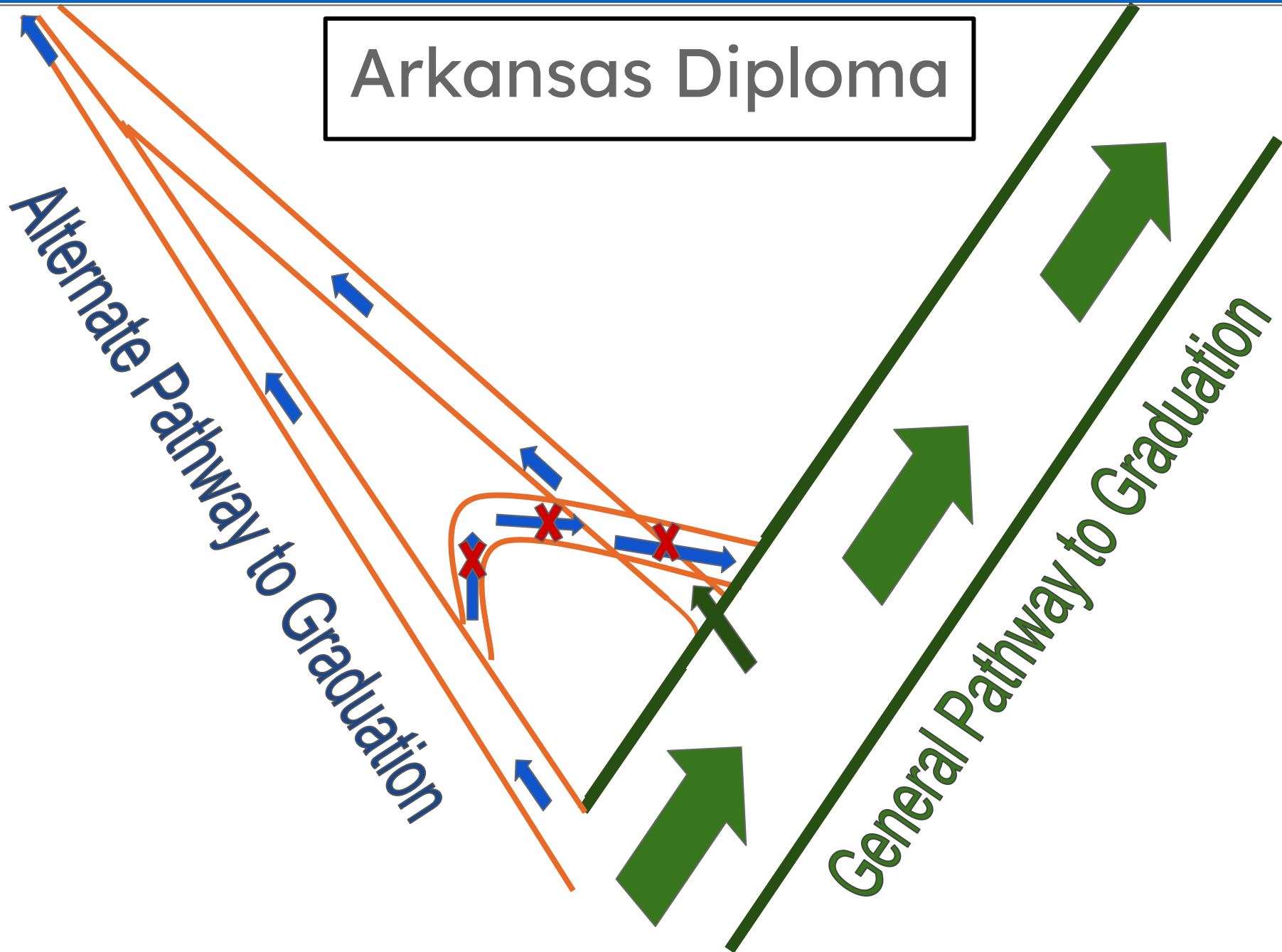


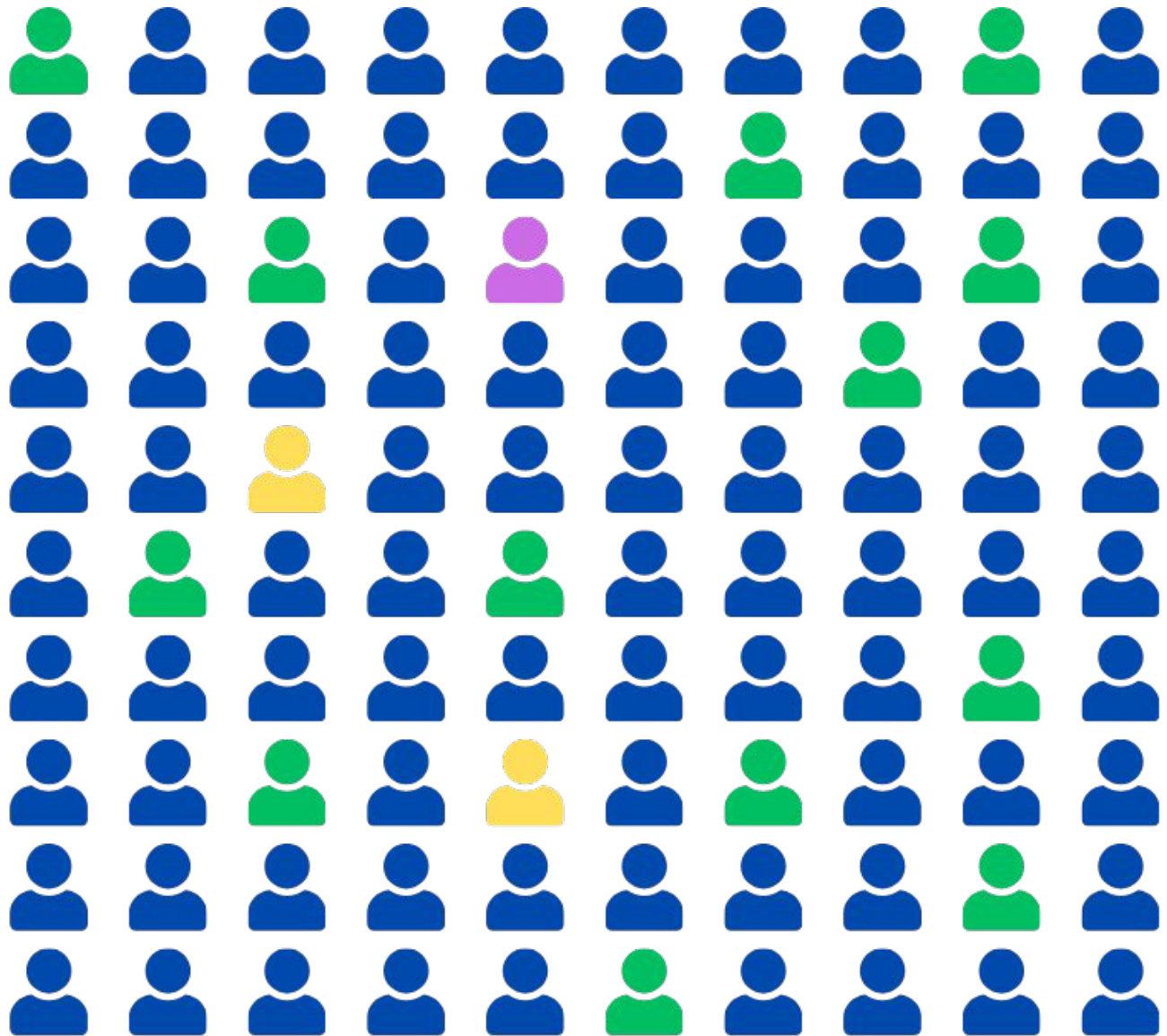
*Adapted from The Progress Center at the American Institutes of Research

Graduation Pathways



Arkansas Diploma





Students with IEPs



Student with the MOST Significant Cognitive Disability



Students with Cognitive Disabilities



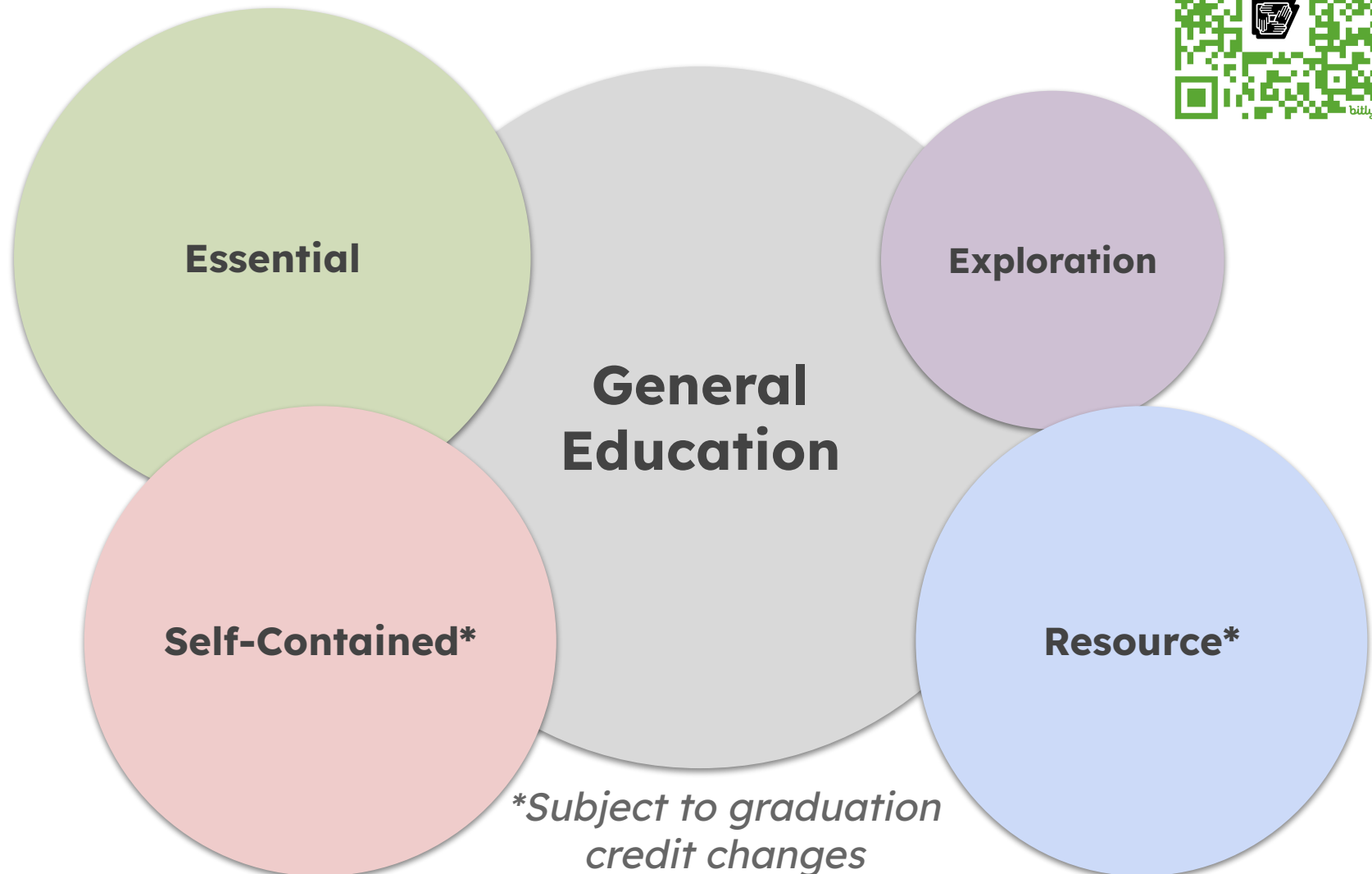
Least Dangerous Assumption

In the absence of conclusive data, educational decisions should be based on assumptions which, if incorrect, will have the least dangerous effect on the student.

-Anne Donnellan, 1984

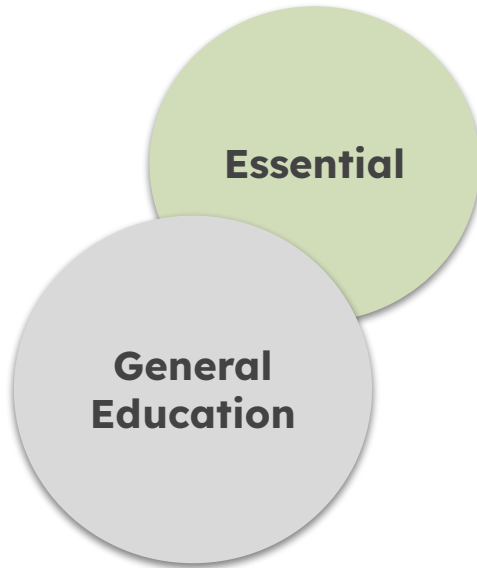


Overview of Course Options

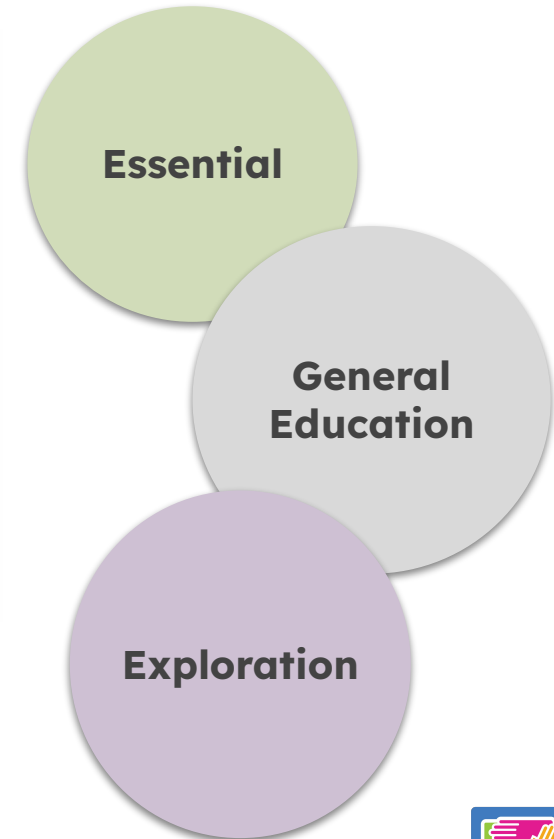


Pathway Matters

*I'm on the **regular pathway to graduation**. Which courses can count for credit?*



*I'm on the **alternate pathway to graduation**. Which courses can count for credit?*



bit.ly/MA-coursechart



Grading and Transcript Guidance

Questions and Answers:

May a student
in a general ed

NO. Accommo
students with
standards or c
on a student's
course content

May classes be
school student
modified curric

NO. Words suc
Math" should
"English Essen
descriptive ph
special educati

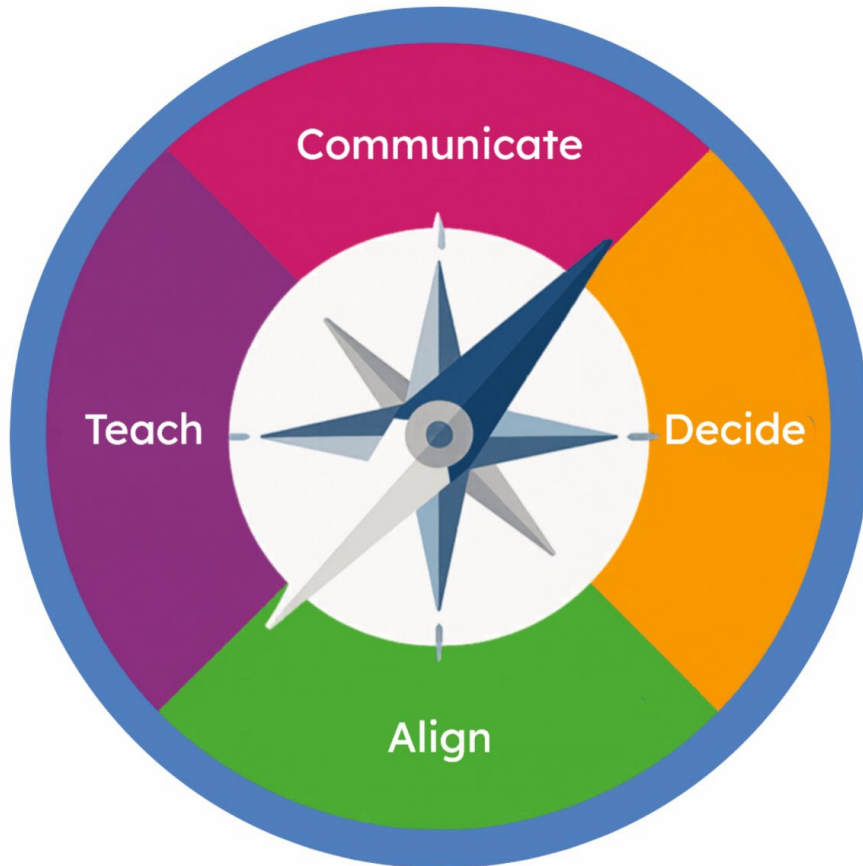
Q: May a student in a general education classroom who receives modifications be given a modified grade?

A: YES. Students with disabilities enrolled in general education classes may be given modified grades that are determined collaboratively between the general and special educators and outlined in the IEP when course content is modified. Districts may not modify grades because of a student's special education status alone. If grades in general education classes are used for granting credit (rather than pass/fail), then students with disabilities enrolled in that class for credit shall receive grades.

as well as student
504.

bit.ly/OSE-grading

Orienting for Meaningful Access



The Graduate Positioning System

Like a GPS, it helps you:

- **Stay oriented** within a complex system
- **Receive ongoing feedback** on what's working
- **Adjust** when conditions change
- **Stay aligned** by keeping all reference points active



Big Overview

COMMUNICATE

*where
understanding
becomes action*

TEACH

*where learning is
made real*



DECIDE

*where access is
determined*

ALIGN

*where decisions
meet systems*



Communicate



Decide

Align



Decide Student Needs First

Student Centered Placement

- Placement decisions shape access
- Student need drives placement (FAPE & LRE)
- Evidence before assumptions
- Leadership responsibility



Why Decisions Today Affect Outcomes Tomorrow

When decisions are made early and intentionally

- Grade-level access comes first
- Pathway and credits are confirmed up front
- Instruction and supports are planned together

→ Later results

- Students stay on track
- Fewer last-minute fixes
- More accurate accountability outcomes

When decisions aren't made with the end in mind

- Pathway and credit rules are checked too late
- Courses are driven by schedules or staffing
- Supports are added after problems emerge

→ Later results

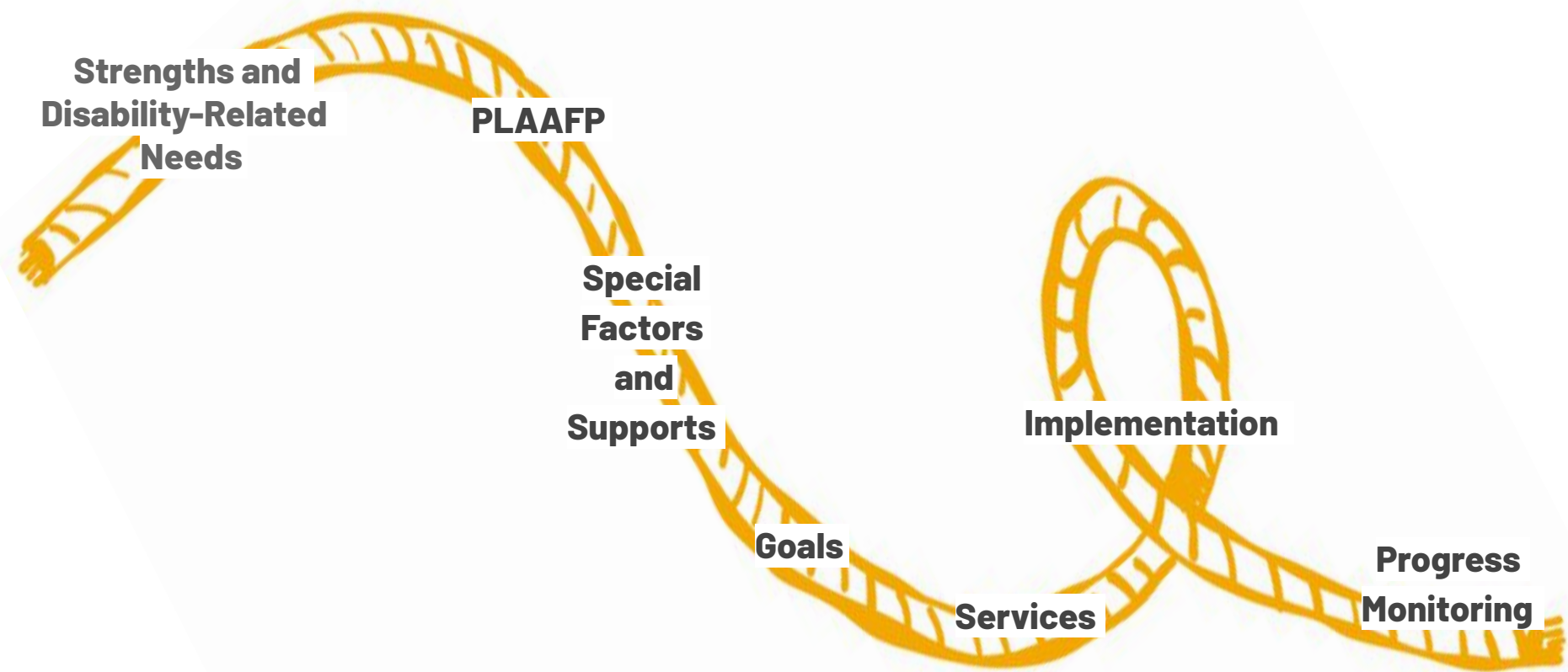
- Missed credits
- Delayed graduation
- Accountability concerns



Alternate Assessment Decision Criteria

Does the student have a disability that significantly impacts intellectual functioning?	Does the student have a disability that significantly impacts adaptive behavior?	Does the student require extensive adaptations and support to perform and/or participate meaningfully and productively in the everyday life activities of integrated school, home, community, and home environments?	Does the student require substantial modifications to the general education curriculum?
Intellectual functioning well below average (IQ typically below 55 or 3.0 or more standard deviations below the mean).	Adaptive behavior* scores are typically two to three standard deviations below the mean in two or more areas.	A significant cognitive disability is pervasive, affecting student functioning across all academic, social, and community settings. The student is expected to require intensive and ongoing support after graduation and throughout life.	Substantial modifications change the content expectation through a significant reduction in depth, breadth, and complexity of grade-level standards.
_____ Yes	_____ Yes	_____ Yes	_____ Yes

Following the Thread



From “Designing Meaningful IEPs,” *Tabitha Riendeau*



“Possible Ways to Meet the Needs of Students”

This familiar [slide deck](#) offers examples of ways students could be supported, including sample IEP documentation.

Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education

Scenario 5 - BLOCK SCHEDULE

**Services
(Schedule of Services)**

Special Education Services	Time/Amount	Frequency	Setting
		0 Day 0 Week X Month 0 Quarter	X Regular Classroom 0 Special Ed Classroom 0 Therapy Room 0 Other (specify):
Amount as special education time when			
in the general able to provide grade specialized instruction			

Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education



Mr. Watson is a dually certified teacher. He is licensed in 9-12 Mathematics and has recently added his special education resource endorsement. His new skills equip him to provide specially designed instruction in multiple settings, including the general education classroom.

Secondary Education



ly (special education teacher)
provides special education services for two students with IEPs for 15 minutes every day in the general education literacy classroom. Based on the skills being addressed, additional students may need this support.



Decide Student Needs First – in LEADS

Elements:

- Student learning needs drive the master schedule (1C)
- Resources are allocated based on student need (1D)
- School plan drives student growth priorities (1B)
- Staff assignments & placement reflect student needs (4B)
- Data systems support ongoing decision-making (3E)

Reflective Question:

➡ What evidence shows that our schedule, staffing, and resource decisions are consistently driven by student need, and where do we see gaps?





Align



Align Systems for Access

IEP Decisions become reality in...

- Schedules
- Staffing decisions
- Collaboration structures
- Monitoring tools



Course Structures and Licensure

Meaningful Access Requirements

*Regular Graduation
Pathway credit requires:*

- Grade-level standards
- Instruction by content-licensed teachers

This applies to:

- All General education
- All Essential courses



Grade-Level Implementation Timeline

Year-by-Year Rollout

2026–27: Grade 9

2027–28: Grades 9, 10

2028–29: Grades 9, 10, 11

2029–30: All high school grades



System Snapshot

IEP Planning Table

- Student-centered
- Individual student needs
- IEP team members
- Determines access and support
- Legal decision-making authority

System Planning Table

- System-centered
- Aggregate student needs
- School/district leadership
- Determines how to deliver them
- Operational planning authority



The Scheduling Squeeze

**IEP
Planning
Table**

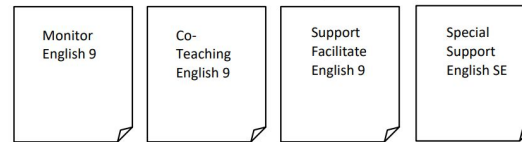


**System
Planning
Table**

Structured Scheduling Process

STEPS FOR SCHEDULING HIGH SCHOOL IN-CLASS SUPPORT

- 1 Survey students with disabilities access to the regular education curriculum. Identify opportunities for each student to address Individual Education Plan's goals/objectives within the general education classroom, using the *Format to Guide Instructional Planning* process (see Form 1).
- 2 Identify type and level of supports needed for students with disabilities to be served in the general education class. Complete the *Classroom Activity Analysis Worksheet* to determine appropriate supports (see Form 2).
- 3 Cluster students per service needs on separate sheets of paper.



Use the *Classroom Activity Analysis Worksheet* to group students into the service needs clusters (4 students who need monitoring in English 9; 14 students who need Co-Teaching for English 9; 18 students who need Support Facilitation for English 9; and 8 students who need pull out by a special education teacher for English). Be sure to put names of students on these cluster sheets.

Place raw data (**bolded**) on Planning Grid Sheet (Form 3): *Number = Instructional Sections Possibly Needed*

Courses	Monitor Only	Co-Teach	Support Facilitation	Specialized Support
English 9	4	14 (2)	18 (5-6)	8
English 10	2	15 (2)	14 (4)	3
English 11	3	11 (1)	10 (3-4)	2
English 12	1	8 (1)	7 (2-3)	3

“Steps for Scheduling High School In-Class Support” Resource



The Office of Educator Effectiveness and Licensure



Vision

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System Planning Reminders

Student Placement	Course & Section Design	Staff & Supports
LRE First: Always start with general education placement (but it's not all or nothing).	Stacking: State-credit courses cannot be stacked. Different course levels and subjects must not be combined within the same class period.	Staff Certification & Caseload: Teachers must be certified and workloads reasonable.
Natural Proportions: Keep SPED distribution aligned with population percentages in gen ed courses.	Section Caps: Section caps apply, as waivers are not an option for Essential courses.	Service Frequency & Duration: Schedule IEP services as written, never "fit if possible."

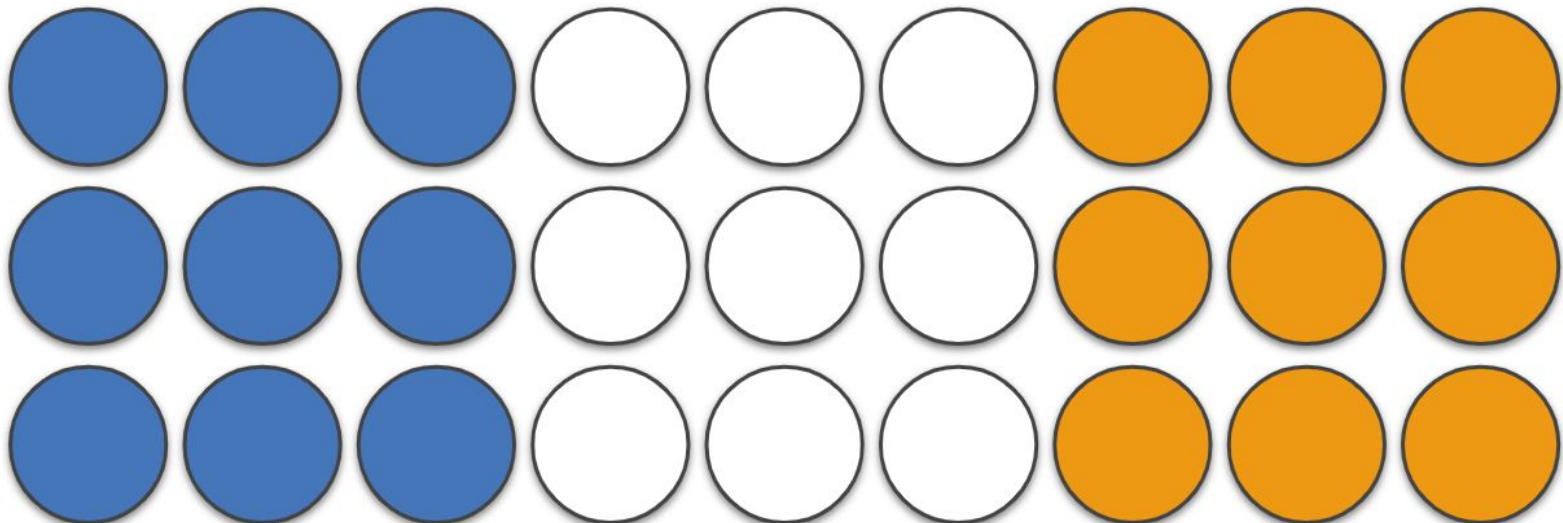


A Look at Natural Proportions

IEP Team Placement
(9 students)

General Education
(9 students)

**Additional Students
with IEPs**
(9 students)



Mr. Good's 9th Grade English Class



Align Systems for Access – in LEADS

Elements:

- Vision, mission, and core values are established and used (1A)
- Collective focus guides monitoring and improvement (1A)
- Change is evidence-based and clearly communicated (2B)
- Discipline and support systems are proactive (2C)
- Teams are structured to respond to student needs (2E)

Reflective Question:

➡ Where do our current systems or practices conflict with our stated vision for access, and how do we address those mismatches?



Communicate

Teach

Align



Teach for Impact

Instruction Is a Leadership Lever

- Alignment over compliance
- Coherence across settings
- Monitoring impact



**“Special education is
specially designed instruction...”**



Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) means...

“...adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction

(i) to address the unique needs of the child that result from the child’s disability; and

(ii) to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards...”



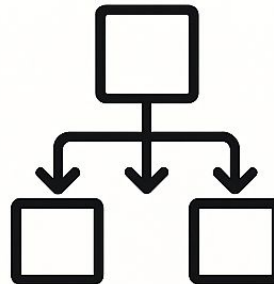
Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)

SDI Content
Adaptations:
What Educators
Need to Know



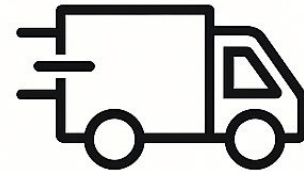
Content

SDI Methodology
Adaptations:
What Educators
Need to Know



Methodology

SDI Delivery
Adaptations:
What Educators
Need to Know



Delivery

The 10-Second Test:

“What instruction is *different* because of the student’s disability?”



Math Collaboration Document

Collaboration Lesson Planning Document

Lesson Plan: [Positive and Negative Numbers \(IM\)](#)

Date: 01/22/26

Teacher: Ms. Fin

	Adaptations	Adaptations
Hook/Intro:	Sped	Speech
1.1: Notice and Wonder: Memphis and Bangor Memphis, TN Saturday 5:00 PM Light Rain Showers 37°F 3°C Bangor, ME Saturday 6:00 PM Partly Cloudy 1°F -17°C What do you notice? What do you wonder?	Think-Pair-Share to accommodate for processing time. (Alex REQUIRES think time.) Alex will need a hardcopy of this section to annotate thinking.	
1.2: Above and Below Zero	Adaptations	
1. Here are three situations involving changes in temperature and three number lines. Represent each change on a number line. Then, answer the question. a. At noon, the temperature was 5 degrees Celsius. By late afternoon, it <u>has</u> risen 6 degrees Celsius. What was the temperature late in the afternoon?	1. Allow Alex to use the interactive thermometer or vertical number line. Model the tool with question a for the whole group. Have Alex complete questions a and c. Provide Alex a completed answer for question b.	1. Pre teach vocabulary: Celsius, risen, dawn; number line; resulting temperature; 2. Simplify Word Problems: Break down each situation into smaller, more manageable parts. 3. Graphic Organizers: Use



Teach for Impact – in LEADS

Elements:

- Guaranteed and viable curriculum is in place (3A)
- Instruction is responsive to student needs (3B)
- Data is used to adjust instruction and supports (3E)
- Systems respond to needs in a timely way (3D)
- Instructional time is protected and prioritized (3B)

Reflective Question:

➡ How do we know instruction is meeting the needs of all learners, and what do we do when the data shows it isn't?





Communicate

Teach

Decide

Communicate for Clarity

Communication Shapes Experience

- Sets expectations
- Promotes least dangerous assumption
- Builds shared responsibility
- Reinforces a sense of belonging



Progress Monitoring

The IEP must include:

“(3) A description of—

- (i) **How** the child’s progress toward meeting the annual goals described in paragraph (2) of this section will be measured; and
- (ii) **When** periodic reports on the progress the child is making toward meeting the annual goals (such as through the use of quarterly or other periodic reports, concurrent with the issuance of report cards) will be provided;”



Five Questions Every Administrator Should Ask Around Progress Monitoring

1. What exactly is the student expected to improve?
2. Are we measuring the actual skill in the goal?
3. How quickly should progress occur?
4. What happens when progress is insufficient?
5. Can a neutral reader follow the decision-making process?



As a leader, how can you ensure that your team is conducting meaningful reviews of progress?

There's a tool for that!



End-of-Marking-Period Student Progress Questionnaire



Student Name:
Grade:
Teacher:
Date:
Marking Period:



1. Overall Progress on IEP Goals

- ☐ Student is on track to meet IEP goals.
- ☐ Student is making some progress, but not yet on track.
- ☐ Student is making limited or no progress on IEP goals.

Notes:

2. Goal-Specific Progress

Goal Area	IEP Goal	Expected Goal Progress	Actual Goal Progress	On Track?
Academic				Yes No
Social/Emotional/Behavioral				Yes No
Communication				Yes No
Functional/Life Skills				Yes No
Other (list)				Yes No

Notes:

Questions? Bateman@SpecialEdConsultant.org | *parallel* parallelllearning.com



End-of-Marking-Period Student Progress Questionnaire



3. Instruction & Supports

What instructional strategies or SDI were most effective?

Were accommodations and modifications implemented consistently?

☐ Yes ☐ No | Notes:

Were related services delivered as documented?

☐ Yes ☐ No | Notes:

4. Barriers & Needs

What barriers impacted progress (attendance, behavior, staffing, curriculum, family concerns, etc.)?

What additional supports/resources are needed to accelerate progress?

5. Next Steps

Adjustments recommended for instruction, supports, or services:

Do you recommend any changes to IEP goals or services at this time? ☐ Yes ☐ No | If yes, explain:

Questions? Bateman@SpecialEdConsultant.org | *parallel* parallelllearning.com





theMIDASProject.org

MIDAS Project Resources

- Parent
- Teacher
- School Leader
 - School Leaders Brief
 - Goldilocks Approach Tool
 - School Leader Walkthrough Observation Tool

Communicate for Clarity – in LEADS

Elements:

- Expectations and plans are clearly communicated (3C, 2B)
- Leadership is distributed and developed (1E, 4C)
- Feedback is frequent and actionable (3C)
- Families receive clear, ongoing communication (2D)
- Professional capacity is intentionally built (4C)

Reflective Question:

➡ How do we ensure students, staff, and families understand least dangerous assumption, expectations, decisions, and supports, and how do we verify that clarity?



Bringing It Together

ALIGN

COMMUNICATE

TEACH

DECIDE



**Chart the course
forward with
intention...**

*...so meaningful
access can thrive.*



Moving Forward



Learning Opportunities

MIDAS Teacher Modules (*themidasproject.org*)



Resources & Tools

[Assessment & Curriculum webpage](#)



Connect & Collaborate

Questions or need support?

Call the Office of Special Education at 501-682-4225



*Thank
You*

Office of Special Education
501-682-4225

