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MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents
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District Guidance Supervisors
District Workforce Education Contacts
High School Principals
High School Guidance Counselors

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DPS: 2009-004

FROM: Dr. Frances Haithcock

DATE: January 15, 2009

SUBJECT: NEW HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA DESIGNATIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Section 1003.4285, Florida Statutes, requires the following four new designations be included on the standard high school diploma beginning with the 2008-09 school year, as applicable:

- Major Area of Interest, pursuant to completion of credits as provided in section 1003.428, Florida Statutes
- Completion of four or more accelerated college credit courses in Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE), or dual enrollment if the student is eligible for college credit pursuant to sections 1007.27 or 1007.271, Florida Statutes
- Career education certification in accordance with section 1003.431, Florida Statutes
- Florida Ready to Work Credential in accordance with section 1004.99, Florida Statutes

DR. FRANCES HAITHCOCK
CHANCELLOR OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Rule 6A-1.0995, Florida Administrative Code, *Form of High School Diplomas and Certificates of Completion*, was recently amended by the State Board of Education as prompted by the new section of statute described above. It requires districts to determine what each designation will look like and where it will be placed provided that the following criteria are met:

- Designations must be in the form of a stamp, sticker, seal, or text,
- There may be no more than four state designations, and
- District-determined seals must be placed below designations.

The following list of questions and answers has been compiled from feedback received from districts.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Must a student complete all four Major Area of Interest (MAI) credits in the same MAI to receive the designation?

Yes, a student must complete all four MAI credits in the MAI to receive the designation; otherwise, all students would receive the designation since it is a graduation requirement.

2. Do MAI designations have to be on the diplomas for the graduating class of 2008-09?

No, MAI designations do not need to be on diplomas for the graduating class of 2008-09. Because MAI requirements took effect beginning with the freshman class of 2007-08, the first year that MAI designations will be needed on the diploma is 2010-11.

3. Can a student who is eligible for recognition in, for example, both AP and dual enrollment coursework receive more than one designation for accelerated college credit on his/her diploma?

No. The rule states that only one designation for any of the accelerated college credit options met may be included on the diploma.

4. Does the accelerated college credit designation require completion of courses or passage of exams at the end of the courses?

Yes. Students in AP, IB, or AICE courses must complete the courses and pass the exams at the level indicated in the Articulation Coordinating Committee *Credit-by-Exam Equivalencies* list (available from the Department's Web site at

http://www.fldoe.org/articulation/pdf/2007_ACC-CBE.pdf).

Students in dual enrollment courses must complete the course with a grade of C or better.

5. Since the scores for AP, IB, and AICE exams are not received by schools until after graduation and career education certification and Ready to Work Credential results may not come in before graduation, how will these eligible students receive their designation?

This will vary by district and possibly by school; however, one approach is for students to return to the school with their diplomas when scores have arrived and have a designated staff member affix the state designations.

6. A diploma designation for a career education certification in accordance with section 1003.431, Florida Statutes, is required. Is this the same as industry certification as referenced in sections 1003.492(2) and 1011.62(1)(o), Florida Statutes?

No. The current requirements in section 1003.431, Florida Statutes, for career education certification are not the same as the requirements for industry certification. The career education certification requirements include the following:

- Completion of the requirements for high school graduation.
 - A passing score on the college entry-level placement test or an equivalent test identified by the Department of Education.
 - A comprehensive program of study in career education including:
 - Completion of academic courses with a designation from the Department of Education of level two or above.
 - Attainment of at least one occupational completion point in an industry-certified career education program or completion of at least two courses in a technology education program.
 - Completion of a one-credit course addressing workplace readiness skills.
 - Participation in work-based learning experiences, as defined in rule by the State Board of Education.
 - Participation in a capstone activity that includes a project related to a career.
7. Can students receiving a special diploma, certificate of completion, or special certification of completion, who are eligible for these designations, have these designations placed on their special diploma or certificate?

No. The statute is titled *Standard high school diploma designations* and states “By the 2008-2009 school year, each standard high school diploma shall include, as applicable....” Therefore, the provision of these designations only applies to a standard high school diploma.

8. Can designations be placed on the back of the diploma?

No, the state designations must be placed on the front of the diploma above any district-determined seals.

9. Must these designations be identified in the student database and/or on the student's transcript that is sent to postsecondary institutions?

Information contained in the district's student data base and on a student's transcript is sufficient for the postsecondary institution to determine whether the student has met each of the four designations except for the Ready to Work Credential. An item to indicate the completion of the Ready to Work Credential will be added to the database and the transcript in the future.

10. Which designations will go on the student transcript?

With the addition in the future of the Ready to Work Credential, all information necessary for the determination of whether a student meets the criteria for these designations will be available on a student's transcript. Some analysis of individual course work will be necessary to make the determination.

11. Can designations in the form of stickers be mailed to students?

Mailing stickers to be affixed to the diploma is not prohibited but the district should consider how to assure security of the designations if this option is used.

12. Can a seventh semester "snapshot" of the student records be used to determine whether students meet any of these designations and to grant designations?

Some students may already qualify for one or more of the state designations by the completion of the seventh semester of high school, but other students will complete the qualifications only after completing all requirements for a standard diploma. A district must allow for determining the status of each student's qualifications for each designation through the student's completion of high school.

If you have any additional questions, please contact Sara Marchessault in the Bureau of School Improvement at (850) 245-0426 or Sara.Marchessault@fldoe.org.