

# Certificate of Completion

Office of Special Education

October 5, 2017

ICASE Break Out Session



*Indiana*  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

*Working Together for Student Success*



# PURPOSE OF PRESENTATION

- Share changes to earning a Certificate of Completion and the rationale for the changes
- Describe the connection between the Certificate of Completion (COC) work and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
- Explain Next Steps



# BACKGROUND

- 511 IAC 7-43-4(h) requires that the IEP of a student entering grade 9 or becoming 14 years of age must contain documentation regarding whether the student will pursue a high school diploma, as defined in 511 IAC 6-7.1-1(e), or a certificate of completion.
- The term “certificate of completion” is not further defined, but is interpreted to be a document awarded to a special education student who has been taken off of the diploma path but completes the public school educational program prescribed in the student’s IEP.
- The term “Certificate of Completion” may only be used to refer to a document awarded for completion of the special educational program outlined in a student’s IEP, and may not be used in any other circumstances.



# ENROLLMENT DATA

## 2015 and 2016 General and Special Education Students

	<b>Indiana Total Student Enrollment</b>	<b>Number of students receiving special education services</b>	<b>Percent of students receiving special education services</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>1,131,000</b>	<b>159, 201</b>	<b>14.08%</b>
<b>2016</b>	<b>1,133,380</b>	<b>161,136</b>	<b>14.22%</b>



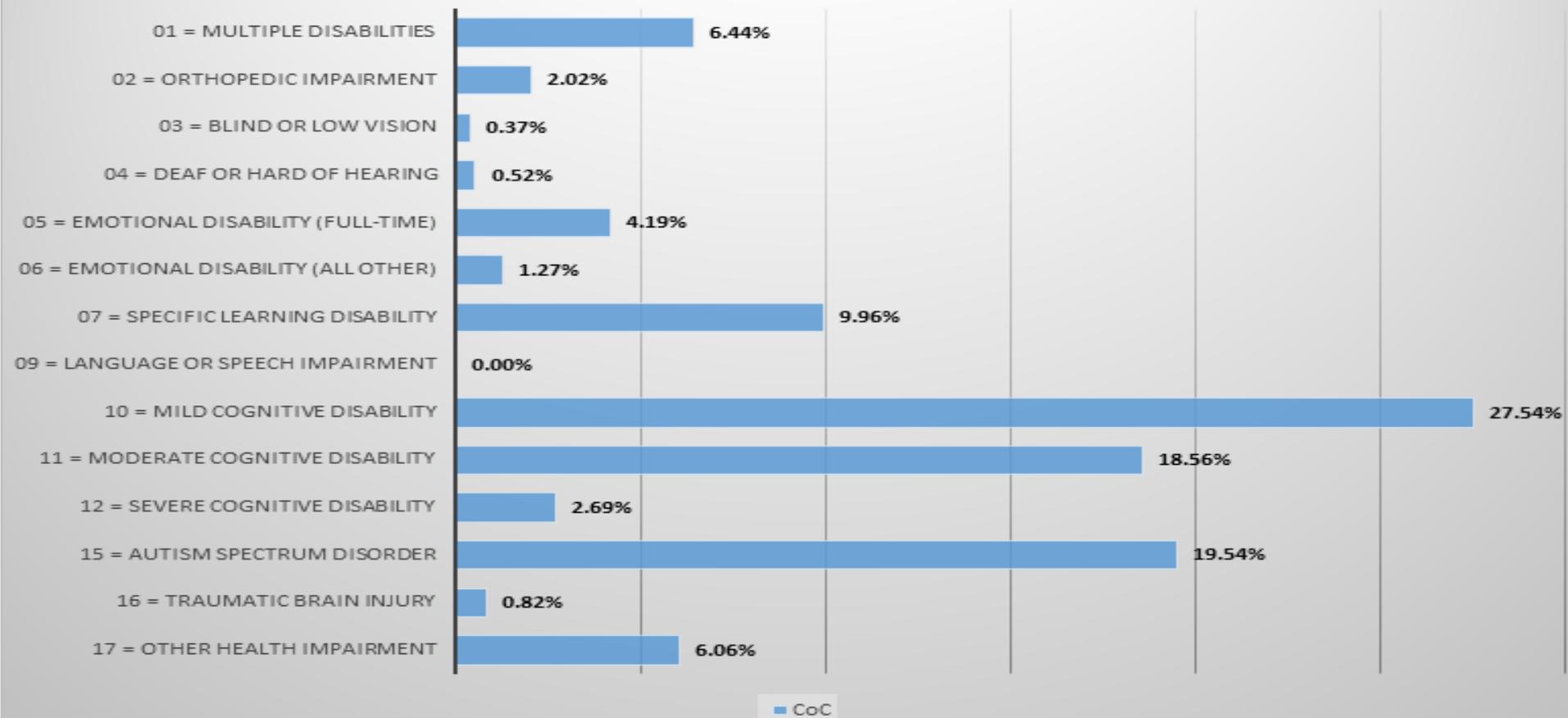
# EXIT DATA

	2015	2016
<b>Total SWD who exited</b>	7223	8102
<b>Total SWD who exited with Certificate of Completion</b>	795	1326
<b>Percentage of SWD who exited with COC</b>	11%	16%



# 2016 COC Distribution by Disability

**Certificate of Completion Distribution by Disability, 2016  
(N=1,326)**





# IMPETUS FOR CHANGE

- 2014 - Indiana's Alternate Assessment shifted focus from functional to academic skills.
- 2015 - Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Development Partners expressed concerns about the readiness of students who receive the COC to enter the workforce.
- 2015 - Parents expressed concerns about the ability of their children to access the workforce without a high school diploma
- 2015 - Schools report receiving minimal guidance on serving students on a Certificate of Completion track. The students have no documentation of their academic or employability skills.
- May 2016 – The number of students exiting high school with a certificate of completion significantly increased.



# IMPETUS FOR CHANGE

- November 2015 – A Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) from the Office of Special Education Programs clarified the definition of a Free Appropriate Public Education including access to grade level standards.
- December 2015 - Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires Equity and Access for all students. Challenging academic content standards apply to all public schools and students in the State; for students with significant cognitive disabilities, alternate achievement standards must be aligned with state academic standards.



# CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION WORKGROUP

- The Certificate of Completion Work Group, a subset of the Interagency Transition Council, began meeting monthly in September 2015 to examine the issues related to the Certificate raised by schools, parents, students and the community and to develop a plan to address the issues.
- The group is comprised of representatives from Teachers, Vocational Rehabilitation, Workforce Development, FSSA, ARC of Indiana, ICASE, INSOURCE, Indiana Resource Network, the Manufacturing Association and various members of the Dept. of Education.



# PROBLEM STATEMENTS

- Students who are on a Certificate of Completion track are often removed from academic classes or have limited access to pathways that lead to successful employment.
- Students with disabilities who have had appropriate academic and vocational instruction-and who leave high school without a diploma, are capable and willing to work; however, the existing Certificate of Completion is not recognized as a meaningful document by the employment community.
- Currently, a Certificate of Completion is not defined in statute; little guidance has been provided to schools other than it is awarded to a student with a disability who does not meet the requirements for a HS diploma but has remained in school and has aged out or met IEP goals.
- Certificate of Completion does not require any level of academic exposure or achievement and holds little value for the student, employer or adult agency provider.





## **POSITION STATEMENT: Diploma First**

The majority of students with disabilities are capable of earning a high school diploma if given appropriate instruction, supports and services.

Students who have been removed from the diploma track by the case conference committee must be presented with and follow a course of study that raises expectations, is aligned with grade level standards and/or alternate standards, and provides opportunities to gain employability skills.

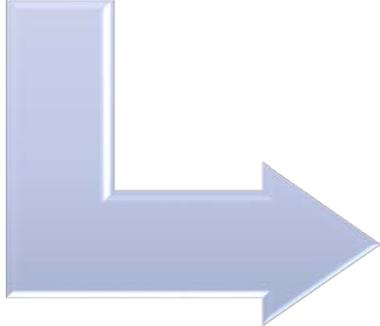




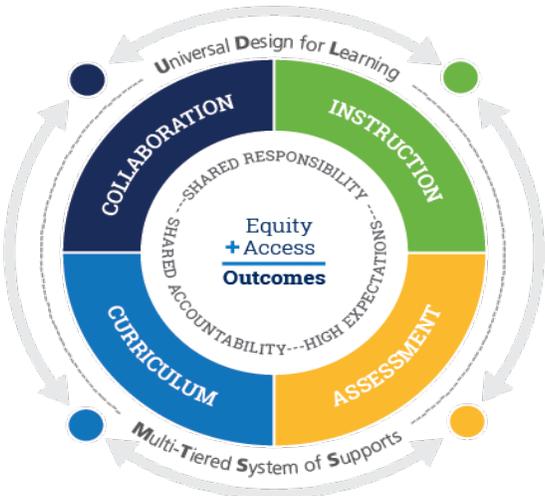
# Development Process

## Course of Study

- Aligned with Diploma
- Support from VR/DWD/Transition
- Assumptions
- Aligned with standards and statewide assessments

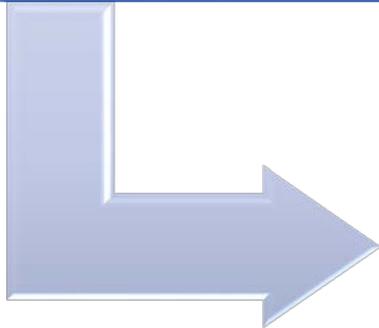


EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS



## Course Descriptions

- Support from P-16
- Aligned to Content Standards, Content Connectors and Workplace Essentials
- Support high expectations and assumptions



## Professional Development

- Academic Instruction
- Transition Planning
- Employability

# DEVELOPMENT OF COC COURSE OF STUDY

- Mirrors regular diploma in requirements (Minimum 40 applied units or credits with emphasis on academics)
- Employability Skills are an integral part of the plan
- **Transition portfolio** is a requirement
- Can be earned through any combination of applied units and credits
- Aligned with Statewide Assessment (ISTAR or ISTEP)





Minimum total 40 credits/applied units: It is expected that these requirements are met through enrollment in a combination of general education courses for credit, modified general education courses in which non-credit applied units are earned and special education courses in which non-credit applied units are earned.

<b>English/Language Arts</b>	<b>8 credits/applied units</b> Including a balance of literature, composition, vocabulary, speech/communication
<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>4 credits/applied units</b> Including a balance of number sense, expressions, computation, data analysis, statistics, probability, equations and inequalities and personal finance. Student must take a math or applied math course each year in high school.
<b>Science</b>	<b>4 credits/applied units</b> Including a balance of physical, earth/nature, life, engineering and technology
<b>Social Studies</b>	<b>4 credits/applied units</b> Including a balance of history, civics and government, geography, economics
<b>Physical Education</b>	<b>2 credits/applied units</b>
<b>Health &amp; Wellness</b>	<b>1 credit/applied unit</b>
<b>Employability</b>	<b>10 credits/applied units</b> Job exploration, work- or project-based learning experiences, employability skills (mindsets, self-management, learning strategies, social, workplace), portfolio creation, intro to post-secondary options Investigation into opportunities for enrollment in postsecondary programs, work place readiness training to develop employability and independent living skills and instruction in self-advocacy
<b>Electives</b>	<b>7 credits/applied units</b>

**Certificate of Completion Transition Portfolio**

**Students earning a certificate of completion fulfill at least one of the following (aligned with transition goals):**

- 1. Career Credential:** Complete an industry-recognized certification, one-year certificate or state-approved alternative
- 2. Career Experience:** Complete project- or work-based learning experience or part time employment
- 3. Work Ethic Certificate:** Earn a Work Ethic Certificate (criteria to be locally determined)
- 4. Other Work Related Activities:** As determined by the case conference committee

**Assumptions:**

- 1) High Expectations for all students is a shared responsibility.
- 2) General Education courses are accessed whenever appropriate to fulfill the Certificate of Completion course of study.
- 3) Students' IEP goals are aligned with grade level standards/content connectors that drive curriculum and instruction.
- 4) Communication skills, reading skills, and problem solving skills are integrated into all courses.
- 5) Courses can be repeated with new goals if appropriate; more than four years may be needed for completion.
- 6) All courses are driven by the Transition IEP and individual goals of each student.



# COC ASSUMPTIONS

- High Expectations for all students is a shared responsibility
- General Education classes are accessed whenever appropriate to fulfill COC Course of Study
- Student's IEP goals are aligned with grade level content standards that drive the curriculum
- Communication skills, reading skills, problem solving skills are woven into all classes
- Classes may be repeated with new goals if appropriate; more than four years may be needed for completion
- Course selection is driven by the Transition IEP and individual goals of students



# Course Descriptions

- Reviewed existing Course Descriptions and developed “Applied” Versions earning units instead of credits.
- Aligned to Academic Standards or Content Connectors and cross walked with Workforce Development Workplace Essentials

Worked with CCR and PK-16 Office to ensure alignment with credit based courses.



# Course Descriptions

High School Course Titles	Course Description	Applied Course Description	Related Critical Content Connectors	Workplace Essentials	Max # Units	Grade Level	COC Requirement
<b>Business Math</b>	<i>Business Math</i> is a course designed to prepare students for roles as entrepreneurs, producers, and business leaders by developing abilities and skills that are part of any business environment. A solid understanding of math including algebra, basic geometry, statistics, and probability provides the necessary foundation for students interested in careers in business and skilled trade areas. The content includes mathematical operations related to accounting, banking and finance, marketing, and management. Instructional strategies should include simulations, guest speakers, tours, Internet research, and business experiences.	<i>Applied Business Math</i> is a course designed to prepare students for roles as entrepreneurs, producers, and business leaders by developing abilities and skills that are part of any business environment. A solid understanding of application of money management skills, navigating industry specific technology and apps, establishing and managing budgets, and maintaining inventory for products and other necessary skills that provides the foundation for students interested in careers in business related fields. The content includes basic mathematical operations related to accounting, banking and finance, marketing, management, and retail. Instructional strategies should include simulations, guest speakers, tours, Internet research, and business experiences.	<p>AI.DS.5.a.1: Examine the study using categorical data.</p> <p>AI.L.11.a.1: Solve linear equations with 1 variable.</p> <p>AI.RNE.2.a.1: Identify the pattern for the sum or product for combinations of rational numbers.</p>	<p>Multi-Tasking Skill in handling multiple tasks and assignments simultaneously by setting priorities and managing work flow under varying deadlines</p> <p>Numerical and Arithmetic Application Skill in compiling data, using numbers in various formats, and performing job-appropriate numbers-based problem-solving</p> <p>Resource Allocation Knowledge of how to identify, leverage and distribute financial and material resources effectively and efficiently</p>	2	10+	employability, math



# Plan Examples

Maria is an eighth grade student with a significant cognitive disability. She is medically fragile and has identified means of communication. She is able to sustain short periods of instruction, but frequent pro is needed. Recent evaluation attempts were inconclusive, but teachers report that Maria appears to be for approximately 2 hours per day but tires easily and requires frequent breaks.

## Six-Year Plan Template

Freshman Year – Fall 20			Freshman Year – Spring 20		
Course	Requirement	Units	Course	Requirement	Units
1002A	English 9-12	1	1002A	English 9-12	1
2520A	Algebra 1	1	2520A	Algebra 1	1
2516A	Algebra 1 Lab	1	2516A	Algebra 1 Lab	1
5394A	Preparing for College and Careers	1	5394A	Preparing for College and Careers	1
0500A	Basic Skills Development	1	0500A	Basic Skills Development	1
3030A	Life Science	1	3102A	Physical Science	1
3506A	Applied Health and Wellness	1	3542A	Physical Education I	1
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Sophomore Year – Fall 20			Sophomore Year – Spring 20		
	Requirement			Requirement	
	English 9-12			English 9-12	
	Algebra 1			Algebra 1	
	Geometry			Geometry	
	Biology			Biology	
	Current Problems,			Current Problems,	
	Applied Health and			Physical	
	Basic Skills			Basic Skills	
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Junior Year – Fall 20			Junior Year – Spring 20		
Course	Requirement	Units	Course	Requirement	Units
1006A	English 9-12	1	1006A	English 9-12	1
5364A	Applied Interpersonal Relationships	1	5364A	Applied Interpersonal Relationships	1

Jalen is a ninth-grade student with a significant cognitive disability. He communicates using mostly one and two word phrases. Recent evaluation data shows his receptive language to be several years above his expressive language skills. Reading comprehension level is unknown.

## Four-Year Plan Template

Freshman Year – Fall 20			Freshman Year – Spring 20		
Cour	Requirement	Units	Course	Requirement	Units
1002A	English 9-12	1	1002A	English 9-12	1
2520A	Algebra 1	1	2520A	Algebra 1	1
2516A	Algebra 1 Lab	1	2516A	Algebra 1 Lab	1
5394A	Preparing for College and Careers	1	5394A	Preparing for College and Careers	1
0500A	Basic Skills Development	1	0500A	Basic Skills Development	1
3030A	Life Science	1	3102A	Physical Science	1
3506A	Applied Health and Wellness	1	3542A	Physical Education I	1
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Sophomore Year – Fall 20			Sophomore Year – Spring 20		
Cours	Requirement	Units	Cours	Requirement	Units
1004A	English 9-12	1	1004A	English 9-12	1
2520A	Algebra 1	1	2520A	Algebra 1	1
2532A	Geometry	1	2532	Geometry	1
3024A	Biology	1	3024	Biology	1
1512A	Current Problems, Issues and Events	1	1512A	Current Problems, Issues and Events	1
3506A	Applied Health and Wellness	1	3542A	Physical Education I	1
5364A	Applied Interpersonal Relationships	1	5364A	Applied Interpersonal Relationships	1
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Junior Year – Fall 20			Junior Year – Spring 20		
C	Requirement	Units	C	Requirement	Units



# ALIGNING INSTRUCTION

- Aligned to Course Descriptions, Academic Standards, including Alternate Achievement Standards (Content Connectors)
- Includes content, practice and application
- Includes exposure to grade level content standards
- Includes workplace essentials, employment, soft skills and job experiences.
- Professional Development Provided by Project Success to LEAs on aligning instruction with alternate achievement standards





# ADAPTING INFRASTRUCTURE

- Working with two districts to help with development (Avon and Michigan City)
- Began meeting with Guidance Counselors in Michigan City to determine infrastructure changes (scheduling, transcripts, grading, etc.) in order to support the revised system
- Determine implementation phases with the assistance of the two districts
- Goal for Statewide implementation of new COC: August 2018



# ESSA ALIGNMENT

**Assessment and Standards** – the COC Course of study provides a structure for schools that allows students to make progress toward either the Academic Standards or Alternate Achievement Standards (aka Content Connectors); Alternate Standards have been developed and Alternate Assessment Aligns with the standards.

**Supporting All Students** – the revised requirements for earning a Certificate of Completion, as encourages equity (course of study that mirrors a diploma) and allows flexibility through the credits or units for accessing both the Academic Standards and Alternate Achievement Standards.

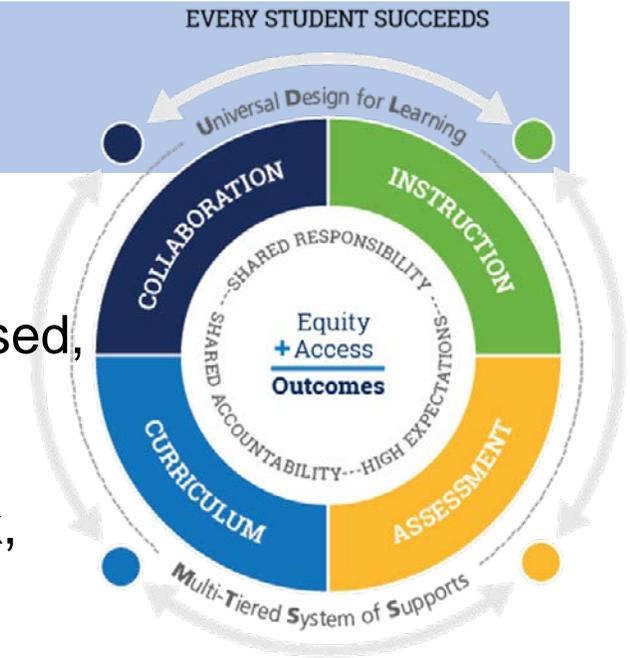


# ESSA ALIGNMENT

**Supporting Excellent Educators** – the Certificate of Completion, as revised, requires a more rigorous curriculum for students who have been removed from the diploma track. Professional Development is available to all teachers who are working with students who are not on a diploma track, particularly those who have significant cognitive disabilities.

**Accountability** – the Certificate of Completion, as revised, meets the requirements of an Alternate Diploma for students with significant cognitive disabilities. ESSA allows for 1% of students assessed in the state with significant cognitive disabilities to take an Alternate Assessment that could count favorably in the school accountability formula.

**School Improvement** - As DOE works with districts on improvement, all subgroups must be considered. The Certificate of Completion, as revised, raises expectations for students who have been removed from the diploma track. Raised expectations = Improved Outcomes.



# Next Steps

- Share Draft Course of Study with field and gather input  
Teachers in summer trainings, Principals' Association, Superintendents' Association, Guidance Counselors, SAC, ICASE. 
- Analyze Input and Finalize Course of Study 
- Share with the State Board of Education 
- Complete Course Descriptions 
- Share with other stakeholder groups: Superintendent's Association, Principals' Association, School Boards Association, Guidance Counselors, ICASE, ARC, INSOURCE, SAC, Summer workshops and trainings. (In process in person and using multi media)
- Determine implementation phases with the assistance of two districts (in process)
- Provide extensive Professional Development and Technical Assistance to schools (in process)



## ADDITIONAL SUBCOMMITTEE WORK

- Developing a website with COC guidance (FAQ, example 4-6 year plans, guidance counselor considerations, etc)
- Revision of the Summary of Performance format to provide skill/work experience detail
- Plan ways to inform employment community
- Other activities to be determined by stakeholders



# QUESTIONS THAT HAVE COME IN

- **It is my understanding the students on a COC will be tested with ISTAR.**
  - Not true
- **The ISTAR criteria as stated in IIEP seem to require that the student have a cognitive disability.**
  - The requirement for a student to take an alternate assessment is they must have a significant cognitive disability
- **Is having a CD part of the criteria for being on the COC?**
  - No
- **When will the DOE Course Titles and Descriptions be posted?**
  - The P-16 Office anticipates some time in later October
- **Do special education teachers need to be certified in specific content areas in order to teach courses for applied units?**
  - No. Teachers need to be highly qualified only if the student is receiving *credit* for the course. Teachers **do not** need to be highly qualified in order for students to earn *applied units*.





ANY QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU

