

# **Adult Education and Literacy Adult Diploma Program Frequently Asked Questions**

The Adult Diploma Program is an Agency of Education (AOE) administered program...through which any Vermont resident who is at least 16 years of age, who has not received a high school diploma; and who is not enrolled in a public or approved independent school, postsecondary institution, or home study program can receive a local high school diploma granted by one of the Program’s participating high schools.” ([16 V.S.A. § 945 of H.883, Act 113](#)).

This frequently asked questions (FAQ) document responds to questions from educators, administrators and other stakeholders. It will be updated regularly to reflect the development of the program and as additional questions are received by the AOE. Other questions may be submitted through [this form](#).

## **Acronym Key**

<b>AOE</b> - Agency of Education	<b>HSCP</b> - High School Completion Program
<b>AEL</b> - Adult Education and Literacy	<b>IEP</b> – Individualized Education Program
<b>ADP</b> - Adult Diploma Program	<b>MOU</b> – Memorandum of Understanding
<b>ALP</b> – Adult Learning Plan	<b>PLP</b> – Personalized Learning Plan
<b>CCRS</b> – College and Career Readiness Standards	<b>PoAG</b> – Portrait of an Adult Graduate
<b>CTE</b> – Career and Technical Education	<b>PBGR</b> - Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirement
<b>DOL</b> – Department of Labor	<b>TABE</b> – Test of Adult Basic Education
<b>EQS</b> – Education Quality Standards	<b>WIOA</b> - Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
<b>GA</b> – Graduation Agreement	

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## Questions and Answers

### Q1. What happened to students in the HSCP when the program was repealed?

In early 2024, it was anticipated that the Vermont legislature may repeal the HSCP and amend 16 V.S.A. § 945 per the recommendations of the legislative report, [AEL Student Access Committee](#), submitted January 18, 2024. To mitigate the impacts on those HSCP students who were working toward summer graduation and who may need additional time to complete, the AOE requested that AEL providers submit student names who met these criteria. The AOE approved roughly 100 students who could graduate in July or August, an identified transition period from the sunset of the HSCP on June 30, 2024.

On June 10, 2024, the [HSCP Repeal – FY25 Transition Year memo](#) was sent to superintendents and principals. The memo explains the process and signals that subsequent letters will be sent to partnering high schools with student lists. Those letters were emailed to high schools on June 14, 2024.

### Q2. What will happen to a student who had a signed HSCP plan that was not completed prior to HSCP being repealed on July 1, 2024, but they are still engaged in AEL services and working on that plan?

Any student who had a plan for meeting HSCP local graduation requirements has been addressing the state-adopted content standards established for the ADP. Students may continue to work on their studies with AEL providers. Once the pilot version of ADP is

launched, AEL provider staff and students will review the requirements of ADP and begin to build a plan that will lead to graduation. Students who had HSCP plans may have already met some proficiencies required for graduation under ADP. In that case, their ADP graduation plan should clearly outline when those and any other proficiencies were met and how they were met.

### **Q3. Why can't HSCP students still graduate using the HSCP process?**

The HSCP was repealed in State law effective July 1, 2024, which means HSCP is no longer a pathway to graduation. To ensure the accessibility of the HSCP for those students close to graduating, the AOE developed a sunset period for those identified students so that they could still graduate under the program through August 31, 2024. A memo was sent to districts followed by letters to high schools with lists of students identified who could still graduate under HSCP during the sunset period.

### **Q4. Is ADP the new name for HSCP?**

No. The HSCP was a school district flexible pathway. The ADP is an AEL program and AEL is a WIOA, Title II workforce development program for adults.

### **Q5. What has been done to design and launch the pilot version of the ADP and what will be done after the pilot has been launched?**

As a result of the repeal of HSCP and the amended § 945 in H.883 in May of 2024, the AOE immediately engaged an internal group regarding the design of a new ADP. Collaborators worked to draft a [PoAG](#) which focuses on adult needs as the ADP is a workforce development program under WIOA, Title II.

In June, with the technical assistance of Great Schools Partnership, the AOE invited principals to review the PoAG draft and consider documents that show the crosswalks of Critical Proficiencies and CCRS for Adult Education for both [English Language Arts](#) and [mathematics](#). A subsequent stakeholder meeting was held in August when more draft documents were reviewed, including a [comparison of HSCP and ADP](#) and proposed statewide PBGRs.

The AOE is continuing to develop design elements with input from AEL providers and other stakeholders. This FAQ and several other documents have been posted to the AOE website and a draft ADP Pilot Policy Manual is in development with stakeholder input. A letter will be sent to high school principals inviting them to participate in the ADP by signing an MOU with the AOE. Once MOUs are in place and the ADP pilot policy manual is finalized, we will be able to launch the pilot. Although an exact date to launch the pilot is not known, the work is being expedited.

After the pilot is launched, an advisory group will be formed to continue working on design elements and to address ongoing feedback from the pilot's implementation

process. Revised policies will be released for subsequent iterations of the ADP as a result of lessons learned from the pilot and with the input of the advisory group.

**Q6. Will the option for students to remain enrolled in their high school while participating in the ADP be an option if the student passes the TABE?**

No. The HSCP was a school district program where partner AEL providers supported the school district flexible pathway. ADP is an AEL program. Federal law restricts AEL students from being co-enrolled in secondary schools. State law (16 V.S.A. § 945) specifies that ADP students must not be enrolled in school. Further, the TABE is designed at the national level for those participating in AEL programs and not for enrolled-in-school students.

**Q7. Will it still be an option for a student who is participating in the ADP to work with WIOA personnel? AEL students typically work and have career goals and opportunities written into their PLP.**

The ADP is an AEL program under WIOA, Title II. All AEL students, including those participating in the ADP, are to be provided with information on WIOA programs as part of the [One-Stop System American Job Center in Vermont](#). Sometimes AEL students are co-enrolled in Department of Labor or HireAbility programs, which is an option for all AEL students and may be written into an ALP. Note that we will not be using the term, “Personalized Learning Plan” as that is a requirement of districts under 16 V.S.A. § 941.

**Q8. Will students in ADP have access to dual enrollment vouchers?**

Yes. [Sec. 944 of H.883 \(Act 113\)](#) gives ADP students access to dual enrollment vouchers. The ADP Graduation Plan will need to identify participation in dual enrollment as an educational activity to help students gain proficiency in one or more ADP PBGRs.

**Q9. Will students participating in ADP create a portfolio to demonstrate proficiency?**

The ADP Pilot will include a menu of assessments to demonstrate proficiency for each of the ADP PBGRs. The ADP advisory group will be tasked with the development of a more robust review and performance assessment process to prepare for the next iteration of policy for implementation.

**Q10. Can the schools legally allow staff to spend time helping ADP students since they are not enrolled in the school?**

While state school funding is based on the Average Daily Membership, there is no law that prevents schools from serving students who are not enrolled. In the case of ADP, the schools will be agreeing to participate in the ADP and therefore will have an official reason to serve ADP students.

**Q11. Won't the ADP be easier for students than traditional high school since it may have fewer PBGRs, and wouldn't that encourage students to unenroll and enter ADP to avoid their local high school's PBGRs?**

The school and the AEL program offer different experiences. For some students, this may seem easier because aspects of the ADP align better with their needs, e.g., work schedules. All students, whether they choose to stay enrolled in school or not, need to meet high expectations for proficiencies to graduate because the standards for school and ADP are both aligned with the Common Core (see the [English Language Arts](#) and [Mathematics](#) alignment crosswalks for more information). The [assessments used in AEL](#) are rigorous as well. AEL also requires that students exercise a level of independence and motivation that many students find challenging. Those unenrolled from school do not have access to extra curriculars (including drama and sports), school meals provided, the structure of attending classes five days a week, regular contact with multiple peers, and school health services. AEL services by contrast focus on transitioning to college and/or career through flexible scheduling and student-directed educational activities.

**Q12. When a high school wants to transition a student to AEL who has, for example, two credits left to graduate, how do AEL providers work with that school/student right now?**

Schools must work to assist every enrolled student to graduation. They must identify other services and/or flexible pathways that would help the student earn their diploma. There are options available without unenrolling the student. If it is determined by the student and parents/guardians that unenrolling from school is the only option, the student will need to work with the AEL provider to enter the ADP once the pilot begins.

**Q13. Will diplomas for students who graduate through the ADP be issued by high schools or the AOE?**

Diplomas will be issued by the high schools. There are only two pathways to a diploma in Vermont: via enrollment in schools that are diploma-granting, and via the ADP and participating schools who are diploma-granting.

**Q14. Why aren't AEL providers able to issue diplomas?**

AEL providers are not schools and cannot issue diplomas.

**Q15. Can participating high schools count an ADP student as a graduate after they obtain a high school diploma through ADP?**

Those high schools that have a signed MOU to participate in the ADP can issue diplomas through ADP and are required to report all students who are issued a diploma

to the AOE. Information on the codes that schools must be used to report ADP students will be provided in the ADP Pilot Policy Manual.

**Q16. Has the AOE cross-referenced the performance indicators for the PBGR hierarchies with the proposed proficiencies for the ADP?**

The first design element that the AOE created for the ADP were crosswalks between the [English Language Arts](#) and [Mathematics](#) Proficiency-Based Graduation hierarchies and the CCRS for Adult Education. These crosswalks demonstrate, and the multidisciplinary team agrees on, the core proficiencies for ADP based on the clear overlap between these standards.

**Q17. Some elements in the hierarchies are not assessed on the TABE. Are AEL providers expected to teach “critical proficiencies” that are not even assessed?**

Educators in the K-12 system, including AEL providers, are expected to teach to all standards, not only the ones explicitly assessed. Since not all standards are created equal, the hierarchies are meant to differentiate between the standards that should be explicitly assessed to demonstrate proficiency for graduation and those that should be addressed as part of curriculum and instruction. Additionally, the crosswalks only describe the proficiencies at the high school level and AEL instructors need to address the standards that a student is not demonstrating proficiency in according to the math and English Language Arts CCRS for Adult Education. In other words, the standards build on one another from kindergarten through a grade 12 equivalency. When an AEL teacher reviews the results of the TABE scores after assessing a student, they then design instruction that will address the standards that the student still needs to meet. The goal is to graduate students who have met most if not all of the standards so that they have the skills and knowledge to transition successfully to employment and/or postsecondary education/training. We teach to all the standards, not only those that are assessed or identified as critical proficiencies.

**Q18. Will students taking advantage of the ADP still be able to access a tech center part time? Is that considered enrolling in school? If they can, will the enrollment cost be covered through the grant?**

ADP students may be co-enrolled in a training course that is part of an Integrated Education and Training program, whether that course is offered through CTE, Adult CTE, or a college or university.

Adult CTE courses and other postsecondary technical skill credentialing programs are allowable co-enrollments for ADP students when the cost is not covered by a school district.

Those enrolled in a secondary CTE program for a full or half semester, even if they are not currently enrolled in a high school, have their tuition covered by their district of residence. These students are thus enrolled in the district that is paying tuition and are ineligible for AEL (and the ADP as part of the state AEL program).

**Q19. Will the graduation agreements vary by the student’s age?**

Every student in the ADP will need to meet the statewide PBGRs. Educational activities may be unique for each student to meet their goals for transitioning to college and career. Many things may be taken into consideration when developing the graduation agreement, including age or other factors that may influence the learning experience.

**Q20. What is the difference between an Adult Learning Plan (ALP) and the ADP Graduation Agreement (GA)?**

Every student served in AEL will have an ALP that outlines all the services that the student will receive while participating in AEL. Only those students pursuing their diploma through the ADP will have a GA, which will describe the educational activities that will help the student gain the skills necessary to demonstrate the PBGRs. For example, Student A wants to explore career interests and career pathways, prepare for the SAT, work with the DOL to pursue jobs and/or training, study for their driver’s license, and pursue a diploma through the ADP. The student works with the AEL provider to create an ALP that outlines the career services provided including referral to the DOL and TABE assessments administered to determine what areas of math and English they need to work on. The ALP also can describe the student’s work to explore their career interests. The GA may include gaining reading skills in the context of studying for their driver’s license or using TABE Academy and attending AEL classes to work on English and math skills in the context of preparing for the SAT and demonstrating proficiencies. In short, the GA will be referenced in the ALP but will be a separate document for the specific purpose of planning toward meeting requirements to graduate through the ADP.

**Q21. If a student unenrolls from a high school that is not participating in the ADP, how would that student access the ADP?**

The local AEL provider serving the student’s town of residence will work with the student to identify the nearest ADP participating high school that will be issuing the diploma. Any high school the student previously attended should be able to share the student’s records with the AEL provider when the student or parent/guardian signs a release.

**Q22. What about students who reside in Vermont, but go to schools outside of the state? When they leave their school and decide to participate in the ADP, how will credit-based courses translate to proficiencies?**



These students will not be treated any differently in terms of intake and development of their ADP GA. Transcripts from the last school attended will be reviewed to develop the GA.

**Q23. Can a student stay on an IEP and be in the ADP?**

The IEP is a part of Special Education services for those qualifying students who are enrolled in school. Only those unenrolled from school can participate in the ADP and AEL providers do not provide Special Education services. Schools and AEL providers must continue to encourage any students eligible for IEPs to stay enrolled or get enrolled in school. Schools and AEL providers must ensure that clear information about the services available through AEL are provided to students considering unenrolling from school.

**Q24. What are the school’s responsibilities for students who had IEPs/504 Plans and are now unenrolled and participating in ADP?**

The student and parent/guardian are strongly encouraged to sign a release that would permit the school to share copies of the student’s IEP. 504 Plans are sometimes included as a part of the IEP, but not necessarily. Each AEL provider will need to develop a new 504 Plan that specifies what accommodations will be provided, including for instruction and other accessibility needs.

**Q25. Although IEPs are for schools, would IEP proficiency recommendations based on the student’s learning disability be honored in ADP?**

No, the PBGRs for ADP are the same for all students. IEPs can be used to inform the development of 504 Plans for access to instruction and other services. Any questions about serving students with disabilities may be directed to the AOE.

**Q26. How is “Vermont resident” defined?**

A Vermont resident for the purpose of the ADP is anyone who has made Vermont their fixed or permanent home and is currently living in the state. However, a minor student is considered a resident of the state where their parents/guardians reside.