

January 26, 2017

Dear Parents/Guardians/Adult Students:

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, requires that school districts provide students with disabilities who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). In prior school years, when a student with a disability graduated from high school with a standard diploma, the school district was no longer obligated to provide FAPE and all services ended. During the 2014 legislative session, section 1003.4282, Florida Statutes, was amended and the opportunity for certain students with disabilities to defer receipt of their standard high school diploma in order to continue to receive services was continued.

SouthTech Academy allows students to defer the receipt of their standard high school diploma if they have an IEP where all graduation requirements have been met by the end of their senior year. The standard diploma can be deferred if the IEP prescribes special education, transition planning, transition services, or related services through age 21. Students will still be able to walk with their graduating class, attend all Senior activities and will be treated just as their peers. However, instead of going right into college or sitting on the couch being unproductive, this program allows your child to further their education to earn more industry certifications that would better prepare them for work and higher education. The student and parent can withdraw from the program at any time, in which the student will then receive the actual diploma.

The students would then be enrolled in our C.O.R.E. (Career Opportunities & Related Education) program. They would attend SouthTech Academy for 2 periods a day in an industry certification course. This would afford students an opportunity that would be free to them and they would be able to earn more industry certifications, possibly in a completely different academy than they attended before.

They would also be teamed up with a support staff member that would help them within a structured work-study, internship or pre-apprenticeship programs. Your child is eligible to defer the standard diploma that is anticipated for award this school year. If you are interested, please complete the back of this paperwork and make sure that Mrs. Kingsley-Scott receives it before February 28.

This paperwork needs to be completed within a timely manner if you and your child may be considering this an amazing opportunity. The unfortunate component is that we cannot go backwards after graduation and make the change. Once your child graduates with his/her standard diploma and they have not deferred, the school district no longer is responsible for providing any types of services.

Please speak with your child and if you feel that your child is not immediately college bound or work ready, have the conversation of this being an option. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call Mrs. Kingsley-Scott at 561-364-7935. I would be more than happy to help you with this process.

Sincerely,

Shawna Kingsley-Scott