

§257-A. Department of Education diploma
(CONTAINS TEXT WITH VARYING EFFECTIVE DATES)

The commissioner shall issue a Department of Education diploma to a student who qualifies for the diploma pursuant to this section. A Department of Education diploma has the same legal status as a diploma awarded by a school administrative unit. [PL 2013, c. 439, §2 (NEW).]

1. Eligibility to apply for diploma. A student is eligible to apply for a Department of Education diploma if that student is unable to satisfy the requirements for a diploma from a school administrative unit because the student experienced one or more education disruptions during the student's educational history.

[PL 2021, c. 445, §1 (AMD).]

1-A. (TEXT EFFECTIVE UNTIL 9/01/26) (TEXT REPEALED 9/01/26) Eligibility for students impacted by COVID-19 pandemic. Notwithstanding the eligibility requirements in subsection 1, a student is eligible to apply for a Department of Education diploma if that student is a 4th year secondary school student and is unable to satisfy the requirements for a diploma from a school administrative unit because the student experienced a significant interruption to the student's education as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and civil emergency during the student's secondary school education history.

This subsection is repealed on September 1, 2026.

[PL 2023, c. 171, §1 (AMD).]

1-B. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Community provider" has the same meaning as in section 5161, subsection 1-B. [PL 2021, c. 445, §1 (NEW).]

B. "Education disruption" has the same meaning as in section 5161, subsection 2-A. [PL 2021, c. 445, §1 (NEW).]

C. "Responsible school" has the same meaning as in section 5161, subsection 5-A and includes a school identified pursuant to section 5163, subsection 6. [PL 2021, c. 445, §1 (NEW).]

D. "Student experiencing homelessness" has the same meaning as in section 5161, subsection 11. [PL 2021, c. 445, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2021, c. 445, §1 (NEW).]

2. Standard for awarding diploma. The commissioner shall issue a diploma under this section only to a student who completes the minimum requirements for a high school diploma pursuant to section 4722.

[PL 2021, c. 445, §1 (AMD).]

3. Process. The responsible school shall provide support for and assist in the completion and submission to the commissioner of an application for a Department of Education diploma for any student who has experienced one or more education disruptions during the student's educational history on the request of the student's parent or guardian or on the request of the student if the student is at least 18 years of age or is a student experiencing homelessness. Community providers may also assist in the application process. The commissioner may require only information on an application necessary to show that the student has completed the minimum requirements for a high school diploma pursuant to section 4722. The commissioner may not require additional information or an interview with the student. Evidence that a student has met these requirements may include, but is not limited to, transcripts, waivers, academic reports and school work recognition plans. The commissioner shall form a review team to review the provided evidence and to make a recommendation to the commissioner on the awarding of a diploma under this section. The review team may seek clarification of the evidence

provided but may not impose additional requirements beyond those specified in the application. The commissioner shall make the final determination of eligibility for a diploma under this section.

[PL 2021, c. 445, §1 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2013, c. 439, §2 (NEW). PL 2021, c. 61, §1 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 445, §1 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 171, §1 (AMD).

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