

Special Education Students Allowed to Participate in Graduation Ceremony

On May 1, 2006, Governor Rendell signed into law Act 31, effective immediately, thereby mandating that beginning with this year's graduation, special education students be allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies with their classmates even if their individualized education program (IEP) prescribes continuing education beyond four years of high school. Special education students who have attended four years of high school would receive a certificate of attendance at a graduation ceremony with their peers. However, receipt of a certificate of attendance does not preclude a special education student from receiving a high school diploma upon completion of their IEP.

Specifically, Act 31 adds Section 1614 (Participation By Students with Disabilities in High School Graduation Ceremonies) to the Public School Code which provides that "(a) For the 2005-2006 school year and each school year thereafter, a board of school directors of a school district, an area vocational-technical school or a charter school shall allow a student with a disability, whose individualized education program as established pursuant to 22 Pa. Code § 14.131 (relating to IEP) prescribes continued special education programs beyond the fourth year of high school, to participate in commencement ceremonies with the student's graduating class and receive a certificate of attendance, provided that the student has attended four years of high school regardless of whether the student has completed the individualized education program. (b) Nothing in this section shall be construed to preclude a student with a disability from receiving a high school diploma when the student satisfactorily completes an individualized education program as required under 22 Pa. Code § 14.131."

Clients who have questions regarding issues discussed in this article, should feel free to call us at 215-345-9111