

High School Graduation Diplomas

The National Center for Educational Opportunities did a study in 2011 to identify diploma options across all states. Their findings are summarized in the table below. All 51 respondents offer a standard diploma (which is Core 40 in Indiana). Many of the options offered are actually the standard diploma plus a specific endorsement.

In response to a variety of state and local interests, states are clearly experimenting with options in their diploma structures. Only three states offer an occupational diploma, which is down from their 2003 and 2007 results. Georgia, for example, had experimented with an occupational diploma for a short time but moved pretty quickly for equity reasons.

The regular diploma (“Core 40” in Indiana, established by state law IC 20-32-4-1) with a variety of endorsements (“Certificate of Achievement” in the chart and in Indiana per state law IC 20-32-3) such as AP, IB, CTE, etc. seems to be an innovative approach that does not jeopardize students’ options for their future college and career pathway choices.

High School Graduation Diplomas Available by State

(from 2011 NCEO study by Johnson & Thurlow)

	Honors Diploma	Regular Diploma	Certificate of Achievement	Occupational Diploma	Other	Total
Alabama	•	•		•	•a	4
Alaska		•	•			3
Arizona		•				1
Arkansas		•				1
California		•	•		•b	4
Colorado	•	•				4
Connecticut		•				1
Delaware	•	•	•			3
District of Columbia		•				2
Florida		•		•		4
Georgia		•				3
Hawaii	•	•				3
Idaho		•				1
Illinois		•				2
Indiana	•	•	★			3

	Honors Diploma	Regular Diploma	Certificate of Achievement	Occupational Diploma	Other	Total
Iowa		•	•			3
Kansas		•	•			3
Kentucky	•	•	•			3
Louisiana		•	•		•c	5
Maine		•				1
Maryland		•				1
Massachusetts		•			•d	2
Michigan		•				1
Minnesota		•				1
Mississippi		•		•		3
Missouri		•				2
Montana		•				1
Nebraska		•	•			3
Nevada	•	•			•e	7
New Hampshire		•				2
New Jersey		•				1
New Mexico	•	•				3
New York	•	•				3
North Carolina		•	•			2
North Dakota		•				1
Ohio	•	•				2
Oklahoma		•				1
Oregon	•	•	•		•f	5
Pennsylvania		•			•g	2
Rhode Island		•	•			2
South Carolina		•				1
South Dakota		•				1

	Honors Diploma	Regular Diploma	Certificate of Achievement	Occupational Diploma	Other	Total
Tennessee		•				3
Texas	•	•	•			3
Utah		•				1
Vermont		•				1
Virginia	•	•	•			5
Washington		•				1
West Virginia		•				2
Wisconsin		•	•		•h	4
Wyoming		•	•			3
Total:	13	51	15	3	8	

★Certificates of Achievement (Indiana Code IC 20-32-3)

a Graduation Certificate (Alabama)

b Diploma with endorsement for Golden State (California)

c Career Diploma, Skills Certificates, Other Endorsements (Louisiana)

d LEAs may offer any or all of the other types (Massachusetts)

e Adult Standard Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Standard Diploma with CTE Endorsement (Nevada)

f Extended or Modified Diploma (Oregon)

g Recognition of Achievement (Pennsylvania)

h High School Equivalency Diploma (Wisconsin)