

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

To: District Superintendents, Superintendents,
High School Principals

Date: April 26, 2012

From: Kevin Smith, Deputy Commissioner ACCES *KAS*
Ken Slentz, Deputy Commissioner P-12 *KS*

Subject: Reauthorization of "Operation Recognition"

Section 305 of the Education Law requires the Commissioner of Education to develop a program whereby any veteran of the armed forces who served during WWII, Korea, or Vietnam, and who was unable to complete a secondary education, may be able to obtain a high school diploma based on knowledge and experience gained while in the service.

Consequently, a program was established whereby candidates could submit evidence of military service to any New York State school that issues general or local diplomas, and without a fee, the school would supply the applicant with a local high school diploma.

On July 1, 2011, schools were no longer authorized to issue local diplomas, and the program was temporarily suspended. In February 2012, an amendment to the Commissioner's regulation was published in the State registry. The amended regulation reauthorizes school districts to issue local high school diplomas to qualified veterans. The regulation was adopted by the Regents on April 24 and will become effective on May 16.

The amended regulation is similar to the rules that were in effect until July 1, 2011. Specifically:

- The candidate may submit to any school district evidence of service during World War II (Dec. 7, 1941 – Dec. 31, 1946), the Korean conflict (June 27, 1950 – January 31, 1955) or the Vietnam War (May 1, 1961 – April 30, 1975).
- Such documentation may include discharge papers or other such documents or a letter from a recognized veteran's agency affirming such service. Candidates do not need to show evidence of attendance at a school in New York State. They need only affirm in writing that they do not possess a high school diploma and are residents of New York State.
- Candidates possessing a High School Equivalency Diploma are eligible for the program.
- Diplomas may be awarded to next of kin, if eligibility is established.

Upon submission of appropriate documentation, the school district shall issue the candidate a local diploma. No fee shall be charged.

We have attached a copy of the new regulation. Please be prepared to comply with this regulation beginning on May 16, 2012.

Thank you.

Attachment