

High School Graduation Requirements

The Board of Education and Superintendent desire each student to complete the approved secondary program and receive a diploma of graduation from high school in order that they may be provided with opportunities for postsecondary education and/or employment.

District students shall complete graduation course requirements as specified in Education Code 51225.3. Unless exempted as provided in "Exemptions from District-Adopted Graduation Requirements," district students shall also complete other course requirements adopted by the Board. Students who are exempted from district-adopted graduation requirements shall be eligible to participate in any graduation ceremony and school activity related to graduation in which other students are eligible to participate.

REQUIREMENTS FOR A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA:

To obtain a high school diploma, students shall complete the following courses in grades 9-12, with each course being one year unless otherwise specified:

- 1 Three courses in English (Education Code 51225.3)
- 2 Two courses in mathematics (Education Code 51225.3)

Students shall complete at least one mathematics course that meets the state academic content standards for Algebra I or Mathematics I. Students may complete such coursework prior to grade 9 provided that they also complete two mathematics courses in grades 9-12. (Education Code 51224.5)

- 3 Successful completion of an approved computer science course that is classified as a "category C" course based on the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) "A-G" admission requirements shall be counted toward the satisfaction of additional graduation requirements in mathematics. (Education Code 51225.3, 51225.35)
- 4 Two courses in science, including biological and physical sciences (Education Code 51225.3)
- 5 Three courses in social studies, including United States (U.S.) history and geography; world history, culture, and geography; a one-semester course in American government and civics; and a one-semester course in economics (Education Code 51225.3)

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- 6 One course in visual or performing arts, world language, or career technical education (CTE). For purposes of this requirement, a course in American Sign Language shall be deemed a course in world language (Education Code 51225.3)

To be counted towards meeting graduation requirements, a CTE course shall be aligned to the CTE model curriculum standards and framework adopted by the State Board of Education. (Education Code 51225.3)

- 7 Two courses in physical education, unless the student has been otherwise exempted pursuant to other sections of the Education Code (Education Code 51225.3)
- 8 Beginning with the 2029-30 school year, a one-semester course in ethnic studies (Education Code 51225.3)

- 9 Additional coursework:

Exemptions from District-Adopted Graduation Requirements

The Superintendent or designee shall exempt or waive any graduation requirements adopted by the Board that are in addition to statewide course requirements for foster youth, student experiencing homelessness, migrant student who transfers into the district or between district schools any time after completing the second year of high school, children of military families, newcomer student who is in the third or fourth year of high school or when it is determined to be in the best interest of the student in accordance with Educational Code 51225.1 and 49701. This exemption shall not apply if the Superintendent or designee makes a finding that the student is reasonably able to complete the additional requirements in time to graduate by the end of the fourth year of high school.

Within 30 days of the transfer into a school by the foster youth, student experiencing homelessness, former juvenile court school student, child of a military family, migrant student, or newcomer student, as applicable, the Superintendent or designee shall notify any eligible student, and others as required by law, of the availability of the exemption from local graduation requirements and whether the student qualifies for it. (Education Code 51225.1)

The Superintendent or designee shall not require or request the foster youth, student experiencing homelessness, former juvenile court school student, child of a military family, migrant student, or newcomer student who is exempted from district-established graduation requirements and who completes the

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statewide coursework requirements before the end of the fourth year of high school, and would otherwise be entitled to remain in school, to graduate before the end of the student's fourth year of high school. (Education Code 51225.1)

If the foster youth, student experiencing homelessness, former juvenile court school student, child of a military family, migrant student, or newcomer student was not properly notified of an exemption, declined the exemption, or was not previously exempted, the student or the student's educational rights holder may request the exemption and the Superintendent or designee shall exempt the student within 30 days of the request. Any such student who at one time qualified for the exemption may request the exemption even if the student is no longer eligible. (Education Code 51225.1)

The Superintendent or designee may also exempt students facing demonstratable barriers to education progress, specifically addressing mental or physical health challenges and those facing unavoidable lapses in attendances from additional local coursework requirements. Prior to granting an exemption, the district shall consult with the student and the student's educational rights holder regarding the impact of not fulfilling locally required coursework on the student's ability to gain admission to a four-year institution of higher education.

Additionally, a student with disabilities shall be eligible for an exemption from all coursework and other requirements adopted by the Board in addition to the statewide course requirements for high school graduation, if the student's individualized education program (IEP) provides for both of the following requirements: (Education Code 51225.31)

1. That the student is eligible to take the alternate assessment as described in Education Code 60640
2. That the student complete state standards aligned coursework to meet the statewide coursework specified in Education Code 51225.3

The district's responsibility to provide a free appropriate public education shall not terminate when a student with a disability who is exempted from district-adopted graduation requirements participates in graduation activities unless the IEP team, which includes the parent/guardian and student, has determined that the student has completed the high school experience. (Education Code 51225.31)

Annually, the Superintendent or designee shall report to the California Department of Education, in accordance with Education Code 51225.1, the number of student's graduating from the fourth or fifth year of high school who, for the prior school year, graduated with an exemption from district-established graduation requirements that are in addition to statewide coursework requirements.

Honorary Diplomas

The Board may grant honorary high school diplomas to a student who is terminally ill. The honorary diploma shall be clearly distinguishable from the regular diploma of graduation awarded by the district.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

37252 Supplemental instructional programs

37254 Supplemental instruction based on failure to pass exit exam by end of grade 12

37254.1 Required student participation in supplemental instruction

47612 Enrollment in charter school

48200 Compulsory attendance

48412 Certificate of proficiency

48430 Continuation education schools and classes

48645.5 Acceptance of coursework

48980 Notification of parent/guardian

49701 Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

51224 Skills and knowledge required for adult life

51224.5 Algebra instruction

51225.1 Exemption from district graduation requirements

51225.2 Pupil in foster care defined; acceptance of coursework, credits, retaking a course

51225.3 Requirements for graduation

51225.5 Honorary diplomas; foreign exchange students

51228 Graduation requirements

51240-51246 Exemptions from requirements

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INSTRUCTION

Board Policy 6146.1

51250-51251 Assistance to military dependents

51410-51412 Diplomas

51420-51427 High school equivalency certificates

51450-51455 Golden State Seal Merit Diploma

51745 Independent Study Restrictions

56390-56392 Recognition for educational achievement, special education

66204 Certification of high school courses as meeting university admissions criteria

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

1600-1651 Graduation of pupils from grade 12 and credit toward graduation

COURT DECISION

O'Connell v. Superior Court (Valenzuela), (2006) 141 Cal.App.4th 1452

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