

InstructionHigh School Graduation Requirements

The Board of Education desires to prepare all students to successfully complete the high school course of study and to obtain a diploma that represents their educational achievement and increases their opportunities for postsecondary education and 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.

Course Requirements

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)
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)

Because the prescribed course of study may not accommodate the needs of some students, the Board shall provide alternative means for the completion of prescribed courses in accordance with law.

Exemptions from District-Adopted Graduation Requirements

A foster youth, student experiencing homelessness, former juvenile court school student, child of a military family, migrant student who transfers into the District or between District schools any time after completing the second year of high school, or newcomer student who is in the third or fourth year of high school shall be exempted from any graduation requirements adopted by the Board that are in addition to Statewide course requirements. 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 a 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 a 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 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)

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 students 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.

Retroactive Diplomas

Any student who completed grade 12 in the 2003-04 through 2014-15 school year and met all applicable graduation requirements other than the passage of the high school exit examination shall be granted a high school diploma. (Education Code 51413)

In addition, the District may retroactively grant high school diplomas to former students who: (Education Code 48204.4, 51430, 51440)

1. Departed California against their will while in grade 12 and did not receive a diploma because the departure interrupted their education, provided that they were in good academic standing at the time of the departure.

Persons may be considered to have departed California against their will if they were in custody of a government agency and were transferred to another state, were subject to a lawful order from a court or government agency that authorized their removal from California, were subject to a lawful order and were permitted to depart California before being removed from California pursuant to the lawful order, were removed or were permitted to depart voluntarily pursuant to the Federal Immigration and Nationality Act, or departed due to other circumstances determined by the District that are consistent with the purposes of Education Code 48204.4.

In determining whether to award a diploma under these circumstances, the Superintendent or designee shall consider any coursework that may have been completed outside of the U.S. or through online or virtual courses.

2. Were interned by order of the Federal government during World War II or are honorably discharged veterans of World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War, provided that they were enrolled in a District high school immediately preceding the internment or military service and did not receive a diploma because their education was interrupted due to the internment or military service in those wars.

Deceased former students who satisfy these conditions may be granted a retroactive diploma to be received by their next of kin.

3. Are veterans who entered the military service of the U.S. while in grade 12 and who had satisfactorily completed the first half of the work required for grade 12 in a District school.

4. Are former members of the military, a resident of California, and received an honorable discharge, or, are current members of the military, a resident of California, and a resident of California when entering the military

In determining whether to award a diploma under these circumstances, the Superintendent or designee shall evaluate classes completed in any high school, community college, or State college, grant credit toward graduation for military service and training received while in the military, and if satisfied that the person has completed the equivalent of the requirements for graduation from high school, grant the person a diploma of graduation.

5. Were in their senior year of high school during the 2019-20 school year, were in good academic standing and on track to graduate at the end of the 2019-20 school year as of March 1, 2020, and were unable to complete the Statewide graduation requirements as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

Honorary Diplomas

The Board may grant an honorary high school diploma to: (Education Code 51225.5)

1. An international exchange student who has not completed the course of study ordinarily required for graduation and who is returning to the student's home country following the completion of one academic school year in the District.

2. A student who is terminally ill.

The honorary diploma shall be clearly distinguishable from the regular diploma of graduation awarded by the District. (Education Code 51225.5)

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

220 Prohibition of discrimination

47612 Average daily attendance in charter school

48200 Compulsory attendance

48204.4 Parents/guardians departing California against their will

48412 Certificate of proficiency

48430 Continuation education schools and classes

48645.5 Former juvenile court school students; enrollment

48980 Parent/Guardian notifications

49701 Provisions of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

51224 Skills and knowledge required for adult life

51224.5 Algebra in course of study for grades 7-12

51225.1 Exemption from district graduation requirements

51225.2 Course credits

51225.3 High School graduation requirements

51225.31 Graduation exemption for students with disabilities

51225.35 Mathematics course requirements; computer science

51225.36 Instruction in sexual harassment and violence; districts that require health education for graduation

51225.5 Honorary diplomas; foreign exchange and terminally ill students

51225.6 Instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation; districts that require health education for graduation

51225.9 Courses of study, grades 7 to 12; career technical education

51226.7 Model curriculum in ethnic studies

51228 Course of study; offerings and timely opportunity

51230 Credit for community emergency response training

51240-51246 Exemptions from requirements

51250-51251 Assistance to military dependents

51410-51413 Diplomas

51420-51427 High school equivalency certificates

51430 Retroactive high school diplomas

51440 Credit and granting of diploma to veterans and members of the military service

51450-51455 Golden State Seal Merit Diploma

51744-51749.6 Independent study

56390-56392 Recognition for educational achievement, special education

60640 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress

60900.2 Students with Disabilities Graduation Reporting

66204 Certification of high school courses as meeting university admissions criteria

67386 Student safety; affirmative consent standard

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

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

4600-4670 Uniform complaint procedures

UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 20

7011 Definition of newcomer student

CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, TITLE 34

300.1-300.818 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act