

Instruction**BP 6146.1 (a)****HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

The Governing Board desires to prepare all students to successfully complete the high school course of study and 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. Additionally, unless exempted as provided in "Exemptions from District-Adopted Graduation Requirements" for Highly Mobile Students" below, or in Board Policy 6146.4 - Differential Graduation and Competency Standards for Students with Disabilities, district students shall 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. Four courses in English (Education Code 51225.3)
2. Three 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)

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)

3. Three courses in science, including biological and physical sciences (Education Code 51225.3)

4. 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)

5. 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)

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6. Two courses in physical education, unless the student has been otherwise exempted pursuant to other sections of the Education Code (Education Code 51225.3)

7. Beginning with the 2029-30 school year, a one-semester course in ethnic studies (Education Code 51225.3)

8. Beginning with the 2030-31 school year, a separate, stand-alone one-semester course in personal finance, that is not combined with any other course (Education Code 51225.3)

A student who completes a separate stand-alone one-semester course in personal finance may be exempted from the requirement to complete a one-semester course in economics. (Education Code 51225.3)

Additionally, to obtain a high school diploma, students in grades 9-12 shall complete the following Board-adopted courses or requirements:

40 hours of community service (community service hours must be entered and verified each school year for that year's activities)

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.

The Superintendent or designee may exempt a student from any graduation requirements adopted by the Board that are in addition to the statewide course requirements. Before exempting a student from such requirements, the Superintendent or designee shall consult with the student and the educational rights holder for the student regarding any impact of not fulfilling district-adopted coursework on the student's ability to gain admission to an institution of higher education. (Education Code 51225.3)

Exemptions from District-Adopted Graduation Requirements for Highly Mobile Students

“Highly mobile student” means a foster youth, student experiencing homelessness, former juvenile court school student, child of a military family, student who is migratory, or a student participating in a newcomer program as specified in Education Code 51225.1.

A highly mobile student who transfers into the district or between district schools any time after completing the second year of high school or, if a 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.

To determine whether a highly mobile student is in the third or fourth year of high school, the district shall use either the number of credits the student has earned as of the date of the transfer, the length of school enrollment, or, for a student with significant gaps in school attendance, the student's age as compared to the average age of students in the third or fourth year of high school, whichever qualifies

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the student for the exemption. Additionally, for a newcomer student, enrollment in grade 11 or 12 based on the average age of students in the third or fourth year of high school may be used to determine whether the student is in the third or fourth year of high school. (Education Code 51225.1)

Within 30 days of the transfer into a school by a highly mobile student, 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)

If a highly mobile student who is eligible for an exemption from district-established graduation requirements was not properly notified of the 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)

When a highly mobile student is not exempted from district-established graduation requirements based on the Superintendent's or designee's determination that the student is reasonably able to complete such requirements by the end of the student's fourth year of high school, within 30 calendar days of the following academic year the student shall be reevaluated based on the student's course completion status at the time to determine if the student continues to be reasonably able to complete the district-established graduation requirements in time to graduate by the end of the student's fourth year of high school. Written notice as to whether the student then qualifies for exemption shall be provided to the student, the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student, and if applicable, to the student's social worker or probation officer. (Education Code 51225.1)

If, upon reevaluation, it is determined that the highly mobile student is not reasonably able to complete the district-established graduation requirements in time to graduate from high school by the end of the student's fourth year of high school, the Superintendent or designee shall provide the student with the option to receive an exemption from district-established graduation requirements or stay in school for a fifth year to complete the district-established graduation requirements upon agreement with the student, or if under 18 years of age, the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student, and provide notifications in accordance with Education Code 51225.1. (Education Code 51225.1)

When a highly mobile student is exempted from district-established graduation requirements, the Superintendent or designee shall consult with the student and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student regarding the following: (Education Code 51225.1)

1. Discussion of how any requirements that are waived may affect the student's postsecondary education or vocation plans, including the ability to gain admission to a postsecondary educational institution

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2. Discussion and information about other options available to the student, including, but not limited to, a fifth year of high school, possible credit recovery, and any transfer opportunities available through the California Community Colleges
3. Consideration of the student's academic data and any other information relevant to making an informed decision on whether to accept the exemption

The district shall not require or request a highly mobile student to transfer schools in order to qualify for an exemption and shall not grant any request made by an eligible student, or the student's parent/guardian, the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student, the student's social worker, the student's probation officer, or the district liaison on behalf of the student, as applicable, for a transfer solely to qualify for an exemption. (Education Code 51225.1)

The Superintendent or designee shall not require a highly mobile student who is eligible for an exemption from district-established graduation requirements and would otherwise be entitled to remain in attendance at the school, to accept the exemption or be denied enrollment in, or the ability to complete, courses for which the student is otherwise eligible, including courses necessary to attend an institution of higher education, regardless of whether such courses are required for statewide graduation requirements. (Education Code 51225.1)

If a highly mobile student is exempted from district-established graduation requirements, the exemption shall not be revoked. Additionally, the exemption shall continue to apply while the student is enrolled in the school or transfers to another school, including a charter school, or school district, including after the student has ceased to meet the definition of a highly mobile student. (Education Code 51225.1)

The Superintendent or designee shall not require or request a highly mobile 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)

Upon making a finding that a highly mobile student is reasonably able to complete district-established graduation requirements within the fifth year of high school, the Superintendent or designee shall: (Education Code 51225.1)

1. Consult with the student and, if under 18 years of age, the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student, of the option to remain in school for a fifth year to complete the district-established graduation requirements and how that will affect the student's ability to gain admission to a postsecondary educational institution
2. Consult with and provide information to the student about transfer opportunities available through the California Community Colleges

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3. Upon agreement the student or with the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student if under 18 years of age, permit the student to stay in school for a fifth year to complete the district-established graduation requirements.
4. For a foster youth or a student who is experiencing homelessness, consult with the student and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student of the option to remain in the student's school of origin

When a highly mobile student who is eligible for an exemption from district-established graduation requirements is not reasonably able to complete the district-established graduation requirements within the student's fifth year of high school but is reasonably able to complete the statewide coursework requirements within the fifth year of high school, the student shall be exempted from all district-established graduation requirements and be provided with the option to remain in school for a fifth year to complete the statewide requirements. In such situations, the Superintendent or designee shall consult with the student and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student, regarding the following: (Education Code 51225.1)

1. The student's option to remain in school for a fifth year to complete statewide coursework requirements
2. The effect of waiving the district-established requirements and remaining in school for a fifth year on the student's postsecondary education or vocation plans, including the ability to gain admission to an institution of higher education
3. Other options available to the student, including, but not limited to, possible credit recovery, and any transfer opportunities available through the California Community Colleges
4. The student's academic data and any other information relevant to making an informed decision on whether to accept the exemption and option to remain in school for a fifth year to complete the statewide coursework requirements

Information regarding the educational rights of highly mobile students, as specified in Education Code 51225.1, shall be included in the annual uniform complaint procedures notification distributed to students, parents/guardians, employees, and other interested parties pursuant to 5 CCR 4622. (Education Code 51225.2)

Any complaint alleging that the district has not complied with requirements regarding the education of highly mobile students, as specified in Education Code 51225.2, may be filed in accordance with the district's procedures in Administrative Regulation 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures.

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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 the 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)

Additionally, 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 United States 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 United States while in grade 12 and who had satisfactorily completed the first half of the work required for grade 12 in a district school.

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

State

5 CCR 1600-1651: Graduation of students from grade 12 and credit toward graduation

5 CCR 4600-4670: Uniform complaint procedures

Ed Code 60900.2: Students with disabilities graduation reporting

Ed. Code 220: Prohibition of discrimination

Ed. Code 47612: Average daily attendance in charter school

Ed. Code 48200: Compulsory attendance

Ed. Code 48204.4: Parents/guardians departing California against their will

Ed. Code 48412: Certificate of proficiency

Ed. Code 48430: Continuation education schools and classes

Ed. Code 48645.5: Former juvenile court school students; enrollment

Ed. Code 48980: Parent/Guardian notifications

Ed. Code 49701: Provisions of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children

Ed. Code 51222: Courses of study, grades 7 to 12

Ed. Code 51224: Skills and knowledge required for adult life

Ed. Code 51224.5: Algebra in course of study for grades 7-12

Ed. Code 51225.1: Exemption from district graduation requirements

Ed. Code 51225.2: Course credits

Ed. Code 51225.25: Students participating in a newcomer program; definition

Ed. Code 51225.3: High school graduation requirements

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Ed. Code 51225.31: Graduation exemption for students with disabilities
Ed. Code 51225.35: Mathematics course requirements; computer science
Ed. Code 51225.36: Instruction in sexual harassment and violence; districts that require health education for graduation
Ed. Code 51225.5: Honorary diplomas; foreign exchange and terminally ill students
Ed. Code 51225.6: Instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation; districts that require health education for graduation
Ed. Code 51225.9: Courses of study, grades 7 to 12; career technical education
Ed. Code 51226.7: Model curriculum in ethnic studies
Ed. Code 51226.8: Personal finance curriculum guide
Ed. Code 51228: Course of study; offerings and timely opportunity
Ed. Code 51230: Credit for community emergency response training
Ed. Code 51240-51246: Exemptions from requirements
Ed. Code 51250-51251: Assistance to military dependents
Ed. Code 51410-51413: Diplomas
Ed. Code 51420-51427: High school equivalency certificates
Ed. Code 51430: Retroactive high school diplomas
Ed. Code 51440: Credit and granting of diploma to veterans and members of the military service
Ed. Code 51450-51455: Golden State Seal Merit Diploma
Ed. Code 51744-51749.6: Independent study
Ed. Code 56390-56392: Recognition for educational achievement; special education
Ed. Code 60640: California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress
Ed. Code 66204: Certification of high school courses as meeting university admission criteria
Ed. Code 67386: Student safety; affirmative consent standard

Federal

20 USC 7011: Definition of newcomer student
34 CFR 300.1-300.818: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Management Resources

California Department of Education Publication: Alternate Assessment IEP Team Guidance
California Department of Education Publication: Diploma Pathway for Students who Qualify for the California Alternate Assessment, November 2024
Court Decision: O'Connell v. Superior Court (Valenzuela) (2006) 141 Cal.App.4th 1452
Website: California Department of Education, Personal Finance
Website: CSBA District and County Office of Education Legal Services
Website: California Department of Education, High School
Website: University of California, List of Approved A-G Courses
Website: CSBA

Policy Adopted: 6/9/26

ORCUTT UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
Orcutt, California