

» Policy 6146.1: High School Graduation Requirements

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 08/28/1995 | Last Revised Date: 03/27/2006 | Last Reviewed [see more](#)
Date: 03/27/2006

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 may be permitted to participate in the graduation ceremony and receive a diploma of graduation from the high school only after completing a full semester of residence at the high school during the second semester of their senior year and only after earning a minimum of 220 units of credit in the prescribed course of study and meeting the standards of proficiency established by the state.

~~Students moving into the district from another community at any time during their four years in high school will be able to graduate from their school of residence provided they have met all graduation requirements.~~ Students transferring in their senior year will be held to the graduation standards as set forth by the school from which they are transferring.

Students enrolled in an alternative program, including those students referred to the alternative program during the second semester of their senior year are eligible to receive a diploma from the alternative school upon meeting all district graduation requirements. Appeals for extenuating circumstances relative to this provision must be filed with the principal of the referring school.

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.

Subject and Unit Requirements for Graduation up to class of 2026:

Two hundred and twenty units of credit must be completed, including the following subject-specific requirements:

English	40 credits
Mathematics including Algebra or higher	20 credits
Science	20 credits
Physical 2 semesters	
Life 2 semesters	
Social Studies	35 credits

World History	2 semesters	
U.S. History	2 semesters	
Civics or Government	1 semester	
Economics	1 semester	
Individual and Social/Global Perspectives or Social Studies	1 semester	
Fine Arts/Foreign Language/ Practical Arts (a minimum of 10 in 2 of the 3 area)		20 credits
Physical Education		20 credits
Health Education		5 credits
Electives		60 credits

Subject and Unit Requirements for Graduation for Class of 2027 and beyond:

Two hundred and twenty units of credit must be completed, including the following subject-specific requirements:

English		40 credits
Mathematics including Algebra or higher		20 credits
Science		20 credits
Physical	2 semesters	
Life	2 semesters	
Social Studies		40 credits
Ethnic Studies	2 semesters	
World History	2 semesters	
U.S. History	2 semesters	
Civics or Government	1 semester	
Economics	1 semester	
Fine Arts/Foreign Language/ Practical Arts (a minimum of 10 in 2 of the 3 area)		20 credits
Physical Education		20 credits
Health Education		5 credits
Electives		55 credits

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 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 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)

That the student is eligible to take the alternate assessment as described in Education Code 60640

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 an honorary high school diploma to: (Education Code 51225.5)

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

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)

Alternative Means for the Completion of Credits Toward Graduation

The Superintendent shall establish regulations under which the district may grant credits toward graduation for college courses and private instruction attended by district students. Credit towards graduation also may be granted pursuant to law for training received in the armed forces and for correspondence instruction from an accredited institution.

The Superintendent may grant physical education credit for participation in district interscholastic athletic programs when a student has been exempted from physical education classes because of this participation and when such participation entails a comparable amount of time and physical activity.

Students using interscholastic athletics participation to fulfill physical education requirements may be graded on this participation, provided that a teacher credentialed to teach physical education supervises this participation and assigns the grade.

The Governing Board recognizes that the prescribed course of study may not accommodate the needs of some students. The district may grant credits toward graduation for course work completed in private instruction and for credits transferred in from nontraditional sources. Alternative means for the completion of credits toward graduation may include:

1. Independent Study

2. Juvenile Court School

The district shall accept for credit any coursework satisfactorily completed by students while detained in a juvenile court school or county or state-operated institution. District students who successfully complete district graduation requirements while so detained shall receive a diploma from the school they last attended. (Education Code 48645.5)

3. Private School Instruction

The district shall accept for credit courses successfully completed in a private school that is accredited or licensed.

4. Credit earned at a postsecondary institution

The district shall give credit toward high school graduation for course work successfully completed

at a junior college, state college, or university provided:

- a. The student makes a written application for the credit in advance. (5 CCR 1630)
The student receives the same letter grade for the high school credit as is granted by the college.
Credits earned at a junior college, state college or university are doubled for the purpose of counting them toward high school graduation.
5. Credit for correspondence or distant learning instruction from an accredited institution.
6. Courses offered by regional occupational centers or programs.
7. Work experience or other outside school experience.
8. Credits granted for course work completed in nontraditional settings.

The Board recognizes that an alternative course of study may have to be designed to meet the needs of individual students for whom the standard program does not optimally support their particular learning styles and educational needs.

At his/her discretion, the principal may grant credit toward high school graduation for private instruction and coursework completed by agreed upon alternative means. The conditions for acceptable completion of such work and the means by which grades and credits will be assigned and proficiency in the subject demonstrated, must be delineated in an approved Independent Study Contract. Typically this contract would be developed in an IEP or 504 meeting.

Units and grades earned for private instruction will be entered on the transcript as "transfer credits earned in a nontraditional setting". Typically, 15 hours of verified work will result in one unit of credit.

A student may not count more than 40 "credits from nontraditional sources toward graduation" without the approval of the high school principal.

Repeated Classes

Board Policy 5121 provides students with the opportunity to repeat a course in order to raise his/her grade.

Only courses repeated within the Mountain View-Los Altos school system, i.e. in summer school, through the Moffett Independent Study Program, or during the school year, may be used to replace a grade previously earned in a given course. For courses "repeated" within this district, Administrative Regulation 5121 specifies that both grades received will be entered on the student's transcript, but only the highest grade received will be computed as part of the student's GPA.

Requirements for graduation and specified alternative means for completing the prescribed course of study shall be made available to students, parents/guardians and the public. (Education Code 51225.3)

Foreign exchange students may receive honorary diplomas pursuant to Education Code 51225.3.

Students who complete all requirements for a high school diploma and demonstrate mastery of the curriculum in at least six subject matter areas may qualify for the Golden State Merit Diploma.

This honors diploma shall be issued to eligible students who demonstrate mastery on the Golden State Exam in mathematics, English language arts, science, United States history and two subject matter areas selected by the student. (Education Code 51450)

~~Standards of Proficiency/High School Exit Examination~~

~~As condition for earning a high school diploma, students must pass the State of California High School Exit Examination. When students do not demonstrate sufficient progress toward passing the exit examination, supplemental instruction offered by the district shall be designed to assist students to succeed on the exit examination and shall reflect statewide academic standards to the extent that the district has aligned its curriculum with those standards. (Education Code 60851)~~

~~Supplemental instruction shall include summer school instructional programs for students in grades 7 through 12 who do not demonstrate sufficient progress toward passing the exit examination. (Education Code 37252)~~

~~The examination shall be administered in accordance with law, Board policy and administrative regulation.~~

~~At the beginning of each school year or at the time a student transfers into the district, the Board shall provide written notification to all students in grades 9 through 12 and to their parents/guardians that, starting in the 2003-04 school year and each year thereafter, each student completing the 12th grade shall be required to successfully pass the state's high school exit examination as a condition of graduation. The notification shall include, at a minimum, the date of the examination, the requirements for passing the examination, and the consequences of not passing the examination. (Education Code 48980, 60850)~~

~~No student shall be considered having failed the High School Exit Exam until after the last and final administration of the test, at the end of summer school following the student's senior year.~~

~~Students who have completed all other subject and unit requirements for graduation but who after a final administration of this test at the end of the summer school session following the student's senior year, are still not able to pass the California High School Exit Exam, may be granted a certificate of completion in lieu of a California high school diploma.~~

~~The Board recognizes that limited command of the English language (EL) may be a significant barrier for English language learners in passing the High School Exit Exam. Therefore, the Board adopts a policy whereby EL students enrolled in the district for less than twelve months, may be accorded nonstandard accommodations as permitted by law during the administration of the High School Exit Exam.~~

Graduation Requirements for Special Education Students

Beginning with the Class of 2004, Special Education students in grades 9-12 who have an active Individualized Education Plan (IEP) must complete all course and examination requirements for graduation in order to receive a diploma.

1. Special Education students are required to take the High School Examination in order to graduate from high school and receive a diploma.
2. At the end of the student's freshman year, or for students entering the district after the 9th grade, at the first IEP meeting, written notice must be provided to the parents/guardians of each Special Education student regarding whether or not the student will be on a diploma track or an alternative Certificate of Completion track.
 - a. The IEP team determines the appropriate track:
 - i. If a diploma track is identified, the student must complete all graduation requirements ~~including the High School Exit Exam.~~
 - ii. If a Certificate of Completion track is identified, the student must meet certificate requirements including consistent attendance, progress in IEP goals and objectives, and appropriate behavior.
 - iii. **If an Alternative Diploma track is identified, the student must meet certificate requirements including consistent attendance, progress in IEP goals and objectives, and appropriate behavior.**
3. ~~For the Special Education student who is allowed testing accommodations within his/her IEP, that student may be administered the High School Exit Exam with the appropriate accommodations as determined by the California Department of Education.~~
4. A Special Education student who fails to meet the requirements for graduation will be subject to the same policies regarding graduation as all other district students.
5. ~~Though a Special Education student on the Certificate of Completion track~~ **or Alternative Diploma Track** ~~will not meet the requirements to receive a diploma, he/she~~ may participate in the graduation ceremony with ~~his/her~~ **their** graduation class provided ~~he/she~~ they has **have** met all certificate **or Alternative Diploma Track**-requirements.
6. The Special Education student who is exempted from requirements for high school graduation remains eligible for Special Education services through the age of 21.