

***Riverside County Office of Education  
Board Policy 6146.1 High School Graduation Requirements***

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**INSTRUCTION**

**SUBJECT: High School Graduation Requirements**

The County Board of Education (County Board) and County Superintendent of Schools or designee (County Superintendent) desire 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.

County Office of Education (County Office) students shall complete graduation course requirements as specified in Education Code 51225.3. Unless exempted as provided in "Exemptions from County Office-Adopted Graduation Requirements," County Office students shall also complete other course requirements adopted by the County Board. Students who are exempted from County Office-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 through 12, with each course being one year unless otherwise specified:

1. Three courses in English (Education Code Section 51225.3)
2. Two courses in mathematics (Education Code Section 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. Two courses in science, including biological and physical sciences (Education Code Section 51225.3)
4. One semester course in health. (Education Code Section 51225.3)
5. Three courses in social studies, including United States 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 Section 51225.3)
6. One course in visual or performing arts, world language, including American Sign Language- or career technical education (CTE) (Education Code Section 51225.3)

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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

7. Two courses in physical education, unless the student has been otherwise exempted pursuant to other sections of the Education Code. (Education Code Section 51225.3)
8. Commencing with pupils graduating in the 2029-30 school year, a one-semester course in ethnic studies (Education Code 51225.3) Commencing with the 2025–26 school year, the County Office shall offer pupils in grades 9 to 12 at least a one-semester course in ethnic studies. A pupil may fulfill this requirement through the completion of any of the following types of courses:
  - a. A course based on the model curriculum developed pursuant to Section 51226.7.
  - b. An existing ethnic studies course.
  - c. An ethnic studies course taught as part of a course that has been approved as meeting the A–G requirements of the University of California and the California State University.
  - d. A locally developed ethnic studies course approved by the County Board of Education

A total of 200 credits is required to graduate from County Board programs.

The County Board recognizes that the prescribed course of study may not accommodate the needs of some students; therefore, credit earned from the following alternative means may be included as part of the 200 credits required for graduation:

1. Practical demonstration of skills and competencies.
2. Work experience or other outside school experience.
3. Vocational education classes offered in high schools.
4. Courses offered by regional occupational centers or programs.
5. Interdisciplinary study.
6. Independent study.
7. Credit earned at a postsecondary institution.

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 Section 51225.3)

**Exemptions from County Office-Adopted Graduation Requirements**

Prior to the beginning of grade 10, the individualized education program (IEP) team for each student with disabilities shall determine whether the student is eligible for exemption from all coursework and other requirements adopted by the County Board in addition to the statewide course requirements for high school graduation, and if so, shall notify the student's parent/guardian of the exemption. A student with disabilities shall be eligible for the exemption,

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if the student's IEP provides for both of the following requirements: (Education Code 51225.31)

1. That the student take the alternate assessment aligned to alternate achievement standards in grade 11 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

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 County Board that are in addition to statewide course requirements. This exemption shall not apply if the County Superintendent 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 County Superintendent 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 County Superintendent shall not require or request a foster youth, student experiencing homelessness, former juvenile court school student, child of a military family, migrant student, or a newly arrived immigrant student participating in a newcomer program who is exempted from County Office-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 a foster youth student experiencing homelessness, former juvenile court school student, child of a military family, migrant student, or a newly arrived immigrant student participating in a newcomer program was not properly notified of an exemption, declined the exemption, or was not previously exempted, the student or the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student may request the exemption and the County Superintendent 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

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Code 60640

2. That the student complete state standards aligned coursework to meet the statewide coursework specified in Education Code 51225.3

The County Office's responsibility to provide a free appropriate public education shall not terminate when a student with a disability who is exempted from County Office- 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 County Superintendent shall report to the California Department of Education (CDE), 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 County Office-established graduation requirements that are in addition to statewide coursework requirements.

**Adult Education Graduation Requirements**

The County Board believes that education is a lifelong process and that it is important for individuals to continuously develop new skills. Eligible adults shall be offered opportunities to enroll in programs and courses that develop academic and workforce skills and, as appropriate, lead to completion of requirements for high school graduation.

The County Superintendent shall recommend, for approval by the County Board and CDE, courses to be offered through the County Office adult education program.

To ensure efficient and coordinated adult education services for the adult programs funded through the Adult Education Block Grant pursuant to Education Code 84900-84920, the County Office shall collaborate with other local educational agencies and the community college district in the region's adult education consortium. The County Office shall participate in the consortium's identification of the educational needs of adults in the region, identification of available funding and services, development and approval of an adult education plan pursuant to EC 84906, and implementation of strategies to address the identified needs, improve the effectiveness of County Office services, and improve students' transitions into postsecondary education and the workforce.

The County Office representative to the region's adult education consortiums shall be designated by the County Board. (EC 84905)

The County Superintendent shall ensure that all teachers of adult education classes possess an appropriate credential issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing and have access to high-quality professional development to continuously enhance their knowledge and skills.

Adult education classes may be offered any day or evening, including weekends, for such length of time during the school year as determined by the County Board. (EC 52505, 52513)

Adult education students who fulfill the County Board's graduation requirements shall receive a diploma of high school graduation.

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The adult education graduation requirements are as follows:

1. Three courses in English
2. Two courses in mathematics  
At least one mathematics course, or a combination of the two mathematics courses, shall meet or exceed state academic content standards for Algebra I.
3. Two courses in science, including biological and physical with a lab component for Biology or Chemistry
4. One semester course in health
5. Three courses in social studies, including United States history and geography; world history, culture, and geography; a one-semester course in American government and civics; and a one-semester course in economics
6. One course in visual or performing arts, foreign language, including American Sign Language, or Career Technical Education (CTE)

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.

A total of 175 credits is required to graduate from County Board adult education programs.

The County Superintendent shall regularly report to the County Board on the effectiveness of the County Office's adult education program. This report shall include, but not be limited to, the number of adults and high school students participating in the program, student participation in each type of adult education course or class, and the extent to which students successfully completed these programs, including, as applicable, the completion of requirements for the high school diploma or certificate of equivalency.

**Retroactive Diplomas**

Any student who completed grade 12 in the 2003-04 through 2014-15 school year and has met all applicable graduation requirements other than the passage of the high school exit examination shall be granted a high school diploma. (Education Code 60851.6)

In addition, the County Board may grant a diploma to a veteran who entered the military service of the United States while he/she was a County Office student in grade 12 and who had completed the first half of the work required for grade 12 (Education Code 51440)

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

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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)

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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**

47612 Enrollment in charter school

48200 Compulsory attendance

48412 Certificate of proficiency

48430 Continuation education schools and classes

48645.5 Acceptance of coursework

48980 Required notification at beginning of term

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 of course

51225.3 High school graduation

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 students

51228 Graduation requirements

51240-51246 Exemptions from requirements

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

60851.5 Suspension of high school exit examination

60851.6 Retroactive diploma; completion of all graduation requirements except high school exit examination

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 students from grade 12 and credit toward graduation

**COURT DECISIONS**

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

**Legal Reference:**

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8500-8538 Adult education  
10200 CalWORKs education and job training plan  
41975-41976.2 Adult education; authorized classes and courses  
44260.2-44260.3 Credential requirements, designated subjects adult education credential  
44865 Qualifications for home teachers and teachers in special classes  
46190-46192 Adult school; days of attendance  
46300.1-46300.4 Independent study  
51040 Prescribed courses  
51056 Adult education course of study  
51225.3 Requirements for graduation  
51241 Physical education exemptions  
51246 Physical education exemptions  
51730-51732 Elementary school special day and evening classes  
51745-51749.6 Independent study  
51810-51815 Community service classes  
52500-52523 Adult schools  
52530-52531 Use of hospitals  
52540-52544 Adult English classes  
52550-52556 Classes in citizenship  
52570-52572 Disabled adults  
52610-52616.24 Adult schools, finances  
52651-52656 Immigrant Workforce Preparation Act  
60410 Books for adult classes  
84830 Adult education consortium  
84900-84920 Adult Education Block Grant  
WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE  
11320-11329.5 CalWORKs, including education and job training  
CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5  
10501 Adult education  
10508 Records and reports  
10530-10534 Standards  
80034 Teaching credentials, adult education  
80034.5 Adult education, substitute teachers  
80036-80036.4 Requirements for designated subjects adult education credential  
80040.2-80040.2.7 Programs of personalized preparation for the designated subjects adult education teaching credentialing  
UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 20  
2301-2415 Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act  
UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 29  
3101-3255 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act  
3271-3333 Adult Education and Family Literacy Act  
Management Resources:  
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS  
Adult Education Handbook for California, 2005  
Pupil Fees, Charges, and Other Deposits, Fiscal Management Advisory 12-02, April 24, 2013

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**WEB SITES**

California Council for Adult Education

California Department of Education

California Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Apprenticeship Standards

Commission on Teacher Credentialing

Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems

CSBA

California Department of Education, High School

University of California, List of Approved a-g Courses