

VENTURA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

BOARD POLICY NO. 6146.1

ADOPTED: 02/24/97

CLASSIFICATION: Instruction

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09/22/14
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09/25/23**

SUBJECT: High School Graduation Requirements

The Ventura County Board of Education and County Superintendent desire to prepare all students to successfully complete the high school course of study and obtain a high school diploma that represents their educational achievement and increases their opportunities for post-secondary education and employment.

Students in VCOE Schools and Programs shall complete graduation course requirements as specified in Education Code 51225.3. Unless exempted as provided in “Exemptions from VCOE-Adopted Graduation Requirements,” VCOE students shall also complete other course requirements adopted by the County Board. Students who are exempted from VCOE-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.
2. Three courses in mathematics.

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.

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.

3. Two courses in science, including biological and physical sciences.
4. Three courses in social studies, including United States (U.S.) history and geography; world history, culture, and geography; one semester course in American government and civics; and a one-semester course in economics.
5. One course in visual or performing arts or world language. For purposes of this requirement, a course in American Sign Language shall be deemed a course in world language.
6. One-semester course in 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.
7. Two courses in physical education, unless the student has been otherwise exempted pursuant to other sections of the Education Code.
8. One-semester course in health education. In requiring health education for graduation from high school, the course must include instruction in performing compression-only cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and instruction in sexual harassment and violence, including, but not limited to, information on the affirmative consent standard pursuant to Education Code 67386.
9. Elective courses that amount to 60 credits until the 2028-29 school year

Beginning with the 2029-30 school year, elective courses that amount to 55 credits.
10. Beginning with the 2029-30 school year, a one-semester course in ethnic studies.

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

EXEMPTIONS FROM VCOE-ADOPTED GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

A student with a disability, who entered ninth grade in the 2022-23 school year or later, shall be eligible for exemption from all courses and other requirements adopted by the County Board that are additional to the statewide course requirements if the student’s IEP program provides for all of the following:

1. The student's IEP team has deemed the student eligible to take the state alternate assessments as described in Education Code 60640.
2. The student is required to complete state standards aligned coursework to meet the statewide course requirements specified in Education Code 51225.3.

In addition, a foster youth, student experiencing homelessness, former juvenile court school student, child of a military family, or migrant student who transfers into VCOE Schools and Programs or between schools within VCOE Schools and Programs any time after completing the second year of high school, or a newly arrived immigrant student who is in the third or fourth year of high school and is participating in a newcomer program, 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 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 a newly arrived immigrant student, or of the commencement of participation in a newcomer program, as applicable, the County 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.

The County 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 a newly arrived immigrant student participating in a newcomer program who is exempted from VCOE-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.

Additionally, if a student completes the statewide coursework requirements for graduation specified in Education code 51225.3 while attending a juvenile court school, the VCOE shall issue the student a diploma of graduation and shall not require the student to complete coursework or other requirements that are in addition to the statewide course requirements.

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 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.

Annually, the County 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 VCOE-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.

In addition, VCOE may retroactively grant high school diplomas to former students who:

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 VCOE that are consistent with the purposes of Education Code 48204.4.

In determining whether to award a diploma under these circumstances, the County 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 VCOE 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 VCOE Schools and Programs.
4. 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 County Superintendent may grant an honorary high school diploma to:

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 VCOE Schools and Programs.
2. A student who is terminally ill.

The honorary diploma shall be clearly distinguishable from the regular diploma of graduation awarded by VCOE Schools and Programs.

Legal References:

EDUCATION CODE

48204.4	Parents/guardians departing California against their will
48412	Certificate of proficiency
48645.5	Former juvenile court school students; enrollment
48980	Parent/Guardian notifications
49701	Provisions of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children
51224.5	Algebra in course of study for grades 7-12
51225.1	Exemption from LEA 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; LEAs that require health education for graduation
51225.5	Honorary diplomas; foreign exchange and terminally ill students
51225.6	Instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation; LEAs that require health education for graduation
51225.9	Courses of study, grades 7-12; career technical education
51226.7	Model curriculum in ethnic studies
51430	Retroactive high school diplomas
51410-51413	Diplomas
51420-51427	High school equivalency certificates
51440	Credit and granting of diploma to veterans and members of the military service
67386	Student safety; affirmative consent standard

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

1600-1651	Graduation of students from grade 12 and credit toward graduation
4600-4670	Uniform complaint procedures

COURT DECISION

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