

**CAPISTRANO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD REPORT**

To: Board of Trustees

From: Susan Holliday, Chief Administrative Officer, Education and Support Services
Greg Merwin, Chief Academic Officer, Education and Support Services

Date: February 17, 2021

Board Item: First Reading - Temporary Board Policy T6146.1, High School Graduation Requirements

HISTORY

A review of Board Policy 6146.1, *High School Graduation Requirements*, determined that aspects of the policy needed to be reviewed based on current circumstances as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the reopening of schools. The policy was adopted in 1999, was further revised in 2018, and most recently in 2020 to support students in meeting graduation requirements during the pandemic. District graduation requirements currently exceed those required for graduation by California Education Code § 51225.3. The requirements in place ensure that students explore multiple elective options while enrolled in high school. These opportunities allow students to specialize in certain areas that are of particular interest to them. The temporary policy language was intended to support more flexibility and opportunities for students to meet the requirements under the new health and safety conditions, tied to the impacts of the pandemic.

On July 15, 2020, Trustees approved temporary changes to Board Policy 6146.1, *High School Graduation Requirements*. These temporary changes were determined to be critical to provide students and the District with maximum flexibility.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Temporary Board Policy T6146.1, *High School Graduation Requirements*, was developed to be in place for up to two years, to support increased flexibility for high school students. This policy was revised with temporary language by Trustees on July 15, 2020; in response to COVID-19, the policy language provided the District with maximum flexibility for reopening. At the August 5, 2020, Board meeting, per Trustee direction, staff developed a summary on high school student data, with the outcomes tied to the temporary changes applied to Board Policy T6146.1, *High School Graduation Requirements*. Trustees reviewed this report and the temporary policy on November 18, 2020, and accepted the minor technical revisions which included updating the table on page one, detailing exceptions in the body of the policy, removing 2020 references as well as replacing the term unit with credit throughout the policy. These technical revisions were approved at the January 20, 2021, Board meeting.

CURRENT CONSIDERATIONS

In response to Trustee direction at the January 20, 2021, Board meeting, Board Policy T6146.1 *High School Graduation Requirements*, has been updated for Trustee consideration. The draft language returns the policy to 220 credits required for high school graduation. Staff met with high school principals to gather their input on the draft language.

The following revisions are recommended in response to their input:

- Under the table on page 1 of the policy, the temporary asterisk language has been updated to reflect:
 - The classes of 2022, 2023 and 2024 will be required to complete 210 credits to graduate.
 - Elective credits are temporarily reduced from 65 to 50 for the class of 2021.
 - Elective credits are temporarily reduced from 65 to 55 for the classes of 2022 and 2023.
 - Elective credits are temporarily reduced from 65 to 60 for the class of 2024.
 - The class of 2025 and beyond will be required to complete 220 credits to graduate.

High school principals and staff recommend that the increase in graduation requirements be phased in so that current freshman, sophomores and juniors are not harmed with the increase in requirements. High school principals recommend that health continue to be waived for the class of 2024. This will allow the high schools the flexibility to let students retake courses they failed this year.

Staff recommends that the policy language regarding access to college courses remain in place to allow students to continue to harness access to Saddleback College courses, dual enrollment and articulated pathways. The language allows students to receive college credit as well as high school credit for qualifying courses. With this additional flexibility, student participation in Saddleback College classes this fall increased by over 36 percent as compared to the previous year.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no financial impact.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Following discussion, it is recommended the Board of Trustees approve temporary Board Policy T6146.1, *High School Graduation Requirements*.

PREPARED BY: Susan Holliday, Chief Administrative Officer, Education and Support Services

APPROVED BY: Greg Merwin, Chief Academic Officer, Education and Support Services

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The state of California has established high school graduation requirements for all students. The state's prescribed course of study for students in Grades 9-12 to receive a diploma is listed in the table below (Education Code 51225.3). The Board of Trustees of the District has adopted graduation requirements for all students which exceed the requirements of the State of California. (Note: 10 credits equal 1 full-year course, and 5 credits equal 1 semester course.)

	CA Minimum Requirements	CUSD Requirements	Serra Requirements
Subject	Credit	Credit	Credit
English	30	40	40
Mathematics	20 Algebra	30 with Algebra	30 with Algebra
Science	20	20	20
Social Studies	30	30	30
Visual or Performing Arts, World Language, or Career Technical Education	10	10	10
Health	N/A	5*	5*
Physical Education	20**	20**	20**
Electives		65***	35
TOTAL	130	220****	190

*The 5 credit Health requirement is waived for the classes of 2021 and 2024.

** Unless the student has been exempted pursuant to the provisions of the Education Code.

*** The Elective credit requirement ~~was is~~ temporarily reduced from 65 to 50 credits for the class of 2021. The Elective credit requirement is temporarily reduced from 65 to 55 for the classes of 2022 and 2023. For the class of 2024 the Elective credit requirement is 60 credits.

**** The total number of credits required to graduate ~~was is~~ temporarily reduced from 220 to: 205

- 200 credits for the class of 2021.
- 210 credits for the classes of 2022, 2023 and 2024.

~~The classes of 2021 and 2024 are required to have a minimum of 200 semester credits of work to graduate due to the fact the Health requirement was waived.~~

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (continued)

The Board authorizes the granting of a high school diploma to any student who has completed the prescribed course of study for any of the following schools: (1) traditional high school, and/or (2) continuation high school.

1. Requirements for Graduation/Traditional High School**General Conditions**

- a. High school graduation is conditioned upon the successful completion of the required course of study totaling a minimum of 220**** semester credits of work.
- b. The 5 credit Health requirement has been waived for the classes of 2021 and 2024.
- c. The classes of 2021 and 2024 are is required to have a minimum of 200**** semester credits of work to graduate.
- b. The class of 2024 is required to have a minimum of 210**** semester credits of work to graduate.
- e.d. To receive a high school diploma from the District, students must maintain a satisfactory program of continued education and attend a total of eight semesters in Grades 9-12, unless application for early graduation is filed one semester in advance.

A traditional high school program includes successful completion of the following credits:

40 of English

30 of Social Science, including:

10 World History

10 U.S. History

5 American Government

5 Economics

30 Mathematics (Includes Algebra I)

20 Science, including both biological and physical sciences

10 Fine Arts, World Language, or Career Technical Education

20 Physical Education

5 Health

Electives needed to complete a total of 220*** semester credits.

~~*** The Elective credit requirement was temporarily reduced from 65 to 50 credits~~

In an effort to provide students with maximum flexibility, comprehensive high school students may enroll into single courses offered through the District's Cal Prep Academy. Each year, the comprehensive high school staff will work collaboratively with the Cal Prep staff to create the potential single course offerings based upon student need.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (continued)

The Superintendent or designee shall establish regulations under which the District may grant credits toward graduation for college courses and private instruction attended by District students.

The Superintendent or designee may grant physical education credit for independent study programs. Specifically, only individual sports with national competitive rankings are eligible for consideration under this provision. The Superintendent or designee shall establish regulations governing independent study physical education requirements.

The Superintendent or designee 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.

2. Transfers

To participate in a graduation ceremony and receive a diploma from a District comprehensive high school, a student must be enrolled prior to the first day of the spring semester. These students must successfully complete 25 District credits. Students who transfer in the fall semester of their senior year must successfully complete 50 District credits.

- a. The District shall exempt from any District-adopted graduation requirements that are in addition to the state requirements specified in Education Code 51225.3, a foster youth, homeless student, former juvenile court school student, child of a military family, or migrant student who transfers into the District or between District high schools any time after completing the second year of high school, or an immigrant student who is in the third or fourth year of high school and is participating in a newcomer program, a student in foster care, a student who is a homeless child or youth, or a former juvenile court school student, who transfers between schools any time after the completion of the student's second year of high school from all coursework and other requirements adopted by the Board that go beyond the minimum statewide requirements specified in Education Code section 51225.3, unless the District makes a finding that the student is reasonably able to complete the District's graduation requirements in time to graduate from high school by the end of the student's fourth year of high school. Additionally, children of military families may be eligible for specific waivers from the District's graduation requirements in accordance with Education Code 49701.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (continued)

b. Reciprocity on Graduation Requirements

Students in Grades 9-12 transferring to this District from schools outside of California must meet District graduation requirements in order to receive a high school diploma, subject to the exceptions set forth in Education Code sections 51225.1-51225.2.

c. Transfer credits are accepted from accredited institutions only, subject to the exceptions set forth in Education Code sections 51225.1-51225.2.

d. Courses from the transferring district which are designated as honors courses will not receive honors credit if there is not a corresponding District course of the same title with the same description, subject to the exceptions set forth in Education Code sections 51225.1-51225.2.

e. Courses designated as Advanced Placement from accredited transferring districts will receive additional weighted credit, which will be computed using the following numerical value: A = 5, B = 4, C = 3, D = 1, and F = 0.

Students with special circumstances may request consideration of a fifth year of study to meet graduation requirements.

3. Requirements for Graduation/Continuation School

a. General Conditions

The Board shall grant a diploma of continuation high school graduation to any pupil upon completion of the prescribed course of study including satisfactory completion of a minimum of 190* semester credits of classroom instruction and supervised learning.

b. Basic Requirements

- (1) The specific subject requirements for a continuation high school diploma are identical to those required of the traditional high school. In addition to the specific subject requirements, electives are needed to complete a total of 190* semester credits.

Students wishing to receive a continuation high school diploma must successfully complete a minimum of five credits at the continuation high school. In the event of extenuating circumstances, the Superintendent or designee, may waive this requirement.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (continued)**4. Satisfactory High School Credit May Be Earned Through Avenues Outside of the District****a. 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 detention institution. District students who successfully complete District graduation requirements while so detained shall receive a diploma from the school they last attended.

b. Instruction from Accredited Non District Institutions

Credit toward high school graduation for instruction from accredited non district institutions may be granted, provided that:

- (1) Credit earned at a different accredited institution while the student attends District schools in Grades 9-12 does not exceed 10 credits annually
- (2) Parent/guardian applies in writing for the credit.
- (3) The number of credits sought equals at least one semester's work.

c. College Courses

- (1) The individual may complete his/her high school education by attending an accredited college.
- (2) The District maintains a cooperative agreement with Saddleback College, the Concurrent College Studies Program. Under the auspices of the program, a student may enroll in Saddleback College courses. Courses under this program receive high school credit as well as college credit. Graduation requirements, with the exception of electives, may not be taken under this program.

Students may enroll in community college courses offered at other community colleges provided that they apply through their high school guidance office for approval. Approved courses will receive high school credit as well as college credit. Graduation requirements, with the exception of electives, may not be completed in this manner.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (continued)

- (3) College courses will be equated to high school credits on the following basis: each semester unit of college credit is equal to three and one-third high school credits.

5. High School Equivalency/California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE)

The Board desires that every student have the opportunity to earn a high school diploma through successful completion of class work and Board-approved competency tests.

The Board, however, recognizes that the California Legislature has provided two alternatives to the high school diploma: the General Educational Development Certificate for individuals 18 or older, and the California High School Competency.

Certificate for persons 16 or older or who have been in the tenth grade for a year or who are currently enrolled in the final semester of tenth grade. These certificates may be granted by the California Department of Education (CDE) to individuals who pass performance tests established by the Department.

The principal of each school maintaining tenth, eleventh, and/or twelfth grades shall distribute to each student in those grades an announcement explaining the California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE) as provided under Education Code 48412. When announcements from the CDE or its contractor are received, this information shall be distributed early enough to enable interested students to register for the test.

Any person 16 or older or who has been in the tenth grade for a year or who is currently enrolled in the final semester of tenth grade may apply to have his/her proficiency in basic skills verified by examination according to criteria established by the CDE.

Any person 18 or older may take the General Educational Development Test (GED) given by the CDE in order to receive the High School Equivalency Certificate.

6 Graduation Ceremonies

- a. The Board does not permit nor recognize any graduation ceremony for District students other than the ceremonies attached to graduation from high school (Grade 12); or continuation school (Grade 12).

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (continued)

- b. Students may participate in the graduation ceremony if:
- (1) They qualify for a diploma by meeting all applicable graduation requirements,
or
 - (2) They qualify for a Certificate of Achievement by meeting all applicable graduation requirements.

*Legal Reference:***EDUCATION CODE***37252 Summer school instructional programs**35160 Authority of governing boards**35160.1 Broad authority of school districts**35160.5 Extracurricular and cocurricular activities, differential standards**8645.5 Course credit re juvenile court schools**48400-48403 Persons subject to compulsory continuation education**48410 Persons exempt from continuation classes**48412 Certificate of Proficiency; examination fees**48413 Enrollment in continuation classes**48414 Reenrollment in district**48430 Continuation education schools and classes**48431.6 Review and counseling of academic progress at age 16 or 10th grade**48800-48803 Attendance at community college; advanced education**51220 Areas of study; grades 7-12**51224 Skills and knowledge required for adult life**51225.1 Pupils in foster care; pupils who are homeless children or youth or former juvenile court school pupils; transfer between schools; exemption from local graduation requirements; reasonable ability to complete requirements within fifth year of high school; notice; complaint of noncompliance with requirements of section**51225.2 Pupils in foster care or who are homeless children or youth, or former juvenile court school pupils; acceptance of coursework completed at another school; application of credits; retaking a course; complaint of noncompliance with requirements of section**51225.3 Requirements for graduation**51225.4 Elementary school certification of sufficient preparation for high school**51226 Board review of curriculum every three years; model standards*

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (continued)

5124051246 Exemptions from requirements
51242 Exemption from physical education for athletic program participants
51243-51245 Credit for foreign language private school studies
5126051269 Drug education
5140051442 Diplomas and certificates
51740 Authority to provide instruction by correspondence
52508 Diplomas or certificates (adult school)
52510 Requirements for eighth grade graduation (adult school)
56000 Education of individuals with exceptional needs
56341 Individualized education program team
56345 Elements of the IEP
60851 Successful completion of test for graduation
60852 Deferment of examination requirement for certain students
60853 Preparation of students for examination

VEHICLE CODE

12507 Driver education

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

16001651 Graduation of pupils from Grade 12 and credit toward graduation
1630 Credit for college courses
1631 Credit for private instruction
1632 Credit for private school foreign language instruction
1633 Credit for correspondence instruction
1634 Credit to present or past member of the armed services
3069 Graduation
11520 Definitions
11521 Placement on pupil transcript
11522 Requirements for exemption from school attendance form
11523 Requirement to make examination announcements
11530 High School Equivalency Certificate

Policy

adopted: February 8, 1999

revised: June 12, 2000

revised: June 24, 2002

revised: August 19, 2002

revised: September 11, 2006

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San Juan Capistrano, California