

Da Vinci Schools

Policy and Procedures

Da Vinci RISE High School Graduation Requirements

The Board of Trustees is committed to providing students with the instruction and life skills necessary to take advantage of opportunities for postsecondary education and employment. As a necessary component of this preparation, Da Vinci Schools works to ensure that its high school students strive to complete "a-g" course requirements for admission into the California State University, University of California, and other national college and university systems.

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. Da Vinci RISE offers students three distinct pathways toward graduation. These pathways include:

Course Requirements for the A-G Pathway: Students who complete the A-G Requirements are eligible to attend Cal State and UC schools upon graduation. To obtain an A-G eligible high school diploma, students at Da Vinci RISE shall complete at least 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

At least one mathematics course, or a combination of the two mathematics courses, shall meet or exceed state academic content standards for Algebra 1. Completion of such coursework prior to grade 9 shall satisfy the Algebra 1 requirement but shall not exempt a student from the requirement to complete three mathematics courses in grades 9-12. All students are strongly encouraged to take a mathematics course in all semesters/years of high school enrollment.

3. Two courses in science, including biological and physical sciences
4. Three courses in social science, including world history, culture, and geography; United States history and geography; a one-semester course in American government and civics; and a one-semester course in economics
5. Two courses in the same world language, other than English
6. One course in visual or performing arts
7. One course in any college-preparatory subject
8. Commencing with students graduating in the 2029-30 school year, a one-semester course in ethnic studies
9. Commencing with students graduating in the 2030-31 school year, a separate, stand-alone one-semester course in personal finance, that shall not be combined with any other course

10. Any other coursework, as determined appropriate and/or necessary by the principal or designee, to ensure that each student is enrolled in a minimum of six courses each semester.

Course Requirements for the “RISE High” Pathway: The RISE pathway is designed for students who are unable to meet the A-G requirements who would like additional course preparation to succeed in community colleges and in the workforce. To obtain the RISE High diploma, students at Da Vinci RISE shall complete at least the following courses in grades 9-12, with each course being one year unless otherwise specified:

1. Four 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 1. Completion of such coursework prior to grade 9 shall satisfy the Algebra 1 requirement but shall not exempt a student from the requirement to complete three mathematics courses in grades 9-12.

3. Two courses in science, including biological and physical sciences
4. Three courses in social science, including world history, culture, and geography; United States history and geography; a one-semester course in American government and civics; and a one-semester course in economics
5. Two courses in world language and/or visual or performing arts (may be 1 year for each course or 2 years in one course)
6. One course in Career Development
7. Commencing with students graduating in the 2029-30 school year, a one-semester course in ethnic studies
8. Commencing with students graduating in the 2030-31 school year, a separate, stand-alone one-semester course in personal finance, that shall not be combined with any other course

Exemptions from Da Vinci Schools Graduation Requirements

The Board of Trustees understands that the prescribed course of study above may not accommodate the needs of all students and shall provide alternative means for the completion of prescribed courses in accordance with law. Eligible students will be awarded a regular high school diploma based upon the California State Minimum Graduation requirements, as outlined below:

California State Minimum Graduation Requirements

To obtain a regular high school diploma that meets state minimum requirements, students shall complete at least the following courses in grades 9-12, with each course being one year unless otherwise specified: (Education Code § 51225.3)

1. Three courses in English

2. Two courses in mathematics
3. Two courses in science, including biological and physical sciences
4. Three courses in social science, including world history, culture, and geography; United States history and geography; a one-semester course in American government and civics; and a one-semester course in economics
5. One course in visual or performing arts, world language, or career technical education
6. Commencing with students graduating in the 2029-30 school year, a one-semester course in ethnic studies
7. Commencing with students graduating in the 2030-31 school year, a separate, stand-alone one-semester course in personal finance, that shall not be combined with any other course

In order to obtain a regular high school diploma meeting the California State Minimum Graduation requirements, which is an exemption from Da Vinci Schools' high school graduation requirements, a student must meet the following eligibility requirements:

1. The student is one of the following:
 - a. In foster care, as defined in Education Code Section 51225.1
 - b. Is a homeless youth, as defined in Section 11434a(2) of Title 42 of the United States Code
 - c. A former juvenile court school student, as defined in Education Code Section 51225.2
 - d. A child of a military family, as defined in Section 49701 of the Education Code
 - e. A migratory child who meets the definition of "currently migratory child" under Section 54441 (a) of the Education Code
 - f. A newcomer pupil, as defined in Education Code Section 51225.2
2. The student transfers between schools any time after the completion of their second year of high school, or if the student is a newcomer pupil, the student is in their third or fourth year of high school

Within thirty (30) calendar days of transfer into a Da Vinci high school, any such student shall be notified of the availability of the exemption and whether he/she is qualified for it. The notification will include how the exemption will affect the student's ability to gain admission to a post-secondary educational institution and will provide information about transfer opportunities available through the California Community Colleges. A qualified student may decline the exemption initially, and then choose to accept the exemption at a later date. Once exempted from Da Vinci Schools' graduation requirements, the exemption cannot be revoked even if the student transfers to another school. If the exempted student completes the requirements under the State Minimum Diploma Path before the end of their fourth year of high school and the student would otherwise be entitled to remain in attendance at the school, he/she may remain in attendance to complete additional coursework. No student eligible for exemption and who would otherwise be entitled to remain in attendance at the school shall be required to accept the exemption or be denied enrollment in, or the ability to complete, courses for which he/she

is otherwise eligible, including courses necessary to attend an institution of higher education, regardless of whether those courses are required for the State Minimum Diploma Path. (Education Code § 51225.1)

3. The student is not reasonably able to complete Da Vinci Schools' graduation requirements by the end of the student's fourth year of high school. This may be due to circumstances outside of the student's control, such as but not limited to:
 - Transfer during the last two years of high school from a school with different graduation requirements
 - Disability, regardless of whether the student has an individualized education program or a Section 504 services plan
 - Limited English proficiency (e.g., student identified as an English language learner)
 - Hardship (e.g., emergency, natural disaster, trauma, personal or family crisis)

Alternative Pathways to Receiving a Diploma for Students Receiving Special Education Services

The Board of Trustees recognizes that students with disabilities are entitled to a course of study that provides them with a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) and that modifications to Da Vinci Schools' regular courses may be needed on an individualized basis to provide FAPE. In accordance with law, students with disabilities intending to earn a regular high school diploma may receive accommodations and/or modifications to meet graduation requirements, as specified in their respective individualized education program (IEP) and/or Section 504 services plan.

Students with exceptional needs, who entered ninth grade in the 2022–23 school year or later shall be exempted from Da Vinci Schools' high school graduation requirements that are additional to the statewide course requirements specified in Education Code Section 51225.3 and shall receive a high school diploma, if the student's IEP provides for all of the following:

1. The student is eligible to take the California Alternate Assessments for ELA and Math, and
2. The student is required to complete state standards-aligned coursework to meet statewide course requirements specified in Education Code Section 51225.3.

Through the completion of the state minimum coursework requirements, Da Vinci Schools must award the qualifying student a diploma of graduation from high school. Through this newly defined diploma pathway, the qualifying student may participate in any graduation ceremony and any school activity related to graduation with their grade-level peers with and without disabilities. The award of the diploma of graduation via the alternative pathway under Education Code Section 51225.31 does not change or terminate an LEA's obligation to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to an eligible special education student. This is consistent with Section 7801(23)(A)(ii)(I)(bb) of Title 20 of the United States Code and Section 300.102(a)(3) of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

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. (Education Code Section 51413)

In addition, Da Vinci Schools may retroactively grant a high school diploma to a student in accordance with applicable law, including Education Code Section 451430.

Honorary Diplomas

The Board may grant honorary high school diplomas to:

1. An international exchange student who has not completed the course of study ordinarily required for graduation, and who is returning to the home country following the completion of one academic school year in Da Vinci Schools.
2. A student who is terminally ill.

The honorary diploma shall be clearly distinguishable from the regular diploma of graduation awarded by Da Vinci Schools.

Alternative Means of Completion

Students may fulfill a course requirement for graduation through the following:

1. Practical demonstration of skills and competencies
2. Supervised work experience or other outside school experience
3. Career technical 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
8. Private instruction

Upon receiving an advance, written application by the student or their parent/guardian, the Chief Executive Officer or designee shall determine whether completion of the proposed alternative means would satisfy course requirements for graduation and what documentation shall be required, if any, to verify the student's successful completion. The Chief Executive Officer or designee shall make the final determination as to whether the student's completion of an alternative means is sufficient to satisfy Da Vinci Schools' graduation requirements.

As appropriate, the Chief Executive Officer or designee shall determine the grade to be assigned to students for the completion of any of the above alternative means. When a grade is assigned by a private school, postsecondary institution, or other educational institution for completion of coursework, that same grade shall be awarded by Da Vinci Schools provided that the Chief Executive Officer or designee has determined the alternative course to be substantially equivalent to a Da Vinci Schools course.

Certificate of Educational Achievement or Completion

In place of a high school diploma, a student with a disability may be awarded a certificate of completion if the student has met one of the following requirements: (Education Code § 56390)

1. Satisfactorily completed a prescribed alternative course of study approved by the board of trustees with jurisdiction over the student as identified in their IEP.
2. Satisfactorily met their IEP goals and objectives during high school as determined by the IEP team.
3. Satisfactorily attended high school, participated in the instruction as prescribed in their IEP, and met the objectives of the statement of transition services.

A student with a disability who meets any of these criteria specified above shall be eligible to participate in any graduation ceremony and any school activities related to graduation in which a graduating student of similar age without a disability would be eligible to participate. (Education Code § 56391)

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