

Class of 2020 Graduation Guidance

Nevada Department of Education

April 2, 2020



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Introduction

The primary goal of this guidance is to meet the immediate needs of our educators and students around the State as we navigate this challenging time caused by the outbreak of COVID-19. This guidance is also intended to bring clarity around the available options that exist for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) as they work to ensure all students within the Class of 2020 are able to complete a pathway toward graduation. It is not the Nevada Department of Education's (NDE) position that seniors are automatically finished with schooling during the closure of school buildings, since there are other considerations, such as concurrent credit courses, CTE industry certifications, and other determinations as to whether a senior is on the path toward graduation. Whether a senior is on the path toward graduation is a local education agency decision. This determination should be made based on a review of student data including, but not limited to, grades and credits earned. LEAs may have additional requirements for specific designations upon graduation or opportunities for seniors to continue engagement for the remainder of the school year and beyond. LEAs must also continue to provide the services and supports included in a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan necessary to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) as part of any continued academic engagement or other opportunities. This resource will offer support in four essential areas¹:

- Attendance Requirements
- Course Completion Requirements
- GPA Requirements for Class Rank and Other Factors
- Assessment Requirements

Attendance Requirements

On March 15, 2020, Governor Sisolak issued *Declaration of Emergency Directive 005*. This directive ordered all schools in grades Kindergarten through 12 to close to students pending the approval of the Chief Medical Officer of the State of Nevada. The Directive also provided for the continuation of educational services to Nevada's students, while also accelerating and expanding access to programs of distance education. On March 20, 2020, the NDE released the Request for Emergency Program of Distance Education for LEAs. As part of this request each LEA certified that,

"...each pupil will be contacted by a licensed teacher or licensed substitute teacher at least once per week for attendance purposes as well as put in place a method for documenting contact with pupils, which may be done through Infinite Campus, paper

¹ For information related to credit requirements for graduation, please see Appendix.

document, or other means. 'Other Means' may include pupils demonstrating progress in their classwork that can be verified through a learning management system".

Course Completion Requirements

If LEAs have graduating seniors who are unable to complete their classes due to issues related to COVID-19, the NDE suggests the LEAs use local discretion to determine whether the students have completed sufficient course content to consider the units complete.

- An example could be the classification of students as “meeting the graduation requirements” if they were on the path toward graduation prior to the emergency closure of school buildings.

It is important to note, instructional minute requirements for course credit have been waived with the approval of an LEA’s Request for Emergency Distance Education Program. NDE recommends that districts provide as much latitude and support for students to graduate on time as possible. Furthermore, seniors who were not on the pathway toward graduation must be given the opportunity for credit recovery through the methods available by an LEA.

As LEAs consider how to create academic experiences for students to earn credit and achieve eligibility for graduation, the options below may be worthy of consideration:

- A. Credit via a locally designed series of assignments or work completion:
 - a. Examples include online coursework, written work packets, project-based learning, portfolios, or applied work experiences (where current high school course standards align with a student’s employment).
- B. Credit via competency-based assessment(s):
 - a. Examples include a locally designed test, formative and summative assessments, online ACT/PSAT/SAT prep, leveraging a determined cut score from a college entrance exam, spring dual credit, world language competency, industry recognized credential or certificate, or college admissions/placement.

It is important to note that students may demonstrate competency in a variety of ways as determined by LEAs. Examples of demonstrations of competency may include, but are not limited to:

- Portfolios
- Project-based learning
- Capstone projects
- Oral presentations

Dual Credit Courses

Students, including graduating seniors, must meet the objectives of dual credit courses to receive college credit. LEAs should contact their liaisons from higher education institutions to determine the most feasible means to arrange completion of dual credit courses for current seniors during the closure of school buildings.

Advanced Placement Credit

The [AP College Board](#) will be supporting students to provide access to AP content and AP exams. As of this guidance, the AP College Board is providing live and on-demand AP courses for free and implementing a new at-home testing option. For additional information on AP exams, LEAs should contact their College Board liaison or Roxane Pirayesh, College Board's Director of State and District Partnerships for Nevada at rpirayesh@collegeboard.org.

CTE Courses

As it relates to the completion of CTE Work-Based Learning Course requirements during the emergency closure of school buildings, the Department is currently researching solutions to this matter to ensure that continuity of learning exists in a manner that minimalizes the burden on LEAs and also provides opportunity to students. The Department will provide an update on the status of its findings by Thursday, April 9, 2020.

As it relates to regular CTE courses, please refer to the guidance provided around the College and Career Ready (CCR) Diploma located in the Appendix.

GPA Requirements for Class Rank and Other Factors

The process by which LEAs assign grades to students continues to be a local decision, including the weighting of grades for honors or advanced placement courses. Among the options that LEAs could consider are the following:

- A. Processing grades in an identical manner as to the previous semester of the current school year
- B. Any other method determined by the LEA that reflects the work of the student

The only exception to student grades as a local decision pertains to End Of Course Exams (EOC). LEAs are required to factor EOC scores into a student's final grade (NRS 390.700). This requirement for the 2019-2020 school year has been waived due to Governor Sisolak's Declaration of Emergency Directive 005 (2020).

Assessment Requirements

This section provides information regarding the most common assessments administered to seniors outside of Nevada's assessment and accountability system. For reference, on March 27, 2020, the Department provided a memorandum to LEAs entitled, *"ESEA Assessment and Accountability Waiver for the 2019-2020 School Year: Nevada School Performance Framework and the Identification of Schools for Support and Improvement"*. This memorandum details the various components of Nevada's assessment and accountability infrastructure that have been waived by the United States Department of Education for the 2019-2020 school year. The items below are outside of the scope of the waiver, thus compelling the need for additional guidance.

Civics Assessment

NRS 389.009 outlines the requirements for the administration of the civics assessment within a public high school. The current NRS provides public high schools the authority to determine which course the exam will be administered in as well as the number of questions included on the exam, to be no less than 50. NRS 389.009 further provides provisions for waivers for students with disabilities, English Language Learners, or up to 10% of each graduating class.²

The Department is currently researching available options to have the civics assessment waived. The Department will provide more information as it becomes available.

CTE Assessments

The CTE Assessment vendor, CTECS, is currently working on an online solution. They anticipate that online testing could begin as early as April 20, 2020. In addition, the online testing will continue as long as necessary. However, we encourage school districts to complete all online testing by early August 2020 so that students have time to complete their application for CTE college credit and for them to enroll in the appropriate college level courses.

ACT Assessment for Seniors

Students enrolled in Grade 11 during the statewide census administration of the College and Career Readiness Assessment (The ACT) must "participate" in the statewide census administration of ACT in order to be eligible for a standard diploma. Students enrolled in a Nevada school after the statewide census administration of ACT for all students in Grade 11 are exempted per NRS 390.610³. As a result, students in Grade 12 are not required, by the State, to participate in the ACT Assessment as a condition for graduation.

² For a more detailed view of NRS 389.009 that provides specifics around the implementation of the civics assessment and the available waivers please click this [link](#).

³ For a full review of NRS 390.610, please [click here](#).

Conclusion

High school graduation is an important milestone in the lives of our Nevada students. As LEAs consider graduation for the class of 2020 in these exceptional times, the Nevada Department of Education provides this resource to support the local decision-making process for graduation. Furthermore, the NDE encourages LEAs to consider alternatives to in-person graduation ceremonies in the event the COVID-19 crisis has not ended by the conclusion of the school year.

The Nevada Department of Education would like to extend its gratitude to WestEd, Churchill County School District, Lyon County School District, Washoe County School District, White Pine School District, and the Nevada Association of School Superintendents for their collaboration and contribution to this guidance.

Appendix

Credit Requirements for Graduation

Students in the Class of 2020 are eligible to earn five diploma types as recognized by the NDE. For purposes of this resource, this document will focus on the following three diploma types⁴.

- The Standard Diploma- *NAC 390.440*⁵
- The Advanced Diploma- *NAC 390.430*
- The College and Career Ready (CCR) Diploma- *NAC 390.605*

It is important to note that LEAs may have requirements for graduation that extend beyond the minimum requirements outlined by the State. In this instance, LEAs should work with their local governing board to adjust any requirements beyond the state requirements as necessary.

The Standard Diploma

The Standard Diploma requires a minimum of 22.5 credits for attainment. The table below outlines the minimum requirements necessary for attainment.

Required Courses for Standard Diploma	Minimum Number of Credits Required for Standard Diploma
American Government	1
American History	1
Arts and Humanities, Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (Level III or Level IV), or Career and Technical Education	1
English, including reading, composition, and writing	4
Health Education	0.5
Mathematics	3
Physical Education	2
Computer Education and Technology	0.5
Science	2
Elective Courses	7.5

⁴ The Nevada Alternative Diploma is the fourth diploma type and carries special considerations. For guidance on the implementation of the Nevada Alternative Diploma, please use this [link](#). The Adult Diploma is the fifth diploma type recognized by NDE. This diploma type is not applicable to graduating seniors within the four-year graduation cohort for the Class of 2020.

⁵ NAC refers to the Nevada Administrative Code. The NAC represents regulations that stem from state statutes and govern the work for the NDE.

The Advanced Diploma

The Advanced Diploma requires a minimum of 24 credits for attainment. The table below outlines the minimum requirements necessary for attainment.

Required Courses for Advanced Diploma	Number of Credits Required for Advanced Diploma
American Government	1
American History	1
Arts and Humanities, Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (Level III or Level IV), or Career and Technical Education	1
English, including reading, composition, and writing	4
Health Education	0.5
Mathematics	4
Physical Education	2
Computer Education and Technology	0.5
Science	3
Elective Courses	6
Social Studies	1

The CCR Diploma

The CCR Diploma requires a minimum of 24 credits for attainment. The table below outlines the minimum requirements necessary for attainment. Unlike the Standard and Advanced diploma types, the CCR Diploma has two additional requirements that students must meet in order to fulfill the minimum requirements. The first requirement is that students must demonstrate proficiency in speaking not less than two languages **or** have earned not less than two units of credit used to complete the minimum requirements in the areas of;

- Advanced Placement (AP)
- International Baccalaureate (IB)
- Dual Credit (DC)
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Work-Based Learning (WBL)
- World Languages (WL)

The second requirement, is that students must earn one or both of the associated endorsements listed below:

- College-ready endorsement

- ACT English score of 18 or higher
- ACT ELA score of 20 or higher
- ACT Math score of 22 or higher

AND/OR

- Career-ready endorsement⁶
 - ACT NCRC Silver+;
 - ASVAB 50+;
 - CTE Skills Attainment Certificate
 - Industry-recognized credential

⁶ In order to fulfill the requirement for the career-ready endorsement, students only need to complete one of the options listed above.