

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

High School Graduation Alternatives

Are you not graduating with your class or are you thinking about dropping out of school? Or, have you dropped out and want to find a way to finish high school so you can get a job, go to college or enter the military?

There are a number of options to get your high school diploma or an equivalent certificate. These programs allow you to catch up on credits, take specialized classes to match your interests or take tests to finish school.

Dual/concurrent enrollment:

While attending a regular high school, you can earn extra credits by enrolling in classes at an adult school or community college. You should talk with your guidance counselor or a counselor at adult education or community college about these programs to help you with referrals.

TIP:

Students in high school may not be able to get financial aid to pay for their community college classes, but if you are under 18 years old and enrolled in general education, the school district may pay for the classes.

AB 167: cfyetf.org (AB 167 Frequently Asked Questions)

Because foster youth are moved around a lot, sometimes they have to switch schools and it gets in the way of graduating on time. There is a law, commonly called “AB 167” that says: if foster youth are **moved when they are in the 11th or 12th grade and that results in changing schools**, then the new school must review the youth’s progress towards graduation. If the youth cannot graduate on time because he cannot “reasonably complete” all the required credits, then the youth and their education rights holder have the right to request that the student graduate under AB 167. This means they have to meet state requirements instead of school district graduation requirements. However, the youth **still has to pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) and pass specific classes required by the State of California.**

High school equivalency certificates:

There are three high school graduation equivalency tests: GED®, HiSET® and TASC® for students 18 and older, even 17 in some cases. You may be eligible to have the costs (preparation and tests) covered by the ILP program. Contact your transition coordinator to see if you are eligible for financial support.

The **GED test** covers five subjects: reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. For more information: gedtestingservice.com

-  By passing the GED, you earn an equivalency certificate but not a high school diploma. It will help you to qualify for jobs that require a high school diploma and make you eligible for financial aid to pay for college or vocational certificate programs.
-  It is not a free test, and the costs vary depending on the program. You may be charged from \$90 to \$200 to take the test and \$25 to retest a specific section.
-  There are free preparation courses throughout LA. Look for classes/tests at your local adult education program and/or community college.



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TIP: While a GED might be faster to get than a diploma, it is not an easy test and some military branches and employers will not accept a GED the same as a high school diploma. So, choosing a GED over a high school diploma may limit the types of jobs you can get.

The **High School Equivalency test (HiSET)** is an affordable alternative to the GED® test and offers you more choices. Find a test center near you: <https://ereg.ets.org/ereg-web/public/test-center/search/HSE>

-  It can be taken in multiple formats and multiple languages, and it provides a number of accommodations for test takers with disabilities and health-related needs.
-  With your test fee, you'll get free test prep and two retests within 12 months of your original purchase when you buy all five HiSET subtests.

The **Testing Assessment Secondary Completion (TASC)** assesses five subject areas: Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. The five subject area tests are based on what current students need to know to pass high school tests.

For more information: www.tasctest.com/test-center-locations-for-test-takers.html

GED plus/diploma plus:

If you are a year or more behind in credits, you may be able to get a high school diploma through a GED Plus or Diploma-Plus Program. To earn your diploma, you must complete ten specific classes and pass the GED and the CAHSEE. You can get information from your guidance counselor, some community colleges and skills centers.

Pregnant minor schools:

If you are a pregnant or parenting teen, you may want to consider a school that provides extra support for you and your child. These schools provide 6th through 12th grade for parents or soon-to-be parents to get their high school diploma. Typically, they provide counseling by school nurses, information on health and nutrition, and pre-natal and infant care instruction.

TIP: If you are a pregnant or parenting teen with an open case in the dependency court, you may also be able to access help paying for childcare while you attend a regular school. Speak to your social worker about what options might be available to you and discuss your options at your PPT conference.

Continuation high schools:

If you are between 16 and 18 years old, and behind on credits, you may not graduate on time. If this is the case, you may want to consider a “continuation school.” These programs are great for some youth because they allow you to make up and earn credits quickly so you can transfer back to your traditional high school when you are caught up on credits. Some programs take the form of independent study, where you complete work on your own and attend school for only a few hours a week, while others offer a full school day.

TIP: The downside of these programs is they offer little time with a teacher or support if you are having trouble learning something. If you have been struggling to pass classes at your neighborhood school, you should ask them to offer you extra support and help there, rather than suggesting a continuation school, where you might get even less help.

Alternative high schools and programs:

If you find that a general education high school does not work with your learning style or you are over 18 and your neighborhood high school has told you that you are too old to attend, then you might want to consider an alternative high school or program. To find an alternative high school graduation program near you, **download the B4UGo smartphone app (kids-alliance.org/app)** for a listing of programs near you.



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