

Kenosha Unified School District

High School Competency Diploma Option

Student Handbook



Kenosha Unified School District

Dr. Bethany Ormseth, Interim Superintendent of Schools



KENOSHA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
HIGH SCHOOL COMPETENCY DIPLOMA APPLICATION

School _____

Student Name:	Date of Birth:	Age:
KUSD ID:	Phone Number:	
Street Address:	City, State, Zip:	
Date Student Entered Ninth Grade:	Cohort Graduation Date:	

Verification of Completion:		
Complete/Incomplete		Grade
	Consumer Education /Economics	
	Health	
	Government & Politics	
	U.S. Civics Exam (min. score of 65/100)	
	Post Graduation Plans:	
	Employability Skills: (first 3 checkboxes required or just 4th)	
	2 weeks of check stubs received	
	Employee evaluation received	
	Student self-evaluation completed	
	OR	
	Work Readiness Portfolio	
	Writing Component (any one)	
	WorkKeys Score: Date Taken: Result:	
	ACT Aspire Score: Date Taken: Result:	
	ACT Writing Score: Date Taken: Result:	
	Community Service	
	10 hour CS:	
	100 hour CS:	

Complete/ Incomplete	Iowa Subtests	Date Passed	Score	Test Fee Paid		
				Amount	Date Paid	KUSD initials
	Reading					
	Written Expression					
	Vocabulary					
	Math Total					
	Social Studies					
	Science					

When all requirements have been met, please forward the completed form to the Office of Information and Accountability. NOTE: When all criteria have been met and this signed form has been verified, schools will receive instructions for graduating students.

Teacher:/Counselor/Designee Signature _____ Date _____

Summary of Requirements

Eligibility Requirement	Requirements
Credit deficient students who are at least 17 years of age who have been in a high school cohort group for more than three years.	Required
Students must be current residents of KUSD	Required
Writing (must achieve proficiency in at least one of the listed assessments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Score level 3 or higher on the WorkKeys Business Writing • Score a level of Close or Ready on the ACT Aspire • Score 6 or higher on the ACT Writing (maximum score of 12) • Score of 15 or higher on the ACT Writing (maximum score of 36)
Employability Skills	Six months of successful employment or District Approved Work Readiness Portfolio
U.S. Civics Exam	Required (min. score of 65/100)
Community Service	Required to perform a minimum of 10 hours Effective Aug 1, 2021.
Government & Politics*	Credit Attainment
Consumer Education/Economics*	Credit Attainment
Health*	Credit Attainment
Costs - Students (each time testing)	
IOWA Scoring Fee	\$14.79
WorkKeys Business Writing and Scoring	\$20.00
Academic Proficiency Level Requirement IOWA	
Reading	4th Stanine
Written Expression	
Vocabulary	
Math Total	
Social Studies	
Science	

* For information on independent study opportunities, contact your school.

Sources for WorkKeys and Employability Requirements



Business Writing

The main requirement of workplace writing is clarity. Employers want their employees' written communications to be direct, grammatically correct, and easy to read. Careless errors may lead the reader to believe there are also errors in the facts, and the writer loses credibility and trustworthiness. *WorkKeys Business Writing* requires standard business English, defined as writing that is direct, courteous, grammatically correct, and not overly casual.

The *WorkKeys Business Writing* test measures the skills individuals will use when they write an original response to a work-related situation. Components of the Business Writing skill include sentence structure, mechanics, grammar, word usage, tone and word choice, organization and focus, and development of ideas.

- Format – Business Writing (computer based)
- Cost: \$20.00
 - See [district test calendar](#) for administration dates for assessment
- Time needed – 30 to 40 minutes
- Test dates will be determined and offered at KUSD high schools with a minimum of 30 days required between tests
- See your school for WorkKeys Business Writing study materials

Business Writing Scoring Guide

Score 5

A paper at this highest level has well-developed ideas elaborated with relevant supporting examples and specific details. The writing shows insight. The organization is smooth and maintains clear and consistent focus from beginning to end. Transitions are varied and effective, creating a seamless flow of ideas. Sentences are varied in length and complexity. Word choice is precise and varied. The style and tone are appropriate for a business setting. Minor and/or infrequent errors in grammar and/or mechanics, if present, do not interfere with communication.

Score 4

A paper at this level has most of the ideas well developed with relevant supporting examples and details. The writing is organized and maintains consistent focus. Transitions are effective, if not especially varied. Sentences are generally varied in length and complexity. Word choice shows some precision and variety. The style and tone are consistent with standard business English. Relatively minor and/or infrequent errors in grammar and/or mechanics do not interfere with communication.

Score 3

A paper at this level has adequate development of ideas but is limited in depth and thoroughness. Supporting examples tend to be general and details are relevant, but they may be repetitive. The writing is generally organized but may have minor lapses in focus. Transitions are simple. Sentences are usually correct, with some variety and complexity attempted. Word choice is generally clear and correct but may be repetitive and/or informal. The style and tone are consistent with standard business English but may be overly casual. Some errors in grammar and mechanics are apparent but do not interfere with communication. Basic spelling is correct.

Score 2

A paper at this level has thinly developed ideas that are not expanded and may be presented as a list. Although some organization is evident, the focus is unclear and/or inconsistent. Few or no transitions are used. Sentences are often simple or repetitive, with some noticeable errors in construction. Word choice is limited, often repetitive, and sometimes incorrect. The style and tone may be inconsistent with standard business English. Significant errors in grammar and/or mechanics interfere with communication.

Score 1

A paper at this level has little or no development or support. Any development is extremely simple and/or repetitive. No organization is evident. Sentences lack variety, and construction errors seriously impede understanding. Word choice is poor and interferes with communication. The style and tone are inconsistent with standard business English. Errors in grammar and mechanics are frequent, severe, and seriously interfere with communication.

Score 0

Off-topic, offensive or strongly inappropriate language (may include profanity and/or threats), or written in a language other than English. May be blank or too brief to evaluate.

Level 3 Business Writing

Sample Item

Prompt:

At your office, employees are allowed to skip their morning and/or afternoon breaks to take longer lunch breaks. However, the personnel manager says that employees have been taking too much time on their lunch breaks as a result of this policy. She wants to require all employees to take their morning and afternoon breaks and the standard lunch break. Write a letter to the personnel manager explaining whether or not you are in favor of this proposal and why.

Level 3 Sample Response

I would have to agree with you on the break. The employees should take breaks and 1 lunch break at the normal time. They shouldn't be allowed to combine their breaks. They need to go by the rules like almost every other office buildings. There should be a law about this situation. It shouldn't be allowed. The employees need to learn how to flex their time during their lunch hour and breaks.

The management should start a good law about it. It shouldn't be allowed. The employees will just try to confuse the managers mind to let them have a longer lunch. They need to have 2 small breaks and 1 lunch hour. I think it is really, totally fair. They just need to learn how to manage their time so they can do all they need to.

Your proposal as the manager is what the building needs to make all office buildings fair and equal. All breaks should be taken and only a ½ hour lunch should be taken per work day. The manager is only trying to be fair to the workers. It is totally fair in my opinion. The workers need to follow the guidelines of experienced managers. Managers have more knowledge than employees. Managers are higher up and should have more say so than the employees. But if the employees disobey more than a couple times they should be taken off the job and fired. Not trying to be hersh but that is just my opinion in this situation. Give them a warning or two and maybe they will learn.

Please follow the new proposal its fair to the company. Its a good thing to do, because if they have longer lunches they may be doing something illegal or is just bad for other people. This is an excellent proposal from the manager to have more opinions. I say go with what the manager says.

Why this is a Level 3 response:

- Sentence structures are usually correct (despite a run-on sentence), and some variety and complexity are attempted, but many of the sentences are overly simple and vague. (*Please follow the new proposal its fair to the company... It shouldn't be allowed... It is totally fair in my opinion.*)
- There are some errors in grammar and mechanics, but they do not interfere with communication. Spelling is generally correct. Errors include misspellings of *experienced* and *hersh*, a missing word in *or is just bad*, and missing apostrophes in *managers mind* and *its a good thing*.
- Word choice is generally clear and correct but is repetitive: *There should be a law about this* (1st paragraph). *The management should start a good law about it* (2nd paragraph).
- The tone and style are casual but acceptable for standard business English (*I think it is really, totally fair.*)
- The writing is generally organized, and simple transitions are used (*but* and *not*).
- Ideas are adequately developed but are limited in depth and thoroughness. The idea that the policy is fair and that the manager's decision should be upheld is developed adequately, but there is little depth to the development. Supporting examples and details are relevant, but they are general and repetitive. The fairness issue is mentioned several times.

Employability

- **For students currently employed with at least 6 months of continuous employment:**
 - Employer completes evaluation form
 - Student completes self-evaluation
 - Student brings in two weeks of pay check stubs

- **For students not currently employed:**
 - Student must have district-approved work readiness portfolio
 - For more information, contact your school:

Bradford High School	359-6200
Harborside	359-8400
Hillcrest	359-6118
Indian Trail HS & Academy	359-8700
Kenosha eSchool	359-7715
LakeView Tech Academy	359-8155
Reuther Central High School	359-6160
Tremper High School	359-2200

- **ACT WorkKeys Resources:**

- **ACT WorkKeys Administration Website**

<https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/workkeys-for-educators/assessments/administration.html>

- **ACT WorkKeys Business Writing Website**

<https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/workkeys-for-educators/assessments/business-writing.html>

Sample Letter to Employer
(to be printed on school letterhead)

Date

Dear Employer:

One of your employees, _____, is a student in our High School Competency Diploma program at _____ High School. As part of the program requirements, students are to provide proof of at least six months of successful employment, provide check stubs, and write a self-evaluation. We are asking you to complete our enclosed evaluation regarding this student's work for you. Your honest feedback will help the student to improve his/her employability skills, in addition to satisfying the requirements for the High School Competency Diploma Option.

Please return the evaluation by _____ either by fax, (262)____-_____ or in your sealed business letterhead envelope. We appreciate your cooperation in helping this student work toward high school graduation. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call _____ at _____.

Sincerely,

Principal/Designee

Enclosure

Employee Evaluation Form

Employee: _____ Company: _____

Job Title: _____

Supervisor (print) _____

Supervisor signature _____ Date: _____

Number of hours in average weekly schedule: _____

Student has worked at this company since: _____ (month/day/year)

Employability Skills Form

Occupational Skills	Very Good	Good	Average	Needs to Improve	Poor
Attends regularly					
Reports on time					
Follows instructions					
Works without constant supervision					
Uses time and materials effectively					
Is able to perform job duties					
Completes assigned work					
Uses tools/materials appropriately					
Works safely and carefully					
Is willing to do the same job repeatedly					
Assumes responsibility					
Accepts criticism/corrections					
Shows initiative					
Gets along with supervisor					
Demonstrates good manners					
Gets along with other workers					
Communicates well with people					
Displays honesty					
Demonstrates appropriate behavior					
Dresses properly for the job					
Maintains good hygiene/grooming					
Keeps work area in order					

Continue on next page

What personal strengths have you observed in this student?

Please list any suggestions that may improve the student's job performance.

Please provide any additional comments.

**Please fax this form to _____ (school) at (262) ___ - _____ to the
attention of _____ (name).**

**If faxing is not possible, have the student return the form to school in your sealed business
letterhead envelope.**

Thank you,

Principal/Designee

Student Self-Evaluation

After your employer evaluation is completed, you may begin your self-evaluation. The employability skills self-evaluation should consist of the following four paragraphs:

1. A description of the place you work and your job duties
2. Your areas of strength on the job
3. The areas in which you could improve
4. Your plans to improve and/or maintain your job performance

Use your employer's evaluation of you as a starting point for discussing your strengths and weaknesses. Include a topic sentence, several supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence in each paragraph. The self-evaluation must be word-processed but you do not need a cover sheet. Be honest!

Questions and Answers for Students and Parents

The Kenosha Unified School District (KUSD) is offering a program designed to provide another option to students who are unable to meet the credit requirements for receiving their high school diploma. The District believes the KUSD High School Competency Diploma Option will serve to decrease the number of dropouts and increase the number of high school graduates.

Students who are unable to meet the credit requirements to graduate with their cohorts are likely candidates to drop out of school and not graduate. With that in mind, the KUSD is offering a Competency Diploma that gives students an opportunity to graduate and to further their respective educational and career opportunities. Frequently asked questions and answers follow.

WHAT IS THE KUSD HIGH SCHOOL COMPETENCY DIPLOMA?

- It is an alternate route to graduation in which a diploma is issued for a small percentage of students who meet all requirements and take and pass the IOWA Assessments.
- With this diploma, graduates can continue their education at the post-secondary level, join the military, or go directly to work. However, all colleges, trade schools, businesses, apprenticeship programs, or branches of the military may not accept the diploma.

HOW DO STUDENTS QUALIFY FOR THE KUSD HIGH SCHOOL COMPETENCY DIPLOMA?

- Students must be at 17-20 years old, attended at least 3 years of high school, are credit deficient and a member of an existing KUSD cohort group.
- Students must be current residents of the Kenosha Unified School District.
- Students must meet the requirements for the writing and employability components.
- Students must have completed consumer education/economics, health, and government and politics, or comparable courses.
- Students must successfully complete the U.S. Civics Exam (min. score of 65/100).
- Students required to perform a minimum of 10 hours of community service. Effective Aug 1, 2021.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

- Interested students **ages 17 and over who are credit deficient** will meet with a counselor to determine credit status and feasibility of graduating through credit acquisition. Eligible students will fill out an application form, sign consent, and be given information regarding the KUSD High School Competency Diploma Option.
- Students will be offered an opportunity to attend school to prepare for the IOWA Assessments.
- Students who attend school for test-preparation will be subject to all classroom, school, and District rules and policies.
- Eligible students who complete all course requirements and pass the IOWA Assessments can graduate with the Competency Diploma. Those not satisfying both conditions prior to their twenty-first birthday are ineligible for this Diploma.
- Students receiving the Competency Diploma will be allowed to participate in the Competency Diploma graduation ceremony.

WHAT IS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS WHO WISH TO TAKE THE IOWA ASSESSMENTS?

- Eligible students must have on file a signed KUSD High School Competency Diploma Student Participation Form and transcript showing that course requirements have been met (consumer education/economics, health, and government and politics).
- Students must successfully complete the U.S. Civics Exam (min. score of 65/100).
- Students required to perform a minimum of 10 hours of community service. Effective Aug 1, 2021.
- Students must successfully complete one of the following writing assessments: score Level 3 or higher on the ACT WorkKeys Business Writing, score a Level of Close, Ready or Exceeding on the ACT Aspire Writing, or score 6 or higher on the ACT Writing (maximum of 12) or score a 15 or higher on the ACT Writing (maximum of 36).
- Students must satisfy the employability skills requirement prior to testing.
- Eligible students must have paid in full all testing fees required prior to testing.
- Students will take the IOWA Assessments, which measures knowledge in the areas of reading, vocabulary, written expression, mathematics, social studies, and science.
- Students must pass the IOWA Assessments by achieving a minimum stanine score of four in each of the subject areas. Until their twenty-first birthday, students who fail one or more tests may re-test during each testing cycle.
- Iowa Assessments candidates shall present valid photo identification.
- The tests are administered in English.
- Students with documented special education needs may be eligible for testing accommodations.

WHAT IS REQUIRED OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS/DESIGNEES?

- Students will be fully informed of each diploma's potential value in terms of getting a job, entering post-secondary education, or joining the military.
- Informational fliers/letters will also include the contact information of the student's guidance counselor or principal's designee, who will provide more detailed information regarding the program.
- Schools will provide opportunities for preparatory work to increase the likelihood of success for students who choose the KUSD High School Competency Diploma Option.
- Principals or their designees will oversee testing accommodations and will monitor student eligibility and identification for this option.
- Principals or their designees will notify students who have not passed the IOWA Assessments.

WHAT IS THE PARENT'S/GUARDIAN'S ROLE?

- The school district has developed a parent notification letter and a parent signature letter. The parent/guardian signature is required prior to participation by students who are 17.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to meet with their student's counselor or teacher to be fully informed about the KUSD High School Competency Diploma Option.

WHEN WILL STUDENTS RECEIVE THE KUSD HIGH SCHOOL COMPETENCY DIPLOMA AND WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE?

- Students successfully completing the program will be awarded the KUSD High School Competency Diploma at a Competency Diploma graduation ceremony.
- The District, rather than a high school will award the KUSD High School Competency Diploma.

KUSD High School Competency Diploma

Student Participation Form

I _____ (print student name) have read the requirements regarding the KUSD High School Competency Diploma and choose to participate in this option. I understand that:

- I must be a current resident of the Kenosha Unified School District;
- I must be credit deficient as verified by my counselor;
- I must be 17-20 years old;
- I must be a member of a KUSD cohort group;
- I must perform a minimum of 10 hours of community service;
- I must pass all sections of the IOWA Assessments at the 4th stanine or above and meet all other requirements prior to my twenty-first birthday;
- the KUSD High School Competency Diploma may not be acceptable for entry into all institutions of higher education or all branches of the military or all apprenticeship programs;
- it is my responsibility to determine whether or not the KUSD High School Competency Diploma will be accepted at colleges and universities, by the military, or by other programs/institutions;
- if I pass the IOWA Assessments and meet all other requirements, I will be allowed to participate in the KUSD Competency Graduation Ceremony;
- I am subject to all school rules and School Board policies while on school property and that failure to follow rules and procedures may result in my dismissal from the program.

(student signature and date)

(phone number)

The Kenosha Unified School District is an Equal Opportunity Educator/Employer with established policies prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age, race, creed, religion, color, sex, national origin, disability or handicap, sexual orientation, or political affiliation in any educational program, activity, or employment in the District. The Superintendent of Schools/designee (262-359-6320) addresses questions regarding student discrimination, and the Chief Human Resources Officer (262-359-6333) answers questions concerning staff discrimination.

Parent/Guardian Consent
(required for students under the age of 18)

KUSD High School Competency Diploma Student Participation Form

I/We, _____, have read the requirements
(print parent/guardian name)
regarding the KUSD High School Competency Diploma and grant my/our permission for

_____ to participate in this option.
(print name of son/daughter)

I/We understand that our son/daughter

- must be a current resident of the Kenosha Unified School District;
- must be credit deficient as verified by their counselor;
- must be 17-20 years old;
- must be a member of a KUSD cohort group;
- must perform a minimum of 10 hours of community service;
- must pass all sections of the IOWA Assessments at the 4th stanine or above and meet all other requirements prior to his/her twenty-first birthday;
- must understand that the KUSD High School Competency Diploma may not be acceptable for entry into all institutions of higher education or all branches of the military or all apprenticeship programs;
- must understand it is his/her responsibility to determine whether or not the KUSD High School Competency Diploma will be accepted at colleges and universities, by the military, or by other programs/institutions;
- must understand if he/she passes the IOWA Assessments and meets all other requirements, he/she will be allowed to participate in the KUSD Competency Graduation Ceremony;
- must understand he/she is subject to all school rules and School Board policies while on school property and that failure to follow rules and procedures may result in his/her dismissal from the program.

(parent/guardian signature and date)

(phone number)

The Kenosha Unified School District is an Equal Opportunity Educator/Employer with established policies prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age, race, creed, religion, color, sex, national origin, disability or handicap, sexual orientation, or political affiliation in any educational program, activity, or employment in the District. The Superintendent of Schools/designee (262-359-6320) addresses questions regarding student discrimination, and the Chief Human Resources Officer (262-359-6333) answers questions concerning staff discrimination.