



# KEEP YOUR FUTURE IN MIND. . . SET YOUR GOALS EARLY



**CHOOSE COURSES FOR HIGH SCHOOL THAT WILL. . . .**  
**CONTRIBUTE – TO GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS.**  
**ALLOW - YOU TO EXPLORE YOUR INTERESTS/AND EARN AN ENDORSEMENT.**  
**PREPARE – YOU FOR COLLEGE, TECHNICAL SCHOOL, MILITARY, OR WORK.**

## **HELP REACH YOUR GOALS BY:**

### **MAKING THE MOST OF SCHOOL SUBJECTS**

Employers, colleges and technical schools are concerned about your scholastic record as well as your attendance.

### **PARTICIPATING IN VOLUNTEER WORK**

Investing your time in our areas of interest will give you valuable information and experience.

### **GETTING INVOLVED IN EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

School, church and community organizations allow you to gain experience in organizational skills, leadership training and accepting responsibility.

### **WORKING AT A PART-TIME JOB**

Part-time jobs can help you learn about different career fields.

## **Planning Ahead For College**

### **9<sup>TH</sup> Grade**

- Follow the Distinguished Level of Achievement Plan, and plan to earn at least one endorsement.
- Be serious about your grades. Your class rank and GPA are an important part of the college admission process.
- Participate in extra-curricular activities and keep records of honors and awards you receive.
- Visit colleges (2 and 4 year), art, business and technical schools.
- Find out what it will take to be considered “College/Career Ready” by the time you graduate.
- Explore your career interests and the type of post high school education required in Xello.

### **10<sup>TH</sup> Grade**

- Participate in your individual planning session with your counselor and parent, to update your PGP (Personal Graduation Plan) that you began in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Take challenging course work and advanced academic classes.
- Attend the HEB ISD College and Career Night to receive information from many college and business representatives.
- Take the PSAT in the fall.
- Concentrate on grades and stay involved.
- Continue your college visits in the summer.  
Work on doing what it will take to be considered “College/Career Ready” by the time you graduate.

# Graduation Requirements for Students Beginning 9th Grade in 2014-2015 or After

The default plan for HEB ISD students is the Distinguished Level of Achievement Plan, which includes one endorsement choice. Multiple endorsements are possible.

<p><b>ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS</b></p> <p>Four credits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*English I</li> <li>*English II</li> <li>English III</li> <li>English IV</li> </ul>
<p><b>MATHEMATICS</b></p> <p>Four credits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Algebra I</li> <li>Geometry</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Algebraic Reasoning followed by Algebra II</li> <li>Algebra II followed by a 4th math credit</li> </ul>
<p><b>SCIENCE</b></p> <p>Four credits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Biology</li> <li>Advanced Science Courses</li> <li>(3 credits-must include Chemistry or Physics)</li> </ul>
<p><b>SOCIAL STUDIES</b></p> <p>Four credits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>World Geography</li> <li>World History</li> <li>*U.S. History</li> <li>U.S. Government (one-half credit)</li> <li>Economics (one-half credit)</li> </ul>
<p><b>PHYSICAL EDUCATION</b></p> <p>One credit</p>
<p><b>LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH</b></p> <p>Two credits in the same language</p>
<p><b>FINE ARTS</b></p> <p>One credit</p>
<p><b>SPEECH</b></p> <p>One-half credit - must be Professional Communications, Debate, Oral Interpretation or Communication Applications</p>
<p><b>HEALTH</b></p> <p>One half-credit</p>
<p><b>TECHNOLOGY</b></p> <p>One Credit</p>
<p><b>ELECTIVES FOR ONE ENDORSEMENT</b></p> <p>Four credits</p>
<p><b>TOTAL CREDITS: 26</b></p>

<b>ENDORSEMENT CHOICES</b>	
<b>STEM</b>	
Science	Technology
Engineering	Math
<b>BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY</b>	
Architecture & Construction	
Arts, AV Technology, & Communications	
Business, Marketing, & Finance	
Hospitality & Tourism	
Information Technology	
Manufacturing	
Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics	
<b>PUBLIC SERVICES</b>	
Education & Training	Health Science
Human Services	Law & Public Service
<b>ARTS AND HUMANITIES</b>	
Art	Dance
Music	Theater
Social Studies	World Languages
<b>MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES</b>	
Allows a student to complete prescribed courses from:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each of the four foundation subject areas</li> <li>• Advanced Placement / International Baccalaureate courses from each of the four foundation subject areas</li> <li>• 4 advanced courses from within one endorsement area or among endorsement areas not in a coherent sequence</li> </ul>	

Beginning with the graduating class of 2022, all students must successfully complete and submit one of the following forms:

- FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)
- TAFSA (Texas Application for State Aid)
- Texas Education Agency's Opt-Out form

Students will need to submit the form during the fall of their senior year in order to graduate from high school.

**It is the responsibility of each college-bound student to research admission requirements, as each college's requirements may differ.**



\*Course has a STAAR EOC. The required passing standard must be met for each EOC in order for a student to receive a high school diploma.

**PERFORMANCE ACKNOWLEDGMENT**  
 A student may earn performance acknowledgments on their high school transcript for outstanding performance:

- In a dual credit course
- On an AP or IB exam
- For earning a nationally or internationally recognized industry certification
- In bilingualism and biliteracy
- On the PSAT, ASPIRE, SAT or ACT

## Testing Requirements for High School Graduation

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STAAR EOC: In order to receive a high school diploma, students must earn the required credits for graduation and must pass 5 STAAR End-of-Course exams (EOC).

These exams are:

- Algebra 1
  - For the majority of students, Algebra is generally taken in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. 8<sup>th</sup> grade Pre-AP Algebra students will take this EOC in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Biology
  - For the majority of students, Biology is generally taken in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. 8<sup>th</sup> grade Pre-AP Biology students(CJH only) will take this EOC in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- English 1
  - This course is taken at the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level. The test is a combined Reading/Writing test.
- English 2
  - This course is taken at the 10<sup>th</sup> grade level. The test is a combined Reading/Writing test.
- U.S. History
  - For the majority of students, this course is taken in 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

## Performance Acknowledgment

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For students who begin 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 2014-2015 and thereafter, a student may earn a performance acknowledgement for:

- Outstanding performance (as determined by the Texas Education Agency)
  - in a dual credit course
  - in bilingualism and biliteracy
  - on an AP test or IB exam
  - on the PSAT, the ASPIRE, the SAT, or the ACT
- Earning a nationally or internationally recognized business or industry certification or license.

## Other Standardized Testing Options for Junior High Students

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PSAT – All 8th graders will take the PSAT 8/9. This is a practice SAT exam that helps to identify students with AP (Advanced Placement) potential. Students scoring high enough on the PSAT as a 8<sup>th</sup> grader may earn the distinction as a “Superintendent’s Scholar” and receive additional test prep.

# GPA Counts!

**GPA – Grade Point Average** - Refers to a grade point scale that assigns more points to grades earned in certain classes. Courses designated as AdvAc, Dual Credit, and certain selected and approved CTE courses will fall on the Tier II scale. Courses that culminate in a national or international exam, i.e. Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and other District determined courses will fall on the Tier III scale. All other courses fall under the Tier I scale.

## GRADE SCALE AND GRADE POINT EQUIVALENTS

<u>NUMBER GRADE</u>	<u>TIER III</u>	<u>TIER II</u>	<u>TIER I</u>
98-100	6.000	5.000	4.000
93-97	5.666	4.666	3.666
90-92	5.333	4.333	3.333
87-89	5.000	4.000	3.000
83-86	4.666	3.666	2.666
80-82	4.333	3.333	2.333
77-79	4.000	3.000	2.000
73-76	3.666	2.666	1.666
70-72	3.333	2.333	1.333
Below 70	0	0	0

A grade point average (GPA) is a calculated average of the numeric grades you earn in school following a 4.0, 5.0, or 6.0 scale. Every semester, you will receive a GPA based on the grades you earned in all of your classes during that semester. Throughout high school, you will also maintain a cumulative GPA, which is an ongoing average of all your semester one and two grades beginning with freshman year. For some who begin earning high school credit in 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade, those credit earning courses count toward GPA.

### Your GPA is important for your future because:

1. Even before college, your GPA can determine whether you are eligible or not to take Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses during your junior and senior years of high school.
2. For admission, prospective colleges consider both your GPA and your class rank, which is determined by your GPA. So the higher your GPA, the better your chances are of getting into the college of your choice. Your rank will also dictate how well you need to score on the SAT or ACT for college admissions.
3. Your GPA is a major consideration for both academic and athletic college scholarships as well as financial aid.

### Start improving your GPA now.

4. You cannot wait until your junior or senior year to start worrying about your cumulative GPA. Every single class you take for high school credit gets averaged in, so all your grades are just as important. If you bomb every class in the first year or two, it will be impossible to graduate with an above average GPA. For example, if you receive all D's or 1.0's in 9th and 10th grade and all A's or 4.0's in 11th and 12th grade, your cumulative average GPA will be 2.5, which doesn't meet the minimum many schools require for admission.
5. However, a little planning and hard work during your freshman year can go a long way toward a better cumulative GPA and make all the difference when you send in your college applications. In fact, the GPA on your college application may only reflect the first 3 or 3 ½ years of high school anyway since you will need to apply before your first semester grades of senior year are calculated.

### GPA Tips & Tactics

- Work hard in your freshman and sophomore years to increase your chance of admission into AP, IB, honors and accelerated course—they're your ticket to a higher GPA since they're given more weight on the GPA scale.
- While a low GPA will not keep you from getting into college, some four-year colleges do require a 3.0 or higher for admission. The myth of an "easy" senior year is FALSE – Every grade you make counts!
- Don't slack off once you receive your acceptance letter. Your future college will continue to monitor your grades through the end of your senior year and expect a final transcript.

## WHAT COUNTS IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

**What admissions staff found as “considerably important” in a national survey:**

Factor	Considerable importance	Moderate Importance	Limited Importance	No Importance
Grades in college prep courses	76.0%	12.5%	9.3%	1.4%
Strength of curriculum	51.8	35.3	7.3	5.5
Admission test scores (SAT, ACT).	54.3	27.9	13.7	4.1
Grades in all courses	77.1	13.8	6.4	2.8
Essay or writing sample	18.9	35.9	22.1	23.0
Student's demonstrated interest	13.7	25.5	32.1	28.8
Counselor recommendation	14.6	46.0	25.8	13.6
Class Rank	9.2	24.0	34.6	32.3
Teacher recommendation	10.9	46.4	28.0	14.7
Subject test scores (AP, IB)	6.9	30.6	30.6	31.9
Portfolio	6.2	5.7	27.6	60.5
Interview	4.7	17.4	31.9	46.0
SAT II scores	2.4	6.1	21.2	70.3
Extracurricular activities	7.9	36.0	36.9	19.2
State graduation exam	1.9	7.6	21.9	68.6
Work	2.8	15.6	47.4	34.1

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2017

\*\*\*Texas public universities and colleges will automatically accept the top 10% of the graduating class from public high schools, if the student graduates with a Distinguished Level of Achievement Diploma. The University of Texas at Austin automatically accepts the top 6%\*\*\*



# It's Never Too Early To Start Planning!

## Financial Aid

Most financial aid is awarded based on financial need.

$$\frac{\text{Cost of Attending College} - \text{Family Contribution}^{**}}{\text{Financial Need}}$$

More than \$8,180,000,000 in financial aid is awarded to students in Texas each year



## Types of aid

Grants and Scholarships\* (Free Money) = 47%  
Work Study (Part-time jobs) = 1%  
Loans (To be paid back, with interest) = 52%

\*\*Student Aid Index calculates based on the income and assets of the student and their parents or spouse, if applicable. The analysis formula used considers both taxed and untaxed income, as well as any assets and benefits received, such as unemployment or Social Security information provided using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

## How Can I Prepare for College

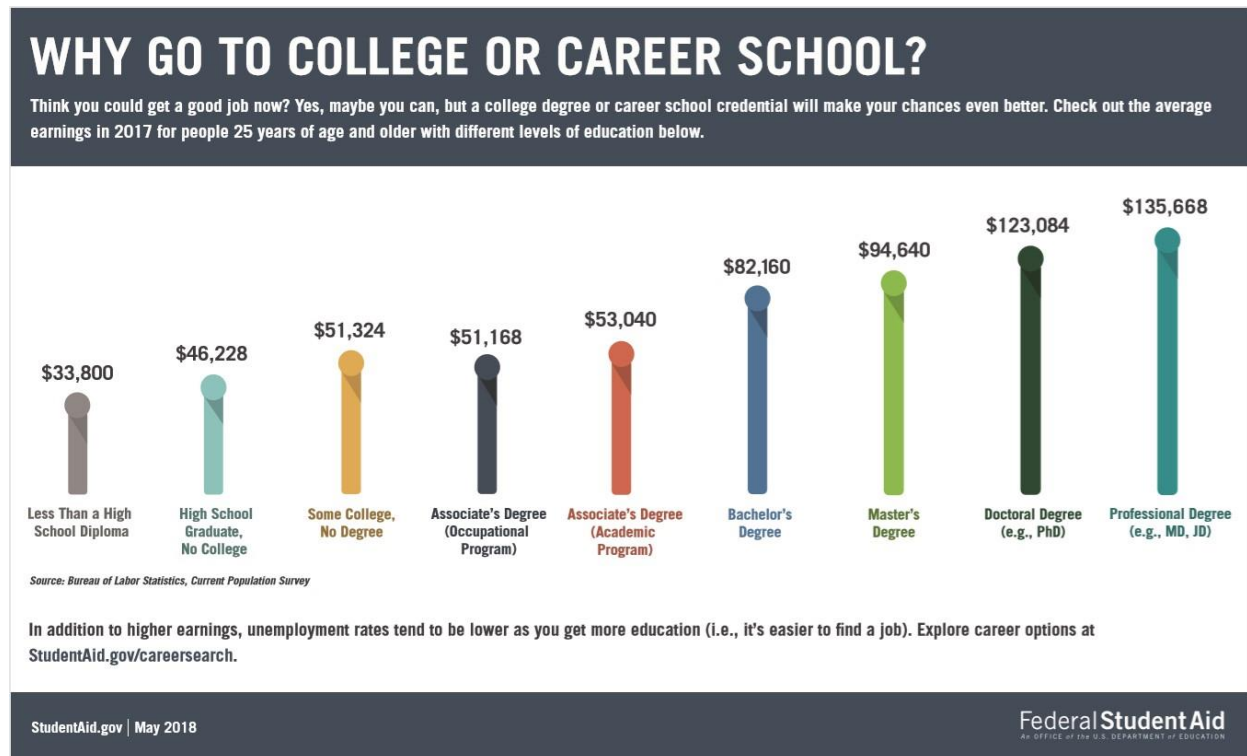
- ❖ Prepare for college academics by taking the most rigorous classes you can.
- ❖ Grades are important; many scholarships are awarded on academic achievement.
- ❖ Participate in community activities as well as extracurricular school events.
- ❖ Begin to learn about the different colleges and universities through the internet and with campus visits.
- ❖ Investigate career options for your future and explore opportunities to learn more about specific careers.

# Why Go to College?

## (How about ... to get a good job!)

Can't I get a good job now?

Yes, maybe you could, but a college degree will make your chances even better. Check out the earnings and unemployment rates below for people 25 years and older with different levels of education.



Sometimes it's hard to stay in school if you think you need to be working to earn money. But if you get an education beyond high school, you'll have a wider variety of jobs to choose from, and you'll earn more— especially in the long run.

### But I don't know what career to go into!

If you can't decide what to do, talk to your school counselor or visit [StudentAid.gov/prepare](http://StudentAid.gov/prepare) to find out how to prepare for college and explore your career options.

### Doesn't college cost a lot of money?

Think of college as an investment: You spend money now so you can earn more later. The U.S. Department of Education may help you pay for your education. Take a look at [StudentAid.gov](http://StudentAid.gov) for information about our federal student aid programs. The site also links to a free scholarship search at [StudentAid.gov/scholarships](http://StudentAid.gov/scholarships).

Still have questions? Call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)



# Helpful Websites

The following web sites can be beneficial to you throughout the application process and in your quest to financially support your college career. HEB ISD does not endorse or recommend any specific website. These are for informational purposes only.

<u>College for All Texans</u>	<a href="http://www.collegeforalltexans.com">www.collegeforalltexans.com</a>	scholarships for Texans
<u>College is Possible</u>	<a href="http://www.collegeispossible.com">www.collegeispossible.com</a>	a campaign to provide information related to preparing for, paying for, and choosing the right college
<u>College Net</u>	<a href="http://www.collegenet.com">www.collegenet.com</a>	school information
<u>Fast WEB</u>	<a href="http://www.fastweb.com">www.fastweb.com</a>	extensive listings of scholarships
<u>Free Application for Federal Student Aid</u>	<a href="http://www.fafsa.ed.gov">www.fafsa.ed.gov</a>	government financial aid application
<u>High Scholarships</u>	<a href="http://www.highscholarships.com">www.highscholarships.com</a>	scholarship search for high school
<u>Nelnet</u>	<a href="http://www.nelnet.com">www.nelnet.com</a>	college planning, financial aid information
<u>Sallie Mae College Answer</u>	<a href="http://www.collegeanswer.com">www.collegeanswer.com</a>	college planning, financial aid information
<u>SAT</u>	<a href="http://www.collegeboard.com">www.collegeboard.com</a>	SAT registration and testing information
<u>Scholarships</u>	<a href="http://www.scholarships.com">www.scholarships.com</a>	scholarship search, financial aid information
<u>U.S. Department of Education</u>	<a href="http://www.ed.gov">www.ed.gov</a>	college funding
<u>Wired Scholar</u>	<a href="http://www.wiredscholar.com">www.wiredscholar.com</a>	scholarship search, preparation



XELLO  
TOOLS TO  
HELP YOU  
PLAN FOR  
THE FUTURE

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# The Xello difference: A model that connects self-knowledge to future success

Built with thousands of hours of research with educators, Xello puts students at the center of their journey of self-discovery. Every student will build the skills and knowledge necessary for success in their own unique future.



## **Build Self-knowledge**

Students define their interests, skills, preferences, and aspirations so they can explore the opportunities right for them.



## **Explore Options**

Students learn about career possibilities and educational pathways by exploring rich engaging content and lessons.



## **Create a Plan**

Students create dynamic, actionable plans that outline the steps needed to achieve school, career, and life goals.



## **Learn & Reassess**

As students gain experience, knowledge, and skills, they can reassess and change their plans for the future.

Xello is an online program your child is using in school to help them prepare for the future. It offers a variety of activities from kindergarten to the end of high school. These activities help students build self-knowledge, explore their options, and create achievable plans. They develop the 21st-century skills needed to thrive in the world of work.

It's important for students to take ownership in planning for their future. But the caring adults in their life play an essential supporting role. Use your Xello Family account to see your child's work in future-readiness. Use this opportunity to discuss and support their future goals and plans. Please see your student's counselor for Xello assistance.



# Help Students Discover Post-Secondary Options

The image displays two views of the xello website. The top view is a desktop browser window showing the 'EXPLORE SCHOOLS' page. It includes a search bar for 'Location' (with a placeholder 'Add one or more states') and a 'Cost / Year' slider ranging from \$0 to \$50,000. Below these are search filters for 'All Schools' and 'Apply to Schools'. A grid of school cards is visible, each with a photo and name, such as 'South Dakota College' in Huron, SD, and 'Alabama Christian University' in Anniston, AL. A 'Save' button is present at the bottom right of the grid.

The bottom view is a laptop screen showing a career profile for 'ECOLOGIST'. The profile features a video of a person in a field, a salary range of '\$35,000 - \$100,000', and a 'Save' button. Below the video is a section titled 'EXPLORE THIS CAREER' with a 'Grade My Data' button. This section contains six interactive cards: 'How I Feel About This Career' (Love It), 'My Notes' (Add), 'Important Factors' (Add), 'Likes and Dislikes' (Add), 'Helpful Articles' (Add), and 'Related Videos' (Add).

# Encourage Students to Build Self-Knowledge

The first step of being future-ready is knowing who you are. Xello helps students discover more about themselves by encouraging them to record and reflect on their strengths, skills, and interests. They learn to think critically about how to apply all they discover to create a plan that gets them excited and ready to explore!

## Career Matchmaker

Students participate in an interactive assessment with situation-based questions. Their answers match them with careers that align to their passions and skills, engaging and exciting them in planning for the future.

## Personality Style Assessment

Based on the Holland Model, the Personality Style assessment helps students learn why certain careers are a good match for them based on their unique traits, likes and dislikes.

## Learning Style Assessment

By completing the Learning Styles assessment, students discover how they learn best, and are equipped with the tools and awareness to maximize their learning techniques.

## After High School

Students begin by thinking about what they might want to do after high school - giving them a base to start from when planning their future.

## Favorite Clusters

Viewing similar careers in favorite clusters helps inspire students and broadens their choices.

## Experiences

With an interactive timeline, students track their accomplishments in life, education, work, and volunteer experiences, prompting them to reflect on, and learn from, their experiences.

## Skills & Interests

Students identify and reflect on their skills and interests to learn how to apply them to their future.

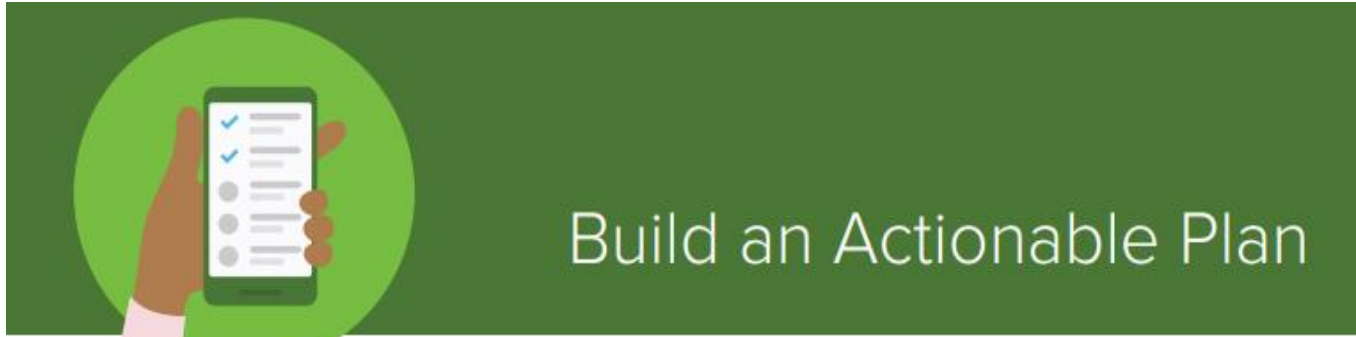
## Storyboard

Students collect and store in one place their favorite photos, videos, links, and files to express their personality, represent their story, and visually capture their goals.

The screenshot displays the Xello interface for a student named Jameela Young. The profile includes a header with navigation links (About Me, Explore Options, Goals & Plans) and a search icon. Below the header is a profile picture and the name 'JAMEELA YOUNG' with contact information (Email, LinkedIn School, Grade 12). The main content area is divided into several sections:

- CAREER MATCHES:** A carousel of five career cards: Photographer (Salary: \$18,400 - \$70,000), Camera Operator (Salary: \$23,360 - \$102,000), Biologist (Salary: \$18,400 - \$70,000), Ecologist (Salary: \$18,400 - \$70,000), and another Ecologist (Salary: \$18,400 - \$70,000).
- PERSONALITY STYLE:** A circular diagram with six segments: Organizer, Thinker, Creator, Doer, Relater, and Socializer.
- LEARNING STYLE:** A circular diagram showing percentages: 45% Visual, 40% Tactile, and 15% Auditory. The result is 'You are a Visual-Tactile Learner'.
- AFTER HIGH SCHOOL...:** A section titled 'My post-high school learning' with an 'Edit Goal' button and a group of icons representing different educational paths.
- FAVORITE CLUSTERS:** A section titled 'Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources / Arts, AV Technology & Communications' with an 'Update' button.
- EXPERIENCES:** A horizontal timeline from 2016 to 2018. Key events include 'MOVING CLASS' (2016), 'CAMP COUNSELLOR' (2017), and 'CAMP COUNSELLOR' (2018).
- SKILLS:** A list of skills with star ratings: Listening (4 stars), Taking Criticism (4 stars), Communicating (4 stars), Abstract Thinking (4 stars), Photography (4 stars), and Visual Communication (4 stars).
- INTERESTS:** A list of interests: Planning (4 stars), Photography (4 stars), Reading (4 stars), Modeling (4 stars), Art (4 stars), and Soccer (4 stars).
- PLACES:** A world map with two location pins: San Francisco, California, United States and San Francisco, California, United States.
- STORYBOARD:** A grid of image thumbnails. The first is a plus sign with 'Add file'. Other thumbnails include: 'Insect Photography Tips', 'CANYON (that photo)', 'Sunlight', 'Landscape 1 (week sign)', 'Landscape 1 (week sign)', 'Landscape 1 (week sign)', 'Landscape 1 (week sign)', 'Landscape 1 (week sign)', and 'WILDING!'.





# Build an Actionable Plan

### COURSE PLANNER

High School Diploma

Credits Left: 46/50

YEAR 9	YEAR 10 (this year)	YEAR 11 (next year)	YEAR 12
English ENG9C	English ENG10C	College English ENG12C	College English ENG12C
Maths 2U Mathematics & Statistics	English ENG10D	Maths 2U	Maths 2U
Science SC9C	English 1 ENG10EA	Maths 2U	Maths 2U
Geographic GEO9C	English 1 ENG10EB	Maths 2U	Maths 2U
French FREN1	English 1 ENG10EC	Maths 2U	Maths 2U
English Contemporary First Nations	English 1 ENG10ED	Maths 2U	Maths 2U
Visual Arts ART9C	English 1 ENG10EE	Maths 2U	Maths 2U
Information and Communication	English 1 ENG10EF	Maths 2U	Maths 2U

### MY TRANSCRIPTS

Send New Transcript

Send My Transcript?

All Requests

- Miguel University - Status: Pending
- University Of Chicago - Status: Pending

### PHOTOJOURNALIST

I will become a

**PHOTOJOURNALIST**

CAREER: PHOTOJOURNALIST

SCHOOLS: California State University, Sacramento

MAJORS: Wildlife Biology

I love taking photos of nature and getting outside. Capturing light is really important to me and I like to take pictures of things in motion.



Texas Education Agency

# Graduation Toolkit

Information for Planning Your High School Years & Beyond



including information about the new  
**Foundation High School Program**

◆ *Overview*

◆ *Choices*

◆ *Resources*

◆ *Benefits*

◆ *Checklists*

◆ *Glossary*

Texas Education Agency

# Graduation Toolkit

Graduation Program - *Overview*

Distinguished Level of Achievement  
- *Benefits*

Texas High School Diploma - *Steps*

Endorsements - *Choices*

Graduation Program - *Checklists*

Information - *University*

Information - *Workforce*

Graduation Program - *Glossary*

# Graduation Program – Overview

## Foundation High School Program

A new, more flexible graduation program that allows students to pursue their interests will be in place for all students who enter high school, beginning in the 2014-2015 school year.

### The program contains up to four parts:

- A 22-credit foundation program which is the core of the new Texas high school diploma
- Five endorsement\* options that allow students to focus on a related series of courses
- A higher performance category called Distinguished Level of Achievement
- Performance Acknowledgments that note outstanding achievement

### The Foundation requirements (22 credits) include:

**English (4 credits)** • English I • English II • English III • An advanced English course

**Mathematics (3 credits)** • Algebra I • Geometry • An advanced math course

**Science (3 credits)** • Biology • Integrated Physics & Chemistry or an advanced science course  
• An advanced science course

**Social Studies (3 credits)** • World History or World Geography • U.S. History  
• U.S. Government (one-half credit) • Economics (one-half credit)

**Languages Other Than English (2 credits)** • 2 credits in the same language or  
• 2 credits from Computer Science I, II, III

**Physical Education (1 credit)**      **Fine Arts (1 credit)**      **Electives (5 credits)**

**Speech:** Demonstrated proficiency

**Endorsements** Total credits with endorsements 26

## Enhancements

Additionally, a student may earn the Distinguished Level of Achievement and/or a Performance Acknowledgment for outstanding performance. The Distinguished Level of Achievement must be earned to be admitted to a Texas public university under the Top 10 percent automatic admission law.

### Distinguished Level of Achievement

- Foundation Program requirements
- 4 credits in math including Algebra II
- 4 credits in science
- at least 1 endorsement

### Performance Acknowledgments

- dual credit course
- bilingualism and biliteracy
- PSAT, ACT's Plan, SAT or ACT
- Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate exam
- earning a nationally or internationally recognized business or industry certification or license

\*A student entering 9th grade must indicate an endorsement he or she plans to follow. A student may change or add an endorsement at any time.

A student may graduate without earning an endorsement if, after his or her sophomore year, the student's parent signs a form permitting the student to omit the endorsement requirement.

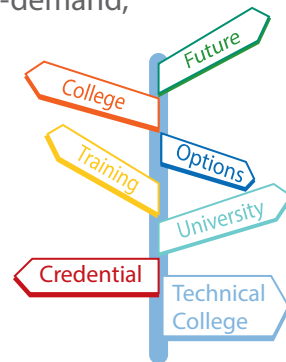


## Distinguished Level of Achievement – *Benefits*

### Choices determine options

Most of the very best jobs available now and in the future require education and training beyond a high school diploma. Whether you intend to pursue a high-demand, industry workforce credential from a community or technical college or a traditional four-year degree from a university, the choices made in high school will determine your future options.

To best prepare yourself now for the transition to post-high school education or quality workforce training, choosing and taking the right classes is essential. The Distinguished Level of Achievement will ensure the best preparation for your future.



### Why it matters — *Benefits*

The Distinguished Level of Achievement opens a world of educational and employment opportunities for you beyond high school. The Distinguished Level of Achievement will:

- Allow you to compete for Top 10% automatic admissions eligibility at any Texas public university;
- Position you among those first in line for a TEXAS Grant\* to help pay for university tuition and fees; and
- Ensure you are a more competitive applicant at the most selective colleges and universities.

\*Must be financially qualified

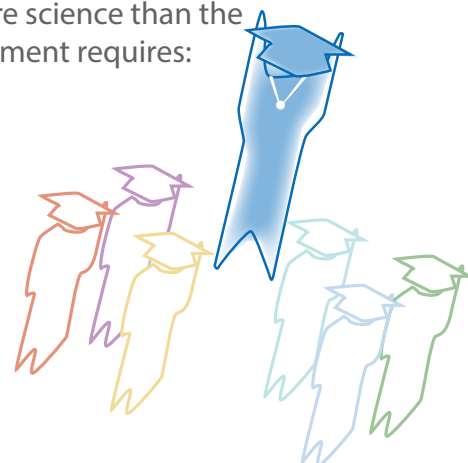
### What it means

The Distinguished Level of Achievement requires more math and more science than the Foundation High School Program. The Distinguished Level of Achievement requires:

- A total of four credits in math, including Algebra II;
- A total of four credits in science; and
- Successful completion of an endorsement in your area of interest.

### Advantages

- Opportunity to earn an endorsement in an area of interest
- More college and university options
- More financial aid options
- Better preparation for college-level coursework at community/technical colleges and universities
- Opportunity for immediate enrollment in classes related to your chosen field of study
- Strong foundation to successfully complete an industry workforce credential or college degree



## Endorsements – *Choices*

### Endorsements

For the first time, students will be able to earn one or more endorsements as part of their graduation requirements. Endorsements consist of a related series of courses that are grouped together by interest or skill set. They provide students with in-depth knowledge of a subject area.

Students must select an endorsement\* in the ninth grade. Districts and charters are not required to offer all endorsements. If only one endorsement is offered, it must be multi-disciplinary studies.

Students earn an endorsement by completing the curriculum requirements for the endorsement, including 4th credit of math and science and 2 additional elective credits.

### Students can choose from 5 endorsement areas

#### Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)

- Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses related to STEM
- Mathematics
- Science
- Computer Science
- Combination of no more than two of the categories listed above

#### Business and Industry (one of the following or a combination of areas)

- Agriculture
- Arts
- Audio/Video
- Finance
- Marketing
- Food and Natural Resources
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing
- Technology Applications
- Architecture and Construction
- Technology and Communications
- Business Management and Administration
- Transportation or Distribution and Logistics
- English electives in public speaking, debate, advanced broadcast journalism, advanced journalism including newspaper and yearbook

#### Public Service (one of the following)

- Human Services
- Law
- Corrections and Security
- Health Science
- Public Safety
- Education and Training
- Government and Public Administration
- Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC)

#### Arts and Humanities (one of the following)

- 2 levels each in two languages other than English (LOTE)
- 4 levels in the same LOTE
- Courses from one or two areas (music, theater, art, dance) in fine arts
- English electives not included in Business and Industry
- Social Studies
- American Sign Language (ASL)

#### Multi-Disciplinary Studies (one of the following)

- 4 advanced courses from other endorsement areas
- 4 credits in each foundation subject area, including English IV and chemistry and/or physics
- 4 credits in Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or dual credit selected from English, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, LOTE or fine arts

\*Visit your school counselor to learn more about your options.  
Students may earn more than one endorsement.

ENDORSEMENTS

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

- Review** choices offered under the **Foundation High School Program** and the **Endorsements** to decide on your future academic path.
- Select** the endorsement that best fits your area of personal interest and the major you plan to study in college.
- Recognize** that most college entrance requirements include rigorous advanced courses including **Algebra II**, higher-level science courses and languages other than English.

## 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> Grade

- Monitor** high school credits; be sure to meet all **local and state requirements** by the end of the senior year.
- Take dual enrollment** or **Advanced Placement courses** if possible to earn college credit while still in high school.
- Keep** list of awards, honors and extracurricular activities for scholarship and college applications.
- Research** colleges or universities you are interested in attending. **Check** admission and application requirements and timelines.
- Explore** interests and take advantage of **Career Day** opportunities.
- Attend college nights** hosted by your high school. **Talk** with school representatives about the types of financial aid available.
- Take** the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test in your sophomore year for practice. In your junior year, take the PSAT for eligibility for the National Merit Scholarship Competition. Students who take the PSAT or ACT's PLAN tend to score higher on the SAT or ACT than those who do not.

## 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> Grade

- Take dual enrollment** or **Advanced Placement courses** if possible to earn college credit while you are still in high school.
- Check** with your counselor's office to learn about available scholarships. Be sure to apply early and for as many scholarships as possible. Do not limit yourself to local scholarships.
- Consider** taking SAT/ACT preparation classes. **Sign up** and take the ACT and/or SAT test, preferably in your junior year but no later than the fall of your senior year.
- Fill out** the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) early in the spring of your senior year.
- Apply** to college during the fall of your senior year.

If you plan to pursue technical training or enter the workforce after graduation, see the Information - *Workforce Resources* page or visit Texas Reality Check at [www.texasrealitycheck.com/](http://www.texasrealitycheck.com/).



## Resources

### House Bill 5

[www.tea.state.tx.us/graduation-requirements/hb5.aspx](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/graduation-requirements/hb5.aspx)

In 2013, the Texas Legislature passed House Bill 5 creating a new graduation plan for Texas students — the Foundation High School Program. This webpage provides an array of information including:

- A side-by-side comparison of the Foundation High School Program and the previous graduation plans (PDF)
- A Foundation High School Program Frequently Asked Questions (PDF)
- Approved Foundation High School Program Rules — Detailed information about the state's graduation plan (PDF)

### Compare College TX

[www.comparecollegetx.com](http://www.comparecollegetx.com)

Compare College TX is an interactive, mobile-friendly web tool designed to help students and parents learn more about Texas public universities and community/technical colleges.

## Did you know...

### *credit*

students can earn college credit while still in high school by taking Advanced Placement courses and earning high scores on the AP tests or by enrolling in and passing dual credit courses?

### *eligible*

students ranked in the Top 10 percent of their graduating class from an accredited public or private Texas high school are eligible for automatic admission to any Texas public university if they have completed the Distinguished Level of Achievement?

### *earnings*

over their lifetime, high school graduates with a bachelor's degree earn 84 percent more\* than a high school graduate?

### *tuition*

the highest ranking graduate at each Texas public high school receives a certificate from the Texas Education Agency that can be used as a scholarship to cover tuition costs at any Texas public college or university?



\*Center on Education and the Workforce, "The College Payoff: Education, Occupations, Lifetime Earnings," August 2011. Georgetown University

## Career

If you are considering going straight into the workforce or into a technical training program following graduation, you still need to complete your high school education and earn a high school diploma.

### While in high school, you will want to:

- Look** at the five endorsements offered under the Foundation High School Program.
- Determine** your area of interest.
- Complete** your selected endorsement along with the required foundation program to earn your high school diploma.
- Learn** about available jobs, and any required post-high school or technical training.
- Explore** new career opportunities.
- Research** wage and occupation information, required levels of education and training requirements.
- Discover** your interests and abilities; use labor market resources at [www.texasrealitycheck.com/](http://www.texasrealitycheck.com/) and at [www.texasworkforce.org/customers/jsemp/career-exploration-trends.html](http://www.texasworkforce.org/customers/jsemp/career-exploration-trends.html).
- Research** which jobs are among the fastest and most in-demand in Texas at [www.texascaresonline.com/hotshots/hotshotslists.asp](http://www.texascaresonline.com/hotshots/hotshotslists.asp).

### Community College & Career Schools

- Find** training and certifications for specific occupations or skills through community colleges or career schools and colleges at [www.texasworkforce.org/svcs/propschools/career-schools-colleges.html](http://www.texasworkforce.org/svcs/propschools/career-schools-colleges.html).

## Did you know... training

many of the high-demand jobs<sup>1</sup> will require some postsecondary education?

## tuition

students attending community colleges or trade schools may also be eligible for state or federal financial aid?<sup>2</sup>

## credential

that Texas public school students can earn a Performance Acknowledgement with their diploma by earning a nationally- or internationally-recognized credential for a specific professional occupation, such as certified nurses' aid certification (CAN) or computer tech certification (CTC) while in high school?

## earnings

over their lifetime, high school graduates with a workforce certificate from a community or technical college earn 20 percent more<sup>3</sup> than those with only a high school diploma?

<sup>1</sup> Texas Workforce Commission

<sup>2</sup> Get the facts at [www.collegeforalltexans.com](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com) or [studentaid.ed.gov](http://studentaid.ed.gov)

<sup>3</sup> Center on Education and the Workforce, "Certificates: Gateway to Gainful Employment and College Degrees," June 2012. Georgetown University

### Foundation High School Program

The basic 22-credit graduation program for Texas public school students.

### Endorsements

Areas of specialized study. The areas are:

- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
- Arts and Humanities
- Public Service
- Business and Industry
- Multidisciplinary Studies

A district or charter that offers only one endorsement must offer Multidisciplinary Studies.

### Distinguished Level of Achievement

A high level of academic achievement earned by going beyond the Foundation High School Program. It requires a total of 26 course credits, including Algebra II, a fourth science credit and an endorsement. A student must earn this designation to be eligible for Top 10 percent automatic admission to a Texas public university.

### Performance Acknowledgments

Students may earn an additional acknowledgment on their diploma because of outstanding performance in areas such as dual credit courses and bilingualism and biliteracy; on Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, PSAT, ACT's Plan, the SAT or ACT exams; or by earning a nationally- or internationally-recognized business or industry certification.

### Course Credit

A unit of measure awarded for successful completion of a course. Completion of a one semester course typically earns one-half credit for a student.

### Industry Workforce Credential

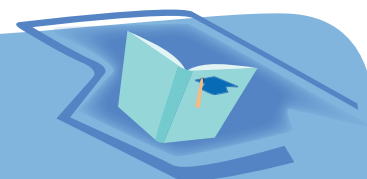
A state, nationally, or internationally-recognized credential that aligns with the knowledge and skills standards identified by an association or government entity representing a particular profession or occupation and valued by business or industry. Examples include a credential for certified nurse aid (CNA) or the automotive service excellence (ASE) certification in the automotive industry.

### STAAR

State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) is the state-mandated test given annually to students in grades 3-8 and in five high school courses.

### EOC

STAAR end-of-course exams are state mandated tests given during the final weeks of a course. In addition to meeting graduation course requirements, students are required to pass five end-of-course exams to earn a diploma from a Texas public high school. Those five exams are given when a student takes English I and II, Biology, Algebra I and U.S. History courses.



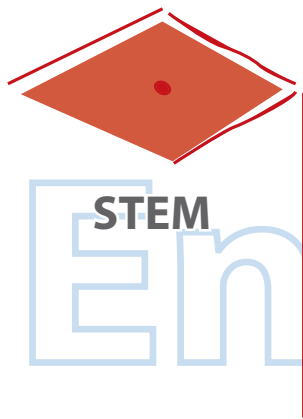
# Texas High School Diploma – *Steps*

## Distinguished Level of Achievement

26 Credits • Algebra II Required • Eligible for Top 10% Automatic Admissions to Texas Public Universities

22 Credits for the Foundation High School Program

Requirements of 1 Endorsement  
(including 4<sup>th</sup> credit of Math and Science and 2 additional electives)

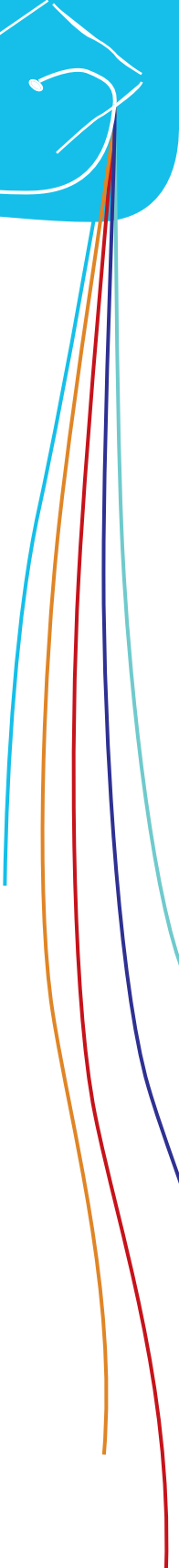


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Students may earn more than one endorsement.

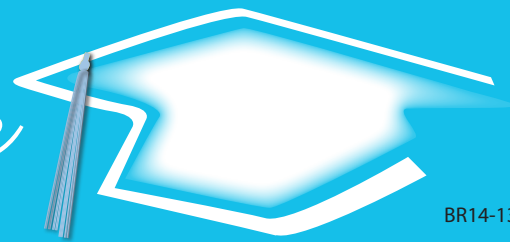
# My Notes



Two columns of horizontal lines for writing notes, separated by a vertical line down the center. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across most of the page's width.



# My Graduation Date





# TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

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