

TEXAS EDUCATION CODE
CHAPTER 28. COURSES OF STUDY; ADVANCEMENT
SUBCHAPTER B. ADVANCEMENT, PLACEMENT, CREDIT, AND
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT RECORD

TEC, §28.025. HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA AND CERTIFICATE; ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT RECORD.

- (a) The State Board of Education by rule shall determine curriculum requirements for the foundation high school program that are consistent with the required curriculum under Section [28.002](#). The State Board of Education shall designate the specific courses in the foundation curriculum under Section [28.002](#)
- (a)(1) required under the foundation high school program. Except as provided by this section, the State Board of Education may not designate a specific course or a specific number of credits in the enrichment curriculum as requirements for the program.
- (b) A school district shall ensure that each student, on entering ninth grade, indicates in writing an endorsement under Subsection (c-1) that the student intends to earn. A district shall permit a student to choose, at any time, to earn an endorsement other than the endorsement the student previously indicated. A student may graduate under the foundation high school program without earning an endorsement if, after the student's sophomore year:
 - (1) the student and the student's parent or person standing in parental relation to the student are advised by a school counselor of the specific benefits of graduating from high school with one or more endorsements; and
 - (2) the student's parent or person standing in parental relation to the student files with a school counselor written permission, on a form adopted by the agency, allowing the student to graduate under the foundation high school program without earning an endorsement.
- (b-1) The State Board of Education by rule shall require that the curriculum requirements for the foundation high school program under Subsection (a) include a requirement that students successfully complete:
 - (1) four credits in English language arts under Section [28.002](#)(a)(1)(A), including one credit in English I, one credit in English II, one credit in English III, and one credit in an advanced English course authorized under Subsection (b-2);
 - (2) three credits in mathematics under Section [28.002](#)(a)(1)(B), including one credit in Algebra I, one credit in geometry, and one credit in any advanced mathematics course authorized under Subsection (b-2);
 - (3) three credits in science under Section [28.002](#)(a)(1)(C), including one credit in biology, one credit in any advanced science course authorized under Subsection (b-2), and one credit in integrated physics and chemistry or in an additional advanced science course authorized under Subsection (b-2);
 - (4) three credits in social studies under Section [28.002](#)(a)(1)(D), including one credit in United States history, at least one-half credit in government and at least one-half credit in economics, and one credit in world geography or world history;
 - (5) except as provided under Subsections (b-12), (b-13), and (b-14), two credits in the same language in a language other than English under Section [28.002](#)(a)(2)(A);
 - (6) five elective credits;

- (7) one credit in fine arts under Section [28.002](#)(a)(2)(D); and
 - (8) except as provided by Subsection (b-11), one credit in physical education under Section [28.002](#)(a)(2)(C).
- (b-2) In adopting rules under Subsection (b-1), the State Board of Education shall:
- (1) provide for a student to comply with the curriculum requirements for an advanced English course under Subsection (b-1)(1), for an advanced mathematics course under Subsection (b-1)(2), and for any advanced science course under Subsection (b-1)(3) by successfully completing a course in the appropriate content area that has been approved as an advanced course by board rule or that is offered as an advanced course for credit without board approval as provided by Section [28.002](#)(g-1); and
 - (2) allow a student to comply with the curriculum requirements for the third and fourth mathematics credits under Subsection (b-1)(2) or the third and fourth science credits under Subsection (b-1)(3) by successfully completing an advanced career and technical course designated by the State Board of Education as containing substantively similar and rigorous academic content.
- (b-3) In adopting rules for purposes of Subsection (b-2), the State Board of Education must approve a variety of advanced English, mathematics, and science courses that may be taken to comply with the foundation high school program requirements, provided that each approved course prepares students to enter the workforce successfully or postsecondary education without remediation.
- (b-4) A school district may offer the curriculum described in Subsections (b-1)(1) through (4) in an applied manner. Courses delivered in an applied manner must cover the essential knowledge and skills, and the student shall be administered the applicable end-of-course assessment instrument as provided by Sections [39.023](#)(c) and [39.025](#).
- (b-5) A school district may offer a mathematics or science course to be taken by a student after completion of Algebra II and physics. A course approved under this subsection must be endorsed by an institution of higher education as a course for which the institution would award course credit or as a prerequisite for a course for which the institution would award course credit.
- (b-6) Repealed by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 211, Sec. 78(b)(3), eff. September 1, 2014.
- (b-7) The State Board of Education, in coordination with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, shall adopt rules to ensure that a student may comply with the curriculum requirements under the foundation high school program or for an endorsement under Subsection (c-1) by successfully completing appropriate courses in the core curriculum of an institution of higher education under Section [61.822](#). Notwithstanding Subsection (b-15) or (c) of this section, Section [39.025](#), or any other provision of this code and notwithstanding any school district policy, a student who has completed the core curriculum of an institution of higher education under Section [61.822](#), as certified by the institution in accordance with commissioner rule, is considered to have earned a distinguished level of achievement under the foundation high school program and is entitled to receive a high school diploma from the appropriate high school as that high school is determined in accordance with commissioner rule. A student who is considered to have earned a distinguished level of achievement under the foundation high school program under this subsection may apply for admission to an institution of higher education for the first semester or other academic term after the semester or other academic term in which the student completes the core curriculum.
- (b-8) Repealed by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 211, Sec. 78(b)(3), eff. September 1, 2014.
- (b-9) A school district, with the approval of the commissioner, may allow a student to satisfy the fine arts credit required under Subsection (b-1)(7) by participating in a community-based fine arts

program not provided by the school district in which the student is enrolled. The fine arts program must provide instruction in the essential knowledge and skills identified for fine arts by the State Board of Education under Section [28.002\(c\)](#). The fine arts program may be provided on or off a school campus and outside the regular school day.

- (b-10) A school district, with the approval of the commissioner, may allow a student to comply with the curriculum requirements for the physical education credit required under Subsection (b-1)(8) by participating in a private or commercially sponsored physical activity program provided on or off a school campus and outside the regular school day.
- (b-11) In adopting rules under Subsection (b-1), the State Board of Education shall allow a student who is unable to participate in physical activity due to disability or illness to substitute one credit in English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies, one credit in a course that is offered for credit as provided by Section [28.002\(g-1\)](#), or one academic elective credit for the physical education credit required under Subsection (b-1)(8). A credit allowed to be substituted under this subsection may not also be used by the student to satisfy a graduation requirement other than completion of the physical education credit. The rules must provide that the determination regarding a student's ability to participate in physical activity will be made by:
 - (1) if the student receives special education services under Subchapter A, Chapter [29](#), the student's admission, review, and dismissal committee;
 - (2) if the student does not receive special education services under Subchapter A, Chapter [29](#), but is covered by Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Section 794), the committee established for the student under that Act; or
 - (3) if each of the committees described by Subdivisions (1) and (2) is inapplicable, a committee established by the school district of persons with appropriate knowledge regarding the student.
- (b-12) In adopting rules under Subsection (b-1), the State Board of Education shall adopt criteria to allow a student to comply with the curriculum requirements for the two credits in a language other than English required under Subsection (b-1)(5) by substituting two credits in computer programming languages, including computer coding.
- (b-13) In adopting rules under Subsection (b-1), the State Board of Education shall allow a student to substitute credit in another appropriate course for the second credit in the same language in a language other than English otherwise required by Subsection (b-1)(5) if the student, in completing the first credit required under Subsection (b-1)(5), demonstrates that the student is unlikely to be able to complete the second credit. The board rules must establish:
 - (1) the standards and, as applicable, the appropriate school personnel for making a determination under this subsection; and
 - (2) appropriate substitute courses for purposes of this subsection.
- (b-14) In adopting rules under Subsection (b-1), the State Board of Education shall allow a student who, due to disability, is unable to complete two courses in the same language in a language other than English, as provided under Subsection (b-1)(5), to substitute for those credits two credits in English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies or two credits in career and technology education, technology applications, or other academic electives. A credit allowed to be substituted under this subsection may not also be used by the student to satisfy a graduation credit requirement other than credit for completion of a language other than English. The rules must provide that the determination regarding a student's ability to participate in language-other-than-English courses will be made by:

- (1) if the student receives special education services under Subchapter A, Chapter [29](#), the student's admission, review, and dismissal committee; or
 - (2) if the student does not receive special education services under Subchapter A, Chapter [29](#), but is covered by Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Section 794), the committee established for the student under that Act.
- (b-15) A student may earn a distinguished level of achievement under the foundation high school program by successfully completing:
- (1) four credits in mathematics, which must include Algebra II and the courses described by Subsection (b-1)(2);
 - (2) four credits in science, which must include the courses described by Subsection (b-1)(3);
 - (3) the remaining curriculum requirements under Subsection (b-1); and
 - (4) the curriculum requirements for at least one endorsement under Subsection (c-1).
- (b-16) A student may satisfy an elective credit required under Subsection (b-1)(6) with a credit earned to satisfy the additional curriculum requirements for the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation high school program or an endorsement under Subsection (c-1). This subsection may apply to more than one elective credit.
- (b-17) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to ensure that a student may comply with the curriculum requirements under Subsection (b-1)(6) by successfully completing an advanced career and technical course, including a course that may lead to an industry-recognized credential or certificate or an associate degree.
- (b-18) In adopting rules under Subsection (b-1), the State Board of Education shall allow a student to comply with the curriculum requirements under Subsection (b-1) by successfully completing a dual credit course.
- (b-19) In adopting rules under Subsection (b-1), the State Board of Education shall adopt criteria to allow a student to comply with curriculum requirements for the world geography or world history credit under Subsection (b-1)(4) by successfully completing a combined world history and world geography course developed by the State Board of Education.
- (b-20) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to include the instruction developed under Section [28.012](#) in one or more courses in the required curriculum for students in grade levels 9 through 12.
- (b-21) In adopting rules under Subsection (b-1), the State Board of Education shall adopt criteria to allow a student to comply with the curriculum requirement for one credit under Subsection (b-1)(5) by successfully completing a dual language immersion program under Section [28.0051](#) at an elementary school.
- (c) A person may receive a diploma if the person is eligible for a diploma under Section [28.0251](#). In other cases, a student may graduate and receive a diploma only if:
- (1) the student successfully completes the curriculum requirements identified by the State Board of Education under Subsection (a) and complies with Section [39.025](#); or
 - (2) the student successfully completes an individualized education program developed under Section [29.005](#).
- (c-1) A student may earn an endorsement on the student's transcript by successfully completing curriculum requirements for that endorsement adopted by the State Board of Education by rule. The State Board of Education by rule shall provide students with multiple options for earning

each endorsement, including, to the greatest extent possible, coherent sequences of courses. The State Board of Education by rule must permit a student to enroll in courses under more than one endorsement curriculum before the student's junior year. An endorsement under this subsection may be earned in any of the following categories:

- (1) science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), which includes courses directly related to science, including environmental science, technology, including computer science, cybersecurity, and computer coding, engineering, and advanced mathematics;
 - (2) business and industry, which includes courses directly related to database management, information technology, communications, accounting, finance, marketing, graphic design, architecture, construction, welding, logistics, automotive technology, agricultural science, and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning;
 - (3) public services, which includes courses directly related to health sciences and occupations, mental health, education and training, law enforcement, and culinary arts and hospitality;
 - (4) arts and humanities, which includes courses directly related to political science, world languages, cultural studies, English literature, history, and fine arts; and
 - (5) multidisciplinary studies, which allows a student to:
 - (A) select courses from the curriculum of each endorsement area described by Subdivisions (1) through (4); and
 - (B) earn credits in a variety of advanced courses from multiple content areas sufficient to complete the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation high school program.
- (c-2) In adopting rules under Subsection (c-1), the State Board of Education shall:
- (1) require a student in order to earn any endorsement to successfully complete:
 - (A) four credits in mathematics, which must include:
 - (i) the courses described by Subsection (b-1)(2); and
 - (ii) an additional advanced mathematics course authorized under Subsection (b-2) or an advanced career and technology course designated by the State Board of Education;
 - (B) four credits in science, which must include:
 - (i) the courses described by Subsection (b-1)(3); and
 - (ii) an additional advanced science course authorized under Subsection (b-2) or an advanced career and technology course designated by the State Board of Education; and
 - (C) two elective credits in addition to the elective credits required under Subsection (b-1)(6); and
 - (2) develop additional curriculum requirements for each endorsement with the direct participation of educators and business, labor, and industry representatives, and shall require each school district to report to the agency the categories of endorsements under Subsection (c-1) for which the district offers all courses for curriculum requirements, as determined by board rule.

- (c-3) In adopting rules under Subsection (c-1), the State Board of Education shall adopt criteria to allow a student participating in the arts and humanities endorsement under Subsection (c-1)(4), with the written permission of the student's parent or a person standing in parental relation to the student, to comply with the curriculum requirements for science required under Subsection (c-2)(1)(B)(ii) by substituting for an advanced course requirement a course related to that endorsement.
- (c-4) Each school district must make available to high school students courses that allow a student to complete the curriculum requirements for at least one endorsement under Subsection (c-1). A school district that offers only one endorsement curriculum must offer the multidisciplinary studies endorsement curriculum.
- (c-5) A student may earn a performance acknowledgment on the student's transcript by satisfying the requirements for that acknowledgment adopted by the State Board of Education by rule. An acknowledgment under this subsection may be earned:
 - (1) for outstanding performance:
 - (A) in a dual credit course;
 - (B) in bilingualism and biliteracy;
 - (C) on a college advanced placement test or international baccalaureate examination;
 - (D) on an established, valid, reliable, and nationally norm-referenced preliminary college preparation assessment instrument used to measure a student's progress toward readiness for college and the workplace; or
 - (E) on an established, valid, reliable, and nationally norm-referenced assessment instrument used by colleges and universities as part of their undergraduate admissions process; or
 - (2) for earning a state recognized or nationally or internationally recognized business or industry certification or license.
- (c-6) Notwithstanding Subsection (c), a person may receive a diploma if the person is eligible for a diploma under Section [28.0258](#). This subsection expires September 1, 2019.
- (c-10) In adopting rules under Subsection (c-1), the State Board of Education shall adopt or select five technology applications courses on cybersecurity to be included in a cybersecurity pathway for the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics endorsement.
- (d) A school district may issue a certificate of coursework completion to a student who successfully completes the curriculum requirements identified by the State Board of Education under Subsection (a) but who fails to comply with Section [39.025](#). A school district may allow a student who receives a certificate to participate in a graduation ceremony with students receiving high school diplomas.
- (e) Each school district shall report the academic achievement record of students who have completed the foundation high school program on transcript forms adopted by the State Board of Education. The transcript forms adopted by the board must be designed to clearly identify whether a student received a diploma or a certificate of coursework completion.
- (e-1) A school district shall clearly indicate a distinguished level of achievement under the foundation high school program as described by Subsection (b-15), an endorsement described by Subsection (c-1), and a performance acknowledgment described by Subsection (c-5) on the transcript of a student who satisfies the applicable requirements. The State Board of Education shall adopt rules as necessary to administer this subsection.

- (e-2) At the end of each school year, each school district shall report through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) the number of district students who, during that school year, were:
 - (1) enrolled in the foundation high school program;
 - (2) pursuing the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation high school program as provided by Subsection (b-15); and
 - (3) enrolled in a program to earn an endorsement described by Subsection (c-1).
- (e-3) Information reported under Subsection (e-2) must be disaggregated by all student groups served by the district, including categories of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sex, and populations served by special programs, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter [29](#).
- (f) A school district shall issue a certificate of attendance to a student who receives special education services under Subchapter A, Chapter [29](#), and who has completed four years of high school but has not completed the student's individualized education program. A school district shall allow a student who receives a certificate to participate in a graduation ceremony with students receiving high school diplomas. A student may participate in only one graduation ceremony under this subsection. This subsection does not preclude a student from receiving a diploma under Subsection (c)(2).
- (g) Repealed by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 211, Sec. 78(b)(3), eff. September 1, 2014.
- (h) The commissioner by rule shall adopt a transition plan to implement and administer the amendments made by H.B. No. 5, 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, 2013, replacing the minimum, recommended, and advanced high school programs with the foundation high school program beginning with the 2014-2015 school year. Under the transition plan, a student who entered the ninth grade before the 2014-2015 school year must be permitted to complete the curriculum requirements required for high school graduation under:
 - (1) the foundation high school program, if the student chooses during the 2014-2015 school year to take courses under this program;
 - (2) the minimum high school program, as that program existed before the adoption of H.B. No. 5, 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, 2013, if the student was participating in that program before the 2014-2015 school year;
 - (3) the recommended high school program, as that program existed before the adoption of H.B. No. 5, 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, 2013, if the student was participating in that program before the 2014-2015 school year; or
 - (4) the advanced high school program, as that program existed before the adoption of H.B. No. 5, 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, 2013, if the student was participating in that program before the 2014-2015 school year.
- (h-1) This subsection and Subsection (h) expire September 1, 2018.
- (i) If an 11th or 12th grade student who is homeless or in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services transfers to a different school district and the student is ineligible to graduate from the district to which the student transfers, the district from which the student transferred shall award a diploma at the student's request, if the student meets the graduation requirements of the district from which the student transferred. In this subsection, "student who is homeless" has the meaning assigned to the term "homeless children and youths" under 42 U.S.C. Section 11434a.