



Graduation Plans FAQ's

The 83rd Legislature passed House Bill 5 (HB 5), and it was signed into law by the Governor on June 10. Below are answers to commonly asked questions about the new legislation and its impact on Donna ISD students.

END-OF-COURSE EXAMS

1. Which End-Of –Course (EOC) tests are required for graduation due to HB5?

English I, Algebra I, Biology, English II, U.S. History

2. Which previously required EOCs are no longer required for graduation under HB5?

Chemistry, Physics, Geometry, World History, World Geography, Algebra II, and English III

3. Will EOC exam results be included in grades?

No. HB 5 eliminated the requirement that EOC exam results be counted towards a student's final grade.

NEW GRADUATION PLANS

4. What are the new graduation plans established under HB 5?

HB 5 replaces the Minimum High School Program, Recommended High School Program, and the Distinguished Achievement Program with three new Foundation High School Program (HSP) graduation options:

- *Foundation High School Program without Endorsement*
- *Foundation High School Program with one or more Endorsement*
- *Foundation High School Program with one or more Endorsement plus Distinguished Level of Achievement*

DISD's Board of Trustees will vote at their next meeting to establish the Distinguished Level of Achievement as the district's prescribed graduation plan. This means that students entering ninth grade in the school year 2014-2015 will be enrolled in courses that ultimately satisfy the Distinguished Level of Achievement.

DISTINGUISHED LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT

5. What is the difference between the Foundation with Endorsement and the Distinguished Level of Achievement?

The only difference is that *Algebra 2* is required.

6. Why is the Distinguished Level of Achievement the preferred plan for DISD students?

Students will have more flexibility in their choices after graduation, whether they are entering the workforce, entering a two-year trade school, attending community college or a four year college if they challenge themselves academically in high school.

7. The previous Distinguished program required students to successfully complete 3 levels of a foreign language. Is that required on the new Distinguished plan?

No. The new FHSP Distinguished Level of Achievement requires students to complete two levels of a Language Other Than English.

8. What if I want to change to the district's Foundation without endorsement plan?

Students will be allowed to change to a lower plan after completion of their sophomore year. The student must have parental consent and paper work must be on file with the counselor.

9. When are the new graduation plans effective?

The new graduation plans will become effective with the entering 2014-2015 Freshmen class.

School districts must continue to offer the three existing graduation programs—the Minimum High school Program, Recommended High School Program, and Distinguished Achievement Program—through at least the 2016-2017 school year for those students who entered high school before the 2014-2015 school year.

However, students who will be sophomores, juniors or seniors during the 2014-2015 school year will have the option of switching to the Foundation High School Program when it becomes available in the 2014-2015 school year. As updates become available about the graduation programs, they will be posted on the Texas Education Agency's website at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/graduation.aspx>



10. What are the new endorsements under HB 5?

STEM—include courses directly related to:

- ◆ Engineering
- ◆ Advanced Math
- ◆ Advanced Science



BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY—Includes courses related directly to:

- ◆ Agriculture, food, and natural resources
- ◆ Architecture and construction
- ◆ Arts, audio-video and communications
- ◆ Business management and administration
- ◆ Journalism
- ◆ Hospitality and Tourism
- ◆ Manufacturing
- ◆ Marketing
- ◆ Transportation, distribution and logistics



PUBLIC SERVICE: Includes courses directly related to:

- ◆ Education and Training
- ◆ Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Safety & Security
- ◆ Health Science
- ◆ Human Services
- ◆ JROTC



ARTS AND HUMANITIES—Includes courses directly related to:

- ◆ Social Studies
- ◆ Fine Arts
- ◆ Language Other Than English (LOTE)



MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES—allows a student to select courses from the curriculum of each endorsement area and earn credit in a variety of advanced courses from multiple content areas.



11. What are the new endorsements under HB 5?

To see a list of approved courses for each endorsement area, please see your school counselor or visit the website at www.donnaisd.net

12. Will the school district offer all five endorsements?

HB 5 requires school districts to make available to high school students courses that allow a student to complete the requirements for at least one endorsement.

DISD offers a wide variety of courses that could fit under each of the five endorsement areas.

13. When must a student choose an endorsement plan?

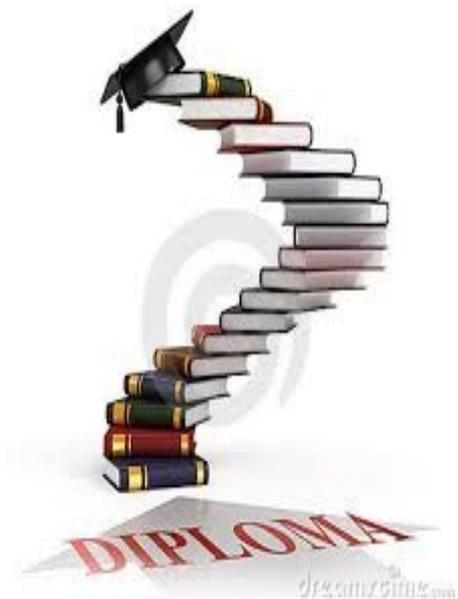
DISD students will first select an endorsement in the spring of their 8th grade year.

14. May a student switch from one endorsement to another?

Yes. HB 5 requires that a school district permit a student to choose, at any time, an endorsement other than the endorsement the student previously indicated. Students who wish to change their initial endorsement option will meet with their counselor for more information.

15. May a student choose more than one endorsement?

Yes.



16. Must a student choose an endorsement, or can the student graduate under the Foundation High School Program?

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 TEA adopted form, allowing the student to graduate under the Foundation High School Program without an endorsement.

17. Under what graduation plan must a student graduate in order to be considered for automatic admission to a Texas public four-year institution of higher education under HB5?

A student qualifies for automatic admission to a Texas public four-year institution if the student is in the top 10% of his or her class, met the requirements of the Foundation High School Program, earned an endorsement, and successfully completed Algebra II among the student's four credits in mathematics.

Students are exempt from this rule if they ranked in the top 10 percent of their graduating class and either 1) met the ACT’s College Readiness Benchmarks on ACT tests or 2) earned an SAT score of at least 1500 out of 2400.

18. How does the student earn a Performance Acknowledgement?

A student may earn a Performance Acknowledgement for outstanding performance

1. In a dual credit course; or
2. In bilingualism and biliteracy; or
3. On a College Board advanced placement (AP) test or International Baccalaureate (IB) examination; or
4. On the PSAT®, the ACT-Plan (ASPIRE), the SAT® or the ACT®
5. Earning a nationally or internationally recognized business or industry certification or license.

HB 5 requires the SBOE to specify in a rule the requirements for earning a performance acknowledgment. These rules were finalized on January 31, 2014.

COUNSELING

19. When are students counseled on graduation plans?

Current law requires each school counselor at a middle and high school to advise students and their parents or guardians regarding the importance of postsecondary education, coursework designed to prepare students for postsecondary education, and financial aid availability and requirements.

Counselors are also required to develop and administer a personal graduation plan for students in middle school who do not perform satisfactorily on the State assessment, or are not likely to receive a high school diploma before the fifth school year after enrollment in 9th grade.

HB 5 requires that information explaining the advantages of the Distinguished Level of Achievement and of each endorsement be published on the district’s Internet website and be made available to students in grades 9 and above. A counselor or school administrator is required to review personal graduation plan options with each student entering 9th grade together with the student’s parent or guardian. Before the conclusion of the 9th grade school year, the student and the student’s parent or guardian must confirm and sign a personal graduation plan for the student.

20. For further information, you may contact the following individuals or visit www.donnaisd.net

Velma Rangel	Asst. Supt. Of Curriculum & Instruction	464-1600
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