



House Bill 5 Frequently Asked Questions

The 83rd Legislature passed House Bill 5 (HB 5) and was signed by the Governor on June 10. Below we've provided commonly asked questions regarding the new legislation.

End-of-Course Exams

1. Which end-of-course (EOC) tests are required for graduation due to HB5?

English I*, English II*, Algebra I, U.S. History and Biology
**reading and writing combined*

2. Which previously required EOC's are no longer required for graduation under HB 5?

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

3. If a student has passed English I or English II reading, but not English I or English II writing (or vice versa), does the student have to retake the part that he or she has not passed?

To provide additional flexibility for students in the 2015 and 2016 graduating classes during the transition period from separate assessments to combined reading and writing assessments for English I and English II, TEA is proposing to maintain the minimum – and cumulative – score concepts to determine whether students taking these assessment have met their English I and English II graduation requirements. These concepts would be applied within each course, not across courses, and would require students who took separate reading and writing assessments to meet three criteria:

- Pass one assessment (either reading or writing);
- Meet at least the minimum score on the other: and
- Achieve a combined scale score of 3750 (the phase-in 1 standard), which represents the sum of the scale scores needed to reach Level II for reading (1875) and Level II for writing (1875).

These three criteria would apply only to the current STAAR English I and II reading and writing assessments administered prior to the roll-out of the redesigned (combined) English I and II assessments in spring 2014. Under this proposal, students who have not met this requirement by that time would need to take and pass the redesigned assessment(s) to meet their English EOC testing requirements for graduation.

4. Will EOC exam results be included in students’ grades?

No, EOC’s will not be included as 15 percent of the course grade; HB 5 has eliminated that requirement.

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

- The Foundation High School Program , plus Endorsements, plus Distinguished Level of Achievement
- The Foundation High School Program, plus Endorsement (Arlington ISD Graduate Standard)
- The Foundation High School Program

The current Recommended High School Program that requires four courses in Math, English, Science and Social Studies (“4X4”) for graduation is replaced by a 22-credit Foundation High School Program that allows students to earn endorsements in specific areas of study by completing four additional credits.

To earn a distinguished level of achievement, a student must complete the Foundation High School Program, plus an endorsement, and must complete Algebra II, plus a fourth Science.

6. When are the new graduation plans in effect?

Students who start 9th grade in 2014-2015 will be the first group under the Foundation High School Program and must select an Endorsement.

School districts must continue to offer the three existing graduation programs – the Minimum High School Program, Recommended High School Program, and Distinguished Achievement Program – until current 9th – 12th grade students graduate.

7. What are the new endorsement areas under HB 5?

Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) – includes courses directly related to:

- Advanced Math
- Advanced Science
- Computer Science
- Engineering

Business and Industry, includes courses directly related to:

- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
- Architecture and Construction
- Arts, Audio Visual Technology, and Communication
- Business Management and Administration Communication
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Information Technology

Public Services, includes courses directly related to:

- Education and Training
- Health Sciences
- Human Services
- Government and Public Administration
- Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp (JROTC)

Arts and Humanities, includes courses directly related to:

- Fine Arts
- Languages
- Social Studies

Multidisciplinary Studies, a student must complete one of the following:

- Four advanced courses that prepare a student to enter the workforce successfully or postsecondary education without remediation from within one endorsement area or among endorsement areas that are not in a coherent sequence
- Four credits in each of the four foundation subject areas to include English IV and chemistry and/or physics
- Four credits in AP, IB, or dual credit selected from English, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, LOTE, or fine arts

8. Will Arlington ISD offer all 5 endorsements?

Yes. Our school district currently offers a wide variety of courses that could fit under each of the five endorsement areas.

9. When must a student choose an endorsement area?

HB 5 states that a school district shall ensure that each student “upon entering 9th grade” indicates **in writing** an endorsement that the student intends to earn.

10. 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, to earn an endorsement other than the endorsement the student previously indicated.

11. May a student choose more than one endorsement?

Yes.

12. 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 earning an endorsement

13. Under what graduation plan must a student graduate in order to be considered for automatic college admission under the Top 10% statute?

A student must earn the Distinguished Level of Achievement to qualify for automatic admission under the top 10% statutes.

14. What are performance acknowledgements and how can a student earn them?

Performance acknowledgements may be earned for outstanding performance:

- In a dual credit course
- In bilingualism and biliteracy
- On a college advanced placement test or the PSAT, ACT-Plan, SAT, or ACT

A student may also receive a performance acknowledgement for earning a nationally or internationally recognized business or industry certification or license.

HB 5 requires the State Board of Education to specify in a rule the requirements for earning a performance acknowledgment.

Counseling

15. When are students counseled on graduation options?

Current law requires each school counselor at an elementary, 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 (PGP) for students in middle school who do not perform satisfactorily on an assessment instrument, 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 website and be made available to student 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 that 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.**

Eighth grade students in Arlington ISD will be scheduled into the Career, Technical and Higher Education Investigations course that will give detailed explanations of the new graduation programs.