Parent Viewpoints on the Endorsement Selection Process:
A Report of Findings from a Recent Statewide Survey
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 Performance Acknowledgments
- Foundation Program requirements · dual credit course
- 4 credits in math including Algebra II · bilingualism and biliteracy
- 4 credits in science · PSAT, ACT’s Plan, SAT or ACT
- at least 1 endorsement · Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate exam

For a complete explanation of each endorsement:
http://www.lmci.state.tx.us/shared/FHSEB/FHSEB.asp

* 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.
# Texas Education Agency Graduation Toolkit

## 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
- Combination of no more than two of the categories listed above

**Business and Industry (one of the following or a combination of areas)**
- Agriculture
- Food and Natural Resources
- Architecture and Construction
- Arts
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Technology and Communications
- Audio/Video
- Information Technology
- Business Management and Administration
- Finance
- Manufacturing
- Transportation or Distribution and Logistics
- Marketing
- Technology Applications
- English electives in public speaking, debate, advanced broadcast journalism, advanced journalism including newspaper and yearbook

**Public Service (one of the following)**
- Human Services
- Health Science
- Education and Training
- Law
- Public Safety
- Government and Public Administration
- Corrections and Security
- 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

**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

*Students may earn more than one endorsement.

*Visit your school counselor to learn more about your options.*
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 4th credit of Math and Science and 2 additional electives)

STEM  
Business & Industry  
Public Service  
Arts & Humanities  
Multi-Disciplinary Studies

Be sure to visit your school counselor to learn more about your options. Students may earn more than one endorsement.

Texas Education Agency • Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board • Texas Workforce Commission
Research Design
Phase 1: District Administrators

January – April 2016

Stage 1: Exploration
Review of literature, national exemplars,

Stage 2: Stakeholder Outreach
Understanding of HB 5 context

Stage 3: Sampling
Identification of representative districts and schools

Stage 4: Interviews
Investigation of current implementation practices from administrator point of view

Stage 5: Data Analysis & Dissemination
Aggregate findings, narratives, and case studies of best practices shared with TEGAC and stakeholders

Analysis of original study data determined more research needed around counselor role and communication strategies to parents...
Phase 2: Counselor & Parent Survey Research Study
May – August 2016

Stage 6: Counselor Outreach
Identification of communication channels to contact counselors

Stage 8: Interviews
Contacted counselors and head counselors across state

Stage 9: Data Analysis
Aggregate findings, more best practice cases, parent survey findings, and final recommendations developed

Stage 10: Dissemination
Additional findings shared with TEGAC, all participants, and educational community in lead-up to legislative session to expand dialogue.

Stage 7: Sample Considerations
Targeted low SES, West, and RGV counselors

Stage 8: Parent Survey
Contacted 40,000 PTA members across state
Sample
Parent Survey Respondents by Region

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</tr>
<tr>
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</table>

**Total:** 289
Texas PTA provided access to their 40,000 Texas PTA parent members

Online survey

Parents were asked to self-select into the survey based on endorsement experience (e.g. parents with children under endorsement plan)

Resulted in 290 respondents

Allowed assessment of perceptions of some of the state’s most active parents in the educational process

Parent voice: 98 frustrations, 118 added feedback from parents
Survey Topics

- Parent understanding of the endorsement selection process
- Communication channels used and preferred by parents
- Perceptions of the information sharing experience
- Knowledge of career interest inventories
- Comfort levels with materials
- Confidence in their child’s selections
Combined Household Income of Surveyed Parents

- $100,000–$149,999: 23%
- $75,000–$99,000: 19%
- $200,000 or More: 15%
- $150,000–$199,999: 16%
- $50,000–$74,999: 17%
- $30,000–$49,999: 6%
- $10,000–$29,999: 2%
- Less than $10,000: 2%
What is the Highest Level of Education Attained in Your Household?

- Bachelor's Degree: 39%
- Master's Degree or Equivalent: 31%
- Some College: 11%
- Doctorate, Law or Medical Degree or Equivalent: 8%
- Some Graduate School: 6%
- Associate's Degree: 4%
- Some High School or Less: 1%
What Grade Will Your Child be Entering in the Fall of 2016?

- 9th Grade: 31%
- 10th Grade: 22%
- 11th Grade (Opted Out of an Endorsement Pathway): 3%
- 11th Grade (Opted In to an Endorsement Pathway): 3%
- 12th Grade (Opted Out of an Endorsement Pathway): 7%
- 12th Grade (Opted In to an Endorsement Pathway): 3%
- Just Graduated: 3%
Major Findings: Parent Survey
Most Common Parent Communication Channels

- Large Group Meetings: 53%
- Email: 44%
- Handouts Brought Home by My Student: 43%
- Handouts Distributed at Individual or Group Meeting: 24%
- One on One Meeting: 17%
- Direct Mail: 10%
- Robocalls: 9%
- Group Meetings: 7%
- Mass Text: 4%
- Phone Call: 1%
- Other: 14%

n = 290
Most Effective Parent Communication Channels

- Email: 54%
- One on One: 18%
- Direct Mail: 7%
- Small Group: 6%
- Large Group: 4%
- Handouts brought home by student: 4%
- Texting: 3%
- Other: 4%

n = 286
On a Scale of 1-5, with 1 Being “Very Comfortable” and 5 Being “Very Uncomfortable,” How Comfortable Are You with Your Understanding of the Endorsement Selection Process, Regardless of Quality of Materials?
On a Scale of 1-5, 1 Being “Very Well” and 5 Being “Not Well at All,” How Would You Assess Your Student’s Understanding of the Endorsement Selection Process? (As Reported by Parents)
On a Scale of 1-5, 1 Being “Understands Extremely Well” and 5 Being “Does Not Understand at All,”
How Would You Assess Your School Counselor’s Understanding of the Endorsement Content?
On a Scale of 1 to 5, with 1 Being “Extremely Well Designed” and 5 Being “Extremely Unhelpful,” Please Rate the Quality of the In-Person Advisement Session(s) (As Reported by Parents)
Endorsements Expanding or Limiting Student Choice

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<th>Expanding</th>
<th>Limiting</th>
<th>Unsure/I Don’t Know</th>
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<tr>
<td>Unsure/I Don’t Know</td>
<td>63%</td>
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</table>

n = 286
In Their Own Words
Core Concerns of Parents

- Endorsement Process Coming Too Early, Creating Too Much Pressure for Young Students
- Lack of Parent Consultation
- Parents Desire More Options for Students to Sample
- Parent Concerns about Process
- Logic of Endorsement Selection is Unclear – Parent Sees it as a Waste of Time
- Concerns about Counselor/Administrator/Teacher Role/Capacity
In Their Own Words (cont.)
Core Concerns of Parents

- Special Circumstances – My Kid Is Stuck!
- Ready and Interested, But Need Access to Information
- Connection To Post-Secondary Education Unclear
- Meeting Issues
- Too Much Information
- Equity Concerns
- Need More Attention at a Different Level
Most schools have too few counselors to adequately guide each student and many are still learning how to navigate the complex details of the new graduation plans.

There may be cases where some courses do not align with college requirements.

Colleges and universities still have their own requirements for acceptance. You must verify that any CTE (career-technical) course or endorsement course replacing a previous ‘4x4’ plan course will be accepted. This applies especially to math and science courses.
Next Steps: More Data Needed

- Wealthy and best educated responded to this survey
- The jury is still out on whether HB 5 has been a positive intervention or not
- Need data collection within districts
- Need focus groups by parent types to better understand nuanced challenges
- Need to launch a state-wide survey to capture a much wider demographic
- How to reach low socio-economic and minority parents to better assess their perspectives?
- How to get word to districts?
- How to get word to TEA?
- Worth sharing best district exemplars statewide to spur improvements
Summary Recommendations

- Clarify role of TEA vis a vis information sharing, training, support functions
- Identify workload relief options for counselors
- Consider modifications to counselor roles and team structures, vertical integration
- Create more one on one time with students
- Enhance parent communication strategies in line with their preferences
- More widespread sharing of resources & best practices across districts
Support for Parents & Students
Parental involvement is critical! Remain informed and knowledgeable of the courses your student is taking, as well as the changes to their high school graduation plan.

Students need parental support and guidance as they explore their potential career pathways.

Websites and resources are a great foundation, but most students need an involved parent to encourage them to engage in the materials.
Basic Endorsement Milestone Timeline

7th & 8th Grade
Students explore career interests in school & learn about endorsements

(End of 8th Grade: Students choose endorsement(s) during high school enrollment)

10th Grade
The last year for your student to change endorsement (sequencing of classes increases in importance after 10th grade)

Graduation
Receive endorsements & performance acknowledgements

9th Grade
Students begin endorsement pathways

11th and 12th Grade
Students take advanced courses to complete endorsement(s)

Milestones & TEA Checklist

Parent Support

Texas Education Agency Graduation Toolkit
Graduation Program – Checklists

8th 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.

9th/10th 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.

11th/12th 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 Development page or visit Texas Reality Check at www.texasrealtycheck.com.
6 Questions You Can Ask To Advocate On Behalf Of Your Student

- What endorsement options are available from this school for my child? What is the full range available in this district?

- Are there transportation options for students to take classes at other campuses?

- How will my student benefit from taking Algebra II, Statistics or Algebraic Reasoning? Which one will best fit their college/career goals?

- Which math and science courses are colleges/universities still requiring for admittance?

- What are ‘performance acknowledgements’ and how can they benefit my student?

- How does the distinguished plan benefit my student and help with the Top Ten Percent automatic admission?
Resources
Best Websites

Where Do I Go for More Information and Tools to Support My Student’s Career Exploration?

- **OnCourse for Educators, Students, & Parents:**
  http://texasoncourse.org/students-parents

- **AIR Student-Oriented Career and Program of Study Exploration:**
  http://www.LaunchMyCareerTX.org

- **Texas Education Agency (TEA) Education Resources:**
  - **Graduation Toolkit:**
    http://tea.texas.gov/communications/brochures.aspx
  - **Graduation Requirements:**
    http://tea.texas.gov/graduation-requirements/hb5.aspx
  - **Endorsement FAQs:**
    http://3_HB5 Endorsement FAQ 031914.pdf

- **Texas Workforce Commission and Bureau of Labor Education and Career Resources:**
  - **Overview of 5 Endorsements:**
    http://www.lmci.state.tx.us/shared/FHSEB/FHSEB.asp
  - **Additional Career Exploration:**
    http://www.texascareercheck.com
  - **Occupational Outlook Handbook:**
    http://www.bls.gov/ooh/
Additional Web Resources

**Other Resources:**

Salary and Budget Exploration by Job Type: http://www.texasrealtycheck.com/
Matched Career Field and College Exploration: http://www.texasgenuine.org/

Programs of Study: http://www.texascareercheck.com/ExploreEducation/ProgramsOfStudy
Comparison of Texas Public 2 & 4-year postsecondary institutions by graduate earning data: http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/apps/txcrews/

**Student-Oriented Resources:**

http://texasoncourse.org
http://www.TexasGearUp.com
http://www.OwnYourFuture.com
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