

Executive Summary

Prepared for Board of Trustees Meeting July 28, 2009

House Bill (HB) 3 and Graduation Requirements 2009-2010

Board Goal

Teaching & Learning... In pursuit of excellence, the district will:

- expect full curriculum implementation on each campus by instructional leaders
- cultivate a consistent, strong, district-wide balanced curriculum based on ongoing needs assessment that supports all students

Vision ... In pursuit of excellence, the district will:

- develop a culture where learning is our first priority
- remain committed to providing equitable and outstanding opportunities for every student on every campus

Purpose of Report

Purpose 1:

The passage of House Bill (HB) 3 requires new graduation requirements that will take effect on September 1, 2009. These new graduation requirements supersede the graduation requirements in 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 74. Prior to this legislative change, DISD staff was in the midst of conversations relating to the number of credits required of DISD students to graduate on the minimum graduation plan. Currently, The Recommended High School Program (RHSP) is the default graduation plan for all Texas and DISD students. Successful completion of the RHSP requires students to accrue 26 credits for graduation.

Purpose 2:

Under state law, permission to graduate under the minimum high school program must be agreed to in writing and signed by the student, student's parent (or other person standing in parental relation to the student), and a school counselor or school administrator.

Under HB 3, to graduate under the state minimum high school program, students must

- Be at least 16 years of age
- Have completed 2 credits for graduation in each subject of the foundation curriculum;
or
- Have failed to be classified as a 10th grade student one or more times as determined by the school district.

Local districts may continue to adopt additional graduation requirements that go beyond the state requirements for graduation. DISD teachers, counselors, campus administrators, and central office personnel are exploring the possibilities allowing the requirements necessary for the state minimum high school program to serve as the requirements necessary for the DISD minimum high school program. A study of local districts indicates a variance in the number of credits

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required for graduation on the minimum high school program. 10 district policies were examined in this comparison. The range of credits required for graduation on the minimum high school program is 22 to 27. Two districts require the same number of credits as Denton ISD, seven districts require less, and one district requires more.

Objectives

- To communicate the impact of HB 3 on DISD graduation plans
- To discuss current DISD graduation requirements for DISD students on the Minimum, Recommended, and Distinguished graduation plans

Operational Impact

Students in the DISD, with a few exceptions, have had the ability to choose from two graduation plans – the Recommended High School Program (RHSP) or the Distinguished Academic Program (DAP). The HB 3 changes have provided more flexibility in the enrichment (elective) areas for students who will graduate under the RHSP without changing the number of credits necessary to graduate. HB 3 states that students graduating under the RHSP will no longer be required to take Health or Technology Applications, and only 1 credit of Physical Education instead of 1.5 credits, however these courses will count as the required state electives for all students. The DAP and Minimum Plan requirements continue to include health, technology, and 1.5 credits in PE. In addition, one credit in fine arts is now required in the Minimum Plan.

Results

Although there are a number of challenges created by this untimely change in graduation plan requirements, our high schools are staffed based on student schedules created last spring. Consequently, we are unable to accommodate students requesting schedule changes. District and campus procedures for schedule changes will remain the same. Students are expected to continue with their pre-enrolled schedule since the classes count as required electives toward graduation. Any courses already taken by students toward their graduation plan will continue to count as required or elective courses toward graduation.

Other Options

Options to consider for future discussion regarding the Minimum Graduation Plan and Denton ISD.

Option 1: Maintain the HB 3 requirements and number of credits (26) for graduation at any or all DISD high schools on the minimum high school program.

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- Option 2:** Maintain the HB 3 requirements, reducing the number of credits to 22 only at Fred Moore High School (see HEB ISD for sample policy).
- Option 3:** Maintain the HB 3 requirements, reducing the number of credits to 22 at all DISD high schools (see Keller ISD for sample policy).
- Option 4:** Maintain the HB 3 requirements, reducing the number of credits at any or all DISD high schools to a number determined by staff recommendation and board consultation (see district samples).
- Option 5:** Maintain the HB 3 requirements, increasing the number of credits to 27 at any or all DISD high schools (see Mansfield ISD for sample policy).