



## Grading, Graduation, and Class Rank—COVID-19 FAQs

April 2, 2020

As district operations continue to be impacted by COVID-19, Policy Service has received questions about guidance from TEA on [Grading and Graduation Requirements](#), which is available on the [TEA Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Support and Guidance](#) website, as well as questions regarding EIC(LOCAL), Class Rank. We encourage you to frequently check the TEA site for new guidance in this area.

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**Q: TEA has indicated that current seniors who have not passed all end-of-course (EOC) assessments may be eligible to graduate through the individual graduation committee (IGC) process regardless of the number of EOC assessments they still need to pass. Where do I find information on the IGC process?**

A: TEA has published detailed guidance on [Assessment](#) and [Individual Graduation Committees](#) to assist districts in completing IGC reviews for seniors this year. In board policy manuals, provisions on the individual graduation committee process are in EIF(LEGAL).

**Q: TEA has temporarily suspended STAAR assessments for the 2019–20 school year, but our district has students who entered grade 9 before the 2011–12 school year and are under TAKS, TAAS, or TEAMS testing requirements. Have those requirements been waived?**

A: TEA's [Assessment](#) guidance indicates that although waivers do not apply to the TAKS, TAAS, or TEAMS testing requirements, these students can pursue a diploma through district decision in accordance with Education Code 28.02541 and 19 Administrative Code 74.1027 or using alternate assessments, as described on TEA's [TAKS website](#).

Policy Service has a resolution, available below and also in the *Regulations Resource Manual*, to assist districts that will use the district decision process under Education Code 28.02541 and the Administrative Code. As a reminder, a district may permit an eligible individual to qualify to graduate and receive a high school diploma if the individual meets the alternative requirements under 19 Administrative Code 74.1027(c) or board-approved local alternative requirements under 19 Administrative Code 74.1027(d).

If the board approves local alternative graduation requirements differing from those in state rule the resolution below may be used.

**Please note: If the board previously adopted a similar resolution prior to September 2019, the board will need to readopt a resolution, as the original September 2019 expiration of these provisions was extended by the 86th Texas Legislature to September 1, 2023.**

**Q: TEA has temporarily suspended grade advancement testing requirements for students in grades 5 and 8. However, our district's local policy requires students in grades 5 and 8 to meet the passing standard on applicable state-mandated assessments to be promoted. Do we need to revise our local policy?**

A: Because TEA suspended this requirement statewide, Policy Service does not recommend revising local policy for this temporary period of suspension.

**Q: Our district is engaging in distance learning for continuity of instruction. How do we determine and document decisions on grading, coursework completion, and award of credit?**

A: TEA has issued an [instructional continuity planning website](#) that addresses several logistical issues. We recommended that districts continue to follow existing policies and procedures to the extent possible and in compliance with TEA guidance.

Policy EIE(LOCAL) includes the district's standards for mastery that are considered for promotion.

Policy EIA(LOCAL) references the district's guidelines for grading. Most districts' policies provide that the guidelines must ensure that grading reflects a student's relative mastery of an assignment and that a sufficient number of grades are taken to support the grade average assigned.

If the district makes any changes to current grading guidelines to accommodate distance learning, be sure to timely communicate those changes to students and parents.

**Q: Our district wants to ensure that designation of local graduation honors, including valedictorian and salutatorian, remains fair and consistent while the district is engaged in distance learning for continuity of instruction. May we temporarily adjust EIC(LOCAL) to revise the calculation to exclude grades earned during distance learning?**

A: If the district would like to temporarily adjust EIC(LOCAL), we recommend revising the local policy through a board-adopted resolution. We have received multiple inquiries from districts about making temporary adjustments to EIC(LOCAL) regarding determination of local graduation honors. For example, a district that normally determines local graduation honors based on grades available at the end of the fifth six-week grading period may instead wish to base the determinations on the most recent final grading period before the district began remote instruction, the most recent final semester grades, grades on a specific date, or some other method.

To assist districts that wish to temporarily revise provisions on determining local graduation honors, we have included a sample resolution below that can be adjusted as needed. Again, timely communicate any revisions to students and parents.

The board has a great deal of latitude in determining the district's class rank policy; however, we generally recommend avoiding changes to a class rank policy midway through current students' high school education. In the past, students harmed by such a change have brought legal challenges to prevent implementation of the new policy. Given the current circumstances, board action to change the timing of the calculation is necessary and appropriate. We recommend the district change only policy provisions affected by the COVID-19 school closure to minimize disruption to the current class rank system.

*This information is provided for educational purposes only to facilitate a general understanding of the law or other regulatory matter. This information is neither an exhaustive treatment on the subject nor is this intended to substitute for the advice of an attorney or other professional adviser. Consult with your attorney or professional adviser to apply these principles to specific fact situations.*

## Resolution of the Board Regarding Policy EIC(LOCAL), Class Rank

WHEREAS, on March 19, 2020, the Texas Governor issued Executive Order No. GA-08 relating to COVID-19 preparedness and mitigation and through this action and in accordance with Guidelines from the President ordered the temporary closure of all Texas school districts;

WHEREAS, on \_\_\_\_\_, 2020, \_\_\_\_\_ School District began closure of the district to protect the health and safety of staff and students;

WHEREAS, the Board has implemented procedures for continuity of instruction to the extent possible during the district closure;

WHEREAS, the Board finds that a need exists to temporarily adjust local policy provisions addressing class rank under these circumstances to ensure fair and consistent designation of local honors;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of \_\_\_\_\_ School District makes the following temporarily adjustments to policy EIC(LOCAL), Class Rank:

- The determination of local honors, including valedictorian and salutatorian determinations, shall be based on the grades available **(insert a description regarding which grades the district will use for these determinations, such as “for the most recent final grading period before the district began remote instruction,” “for the most recent final semester,” a specific date, such as “on \_\_\_\_\_, 2020,” or other method).**
- **(Insert any other temporary adjustments to policy EIC(LOCAL) that the district wishes to make.)**

The authority granted by this resolution to adjust EIC(LOCAL) calculations shall apply for the remainder of the 2019–20 school year, unless the Board takes further action.

Adopted this \_\_\_\_\_ (date) day of \_\_\_\_\_ (month), \_\_\_\_\_ (year), by the Board of Trustees.

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Presiding Officer

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Secretary

**Note:** This resolution only needs to be adopted by the board if the board approves local alternative graduation requirements differing from those in state rule for an eligible individual who entered grade 9 before the 2011–12 school year to be awarded a high school diploma.

### **Resolution to Consider Alternative Graduation Requirements**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Education Code section 28.02541, a district may graduate and give a high school diploma under alternative requirements to individuals who entered the ninth grade before the 2011–12 school year and have met all applicable graduation requirements for the year they entered ninth grade, but have not performed satisfactorily on an assessment instrument or part of an assessment instrument required for graduation;

WHEREAS, in accordance with 19 Administrative Code section 74.1027, a district may permit eligible individuals to qualify to graduate and receive a high school diploma if they meet the alternative requirements under 19 Administrative Code section 74.1027(c) or Board-approved local alternative requirements under 19 Administrative Code section 74.1027(d) that allow an individual to demonstrate proficiency in the content related to the examination for which the individual did not perform satisfactorily;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of \_\_\_\_\_ School District by adoption of this resolution approves the following local alternative requirements developed by the District that will allow eligible individuals to graduate and receive a high school diploma as authorized under Education Code section 28.02541 and pursuant to 19 Administration Code section 74.1027(d).

To be eligible to graduate and receive a high school diploma under these provisions, an eligible individual must demonstrate proficiency to the satisfaction of a local graduation committee in the content areas related to the assessments on which the individual has not performed satisfactorily. Proficiency will be established through one or more of the following factors:

1. The individual's grade in each course in the subject areas applicable to the assessments on which the individual has not performed satisfactorily;
2. The individual's score on each assessment instrument on which the individual has failed to perform satisfactorily;
3. The individual's performance on any projects or work samples in the subject areas applicable to the assessments on which the individual has not performed satisfactorily (including any projects or work samples identified and assigned by the local graduation committee to be completed by the individual);
4. The individual's participation in offered remediation;
5. The individual's school attendance rate;
6. The individual's transcript of course work;
7. The individual's completion of career and technical education (CTE) program courses; or
8. Any other academic, work, or life experience determined to be relevant by the local graduation committee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that an individual may graduate under the local alternative requirements if the District has made its determination that the individual has met the requirements by September 1, 2023.

Adopted this \_\_\_\_ (*date*) day of \_\_\_\_\_ (*month*), \_\_\_\_ (*year*), by the Board.

Presiding officer's signature:

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Secretary's signature:

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