

**Sec. 1. APPLICABILITY OF TITLE RELATING TO HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION**

Premier High Schools is subject to a prohibition, restriction, or requirement, as applicable, imposed by Title 2 (Public Education) of the Texas Education Code (“TEC”), or a rule adopted under Title 2 (Public Education) of the TEC, relating to high school graduation under TEC §28.025. (TEC §12.104(b)(2)(E))

**Sec. 2. ARD COMMITTEE AND IEP**

For each student who is 13 years old and qualifies for special education, the admission, review, and dismissal (“ARD”) committee must begin transition planning. The ARD committee must also consider the student’s graduation plan and what state assessments are required for graduation. (TEC §29.0111; 19 TAC §89.1070)

**Sec. 3. SPECIAL EDUCATION ELIGIBILITY UPON GRADUATION**

Graduation with a regular high school diploma terminates a student’s eligibility for special education and related services. Termination of eligibility based on graduation requires Premier High Schools to complete a summary of performance in accordance with 34 CFR §300.305(e)(3), and prior written notice must be provided to the parent. (34 CFR §300.102)

A student who receives a diploma, but took one or more classes with a modified curriculum, may request the ARD committee determine needed educational services as long as the student meets the age eligibility requirements. Modified curriculum is defined as curriculum or content that is reduced in amount or complexity of the required Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (“TEKS”). (19 TAC §89.1070)

**Sec. 4. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE FOUNDATION HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM**

A student with a disability that receives special education services and who enters 9th grade in or after the 2014-2015 school year, may receive a regular high school diploma if the student:

1. Demonstrates mastery of the required states standards;
2. Completes the credit requirements under the Foundation High School Program; or
3. Achieves satisfactory performance on the required state assessment unless the ARD committee determines that satisfactory performance on the required state assessment is not necessary for graduation.

A student who receives special education services entering 9th grade in 2014-2015 or after may also earn a high school diploma if the student the student meets the above requirements and

successfully completes the individualized education program (“IEP”) and meets one of the following:

1. consistent with the IEP, the student obtains full-time employment and masters sufficient self-help skills to enable to the student to maintain employment without direct or ongoing educational support;
2. consistent with the IEP, demonstrated mastery of specific employability skills and self-help skills that do not require ongoing educational support;
3. has access to services that are not within the legal responsibility of Premier High Schools or educational options for which the student has been prepared for by the academic program; or
4. no longer meets eligibility requirements.

(19 TAC §89.1070; TEC §28.025)

**Sec. 5. ENDORSEMENTS UNDER THE FOUNDATION HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM**

A student receiving special education services, may receive an endorsement if the student:

1. Completes the requirements for graduation under the Foundation High School Program and completes the additional credits requirements in mathematics, science, and elective courses required for an endorsement with or without modified curriculum; or
2. Completes the courses required for the endorsement with or without modified curriculum; and
3. Requirements for satisfactory performance on the state assessment is determined by the ARD committee.

A student who is in 11th or 12th grade in 2014-2015, 2015-2016, or 2016-2017 school years who took each of the required assessments, but failed to achieve satisfactorily on no more than two assessments is eligible for an endorsement if the student meets the other endorsement requirements.

For students receiving special education services, if the student wants to use a course to satisfy both the Foundation High School Program requirements and for the endorsement requirement, the course must be completed without modified curriculum.

(19 TAC §89.1070; TEC §28.025)

**Sec. 6. TRANSITIONING TO THE FOUNDATION HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM**

For students who entered 9th grade prior to the 2014-2015 school year, a student may receive a diploma under the Foundation High School Program if the student's ARD committee determines the student should take courses under the Foundations program and the student completes the requirements.

A student transitioning may also receive an endorsement if he or she meets the requirements.

A student who is in 11th or 12th grade in the 2014-2015, 2015-2016, or 2016-2017 school years and transitioning to the Foundation High School Program, who took each of the required assessments, but failed to achieve satisfactorily on no more than two assessments may graduate if the student met the other graduation requirements.

(19 TAC §89.1070; TEC §28.025)

**Sec. 7. SUBSTITUTIONS UNDER THE FOUNDATION HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM**

**a) *Language other than English***

If the ARD committee determines that a student with a disability is unable to complete two credits in the same language other than English, the ARD committee may determine to:

1. substitute a combination of two credits from ELA, math, science, or social studies; or
2. substitute two credits of CTE, technology applications, or other academic electives.

(TEC §74.12(b)(5)(D)(i); §28.025(b-14)(1))

**b) *Physical Education***

In accordance with State Board of Education ("SBOE") rules, a student who is unable to participate in physical activity due to disability or illness is allowed to substitute one credit in English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies or one academic elective credit for the required physical education credit. A credit allowed to be substituted may not also be used by the student to satisfy a graduation requirement other than completion of the physical education credit. The determination regarding a student's ability to participate in physical activity must be made by the student's ARD committee. (TEC §28.025(b-11))

Credits allowed as a substitution for the language and PE requirement may not be used to satisfy other graduation credit requirements.

(TEC §28.025(b-11) and (b-14))

**Sec. 8. DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT, RECOMMENDED, AND MINIMUM HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM**

A student receiving special education services who entered 9th grade before the 2014-2015 school year, may graduate with a regular diploma if the student:

1. Demonstrates mastery of the state standards or the LEA's standards if they are greater;
2. Completes credit requirements for graduation under the recommended or distinguished program; and
3. Achieves satisfactory performance on the required state assessments.

A student who is in 11th or 12th grade and who took each of the required assessments, but failed to achieve satisfactorily on no more than two assessments may graduate under the recommended or distinguished program if the student met the other graduation applicable requirements.

A student receiving special education services who entered 9th grade before the 2014-2015 school year, may also graduate with a regular diploma if the student:

1. Demonstrates mastery of the state standards;
2. Completes credit requirements for graduation under the minimum program; and
3. Participates in or satisfactorily performs on the required state assessment as determined by the ARD committee.

A student receiving special education services who entered 9th grade before the 2014-2015 school year, may also graduate with a regular diploma if the student:

1. Demonstrates mastery of the state standards through courses, one or more of which contained modified content and is aligned with the requirements under the minimum high school program;
2. Completes credit requirements for graduation under the minimum program;
3. Participates in or satisfactorily performs on the required state assessment as determined by the ARD committee; and
4. Successfully completes the IEP and meets one of the following conditions:
  - a. consistent with the IEP, the student obtains full-time employment and masters sufficient self-help skills to enable to the student to maintain employment without direct or ongoing educational support;
  - b. consistent with the IEP, demonstrated mastery of specific employability skills and self-help skills that do not require ongoing educational support;
  - c. has access to services that are not within the legal responsibility of Premier High Schools or educational options for which the student has been prepared for by the academic program; or

- d. No longer meets eligibility requirements.

(19 TAC §89.1070)

**Sec. 9. CHILDREN ELIGIBLE TO RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER GRADUATING**

A student who meets the age eligibility requirements may return to Premier High Schools as long as the child was awarded a diploma that met the following conditions:

1. The child was required to successfully complete the child's IEP; and
2. The child was required to:
  - a. Obtain full-time employment, based on the child's abilities and local employment opportunities, in addition to mastering sufficient self-help skills to enable the child to maintain the employment without direct and ongoing educational support of the LEA;
  - b. Demonstrate mastery of specific employability skills and self-help skills that do not require direct ongoing educational support of the LEA; or
  - c. Have access to services that were not within the legal responsibility of public education or employment or educational options for which the child has been prepared by the academic program.

The ARD committee must determine the needed educational services upon the request of the child or parent to resume services.

**SEC. 10. CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION IN GRADUATION CEREMONIES**

Premier High Schools does issue a Certificate of Attendance to a student who receives special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”), and who has completed four years of high school but has not completed the student's IEP. Premier High Schools shall allow a student who receives a certificate to participate in a graduation ceremony with students receiving high school diplomas. A student may participate in only one graduation ceremony. Receiving a Certificate of Attendance does not preclude a student from receiving a diploma. (TEC §28.025(f))

**SEC. 11. PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

Anytime a student fails to perform satisfactorily on an assessment administered under Section 39.023(a) in the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, or 8th grade, Premier High Schools shall provide the student with accelerated instruction in the applicable subject area. Accelerated instruction may require participation of the student before or after normal school hours and may include participation at times of the year outside normal school operations.

The ARD committee of a student who participates in Premier High Schools' special education program and who does not perform satisfactorily on an assessment shall determine:

1. the manner in which the student will participate in an accelerated instruction program under this section; and
2. whether the student will be promoted or retained under this section.

(TEC §28.0211)

**Sec. 12. Financial Aid Application Requirement**

Beginning with the 2021-2022 school year, Premier High Schools shall ensure that each student enrolled in Grade 12 before graduating from high school completes and submits a free application for federal student aid (FAFSA) or a Texas application for state financial aid (TAFSA).

The student is not required to submit the FAFSA or the TAFSA if:

1. The student's parent or other person standing in parental relation submits a signed form indicating that the parent or other person authorizes the student to decline to complete and submit the financial aid application;
2. The student signs and submits the form on the student's own behalf if the student is 18 years of age or older or the student's disabilities of minority have been removed for general purposes; or
3. A school counselor authorizes the student to decline to complete and submit the financial aid application for good cause, as determined by the school counselor.

Texas College Preparatory shall adopt a form approved by the TEA to be used for purposes of documenting the waiver to submit the FAFSA or TASFA and make such form available in English and Spanish. (TEC 28.0256(a-d)).