

## State Board of Education Graduation Requirements Frequently Asked Questions – Volume One

### **General**

1. What happened to concurrent enrollment courses? Are they no longer allowed to count toward graduation credit?

Since high school credit is based on demonstrated proficiency in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for a given course, including concurrent enrollment in the list of courses that count for specified graduation requirements is redundant.

Prior to the recent changes to the graduation requirements, a student was allowed to earn credit for concurrent enrollment in a college course if the course covered all of the TEKS. A student may still earn credit toward graduation if the student demonstrates proficiency in the TEKS for a comparable high school course. For example, a student may earn credit for English IV through concurrent enrollment in a college English course if the student demonstrates proficiency in all the TEKS for English IV.

### **Minimum High School Program**

2. What are the criteria that students must satisfy in order to opt into the Minimum High School Program (MHSP)?

A student must:

- (1) be at least 16 years of age;
- (2) have completed two credits required for graduation in each subject of the foundation curriculum under the Texas Education Code, §28.002(a)(1); *or*
- (3) have failed to be promoted to Grade 10 one or more times as determined by the school district.

Only one of the three criteria must be met.

3. Are students who were already on the MHSP required to go back and satisfy one of the criteria?

No. A student who was initially placed on the minimum high school program prior to the start of the 2009-10 school year may remain in the minimum high school program without meeting one of the criteria listed above.

4. Are students on the MHSP still required to complete a health credit?

Beginning with the 2010-11 school year students on the MHSP are no longer required by the state to complete one-half credit in health as a graduation requirement regardless of the year the student entered Grade 9. School districts retain the authority to continue to require health as a district requirement.

5. Are students on the MHSP still required to complete a technology applications credit?

Beginning with the 2010-11 school year students on the MHSP are no longer required by the state to complete one credit in technology applications as a graduation requirement regardless of the year the student entered Grade 9. School districts retain the authority to continue to require technology applications as a district requirement.

6. Does the fine arts credit requirement for MHSP apply only to freshmen entering 2010-11 or must those graduating in 2010-11 also complete the fine arts credit?

A student entering Grade 9 beginning with the 2010-11 school year must complete one credit in fine arts. A student who entered Grade 9 before the 2010-11 school year is not required to complete a credit in fine arts.

7. If a student takes biology and chemistry, has he or she satisfied the 2-credit science requirement for the MHSP?

IPC is still required for students on the MHSP. A student may substitute chemistry or physics for IPC and then must take the second of these two courses as the academic elective credit. If a student has taken biology and chemistry, the student must successfully complete a physics credit in order to satisfy the graduation requirements for the MHSP.

### **Recommended High School Program**

8. The letter dated January 25, 2010 indicates that changes to the graduation requirements are effective beginning in the 2010-11 school year. Does this mean that students on the Recommended High School Program (RHSP) have to complete the health and technology applications credits this year?

No. State law increased flexibility for students on the RHSP by removing the requirements for health and technology applications and by reducing the P.E. requirements from one and one-half to one. This was effective for the 2009-10 school year for all students on the RHSP regardless of when they entered Grade 9. Additional changes made to graduation requirements will be effective in the 2010-11 school year. School districts retain the authority to continue to require health and technology applications and may have done so for the 2009-2010 school year.

### **Distinguished Achievement Program**

9. Are students on the Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP) still required to complete a health credit?

Beginning with the 2010-11 school year students on the DAP are no longer required by the state to complete one-half credit in health as a graduation requirement regardless of the year the student entered Grade 9. School districts retain the authority to continue to require health as a district requirement.

10. Are students on the DAP still required to complete a technology applications credit?

Beginning with the 2010-11 school year students on the DAP are no longer required by the state to complete one credit in technology applications as a graduation requirement regardless of the year the student entered Grade 9. School districts retain the authority to continue to require technology applications as a district requirement.

### **Physical Education**

11. Individual and Team Sports are now listed together in the graduation requirements. Does this mean that students have to take both Individual and Team Sports?

No. A student may continue to earn one-half credit for successful completion of Individual sports or one-half credit for successful completion of Team Sports.

12. For what school year and for which students (grades 9-12) will the new physical education substitutions be implemented?

The new allowable physical education substitutions are to be implemented beginning with the 2010-11 school year for all students. However, if a student completed the physical education requirement prior to the 2010-11 school year through a substitution that was allowed at that time, the student has satisfied the requirement. For example, if a student satisfied the P.E. requirement through a two- or three-credit work-based training course prior to the 2010-11 school year the student has completed the requirement and does not have to take another P.E. course.

13. Please explain the following language, "Credit may not be earned for any P.E. course more than once and no more than four substitutions may be earned through any combination of allowable substitutions."

A student may only earn credit for a specific TEKS-based P.E. course one time. Since there are a limited number of TEKS-based P.E. courses, the total credits a student may earn for successful completion of P.E. courses is limited to the number of courses available (i.e. no more than four credits total).

State Board of Education administrative rules continue to allow certain substitutions for TEKS-based P.E. courses. Regardless of which substitution activities a student participates in, the student may not earn more than a total of four credits toward graduation for P.E. substitutions.

14. Are school districts still required to apply to the Commissioner of Education for approval of off-campus programs?

Yes. Information regarding submission of a request for approval of a private or commercially-sponsored physical activity program conducted on or off campus may be accessed at: <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/curriculum/hpe/index.html>

15. Will the substitutions that are awarded serve as one required credit for physical education and four additional state elective credits for graduation for a total of five credits allowed?

No. No more than four substitutions may be earned through any combination of allowable substitutions. The substitution activities of athletics, JROTC, and private or commercially-sponsored physical activity programs may be awarded up to four P.E. credits toward graduation, one for the required physical education credit and three additional P.E. credits as electives.

The substitution activities of drill team, cheerleading, and marching band may be awarded one P.E. credit toward graduation that may satisfy the physical education credit requirement.

If a student participates in a combination of activities, the student may earn no more than the four available P.E. credits toward graduation for participation in those activities.

16. Has the option for students to take the same P.E. course with the same TEKS more than once been eliminated?

A student may only earn credit for a specific TEKS-based P.E. course one time.

17. Was Dance I-IV overlooked as a course substitution?

Dance I-IV are TEKS-based courses for which a student may earn up to four credits toward graduation. The allowable substitutions under the newly adopted rules are all for activities that would not otherwise earn credit toward graduation and not for other TEKS-based courses. If all of the TEKS for one of the TEKS-based P.E. courses are covered as part of a dance course, a student may be awarded P.E. credit.

18. What happened to two- or three-credit career and technology work-based training courses (CTE) as P.E. substitutions?

CTE courses, including two- or three-credit work-based training courses may no longer satisfy the P.E. requirement. These courses are TEKS-based courses for which a student may already earn credit toward graduation. The allowable substitutions under the newly adopted rules are all for activities that would not otherwise earn credit toward graduation and not for other TEKS-based courses.

### **Career and Technical Education**

19. Are there any new Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses that will be able to satisfy the mathematics graduation requirements?

The following CTE courses were added as options for students to satisfy the fourth mathematics credit requirement on the RHSP:

- Mathematical Applications in Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources if successfully completed prior to Algebra II
- Engineering Mathematics
- Statistics and Risk Management

The following CTE courses were added as options for students to satisfy the fourth mathematics credit requirement after successful completion of Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II on the DAP:

- Engineering Mathematics
- Statistics and Risk Management

20. Are there any new Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses that will be able to satisfy the science graduation requirements?

The following CTE courses were added as options for students to satisfy the fourth science credit requirement on the RHSP and the DAP:

- Engineering Design and Problem Solving
- Advanced Animal Science
- Advanced Biotechnology
- Advanced Plant and Soil Science
- Food Science
- Forensic Science

21. Will CTE courses that previously satisfied science graduation requirements continue to satisfy science graduation requirements?

Yes. The following CTE courses will continue to be options for students to satisfy the fourth science credit requirement on the RHSP and the DAP:

- Scientific Research and Design
- Anatomy and Physiology
- Medical Microbiology
- Pathophysiology

Principles of Technology will continue to be an option for students to satisfy the physics credit requirement on the RHSP.

22. Can any of these courses satisfy the fourth science credit requirement?

One credit of Medical Microbiology      Yes

One credit of Pathophysiology      Yes

One-half credit of Medical Microbiology and one-half credit of Pathophysiology      Yes

23. When can a school district begin offering these new CTE courses to satisfy mathematics and science credit requirements?

New CTE courses that may satisfy mathematics and science credit requirements may be offered beginning in the 2010-11 school year.

24. Does the CTE course, Principles of Technology (POT), still count for physics credit? Will POT count on the Recommended High School Plan (RHSP), as well as the Distinguished Achievement Plan (DAP)?

Students on the RHSP may satisfy the physics credit requirement by successfully completing Principles of Technology (POT).

Students on the DAP **may not** satisfy the physics credit requirement by successfully completing Principles of Technology (POT).

25. Will students who substitute Principles of Technology (POT) for physics be required to take the End-of-Course (EOC) examination in physics?

Yes.

26. Are there any new CTE courses that count for other graduation credit requirements?

The CTE Professional Communications course was added as an option for students to satisfy the speech requirement on all three graduation programs.

The CTE Principles and Elements of Floral Design course was added as an option for students to satisfy the fine arts requirement on all three graduation programs.

## **Science**

27. Does Integrated Physics and Chemistry (IPC) still count on minimum graduation plan?

IPC is still required for students on the MHSP. A student may substitute Chemistry or Physics for IPC and then must take the second of these two courses as the academic elective credit.

28. Does Integrated Physics and Chemistry (IPC) count on the RHSP?

A student may take IPC as one of the four science credits on the RHSP if IPC is successfully completed prior to chemistry and physics.

29. Does Integrated Physics and Chemistry (IPC) count on the Distinguished Achievement Plan (DAP)?

IPC may not count as one of the four science credits on the DAP. If a student on the DAP takes IPC it may count as an elective, but the student will still need to successfully complete four science credits to include a biology credit, a chemistry credit and a physics credit.

30. Can Integrated Physics and Chemistry (IPC) be taken in 8<sup>th</sup> grade for high school science credit?

Yes. Districts may offer courses designated for Grades 9-12 in earlier grade levels. A course must be considered completed and credit must be awarded if the student has demonstrated achievement by meeting the standard requirements of the course, including demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter, regardless of the time the student has received instruction in the course or the grade level at which proficiency was attained. The academic achievement record (transcript) must reflect that students have satisfactorily completed courses at earlier grade levels than Grades 9-12 and have been awarded state graduation credits.

31. If a student on the Recommended High School Program takes biology, IPC, chemistry, and physics, won't the student be missing the opportunity to take a fourth science credit such as Earth and Space Science or Environmental Systems?

A student is not limited to taking four science courses. Any science course a student takes beyond those that satisfy the four required science credits will count toward elective credit.

32. Is there an End-of-Course examination (EOC) for Integrated Physics and Chemistry (IPC)?

No.

33. Will an EOC be developed and required of students who take IPC?

Authority for requiring EOCs belongs to the Texas Legislature. There would have to be a change in state law in order for an IPC end-of-course assessment to be required.

34. Can students who take Integrated Physics and Chemistry (IPC) on the Recommended High School Program still take Principles of Technology (POT) to satisfy the physics credit requirement?

Yes. Students on the RHSP may satisfy the physics credit by successfully completing Principles of Technology (POT).

35. Students on the Recommended High School Plan (RHSP) have been able to take biology, and then complete two of three science courses from Integrated Physics and Chemistry (IPC), chemistry, and physics. When will this course sequence option stop?

If a student on the RHSP takes IPC in 2010-11 or later, the student will need to successfully complete credits in chemistry and physics after successful completion of IPC in order for IPC to count as a science credit.

36. Will our current high school juniors (2009-10) on the RHSP who took IPC, biology, and chemistry need to take physics to graduate?

High school graduation requirements successfully completed prior to the 2010-11 school year shall count toward graduation in the manner established at the time the credit was earned. Consequently, a student who successfully completed IPC and chemistry prior to the 2010-11 school year has satisfied the requirement that a student complete two out of the three courses (IPC, chemistry and/or physics).

37. What if a student completed IPC prior to 2010-11, but is scheduled to take chemistry in 2010-11?

High school graduation requirements successfully completed prior to the 2010-11 school year shall count toward graduation in the manner established at the time the credit was earned. At the time the student took IPC, the requirement was that the student successfully complete two out of the following three courses: IPC, chemistry and/or physics. Consequently, if the student took IPC prior to 2010-11, the student may take either chemistry or physics in 2010-11 to satisfy the requirement. The student does not need to take both chemistry and physics to satisfy the requirement.

38. If a student takes biology, then IPC, and chemistry, may they substitute POT for Physics in their senior year?

A student on the RHSP may take biology, IPC, chemistry and then Principles of Technology to satisfy the four science credit requirement.