

Graduation Plans

Under State Board of Education rules, students have a variety of graduation plans to choose from, depending on when they first began high school. If your child began the ninth grade before 2001-02, check with the high school counselor for full information on graduation requirements.

Students who began ninth grade in 2003-04 can receive a diploma by passing the Exit-Level TAKS Examinations and completing the Minimum Program, the Recommended Program, or the Distinguished Achievement Program. Students who began ninth grade in 2007-08 and after must complete the Recommended Program or Distinguished Achievement Program. The Minimum and Recommended programs and a basic description of their requirements are described in the chart below.

Minimum High School Program		Recommended High School Program	
English Language Arts or approved substitute	4	English Language Arts	4
Mathematics-including Algebra I and Geometry	3	Mathematics-Algebra I & II, Geometry	4
Science-Biology and IPC or approved substitute	2	Science-Biology required; 2 from IPC, Chemistry, Physics (not more than one from each area)	4
Social Studies-World History or World Geography & US History After Reconstruction & .5 Government	2.5	Social Studies-World History, World Geography, US History After Reconstruction, Government	3.5
Academic Elective-World History, World Geography, or a Science class	1	Language other than English (in the same language)	2
Economics-Free Enterprise	.5	Economics-Free Enterprise	.5
Physical Education (2 maximum for state credit)	1.5	Physical Education (2 maximum for state credit)	1.5
Health Educatio	.5	Health Educatio	.5
Speech-Communication Applications	.5	Speech-Communication Applications	.5
Technology Applications	1	Technology Applications	1
Electives	5.5	Fine Arts	1
		Electives	3.5
Total Units Required	22	Total Units Required	26

The **Distinguished Achievement Program** is similar to the **Recommended Program** with the following differences and additional requirements:

Recommended Program		Distinguished Program	
Language other than English (in the same language)	2	Language other than English (all in the same language)	3
Electives	3.5	Electives	2.5

For the **Distinguished Achievement Program**, students must also receive any combination of four of these advanced measures that are assessed through an external review process:

1. Score of 3 or higher on College Board Advanced Placement examination(s).
2. Score of 4 or higher on International Baccalaureate examination(s).
3. Grade point of 3.0 or higher in courses that count for college credit, including tech prep programs.
4. PSAT that qualifies student for recognition as Commended Scholar or higher; as part of National Hispanic Scholar Program; or as part of National Achievement Scholar Program for Outstanding Negro Students.
5. Original research/project related to the required curriculum that is judged by a panel of professionals in the field of student or conducted under direction of mentor(s) and reported to an appropriate audience.
6. License awarded by professional board or organization, counted as one measure regardless of the number of licenses received.

Personal Graduation Plan

If your child is in junior high/middle school or high school and does not perform successfully on any TAKS test or if we determine that your child is not likely to receive a high school diploma within five years of beginning the 9th grade, you will be asked to participate in developing a personal graduation plan for your child. That plan will identify your child's education goals and will take into consideration your educational expectations for your child. Should a personal graduation plan be appropriate for your child, the counselor and principal will contact you with more specific information.

Early Graduation Scholarships

High school students who complete the Recommended or Advanced program and graduate in less than four school years are eligible under state law for the Early High School Graduation Scholarship program. This scholarship provides from \$500 to \$3,000 in credits toward tuition and mandatory fees for a public or private college or university in Texas. The amount of the scholarship depends on the number of months needed to

complete the high school program and the number of college credits a student earns during high school. Contact your high school counselor for complete information on this program.

Graduation Honors/Class Ranking

Class rankings are calculated for the first time at the end of the sophomore year. Final rank in class for purpose of determining valedictorian and salutatorian and honor graduates is calculated following the completion of the fifth six-week grading period and the availability of college grades during the senior year.

Under state law, students who are ranked in the top 10% of their graduating class are eligible for automatic admission to all Texas state colleges and universities, including The University of Texas system and the Texas A&M University system. The counselor will provide more detailed information about this opportunity during a student's first year of high school, including information about eligibility for financial aid. Please contact the counselor at any time for information.

Rank in class for purposes of determining which students are in the top 10% of their graduating class will be calculated at the end of the 11th grade, middle of the 12th grade, and at high school graduation. Students will use the latest ranking in relation to their college application deadlines. The number of students in the top 10% for automatic admission to a Texas college will not exceed the mathematical calculation of 10% of the number of students in the graduating class.

We use a weighted grade point/grade average system that is designed to recognize the relative difficulty and effort required for the course. The additional grade point/points on the grade are used solely for ranking purposes and will not be reflected in the grades recorded on your child's official transcript or Academic Achievement Record. Any courses for which a student receives dual credit will be given additional weighting for ranking purposes.

The valedictorian and salutatorian will be the highest and next highest ranking eligible student in the graduating class. The valedictorian and salutatorian must have completed their entire junior and senior year at Zavalla I.S.D.. Eligible students who complete all requirements in three years, rather than the usual four years, will be ranked for graduation honors with students who have completed requirements in four years. The highest ranking graduate, who will be eligible to receive a scholarship for exemption from the first year of tuition at a state college or university, will be the person who has the highest rank in class, regardless of eligibility for the honor of valedictorian under our policies. Eligible students whose class ranking places them in the top ten percent of their graduating class will be recognized as Honor Graduates.

Graduation Exercises

Graduation exercises are held at the end of the school year for students completing course requirements. According to local policies, students who have completed all required coursework, but have not passed one or more of the TAKS test, will be allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies. All students who have completed all graduation requirements, whether in three years or four years, are eligible to participate in graduation exercises. Official diplomas are not distributed at the graduation ceremony, but must be picked up following the graduation ceremony.

Participation in graduation exercises is a privilege, not a right, and students who do not comply with dress, grooming, and conduct standards for the rehearsal and ceremony will be removed from the ceremony. Graduating students who are assigned to the district's Disciplinary Alternative Education Program through the end of school year and successfully complete their term of assignment in the DAEP without further disciplinary action may be allowed to take part in graduation ceremonies. That decision rests with the principal and cannot be appealed. The graduation ceremony is a solemn event commemorating a milestone achievement in the lives of our graduates. The planning and execution of the ceremony is under the control of the administration, which will exercise editorial review and approval of the speeches and other comments to be delivered by the Valedictorian and Salutatorian and any other students.