HB 5: Other Frequently Asked Questions

College Preparatory Courses

1. Are high schools required to offer a college prep course?

Under Section 28.014 of the Texas Education Code, each school district is required to partner with at least one institution of higher education to develop and provide college preparatory courses in English language arts and mathematics. However, each high school within the school district is not required to offer these courses.

2. Are certain students required to enroll in college prep courses?

No. School districts are required to provide notice to each student who meets eligibility criteria for a college preparatory course and the student's parent or guardian regarding the benefits of enrolling in the course. However, students are not required to enroll in college preparatory courses that are required in statute.

3. Is a student required to take the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) to determine college readiness and placement in a college prep course?

No. A district may use performance on coursework, a college entrance examination, or the TSI to determine that the student is not ready to perform entry-level college coursework.

4. If a district chooses to use TSI to determine college readiness and placement in a college prep course, must a district pay for the TSI for students?

The course required under TEC, §28.014 must be available free of charge to students. Students may qualify for the course based on performance on coursework, a college entrance examination, or the TSI. If the district chooses to use only the TSI to enroll students, it cannot require payment for access to the course.

5. Is a student required to take the TSI to determine successful completion of a college prep course?

State law does not explicitly require or prohibit the use of testing to determine successful completion of a college prep course described in TEC, §28.014. Whether a particular test is required, whether it is

required only for the purpose of awarding dual credit, or whether there is no test at all is part of the flexibility HB5 provided to each school district in working with an institution of higher education.

6. If a district chooses to use TSI to determine successful completion of a college prep course, must a district pay for the TSI for students?

Yes. If the district chooses to use only the TSI to determine successful completion of the course, it cannot require payment for the TSI. If other standards involving grades or other exams are used, and TSI is not required for completion of the course, the district is not required to administer or pay for the TSI.

7. What end-of-course assessment instrument would indicate that a student does not meet college readiness standards for purposes of Texas Education Code, §28.014?

There is no longer a state assessment that would meet this purpose. The local development process may decide to use an assessment as part of the course, but is not required to do so.

8. Can high schools offer college prep course to students who are not in the 12th grade?

There is not a specific requirement that a student must be in 12th grade to take a college preparatory course. However, a student may not earn credit for the college preparatory math course until after the student has completed the three mathematics credit requirements for the Foundation High School Program.

9. Can a student who remains on the current Recommended High School Program (RHSP) or the Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP) earn credit for a college preparatory course?

No. Administrative rules do not allow for these courses to satisfy credit requirements for students on the RHSP or DAP. However, a student on the Foundation High School Program who successfully completes a college preparatory course may use the credit earned to satisfy an advanced mathematics credit or an advanced English credit.

10. What is the relationship between the college preparatory courses referenced in Texas Education Code, §28.014 and §39.025(b-2)?

Texas Education Code, subsection 39.025(b-2) does not apply to a course developed under section 28.014. While both statutes use the term “college preparatory course,” they are different enactments

and represent different local program options. There is currently no assessment available for a course under TEC, §39.025(b-2).

11. If a student takes one of the college prep courses to attain college readiness, can the student take the new TSI and, if the student passes the TSI, will it satisfy the STAAR end-of-course assessment requirements as well as the TSI requirement?

No. Neither of the college preparatory courses identified in statute satisfy the state assessment requirements for high school graduation. Additionally, TSI is not listed as a substitute for any STAAR end-of-course assessment.

12. Can one college prep course in English satisfy both the requirements in Texas Education Code, §28.014, and in Texas Education Code, §39.025(b-2)?

The courses described in TEC, §28.014, and TEC, §39.025(b-2), are different. There is currently no assessment available for a course under TEC, §39.025(b-2). It is anticipated that the STAAR English III and Algebra II assessments, when administered again beginning in spring 2016, will be able to serve the purpose of an assessment related to TEC, §39.025(b-2). At this time, however, there is not a way for a district to implement the 39.025(b-2) requirement without an available assessment.

13. Must the college preparatory English course be a full-credit course?

No. In accordance with TAC, §74.12(b)(1), the college preparatory English course may be a half-credit course that, when paired with another half-credit from the list of allowable advanced English courses, may satisfy the advanced English requirement for graduation.

14. Must the college preparatory mathematics course be a full-credit course?

Yes. In accordance with TAC, §74.13(e)(4), the college preparatory mathematics course must be a full-credit course. However, in accordance with TAC, §74.26, in accordance with local district policy, students who are able to successfully complete only one semester of a two-semester course can be awarded credit proportionately. Consequently, a student may be awarded a half credit for successful completion of half of the college preparatory mathematics course. This half credit, when paired with another half credit from the list of allowable advanced mathematics courses, may satisfy the advanced mathematics requirement for students pursuing an endorsement.

College Admission

1. If a student is on the Foundation High School Program only and does not earn an endorsement, does the student have to attend a community college before attending a four year college?

State law does not prohibit a student who graduates on the Foundation High School Program without an endorsement from attending a four-year college or university. However, a student graduating under the Foundation High School Program without an endorsement may not have met the eligibility requirements for a four-year college or university because colleges and universities set their own entrance requirements. A student would need to check with the specific college/university for information regarding admission requirements.

2. Will computer science as a language other than English (LOTE) count for college admission as a foreign language?

Colleges and universities set their own entrance requirements. Consequently, a student would need to check with the specific college/university for information regarding admission requirements.