

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

- Review** choices offered under the **Foundation High School Program** and the **Endorsements** to decide on your future academic path.
- Select** the endorsement that best fits your area of personal interest and the major you plan to study in college.
- Recognize** that most college entrance requirements include rigorous advanced courses including **Algebra II**, higher-level science courses and languages other than English.

## 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> Grade

- Monitor** high school credits; be sure to meet all **local and state requirements** by the end of the senior year.
- Take dual enrollment** or **Advanced Placement courses** if possible to earn college credit while still in high school.
- Keep** list of awards, honors and extracurricular activities for scholarship and college applications.
- Research** colleges or universities you are interested in attending. **Check** admission and application requirements and timelines.
- Explore** interests and take advantage of **Career Day** opportunities.
- Attend college nights** hosted by your high school. **Talk** with school representatives about the types of financial aid available.
- Take** the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test in your sophomore year for practice. In your junior year, take the PSAT for eligibility for the National Merit Scholarship Competition. Students who take the PSAT or ACT's PLAN tend to score higher on the SAT or ACT than those who do not.

## 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> Grade

- Take dual enrollment** or **Advanced Placement courses** if possible to earn college credit while you are still in high school.
- Check** with your counselor's office to learn about available scholarships. Be sure to apply early and for as many scholarships as possible. Do not limit yourself to local scholarships.
- Consider** taking SAT/ACT preparation classes. **Sign up** and take the ACT and/or SAT test, preferably in your junior year but no later than the fall of your senior year.
- Fill out** the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) early in the spring of your senior year.
- Apply** to college during the fall of your senior year.

If you plan to pursue technical training or enter the workforce after graduation, see the Information - *Workforce Resources* page or visit Texas Reality Check at [www.texasrealitycheck.com/](http://www.texasrealitycheck.com/).

# Graduation Program – Overview

## Foundation High School Program

A new, more flexible graduation program that allows students to pursue their interests will be in place for all students who enter high school, beginning in the 2014-2015 school year.

### The program contains up to four parts:

- A 22-credit foundation program which is the core of the new Texas high school diploma
- Five endorsement\* options that allow students to focus on a related series of courses
- A higher performance category called Distinguished Level of Achievement
- Performance Acknowledgments that note outstanding achievement

### The Foundation requirements (22 credits) include:

**English (4 credits)** • English I • English II • English III • An advanced English course

**Mathematics (3 credits)** • Algebra I • Geometry • An advanced math course

**Science (3 credits)** • Biology • Integrated Physics & Chemistry or an advanced science course  
• An advanced science course

**Social Studies (3 credits)** • World History or World Geography • U.S. History  
• U.S. Government (one-half credit) • Economics (one-half credit)

**Languages Other Than English (2 credits)** • 2 credits in the same language or  
• 2 credits from Computer Science I, II, III

**Physical Education (1 credit)**      **Fine Arts (1 credit)**      **Electives (5 credits)**

**Speech:** Demonstrated proficiency

**Endorsements** Total credits with endorsements 26

## Enhancements

Additionally, a student may earn the Distinguished Level of Achievement and/or a Performance Acknowledgment for outstanding performance. The Distinguished Level of Achievement must be earned to be admitted to a Texas public university under the Top 10 percent automatic admission law.

### Distinguished Level of Achievement

- Foundation Program requirements
- 4 credits in math including Algebra II
- 4 credits in science
- at least 1 endorsement

### Performance Acknowledgments

- dual credit course
- bilingualism and biliteracy
- PSAT, ACT's Plan, SAT or ACT
- Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate exam
- earning a nationally or internationally recognized business or industry certification or license

\*A student entering 9th grade must indicate an endorsement he or she plans to follow. A student may change or add an endorsement at any time.

A student may graduate without earning an endorsement if, after his or her sophomore year, the student's parent signs a form permitting the student to omit the endorsement requirement.

