

**Frequently Asked Questions – HB 5 College Preparatory Courses  
Pursuant to §28.014  
Texas Success Center (TSC)**

**1. What are the College Preparatory course frameworks and how were they developed?**

The House Bill 5 College Preparatory course frameworks in English and mathematics are the result of a collaborative process organized by the Texas Success Center (TSC) at the Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC). This work is guided by a steering committee comprised of educational leaders, community organizations, and regional entities that helps to oversee the framework development process and provide guidance and recommendations for the implementation of these courses.

The preliminary content frameworks consist of course descriptions, recommended prerequisite courses, and student learning outcomes. Content committees, including both higher education and K-12 educators, worked collaboratively to develop preliminary frameworks to be released in time for use in the first year of implementation. As these preliminary frameworks are not a final product, the TSC will seek input from educators across the state and use this feedback to revise and enrich the documents. The framework content is guided by the learning outcomes in the Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM), the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS), and the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Educators are invited to contribute feedback that will benefit the continued development of the frameworks.

**2. What is the purpose of the College Preparatory courses?**

House Bill 5, passed by the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislature, amended §28.014 of the Texas Education Code to require local school districts to develop and offer college preparatory courses in both English language arts and mathematics to high school students whose academic performance indicates the student is not yet ready for college-level coursework. The statute requires districts to partner with at least one institution of higher education to develop and provide the college preparatory courses designed for students at the twelfth grade level. The purpose of the HB 5 College Preparatory courses is to provide high school students an opportunity to gain and demonstrate the necessary college readiness in English language arts and/or mathematics to be successful in college-level, credit-bearing courses without the need for remedial or developmental coursework.

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

Under §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. (Source: Texas Education Agency)

**4. Who should take the College Preparatory courses?**

§28.014 of the Texas Education Code states that the courses must be designed for students at the 12th grade level whose coursework, college entrance examination scores, or Texas Success Initiative (TSI) assessment scores indicate that a student is not ready to perform entry-level college coursework. Furthermore, the course must be designed to prepare students for success in entry-level college courses. The statute also states that the course must be designed for students whose performance on an end-of-course assessment instrument does not meet college readiness standards. However, the THECB “College Readiness” indicators were measures on the Algebra II and English III EOC exams, which are not currently administered and will be optional beginning in the 2015-2016 school year. The THECB College Readiness indicators do not currently exist for Algebra I or English I & II. Thus, the College Preparatory courses described in §28.014 are not designed to provide any type of remediation for Algebra I or English I & II.

**5. 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. (Source: Texas Education Agency)

**6. What does it mean for a student to successfully complete the College Preparatory course for HS credit and TSI exemption?**

House Bill 5 amended §51.3062 of the Texas Education Code to state that a student who successfully completes a college preparatory under §28.014 is exempt from TSI requirements with respect to the content area of the course. Also, an exemption to TSI is not the same as completing TSI requirements. Therefore, this exemption applies only at the institution of higher education that partners with the school district in which the student is enrolled to provide the course. The commissioner of higher education has ruled that the exemption shall be in place for one year after the student graduates. Also, the commissioner has ruled that institutions of higher education may enter into agreements with one another if they wish to extend exemptions to students who earned the exemption at an institution of higher education other than the partnering institution.

It is recommended that the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the school district and partnering institution specify course content and expectations, as well as assessment strategies. “Successful completion” is not defined by statute and is to be agreed upon by the ISD and IHE partners as a part of the MOU. It is not recommended that students be required to take TSI assessment as a method for determining successful completion because this negates the possibility of earning an exemption. Finally, measures of successful completion may be different for the school district and partnering institution. In this case, it is recommended that the partnership agreement clearly specify measures that indicate successful course completion that grants a TSI exemption as well as measures that indicate successful course completion for high school credit requirements

**7. Is a student required to take the TSI to determine college readiness and placement in a College Preparatory 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. (Source: Texas Education Agency)

**8. Can high schools offer College Preparatory courses 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. (Source: Texas Education Agency)

**9. If a district chooses to use TSI to determine college readiness and placement in a College Preparatory 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. (Source: Texas Education Agency)

### 10. Is a student required to take the TSI to determine successful completion of a College Preparatory 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. (Source: Texas Education Agency)

### 11. If a district chooses to use TSI to determine successful completion of a College Preparatory 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. (Source: Texas Education Agency)

### 12. How does successful completion of a College Preparatory course “place” a student in college?

Upon successful completion of a College Preparatory course, the student may enter entry-level college credit-bearing courses in the corresponding content at the partnering institution without remediation and without having to satisfy TSI requirements in the content area. This exemption to TSI exists for a period of one year after the student graduates from high school. By commissioner’s ruling, IHEs may enter into agreements to allow for the acceptance of exemptions at other IHEs. There are currently conversations among IHEs to create regional or possibly a statewide MOU to extend the recognition of exemptions gained from College Preparatory courses among signatories.

### 13. What happens if a student is unsuccessful in a College Preparatory course?

As previously stated, measures of successful completion for a College Prep course may be different for the school district and partnering institution. In this case, it is recommended that the partnership agreement clearly specify measures that indicate successful course completion for high school credit requirements, as well as measures that indicate successful course completion that grants a TSI exemption. If the MOU defines two different measures of success, there are two possible scenarios related to students not meeting those measures:

- If a student successfully completes measures indicated for high school course completion, but **does not** successfully complete measures indicated for college readiness defined by the MOU, he/she will receive the designated high school credit, but will not gain the TSI exemption.
- If a student fails to successfully complete measures for high school course completion **and** fails to successfully complete measures indicated for college readiness defined by the MOU, he/she receives neither the high school credit nor the exemption to TSI.

#### **14. How do credits earned in the College Preparatory Math and ELA courses apply to high school graduation plans?**

The College Prep Math course will count as a fourth credit in mathematics for students on the new foundation high school plan. The College Prep ELA course will count as an advanced English credit for students on the foundation. These courses alone will not satisfy graduation requirements for students on the current (MHSP/RHSP/DAP) graduation plans and will serve as elective credits.

There are provisions under which students on the current (MHSP/RHSP/DAP) graduation plans may elect to switch to the new foundation graduation plan. In this case, the college prep courses alone will satisfy graduation requirements. However, it is important to note that many districts have chosen to counsel current juniors and seniors to remain on the (MHSP/RHSP/DAP) graduation plan due to concerns about college admissions requirements. While the Texas Uniform Admissions policy reflects changes resulting from HB 5 for public institutions in Texas, other private and out-of-state IHEs may not yet have admissions policies that are inclusive of some of the changes resulting from HB 5, such as the inclusion of computer programming to satisfy foreign language or expanded course options to satisfy the credit fourth credit in English language arts.

#### **15. 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. (Source: Texas Education Agency)

During the transition from the current (MHSP/RHSP/DAP) to the new foundation graduation plans, school districts may elect to embed the College Prep courses within courses that satisfy graduation requirements for the current graduation plans. Examples of this practice include embedding the College Prep Math course into the Independent Study in Mathematics course or embedding the College Prep ELA course into English IV. For ISDs electing to embed the College Prep courses, it is the legal responsibility of the school district to ensure that the resulting course meets the course requirements specified by the State, as well as the content requirements specified in the agreement(s) with their partnering institutions(s).

Furthermore, to ensure that it is appropriately noted on the student's transcript and to allow for student performance data tracking, it is recommended that students receive transcribed credit using the appropriate PEIMS service identification numbers upon successful completion of the College Preparatory English language arts course (CP110100: CPELA) and the College Prep mathematics course (CP111200: CPMAT).

#### **16. Can the student earn college credit for a College Preparatory course?**

There is language in HB 5 to suggest that a student may earn college credit for a College Prep course. However, per amendments to TAC Chapter 4 adopted by the THECB, this course cannot be offered as dual credit. While students may not earn college credit for the College Prep courses alone, ISD and partnering IHEs may have a college-credit bearing "trailer course" added to the end of the College Prep course. An example of this practice is a semester-long College Prep Math course leading into a dual credit College Algebra course. It is important to note that the College Prep courses are high school courses that must be taught by instructors holding the appropriate content-area state certification for high school.

**17. Can the College Preparatory courses be offered online?**

House Bill 5, §28.014 (b)(2), mentions that the College Preparatory course may be offered through distance learning or as an online course provided through an institution of higher education with which the school district partners.

**18. 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. (Source: *Texas Education Agency*)

**19. 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 math 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. (Source: *Texas Education Agency*)

**20. Are there student fees associated with a college preparatory course, pursuant to TEC §28.014?**

No. Per TEC §31.001, instructional materials selected for use in the public schools shall be furnished without cost to the student. Our recommendation is to offer the course and supplies free of charge to students to ensure widespread access and enrollment. We encourage IHE-district partnerships to develop or use courses that rely on open source instructional materials. Recommended open source resources for the College Preparatory courses include:

- TASA at iTunesU (<http://www.tasanet.org/itunesu>)
- Southern Regional Education Board: LiteracyReady and MathReady courses ([http://www.sreb.org/page/1508/sreb\\_readiness\\_courses.html](http://www.sreb.org/page/1508/sreb_readiness_courses.html))
- College Readiness Assignments for Texas (<http://craftx.org>)

**21. Who will evaluate the courses?**

It is recommended that ISDs and their partnering IHEs examine student performance data on summative assessments, as well as in entry-level credit-bearing courses in the corresponding content areas.

## 22. How do ISDs offer the course if they do not currently have a working relationship with an IHE?

House Bill 5, §28.014, requires that each district partner with at least one institution of higher education to develop and provide courses in college preparatory math and English language arts. It is recommended that ISDs work with an IHE in or near a local community college service area. If an ISD does not currently have a partner, it is recommended that they contact one of the following organizations for assistance with finding an institution with which to partner:

- TACC - Texas Success Center (<http://www.tacc.org/pages/texas-success-center>)
- Regional College Readiness Special Advisors (<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=23403FC7-F256-BE0D-70B1A9660148DAA7>)
- Texas Regional Education Service Centers ([http://www.tea.state.tx.us/regional\\_services/esc/](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/regional_services/esc/))
- TACC Texas Community College Service Districts Map ([http://www.tacc.org/documents/CTCSer\\_000.pdf](http://www.tacc.org/documents/CTCSer_000.pdf))

## 23. What will training/professional development look like?

It is recommended that Education Service Centers, school districts, and IHEs collaborate to develop and deliver appropriate professional development for the College Preparatory courses. During the 2014-2015 school year, the Texas Success Center will be collecting feedback from ISDs, IHEs, and educational partners to recommend topics and potential sources of professional development to aid in the implementation of the College Preparatory courses.

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