

# Overview of Changes the SBOE Made to High School Graduation Requirements 2/11/14

## CHANGES TO THE FOUNDATION HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Verbiage was added in the **foundation** graduation program that requires students to demonstrate proficiency, *as determined by the district*, in which the student is enrolled, in particular speech skills, such as “deliver clear verbal messages.” **The speech course itself was not added as a requirement for the foundation program or for any of the endorsements.** Districts may incorporate these skills into an existing course or require a separate speech/communication course.

Additional course options for English Language Arts were added to the **foundation** requirements including Communications Applications, Independent Study in Speech, Advanced Journalism: Newspaper III, and; Advanced Journalism: Yearbook III.

The **foundation** program requires three total math credits. Two of the three credits must consist of Algebra I and Geometry. Two additional courses, Algebraic Reasoning and Statistics, were added as options for the *third* math credit. The courses were added to the rules as placeholders for courses that TEA will develop. A TEA news release indicates the developed courses will be available for the 2015–2016 school year.

Mathematical Models with Applications remains as a third credit option in the **foundation** program with no expiration date.

In the languages other than English (LOTE) requirement of the **foundation** program, the rules now specify that a student who chooses the two credits in computer programming languages option *must* select the credits from Computer Science I, II, or III. The computer science credits must be earned before September 1, 2016. Credits earned on or after September 1, 2016, may not be used to satisfy the two-credit LOTE requirement. The computer science credit option expires September 1, 2017.

Course substitution options (safety nets) were added in the **foundation** program for students who are not likely to complete the second credit of LOTE. There are now four options to select from, including: (1) Special Topics in Language and Culture, (2) World History Studies or World Geography Studies (for a student who is not required to complete both by the local district), (3) a LOTE credit in a language *other* than the first credit language, or (4) a computer programming language.

## CHANGES TO THE ENDORSEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Language was added to the **endorsement** requirements that authorizes *a district* to define advanced courses and determine a coherent sequence of courses for an endorsement area, provided prerequisites in Chapters 110–118, 126, 127 and 130 are met (*the rules don't define*

*“advanced” so this gives districts flexibility in determining what should be considered as advanced).*

Algebraic Reasoning and Statistics were added as options for the *fourth* math credit in the **endorsement** requirements. The courses were added to the rules as placeholders for courses that TEA will develop. A TEA news release indicates the courses are expected to be available for the 2015–2016 school year.

Mathematical Models with Applications was also added as a *fourth* math credit option in the **endorsement** requirements. The credit in Mathematical Models must be earned prior to September 1, 2015 or September 1 of a subsequent year in which either the Algebraic Reasoning course or the Statistics course has been developed and approved by the SBOE, whichever is later.

A college preparatory math course that is developed by a district and local higher education partner pursuant to TEC Sec. 28.014 (HB 5) was also added as a *fourth* math credit option in the **endorsement** requirements.

STEM **endorsement** rule language was revised in numerous places. The option to take a coherent sequence of four *credits* in computer science now lists 13 specific courses that a student must choose from, e.g., Fundamentals of Computer Science.

STEM-Math **endorsement** rule language reduced the number of math credits needed by requiring successful completion of Algebra II and *two* (versus three) additional math courses for which Algebra II is a prerequisite. A STEM-Math student needs five total math credits to include Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, and two math courses that have Algebra II as a prerequisite.

A new STEM option was added that allows the **endorsement** to be earned through cross-disciplinary options in addition to Algebra II, physics, and chemistry.

Advanced Journalism: Newspaper and Advanced Journalism: Yearbook courses were added as options for students earning the Business and Industry (B & I) **endorsement** using the four-credit English route.

A new B & I **endorsement** option was added that allows students to earn four credits from nine specified technology applications courses.

A new B & I **endorsement** option was added that allows students to earn a *locally defined* set of four credits from the B & I courses in a coherent sequence that aligns with the student’s academic or career goals, as documented in the student’s personal graduation plan (PGP).

Health Science was removed from the STEM **endorsement** and is now in the Public Services endorsement.

Language was tweaked in the Arts and Humanities **endorsement** that allows students to earn four credits in a coherent sequence of courses from one or two categories or disciplines in fine arts or innovative courses approved by the commissioner (*so students will not take*

*only introductory courses within a discipline, but will get a more in-depth knowledge of the various disciplines).*

The number of social studies courses students must take if they choose the social studies option under the Arts and Humanities **endorsement** increased from four to a total of *five* credits.

Language was added in the Multidisciplinary **endorsement** section that allows students to fulfill requirements by earning four credits in AP, IB, or dual credit courses selected from English, math, science, social studies, economics, LOTE, or fine arts.

Under the rules for the **performance acknowledgement**, language was revised so that a student may earn the acknowledgement with a score of 3 or higher on an AP exam, or a score of 4 or above on an IB exam. The revised language aligns with College Board standards.

Language was added to the **performance acknowledgement** rules, that define a national or internationally recognized business or industry certification as “an industry validated credential that complies with the knowledge and skills standards promulgated by a nationally or internationally recognized business, industry, professional, or government entity representing a particular profession or occupation that is issued or endorsed by (a) a national or international business, industry or professional organization, (b) a state agency or government entity (c) a state-based industry association.”

Also, under the **performance acknowledgement** rules, language was added requiring certifications or licensures for performance acknowledgements to (a) be age appropriate for high school students, (b) represent a student’s substantial course of study and/or end-of-program knowledge and skills, (c) include an industry recognized exam or series of exams, an industry validated skill test or demonstrated proficiency through documented, supervised field experience, and (d) represent substantial knowledge and multiple skills needed for successful entry into a high-skill profession or occupation.

## ALGEBRA

Both statute and the final SBOE rules make it clear that rigorous curriculum requirements remain in place under the new Foundation High School Program and within the five endorsement options.

- All students take Algebra I under the **foundation** program
- The majority of math courses available as a *third* math credit option in the **foundation** program require Algebra II as a prerequisite
- Algebra II is required for the STEM **endorsement**
- Every district **MUST offer** Algebra II
- Many districts will *still require* Algebra II for all students
- Algebra II *is required* for the distinction designation and for students to be eligible for the top 10 percent rule (automatic admission to *Texas* public universities)