
Proposed Revision to the Texas Diploma as Defined in SB 3

4x4+3

This plan would require four credits each of the current foundation subjects: math, science, English language arts, social studies.

In addition this plan would require two credits of languages other than English and one credit of fine arts.

Rationale

1) Supports THECB Performing and Visual Arts Graduation Requirement

Currently, the THECB requires three credits of performing and visual arts for a student to graduate with a baccalaureate degree from a Texas institution. To not include a fine arts requirement in high school is philosophically counter to this requirement. With no high school requirement, there would be no fine arts required for students in public school after grade five. A 4x4+2 plan does not support a seamless P-16 education for Texas students.

2) Supports Dan Pink Philosophy of 21st Century Workforce Training

Twenty-first century work skill development should be the driving force behind our education system moving forward in Texas. While “left-brain” abilities are absolutely necessary, that dominance is gone and the workforce of the future belongs to a different kind of person with a different kind of mind – creative and empathetic “right-brain” thinkers. Rigorous instruction in fine arts is a major component of this workforce development.

3) Aligns Texas Requirements with Federal Legislation

The current core academic subjects defined in No Child Left Behind include mathematics, science, English language arts, social studies, languages other than English, and **fine arts**. Required coursework as described above aligns Texas with NCLB as well as the core subjects of P21 – The Partnership for 21st Century Skills.

4) Aligns with the College Board Publication, “Academic Preparation for College—What Students Need To Know And Be Able to Do”

This College Board document defines the basic academic subjects as English language arts, **fine arts**, mathematics, science, social studies and foreign language.

5) Creates Flexibility

This plan will include flexibility for seven academic electives from the foundation and enrichment subject areas versus the 3.5 elective options in the current Recommended Program.

6) Supports TEC Objectives

This plan supports a “well balanced and appropriate education” as called for in Objective 4 of Section 4.001 of the TEC.

7) Offers Broad-Based Academic Experiences

Fine arts is a subject area offering students the opportunity to explore a variety of academic disciplines through state approved courses in music, art, theater and dance. The arts options are expansive and diverse unlike the other current required enrichment subjects such as communications applications and physical education which are singular or limited course offerings.

Support Documents

I. THECB Rule for Degree Granting Colleges and Universities

From *Subchapter A, Rule 7.5 General Provisions Standards for Operation of Institutions*

(15) General Education.

Each baccalaureate degree program shall contain a general education component consisting of at least twenty-five (25) percent of the total hours required for graduation from the program. This component shall be drawn from each of the following areas: Humanities and **Fine Arts**, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Natural Sciences and Mathematics. It shall include courses to develop skills in written and oral communication and basic computer instruction.

From *Subchapter B, Rule 4.28 Transfer of Credit, Core Curriculum, and Field of Study Curricula*

- The 36-semester credit hour core curriculum must include 3 semester credit hours in **Visual and Performing Arts** and 3 semester credit hours in Humanities.
- The 42-semester credit hour core curriculum may include an additional 3 semester credit hours in **Visual and Performing Arts** as determined by the institution.

II. Alignment with NCLB Core Curriculum

From *SEC. 9101. DEFINITIONS.*

Except as otherwise provided, in this Act: . . .

(11) CORE ACADEMIC SUBJECTS—The term “core academic subjects” means English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, **arts**, history, and geography.

III. P21 – Partnership for 21st Century Skills

The Partnership’s framework for learning in the 21st century is based on the essential skills that our children need to succeed as citizens and workers in the 21st century. The Partnership has identified six key elements of a 21st century education, which are described below.

1. Core Subjects. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, identifies the core subjects as English, reading or language arts; mathematics; science; foreign languages; civics; government; economics; **arts**; history; and geography.

IV. Reflection of College Board's Definition of Academic Subjects

From *Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do:*

Study in the Basic Academic Subjects provides the detailed knowledge and skills necessary for effective work in college. Students who intend to go to college will need this basic learning in order to obtain the full benefits of higher education. This learning provides the foundation for college study in all fields.

The Basic Academic Subjects are English, **the arts**, mathematics, science, social studies, and foreign language. Although these subjects are presented separately, they depend on each other in many ways.