



Navigating Graduation: Considerations for Families of Students with Disabilities

SPEDTex

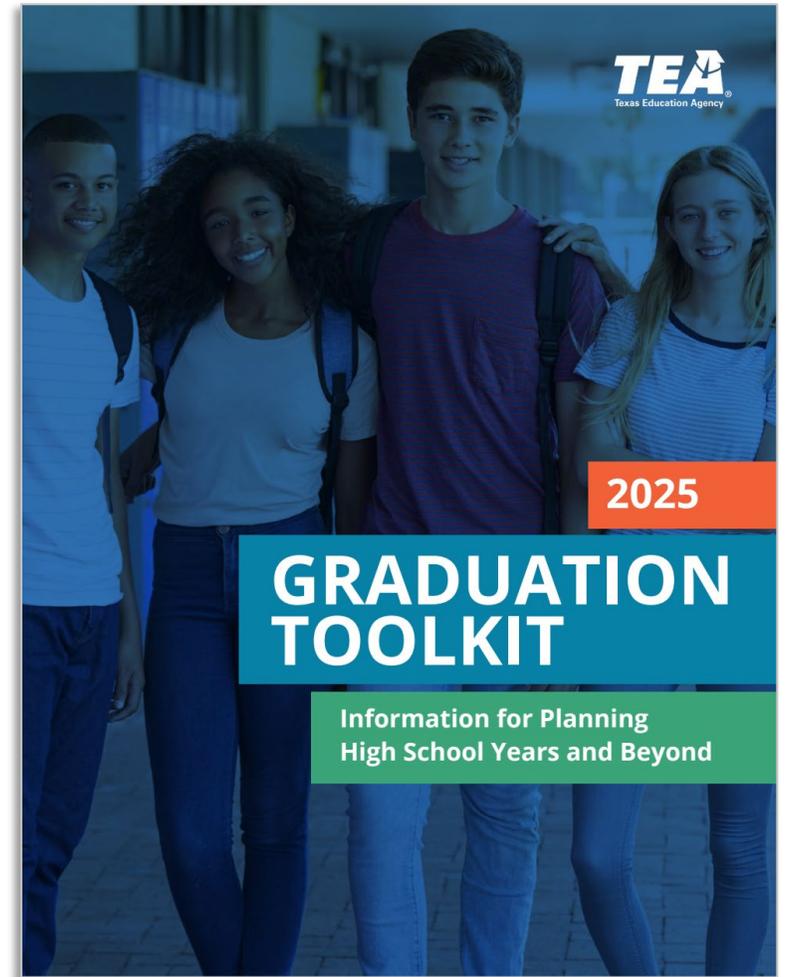
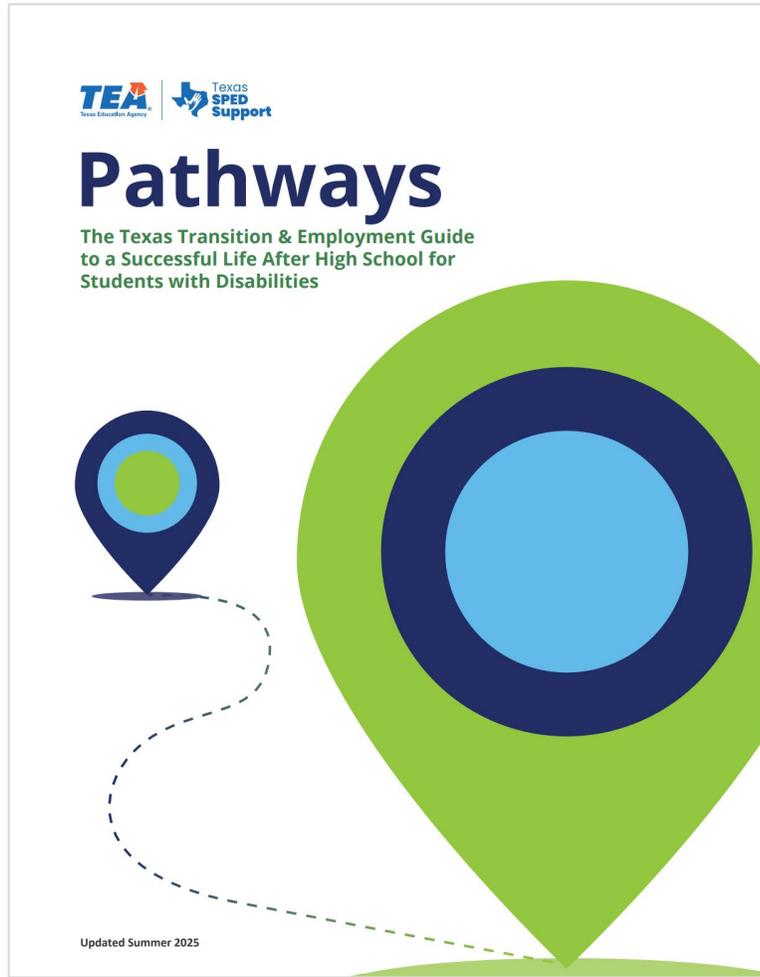
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Most Parents Want to Know.....

- What are the requirements to earn a high school diploma in Texas?
- What are the options to adapt those requirements for my child's disability-related needs?
- Will the needed adaptations have an impact on my child's:
 - High school graduation options?
 - College admissions?
- After meeting graduation requirements, will my child be eligible to continue enrollment in public school to receive special education services?



Key Terms: Defined in Resources

- Course
- Credit
- Diploma
- Distinguished Level of Achievement
- End-of-course (EOC) assessments
- Endorsements
- Performance Acknowledgements
- Personal Graduation Plan (PGP)
- Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)
- 18+ Services and Programs
- Accommodations
- Certificate
- Courses of Study
- Modifications

What are the requirements to earn a high school diploma in Texas?

Foundation High School Program

The **Foundation High School Program** (tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/brochures/tea-brochures) identifies the requirements that all Texas public school students must meet to earn a high school diploma. The information on this page can help you understand graduation requirements. It's important to know about the opportunities available at your school and your options to receive support.

To earn a diploma through the Foundation High School Program, you need to earn at least 22 credits (or more if required by your school) in the following areas:

- » 4 credits English
- » 3 credits mathematics
- » 3 credits science
- » 3 credits social studies
- » 2 credits languages other than English
- » 1 credit fine arts
- » 1 credit physical education
- » 5 credits electives

A **course** is a learning opportunity (usually a class) that addresses curriculum in a subject area. A **credit** is a unit of measure awarded for successfully completing a high school course.

In addition to credits, you will need to take end-of-course (EOC) assessments for English I and II, Algebra I, Biology, and US History. Your school counselor can help you understand other requirements, like demonstrating proficiency in certain speech/communication skills.

- **22 credits (or more if required by your school)**
- **5 EOC assessments through STAAR (with or without accommodations) or STAAR Alternate 2**

Endorsements

You can earn one or more special recognitions called endorsements as part of your high school diploma. An endorsement is a series of classes that are grouped by interest or skill set. The classes help you learn a lot about a subject or prepare for a good job. Every career and technical education (CTE) program of study leads to an endorsement. Not all schools offer every endorsement, so check with your counselor on what your school offers.

To earn an endorsement, you will need to earn 26 credits, including additional credits in math, science, and electives.

Endorsement Areas

- » Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)
- » Business and Industry
- » Arts and Humanities
- » Public Services
- » Multidisciplinary Studies

Performance Acknowledgements

- » Dual credit/college academic courses
- » Bilingualism/biliteracy
- » PSAT, PreACT, the SAT, or the ACT
- » Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) exams
- » Earning a state-recognized or nationally or internationally recognized business or industry certification or license

Distinguished Level of Achievement

- » 4 credits in math (must include Algebra II)
- » 4 credits in science
- » Curriculum requirements for Foundation High School Program and at least one endorsement area

- **TEXAS FIRST PROGRAM Eligibility**
 - Texas residency
 - FAFSA completion
 - At least 22 high school credits
 - Final GPA equivalent to 3.0 or higher
 - Additional academic requirements
 - college readiness test scores,
 - STAAR exam participation and demonstration of mastery in various subjects

- *For more information visit [The Texas First Program - Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board](#)*

Texas First Program

What are the options to adapt high school graduation requirements for my child's disability-related needs?

Your ARD committee will help you consider the special education services for your student's classes. Let's look at a few examples of adaptations for students with disabilities.

- **Accommodations** reduce or even eliminate the effect of your disability on academic tasks, but do not change the learning expectations. Accommodations can change how you learn new information or how you show what you have learned. They do not change the mastery level set for all students in the course.
- **Modifications** reduce the amount or the level of complexity in the curriculum for a course. You will be learning the same things, but you will not be expected to meet the mastery level that is set for all students in the course.

Accommodation or Modification?

Examples of Accommodations and Modifications

Whether a specific support is an accommodation or a modification is dependent on the content being taught. Review the following scenarios to see examples of when supports are considered accommodations or modifications.

Area	Accommodation	Modification
Calculator	If the objective of the assignment is solving multi-step word problems, the use of a calculation device to support math calculation is likely an accommodation.	If the objective of the assignment is to demonstrate 3- digit x 2-digit multiplication with regrouping, the use of a calculation device to support math calculation is likely a modification.

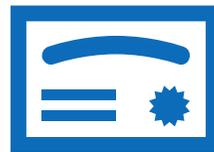
Will the needed adaptations have an impact on my child's high school graduation options?

“Sufficiently rigorous” curriculum

- The ARD committee may award the endorsement(s) and distinguished level of achievement for students who completed the required courses with modified curriculum “provided that the curriculum, as modified, is sufficiently rigorous.”
- ARD committees may find it helpful to consider:
 - In which content areas or courses did the student require modified curriculum?
 - What types of modifications were needed for the student to access the curriculum standards?
 - What other information is available about the student’s academic access, including their participation and progress in courses that satisfy the endorsement requirement?

- Any student with an IEP who will be receiving a diploma or exceeding maximum age eligibility must be provided an SOP.
- The SOP must include the following information, as required by IDEA:
 - A summary of the child's academic achievement and functional performance; and
 - Recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting their postsecondary goals.
- In Texas, the following considerations should be included in the SOP, as appropriate:
 - The views of the parent and student; and
 - Written recommendations from adult service agencies on how to assist the student in meeting postsecondary goals.

- Diploma
- Certificate of coursework completion
- Certificate of attendance



After meeting graduation requirements, will my child be eligible to continue enrollment in public school to receive special education services?

- 18+ **services** are provided as part of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).
 - There is not a comprehensive list of services that a school district must offer.
 - Services will be determined by the ARD committee based on the results of transition assessments and other information about the student.
- 18+ **programs** may be established by school districts to provide these services.
 - Based on local policy and priority
 - Can be an effective way to structure the staffing, location, materials, and other needs

Students who meet eligibility are entitled to **services**, and school systems can choose to develop **programs**.

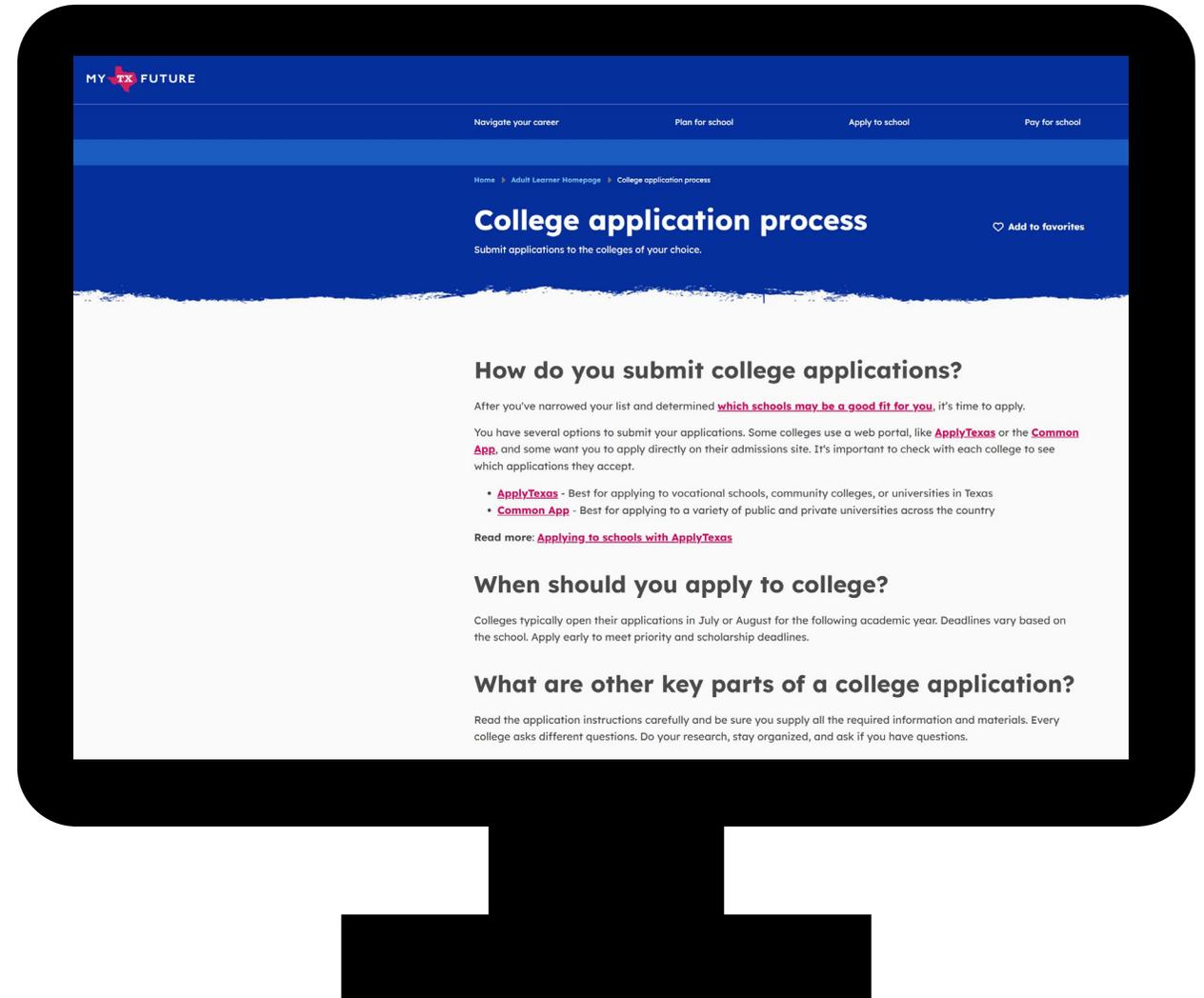
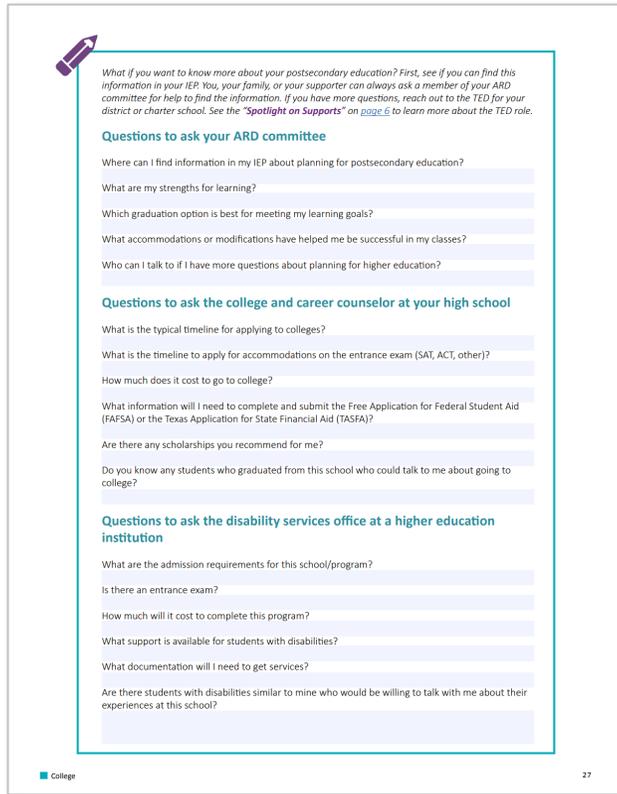
- 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §89.1070
- After graduation requirements are met, eligibility
 - **Ends** when the diploma is awarded for students who meet the academic standards for all students with no modified content.
 - **Continues** for students who did not meet the academic standards for all students. This includes students whose ARD committees determine that passing is not required for more state assessments than would otherwise be required for all students; or students who required modified content in one or more courses for graduation credit.

- 19 TAC §89.1070: “For students who graduate and receive a diploma according to subsections (b)(2) or (b)(3)(A), (B), or (C) of this section, **the ARD committee must determine needed special education services upon the request of the student or parent to resume services**, as long as the student meets the age eligibility requirements.”



Will the needed adaptations have an impact on college admissions?

- My Texas Future website
- College chapter in the Texas Transition and Employment Guide



Postsecondary Programs and Services for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

The following list contains institutions of higher education that have indicated that they provide programs and/or services for students with IDD. If an institution is not on the list, they have either indicated that they do not have programs or services for students with IDD, or they did not respond to the survey. Please contact each program directly to discuss eligibility and application requirements.

Filter listing by City:

ALL

[REDISPLAY Listing](#)

Institution	Address	Postsecondary Programs Available	Services Available	Details
Alamo Community College - Palo Alto College	1400 West Villaret Boulevard, San Antonio, TX 78224	Yes	Yes	View Details
Alvin Community College	3110 Mustang Road, Alvin, TX 77511	Yes	Yes	View Details
Austin Community College	5930 Middle Fiskville Road, Austin, TX 78752	Yes	Yes	View Details
Central Texas College	6200 West Central Texas Expwy, Killeen, TX 76549	Yes	Yes	View Details
College of the Mainland Community College District	1200 Amburn Road, Texas City, TX 77591	Yes	Yes	View Details
Collin County Community College District	3452 Spur 399, McKinney, TX 75069	Yes	Yes	View Details
Dallas College	1601 South Lamar St., Dallas, TX 75215-1816	Yes	Yes	View Details
Dallas College El Centro Campus	801 Main Street, Dallas, TX 75202	Yes	No	View Details
Dallas College Richland Campus	12800 Abrams Road, Dallas, TX 75243-2199	Yes	No	View Details
East Texas A&M University	1700 Hwy 24, Commerce, TX 75429	Yes	Yes	View Details
El Paso Community College District	P.O. Box 20500, El Paso, TX 79998	Yes	Yes	View Details
Houston City College	3100 Main Street, Houston, TX 77002	Yes	Yes	View Details
Lamar State College-Port Arthur	1500 Procter Street, Port Arthur, TX 77641-0310	Yes	No	View Details
Lee College	200 Lea Drive, Baytown, TX 77520-4703	Yes	Yes	View Details

Next Steps and Resources

Families can encourage their child to:

- Talk with their school counselor about their plans for high school and beyond.
- Use their personal graduation plan to discuss classes they want to take and the timeline for earning their diploma.
- Use the Texas Transition and Employment Guide to make a list of questions to ask their ARD committee and others.

- [Texas Transition and Employment Guide](#)
- [TEA Graduation Toolkit](#)
- [My Texas Future](#)
- [Postsecondary Programs and Services for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities \(THECB\)](#)
- [Texas First Program](#)



Thank you!