

House Bill 500: Relating to end-of-course assessment instruments administered to public high school students.

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House Bill 500 (HB 500) proposes to make changes to the use of end-of-course exams and graduation requirements, saving the state money on unnecessary retesting costs, provides a more inclusive transition for students and districts from our current TAKS system to the new STAAR system, and returns the authority for

Currently, in code, those students entering high school during the 2011-12, academic year (or current 8th graders) will be required to meet the following three standards, which will ultimately define the type of high school diploma that they will attain:

- (1) the minimum passing score for each of the 12 EOC exams that makes them eligible and contributes to a student's overall cumulative score;
- (2) the minimum cumulative score, or the average of all EOC exams divided by the total number of exams, that a student must reach to receive a high school diploma;
- (3) the minimum passing score for the Algebra II and English III exams, which determines college readiness, eligibility to receive a Recommended or Distinguished high school diploma, and subsequently student's eligibility to receive forms of state financial aid.

HB 500, would permanently change the graduation requirements for those students beginning in the 2011-12 academic year, and provide them with the following two options for meeting exit-level graduation requirements for the recommended high school plan:

- (1) meet the cumulative score to be set by the Commissioner;
- (2) meet the minimum passing score on English III, Algebra II, one science (i.e., biology, chemistry, or physics), and one social studies (i.e., world geography, world history, or US history) end-of-course exam.

In the case of students graduating under the minimum diploma, students would be required to meet the minimum score on Algebra I, rather than Algebra II, as well as English III, one science (i.e., biology, chemistry, or physics), and one social studies (i.e., world geography, world history, or U.S. history).

During the transition phase from TAKS to the STAAR system, HB 500 would also provide current ninth grade students (AY 2010-11), and those entering the ninth grade in the 2011-

12 academic years, with the following two options for meeting exit-level graduation requirements for the recommended high school plan:

- (1) *graduate under the new STAAR requirements*: meet the cumulative score to be set by the Commissioner OR meet the minimum passing score on English III, Algebra II, one science (i.e., biology, chemistry, or physics), and one social studies (i.e., world geography, world history, or US history) end-of-course exam;
- (2) *graduate under the current TAKS requirements*: meet the current minimum score on each of the math, English language arts, science, and social studies exit-level TAKS exams.

With regards to re-testing for those students that do not meet the minimum passing score to graduate, HB 500 replaces the word “shall” with “may,” removing the district’s requirement to provide a student with additional opportunities to meet the exit-level graduation requirements. Rather than mandating re-testing requirements, HB 500 states that, “[i]f a school district determines that a student, on completion of grade 11, is unlikely to achieve the cumulative score requirements for one or more subjects” as required to receive a high school diploma, “the district shall require the student to enroll in an appropriate content-area college preparatory course for which an end-of-course assessment instrument has been adopted, if available” (Sec. 39.025 [b-2]).

HB 500 also removes the mandate that would require end-of-course exams to account for 15% of a student’s final course grade. Rather, districts will be given the authority to develop a policy to determine whether a student’s performance on an end-of-course exam will be used in determining their final course grade. If a district chooses to use an end-of-course assessment to determine a student’s final course grade, they must report the manner in which the policy would be carried out.

Source: <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/82R/billtext/html/HB00500I.htm>