

MEMORANDUM

August 11, 2016

TO: Beatrice Marquez
Director, Drop-Out Prevention

FROM: Carla Stevens
Assistant Superintendent, Research and Accountability

SUBJECT: **Graduation Plan Report, 2014–2015**

The 2014–2015 school year was the first year in which high school students could graduate on the Foundation High School Program, created by the Texas Legislature House Bill 5 in 2013. In 2015, students were able to graduate on any of the three existing graduation plans—Minimum High School Program (MHSP), Recommended High School Program (RHSP), or Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP)—the new Foundation High School Program (FHSP), or an individual education plan (IEP, for students in special education).

This report outlines the requirements of the Foundation High School Program and how it compares to the other graduation plans. It also illustrates the number of students graduating on each of the five plan options at the levels of the whole district, campus, ethnicity, and economic disadvantage.

Key findings include:

- A total of 9,740 HISD students graduated from 51 high schools in 2015.
- The majority of students (74%) graduated on the RHSP, followed by the MHSP (13%), DAP (6%), IEP (4%), and FHSP (2%).
- Asian and Pacific Islander students were four times more likely than the overall population of graduates to complete the DAP plan. African American students were only half as likely.
- Graduates who were not economically disadvantaged were 66 percent more likely than expected to be on the DAP plan, while those who were economically disadvantaged were 28 percent less likely.

Further distribution of this report is at your discretion. Should you have any further questions, please contact me at 713-556-6700.

 CJS

Attachment

cc: Andrew Houlihan
Mark Smith
Chief School Officers



RESEARCH

Educational Program Report

GRADUATION PLAN REPORT

2014-2015



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Graduation Plan Report, 2014–2015

Introduction

In 2013, the Texas Legislature passed House Bill 5, establishing the Foundation High School Program (FHSP) as the default graduation plan for students entering high school in the 2014–2015 school year. This program replaced the three existing graduation plans: Minimum High School Program (MHSP), Recommended High School Program (RHSP), and Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP). For the 2014–2015 school year, students who were already enrolled in high school were allowed to continue with their existing graduation plans or switch to the requirements of the FHSP. The differences among the requirements of the four programs are outlined in **Table 1** (p. 6).

Endorsements and Enhancements

The minimum requirements for the Foundation High School Program are roughly comparable to the Minimum High School Program, with 22 total credits required for graduation. However the FHSP allows for students to earn endorsements and enhancements by adding a minimum of four credits, for a total of 26 credits, the same number required for the RHSP and DAP.

Endorsements consist of a series of courses within one of five areas of interest or skill sets:

- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) – Including Career and Technical Education and Computer Science
- Business and Industry – Including Agriculture, Architecture and Construction, Finance, and Technology, among others
- Public Services – Including Health Science, Education, Law, Public Safety, and Government
- Arts and Humanities – Including Languages Other Than English, Fine Arts, Social Studies, and American Sign Language
- Multi-Disciplinary Studies

To earn an endorsement, a student must complete the required curriculum for his or her chosen endorsement, a total of four credits in mathematics, a total of four credits in science, and two additional elective credits. A student may graduate without earning an endorsement only with parent or guardian permission after the sophomore year.

Enhancements refer to the Distinguished Level of Achievement and Performance Acknowledgements a student can earn in addition to Foundation and endorsement requirements. To earn the Distinguished Level of Achievement, a student must complete the FHSP requirements as well as four credits in mathematics (including Algebra II) and science, and complete at least one endorsement. Performance acknowledgements are earned for outstanding performance in dual credit courses; for bilingualism and biliteracy; on an AP or IB exam; on the PSAT, ACT-Plan, SAT, or ACT; or for earning a nationally or internationally recognized business or industry certification or license.

For more information on the Foundation High School Program, please consult the Texas Education Agency overview of House Bill 5 and High School Graduation Requirements (February 2014).

Method

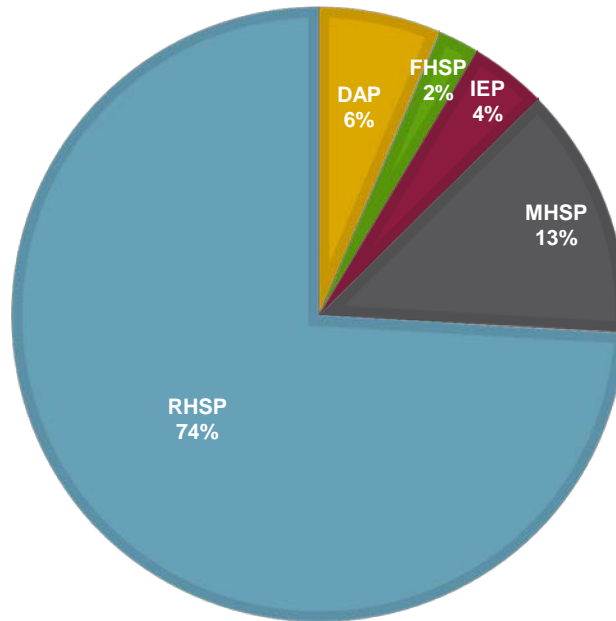
Data on HISD students who graduated in 2015 were pulled from the Houston ISD Graduates Access database for 2015 and included the following fields: Graduation Type Code, Graduate Type Description, Aggregated Ethnicity, Economic Disadvantage Code, and School ID. To simplify comparisons, multiple graduation type codes were grouped together by broad graduation plan. Codes 04, 05, 06, and 07 were combined as IEP; codes 18, 24, 27, and 30 were combined as MHSP; codes 19, 25, 28, and 31 were combined as RHSP; code 29 was used for DAP; and code 34 was used for FHSP. Aggregated Ethnicity codes A (Asian) and P (Pacific Islander) were combined into one ethnicity category: Asian/Pacific Islander, in keeping with common HISD reporting practices. Economic disadvantage codes 01, 02, and 99 were combined to form the “Disadvantaged” category, while code 00 comprised the “not disadvantaged” category.

School latitude and longitude information was pulled from the Cognos Chancery Ad Hoc database on June 8, 2016.

Calculations on the expected likelihood of ethnic groups and economic disadvantage groups compared the proportion of students within those groups who graduated on each graduation plan to the overall population distribution of the various graduation plans (i.e., all things being equal, we should expect the percentage of African American students who graduated on the RHSP to be roughly equal to the percentage of all HISD graduates on the RHSP). Likelihood was calculated as a ratio of the actual number of graduates to the expected number.

Results

- In total, 9,740 HISD students graduated from 51 high schools in the spring of 2015. The campus with the largest graduating class was Lamar High School, with 816 graduates, followed by Bellaire High School (726 graduates), and Chavez High School (671 graduates). The smallest graduating class was from E-STEM Central High School, where six students graduated. A detailed breakdown of graduates by campus and graduation plan is shown in **Table 2** (pp. 7–8).
- The distribution of graduates by plan is illustrated in **Figure 1** (p. 3) Of all the graduating students, the majority graduated on the RHSP plan (7,217 graduates, or 74%). The next most common plan was the MHSP (1,294 graduates, or 13%), followed by DAP (624 graduates, or 6%), Individual Education Plans (for special education students, 393 graduates, or 4%), and the fewest graduated on the new FHSP plan (212 graduates, or 2%). The proportion of graduates at each school who graduated on each plan, plotted on a map of the City of Houston, is shown in **Figure 2** (p. 5) an interactive map is available at <http://www.houstonisd.org/Page/151296>.

Figure 1. Percentage of HISD Graduates by Graduation Plan, 2014–2015

Source: Houston ISD Graduates Data File 2014–2015

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

- Four schools had more than 50 percent of their graduates on the MHSP: Advanced Virtual Academy (79%), Middle College High School – Gulfton (69%), Middle College High School – Fraga (62%), and Reach High School (53%). Fourteen (14) schools had zero graduates on the MHSP plan.
- Four schools had more than 50 percent of their graduates on the DAP: Challenge Early College High School (73%), Carnegie Vanguard High School (72%), Houston Academy for International Studies (65%), and South Early College High School (53%). Twenty-six (26) schools had zero graduates on the DAP plan.
- One school, Leland College Preparatory Academy for Young Men, had 100 percent of their graduates on the FHSP plan. No other campus had more than 50 percent of their graduates on the FHSP plan, but Jones High School had 48 percent. Thirty-two (32) schools had zero graduates on the FHSP plan. This plan is voluntary for all graduates prior to 2018.
- An examination of graduation plan choice by student ethnicity found a relationship between ethnicity and graduation plan, particularly the DAP plan (See **Table 3**, p. 8). Asian and Pacific Islander students were four times more likely than the general population of graduates to graduate on the DAP plan, White students were twice as likely, and students of two or more races were three times as likely, while African American students were only half as likely.
- An examination of graduation plan choice by economic disadvantage (See **Table 4**, p. 8) found that economically disadvantaged students were less likely to be on the DAP plan. Students who were not economically disadvantaged were 66 percent more likely than expected to graduate on the DAP plan, while disadvantaged students were 28 percent less likely to be on the DAP plan.

- A total of 28 graduates completed an endorsement on the FHSP program, only 13 percent of all the FHSP graduates. The 18 graduates at Leland College Preparatory Academy for Young Men completed STEM endorsements. One graduate at Eastwood Academy completed the business and industry endorsement. Three graduates at Sterling High School, three at Chavez High School, two at Eastwood Academy, and one at Westside High School completed the multi-disciplinary studies endorsement.

Discussion

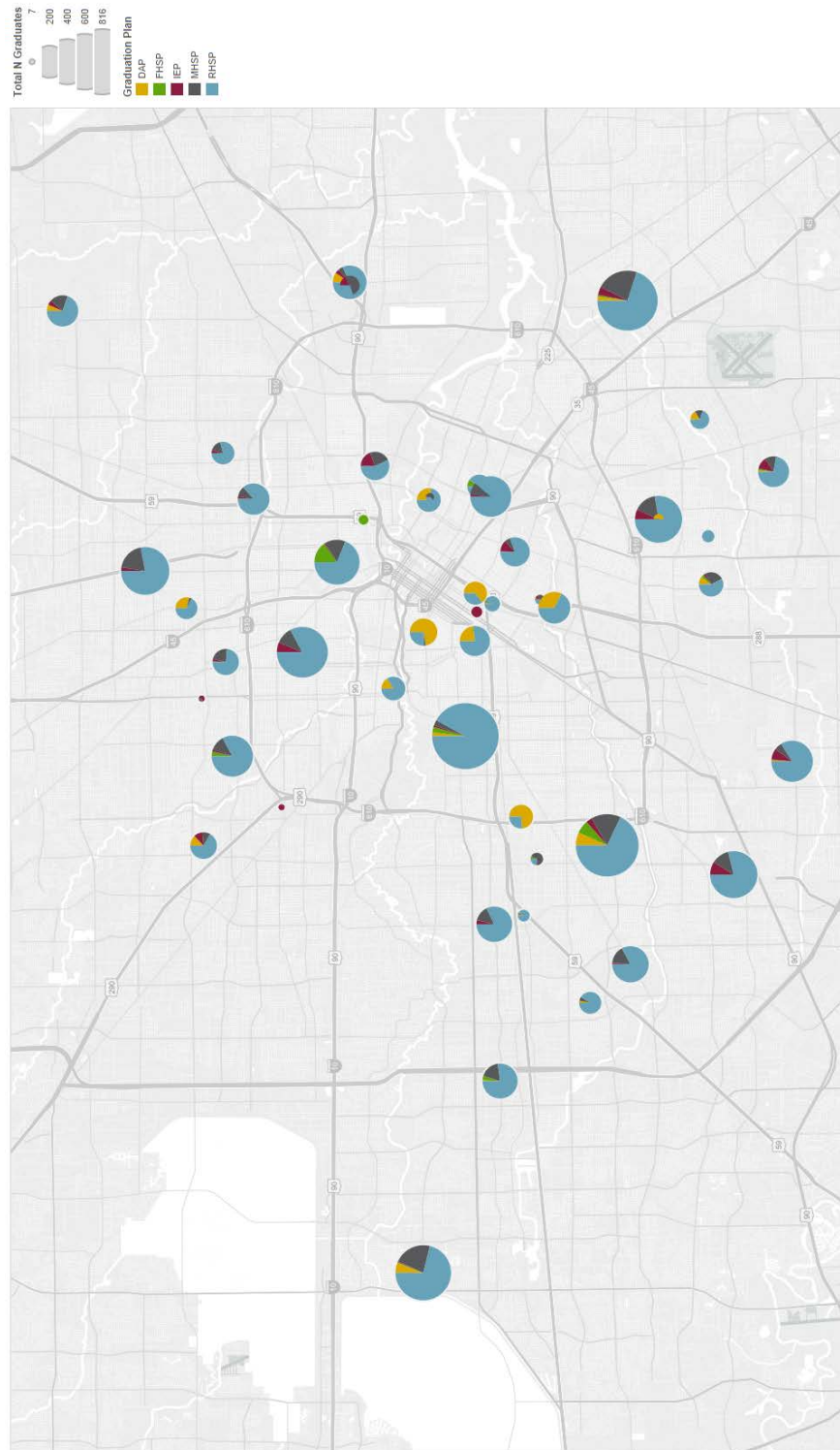
The 2014–2015 school year was the first year that the Foundation High School Program was available for students as a graduation plan. It is not surprising that only two percent of graduates fulfilled this new plan, as the majority of graduating students spent their high school careers working toward the requirements of the existing plans, and there is little incentive to switch plans. Additionally, in this first year of implementation, very few schools were prepared to offer the complete requirements for students to earn endorsements. This year's graduates can serve as a baseline measure, however, as the district moves toward all students graduating on the FHSP plan and completing endorsements by the time those students who entered high school in 2014–2015 ultimately graduate. We would expect to see significant increases in the numbers of graduates completing the FHSP over the next three years.

In the meantime, the variety of existing graduation plans provide a proxy for the goals we expect our students to meet during their high school careers. Do we expect them to do the bare minimum required to graduate, or do we expect distinguished achievement? It also serves as a proxy for the opportunities our schools provide for students. Do our facilities, faculty, and materials allow our schools to offer the advanced courses required of the more rigorous graduation plans? The key point to take away from these data are to look at those schools and communities that have high expectations for their students, and ask what they are doing to ensure that those students meet those expectations. Certainly magnet schools with high achieving students will have many students completing the DAP plan, but there should be lessons we can learn so that half of HISD high schools no longer have zero students working toward distinguished achievement. Raising the expectations and support for student success will help promote students reaching the HISD goal of global graduates who are prepared for life after high school.

References

- Texas Education Agency. (February 2014). *House Bill 5 and High School Graduation Requirements*. Retrieved May 9, 2016 from <http://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=25769809336&libID=25769809338>
- Texas Education Agency. (March 2014). *Side-by-Side comparison: Graduation program options to be implemented beginning in 2014–2015*. Retrieved May 9, 2016 from <http://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=25769809836&libID=25769809849>

Figure 2. HISD Graduates by Graduation Plan and Campus, 2014–2015



Source: Houston ISD Graduates Data File 2014–2015

Notes: Size of pie chart relative to total number of graduates at the campus. Overlapping pie charts indicate school-within-a-school or two schools very close geographically. For an interactive map, visit: <http://www.houstonisd.org/Page/151296>.

Table 1. Graduation Program Requirements				
Discipline	FHSP	MHSP	RHSP	DAP
English Language Arts	4 Credits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> English I–III Advanced English Course 	4 Credits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> English I–III English IV or other approved course 	4 Credits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> English I–IV 	4 Credits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> English I–IV
Mathematics	3 Credits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Algebra I Geometry Advanced Math Course 	3 Credits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Algebra I Geometry Approved Math Course 	4 Credits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Algebra I & II Geometry Additional Math Credit 	4 Credits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Algebra I & II Geometry Additional Math Credit
Science	3 Credits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biology 2 Advanced Science Courses, one of which can be IPC 	2 Credits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biology IPC or Chemistry and Physics (1 of the 2 counts as an elective) 	4 Credits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biology Chemistry Physics Additional Science Credit 	4 Credits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biology Chemistry Physics Additional Science Credit
Social Studies	3 Credits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> US History US Government & Economics World History or World Geography 	3 Credits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> US History US Government & Economics World History or World Geography 	4 Credits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> US History US Government & Economics World History World Geography 	4 Credits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> US History US Government & Economics World History World Geography
Physical Education	1 Credit	1 Credit	1 Credit	1 Credit
Languages Other Than English	2 Credits in same language or 2 Credits in Computer Science	None	2 Credits in same language	3 Credits in same language
Fine Arts	1 Credit	1 Credit	1 Credit	1 Credit
Speech	Demonstrated proficiency in speech skills	0.5 Credit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication Applications or Professional Communications 	0.5 Credit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication Applications or Professional Communications 	0.5 Credit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication Applications or Professional Communications
Electives	5 Credits	7.5 Credits	5.5 Credits	4.5 Credits
Total Credits	22	22	26	26
	*26 Total Credits With an Endorsement			

Source: TEA “Side-by-Side Comparison: Graduation Program Options to be Implemented Beginning in 2014-2015,” March 1, 2014.

Table 2. HISD Graduates by Campus and Graduation Plan, 2015						
Campus	Graduates N	MHSP %	RHSP %	DAP %	FHSP %	IEP %
Austin HS	309	9.4	88.7	---	---	1.9
AVA	87	79.3	17.2	---	---	3.4
Bellaire HS	726	15.3	68.0	6.7	6.7	3.2
Carnegie HS	139	2.2	25.2	71.9	0.7	---
Challenge EC HS	105	---	26.7	73.3	---	---
Chavez HS	671	22.4	70.0	2.2	0.9	4.5
Davis HS	376	14.9	68.9	---	15.4	0.8
DeBakey HS	188	---	67.6	32.4	---	---
East EC HS	106	---	71.7	28.3	---	---
Eastwood Acad HS	108	---	90.7	---	9.3	---
E-STEM Central HS	6	---	100.0	---	---	---
E-STEM West HS	22	---	100.0	---	---	---
Furr HS	211	4.7	82.0	9.5	---	3.8
HAIS HS	100	---	35.0	65.0	---	---
Harper Alt.	7	28.6	---	---	---	71.4
HCC Lifeskills	22	---	---	---	---	100.0
Hope Acad HS	18	44.4	38.9	---	5.6	11.1
Houston MSTC HS	427	19.7	78.0	---	---	2.3
HSPVA	169	---	76.3	22.5	1.2	---
Jones HS	21	---	38.1	---	47.6	14.3
Jordan HS	185	10.8	86.5	---	0.5	2.2
Kashmere HS	96	16.7	79.2	---	---	4.2
Lamar HS	816	2.6	92.0	1.8	2.7	0.9
LECJ HS	105	---	83.8	16.2	---	---
Lee HS	235	14.0	82.1	---	---	3.8
Leland YMCPA	18	---	---	---	100.0	---
Liberty HS	26	3.8	92.3	3.8	---	---
Madison HS	317	6.0	83.9	1.3	---	8.8
Middle College HS - Fraga	13	61.5	38.5	---	---	---
Middle College HS - Gulfton	29	69.0	24.1	---	6.9	---
Milby HS	410	15.6	77.6	---	---	6.8
Mount Carmel Acad HS	66	13.6	69.7	16.7	---	---
North Forest HS	182	18.7	69.8	6.6	---	4.9
North Houston EC HS	89	3.4	67.4	29.2	---	---
Reach HS	70	52.9	30.0	---	---	17.1
Reagan HS	479	10.9	82.9	---	---	6.3
Scarborough HS	132	9.8	66.7	12.9	---	10.6
Sharpstown HS	245	15.9	82.9	---	---	1.2
Sharpstown Intl	90	5.6	91.1	3.3	---	---

Table 2 (continued). HISD Graduates by Campus and Graduation Plan, 2015						
Campus	Graduates N	MHSP %	RHSP %	DAP %	FHSP %	IEP %
SOAR Center	7	---	---	---	---	100.0
South EC HS	19	---	47.4	52.6	---	---
Sterling HS	177	11.9	72.3	1.7	1.7	12.4
TCAH	228	18.0	77.2	0.9	3.9	---
Waltrip HS	314	11.8	82.8	---	3.8	1.6
Washington HS	128	22.7	73.4	0.8	---	3.1
Westbury HS	412	12.1	78.9	---	---	9.0
Westside HS	568	22.0	71.1	6.0	0.4	0.5
Wheatley HS	151	23.8	57.0	---	---	19.2
Worthing HS	111	25.2	57.7	10.8	3.6	2.7
Yates HS	160	6.3	80.6	---	0.6	12.5
YWCPA	44	2.3	93.2	2.3	2.3	---
Total	9,740	13.3	74.1	6.4	2.2	4.0

Source: HISD Graduates Data File 2014–2015

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Table 3. HISD Graduates by Ethnicity and Graduation Plan, 2015						
Ethnicity	Graduates N	MHSP %	RHSP %	DAP %	FHSP %	IEP %
African American	2,540	15.4	71.8	3.3	2.2	7.3
American Indian	21	14.3	76.2	---	4.8	4.8
Asian/Pacific Islander	466	3.4	68.2	25.8	1.5	1.1
Hispanic	5,664	13.9	76.0	4.7	2.3	3.1
White	970	9.1	72.5	14.0	1.9	2.6
Two or More Races	78	12.8	62.8	20.5	1.3	2.6
Total	9,739	13.3	74.1	6.4	2.2	4.0

Source: HISD Graduates Data File 2014–2015

Notes: One student without identified ethnicity was excluded from the data.

Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Table 4. HISD Graduates by Economic Disadvantage and Graduation Plan, 2015						
Economic Disadvantage	Graduates N	MHSP %	RHSP %	DAP %	FHSP %	IEP %
Disadvantaged	6,798	13.7	75.1	4.6	2.2	4.4
Not Disadvantaged	2,942	12.2	71.8	10.6	2.2	3.2
Total	9,740	13.3	74.1	6.4	2.2	4.0

Source: HISD Graduates Data File 2014–2015

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.