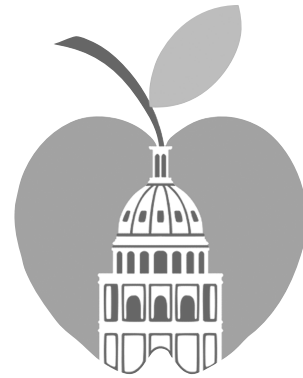


SECTION I:

General Information for Secondary School Students and Parents



AISD

AISD Disclaimer:

The contents of the Secondary School Information Guide are relevant to AISD Policy (Legal and Local), Regulation and Practice as of December 2006. For current information regarding district policy please refer to the Austin Independent School District website at www.austinisd.org or visit with your school counselor.

Specific school-related questions should be directed to campus staff. When a parent or guardian has a question or concern, he or she should contact the person who made the initial decision. After discussing the matter, if the concern continues, the principal should be contacted.

General Information for Secondary School Students and Parents

Success in Secondary School

Success in middle and high school requires planning and lots of hard work. This section of the Secondary School Information Guide is intended to answer many of the questions students and their parents have about planning for graduation and the rules and procedures schools in AISD follow.

Use this guide to help select middle and high school courses. Many courses are required and there are also many enjoyable and enriching electives. Choose your courses carefully, plan to work hard, and get involved in extracurricular activities.

Academic and Career Planning in AISD

Academic and career planning is an ongoing process for students in AISD. Counselors present guidance and career-planning activities to students in grades 5-11. Each student develops an Individual Academic and Career Plan (IACP) annually.

The IACP is a planning process created by the student, in conjunction with the counselor and parent(s) to note current career interests, postsecondary goals, and courses they plan to take to meet graduation requirements.

In 5th grade students utilize the Movin' on to Your Future IACP booklet and the Career Walk Game to make the connection with personal interests and careers.

In 6th grade students will use, Connecting to Your Future, to make the link between career interests, courses taken in Middle School for High School credit and post-secondary plans.

In 7th grade students will use Designing Your Future to make the Transition to 8th grade and HS in looking at courses.

In 8th grade students utilize a web-based career interest program called COIN in which students complete career Interest inventories, learn about careers, post-secondary education, and begin to plan their high school courses.

In grades 9-12 students at all high school campuses utilize the web-based program, COIN.

- 9th Grade students will complete an interest inventory which will plot their interests on the COIN World of Work Map.
- 10th Grade students will research careers based on the results of their interest inventory.

- 11th Grade students will research colleges and universities based on their interest inventory results, and career search results.
- 12th Grade students will research majors of study at their favorite colleges, which is based on their work from the preceding grades. Students in 12th grade will also complete a resume for use either in the workplace or for application to a place of higher education.
- 9th-11th Grade students will also complete and update their four-year academic plan in COIN.

Parents Can Help

Parents play an influential role in helping their son or daughter plan, prepare and develop an IACP. Parents should:

- Review this guide and materials they receive at school and discuss them with their student.
- Learn graduation plan requirements and be sure that the student meets them.
- Encourage students to take foreign language courses and other courses needed for the Texas Education Agency Recommended or Distinguished Achievement Graduation Programs as soon as possible.
- Make sure students select courses that help them meet their educational and career goals.
- Encourage students to take Advanced Placement courses and dual credit courses to earn college credit while still in high school.
- Help students to learn about colleges and careers that interest them.
- Review the results of your students work on COIN, <http://community.coin3.com> using the parent option. Contact your student's counselor for more information on this program.

Students who are involved in after school (extracurricular) activities are often more successful in school. AISD offers clubs, teams and other opportunities for learning academic and social skills, making friends and developing leadership skills. Encourage your student to be involved in at least one extracurricular activity.

High School Transcripts

A transcript, otherwise referred to as an Academic Achievement Record (AAR), is an official and permanent record of a student's academic performance during high school and, in some cases, of high school courses completed in middle school or junior high school (TEC §28.025(e)). Entries on this state document reflect actual courses taken, grades earned, credit awarded, and codes denoting special explanations must be consistent with teachers' records and the student's individual education plan (IEP), when applicable. For detailed regulations related to entries on the AAR please refer to the Texas Education Agency's website: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/taa/stanalign092904a7.doc>

Current and former students may request a copy of their high school transcript by submitting a request to the registrar's office at their current high school or their last school of attendance. Requests must be submitted in writing.

Cost per transcript is \$2.00.

Extracurricular Activities and University Interscholastic League (UIL)

Activities that support course work include language clubs, journalism, debate, theatre arts, band, orchestra, choir, and career clubs. Student athletes can further their development by participating in University Interscholastic League (UIL) sports. For high school: football, volleyball, cross-country, golf, tennis, swimming, basketball, baseball, softball, wrestling and track and field. For middle school: football, volleyball, basketball, track and field, soccer, and tennis. Sixth grade students cannot participate in UIL activities.

High school athletes need to be aware of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) academic guidelines and requirements throughout their high school career (9-12) if they plan to participate in college sports. Beginning in the junior year, important information needs to be submitted to the NCAA Clearinghouse. For more information visit the NCAA website at www.ncaa.org (Click on Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse). Or contact your coach, counselor or registrar for specific information.

Suspension of Eligibility for Extracurricular Activities

A student shall be suspended from participation in any extracurricular activity sponsored or sanctioned by the District or the UIL after a grade evaluation period in which the student received a grade lower than the equivalent of 70 on a scale of 100 in any academic class other than an identified weighted class.

The campus principal shall remove suspension of eligibility:

- *If the student's grade in the course is not below 60, and*
- *If the class failed is identified as an approved advanced level (weighted) course [see EHDC(LOCAL)], or*
- *If the class failed is identified by the State Board of Education as an advanced course [see FM(LEGAL)].*

Refer to AISD policy FM (local) on the AISD website at www.austinisd.org.

Taking Responsibility

Personal Conduct

AISD expects students to exhibit a high degree of self-discipline and contribute to an educational climate that allows each student to enjoy a healthy, safe, and positive learning experience. When necessary, discipline is used to maintain order and promote appropriate behavior. A copy of the AISD Student Code of Conduct is provided to each student, and it is available on the AISD website at www.austinisd.org. Each campus may establish additional rules and regulations under AISD guidelines. Students and parents/guardians will receive these rules.

Closed Campus

All secondary schools operate as "closed-campus." After arriving at school, students may not leave campus until completing their last class of the day. Seniors are permitted to leave campus for lunch only. Any student may leave campus for doctor's appointments or other family obligations. Students must have written permission from a parent/guardian and give the written permission to the appropriate school administrator.

Care of Building, Furniture and Equipment

Students are expected to care for equipment and facilities. If a student causes any damage to school property, willfully or through negligence, the student is responsible for making full payment for replacement or repair.

Care of Textbooks

Textbooks are issued to students for use while they are enrolled in classes. State law requires that books be covered at all times. If a textbook is lost or damaged, the student must pay for the book before another book can be issued.

Personal Possessions at School

Theft and other problems that interfere with an orderly school climate arise when students bring items to school. Each campus has a specific list of articles to avoid bringing to school. If students bring these items to school, the items may be confiscated temporarily by school staff and returned to parents/guardians on request.

Smoking and Other Illegal Drugs

State law and AISD Board policy prohibit the possession or use of tobacco products and narcotic drugs on school property. This includes cigarettes, chewing tobacco, snuff, alcohol and any narcotic or illegal drug.

School Bus Behavior

AISD provides transportation to students who need and qualify for that service. Students and parents/guardians should become familiar with the "Rider's Rules and Regulations." The bus driver has the authority and responsibility to notify school officials of any misconduct occurring on the bus or at the bus stop. Disorderly conduct or persistent refusal to obey the driver may result in disciplinary action and denial of transportation privileges.

Compulsory Attendance Law

Daily attendance is necessary for success in school. To receive credit for a course, a student must be present for a minimum of 90 percent of the days a class is offered. Failure to comply with compulsory attendance law is a class C misdemeanor and punishable by fine. Parents or students who have concerns about attendance should contact their individual campus. The complete text of the official attendance policy is available at each campus and on the District's website. Highlights of the attendance policy are summarized below:

- Reporting: If a student must be absent for any reason, the parent/guardian is responsible for communicating the reason in writing. The note must be delivered to the school office within two days following the absence.
- Tardy: Schools will record a tardy and may have a campus policy that defines a tardy and how the school will address a tardy.
- Make-up work: Students or their parent/guardian are responsible for requesting the opportunity to make up work missed.
- Appeals procedure: A student in grades 6-11 who has not met the 90 percent attendance requirement due to extenuating circumstances, but who has successfully earned a passing grade may appeal for credit no earlier than the last six weeks of each semester. An exception is that the principal may grant an earlier appeal to any student due to special circumstances. Seniors may appeal for credit in a course at any time during a grading period. An Attendance Appeal form can be obtained from the school office. The local campus Attendance Committee will review the appeal request and determine whether the student should be required to make up the class time and work missed. The local campus Attendance Committee and or administrator must give the final authorization for course credit.
- Attendance Expectations: Attendance in all classes is essential for maximum educational opportunities. The presentation of information and activities occur well beyond textbook assignments. If a student is late to a class more than 50% of the class period, the student will be counted absent for that class period.

Warning Notices/Parent Notification Regarding Unexcused Absences

Texas Education Code 25.095 requires school districts to notify a student's parent or legal guardian in writing at the beginning of the school year regarding unexcused absences. In accordance with this requirement this officially notifies the parent or the legal guardian that:

1. Student's parent is subject to prosecution under Section 25.093; and
2. Student is subject to prosecution under Section 25.094 or referral to a Juvenile Court.

If your student is absent from school three days or parts of days in a four week period without parental consent or is absent without an excuse for 10 or more days or parts of days in a six month period the District will send a notice home to inform the parent that:

1. It is the parent's duty to monitor the student's school attendance and require the student to attend school; and
2. The parent is subject to prosecution under Section 25.093 for failure to require the child to attend school as required by law; and
3. The parent should request a conference with the school officials to discuss the absences.

Information Regarding Notices to Parents Due to Excessive Absences

Campus staff will make a reasonable effort to contact a parent about student absences. Report cards will list the number of absences per course. A warning letter to parents regarding student attendance will state The Texas Compulsory School attendance requirement and emphasize the need for improved attendance prior to legal recourse for poor attendance. Warning letters are mailed from the District, not the school campus.

Denied Credit Due to Excessive Absences: Secondary Students

Loss of credit is tabulated on an individual course basis. A student may not receive credit for a course unless he/she has been in attendance for at least 90% of the days the course is offered during the semester or is successful in appealing the loss of credit as provided in District policy.

Restoring Denied Credit Due to Excessive Absences: Secondary Students

Students may make up missed work to restore credit through options provided by District policy and assigned by the campus administrator and/or attendance committee.

Attendance Requirement/Drivers License

The Texas Transportation Code (TRC) requires students who have not obtained a high school diploma or its equivalent to be enrolled in a public school, home school, or private school, or GED program and meet specific enrollment conditions to obtain or renew a license. This requirement applies to persons under 18 years of age. Texas Education Code 25.092 (excerpted). Minimum Attendance for Class Credit, states that a student may not be given credit for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90% of the days the class is offered. The 90% attendance rule applies when determining Verification of Enrollment (VOC) eligibility.

Absences for Extracurricular Activities

Absences for extracurricular activities for secondary school students shall be limited to ten in a school year.

Achieving Success

Student grades will be based on a numerical scale of 0-100. A grade of 70 or above is considered passing.

Grading System

Grading and reporting student progress is intended to help increase student achievement. An effective grading system allows educators to clearly communicate student progress toward pre-defined curriculum standards in a way that is fair, accurate, and useful to parents, teachers, and students. The full text of the AISD grading policy is available on each campus and on the District's website. Policy and District expectations are summarized below.

- The principal is responsible for ensuring that appropriate grading practices are used in each school. Teachers are expected to develop clear grading guidelines that are consistent with District policy. Teachers will communicate the grading guidelines to students and parents each school year.
- Grading procedures must allow for late work and make-up work. Teachers will accept and award partial credit for late work turned in within three consecutive school days of the due date.
- Teachers will use professional discretion in awarding credit for assignments missed due to extended absences and/or extenuating circumstances. Teachers may provide reassessment options.
- The parents and the school share responsibility for helping students succeed. Each school will provide alternative programs for students having difficulties, including individualized instruction, tutorial support, and mentoring. If the student is falling behind in coursework, parents should visit with teachers and school counselors to explore options.

Note: The contents of the Secondary School Information Guide are relevant to AISD Policy (Legal and Local), Regulation and Practice as of November 2006. For current information regarding district policy please refer to the Austin Independent School District website at www.austinisd.org or visit with your school counselor.

Report Cards and Progress Reports

The District will mail all secondary report cards and progress reports to parents. Report cards are sent every six weeks. Progress reports are provided for students and parents at the mid-point of the grading period when a student's grade average is failing (below 70) or borderline (70-73) in any course. Not receiving an unsatisfactory report does not guarantee a passing grade because a teacher cannot always foresee problems that might occur at the end of the reporting period.

Report cards provide clear and concise information about a student's academic performance and promote communication among teachers, students, and parents about the student's personal development, conduct and work habits. The report card also provides information for employers, colleges and other post-secondary institutions.

Numerical scores for each secondary course are based on performance on examinations, essays, papers, presentations, performances, projects, or other measures. Scores may also be given for class work, homework, and class participation. Grades reflect academic achievement only and are not based on discipline, attendance, a tardy, participation in extracurricular activities or other non-academic criteria.

The middle school report card reports a numerical average each six weeks for each course. At the end of the year, the six-weeks' grades are averaged to give the student a course average. The report card also includes the number of absences a student has accumulated.

The high school report card includes the numerical average for the grading period, each six-weeks, plus the number of absences a student has accumulated. The final report card includes a summary of each of the six-week periods and semester grades, as well as, total absences. In a semester course the three six weeks grades and the final examination grade are averaged to give a final numerical average for each semester course. In a yearlong course the two semester grades are averaged to give a final numerical average for each course. The cumulative grade point average is reflective of all completed high school credit courses. Six weeks grades for courses in progress are NOT included in the cumulative grade point average. The high school report card reflects the cumulative grade point average.

AISD Grading Scales

AISD will initiate an Integrated Grading Scale (IGS) for students entering 9th grade in school year 2007-2008. IGS consist of three tiers:

TIER I: Advanced Level courses

TIER II: General Education courses

TIER III: Prescribed courses

See Appendix A for complete details on AISD Grading Scales.

Students who entered 9th grade prior to school year 2007-2008 will remain on the grading scale that was in place prior to the end of school year 2006-2007, which consists of two tiers: Advanced Level courses and Non-Advanced Level courses.

Early Graduates - Grade point averages for a student who completes the high school program requirements in fewer than four years shall be calculated on the scale with the class in which he or she actually graduates.

Out-of-School-Testers will be ranked with the respective graduating class upon completion of all coursework requirements, regardless of when they master all state mandated exit-level tests.

Calculating Grade Point Averages (GPA)

Secondary school students' grades are averaged at the end of each semester. All credit courses assigned a numerical grade (including local credit courses, repeated courses and all courses earned through credit-by-exam, correspondence and Dual Credit) are included in the student's grade-point average (GPA) calculation, excluding credits denied due to excessive absences.

Courses taken on a pass/fail basis are assigned a grade of P or F and are excluded from GPA calculation. The GPA is then used to

determine Honor Roll status each grading period and Rank in Class at the end of each semester. High school courses completed at the middle school level are included in the high school cumulative GPA.

AISD policies are updated regularly. Please check the AISD website for online policy and up-to-date policy information—www.austinisd.org.

Course Credit

Course credit will be awarded for all high school courses when a student earns a numerical grade of 70 or higher. In a yearlong or two-semester course, the two semester grades will be averaged to determine a final yearlong numerical average for the course for the purpose of awarding credit, regardless of when the grade for each part of the course was awarded. This includes grades awarded in current and prior school years (EIA Regulation).

Advanced Academic Weighted Grades

Students are encouraged to take more challenging Advanced Academic courses, such as Pre-AP, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), magnet and college credit courses, which contain “weighted” grade points. For a list of advanced academic weighted courses see Appendix D of this publication.

Weighted courses require additional time, student initiative, and high academic skills. A student who fails one of these courses will be placed on academic probation for the following six weeks. If the student fails again while on academic probation, he or she will be subject to removal from the course. The parent and principal make the final removal decision.

Honor Roll Status

The honor roll system recognizes and rewards notable academic achievement in secondary schools. Honor roll recognition is based on scholarship achievement only. It has no relationship to National Honor Society requirements, which include factors in addition to scholarship. Placement of secondary students on honor rolls will be determined on the basis of their grade point average (GPA) for the respective grading period. To be eligible for honor roll, a secondary student must have received an averageable grade from each of at least three courses. There are three levels of honor roll for middle and high school students.

Middle School GPA:

<i>First Honor Roll</i>	<i>3.875 and above</i>
<i>Second Honor Roll</i>	<i>3.3333 to 3.8749</i>
<i>Third Honor Roll</i>	<i>2.833 to 3.3332</i>

High School GPA:

<i>First Honor Roll</i>	<i>3.5000 and above</i>
<i>Second Honor Roll</i>	<i>2.9000 to 3.4999</i>
<i>Third Honor Roll</i>	<i>2.4000 to 2.8999</i>

If a student makes an F (failure), or I (incomplete), or NG (no grade) during the six-weeks, the student is ineligible for the honor roll that six-weeks.

Pass/Fail Courses

A student may choose to take a course on a pass/fail (P/F) basis, only if the course is beyond state graduation requirements in that subject area for the graduation plan that the student has declared. A student must request P/F status in a course no later than the last instructional day of the sixth week of course instruction. Written approval of the principal or designee, the teacher, and the parent must be acquired prior to placement in a course on a pass/fail basis. [See EHAD] Courses taken on a pass/fail basis are considered as local credit only and are not counted toward state graduation credit. Middle school supplemental intervention courses (beyond middle school requirements) will be identified for pass/fail status. A middle school student participating in these courses will receive a pass/fail grade.

Effective for school year 2005-2006 and thereafter, the only exceptions will be as follows:

(1) off-campus P.E. waiver courses, which shall be taken on a pass/fail basis will receive a grade of “P” or “F” The grade will not be included in the computation of the student’s grade point average (GPA) and will count towards state graduation credit requirements. and;

(2) credits transferred in from another school district that assigned a grade of “P” or “F” The grade will not be included in the computation of the student’s grade point average (GPA) and will count towards state graduation credit requirements, as determined by the sending district.

Standardized Testing

Standardized tests are administered periodically to all students to evaluate knowledge gained over a given period of time and to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum. The Texas Education Agency has established times at which tests are given and AISD provides guidelines for using the results.

In spring of 2008 students will take one or more of the following state-mandated tests:

Grade 6: TAKS: Math and Reading
SDAA II: Math and Reading
TELPAS for LEP students not exited from ESL

Grade 7: TAKS: Math, Reading and Writing
SDAA II: Math, Reading and Writing
TELPAS for LEP students not exited from ESL

Grade 8: TAKS: Math, Reading, Social Studies and Science
SDAA II: Math and Reading; TAKS I Social Studies and Science
TELPAS for LEP students not exited from ESL

Grade 9: TAKS: Math and Reading
SDAA II: Math and Reading
TELPAS for LEP students not exited from ESL

Grade 10: TAKS: English Language Arts, Math, Social Studies and Science
SDAA II: Math, Reading and Writing or ELA;
TAKS I Social Studies and Science
TELPAS for LEP students not exited from ESL

Grade 11: TAKS: English Language Arts, Math, Social Studies and Science
 TAKS I: Math, ELA, Social Studies and Science
 TELPAS for LEP students not exited from ESL
 Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT):
 ACT or SAT: recommended

Grade 12: Exit Level TAKS or TAAS for retested students
 TELPAS for LEP students not exited from ESL
 ACT or SAT: recommended

Graduation Ceremonies

To participate in graduation ceremonies, students are required to complete all graduation requirements and demonstrate proficiency in English/Language Arts, math, science and social studies on the TAKS exit test or other required examinations. Contact your school counselor for specific information.

In 2003, the TAAS test was replaced by the TAKS test that includes testing in English/Language arts, math, science and social studies. Students take the TAKS test for graduation purposes for the first time in the eleventh grade, and they are required to pass all four tests to graduate. The Class of 2005 was the first class required to take TAKS and pass all four tests to meet graduation requirements. [TAKS instructional objectives are shown in Appendix C of this guide.]

Middle School Grade Promotion

To be promoted from one grade to another, a secondary student must:

- Have an overall grade average of 70; and
- Attain an average of 70 or above in three of the following subjects: language arts, mathematics, social studies and science.

High School Grade Level Classification

Promotion, grade-level advancement, and course credit shall be based on mastery of the curriculum. Grade-level advancement for students in grades 9-12 shall be determined by course credits and the number of years completed in high school. Credits are earned by having a passing grade of 70 at the end of each course; credits may be awarded through yearlong averaging as allowed under EIA (Regulation).

Grade Classification

9th grade requires promotion and completion of 8th grade and 0-4.5 credits.

10th grade requires completion of one year of high school and a minimum of 5.0 credits.

11th grade requires completion of two years of high school and a minimum of 10.0 credits.

12th grade requires completion of three years of high school and a minimum of 15.0 credits.

Additionally, the following considerations are adhered to for determination of credit totals for promotion and grade-level placement.

- Denied credit(s) are not included when factoring credit totals;
- Credit totals are based on all awarded credits, including local credits and repeated credits.

Three-Year Graduates

A parent is entitled to request, with the expectation that the request will not be unreasonably denied, that the student be permitted to graduate from high school earlier than the student would normally graduate, if the student completes all courses and exit-level requirements for graduation. Students should see their school counselor regarding their intent to graduate early. Prior to grade level reclassification to grade 12, at the mid-point of the student's anticipated last year in high school the student should:

- Meet the minimum credit requirements for grade level reclassification;
- Show evidence of course completion probability for their intended graduation plan (class schedule, signed and dated by the school counselor);
- Turn in a letter of intent to graduate early signed by the parent or legal guardian verifying approval.

NOTE: Three-year graduates who do not complete graduation requirements for the Recommended high school plan or Distinguished Achievement high school plan will forfeit Early Graduate scholarship money.

Classification of Students Entering from Outside of the District (Grade Level Placement)

Students entering the District from an accredited public, private, or parochial school shall provide evidence of prior schooling outside the District and shall be placed initially at the grade level reached elsewhere. For students in grades 9-12, grade level initial placement will be based upon the number of current credits earned and the number of successful years in high school, pending observation by the classroom teacher, guidance personnel, and the principal. On the basis of these observations and results of tests that may be administered by appropriate District personnel, the principal shall determine the final grade placement. "Accredited" is defined as accreditation by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), an equivalent agency from another state, or an accrediting association recognized by the Commissioner of Education [FD (Local and Regulation)].

A student entering the District from non-accredited public, private, or parochial school, including home schools, shall be placed initially at the discretion of the principal, pending assessment appropriate to the student's grade level, validation of credits, or results of credit-by-examination tests [FD (Local)].

If extenuating circumstances exist and/or the grade placement seems unsuitable, the following steps will be taken as soon as possible to determine proper placement:

- Administering the appropriate placement tests in reading and mathematics;
- Allowing time for teacher observation and documentation;
- Collection of samples of the student's daily work;
- Conducting a conference with teachers and parents.

Transfer of Course Credits and Grades

Courses completed in out-of-district schools, both foreign and domestic, which can be aligned with Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills, shall be considered eligible for transfer of credit. The curriculum of the course, not the grade earned in the course, determines eligibility for transfer of credit. Upon request from the high school registrar or counselor, a course syllabus may be required to establish course transfer eligibility. AISD policies are updated regularly. Please check the AISD website for online policy and up-to-date policy information—www.austinisd.org.

Transfer of Credit from Non-accredited Institutions and Home School Programs

Upon request, the District shall validate high school credit for course transfer for students entering the District from home school programs or non-accredited public, private, or parochial schools by credit by exam for each credit requested, to ensure that the courses meet state board requirements and standards [FD (Local)].

AISD policies are updated regularly. Please check the AISD website for online policy and up-to-date policy information—www.austinisd.org.

Transfer of High School Credit from Newly Accredited Institutions

The process for transferring credits when a non-accredited school is granted accreditation status by TEA, an equivalent agency from another state, or an accrediting association by the Commissioner of Education, is outlined below:

- Secondary students wishing to transfer credits into AISD from out of district schools, whose enrollment date into an AISD school is PRIOR to the school receiving accreditation status, must validate credits as outlined in Policy FD (Local).
- Secondary students whose enrollment date into an AISD school is AFTER the date a school receives accreditation status from an accrediting institution (or within the AISD school year the newly accredited school receives accreditation status), are NOT required to validate credits completed prior to the school receiving accredited status.

AISD policies are updated regularly. Please check the AISD website for online policy and up-to-date policy information—www.austinisd.org.

Letter Grades

When students transfer to AISD from a school that gives letter grades, a uniform grading system for translating letter grades is used in all secondary schools. This system also applies to credits completed through the Early College Start Programs (Dual Credit).

This four-point system is as follows:

A	<i>Excellent</i>	A+	99
		A	96
		A-	92
B	<i>Good</i>	B+	89
		B	86
		B-	82
C	<i>Fair</i>	C+	79
		C	76
		C-	72
D			70
F	<i>Failing</i>	(below 70)	60

Exception: Upon receipt of an alpha-to-numeric conversion scale from the sending district, the sending district's grading scale is used in lieu of AISD's conversion chart.

See Appendix A for AISD grading scales.

Alternative Promotion

A student who has not met the requirements for promotion may be placed in an alternative program at the next grade level if the student is achieving to his or her maximum ability. Prior to placement, the student's needs will be assessed and the appropriate alternative program for the student will be determined. Parents will be notified that the student was not promoted but placed in an alternative program at the next grade level.

Alternative programs may include but are not limited to:

- Tutorial support
- Mentoring
- Extended school day
- Extended school year
- Summer or intercession programs
- Specialized academic interventions

Provisions for students to exit alternative programs are included when appropriate. Except in extreme cases or in compliance with state law, no student shall be retained more than one time in grades five through eight.

Making Changes

Course Change Procedures

From time to time it is necessary for students to change courses during the semester. If a student needs to change a course or transfer from one course to another, the student should discuss the need with the school counselor. The following procedures should be followed:

For a semester or yearlong course, a student may not withdraw after the fourth week of the course. However, to meet individual student needs, the principal may use his or her discretion to approve a course change.

- A student who withdraws from a course before the deadlines stated above will have the grade from the dropped course applied to the grade average for the new course. It is highly recommended that a student transfer from one course to another in the same discipline.
- For UIL eligibility, a student can withdraw with no penalty regardless of the grade in a course at the end of the fourth week of the first six weeks and remain eligible. A student who withdraws with a passing grade at any time and maintains the minimum number of required course enrollments remains eligible.

A student who requests and receives a course change assumes responsibility for the content of the entire course on the final exam. The receiving teacher will outline the knowledge and skills essential for success in the course and suggest ways to learn them.

Course Corrections

In the spring and/or during the summer, students will receive a list of the courses that they requested. Students and parents have the opportunity to request course changes until August 1. After August 1, course corrections will only be made for errors in the student's schedule.

Transfers to Other Schools

AISD expects students, based on their residence address, to attend their assigned schools. However, under certain circumstances, a student may need or wish to transfer to another campus. To obtain a transfer, the parent must secure a transfer form from the student's school office, complete it, and submit it to the Office of Student Services. Once transferred, a student may not return to his or her original school during the school year unless both principals agree. Transfer students and their parents assume responsibility for satisfactory attendance, discipline, achievement, transportation, and cooperation with the school staff while at the transfer school. If these responsibilities are not met, a transfer may be revoked. If a transfer is revoked, the student may not subsequently request a transfer back to the same school.

Advanced Academic Courses and Programs Pre-Advanced Placement Courses (Pre-AP)

Academic courses that lead to Advanced Placement courses are referred to as Pre-Advanced Placement (Pre-AP) courses. Pre-AP courses can be taken in grades 6-11. Emphasis is given to the skills and strategies students need to succeed in AP courses in

grades 11 and 12 and in post-secondary education. Pre-AP courses emphasize critical thinking, additional reading, research, writing, and as appropriate, advanced performance expectations. For a list of Pre-AP courses see Appendix D. High school Pre-AP courses taken receive weighted grade points.

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses

Advanced Placement (AP) courses are offered at each high school. AP courses provide a college-level curriculum. All AP courses carry weighted grade points. Students in AP classes spend more time outside of class reading, writing, and problem solving. After completing an AP course, students may pay a fee to the College Board and take the Advanced Placement Exams held each year in May. Results of the exams are sent to colleges and universities that the student designates. Based on the scores and the university course recognition procedures, students may earn college credit.

What benefit do students receive from enrolling in AP classes? Students who take AP courses will challenge themselves, sharpen their Academic skills, and learn to think independently. Studies have shown that students who take AP courses are:

- Better prepared academically for college admission on all measures of ability and achievement;
- Able to perform significantly better over four years in college; and
- More likely to be leaders and have significant accomplishments.

Weighted Grade Points for Advanced Academic Courses

All high school advanced academic courses carry weighted grade points, including Pre-AP, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) courses, which follow outlines and expectations set forth by the respective academic organization. Magnet, dual credit and some articulated courses also receive weighted grade points. A list of Advanced Academic courses is shown in Appendix D of this guide. See also Appendix A for grading scales and grade point conversion of weighted grades.

ACC–AISD Connection

Seniors in high school are encouraged to get involved with the ACC–AISD Connection. Getting involved in the ACC–AISD Connection is an opportunity for a senior to go through the college acceptance process with Austin Community College, while enrolled as an AISD student. This four-step program involves the college application process, orientation and optional tour of the campuses, placement testing, and academic and financial aid counseling by a college counselor.

Once a senior completes this ACC–AISD Connection, he/she is accepted into ACC and does not have to reapply, even if he/she does not attend the next semester.

There are many advantages in a senior taking part of this program.

- Students who attend a four-year institution can return to Austin and take summer courses at ACC to get a jumpstart on credits at their respective university.

- If a student is enrolled in the Early College Start Program and takes dual credit courses at ACC, he/she may be allowed to skip certain parts of the process and still be a part of the ACC–AISD Connection. (Students should check with their guidance counselors when the ACC–AISD Connection process begins.)
- Students who complete the ACC–AISD Connection upon graduation from high school will be accepted into ACC and receive their AISD diploma on the same graduation day.
- Due to less expensive building use fees and other college costs, students will find that enrolling in and completing courses at ACC will save money in transferring those courses to a four-year university.
- ACC–AISD Connection begins in the fall semester at every high school campus. Parents have the option to waive their students from this program.

Certain courses may not transfer from one college to another. A student should check with the admissions office at his/her college to inquire about what courses will or will not transfer from ACC.

Dual Credit Courses

Dual credit is a program for students who are simultaneously enrolled in AISD and Austin Community College (ACC) and University of Texas Austin. The student will attend pre-approved college-level courses either at their high school or on an ACC campus and will earn both college credit and high school credit. Not all courses listed on the ACC website are pre-approved by AISD for dual credit, and students who enroll in a non-approved course will not earn dual credit. To see what courses can be taken for dual credit, refer to Appendix B of this guide. Dual Credit courses receive weighted grade points.

A student qualifies for the dual credit program by meeting the following requirements:

- Be a high school junior or senior;
- Be limited to a maximum of two (2) college-level courses per semester;
- Meet with an AISD counselor and an ACC advisor prior to enrolling in classes;
- Complete the Early College Start form and obtain the necessary approvals.
- Meet all ACC admissions requirements prior to enrolling in classes (including the THEA test);
- Be recommended by the high school principal or their designee and have parental permission.

Students are not required to pay tuition for dual credit courses. However, students are required to purchase course textbooks and a parking permit, if applicable.

Upon completion of a course taken through an Early College Start Program, a college transcript must be submitted to the registrar's office for the purpose of validating credit, including co-enrollment courses, if the co-enrollment course is to be used as an advanced measure for DAP consideration. Co-enrollment courses are college level courses in which a student receives college credit, but not high school credit.

Advanced Placement (AP) and dual credit students have an opportunity to:

- Obtain college credit or receive an exemption from lower-level university courses and complete their degree sooner;
- Prove to university admission offices that they are willing to tackle difficult courses; and
- Save tuition expenses based on their scores made on the AP exams, or by passing dual credit courses and earning credit for a class without having to pay university tuition and fees.

Students, who do not know if they will be going to college, can still enroll in AP classes. All students can benefit from the courses. Students find that the courses demand more, challenge their thinking, and encourage them to develop academically.

Career and Technology College Articulated Courses

Certain content-enhanced career and technology high school courses have been found to be substantially equal to certain introductory-level college courses. A student completing these courses must achieve a grade of "B" or above to receive articulated credit. Completion of the high school course or courses required to equal a college course with a "B" or above also counts as a Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP) measure. All courses eligible for college credit are identified on the high school transcript with the special explanation course code "A". This code helps participating colleges identify courses taught for award of articulated college credit. Completion of these college-level courses provides a way to start a college technical major in high school and continue in a community or technical college. The result is a certificate or associate degree in a career field. A list of articulated courses with Austin Community College is shown in Appendix F.

International Baccalaureate Program

The International Baccalaureate (IB) program offered only at L.C. Anderson High School and open to all District students, is an internationally recognized curriculum that offers eleventh and twelfth grade students an opportunity to earn an IB Diploma, which is recognized by universities worldwide. To earn the IB Diploma, students complete courses and test in six IB subjects (one of which is a second conversational language – Spanish, French, or German). Students write an extended essay based on independent research guided by a faculty mentor, complete 150 hours of creative, action and service activities (CAS), and participate in a critical thinking course called Theory of Knowledge. This advanced comprehensive program of study offers an integrated approach to learning across the disciplines with an emphasis on meeting the challenges of living and working in a global, technological society. Students who take IB courses without completing the entire program may earn IB certificates by testing in selected IB courses.

Magnet Programs

AISD has several advanced academic magnet programs available to students at the secondary level. The magnet program at Kealing Middle School offers courses in math, science, technology, and the liberal arts. The program at Fulmore Middle School offers special emphasis on humanities, international studies, and law. At the high school level, the Liberal Arts and Science Academy at Lyndon Baines Johnson High School offers students a choice of enriched academic programs. Admission to magnet programs is selective and by application. Each program has its own application form and deadlines. Some common considerations in admission include:

- (1) previous report card grades;
- (2) test results;
- (3) an essay or letter; and
- (4) teacher recommendations.

Contact the specific program for complete information and an application. Students who are successful in magnet programs are committed to:

- A fast paced and challenging academic program;
- An intensive, high energy day;
- Budgeting time and activities; and
- Working cooperatively with peers.

The magnet programs offer students advanced academic studies in an environment built on collegial relationships, individual growth, and intellectual rigor. Emphasis is placed on independent research, group collaboration, presentation of new learning, and the development of original designs and solutions. Computers are used as tools to access, process, and generate ideas, and students have the opportunity to collaborate with engineers, authors, doctors, and other professionals. Internships, field-based experiences, and laboratory studies are also integral components of the magnet experience. Students receive transportation from the school nearest their home to the magnet program in which they are enrolled. All magnet students can participate in UIL sponsored activities, including athletics, clubs, band, orchestra, and other extra-curricular activities. For further information contact the appropriate Magnet Program Director.

Gifted and Talented (G/T) Program

The Gifted and Talented Program identifies students in the four core areas—English/language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. To qualify for this program, students meet special criteria through an identification process. G/T students receive differentiated instruction in the core courses in which they enroll. Those courses may be Pre-AP, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, magnet courses, or in other classes. Students in the G/T program explore further and study more intensively the content of their academic subjects; use greater initiative in learning, and surpass the regular curriculum through independent study, research projects and extensive reading.

Special Schools and Programs

Gonzalo Garza Independence High School

Gonzalo Garza Independence High School is an open enrollment/choice school designed to meet the needs of students who:

- Have experienced unusual life circumstances that have created barriers to graduation;
- Have dropped out or are likely to drop out of regular high school programs;
- Wish to pursue a high school education as part of a comprehensive program that provides integrated health and social services and prepares students for post-secondary options; and
- Will profit from and thrive in a non-traditional approach to learning characterized by integrated, interdisciplinary curriculum that is problem and project based and enhanced by access to technology.

Students may enroll in Garza High School at any time during the school year, provided there is space available. The school day is divided into four instructional blocks beginning at 9:00 am and ending at 3:00 pm. Students may choose appropriate courses based on their individual needs. Students must adhere to the school's "Code of Honor" and meet local and state requirements for graduation. Third year students who have earned ten credits or more are preferred for admission. For further information, contact Gonzalo Garza Independence High School at 414-8614.

DELTA Program

(Diversified Education Through Leadership, Technology, Academics)

The DELTA Program is an academic program available to students enrolled in each Austin ISD comprehensive high school, the Alternative Learning Center, Gardner Betts Leadership Program and Half-way House, Phoenix House, JJAEP, Travis County Detention Center, Cristo Rey La Fuente Center, and Garza Independence High School. The goal of the DELTA Program is to provide an individualized, self-paced instructional program for recovered and potential dropouts that will help students earn academic credits and graduate from high school.

Students apply for admission to DELTA, and upon acceptance, they develop an academic plan. DELTA students typically spend 2 hours daily in the DELTA lab where they work to complete self-paced learning modules. The modules include textbook assignments, experimental activities and lessons on NovaNET, a computer-assisted instruction (CAI) program. There is no credit minimum and no expectation that students have mastered TAKS before enrolling in DELTA.

DELTA is an open-entry/open-exit program. Contact your high school counselor for additional information.

Virtual School Program (VSP)

The Virtual School Program is a non-traditional, home-based academic program that is available to high school seniors. The goal of the program is to provide academic opportunities for students who are unable to participate in a traditional classroom setting, most often because they are parents and/or must work full-time for economic reasons. Students in the VSP may earn academic course credits and graduate from high school.

Students apply for admission to VSP, and upon acceptance, an academic plan is developed. VSP students typically spend 2-4 hours daily completing self-paced lessons at home on an internet ready laptop assigned to them. Specially trained VSP teachers meet three times per week with students for a total of five hours per week. Like DELTA, the VSP is an open entry/open-exit program. Contact your high school counselor or registrar for additional information.

Services for Students with Special Needs

English as a Second Language (ESL)

The Middle School Language Arts curriculum provides English as a Second Language (ESL) for English language learners (ELLs) so that students develop their abilities to listen, speak, read, and write in English. ESL Reading is also provided for ELLs who need additional support in reading on grade level in English. Both classes are designed to develop the English language proficiency needed to succeed in all-English classes including language arts, math, science, and social studies.

The High School language arts curriculum provides English I and II for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL I and ESOL II) to recent immigrant students. Reading in English is also provided to English Language Learners who may not be reading on grade level to further develop comprehensive English skills. The English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher provides English instruction to meet the needs of students at the beginning, intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency. For recent Spanish-speaking immigrant students, Spanish for Spanish Speakers is recommended to strengthen the students' primary language and reinforce the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills required to meet the standards on TAKS. This is particularly important for students with low literacy skills because of interrupted or no schooling prior to enrolling in the school district.

The state graduation plan requires speakers of other languages to take English I for Speakers of Other Languages, English II for Speakers of Other Languages, English III and English IV. A Sheltered English course is recommended for ELLs who, after being in the United States for two or three years, are transitioning into regular English courses but have not learned enough English to perform at the same levels as their native English speaking peers.

For recent immigrant students who have been in a United States school for fewer than three years, sheltered courses in Algebra, World Geography, and Biology are recommended. When possible, bilingual teachers provide native language support in the content areas, especially at the beginning of the course.

Participation of LEP/ELL Students in TAKS

Section 101.3 of the Texas Administrative Code provides secondary LEP/ELL students testing options during a three-year period beginning the first year of the student's enrollment in a United States school. Following the three-year period, students are required to take TAAS/TAKS in English. Exit level TAKS provides for a one-time postponement.

Secondary ELLs are required to take the Reading Proficiency Test in English (RPTE) until the students pass the English TAKS. Teachers also assess the ELLs listening, speaking, and writing skills annually. ELLs in tenth grade who are exempt from taking the reading portion of the TAKS are required to take the math TAKS with Linguistic Accommodations.

Students with Disabilities – Section 504

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as "Section 504," is a non-discrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of the Act is to prohibit discrimination and to ensure that students with disabilities have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to other students.

An eligible student under Section 504 is a student who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits them in a major life activity such as learning, self-care, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working and performing manual tasks. See the school counselor for more information about services for qualifying students.

Students with Dyslexia and Related Disorders

Students with dyslexia have difficulty with reading, writing and/or spelling. Each campus has a teacher who is trained to evaluate, instruct, and monitor qualified students. Schools serve students with dyslexia or related disorders in a variety of ways determined by a 504 committee. Services may include specialized instruction, classroom accommodations, and assistive technology. See the school counselor for more information.

Special Education

Special education and related services are specifically designed instructional services developed to support students with disabilities within the general curriculum. The intent of the support services is to enable all students with disabilities to make progress in the general curriculum, to participate in extracurricular and nonacademic activities, and to be educated and participate with non-disabled peers in the public school system.

AISSD is committed to meeting the needs of students who have cognitive, physical, emotional or learning differences. Each campus has a Local Support Team and IMPACT team that meet to discuss and recommend intervention strategies through general education programming. Students who are referred for special education support and services must participate in an evaluation process with formal notice and consent of parents. If evaluation information shows eligibility for special education support and services, an Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) Committee develops an appropriate educational program for each student.

An ARD Committee includes:

- The student and his/her parent;
- District representative;
- Evaluation representative;
- At least one of the student's general education teachers;
- A special education teacher (The child's disability may require a teacher certified in a specific area, such as Visual or Auditory impairment);
- Related services provider, if required;
- Language Proficiency Assessment Committee representative, if required;
- Career and Technology Education Representative, if CATE is being considered for the student.

The program developed by the ARD Committee is referred to as an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The IEP is implemented in the least restrictive environment appropriate for the student.

The student and parents have legal rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that is outlined in the Procedural Safeguards. Parents also receive information from Texas Education Agency in the booklet, "A Guide to the Admission, Review and Dismissal Process." Information about these rights are provided and explained to parents and/or adult students:

- Upon initial referral for evaluation
- Upon reevaluation
- With notice of ARD meeting

AISD policies are updated regularly. Please check the AISD website for online policy and up-to-date policy information—www.austinisd.org

