



October 7, 2008

Dear Key Communicator:

HB 3851 passed by the 80<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to create a standard method of determining high school student grade point averages (GPA) for admission to a Texas public university. The implementation will take effect no sooner than with the freshman class in 2009-2010, our current eighth-grade students.

The Attorney General issued an opinion in August of this year indicating that **school districts must use the standard GPA calculation for the purposes of admission to public universities in Texas.**

**Public comments will be accepted on the proposed implementation date until October 19, 2008.** After reviewing the issues addressed in this letter, I am encouraging you to contact the THECB at <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/ContactUs/default.cfm>.

If you would like to submit written comments, you may do so by writing Natalie Coffey, senior program director of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, at P.O. Box 12788, Austin, TX, 78711.

The recommendations for Uniform GPA Calculation (UGPAC) under consideration would significantly impact class rank by removing extra grade points for K-level (Honors) courses. As you know, course grade points are used to calculate GPA, and GPA is used to determine class rank.

Currently:

1. Graduates in the top 10 percent of their classes are automatically admitted to any public university in the state.
2. K-level (Honors) classes are weighted heavier than L-level (on-level). For example, a student who receives a "B" in a K-level course earns as many grade points as a student who earns an "A" in an L-level course because of the scope and rigor of the K-level course.
3. The law distinguishes a difference between the rigor of the Minimum High School Program and the Recommended High School Program (RHSP). The RHSP is the "recommended" graduation plan by the state.

Proposed:

1. Current proposals do not address the top 10-percent rule; however, in the previous session several legislators proposed to abolish it.

2. No extra grade points are under consideration for K-level (Honors) courses. Only Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate (does not apply to CFISD) and dual credit courses will receive more grade points than on-level courses. Applying the example in #2 above, a "B" in a K-level (Honors) course would get the same grade points as a "B" in an L-level (on-level) course with no consideration or extra grade points for increased difficulty or rigor of the honors course.
3. Elective courses such as band, orchestra, physical education and athletics would receive no grade points at all, although these courses fulfill graduation requirements of the "recommended" state plan-RHSP.

We must work together to ensure that Texas public universities have admissions policies in place that recognize the rigor of courses in which our students are enrolled to fulfill graduation requirements.

A summary of the Uniform GPA Calculation recommendation is attached for your review. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Cheryl Salyards at [Cheryl.salyards@cfisd.net](mailto:Cheryl.salyards@cfisd.net) or me at [david.anthony@cfisd.net](mailto:david.anthony@cfisd.net).

Sincerely  
David Anthony, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools



# Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

**Summary Brief – Updated October 3, 2008**

## **UNIFORM GPA CALCULATION (UGPAC) RECOMMENDATIONS**

*Note: The following information represents proposed recommendations on the UGPAC currently under consideration by the Commissioner of Higher Education. These and any subsequent recommendations are scheduled to be considered by the full Coordinating Board at its October 23, 2008, quarterly meeting. Please check [www.thecb.state.tx.us](http://www.thecb.state.tx.us) regularly for additional updates. Or, you may contact the External Relations Division at 512-427-6111 or 427-6119 for more details.*

### **Topics:**

- Implementation date
- Course weights
  - a. Pre-AP/IB
  - b. Career and Technical Education
- Public education compliance requirements
- Review of recommendations and final adoption process
- Proposed conversion chart for the UGPAC
- Proposed rules for implementation of UGPAC

### **Background:**

HB 3851 passed by the 80th Texas Legislature requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to create a standard method of determining high school student grade point averages (GPA) for admission to a Texas public university. The Coordinating Board asked the Attorney General for an opinion regarding the scope of the law when it became clear that not all stakeholders interpreted the law in the same manner. In particular, the Coordinating Board asked for clarification on whether or not school districts were required to use the standard method of calculation and whether or not the Coordinating Board had the latitude to provide a transition period for implementation of the standard method of calculation.

The Attorney General issued an opinion on August 26, 2008. The opinion indicates that the standard GPA calculation must be used by the school districts for purposes of public university admissions, and it provides the Coordinating Board with the latitude to implement this legislation in a manner that does not retroactively impact students already in public high schools.

### **1. IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**

- The recent opinion issued by the Office of the Attorney General made clear that the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (CB) has the latitude to phase in the UGPAC to ensure that no high school student currently in the education pipeline is adversely affected by its implementation.
- The current recommendation from the Commissioner of Higher Education, Raymund Paredes, is that the implementation for the new Uniform GPA Calculation takes effect no sooner than with the **incoming high school freshman class of 2009**.
- Current high school students (9-12th grade) will not be affected by any future implementation.



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### 2. COURSE WEIGHTS

#### a. Pre-Advanced Placement/Pre-International Baccalaureate

- Commissioner Paredes is currently considering recommending to the Coordinating Board that Pre-AP and/or Pre-IB courses not be weighted in the UGPAC.
- The recommendation currently includes weighting AP, IB and dual credit courses.
- The reasoning for excluding Pre-AP/Pre-IB is:
  - Not recognized by the College Board
  - No standardization and no uniform standard of rigor
  - No other public institution of higher education in the nation weights Pre-AP/Pre-IB courses for admittance purposes. Weighting those courses would not apply to admittance to out-of-state institutions either.
  - Schools and their districts might begin to create a series of new courses without College Board oversight or standardization in order to give their students an advantage in the calculation. This would create an uneven playing field for those who continue to play by the rules.
  - From the College Board website:  
<http://professionals.collegeboard.com/k-12/prepare/pre-ap>

“Please note: **The College Board does not design, develop, or assess courses labeled "Pre-AP."** In fact, the College Board discourages the labeling of courses as "Pre-AP." Typically, such courses create a track, thereby limiting access to AP classes. The College Board supports the assertion that all students should have access to preparation for AP and other challenging courses. Courses labeled "Pre-AP" can inappropriately restrict access to AP and other college-level work and as such are inconsistent with the fundamental purpose of the College Board's Pre-AP initiatives, which are professional development workshops designed to help teachers instill more rigor in whatever courses they are teaching students in the years prior to AP. “

#### b. Career and Technical Education

- Commissioner Paredes is currently considering recommending to the Coordinating Board that the basis for determining the UGPAC should be focused on academic components (math, science, English, social studies, fine arts, and languages other than English), as defined by the Recommended High School Program (RHSP).
- Beginning in 2010, all Texas high school graduates will need the RHSP in order to gain admission to a general academic teaching institution.
- The principle to focus on academic courses to determine a student's GPA under the new calculation reinforces the RHSP requirement.
  - The CB continues to recognize the important role of Career and Technical Education (CTE) to ensure a skilled workforce.
  - Some CTE courses that may be applied to the UGPAC include those that are considered dual credit courses.
  - A large number of CTE students will enter 2-year community college in order to gain the knowledge and certifications they will need to succeed in their chosen trade.
  - Therefore, the CB continues to advocate for increased academic rigor in CTE to ensure those students gain the skills necessary to successfully complete college-level courses.



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## 3. PUBLIC EDUCATION COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

- The Uniform GPA is designed for use in college admissions and is not meant to infringe on a school district's right to establish its own method for determining GPA.
- But as a practical matter, we anticipate there will be widespread adoption of the UGPAC by school districts.
- Although public educators and Texas Education Agency staff serve on the UGPA Advisory Committee, the statute does not require approval by the Commissioner of Education or the State Board of Education.

## 4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS

### a. Public comment period

- Proposed rules have been placed in the Texas Register (attached).
- Public comments will be accepted on the **proposed calculation formula** until Oct. 6, 2008.
- Public comments will be accepted on the **proposed implementation date** until Oct. 19, 2008.
- Stakeholders wishing to submit a written comment may do so by writing to Natalie Coffey, Senior Program Director of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, at P.O. Box 12788, Austin, TX, 78711.

### b. Participation and Success Committee meetings

- At the Sept. 17, 2008, meeting, the Committee voted to postpone the Commissioner's recommendation in order to give adequate consideration to all public comments.
- October 22, 2008, a joint committee meeting with the Strategic Planning Committee will be held at the THECB beginning at 10 a.m. to discuss all comments received regarding the proposed rules.
  - The meeting if held will be broadcast online. Please visit [www.thecb.state.tx.us](http://www.thecb.state.tx.us) on the day of the event to listen in via internet.

### c. Meeting of the full Coordinating Board

- Discussion and possible adoption of the Commissioners' final recommendations by the Board
- Quarterly meeting, October 23, 2008, at the THECB beginning at 8:30 a.m.
  - The meeting is scheduled to be broadcast online. Please visit [www.thecb.state.tx.us](http://www.thecb.state.tx.us) on the day of the event to listen in via internet.

## SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

**5.9. Conversion Chart for Uniform Grade Point Average.**

The following conversion chart shall be used in the calculation of grade point averages pursuant to Section 5.8 of this subchapter (relating to Uniform Grade-Point Average Calculation for Admission to General academic Teaching Institutions):

GPA	Percentile	Letter Grade	AP/IB/Dual Credit
4.0	95-100	A	5.0
3.9	94	A	4.9
3.8	93	A	4.8
3.7	92	A -	4.7
3.6	91	A -	4.6
3.5	90	A -	4.5
3.4	89	B +	4.4
3.3	88	B +	4.3
3.2	87	B +	4.2
3.1	86	B	4.1
3.0	85	B	4.0
2.9	84	B	3.9
2.8	83	B	3.8
2.7	82	B -	3.7
2.6	81	B -	3.6
2.5	80	B -	3.5
2.4	79	C +	3.4
2.3	78	C +	3.3
2.2	77	C +	3.2
2.1	76	C	3.1
2.0	75	C	3.0
1.9	74	C	2.9
1.8	73	C	2.8
1.7	72	C -	2.7
1.6	71	C -	2.6
1.5	70	C -	2.5
1.4	69	D +	0
1.3	68	D +	0
1.2	67	D +	0
1.1	66	D	0
1.0	65	D	0
0.9	64	D	0
0.8	63	D	0
0.7	62	D -	0
0.6	61	D -	0
0.5	60	D -	0

### 5.10. **Implementation of Uniform Grade Point Average Rules.**

- (a) The rules for calculation of the Uniform Grade Point Average established under Section 5.8 of this subchapter shall apply to the calculation of such averages for all students who enter the ninth grade for the first time from May 1, 2009, onward.
- (b) The grade point averages of students already in ninth grade or higher as of April 30, 2009, or before, shall be calculated on the same basis that would have applied to such students before the adoption of Section 5.8 of this subchapter.

#### SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

#### 5.8. Uniform Grade-Point Average Calculation for Admission to General Academic Teaching Institutions.

Procedures for calculating the high school grade-point average for students seeking admission to a Texas general academic teaching institution shall be as follows:

- (1) Only official high school transcripts shall be accepted by the general academic teaching institution for evaluation and grade-point calculation.
- (2) A four-point scale shall be used in computing the Uniform Grade-Point Average with the exception of paragraph (5) of this section.
- (3) No grade points shall be awarded for courses that do not result in credit awarded (e.g.: failed courses).
- (4) All academic courses included in Chapters 110-114 of this title, Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills shall be used in calculating the Uniform Grade-Point Average regardless of when the course was taken.
  - (A) Grades earned in local credit courses shall not be included in the computation of the Uniform Grade-Point Average.
  - (B) Grades from out-of-state academic courses shall be included in the computation of the Uniform Grade-Point Average if state credit toward the Recommended or Distinguished High School Program is awarded for them.
- (5) Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and academic Dual Credit courses that are part of Chapters 110-114 of this title, Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, shall be weighted equally with an additional weighting of 1.0 points in the calculation of the Uniform Grade-Point Average.
- (6) The Uniform Grade-Point Average shall be computed for use by the general academic teaching institution:
  - (A) By multiplying each grade (see paragraph (4) of this section) by the semester or quarter credit hours earned per course and totaling the products, and
  - (B) The total of the products shall be divided by the total semester or quarter credits.
  - (C) The result is to be calculated to no more than three decimal places, giving the official cumulative Uniform Grade-Point Average.