



# ACADEMIC PLANNING OVERVIEW



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Please read this guide carefully. Contact your campus counselor for additional information regarding scheduling, course prerequisites, dual credit, testing, and/or graduation requirements. **It is important to know that this course description guide includes all courses that are offered in the Mansfield ISD. However, due to enrollment and teacher availability, not every class will be offered every year at all campuses.**

## PLANNING GUIDE HIGHLIGHTS

- Credit is awarded at the end of each **semester** with a grade of 70 or better.
- There are many factors to consider in selecting courses that will meet individual needs for next year.
- Remember to select courses to fit overall planning which projects beyond the high school years.
- Interest and ability should determine choices.
- Experience shows that those who plan an entire high school program early and frequently review the plan will be able to graduate without difficulty.

## COURSE PLANNING

Although students will receive specific instructions during course planning time from high school personnel, the responsibility for appropriate graduation and career choices rests with students and parents. The campus counseling staff is available to assist in making decisions related to course selections.

*One of the most critical functions performed by a school counselor is the planning the student's four-year graduation plan. Based upon courses selection information, courses are scheduled and teachers are employed for the next year; therefore, it is important that course planning be given serious consideration. After mid-April of each year, changes will be made only to correct scheduling errors or to equalize class enrollments.*

## BLOCK SCHEDULING

MISD high schools are organized on an A/B Block Schedule with students taking four classes per day on alternating days. Each block is 90 minutes in length. Ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade students are required to take eight classes each semester in the block schedule. Twelfth grade students who have passed the required End of Course (EOC) will be required to take six classes each semester in the block schedule. Seniors who have not passed their required EOCs must take eight classes. However, all seniors are strongly advised to take advantage of the educational opportunities found in the MISD and take eight classes each semester. Seniors not taking all eight classes each semester must plan for a senior release class and leave campus during their free block. The senior release/free block must be either the first or last block of the day.

1. Remember, classes required for graduation are non-negotiable. Therefore, if you participate in a program that is double-blocked, it is critical that credits are closely monitored.
2. Courses taken at Ben Barber Innovation Academy (BBIA) are available yielding 1 credit for 18 weeks and 2-3 credits for 36 week courses.
3. The block schedule is designed so that students through the lengthened class periods can explore content more thoroughly and develop patterns of management and organization that will benefit them throughout life.
4. Carefully plan your schedule. The four-year plan is very important in order to obtain all of the courses you wish to take.
5. Spend time with your high school counselor; it is time well spent.

## MISD GRADING SYSTEM FOR 9-12

The district high schools use a weighted numerical grading system. In calculating GPA, ten points are added to a student's average in AP, Pre-AP, and approved dual credit courses. **The following chart reflects the MISD grading system for grades 9-12:**

A	B	C	F
90-100	80-89	70-79	BELOW 70

**NOTE:** Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year and thereafter, if a student fails either semester of any MISD yearlong course and passes the opposite semester with a high enough grade for an overall average of 70 for the full course, a full credit will be granted. In this situation, for averaging to occur, the courses must have been taken during the same school year and in consecutive semesters.

## CLASS RANK

Starting in the class of 2023, class rank for the purposes of graduation honors will be determined by calculating grades earned in high school credit courses in the following categories:

1. English/Language Arts
2. Mathematics
3. Science
4. Social Studies
5. Languages Other Than English

For the purposes of applications to institutions of higher education, the District shall also calculate a cumulative class rank to include all courses taken [See EIC(Local)].

## ENROLLMENT

A student enrolling in the district for the first time must be accompanied by his/her parent(s) or legal guardian and must provide satisfactory evidence of required immunization, **proof of residence (utility bill or lease agreement)**, copy of birth certificate and social security card, and a withdrawal form from the previous school. To complete admission, the following demographic information is necessary: home address, home phone, mother's name, place of business and work phone, father's name, place of business and work phone, and a friend or relative's name and number in case of emergency.

### FOR STUDENTS ENTERING MISD FOR THE FIRST TIME IN GRADES 9-12:

This chart will be used if the previous school does not have a conversion chart of its own. MISD will use the conversion chart of the student's previous school if one is provided.

ACADEMIC CONVERSION TABLE			
<b>A+</b>	98	<b>B+</b>	88
<b>A</b>	95	<b>B</b>	85
<b>A-</b>	92	<b>B-</b>	82
		<b>C+</b>	78
		<b>C</b>	75
		<b>C-</b>	72
		<b>D+</b>	68
		<b>D</b>	65
		<b>D-</b>	62
		<b>F</b>	55

Students transferring into the MISD from other school districts will not receive weighted credit for advanced courses taken in their previous school district(s), if the courses in question are not offered in the MISD. Students transferring from international schools, homeschools and unaccredited schools shall be individually assessed.

## SENIOR RELEASE

Students who have earned enough credits to be classified as a senior may opt to take early release or late arrival. Twelfth grade students who have passed Exit Level STAAR/EOC exams will be **required** to take **six classes each semester**. **Seniors who have not passed Exit Level STAAR/EOC must take eight classes**. However, we strongly advise all seniors to take advantage of the educational opportunities found in the MISD and to take eight classes each semester. Seniors not taking all eight classes each semester must sign up for senior release and leave campus during their free classes. **The senior release/free periods must be a combination of either 1<sup>st</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> periods or 4<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> periods.**

## ADVANCED COURSES

MISD courses *eligible* (see conditions below in bold) for weighted credit (10 extra points averaged into the student's overall grade average reflected on the transcript) are limited to those courses identified in this course guide. **Weighted credit will automatically be given to students who receive a grade of 70 or higher in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, Pre-AP courses, Academic Decathlon, and approved dual credit courses.** MISD provides curriculum offerings for students with special talents and abilities. The goal of the advanced program is to challenge and stimulate students to the highest level of their abilities. However, students and parents should be very sensitive to the demanding nature of Advanced Placement courses. Students will be engaged in

college level activities, particularly in the areas of writing skills, reading, and test taking. Advanced Placement courses place a high degree of emphasis on the student's own self-motivation, study skills, and the ability to self-direct his or her own learning. Advanced Placement Courses, because of their academic rigor, are assigned a weighted grade factor of an additional 10 points. Qualifying for Pre-AP or Advanced Placement courses is based on interest and prerequisite courses. Students are encouraged to enroll in as many academically rigorous classes as they can manage. Advanced Placement courses prepare students for Advanced Placement examinations given by the College Board in May. These courses require one to perform at the level of a college student. A successful score on the examination gives the student's college credit or placement for the courses taken in high school, subject to the approval of the student's selected college. **It is the responsibility of the student to inquire if the college of choice accepts advanced placement exam credit and to request that credit be given.**

## ADVANCED COURSES OFFERINGS

SOCIAL STUDIES	ELA/LOTE	SCIENCE
Human Geography	English III	Biology
World History	English IV	Chemistry
US History	Spanish	Physics
European History	German	Environmental-
Psychology	French	Science
Economics	Japanese	
Government	Chinese	
<b>FINE ARTS</b>	Computer Science	<b>MATH</b>
Studio Art	<b>CTE</b>	Calculus
Music Theory	PLTW	Statistics

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain and follow the summer reading/assignment list and testing schedule, when required, for these courses. Tarrant County College Dual Credit Courses, because of their academic rigor, are assigned a weighted grade factor of an additional 10 points. Qualifying for TCC courses is based upon past performance and prerequisite courses. Additional requirements for TCC Dual Credit Courses include an overall grade average of 80 or above. High school credit for TCC Dual Credit Courses will be designated on the high school transcript. It is the responsibility of the student to request that TCC send a copy of the college transcript to the college of choice.

## GIFTED/TALENTED EDUCATION

In the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades, gifted students are served through Advanced Placement (AP) and Advanced Courses. **See the College Board course listings for more specific information. If you have questions, please contact your campus GT Specialist. Parents of identified gifted students should be in touch with your campus representatives on the GT Parent Advisory Council.**

## SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

The special education program provides a comprehensive program for each student between the ages of three and twenty-two who has been identified as having a special need. These special needs include physical, mental, or emotional handicaps, and learning disabilities. Visually handicapped and hearing-impaired students shall have a free, appropriate education from birth through age 22. Consideration of a student's need for special education services is initiated by a referral that may be made by the parents, a physician, a community agency, and/or school personnel. In all cases, parental permission is required for participation in special education unless the student is eighteen or married.

## ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL)

All students who enroll in MISD will complete a home language survey. If this survey indicates that a language other than English is spoken in the home or is spoken by the student, the student must be referred to the ESOL teacher for evaluation. Tests will be administered and students who are found to be limited English proficient (LEP) may enroll in ESOL classes. ESOL classes focus on intensive development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English. Two terms or credits of ESOL may count as two of the English I and II credits required for high school graduation.

## CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) PROGRAMS

Career and technical education courses provide instruction in the technical, practical, and leadership skills needed for entry-level jobs in business and industry, for entry into Tech Prep Programs at community colleges, or for entry into 4-year universities. Various types of programs are offered, which include pre-employment certifications, career preparation, and/or internships. **See the Ben Barber Innovation Academy (BBIA) section for course listings.**

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES AND SUBSTITUTIONS/WAIVERS

One credit of physical education (PE) is required for graduation by the state of Texas. Students may earn up to four state credits in PE/athletics. All PE/athletic credits after four are considered local credit. In addition to the regular physical education courses, there are several ways to substitute or waive these credits: athletics, drill team (fall semester), JV/Varsity cheerleading (fall semester), marching band (fall semester), color guard, and Junior ROTC. Students may also earn credit for PE if the student participates in an appropriate privately or commercially sponsored physical activity program. Applications for off-campus PE are available through the high school counselors. Application must be made prior to the term in which the student wishes to receive credit. **See the Health and Physical Education section for additional information on this subject. Note: Students can only receive 1 state credit for PE for drill team, marching band, JROTC, cheerleading and color guard.**

## COURSE CREDIT TYPES

### REQUIRED:

These courses are required to fulfill state educational guidelines. A course may or may not have a prerequisite; a prerequisite is a course that must be taken prior to the course under consideration. **To receive a high school diploma from the MISD and be eligible to participate in commencement activities, a student must successfully complete the required credits and pass all portions of the required state mandated exit exam.**

### ELECTIVES:

In addition to required state courses, students must choose other courses to complete their schedules. The number and types of electives varies from year to year. Elective courses or credits may be selected from additional core academic courses or from courses in the other departments.

### LOCAL:

Local credit courses are courses approved for credit beyond the 26 required credits for the Foundation Graduation Plan with or without an endorsement or The Distinguished Level of Achievement. See Graduation Programs for additional information on this subject.

## GRADE-LEVEL ADVANCEMENT & CLASSIFICATION

Students are classified at the beginning of each school year according to the number of credits they have earned. Required credits are listed below.

Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior
0-5 ½	6-11 ½	12-18 ½	19+

**In order to graduate, students must earn 26 credits, successfully complete the courses required for their specified graduation plan, and pass the designated state testing requirements.**

## STAAR/EOC

Students will be required to take the STAAR EOC (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness End-of Course) exams. House Bill 5 reduced the number of EOC exams to five: Algebra I, United States History, English I, and II, Biology. Please note that additional information updates regarding EOC exams will be given as needed to parents and students.



## HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPTS FOR COLLEGE ADMISSION

Students must make a written request in the registrar's office for each needed transcript. Transcripts need to be sent directly to the colleges by the high school registrar in order to be considered official. No requests for transcripts are taken by phone. **In addition to needing transcripts for admission, colleges require a final transcript to be sent upon completion of high school graduation requirements.** Please note that a transcript is a working document and is not considered a final document until graduation. The naming of the valedictorian and salutatorian will be finalized at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> six weeks fall semester of students' senior year and announced during the final weeks of school. Students who have attended Tarrant County College, the University of Texas at Arlington or Texas Wesleyan University for dual credit during high school must request a transcript be sent to the college where admission is being requested. High school campuses cannot provide a transcript for TCC, UTA or TWU courses.

## COLLEGE READINESS EXAMS

### PSAT/NMSQT:

This test is designed to test the verbal, mathematical, and written skills of students. This test is taken in preparation for the SAT during the junior year. National Merit Scholarships are available if the student's junior level scores qualify him/her to be a Finalist. College bound high school students are encouraged to take the PSAT as practice for the junior year where the scores count for scholarship consideration. This test is given only once per year in October.

### SAT/ACT:

Most colleges and universities require one of two major entrance exams: the American College Testing Program (ACT) and/or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Students usually take these during the junior year or at the beginning of the senior year. Websites are [www.act.org](http://www.act.org) and [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

### SAT II:

The test is given at no cost once a year to juniors on a school-day in March every year.

## ADDITIONAL WAYS TO EARN CREDIT

The State Board of Education has proposed different methods by which a student may earn credit. For more information, please contact your high school counseling center.

### Credit by Examination (CBE) For Credit Recovery (With Prior Instruction):

Credit by Exam is designed as an option to earn credit for those students who have attended a class at least 55 hours (11 weeks) and received a semester average no lower than a 60. The decision to allow a student to earn credit by exam must be made by the attendance committee when failure of the course resulted from excessive absences. Students have the opportunity to take an exam through either Texas Tech or UT Austin correspondence school. Applications may be obtained online and approved in the high school counseling center. A score of 70 or better on the CBE is required for credit. If credit is awarded, grades will be recorded on the student's transcript, computed in the credits toward graduation, and calculated in the student's overall grade average and rank in class. Fees are established by the universities. Student/Parent is responsible for fees charged by Texas Tech or UT Austin.

### Credit by Examination (CBE) For Acceleration (Without Prior Instruction):

Students who provide evidence of proficiency in a subject area may take a CBE for acceleration. A score of 80% is required for credit per Senate Bill 1. **Contact your counselor or visit the MISD website for more information.** If credit is awarded, grades will be recorded on the student's transcript, computed in the credits toward graduation, and calculated in the student's overall grade average and rank in class. Testing dates and registration deadlines for the 2020-2021 school year are as follows:

Testing Date	Registration Deadline
October 4, 2022	September 9, 2022
February 15, 2023	January 13, 2023
May 1-12, 2023	November 10, 2022
July 25, 2023	June 2, 2023

*\*\*May Tests are AP Exams. Registration for AP Exams occurs at each High School in the fall*

### Correspondence/Online Courses:

Students in grades 9-12 are eligible to earn credits toward graduation through correspondence/online courses. Grades earned in correspondence/online courses will be recorded on the student's transcript, computed in the credits toward graduation, and calculated in the student's overall grade average and rank in class. Students may apply for these course options through their high school counseling center. Self-discipline to complete the lessons and taking the final exams within a specific time frame are important factors when considering correspondence/online courses. State approved correspondence courses are offered by Texas Tech and UT Austin. The student is responsible for all course fees and textbook(s). Additionally, the MISD offers online courses (See the *MISD Online Academics* section in this course guide for more information). Online courses taken during the school days, MISD provides course and textbooks at no cost.