



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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Richardson Independent School District

September 26, 2008

Natalie Coffey, Senior Program Director  
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board  
P.O. Box 12788  
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Ms. Coffey,

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's proposed rules regarding a standard method to compute a high school student's grade point average has caused great concern among parents and educators in Richardson ISD. Specifically, we are concerned about (1) the negative impact that not weighting PreAP courses will have on students' interest in more rigorous classes and subsequent enrollment in AP courses, and (2) the exclusion of state-approved courses required for graduation in the Recommended High School Program from the uniform GPA calculation.

A primary goal of public education in Texas is to prepare students for college level academics. With that in mind, we fully employ the College Board AP program and embrace the College Board's *open enrollment* philosophy. Subsequently, close to half of all RISD students take at least one PreAP course in high school. Because of the increased rigor and pace of our PreAP courses, we believe strongly in awarding additional weight to these courses. Richardson ISD has a strong AP program where 53% of our AP students earn a 3 or higher on the annual exam. It will be difficult to maintain this level of success without the adequate preparation PreAP courses provide.

Furthermore, the proposed rules exclude courses that are required in the state's Recommended High School Program. Courses such as Economics, Technology Applications, Fine Arts, Health, and Physical Education, as well as other electives including Career and Technical courses are important to students' overall education. The exclusion of these courses would result in a GPA which is not reflective of the entire scope of the high school program.

**We strongly suggest that the THECB change the proposed rules for a uniform GPA to include (1) additional weight for PreAP courses, and (2) all state-approved courses required for graduation under Recommended High School Program.**

Thank you and the entire THECB committee for considering our input and for your work on this important matter.

Sincerely,

David Simmons, Ph.D.  
Superintendent