

## Alternate Methods for Earning High School Credit in Fort Bend ISD

*Dear Parents and Students:*

*During the past eight months, Fort Bend ISD has adjusted expectations with regard to external providers of courses. We are also committed to providing a robust program for our students with regard to Pre-AP and AP courses. At this time, we are only accepting external coursework from the Texas Virtual School Network, The University of Texas at Austin, and Texas Tech University for Fort Bend ISD students who elect to take additional courses, and this requires prior approval at the campus level.*

*This year, we have also implemented a new online course platform and a digital learning program called O-Lab. The course platform is Edgenuity. The primary focus of the program is to serve students who need to recover credit. We do have some students working on original credit in O-Lab. AP U.S. History is not a course that is available through this program. For more information regarding O-Lab at your home campus, please contact your child's counselor. Our summer school program of courses is forthcoming. Please find below some Q and A's that may help answer any additional questions you may have.*

### Questions and Answers Regarding Alternate Methods for Earning High School Credit in Fort Bend ISD

**Q:** *Why was the procedure changed to require students to obtain approval before registering for High School coursework with external providers?*

**A:** The procedure requiring counselor approval to take any courses outside of FBISD has not changed and has been in existence for more than 10 years. Fort Bend ISD has an application process in which the student initiates and submits a request to the school counselor for approval prior to registering for coursework with an external provider. The application form specifies all of the requirements and limitations of taking online and/or face-to-face courses outside of FBISD.

**Q:** *Why was the policy changed to limit choices for earning high school course work credit through external providers?*

**A:** FBISD takes great pride in its excellence and rigor for Advanced Placement coursework. For this reason, we council students to enroll in Advanced Placement courses in their FBISD school. It is our goal to ensure that students are properly prepared for end of course exams, College Board exams, and college entrance exams. FBISD is committed to meeting

the needs of students and helping them reach their full potential. Therefore, it was determined and Board of Trustees approved to limit outsider providers for course credit to Texas Tech University, the University of Texas and Texas Virtual School Network.

**Q: *Why was the policy changed so quickly and when were parents notified?***

A: This policy was approved by the FBISD Board of Trustees on December 15, 2014, and went into effect immediately. It was publicized by our communications department via the FBISD website. In addition, a press release went out to all local newspapers, including the *Houston Chronicle*, which also covered the information. Prior to the policy being approved by the Board of Trustees, there was a moratorium in place not allowing students to sign up with any other vendors except the ones listed above.

**Q: *Why do other districts allow students to take AP courses in summer school and with other vendors?***

A: Every district has its own policies and guidelines and some have more limitations than others. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) allows districts to determine their own guidelines in regard to alternative methods for earning credit. We cannot speak for the policies and procedures from other districts.

**Q: *Why doesn't FBISD allow face-to-face instruction through external providers?***

A: In order to ensure alignment to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), alignment to the College Board standards, as well as assurance of rigor, depth and complexity required for subsequent coursework, it has been determined – whether it is face-to-face instruction or on-line – FBISD will recognize the state-approved vendors including Texas Tech University, the University of Texas, and Texas Virtual School Network.

**Q: *Will students be at a disadvantage if they are not allowed to acquire course credit during the summer or during the school year from external providers?***

A: No, we offer many courses at the Pre-AP and AP level in all FBISD comprehensive high schools. Students have the option to take these courses throughout their four years of high school. Students also have the option to take AP semester courses, Pre-AP and on-level courses required to satisfy graduation requirements in FBISD summer school. Parents and students are encouraged to work with campus counselors to discuss course offerings throughout the school year, as well as opportunities in the FBISD summer school program.