

# GPA EXEMPTION

## GPA-Exempt Courses

Fort Bend ISD encourages all students to pursue their areas of special skills and interests in order to enrich their academic achievement and to foster continued student participation in four-year, cocurricular programs. FBISD allows juniors and seniors to participate in the third and fourth years of the following courses on a GPA-exempt basis:

• Advanced Journalism/Individual Study in Journalism (newspaper and yearbook) • Athletics (not PE) • Band • Cheerleading • Choir • Color Guard • Debate/Oral Interpretation • Dance Team • JROTC • Orchestra • Theatre (technical theatre, theatre arts, theatre production) An application is required. See counselor for more information.

## GPA-Exempt Courses

### ***Who is eligible to take a course on a GPA exempt basis?***

This option is available to juniors and seniors who wish to take courses from the approved list that are beyond the requirements for graduation. To qualify for the GPA exemption for the third- or fourth-year course, students must have an overall B average in the prerequisite courses for the third- or fourth year course for which he/she is seeking a waiver. He/she must also have already taken the first two years of this particular course (exception: cheerleading and dance team) at the high school campus. All students must meet the prerequisites of each course and have parent, teacher, and counselor approval.

Full-year courses must be exempt in full (not on a semester-by-semester basis). Full-year courses must be exempt in full (not on a semester-by-semester basis).

Junior students may receive a GPA exemption for only one course during the junior year. If the course is worth two credits, no other exemptions may be taken.

Senior students who have not used any of the GPA exemptions during their junior year would qualify for two exemptions (two credits) during their senior year as long as prerequisites are met. The option of securing exemptions for two classes (two credits) in the same year is only available to seniors for whom no GPA exemptions have been used prior to the senior year.

*NOTE: Students may take only two (2) full-year courses or four (4) half-year courses for a maximum of 2 credits, on a GPA-Exempt basis.*

### **How are grades handled in a GPA-exempt course?**

Students who are eligible and choose to take one of these courses for a GPA-exempt grade:

- Will receive a numeric grade all year on the report card.
- Will have these courses excluded from the computation of GPA and class rank.
- What are the performance standards for these courses?
- Students must complete all of the assigned work. The numeric grade earned will be reported on the report card.
- Students must take tests and final exams for the course unless exempt from finals.
- Students must maintain a passing semester grade average in order to remain eligible for the GPA exemption.

### **How will grades in a GPA-exempt course affect eligibility for extra-curricular activities?**

The numeric grades earned in a GPA-exempt course will be used to determine eligibility for participation in all extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, numeric grades will also be used in determining academic excellence; qualifying criteria used in the selection of students for various positions such as dance team officers, class officers, exam exemptions, etc.; and eligibility for academic awards, including admission to organizations such as the National Honor Society, etc.

**How do students enroll in a GPA-exempt course?** Students interested in taking one of the GPA-exempt courses must discuss this option with the counselor promptly at the beginning of the course. If the student meets all of the criteria, he/she must:

1. Complete the appropriate form.
2. Have the form signed by the parent and teacher.
3. Return the form to the counselor no later than the end of the second (2nd) week of each semester. At this time, if all criteria are met, it will be approved, and a course change will be made to reflect enrollment in a GPA-exempt course.
4. Once a student signs up to take a course as GPA-exempt, the decision cannot be changed.
5. Students enrolled in full-year courses do not need to reapply during the second semester.
6. Students, including transfer students, who miss the deadline for application for the first semester, may apply for exemption for the 2nd semester if they meet the criteria. An application has to be filled out and signed by the student, the parent, and the teacher.

### **Can a student exempt Cheerleading as a junior or senior?**

Yes. If the student was a cheerleader as a sophomore, he/she can exempt the jr year. If the student becomes a cheerleader as a jr, he/she can exempt the sr year as a cheerleader.

### **What are the requirements for the Dance Team waiver?**

If the student was a dance team member as a sophomore, he/she can exempt the jr year. If the student becomes a dance team member as a jr, he/she can exempt the sr year of the course. If a student exempts a course during the jr year, but does not enroll in the same course during the sr year, does he/she lose the exempt status for the jr year? No. Each year will stand alone.

**What if a student drops the exempt course?** Students are expected to complete a full-year course for which a GPA exemption has been approved. In extenuating circumstances where a student is approved to drop a GPA-exempt course after the first semester is completed, the student receives the first-semester credit as GPA-exempt. However, the remaining .5 GPA exemption cannot be applied to another course during 2024-25 Fort Bend ISD High School Course Selection Guide 127 the second semester or the following year. The requested 1-point GPA exemption is considered to be fully expended. If a student drops a full-year course for which a GPA exemption has been approved during the first semester, per established guidelines, the student enters a new course with no GPA exemption. In this case, the GPA exemption is available for use the following semester/ year, if requested and approved according to established guidelines.

**If a one-season athlete does not have an athletic program to enter in the spring semester of their senior year, may they exempt only one semester of the course?** Yes, in some cases the courses eligible for exemption are semester courses.

**When do exemption requests have to be turned into the counselor?** Exemption requests, with all signatures affixed, have to be turned into the counselor by the end of the second (2nd) week of each semester.

**Can a student take Art or Dance courses as GPA-exempt courses?** No. Art or Dance courses (other than dance team) are not offered as GPA-exempt courses for jrs and seniors. A freshman or jr dance team course can be used as a prerequisite for the dance team exemption in the jr and/or sr year.