

**FBISD Listening Tour FAQ
Hightower High School
February 6, 2017**

College and Career Readiness

- 1. Pharmacology and EMT Tech courses have been discontinued at HHS. House Bill 5 wants students to graduate with some certifications and college readiness. Will these courses return to HHS for 2017-18?**

Pharmacology will be offered at the new Career and Technical Center when it opens in Fall 2018. The Medical Academy has a Clinical Rotation course specific to only academy students which will provide them the opportunity to complete clinical rotations at hospitals. The CTE department is currently working with several hospitals in order to provide opportunities during these clinical rotation experiences that will prepare students for the EMT certification.

- 2. Why is the Princeton review course not offered at HHS?**

With the recent redesign of the SAT, which was first administered in Spring 2016, the College Board partnered with Khan Academy to develop an exceptional test prep platform which is free for all students. FBISD students, starting in 8th grade with the PSAT and in high school with the PSAT NMSQT, can receive individualized SAT study plans based on their PSAT performance. The District has focused its efforts on getting students to utilize Khan Academy. So far, more than 5,000 students in FBISD have taken advantage of Khan Academy, which is more than Test Prep companies like Princeton Review and Kaplan can reasonably service. The test prep companies also are costly for our students, parents and District.

- 3. Why does FBISD make it difficult for Dual Credit Courses (DCC) to be taught. If a professor from HCC is available to teach the courses for 1 or 2 classes at a campus, why are they not allowed? HCC professors should not have to be full-time FBISD employees to teach DCC. Please explain.**

This past school year, FBISD partnered with Houston Community College to provide free Dual Credit Courses for all FBISD students. As a result, close to 1,800 students enrolled in dual credit courses this school year, as compared to 600 last year. HCC and FBISD are committed to staffing all Dual Credit Courses with 15 or more registered students, which was accomplished this year. The courses were staffed with a combination of FBISD instructors who are qualified to teach dual credit (Master's Degree and 18 hours in the subject taught) and part-time adjunct professors from HCC who only taught 1 or 2 sections at the campus. The District understands that there have been many barriers

to Dual Credit in the past and thus are working hard, in collaboration with HCC, to remove these barriers and to make Dual Credit accessible to all qualifying students. FBISD and HCC have convened a Dual Credit Task Force this year with many district and campus stakeholders to guide improvement efforts and successfully manage the rapid growth of the program.

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4. Do students really understand the meaning of College and Career Readiness (CCR)? How successful is the program?

There is evidence that the District's CCR Program has been successful. Over the past five years, the number of FBISD students taking AP exams has increased by 56 percent and the number of AP exams scored 3 or higher has increased by 36 percent. This growth in AP exam participation has been led by our African American and Hispanic students with increases of 97 percent and 106 percent, respectively. Dual credit course enrollment has also increased by 185 percent over the past year. Helping FBISD students access AP courses and exams along with Dual Credit, is a central mission and focus of the District's CCR Program as taking and completing rigorous course work is strongly correlated to college enrollment and success.

The Class of 2016 hit five-year highs in Reading on both the SAT and ACT and on the ACT Composite Score. This was accomplished with a 28 percent increase in ACT participation over the past five years. The Class of 2016 also submitted more than 30,000 college applications, a seven percent increase over the Class of 2015. While we cannot control college acceptance and enrollment, we have developed systems through our CCR Advisors and Counselors to ensure students complete and submit their college applications through Naviance. Finally, regarding Career Readiness, there has been a 20 percent increase in students completing a coherent sequence of Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses over the past two years, which we expect to increase even more with the first HB 5 students graduating with Endorsements in 2017-18.

Curriculum

5. Has HHS offered its students to register to vote during lunch hours?

The high school Government course curriculum includes voter registration information and resources. The Principal or Principal's designee (see TAC 81.7) requests and distributes printed applications to of-age students once a semester in a manner to be determined by the campus. This can occur in class, during open house, before and after school and/or during lunches. The Secretary of State's office emails information regarding this process and a printed application request form to principals once a year.

In addition, the District's Social Studies administration team provides information and resources to principals and department chairs each year that they can use on their campus, which includes a list of volunteer registrars they can schedule to come to their campus.

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- 6. Can we make available Excel and PowerPoint learning for 5th graders? My son currently has computer lab at his school at CWE but he hasn't been taught Excel, Word, PowerPoint, etc., but will need these skills in middle school. Also, is it possible to get passwords for all books online, currently only a few books have passwords and usernames provided?**

The curriculum department is currently engaging in a curriculum writing process which will prioritize technology integration within the core content areas. By prioritizing technology integration, each core content area will provide learning experiences to students which build computer skills such as Excel, Word, and PowerPoint.

Online textbooks and their corresponding access points are included through the District website at the following link. <http://www.fortbendisd.com/Page/14847>

The District is not allowed to publish usernames and passwords because this violates intellectual property rights of our publishers. Teachers have been provided with this information and instructions. Students and parents should check with the appropriate teacher(s) if there are access problems.

Advanced Academics

- 7. Are there benefits allowed for Gifted and Talented (GT) students? I have heard that there are laptops, etc.**

Students identified as requiring gifted and talented services in FBISD are placed into cluster grouped, Pre-AP and AP classroom settings with GT trained teachers. These students benefit from this service model, which allows them to receive differentiated instruction in the classroom. Students in FBISD, including those identified for gifted service, have access to various technologies at each campus.

- 8. What Gifted and Talented services are available on the elementary school level?**

Gifted and Talented services are provided through differentiated instruction in GT cluster-grouped classrooms. Students participate in independent research and create sophisticated learning products, which result in opportunities to present to authentic audiences. Differentiated instruction provided to students aims to create greater depth and complexity for gifted students. Various enrichment opportunities are also available including Destination Imagination, where students are involved in creative problem solving and team building exercises.

- 9. What special programs are being offered for Gifted and Talented identified children. My daughter is identified as GT and Pre-AP courses, but it's my understanding that non-GT students are in Pre-AP courses. Do I need to be doing something with the school to make sure she is being challenged?**

Pre-AP and AP programming in FBISD is open to all students who wish to challenge themselves with advanced level curriculum. Gifted and Talented students at the secondary level are provided

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opportunities to explore Pre-AP and AP course content at greater depth and complexity through differentiated instruction provided by GT trained teachers. Parents are encouraged to partner with their children's teachers in order to provide support for the academic, social and emotional development of their children.

10. Based on 2014-2015 actual spending by school, there appears to be heavy emphasis on Middle and High School GT programs. Why are the majority of FBISD's \$20Mil spent at the middle and high school level, whereas elementary schools receive a minimal budget (\$0-2600)?

The District allocation per student for gifted services is less at the high school level than it is at the elementary level. Since more students are identified by the time they are in high school and since high schools have larger student populations, they receive a larger total amount resulting in the appearance that they receive more funding. Since more students are identified by middle and high school, there are also higher expenditures for staffing at these levels in order to serve these students. Staffing costs are not included in individual campus reports.

11. Why are the Elkins and Clements academies moving to Travis?

FBISD has six high school academies, which are housed at various campuses. The location of the academies is determined through building utilization. In January of 2015, the committee examining Academy programs and building utilization determined the location of the Global Studies Academy (Clements High School) and the International Business and Marketing Academy (Bush High School) needed to be changed to Travis High School. The Engineering Academy, currently at Elkins High School, has not been moved to another campus.

12. Are there plans to open an academy at Ridge Point High School?

At this time, FBISD has not planned for the creation of an academy at Ridge Point High School.

13. Any plans to invest more in academies like HISD?

FBISD currently has seven academies, six at the high school level and one at the middle school level. At this time, there are no plans to create more academies for the 2017-18 start of school.

14. My kids are currently in private school but I'm transitioning them into public school. They are currently straight A students and my concern is with Quail Valley being the only Gifted and Talented program for middle school, what are my options in terms of keeping them in a challenging program?

Quail Valley Middle School is not the only location where GT services are provided. Middle school GT identified students receive services at the campus where they are enrolled. All of our middle schools offer rigorous programming, Pre-AP courses which are aimed at ensuring students are academically ready for Advanced Placement courses in high school.

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15. When will the Gifted and Talented program be updated?

FBISD seeks to continually improve programs, including gifted services, through ongoing examination of best practices, stakeholder feedback, student data, as well as student engagement and success. Adjustments are made as needed to meet the needs of our gifted student population.

16. How can parents support or assist in the process of the curriculum re-write for the Gifted and Talented program?

Parents wishing to support the development of curriculum for their gifted identified students may discuss how their child is excelling with the currently provided supports and structures and advocate to their child's teacher the types of activities and lessons which seem to engage and motivate their children.

Special Education

17. Special Ed programs do not expand on options available when a child has special needs, why?

If a parent believes a student has needs that are not currently available in their educational programming, the parent should bring up these requests during an ARD meeting. If a parent has concerns or does not know what is available as far as options, they can contact the Department of Special Education and ask to speak with the Executive Director for Special Education at (281) 634-1142.

18. How can we better meet the needs of children in the classroom, i.e. providing them with elements they need to succeed, smaller classroom enrollment without discriminating, not to separate them, etc.? When parents have their children tested outside the school most children don't receive services based on the district criteria.

If a parent has a question about the difference between the services a child receives in the medical setting vs. the services received in the school setting, the parent is encouraged to speak to the special education evaluation specialist on the campus (Diagnostician) to further review discuss the concerns.

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19. I want to know about the education of students at differing abilities?

Students receiving special education have a variety of differences. Some of the more common disabilities/conditions are in the area of learning challenges, intellectual disabilities (this used to be called mental retardation), emotional and behavioral concerns (depression, anxiety, attentional problems, aggression, etc.) and autism. Special Education services may be provided to a student in a variety of settings to include the general education classroom, a special education setting such as resource, or a specialized program that is designed to utilize a different methodology or approach.

20. My son has dyslexia and will enter middle school in Fall 2018. How can I request that he be allowed to attend a different middle school than the one we are zoned to?

The Office of Student Affairs handles transfers within the district. Please contact their office for more information (281) 327-2829.

21. What can one do when the school does not help? How many days do we wait for an ARD meeting?

A parent is suggested to contact the campus principal if they have concerns about their child not receiving adequate help. The school should have an ARD within seven-10 days of the request. The parent should send the request in writing to the principal if the ARD is not scheduled timely.

22. Parents are concerned about deficiency of classroom instruction and too much change from class to class.

A parent is suggested to contact the special education case manager regarding the concerns and if the concerns with instruction are not resolved, the parent is encouraged to contact the campus principal.

Facilities/Construction

23. What are the top projects in construction occurring for the next five years in FBISD?

The top five projects include the completion of three new elementary schools and one middle school and the completion of the new Career and Technical Education building. In addition, there are numerous projects across the District addressing the replacement of HVAC systems that have reached the end of their lifecycle.

24. Are there any new construction projects at Elkins High School?

Through the Bond 2014 Program, Elkins High School will receive the following updates: replacement of the HVAC system and associated components, replacement of the emergency generator, replacement of some emergency lighting, replacement and rekeying of some interior and exterior doors.

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25. Has Blue Ridge Elementary restrooms been renovated?

Through the Bond 2014 program, BRE will receive renovations addressing an ADA compliant exterior ramp, exterior door rekeying, aluminum storefront replacement and minor painting. The bathrooms have not been renewed.

26. How are we addressing the overcrowding at Fort Settlement Middle School?

The District receives yearly projections from our outside consultant and continuously monitors enrollment. The current utilization for FSMS is 100.7 percent. The most recent projections indicate the utilization through the year 2026 will not exceed 110 percent. If the District were to notice an unexpected increase in enrollment it would consider the addition of portable buildings.

According to Board Policy FC Local, a school shall be considered adequately utilized so long as its enrollment falls between 80-120 percent of its capacity. As part of our continuous planning efforts, Fort Bend ISD conducts enrollment reviews annually, utilizing projections from an independent demographer.

27. Is it possible to add another pick up and drop off area to relieve traffic congestion and avoid using the neighborhood as the alternate?

If you feel this is needed and not being addressed, contact your school principal. A school site can be evaluated to determine the feasibility of adding or reconfiguring the existing drop off area to provide additional off street stacking of cars.

Extracurricular Activities

28. Where are activity buses available?

Individual campuses offer after school activity buses based on need. Buses are currently offered two-three days per week at the following campuses:

Austin High School

Bush High School

Dulles High School

Marshall High School

Ridge Point High School

Willowridge High School

Baines Middle School

Bowie Middle School

Crockett Middle School

Dulles Middle School

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Fort Settlement Middle School

Hodges Bend Middle School

Lake Olympia Middle School

McAuliffe Middle School

Missouri City Middle School

29. What extra-curricular activities are provided at middle school?

All schools offer a variety of athletics and fine arts. In addition, principals offer clubs and activities depending on student need and interest. Some examples include:

Robotics

Coding

Chess

Boys to Men

Girls Club

Cooking

Drama

Writing Club

Book Club

Student Council

Art Club

Wall street Warriors

Athletics

Fine Arts

NJHS (National Junior Honor Society)

Anime

Mentor Program

Harry Potter Club

Math Counts

UIL Programs

FCA (Fellowship Christian Athletes)

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Contact your child's campus principal for specific offerings at your school.

30. What activities/clubs are offered at the elementary level?

Activities and clubs at the elementary level vary by campus. Some examples include:

Student Council

Choir

National honor Society

Robotics

Recycling

Destination Imagination

Dance/Step

Art

Piano

Broadcast Team

Film Club

Safety patrol

Fitness Team

Girls Club

Gentleman's Club

Contact your child's principal for the offerings at your particular campus.

District Calendar

31. What was the result of the calendar survey and are we adding minutes to the day next year?

The calendar survey attracted 18,000 responses. The most common request was to maintain the week off at Thanksgiving which the calendar committee has honored. Additional minutes are not being recommended for the 2017-18 school year.

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32. Why does middle school start at 8:50 a.m. and high school at 7:30 a.m.? Many studies indicate that HS students do a better job with later start.

Currently, FBISD has three different start times that allow for the rotation of transportation and bus drivers. About two years ago, the District did a comprehensive study of this issue. There are certainly benefits to high school students beginning later. After months of research and discussion there was not clear agreement to make the major change which disrupts all three levels. Some reservation was due to elementary children being at bus stops early in the morning often in the dark, high school students not available to watch siblings after school and the later travel and start of UIL activities such as athletics or fine arts. The switch of beginning times will likely be revisited again in the future.