

Ready Texas



IDRA study points to the troubling effects of the state's new graduation requirements

HB5

In 2013, Texas made the most substantial changes to graduation requirements & school curricula in recent history.

House Bill 5 weakened graduation requirements for math, science and social studies and created a system of endorsement specialties for high school students. The policy ended the more rigorous college prep 4x4* plan.

With funding from the Greater Texas Foundation, IDRA conducted a study of HB5 implementation to see how it is affecting student courses and implications for college readiness.

Taking higher math is an indicator of high school and college success.

But Algebra II is no longer a required course for all students in Texas!

96%



Students who took Algebra II or greater

Percent who graduated from high school

54%



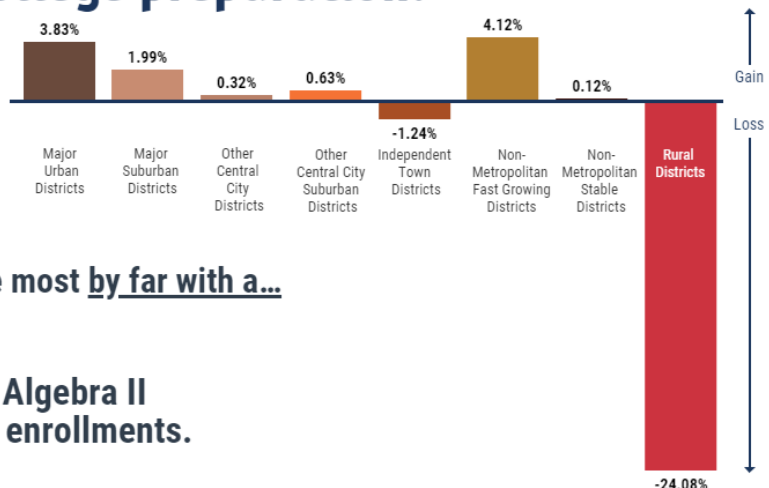
Low-income students who took less than geometry

One study of Texas students found that students who take Algebra II and higher math are much more likely to graduate from high school in four years.

Pathways of Promise: Statewide Mathematics Analysis, by E3 Alliance, 2015

Are some kids in Texas missing out on a chance at college preparation? **Yes!**

IDRA found that, after HB5, fewer school districts are enrolling students in Algebra II.

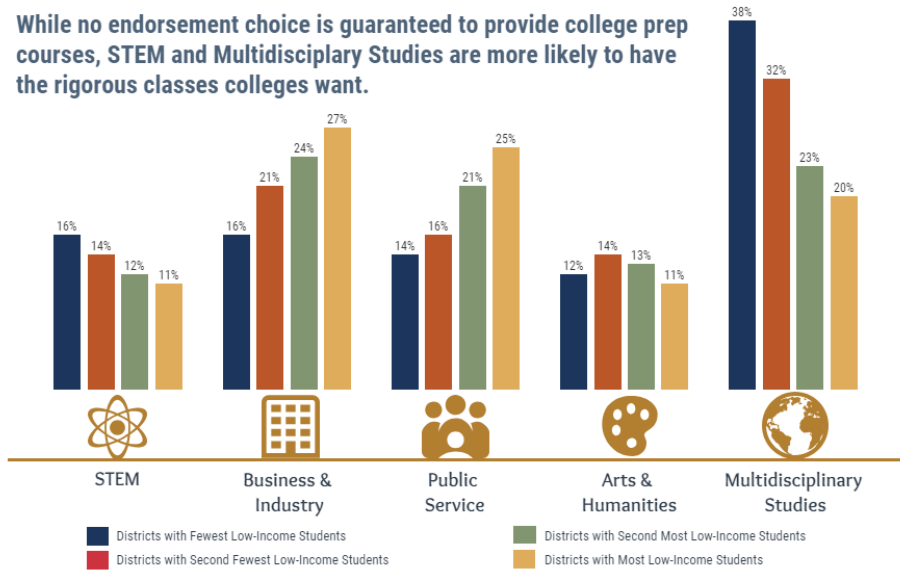


Rural districts lost the most by far with a...

24% loss in Algebra II course enrollments.

Students in low-wealth school districts* were much more likely to be earning an endorsement in Public Service or Arts & Humanities, which are less likely to prepare students for college.

While no endorsement choice is guaranteed to provide college prep courses, STEM and Multidisciplinary Studies are more likely to have the rigorous classes colleges want.



* Defined by the percentage of economically disadvantaged students in the district

What did our focus groups tell us?

Counselors are concerned that endorsements may derail students' college plans because they often are presented as equally important as college prep coursework.

Counselors

Without exception, all parents in our focus groups have college-going aspirations for their children.

They are frustrated about not having information about HB5 & worry that the lack of info will affect their child's college career.

Parents

Most students in this study aspired to attend college, and they understood that endorsements satisfy no requirements for college admission or success.

Students

None of the endorsements or the Distinguish Level of Achievement matches the rigor of the old 4x4. Back then, over 80 percent of students were meeting high standards upon graduation.

It doesn't have to be this way.
Texas can go back to the rigorous 4x4... It was working!

In the meantime, 45 districts we studied now require the Distinguish Level of Achievement as the default to help ensure their students get the higher level courses they need and are eligible for the Texas Top Ten Percent Plan for automatic admission to public colleges in the state.

*The 4x4 required all students to take four courses each in math, science, English and social studies.

See IDRA's study, policy recommendations and podcast episode "Ready Texas - A Study of the Implementation of HB5 in Texas and Implications for College Readiness" <https://budurl.me/IDRAreadyTX>



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