

ESSA Training Kit

Texas Graduation Requirements and Opportunities

Lesson 4

This kit is the fourth in a set of four developed from the Annual IDRA La Semana del Niño Parent Institute in 2017 for use in training and technical assistance for school districts to strengthen family engagement.

This kit is based on a presentation on graduation requirements. While this lesson focuses on Texas policy, the steps can be adapted to other states.



Welcome and Introduction

Describe goals for the session. Have participants introduce themselves and state one thing they hope to learn more about.



Think-Pair-Share

Ask: **What is the difference between the high school classes colleges require students to take and the courses Texas students take to earn an endorsement in high school.**

Have participants discuss in pairs. Report out highlights and point out commonalities.



Small Group

Hand out **Expecting Less is Not Better – Texas' New Graduation Tracks Push Students Away from College**. Have participants circle the three statements that they feel are most important or concerning. Have them share their three points with others in their group and discuss.

To report out, have each group decide on the group's top three points. Have them write each topic on a half sheet of paper or large sticky note (one point per note, large print, three to five words) and post them on the wall.



PowerPoint

Show the PowerPoint: **High School Graduation Requirements & What Colleges Look For**. Pause after Slide 9 for discussion of the overview of Texas' graduation requirements. Stress the importance of the Algebra II and the Distinguished Level of Achievement.

Proceed with Slides 10-16 . See if there are questions about the Endorsements. Stress key points: No endorsement ensures college preparation. Available courses within Endorsements vary widely across different high schools.

Continue with the rest of the PowerPoint. Spend more time on slides that relate to the issues raised by the small groups and by questions participants have shared.

Materials for this kit are online at: <https://budurl.me/2-IDRAedCAFE>



Small Groups

Have the groups review the points they posted on the wall. Ask, what additional concerns or points they have. Have them synthesize them and add more to the wall.



Large Group

Read aloud from the sticky notes. Answer questions and invite participants to provide clarity and ideas.

In examining how their own high school(s) is doing with preparing students for college, ask the group what information they may want to pursue. Examples include:

- How many students are taking Algebra II?
- Are students of all racial/ethnic groups and genders proportionately enrolled in higher level courses (like pre-AP, AP, dual credit)?
- Does our school or district make the Distinguished Level of Achievement the default graduation path?
- How many students are pursuing each Endorsement?
- Do families of students in our school understand the graduation requirements?

If there is interest, have all or a subset of participants plan next steps to get answers to one or more of the questions they identified.



Closing

Invite parents to the next session and advise them of the next Annual IDRA La Semana del Niño Parent Institute.

Learn about IDRA's Education CAFEs – Community Action Forums for Excellence

Grounded in IDRA's Family Leadership in Education framework, an Education CAFE is a parent group that is rooted in a community-based organization, rather than in a single school. And its sole purpose is to collaborate with schools to improve the success of students in the community. With support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, IDRA is establishing a Texas Education CAFE Network of community-based family and educator groups that help inform public education policies and practices related to implementation of ESSA.

<https://budurl.me/2-IDRAedCAFE>

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