

7.8 Programs of Study for All Students

Programs of study have been around for a long time, but House Bill 5 now requires counselors to advise students through a program of study that leads to an endorsement. All districts must have programs of study.

What's different today is that programs of study serve as comprehensive education plan used as a tool for college and career readiness. They also provide students exposure to careers they may not have been aware of.

For example, a district may develop an Engineering program of study that identifies 4 CTE courses as the concentration. They also might develop a Performing Arts program of study, concentrating on music. This could include 4 courses of a particular instrument such as piano, clarinet, or even band. Remember, programs of study may or may not include CTE courses.

A program of study identifies an occupational objective and advises a student through high school. It's as an advisement tool, not something etched in stone. Programs of study advise the counselor, student, and parent.

The Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) works in conjunction with a students' program of study. The PGP assists the counselor to individualize the program of study to meet the needs of all students.

The Texas Education Agency has provided many resources through AchieveTexas. A template for programs of study can be found there. Many Education Service Centers also have templates districts can use to develop quality programs of study.

Districts create their own programs of study and have the flexibility to align curriculum to best serve the needs of their students and community, as identified in House Bill 5.

It's important for districts to consider developing programs of study first, and then align them to endorsements. In this way, students can see real world connections and value for themselves.

Think about programs of study as "road maps" helping students navigate the goals they, themselves, have identified. This is how we develop a strong college and career culture, by teaching students to be their own self advocates.