

Attachment A-2. School Principal Email

Dear [High School Principal],

REL Southwest would like to invite your school to participate in a research study examining changes in the mathematics course requirements for high school graduation being implemented under Texas House Bill 5 (the Foundation High School Program).

The study will investigate whether providing the parents of students entering grade 9 during the 2014-15 school year with information about the changes to the mathematics course requirements (as well as providing a comparison of the admissions requirements for most four-year, public universities and colleges in Texas) has an impact on students' mathematics course enrollment in high school. Specifically, the study will look at differences in the algebra II enrollment and completion between students whose parents received this information and those students whose parents receive informational materials alerting them to changes in the Texas high school graduation requirements and providing them with information on how to access additional resources describing these changes included on several state and regional websites.

Who is eligible to participate?

We are looking for high schools that are not requiring incoming grade 9 students to complete the Distinguished Level of Achievement (i.e., requiring students to complete Algebra II) and that are willing to mail informational materials describing the changes to the high school graduation mathematics requirements to parents of students entering grade 9 during the 2014-15 school year. Materials will be distributed during the early spring of 2016.

How will the study be conducted?

The study will be conducted as a randomized controlled trial. At the beginning of the study, one-half of the participating high schools will be randomly assigned to receive information describing changes to the Texas high school graduation requirements, with a specific emphasis on changes to the mathematics requirements and how these changes may impact college access (treatment), while the other half of the participating schools (control group) will provide parents/guardians with information describing changes to the Texas graduation requirements and providing parents with links to additional resources describing these changes included on state and regional websites. Schools will be asked to distribute these materials during the spring of 2016. High schools in the control schools will receive the materials provided to treatment schools at the conclusion of the study, if desired.

What are the study materials and how will they be distributed?

The study materials will consist of an information brochure—provided in English and Spanish—to be mailed to students' homes. Schools will receive a box of prepaid, pre-stuffed envelopes containing the informational brochure, and they will be asked to print and adhere mailing labels containing student addresses to the envelopes and place them in the U.S. Mail. REL Southwest will reimburse schools up to \$150 to cover the cost of staff time and address label printing materials. Schools will not be asked to provide any student data to REL Southwest. It is estimated that it should not take more than 3 hours for schools to prepare and mail the envelopes.

Schools will not be requested to provide any student data for this study. Most of the data needed for the study will be received from extant data requested from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and will be kept confidential. All individually identifiable information about schools, students, and families will remain confidential in accordance with FERPA regulations. All published reports will be presented in the aggregate- with no individual school or student information provided.

How will you benefit?

Participating schools will receive informational brochures in spring 2016 or at the conclusion of the study describing the new mathematics requirements being implemented under the new Foundation High School Program graduation plans and how these requirements compare to the admissions requirements for most four-year, public universities and colleges in Texas to distribute to parents. The brochures will be available in English and Spanish. These brochures are designed to help students in your schools make informed choices about the mathematics courses they complete.

How can I receive more information or sign up for the study?

For more information or to participate in the study, contact Deborah Van Kummer at (512) 391-6551 or deborah.vankummer@sedl.org.

THANK YOU!

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