

BROWNSVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM DISTRICT GUIDELINES

1. General Information

The Brownsville Independent School District promotes participation in the Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP) by providing several options and educational opportunities for students to earn this extraordinary educational distinction. The DAP requires high performance beyond that expected of students in high school and it includes an external evaluation component. Students who wish to complete the DAP and have the accomplishment recognized on the Academic Achievement Record (transcript) must:

- complete all required courses; and successfully complete
- four advanced measures,

The State Board of Education (SBOE) has articulated the requirements to obtain advanced measures through test data, college courses, and original research/projects. These requirements are-

Test data:

- a score of three or above on any of The College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) examinations;
- a score of four or above on an International Baccalaureate (IB) examination; (currently no campus offers an IB Program)
- a score on the PSAT that qualifies a student for recognition as a Commended Student or higher by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation; as part of the National Hispanic Scholar Program of The College Board; or as part of the National Achievement Scholarship Program for Outstanding Negro Students of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. A student must score approximately 200 or above on the PSAT to be a Commended Student.

The PSAT score may count as only one advanced measure regardless of number of honors received by the student

College courses:

may only be granted in courses approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and only granted when a student earns a grade of 3.0 or higher on courses that count for college credit, including tech prep programs. The approved courses are included in the *CommunityCollege General Academic Course Guide Manual*. (this document can be ordered at (512) 483 61 11 or on the Internet at <http://www.theccb.state.tx.us/divisions/GRPI/publications.htm>).

Original research/project:

- judged by a panel of professionals in the field that is the focus of the project;
- conducted under the direction of mentor(s) and reported to an appropriate audience;
- related to essential knowledge and skills in either the foundation curriculum or the enrichment curriculum; and
- conducted during the junior or senior years.

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II. District Advanced Measures Award Allowances

In addition to specific course requirements, the DAP requires that all students successfully complete four advanced measures. The District will allow advanced measures to be earned with the following stipulations:

Four Advanced Measures: **Four (4)** advanced measures allowed from *each* of these items:

- The College Board's Advanced Placement Examinations
- International Baccalaureate Examinations

Two Advanced Measures: **Two(2)** advanced measures allowed from *each* of these items:

- Original Research/Project
each successful original research project will count as one advanced measure

- College course credit

One Advanced Measure: As per SBOE rule, no more than **one (1)** advanced measure allowed from:

- PSAT Commended Score
may count as only one advanced measure regardless of the number of honors received by the student

III. Documenting Advanced Measure Completion

A student will be notified of a passing score (3, 4, or 5) on a College Board Advanced Placement (AP) examination after the end of the school year.

When a student has completed at least **two (2)** advanced measures at the time of application to a post-secondary institution and has the results of at least **two (2)** additional advanced measures pending, written notification of the student's work toward completing the Distinguished Achievement

Program must be attached to the Academic Achievement Record (transcript) when forwarded to requesting institutions.

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When verification of the successful completion of the remaining two (2) advanced measures has been received by the District, "Distinguished Achievement Program Completion" shall be placed on the student Academic Achievement Record (transcript).

IV. DAP Transfer Student Guidelines

The following guidelines shall be applied to transfer students:

Advanced measures from the categories of test data, college courses, and original research/projects shall be recognized by BISD according to Section 11, Advanced Measures Awards Allowances.

Two original research/projects completed during the student's junior or senior year shall be recognized provided the student submits evidence of successful completion.

Students who have started original research/projects in their former districts must submit to their counselor/advisor the "Research/Project Proposal Application for an Advanced Measure" form by the end of the third week of enrollment. (Form #I)

The counselor/advisor must refer the student to the DAP Campus Coordinator who will ensure that the student is assisted in finding an appropriate mentor, and/or enrolled in the appropriate course.

V. Original Research/Project Advanced Measure Option

A. Purpose

The original research/project option of the DAP helps to recognize advanced independent learners who can conduct in-depth research, prepare products of high quality, and present their findings to appropriate audiences. The students, independently or in collaboration with a mentor, investigate a problem, issue, or concern, research the topic using a variety of technologies, complete a high quality research paper, maintain a portfolio that documents a variety of skills, and present a product of high quality to an appropriate audience.

The research project must relate to the required curriculum set forth in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.

The research/project may initially be a collaborative one in which both the student and the mentor work together, however:

- the research/project must be completed by the student independently with the mentor providing feedback throughout the process,
- at every stage of the research/project the student must initiate the activity; and
- the research/project must produce a product or performance that is the result of extensive research, analysis, and interpretation.

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The following district guidelines are provided to clearly delineate the procedures for independent research/projects. The purpose of the guidelines is to assist campus compliance with the required external evaluation, prior to granting advanced measures in this area.

The guidelines define the following areas:

- The student objectives of the original research/project;
- The recommended timelife of the original research/project;
- The role and responsibilities of the DAP Campus Coordinator;
- The duties of the DAP Advisory Board;
- The selection criteria and responsibilities for mentors;
- The original research/project evaluation procedures.

Student Objectives

The Distinguished Achievement Program Candidate will:

1. Demonstrate real-world problem solving skills and acquire information from community resources.
Objective #1: Assessment: secure a mentor that meets all required qualifications.
2. Define and frame a problem, issue, or concern in terms of an objective, hypothesis, or guiding question; document what is already known; demonstrate independent investigation of a problem, issue, or concern within a selected profession or discipline.
Objective #2: Assessment: research/project proposal application.
3. Demonstrate understanding of the technologies utilized in a selected profession or discipline.
Objective #3: Assessment: research/project portfolio.
4. Use evidence to test hypotheses, form opinions, and draw conclusions to support ideas and generalizations with specific, relevant, and accurate information.
Objective #4: Assessment: research/project portfolio.
5. Develop products that include a research paper and project that meet standards recognized by the selected profession or discipline.
Objective #5: Assessment: score given by readers and evaluation by mentor.
6. Demonstrate understanding of the selected problem, issue, or concern by explaining or justifying findings to an appropriate audience'
Objective #6: Assessment: scores given by the panel of professionals.
7. Demonstrate the ability to self-evaluate his/her work.
Objective #7: Assessment: self-evaluation interview with the panel.

**Distinguished Achievement Program
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Recommended Timeline: Full Academic Year Implementation for Original/Research Project

Month	Activity
August-September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students choose mentors/DAP Coordinator verifies • Distribute "Research/Project Proposal Application" to students (Form #1)
Assessment	Objective #1: The student will demonstrate real-world problem solving skills and acquire information from community resources.
October	"Research/Project Proposal Applications" due
Assessment	Objective #2: The student will define and frame a problem, issue, or concern in terms of an objective, hypothesis, or guiding question; document what is already known; demonstrate independent investigation of a problem, issue, or concern within a selected profession or discipline.
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor completes the "Research/Project Proposal Application Mentor Evaluation" (Form #2) • Parent notification of student "Research/Project Proposal Application" acceptance or denial • Selection and grouping of panel members by DAP Coordinator
December	• DAP research: begin Research/Project Paper. Project and Portfolio
Assessment	Objective #3: The student will demonstrate understanding of the technologies utilized in a selected profession or discipline and maintain evidence in the research/project portfolio; and Objective #4: use evidence to test hypotheses, form opinions, and draw conclusions to support ideas and generalizations with specific, relevant, and accurate information maintained in the research/project portfolio.
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue work on Research/Project Paper, Project, and Portfolio • Finalize work on Research/Project Paper
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor completes the Paper Content Evaluation to verify accuracy of content of Research/Project Paper (Form #3) • Final Draft of Research/Project Paper due • Independent readers score papers (Form #4A and #4B)
Assessment	Objective #5: The student will develop products that meet standards recognized by the selected profession or discipline
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewrite of Research/Project Paper due • DAP Coordinator tallies independent reader scores (Form #5) • Mentor Verification (Form #6) completed by mentor for DAP Project
Assessment	Objective #5: The student will develop products that meet standards recognized by the selected profession or discipline
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viewing and evaluation of DAP Project and Portfolio by panel (Form #7 & #8) • Research/Project Presentation With Student Self-Evaluation(Form#9&#10) • Maintain all DAP student records at campus (Form # 11)
Assessment	<p>Objective #5: The student shall develop products that meet standards recognized by the selected profession or discipline</p> <p>Objective #6: The student will demonstrate understanding of the selected problem, issue, or concern by explaining or justifying findings to an appropriate audience</p> <p>Objective #7: The student will demonstrate the ability to self-evaluate his/her work</p>

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Recommended Timeline: Academic Semester or the Equivalent for Original/Research Project

Month	Activity
1 st Month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students choose mentors/DAP Coordinator verifies • Distribute "Research/Project Proposal Application" to students (Form #I) • "Research/Project Proposal Applications" due
Assessment	Objective #1: The student will demonstrate real-world problem solving skills and acquire information from community resources
2 nd Month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor completes the "Research/Project Proposal Application Mentor Evaluation: (Form #2) • Parent notification of student "Research/Project Proposal Application: acceptance or denial • Selection and grouping of panel members by DAP Coordinator • DAP research: begin Research/Project Paper. Project. and Portfolio
Assessment	<p>Objective #2: The student will define and frame a problem issue, or concern in terms of an objective, hypothesis or guiding question; document what is already known; demonstrate independent investigation of a problem, issue, or concern within a selected profession or discipline.</p> <p>Objective #3: The student will demonstrate understanding of the technologies utilized in a selected profession or discipline and maintain evidence in the research/project portfolio; and</p> <p>Objective #4: use evidence to test hypothesis, form opinions, and draw conclusions to support ideas and generations with specific, relevant, and accurate information maintained in the research/project portfolio</p>
3 rd Month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue work on Research/Project Paper. Project, and Portfolio • Finalize work on Research/Project paper • Mentor completes the Paper Content Evaluation to verify accuracy of content of Research/Project paper (Form #3) • Final Draft of Research/Project paper due • Independent readers score papers (Form #4A and #4B)
Assessment	Objective #5: The student will develop products that meet standards recognized by the selected profession or discipline
4 th Month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewrite of Research/Project Paper due • DAP Coordinator tallies independent reader scores (Form#5) • Mentor Verification (Form #6) completed by mentor for DAP Project
Assessment	Objective #5: The student will develop products that meet standards recognized by the selected profession or discipline
5 th Month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viewing and evaluation of DA.P Project and Portfolio by panel (Form #7 & 8) • Research/Project Presentation with Student Self-Evaluation (Form #9 & #10) • Maintain all DA-P student records at campus (Form #11)
Assessment	<p>Objective #5: The student will develop products that meet standards recognized by the selected profession or discipline</p> <p>Objective #6: The student will demonstrate understanding of the selected problem, issue, or concern by explaining or justifying findings to an appropriate audience</p> <p>Objective #7: The student will demonstrate the ability to self-evaluate his/her work</p>

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DAP Campus Coordinator

To ensure the successful implementation of the research/project, the principal of each high school must select a member of the faculty to serve as the DAP Campus Coordinator. This person shall have several duties that include:

- Ensuring compliance with the BISD DAP Guidelines;
- Attending any necessary District training;
- Communicating with mentors regarding student progress;
- Communicating with students regarding progress;
- Conducting any necessary staff development related to the DAP;
- Completing the DAP Paper Computation Sheet and providing documentation to the student and mentor;
- Scheduling panels to evaluate student portfolios and products
- Selecting the lead panel member for each panel; and
- Scheduling students and panel members for research/project presentations.

DAP Advisory Board

A campus must establish a DAP Advisory Board to act as an oversight committee for difficult decisions related to the DAP Research/Project. The Advisory Board should be comprised of individuals such as a campus administrator, the DAP Campus Coordinator, and designated teachers. This group will meet when necessary to make a decision in situations such as:

- Denying or approving questionable projects;
- Excluding a student from DAP participation because of infractions such as a missed deadline or plagiarism; and
- Any other situation in which the DAP Campus Coordinator may require guidance.

An odd number of members are recommended to aid in a voting process. All decisions of the DAP Advisory Board are final.

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Selection Criteria and Responsibilities of Mentors

The approval of the mentor is critical to the success of the students' research/projects. Individuals who choose to serve as a mentor must meet the following criteria:

- The mentor must have expertise in the assigned field or selected area of study as documented by a college degree in the subject area, a professional license, successful business experience in the specialized field, or experience as a teacher at the high school level or college level in the subject area.
- The mentor may be a faculty member of the school including the student's teacher of record.
- The mentor must complete the "Research/Project Proposal Application Mentor Evaluation" form. (Form #2)
- The mentor must read the final draft of the student's paper for accuracy and thoroughness of content and sign the Paper Content Evaluation form. (Form #3)
- The mentor must make a commitment to provide guidance and direction to the student for the duration of the research/project to include on-going review of the student's project and research/project portfolio.
- The mentor must review the student's product to determine if and how well the student met or her goals by completing the product, then sign and note comments on the Product Mentor Verification form. (Form #6)
- The mentor must provide all documentation to the panel.

Panel Composition

The State Board of Education (SBOE) requires that research/projects must be judged by a panel of professionals in the field that is the focus of the research/project.

- The panel member must have expertise in the assigned field or selected area of study as documented by a college degree in the subject area, a professional license, successful business experience in the specialized field, or experience as a teacher at the high school level or college level in the subject area.
- The panel must be composed of five members that the principal or administrative designee and DAP Campus Coordinator have deemed an appropriate audience.

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- Two of the five-member panel may be faculty members at the student's campus.
- A member of the panel must serve as the lead panel member who must briefly document the completion of the research/project and provide this documentation to the counselor's office.

Procedures to Evaluate Research/Project Papers

- Paid independent readers will grade research/project papers using the District rubric. (Form #4A and Form #4B)
- The DAP Campus Coordinator will complete the DAP Paper Computation Sheet and return the results to the student and mentor. (Form #5)
- All information regarding the student's research/project paper will be returned to the mentor within 10 days.
- Student papers that are not scored at an average of 3.0 or better will be given one rewrite opportunity.

After the rewrite, if the independent readers do not score the paper at an average of 3.0 or better, the student will not be permitted to complete the research/project for an advanced measure.

Procedures to Evaluate the Project and the Research/Project Portfolio

The panel of professionals will convene before the scheduled presentation date to evaluate the DAP project and the research/project portfolio.

- The mentor must review the student's product to determine if and how well the student met his or her goals by completing the product, then sign and note comments on the Product Mentor Verification. (Form #6)
- The panel members must use the District rubric to evaluate the DAP product. (Form #7)
- The panel members must use the District rubric to evaluate the research/project portfolio. (Form #8)

If the panel members do not score the DAP Project or Portfolio at an average of 3.0 or better, the student will not be permitted to present before the panel of professionals.

Research/Project Portfolio Requirements

- *Research/Project Journal* documenting the student self-evaluation and work experiences as the proposal, paper, product, and portfolio of the research/project option are completed;

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- *Research/Project Time Log* documenting the date and time spent on the research/project paper and product;
 - *Research/Project Work Log* describing the work done during the time(s) spent on the research/project paper and product;
 - *Research/Project Paper* the final draft of the research paper written by the student include the evaluations and comments by the independent readers;
 - *Certificates or Letters of Recommendation* earned by the student throughout the research/project phases;
 - *Audience Verification* including videos, evaluation forms, pictures of the student involved in a research/project process, programs, etc.*
- * *Audience Verification is a portfolio requirement if the research/project product is a performance of skills or talents clearly beyond that expected of a high school student.*

Procedures to Evaluate Research/Project Presentation

- Panel members must use the District rubric to evaluate the research/project oral presentation. (Form #9)
- If the panel members do not score the research/project oral presentation at an average of 3.0 or better, the student will not be awarded an advanced measure.*
- Panel members must use the District form to record the responses of the research/project student's self-evaluation questions. A student should provide "Successful" answers to provide panel members insight into the quality of the student's self-evaluation. (Form #10)
- Answers to questions judged "Not successful" will not disqualify a student from earning an advanced measure.*
- The student's mentor will serve as a resource to the panel during the presentation.
 - The lead panel member will complete the Final Score Computation Sheet. (Form #11)
 - Each panel member will have one vote to award or deny the advanced measure.
 - The decision of the panel to award or deny the advanced measure is final.
 - Documentation of the written evaluations of mentors/panel members on the approved District form must be maintained at each campus. (Form # 1 2)

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B. Possible Program Structures

Several structures may be considered in order to create a successful DAP Research/Project opportunity for students.

- A student may pursue the original research/project while enrolled in a standard class (e.g., English IH or IV) with peers who are also pursuing the DAP. In this structure, the teacher of the class is the mentor.
- A student can have a mentor who fulfills the requirements. (See Section V, Selection Criteria and Responsibilities of Mentors). The mentor will meet with the student at predetermined times (not necessarily during the school day) because the mentor is not necessarily the student's teacher of record. Stipends paid to mentors in this structure will be the decision of campus administration.
- The independent study courses offered in most academic disciplines may be utilized to afford DAP students the opportunity to complete their original research/project under the close guidance of a mentor. In this structure, the teacher of the class is the mentor. Independent Study courses include:
 - Independent Study in English (one-half to one credit)
 - Independent Study in Speech (one-half to one credit)
 - Independent Study in Journalism (one-half to one credit)
 - Independent Study in Technology Applications (one-half to one credit)
 - Social Studies Advanced Studies (one-half to one credit)
(students may take this course with different course content for a maximum of two (2) credits)
 - Economics Advanced Studies (one-half credit)
(students may take this course with different course content for a maximum of one (1) credit)
 - Independent Study in Mathematics (one-half to one credit)
 - Independent Study in Business Education (one-half to one credit)

Careful consideration must be given in designing the structures that will support students in their DAP work, e.g., approval of mentors.

Overall Evaluation

The DAP Research/Project option consists of four (4) parts: the paper, the product, the portfolio, and the presentation. Three (3) of the parts must be scored 3.5 to 4.0 in order for the student to earn an advanced measure. A score of 3.0 to 3.4 is permissible on one of the four parts to allow for flexibility in assessing student work. The academic rigor and "learning stretch" of a student must not be compromised in order to have students earn an advanced measure from the research/project option.

BISD does not discriminate on basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or provision of services, programs or activities. BISD no discrimina a base de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo, religión, edad o discapacidad en el empleo en la provisión de servicios o actividades.
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