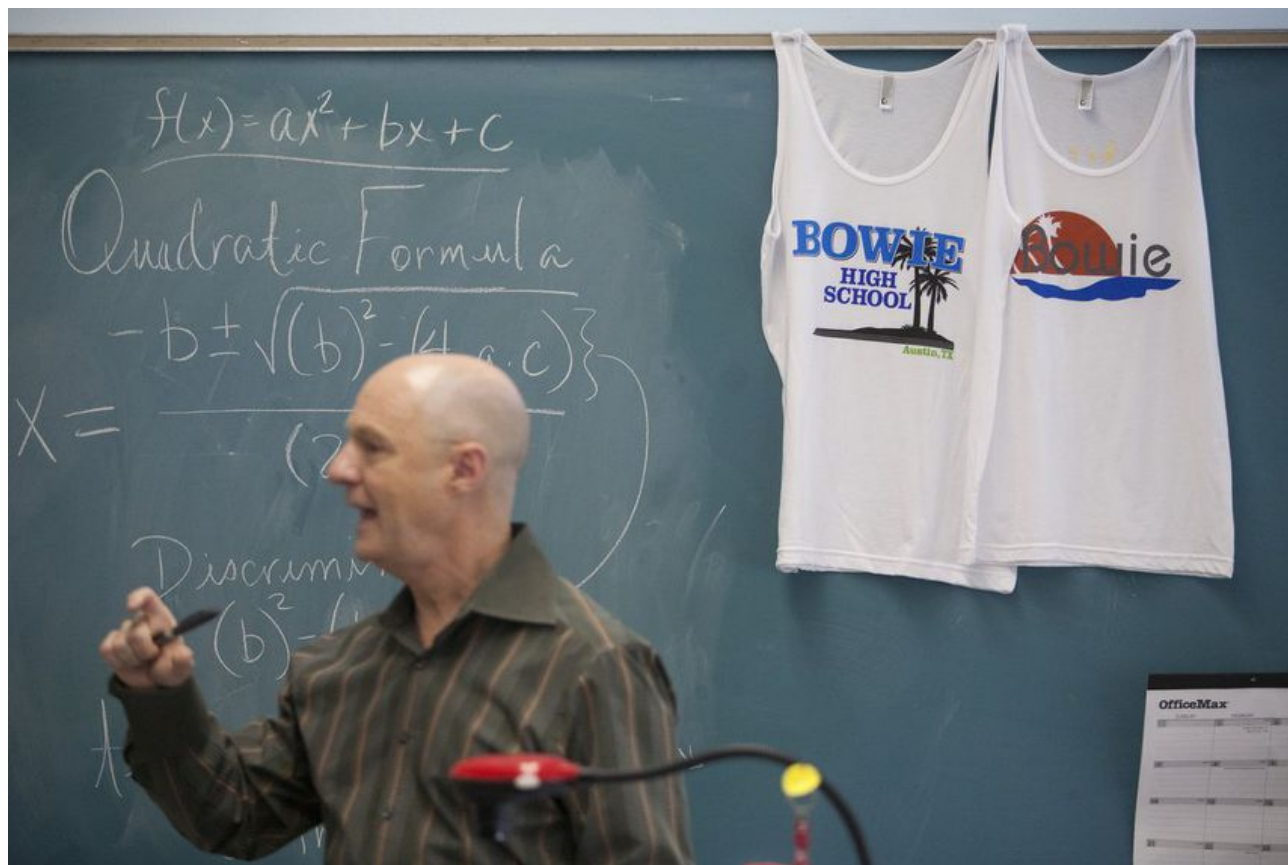


SBOE Retreats From Algebra II in High School Grad Plans

Shifting from a previous proposal, the State Board of Education voted Thursday to require algebra II only for students who pursue an honors plan or a diploma specializing in math and science.

BY [MORGAN SMITH](#) AND [JORDAN GASS-POORE](#) NOV. 21, 2013 8 PM



Hank Warner teaches a pre-advanced placement algebra course for ninth graders at Bowie High School in Austin. Tamir Kalifa

Only high school students who pursue an honors plan or a diploma specializing in math and science will have to take algebra II under recommendations that the Texas State Board of Education preliminarily approved Thursday.

Despite an [initial proposal](#) that had included the advanced math course in all five new diploma plans, the 15-member board was nearly unanimous in its decision Thursday. The single no vote came from [Martha Dominguez](#), D-El Paso.

"I think what we've done so far tonight accomplishes what we've been charged to do," said member [Marty Rowley](#), R-Amarillo.

The board, which has the responsibility of determining which courses school districts should offer in five separate endorsements as a part of an overhaul passed by the Legislature in May, has had two days of testimony and discussion on the topic. That included an [unexpected visit](#) from House Public Education Chairman [Jimmie Don Aycock](#), R-Killeen, and Senate Education Chairman [Dan Patrick](#), R-Houston. Both lawmakers urged the board to reserve as much flexibility for local school districts as possible — and not to require algebra II to fulfill all of the graduation plans.

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The new law came with the support of many educators, parents and a coalition of business leaders who cited the need to provide more relevant courses for students who might not continue to college.

“There are many children that we are crowding to the side of the system because they do not see relevance in their courses,” said Aycock.

But opponents of the policy, including the Austin Chamber of Commerce, the Texas Association of Business and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, have continued to raise concerns that emerged during the legislative session about how the new graduation plans would affect the academic achievement of low-income and minority students.

“With all due respect, the notion that not all students are college material or that our school system should not have a college expectation for all students is not something that is coming from African-American and Latino parents,” former state Rep. [Dora Olivo](#), D-Richmond, said in testimony Wednesday.

After a second vote Friday, the board will finally approve the requirements at its January meeting.

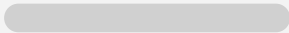
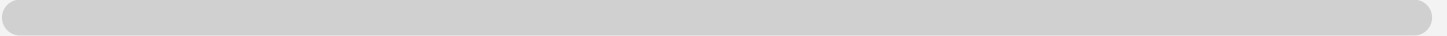
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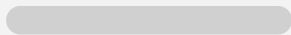
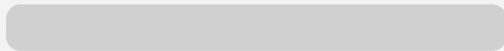
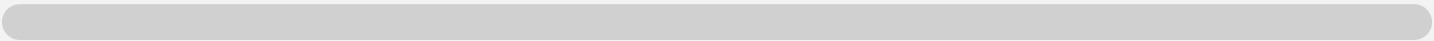
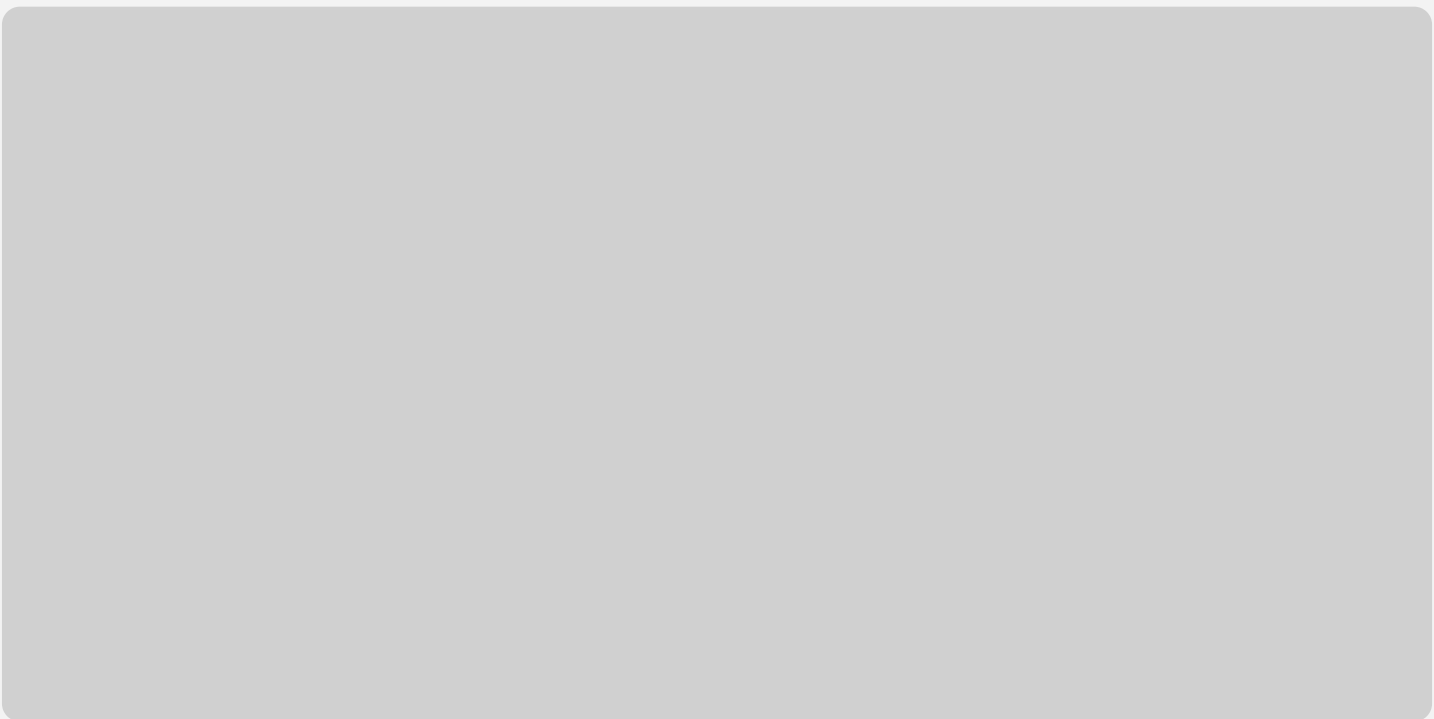
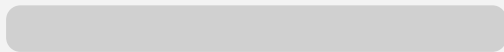
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