

Hill Country High School

Since 1991, Kerrville ISD's Hill Country High School has helped hundreds of area students earn the high school diploma they may not have otherwise received.

The program was born of a vision to help students obtain a diploma who struggled to finish in four years at the district's traditional high school. The junior and senior level school serves two broad groups of students. The first are students who fell behind at the high school whether due to family death, illness or frequent moves. The second group is students who are looking to accelerate the graduation process because of a pending family move or other extenuating circumstance.

Students must apply for admission, interview and show potential for success. From the very first day, students learn to greet with a handshake. They are taught time management skills crucial to their future success. Students are responsible for keeping track of the courses they need to graduate and the effort required to graduate in a reasonable time frame.

Hill Country High School employs three full time teachers and one roving teacher certified in special education. Each teacher is certified in multiple disciplines and provides individualized instruction. The students are required to spend a minimum of four hours per day on campus. Some leave for jobs while others stay all day. The amount of time they commit to the program determines how quickly they complete their diploma.

All students graduating from Hill Country High School have completed the necessary 22 credits to graduate and have passed the mandatory eleventh grade TAKS test. The diploma is the State of Texas' most basic diploma, so while it does not prepare the students for a four-year university, it does provide students the opportunity to go on to a junior / community college or technical school. KISD also partners with Alamo Colleges to provide a local community college that students can easily transition to.

More than just a diploma is earned at Hill Country High School. The teachers ensure curriculum is connected to real life. Students who have been through difficult life situations sometimes have trouble with self-esteem, motivation, persistence and self-control. These skills are woven into the fabric of learning through Principal Steve Schwarz' Tuesday Talks in which he imparts invaluable life lessons to the students.

Part of the curriculum involves researching postsecondary education options. Students learn to research colleges and certification programs online, apply for student aid and attend field trips to colleges as well as technical and trade schools.

In 2012, 65 students graduated from Hill Country High School, with plans to continue on to community colleges and technical schools. Since the school gained its own location and became a separate high school in 1999, a total of 650 kids have obtained their diploma through this non-traditional route.

Kerrville ISD is especially proud of the dedication of the staff members at Hill Country High School in working to ensure that all young people in the community obtain a diploma and have options for creating the future they want.

For more information about Kerrville ISD's Hill Country High School, contact Principal Steve Schwarz at (830) 257-2232 or Jamie Fails, Public Relations Specialist, at (830) 257-2200, extension 233.