RULES
OF
THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
CHAPTER 0520-01-03
ACADEMIC AND INSTRUCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

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0520-01-03-.01 PURPOSE.

T.C.A. § 49-1-302(a)(8) authorizes the State Board of Education to “set policies governing all academic standards and courses of study in the public schools.” The approved standards are to be the basis for planning instructional programs in each local education agency (LEA), state special school, and public charter school.


0520-01-03-.02 UNIFORM GRADING SYSTEM.

(1) LEAs shall use the following uniform grading system for students enrolled in grades nine through twelve (9-12) for purposes of application for postsecondary financial assistance administered by the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Honors Courses</th>
<th>Local and Statewide Dual Credit Courses, Industry Certification-Aligned Courses, and Dual Enrollment Courses</th>
<th>Advanced Placement, Cambridge International, College Level Exam Program (CLEP), and International Baccalaureate Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Shall include the addition of 3 percentage points to the grades used to calculate the semester average.</td>
<td>Shall include the addition of 4 percentage points to the grades used to calculate the semester average.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Rule 0520-01-03-.02, continued)

(2) Assigning additional quality points above 4.0 for honors courses, Advanced Placement (AP), College Level Exam Program (CLEP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Cambridge International, dual credit, dual enrollment, and Industry Certification-aligned courses is not allowed for the purpose of determining eligibility for the lottery scholarships.

(3) LEAs must utilize the Uniform Grading System to calculate eligibility for financial assistance administered by the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation. However, LEAs may adopt an additional local grading scale(s) for other purposes.

(4) LEAs may adopt the Uniform Grading System for grades pre-K through eight (8) or they may adopt a local grading scale for those grades.


0520-01-03-.03 ACADEMIC PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.

(1) The Tennessee state academic standards approved by the State Board shall be used for all courses grades kindergarten through twelve (K-12).

(2) All textbooks and instructional materials adopted and purchased shall be aligned with state academic standards.

(3) All courses listed in State Board’s Approved High School Courses Policy 3.205 may be offered for credit in grades nine through twelve (9-12). Additional details about approved courses shall be included in the Correlation of Course and Endorsement Codes database managed by the Department of Education.

(4) LEAs may offer special courses in addition to the courses listed in the State Board’s Approved High School Courses Policy 3.205. Such special courses shall be approved by the Department of Education and the State Board. Each special course approved by the Department shall be recommended to the State Board for an approval period of one (1), three (3), or six (6) years.

(5) Each school shall evaluate and report in writing to the parent or legal guardian each student’s progress in each subject, at least every nine (9) weeks, in accordance with the local school board’s grading policy.
(6) Each local school board shall develop and implement promotion, and retention policies for grades kindergarten through eight (K-8) in accordance with the State Board’s Promotion and Retention Policy 3.300. Each local policy shall require, at a minimum:

(a) Schools to notify a student’s parent or guardian if it is determined through a student’s overall performance or a state or local assessment that a student in grades kindergarten through three (K-3) is not meeting the expectations of the grade-level standards in reading within fifteen (15) calendar days of such determination;

(b) Schools to notify the parent or guardian of any student that is being considered for retention within fifteen (15) calendar days of identification;

(c) Schools to develop and implement an individualized promotion plan for any student being considered for retention to help the student avoid retention;

(d) Schools to notify the parent or guardian of any student that is retained at least ten (10) calendar days prior to the start of the next school year, if the student was enrolled in a summer reading or learning program, or, if the student was not enrolled in a summer reading or learning program, at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the start of the next school year. The communication shall include notice of the parent or guardian’s right to appeal a retention decision; and

(e) If a retention decision has been made, then the school shall develop an individualized academic remediation plan for the retained student prior to the start of the next school year. A copy of the academic remediation plan shall be provided to the student’s parent or guardian within ten (10) calendar days of development of such plan.

(7) LEAs shall implement the Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²) framework adopted by the State Board. RTI² shall include high-quality instruction and interventions tailored to student need where core instructional and intervention decisions are guided by student outcome data. Tiered interventions in the areas of reading, mathematics, and/or writing shall occur in the general education setting depending on the needs of the student. If a student fails to respond to intensive interventions and is suspected of having a Specific Learning Disability as defined in State Board Rule 0520-01-09-.02, then the student may require special education interventions.

(8) LEAs shall award high school credit to students who successfully complete college-level courses aligned to a graduation requirement course, including general education and elective focus courses.

(a) Local high schools shall accept postsecondary credits as a substitution for an aligned graduation requirement course, including general education and elective focus courses for those students who take and pass dual enrollment courses at a postsecondary institution for credit.

(b) Local boards of education may adopt policies providing for college-level courses to be offered during the school day on the high school campus. Such courses must be taught by a licensed high school teacher or credentialed postsecondary faculty member approved by the local school system and partnering postsecondary institution. These courses are to be considered part of the high school program, with content and instruction subject to the supervision of the school principal and local board of education.

(9) Any coursework successfully completed in a summer school approved by an LEA, public charter school, or Category I, II, or III private school is fully transferable to any other approved school. All summer school teachers at a summer school approved by an LEA or
public charter school shall be licensed and hold endorsements in the subject areas in which they are teaching.

(10) LEAs may offer Work-Based Learning (WBL) experiences that allow students to apply classroom theories to practical problems and to explore career options. All WBL experiences shall align to the State Board’s Work-Based Learning Framework set forth in State Board High School Policy 2.103.

(11) State-mandated student testing programs shall be undertaken in accordance with procedures published by the Department of Education.

(a) State-mandated assessments shall be given for grades three through eleven (3-11).


(c) A comprehensive writing assessment shall be conducted in at least one (1) grade within elementary, middle grades, and high school as part of the state-mandated assessment program.

(d) The Department of Education shall provide raw score data from the end-of-course examinations to each LEA for the purpose of including student scores on the examinations into a student’s final grade for the course. The weight of the examination on the student’s final average shall be determined by the LEA from a range of not less than fifteen percent (15%) and not more than twenty-five percent (25%). If an LEA does not receive its students’ end-of-course examination scores at least (5) instructional days before the scheduled end of the course, then the LEA may choose not to include its students’ examination scores in the students’ final average.

(e) Each local school board shall adopt a policy that details the methodology used and the required weighting for incorporating students’ scores on end-of-course examinations into final report card grades.

(f) Local school boards shall adopt a policy regarding security of test administration, consistent with Department of Education guidelines.

(g) The Department of Education shall annually report to the State Board the number and percentage of students who scored below but were promoted to the next grade level by the LEA. This data shall be disaggregated by subgroups similar to those required for federal reporting.

(12) Prior to grade nine (9), all students, including students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), shall develop an initial four (4)-year plan of focused and purposeful high school study in accordance with the State Board’s High School Policy 2.103.

(13) Each local board of education shall adopt a credit recovery policy, aligned to the State Board’s High School Policy 2.103, to provide standards-based extended learning opportunities for students who have previously been unsuccessful in mastering the standards required to receive course credit or earn promotion.

(a) Each credit recovery policy shall address, at a minimum:

1. Admission to and removal from credit recovery programs;

2. Instruction; and
3. Grading and awarding of credit.

(14) Students may transfer from a Category I, II, or III private school, as defined in State Board Rule 0520-07-02, to a public school without loss of credit for completed work. The school which the student leaves must supply a properly certified transcript showing the student’s record of attendance, achievement, and the units of credit earned.

(15) Students transferring from a Category IV or Category V private school, as defined in State Board Rule 0520-07-02, to a public school shall be allowed credit only when they have passed comprehensive written examinations approved, administered, and graded by the principal or designee of the public school. Student scores from a recognized standardized test may substitute for the required comprehensive written examinations.

(a) The examination administered to students in grades one through eight (1-8) shall cover only the last grade completed.

(b) The examinations administered to students in grades nine through twelve (9-12) shall cover the individual subjects appearing on the official transcripts. The examination for graduation requirement subjects may only cover the last course completed by the student (for example, if a student has completed English I, II, and III, the examination may only cover English III).

(c) The principal of a Category IV or Category V private school is authorized to transmit transcripts of a student to any school to which the student transfers or applies for admission when the records are requested by the receiving school or parent or guardian. The parent or guardian of the student shall be notified by the private school that the transcript is being sent.

(16) The High School Equivalency Testing (HiSET) shall be operated in accordance with the HiSET manual of the Education Testing Service and the rules established by the Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

(a) The chief examiners shall ensure that all examinees meet the state requirements for age, residency, proper identification, and any other qualifications prior to admission to the testing session.

(b) A candidate must be eighteen (18) years of age before being eligible to take the HiSET test. A seventeen (17) year old may be allowed to take the examination upon recommendation of the director of schools. The director of schools may require written documentation from the applicant to support this recommendation. This rule shall not be used to circumvent participation in the regular high school program.

(c) The HiSET test consists of five (5) core areas that count twenty (20) points each. In order to pass, the total composite score on the HiSET test shall not be less than forty-five (45) and no score on any one (1) core area of the test battery shall be less than eight (8).

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 4-3-1422, 49-1-302, 49-1-302(a)(2) and (13), 49-2-110, 49-2-114, 49-6-101, 49-6-201, 49-6-3001, 49-6-3003, 49-6-3005(a) and (a)(4), 49-6-3104, 49-6-3105, and 49-6-6201; Sections 30, 78 through 80, and 88 of Chapter 535 of the Public Acts of 1992; and Public Chapter 652 of 2020.


0520-01-03-.04 REPEALED.


0520-01-03-.05 VIRTUAL EDUCATION.

(1) Public Virtual Schools

(a) A “public virtual school” is a public school that uses technology to deliver a significant portion of instruction to its students via the internet in a virtual or remote setting. Public virtual schools may be established in accordance with T.C.A. §§ 49-16-201 – 49-16-216 and the rules and regulations of the State Board. The LEA establishing the public virtual school is directly responsible for the performance of the public virtual school and ensuring the school remains in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and rules and regulations of the State Board regardless of whether the LEA directly operates the school or contracts with an entity for the management or operation of the school.

(b) Public virtual schools shall:
1. Be established and approved by an LEA.

2. Use technology to deliver a significant portion of instruction to its students via the internet in a virtual or remote setting.

3. Review and provide access to a sequential curriculum that meets or exceeds the academic standards adopted by the State Board utilizing state-approved textbooks and instructional materials, unless a waiver has been granted to the LEA in accordance with T.C.A. § 49-6-2206 and State Board Rules Chapter 0520-01-18.

4. Meet the equivalent of the one hundred and eighty (180) days of instruction per academic year and six and one-half (6½) hours of instructional time per day pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-6-3004, provided, however, that a student, at the student’s own pace, may demonstrate mastery or completion of a course or subject area and be given credit for the course or subject area.

5. Administer all state tests required of public school students to students enrolled in a virtual school in a proctored environment consistent with state test administration guidelines.

6. Be evaluated annually by the LEA.
   
   (i) The evaluation must assess the following utilizing a standardized template provided by the Department of Education:

   (I) Academic, fiscal, and operational performance; and

   (II) The extent to which the school demonstrates increases in student achievement.

   (ii) The results of such evaluation shall be publicly reported through the following methods:

   (I) Posting of the results of the evaluation, utilizing a standardized template provided by the Department of Education on both the virtual school’s and the LEA’s website;

   (II) Direct distribution of the evaluation, utilizing a standardized template provided by the Department of Education, to all enrolled families. Such distribution may be accomplished via e-mail, U.S. mail, or other method determined by the LEA.

7. Ensure that students with special needs, including students with disabilities and limited English proficiency, are not excluded from enrolling and participating in virtual schools, and receive all services required by the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

8. Ensure that each virtual school course has an assigned teacher of record who is properly endorsed and licensed to teach in Tennessee in compliance with state law, State Board Rules Chapter 0520-02-03, and State Board Policy 5.502. For purposes of virtual schools, teacher of record means the teacher who:

   (i) Provides instruction for the course based on the Tennessee Academic Standards;
(Rule 0520-01-03-.05, continued)

(ii) Ensures student progress toward the Tennessee Academic Standards;

(iii) Monitors the physical safety and well-being of students;

(iv) Verifies attendance and reports course grades for students; and

(v) If the teacher is employed by the LEA, claims instructional time for instructionally available students.

9. Ensure that all teachers employed by the LEA serving as teacher of record within the virtual school are evaluated annually pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-1-302 and State Board Rules Chapter 0520-02-01.

10. Ensure students have access to instructional materials, technology such as a computer and printer that may be necessary for participation in the virtual school, and an internet connection used for school work.

11. Meet class size standards established by T.C.A. § 49-1-104. A public virtual school may increase the enrollment in virtual classes by up to twenty-five percent (25%) over the class size maximum established by T.C.A. § 49-1-104 if the school demonstrates student achievement growth at a level of "at expectations" or greater, as represented by the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) in the prior year where TVAAS data is available.

   (i) Public virtual schools shall continue to comply with class size and case load requirements for special education as defined in State Board Policy 3.206. Public virtual schools shall review individual teacher's student caseloads, and shall consult with the teacher when determining class size and student caseloads, to ensure that teachers can meet the needs of students, including students with disabilities, as determined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. §§ 1400 et seq.), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. §§ 701 et seq.), and any student's IEP.

   (ii) Public virtual schools shall maintain accurate records and monitor compliance with class size requirements.

(c) Public virtual schools shall comply with all compulsory attendance requirements and shall monitor and report daily attendance as required in T.C.A. § 49-6-3007, including:

   1. Monitoring and taking daily student attendance, which shall include seeking and receiving daily visual, verbal, and/or written confirmation of student participation in six and one-half (6 ½) hours of instructional time per day using multiple methods of confirming student attendance. Multiple methods of confirming student attendance include two (2) or more of the following:

      (i) Students participating in a phone call with a teacher, with parent or legal guardian support as appropriate for the age of the student;

      (ii) Students participating in synchronous virtual instruction;

      (iii) Students completing work in a learning management system;

      (iv) Students submitting work via hard-copy or virtual formats; or
(Rule 0520-01-03-.05, continued)

(v) Other method the LEA identifies as appropriate to track individual student participation in instructional activities.

2. Each LEA shall develop and implement procedures for determining an excused versus unexcused absence, the internal attendance tracking system to be used, and how the LEA will communicate attendance policies and/or procedures to parents and/or legal guardians and students.

3. The reporting of attendance to the Department must be via the LEA’s student information system utilizing the attendance code set by the Department of Education.

4. The LEA establishing the public virtual school is required to implement the LEA’s progressive truancy intervention plan, as required by T.C.A. § 49-6-3009 and State Board Rule 0520-01-02-.17, for students enrolled in the virtual school and report truancy to the juvenile court having jurisdiction over that student in compliance with state law.

(d) On or before August 1 of each year, the public virtual school shall notify all LEAs of the enrollment of students residing within another LEA’s jurisdiction. LEAs shall be notified within two (2) weeks when changes occur relative to students residing within the LEA’s jurisdiction.

(e) Once a student has been accepted by and enrolled in a public virtual school, it shall be the responsibility of the LEA that has established the public virtual school to maintain enrollment of that student until such a time as the student is withdrawn by the parent or guardian or withdrawn from the virtual school in accordance with the LEA’s policy. If the student is withdrawn, the public virtual school shall send transcripts and other student records to the receiving school in a timely manner.

(f) Public virtual schools and the LEA establishing a public virtual school shall maintain accurate records regarding the operation and compliance of the public virtual school and shall be subject to periodic inspection by the Department of Education as specified in Rule 0520-01-02-.01 and T.C.A. § 49-1-201. The LEA and the public virtual school shall comply with requests for information from the Department in a timely manner.

(2) Virtual Education Programs.

(a) Virtual education programs may be established in accordance with T.C.A. §§ 49-16-101 – 49-16-105 and this rule. A “virtual education program” means a course or series of courses offered through the use of technology by an LEA or public charter school to provide students a broader range of educational opportunities. Providing students a broader range of educational opportunities includes any of the following:

1. Academic remediation or enrichment, or providing students access to a wider range of courses.

2. Continuity of educational service for students who are homebound pursuant to State Board Rule 0520-01-02-.10 or State Board Rule 0520-01-09-.07.

3. Continuity of educational service for students who are quarantined pursuant to State Board Rule 0520-01-13-.01.

4. Continuity of educational service for students enrolled in an alternative school pursuant to State Board Rule 0520-01-02-.09.
(Rule 0520-01-03-.05, continued)

(b) Virtual education programs must be comprised of individual courses accessed by students in an entirely virtual setting; however, teachers of virtual education program courses may meet with students in-person for non-instructional time such as office hours.

(c) Remote instruction via a virtual education program shall not constitute the majority of a student’s total instructional time per school semester unless the student meets one of the following criteria:

1. The student is temporarily receiving all of the student’s instruction via a virtual education program pursuant to paragraph (2)(a)2. or (2)(a)4. of this rule;

2. The student is taking coursework virtually so the student may participate in a work-based learning program or internship that takes place during regular school hours;

3. The student is accessing Advanced Placement (AP) courses or similar advanced coursework virtually; or

4. The student is taking virtual coursework for purposes of credit recovery.

(d) A student may participate in a virtual education program without enrolling in a virtual school; provided, however, that the student must be enrolled at the school where the student receives the majority of the student’s instruction each school year.

(e) The criteria for student participation in a virtual education program shall be at the discretion of the LEA or public charter school where the student is enrolled or zoned to attend; provided that a student may participate in a virtual education program within another LEA if permitted by the out-of-district enrollment policy of the receiving LEA.

(f) Each LEA and public charter school offering a virtual education program shall maintain attendance policies and procedures for determining when a student is present in a course offered via the virtual education program, including plans for seeking and receiving daily periodic visual, verbal, and/or written confirmation of student participation in the courses offered within a virtual education program using multiple methods of confirming student attendance. Multiple methods of confirming attendance include two (2) or more of the following:

1. Students participating in a phone call with a teacher, with parent or legal guardian support as appropriate for the age of the student;

2. Students participating in synchronous virtual instruction;

3. Students completing work in a learning management system;

4. Students submitting work via hard-copy or virtual formats; or

5. Other method the LEA or public charter school identifies as appropriate.

(g) Each LEA and public charter school shall develop procedures for determining an excused versus unexcused absence, the internal attendance tracking system to be used, and how the LEA or public charter school will communicate attendance policies and/or procedures to parents and/or legal guardians and students.
(Rule 0520-01-03-.05, continued)

(h) The reporting of attendance to the Department must be via the LEA or public charter school’s student information system utilizing the attendance code set by the Department.

(i) Classes offered via a virtual education program shall comply with the class size requirements set forth in T.C.A. § 49-1-104(h) and class size and case load requirements for special education as defined in State Board Policy 3.206. Instruction provided virtually by a non-virtual public school, including a public charter school, pursuant to the LEA’s or public charter school’s approved continuous learning plan in accordance with State Board Rules Chapter 0520-01-17 shall be considered a virtual education program for purposes of compliance with T.C.A. § 49-1-104(h).

(j) Accountability

1. The results of student assessments for courses taken as part of a virtual education program and other accountability measures will be attributed to the school where the student is enrolled.

2. Promotion, certificates, and diplomas for a student taking courses as part of a virtual education program shall be determined and issued by the school where the student is currently enrolled.

(k) Each LEA or public charter school offering a virtual education program shall:

1. Ensure there is a teacher of record for each virtual education program course who is properly endorsed and licensed to teach in Tennessee in compliance with state law, State Board Rules Chapter 0520-02-03, and State Board Policy 5.502. For purposes of virtual education programs, teacher of record means the teacher who:

   (i) Provides instruction for the course based on the Tennessee Academic Standards;

   (ii) Ensures student progress toward the Tennessee Academic Standards;

   (iii) Monitors the physical safety and well-being of students enrolled in the course;

   (iv) Verifies attendance and reports student course grades to the school where the student receives the majority of instruction; and

   (v) If the teacher is employed by the LEA or public charter school, claims instructional time for instructionally available students.

2. Ensure that all teachers employed by the LEA or public charter school serving as teacher of record for coursework within the virtual education program are evaluated annually pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-1-302 and State Board Rules Chapter 0520-02-01.

3. Ensure teachers provide instruction utilizing state-approved textbooks and instructional materials in alignment with state law, unless a waiver has been granted pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-6-2206 or § 49-13-111.

4. Ensure participating students have access to instructional materials, technology such as a computer and printer that may be necessary for participation in the virtual program, and an internet connection.
5. Ensure that students with special needs, including students with disabilities and limited English proficiency, are not excluded from enrolling and participating in virtual education programs and receive all services required by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

6. Establish a virtual education program policy that contains the following:

   (i) Student eligibility and participation requirements, including interventions for students struggling to maintain eligibility requirements, and a process for removing students from virtual education program courses who fail to maintain eligibility requirements and placing them into a comparable in-person course.

   (ii) An articulated enrollment agreement for students from another LEA or public charter school to access virtual education program courses, if the LEA or public charter school chooses to allow such arrangements.


0520-01-03-.06 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS.

(1) Students in Tennessee may earn the following diploma options:

   (a) Traditional high school diploma;

   (b) Special education high school diploma;

   (c) Occupational high school diploma; or

   (d) Alternate academic high school diploma.

(2) In order to earn a traditional high school diploma, a student shall:
(Rule 0520-01-03-.06, continued)

(a) Earn the following twenty-two (22) credits required for graduation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English language arts</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education and Wellness</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Finance</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective Focus</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Language</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Participate in the ACT, SAT, or other eleventh (11th) grade postsecondary readiness assessment as determined by the commissioner of education; and

(c) Have a satisfactory record of attendance and discipline.

(3) To earn a traditional high school diploma, students with disabilities must earn the prescribed twenty-two (22)-credit minimum. Students with disabilities shall be included in general education classes to the degree possible and with appropriate support and accommodations.

(4) A special education diploma may be awarded at the end of the fourth (4th) year of high school to students with disabilities who:

(a) Have not met the requirements for a traditional high school diploma;

(b) Have satisfactorily completed an IEP; and

(c) Have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct.

(5) Students who obtain the special education diploma may continue to work toward a traditional high school diploma through the end of the school year in which they turn twenty-two (22) years old.

(6) An occupational diploma may be awarded at the end of the fourth (4th) year of high school to students with disabilities who:

(a) Have not met the requirements for a traditional high school diploma;

(b) Have satisfactorily completed an IEP;

(c) Have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct;

(d) Have completed the occupational diploma Skills, Knowledge, and Experience Mastery Assessment (SKEMA) created by the Department of Education; and

(e) Have completed two (2) years of paid or non-paid work experience.

(7) The determination that an occupational diploma is the goal for a student with a disability shall be made at the conclusion of the student’s tenth (10th) grade year or two (2) academic years prior to the expected graduation date. Students who obtain the occupational diploma may continue to work towards the traditional high school diploma through the end of the school year in which they turn twenty-two (22) years old.
(8) An alternate academic diploma may be awarded to students with significant cognitive disabilities at the end of their fourth (4th) year of high school who have:

(a) Participated in the high school alternate assessments;

(b) Earned the prescribed twenty-two (22) credit minimum, either through the state-approved standards or through alternate academic diploma modified course requirements approved by the State Board;

(c) Received special education services or supports and made satisfactory progress on an IEP;

(d) Satisfactory records of attendance and conduct; and

(e) Completed a transition assessment(s) that measures, at a minimum, preparedness for postsecondary education and training; employment; independent living; and community involvement.

(9) A student who earns an alternate academic diploma shall continue to be eligible for special education services under IDEA until he or she receives a traditional high school diploma or through the school year in which the student turns twenty-two (22).

(10) The required four (4) credits of English shall include English I, English II, English III, and English IV.

(11) Three (3) of the required (4) credits of mathematics shall include Algebra I and II, Geometry, or the equivalent Integrated Math I, II, and III. The fourth credit shall be in another mathematics course beyond Algebra I or Integrated Math I.

(a) Students must be enrolled in a mathematics course each year of high school.

(b) Students who complete any of the required math credits prior to the ninth (9th) grade shall receive graduation credit for that coursework; however, those students are still required to enroll in math during each high school year.

(c) Students with a qualifying disability who have deficits in mathematics as documented in the individualized education program (IEP) shall be required to achieve at least Algebra I and Geometry (or the equivalent Integrated Math I and Integrated Math II). The required number of credits in math will be achieved through strategies such as, but not limited to, increased time, appropriate methodologies, and accommodations as determined by the IEP team.

(12) The three (3) credits of science shall include Biology, Chemistry or Physics, and a third lab science.

(a) Students with a qualifying disability as documented in the IEP shall be required to achieve at least Biology I and two (2) other lab science credits. The required number of credits in science will be achieved through strategies such as, but not limited to, increased time, appropriate methodologies, and accommodations as determined by the IEP team.

(13) The three (3) credits of social studies shall include United States History and Geography, World History and Geography, Economics, and United States Government and Civics.
(Rule 0520-01-3-.06, continued)

(14) Students must earn one-half (½) credit in Personal Finance. Three (3) years of JROTC may be substituted for one-half (½) credit of Personal Finance if the JROTC instructor attends the Personal Finance training conducted by the Department.

(15) The two (2) world language credits must be earned in the same world language.

(16) The three (3) elective focus credits may be earned in CTE, science and math, humanities, fine arts, AP/IB, or other areas designed to prepare students for the workforce and postsecondary approved by the local board of education.

(a) Students completing a CTE elective focus must complete three (3) credits in the same CTE career cluster or state-approved program of study.

(b) The credit requirement for fine arts or world language may be waived by the director of schools for students, under certain circumstances, to expand and enhance the elective focus. Prior to waiver of the requirement for fine arts or world language, the student’s parent or guardian must agree to the waiver in writing.

(c) The director of schools may waive the third (3rd) credit requirement of the elective focus during a student’s senior year if the completion of the third (3rd) elective focus credit would prevent or delay graduation. This waiver option includes those students who transfer during the junior or senior year to a Tennessee high school from a school in another state or from a non-public school.

(17) Every candidate for a traditional diploma must have received a full year of computer education at some point during the candidate’s educational career pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-6-1010. Students who transfer from another state to a Tennessee high school during their senior year are exempt from this requirement.

(18) All full-time students in grades nine (9) through twelve (12) shall be enrolled each semester in subjects that produce a minimum of five (5) units of credit for graduation per year. Students with hardships and gifted students may appeal this requirement to the director of schools and then to the local board of education.

(19) Every local board of education shall develop a policy regarding the minimum and maximum units in any course or subject area for which a student may earn credit toward graduation.

(20) A public high school student may complete an early high school graduation program through the Move on When Ready Program and be eligible for unconditional entry into a public two (2)-year institution of higher education or conditional entry into a public four (4)-year institution of higher education in accordance with T.C.A. §§ 49-6-8101 – 49-6-8106 and the State Board’s High School Policy 2.103.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-1-302, 49-1-302(a)(2) and (13), 49-6-101, 49-6-201, 49-6-3001(c) and (c)(1), 49-6-3003, 49-6-3005, 49-6-3104, 49-6-3105, 49-6-6001, 49-6-6201, and 49-6-8301, et seq.; Sections 30, 78 through 80, and 88 of Chapter 535 of the Public Acts of 1992; and Public Chapter 448 (2013).

(Rule 0520-01-03-.06, continued)


0520-01-03-.07 CIVICS.

(1) All high school students must take and pass a United States civics test in order to meet the social studies course credit requirement to earn a traditional diploma.

(a) The LEA shall prepare the civics test. The test shall be developed in accordance with T.C.A. § 49-6-408.

(b) A student shall pass the test if the student correctly answers at least seventy percent (70%) of the questions. The LEA may provide students with the opportunity to take the test as many times as necessary. Each LEA may determine if a student’s grade on the U.S. civics test will be counted in the classroom grade. A passing score on the civics test shall be noted on a student’s transcript.
(c) The U.S. civics test shall be administered to a student who has an IEP with the accommodations and/or modifications that are deemed necessary by the IEP team.

(d) A school shall be recognized on the Tennessee Department of Education’s website as a United States civics all-star school if all of the school’s seniors receiving a traditional diploma make a passing grade of eighty five percent (85%) or higher on the United States civics test for that school year.

(2) All LEAs shall implement a project-based assessment in civics at least once in grades four through eight (4-8) and once in grades nine through twelve (9-12) pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-6-1028.

(a) “Project-based” means an approach that engages students in learning essential knowledge and skills through a student-influenced inquiry process structured around complex authentic questions and carefully designed products and tasks.

(b) The project-based assessment shall be developed by the LEA, measure the civics learning objectives contained in the social studies standards, and allow students to demonstrate understanding and relevance of public policy; the structure of federal, state, and local governments; and both the Tennessee and the United States constitutions.

(c) LEAs shall submit verification of implementation of the project-based assessment to the Department of Education.

(3) The Governor’s Tennessee Excellence in Civics Education Seal shall be awarded to each school that:

(a) Incorporates civic learning across a broad range of grades and academic subjects that build on the Tennessee academic standards, such as the civics lesson plans and the blue book lesson plans provided by the secretary of state;

(b) Provides instruction regarding our nation’s democratic principles and practices, the significant events and individuals responsible for the creation of our foundational documents, and the formation of the governments of the United States and the state of Tennessee using the federal and state foundational documents, as evidenced by submission of at least five (5) lesson plans or activities that focus on civics and are aligned with the Tennessee academic standards and a summary of how the lesson was implemented;

(c) Provides professional development opportunities or student resources that facilitate civics education, such as civics education workshops offered by the secretary of state, as evidenced by submission of documentation identified by the Department of Education;

(d) Provides one (1) or more of the following opportunities for students to engage in real-world learning activities:

1. Participation in a mock election, such as the secretary of state’s student mock election;

2. Participation in the secretary of state’s civics essay contest by at least fifteen percent (15%) of the school’s students;

3. A school voter registration drive for the school or community;
4. Participation in another state or national civics-based contest by at least fifteen percent (15%) of the school's students;

5. Participation of an individual student or school team in the United States Senate Youth Program or Model United Nations; or

6. Participation in a real-world learning activity recognized by the Department of Education.

(e) Implements a high-quality, project-based assessment in accordance with T.C.A. § 49-6-1028(e), if applicable; and

(f) Is recognized as a civics all-star school in accordance with T.C.A. § 49-6-408, if applicable.

(4) The Governor's Tennessee Excellence in Civics Education Seal shall be awarded to each LEA in which at least eighty percent (80%) of the LEA's schools earn the Governor's Tennessee Excellence in Civics Education Seal.


0520-01-03-.08 REPEALED.


0520-01-03-.09 SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

See Rule 0520-01-09.

0520-01-03-.11 REPEALED.


0520-01-03-.12 THROUGH 0520-01-03-.13 REPEALED.


0520-01-03-.14 RESERVED.

0520-01-03-.15 UNIVERSAL STUDENT SCREENERS AND STATE-ADOPTED BENCHMARK ASSESSMENTS.

(1) Definitions. As used in this rule:

(a) "Nationally Normed" means screener scores, classifications, and score distribution percentiles are reported and calibrated using a representative National Sample.

(b) "National Sample" means a sample of students that represents the population of U.S. students. For universal screeners, a national sample consists of at least one hundred fifty (150) students in each of at least three (3) of nine (9) U.S. Census Bureau divisions sampled before the year 2020. Part of completing the sample may include any needed statistical transformations required to achieve demographic representativeness. Such a sampling must be able to produce valid and reliable scores for classifying and identifying students.

(c) "Significant Reading Deficiency" means:

1. For students in Kindergarten through grade three (K-3), that a student's score on a Universal Reading Screener is in the 15th percentile or below on a Nationally Normed Universal Reading Screener. Students in Kindergarten through grade three (K-3) who have a significant reading deficiency are considered below proficient in English language arts and shall be regarded as priority students for purposes of implementing the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act.

(d) "At Risk for Significant Reading Deficiency" means:

1. For students in Kindergarten through grade three (K-3), that a student's score on a Universal Reading Screener is between the 16th and 40th percentile on a Nationally Normed Universal Reading Screener. Students in Kindergarten through grade three (K-3) who are at risk for significant reading deficiency are considered below proficient in English language arts and shall be regarded as priority students for purposes of implementing the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act.

(e) "Universal Reading Screener" means a uniform tool that screens and monitors a student's progress in foundational literacy skills of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

(f) "Innovative Benchmark Assessment Pilot Program" means a program established, funded, and implemented by the Department as part of the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act to provide the Tennessee universal math screener, the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener, and state-adopted benchmark assessments to LEAs and public charter schools to more frequently measure student learning and address student learning loss.

(g) "Pre-test" means a state mandated assessment provided to students upon entry to summer programming required by the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act to determine current knowledge on prioritized math and English language arts content. The assessment shall be used to determine adequate growth for purposes of determining eligibility for promotion from third (3rd) to fourth (4th) grade beginning in the 2022-2023 school year.

(h) "Post-test" means state mandated assessment provided to students upon exit of summer programming required by the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and
Student Acceleration Act to determine knowledge gained on prioritized math and English language arts content. The assessment will be used to determine adequate growth for purposes of determining eligibility for promotion from third (3rd) to fourth (4th) grade beginning in the 2022-2023 school year.


(2) Pursuant to the Tennessee Literacy Success Act, each LEA and public charter school shall annually administer a Universal Reading Screener to each student in Kindergarten through grade three (K-3) during each of the three (3) administration windows established by the Department.

(3) Student performance on a Universal Reading Screener shall be used to identify students in Kindergarten through grade three (K-3) with a Significant Reading Deficiency or students who are At Risk for Significant Reading Deficiency. Students in Kindergarten through grade three (K-3) with a Significant Reading Deficiency or students who are At Risk for Significant Reading Deficiency are considered below proficient in English language arts and shall be regarded as priority students for purposes of implementing the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act.

(4) Each LEA and public charter school’s foundational literacy skills plan shall include the chosen Universal Reading Screener.

(5) All Universal Reading Screeners shall be Nationally Normed. LEAs and public charter schools may choose from the following Universal Reading Screener options:

(a) A Nationally Normed Tennessee Universal Reading Screener provided by the Department at no cost to LEAs and public charter schools;

(b) A Universal Reading Screener from an approved list of Nationally Normed Universal Reading Screeners identified by the Department and approved by the State Board in State Board Policy 3.302; or

(c) LEAs and public charter schools may request from the State Board approval to use a locally identified Universal Reading Screener. LEAs and public charter schools requesting approval from the State Board to use a locally identified Universal Reading Screener shall submit a revised foundational literacy skills plan to the Department by June 1 prior to the school year in which the LEA or public charter school wishes to use the locally identified screener. The request shall identify the Universal Reading Screener and provide written documentation outlining the evidence that the Universal Reading Screener meets the requirements identified in parts (1) through (6) below. The Department shall review each request and make recommendations to the State Board for approval by July 31 of each year. Each request shall provide proof, including technical reports and assessment specifications, that the Universal Reading Screener meets the following criteria:

1. Is Nationally Normed;

2. Complies with dyslexia screening requirements established in T.C.A. § 49-1-229;
(Rule 0520-01-03-.15, continued)

3. Complies with the universal screening norms and identification requirements established in Tennessee’s RTI² framework manual;

4. Produces scores that meet the Department’s criteria to reliably and validly identify students with a Significant Reading Deficiency or students who are At Risk for Significant Reading Deficiency, identifies priority students for purposes of implementation of the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act, and can measure student growth from one (1) administration window to another;

5. Produces results that allow for the reliable generation of individual growth scores for teachers teaching pre-Kindergarten through grade two (pre-K-2) to use as an alternative growth model in accordance with the Tennessee Literacy Success Act and the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act; and

6. Provides a full dataset of student and educator data that can be submitted electronically to the Department three (3) times a year in a manner that complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g), T.C.A. § 10-7-504, the Data Accessibility, Transparency and Accountability Act (Title 49, Chapter 1, Part 7), and all other applicable state and federal privacy laws in a format that meets the Department’s data standard.

(d) All Universal Reading Screeners approved by the State Board for use by LEAs and public charter schools shall be listed in State Board Policy 3.302. A Universal Reading Screener may be removed from the approved list in State Board Policy 3.302 by the State Board if the Universal Reading Screener does not continue to meet the requirements set forth in paragraphs (c)(1).-6. of this rule, or the Tennessee Literacy Success Act, such that any LEA or public charter school that utilizes the Universal Reading Screener is unable to maintain compliance with the Literacy Success Act.

1. After every administration of the Universal Reading Screener, the Department shall send written notice to any LEA or public charter school that is out of compliance with this rule or the Tennessee Literacy Success Act due to use of a Universal Reading Screener that does not comply with the requirements set forth in paragraphs (c)(1).-6. of this rule. The notice shall:

   (i) Clearly state that the LEA or public charter school’s vendor is out of compliance with this rule or the Tennessee Literacy Success Act;

   (ii) Outline the reasons for non-compliance, and

   (iii) State that failure to remedy the non-compliance by the deadline set by the Department may result in a recommendation to the State Board to remove the Universal Reading Screener from the approved list based on such non-compliance.

2. The notice shall also be sent to the Universal Reading Screener vendor and the chair of the State Board. LEAs and public charter schools that receive a notice of non-compliance from the Department shall work with their Universal Reading Screener vendor to remedy the non-compliance with this rule and the Tennessee Literacy Success Act.

3. If the Universal Reading Screener vendor does not come into compliance by the deadline set by the Department, and the LEA or public charter school continues to be out of compliance with this rule or the Tennessee Literacy Success Act
due to the use of a non-compliant Universal Reading Screener, the Department may bring a recommendation to the State Board that the Universal Reading Screener be removed from the approved list in State Board Policy 3.302. The recommendation shall provide specific information to the State Board regarding the non-compliance, including, but not limited to:

(i) A list of LEAs and public charter schools that use the Universal Reading Screener that is being recommended for removal from the approved list;

(ii) A copy of the non-compliance notice that was provided to the LEA or public charter school and Universal Reading Screener vendor by the Department;

(iii) Data comparing the performance of the Universal Reading Screener vendor as compared to other State Board approved Universal Reading Screener vendors, including, but not limited to the number of accurate and inaccurate data sets submitted by each approved vendor out of the total required data sets within the required window, whether all data sets were submitted for each LEA or public charter school by each approved vendor, and the number of errors in the data sets provided by each approved vendor; and

(iv) Any additional information requested by the State Board regarding the non-compliance and reasons supporting the recommendation for removal of the Universal Reading Screener from the approved list, provided such information is available to the Department.

4. The Universal Reading Screener vendor, any LEA and/or any public charter school may request to speak at the Board meeting when the recommendation is presented by providing notice to the State Board in compliance with State Board Policy 1.400.

5. The Board may vote to remove the Universal Reading Screener vendor from the approved list, to keep the Universal Reading Screener on the approved list, or to defer the vote to a later date.

6. The Department shall create and post on its website a Universal Reading Screener data guide which may include a technical manual, data dictionary, and/or data submission template to support LEAs, public charter schools, and State Board approved Universal Reading Screener vendors to maintain accurate and timely submissions of data in accordance with this rule and the Tennessee Literacy Success Act.

(6) Approved Universal Reading Screeners may be used by LEAs and public charter schools to comply with dyslexia screening requirements established in T.C.A. § 49-1-229 and with the universal screening requirements established in Tennessee’s RTI² framework manual.

(7) LEAs and public charter schools may need to find an alternate tool to measure reading proficiency if a student has a documented disability in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or section 504 plan that indicates the student has a language or physical barrier to using one (1) of the approved Universal Reading Screeners outlined in paragraph (5) of this rule.

(8) Each LEA and public charter school shall submit electronically to the Department the full dataset for each Universal Reading Screener administered to students three (3) times per school year. All student information must be maintained in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g), T.C.A. § 10-7-504, the
(Rule 0520-01-03-.15, continued)

Data Accessibility, Transparency and Accountability Act (Title 49, Chapter 1, Part 7) and all other applicable state and federal privacy laws in a format that meets the Department's data standard.

(9) LEAs and public charter schools may choose to administer a Universal Reading Screener to pre-Kindergarten students.

(10) The Department shall implement an Innovative Benchmark Assessment Pilot Program pursuant to the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act to provide the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener, the Tennessee universal math screener, and state-adopted benchmark assessments to LEAs and public charter schools to more frequently measure student learning and address student learning loss.

(11) Pursuant to the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act, LEAs and public charter schools may use the state-adopted benchmark assessments, the Tennessee universal math screener, the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener, or a Universal Reading Screener approved by the State Board to identify priority students for after-school learning mini-camps, learning loss bridge camps, and summer learning camps.

(a) For grades Kindergarten through three (K-3), the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener provided by the Department, the Tennessee universal math screener provided by the Department, or a Universal Reading Screener approved by the State Board shall serve as the state-adopted benchmark assessments required to be used by LEAs and public charter schools in implementing the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act.

(b) For grades four (4) through eight (8), a locally adopted benchmark assessment approved by the Department for use by the LEA or public charter school shall serve as the state-adopted benchmark assessments used by LEAs and public charter schools in implementing the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act. Each LEA or public charter school shall request from the Commissioner of Education approval to use locally adopted benchmark assessments as the state-adopted benchmark assessment. Each request shall include:

1. The name of each locally adopted benchmark assessment requested for use; and

2. The performance category for each locally adopted benchmark assessment that the LEA or public charter school will use to identify priority students, to implement the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act.

(c) Any student in Kindergarten through grade three (K-3) scoring in the 40th percentile or below on a Nationally Normed universal math screener shall be considered below proficient in math and regarded as a priority student for purposes of implementing the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act.

(12) Pursuant to the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act, LEAs and public charter schools shall use the state-provided pre- and post-test to monitor student growth in summer programming during the summer of 2021 and every summer thereafter.
