

High School Policy 2.103

The Background:

High School Policy 2.103 further defines graduation requirements, high school plans of study, and work-based learning requirements. This item presents several revisions to multiple sections of the policy as summarized below:

Graduation Requirements:

Chapter 979 of the Public Acts of 2022 (PC 979) expanded access to computer science education to ensure elementary, middle, and high school students are prepared for evolving workforce needs. In addition to requiring computer science coursework, Department provided professional development, and a new computer science endorsement pathway for educators, PC 979 requires students to complete at least one (1) credit of computer science to receive a traditional high school diploma. This item adds this requirement to the High School Policy 2.103 to align with revisions to the Graduation Requirements Rule 0520-01-03-.06, specifying that students may fulfill the computer science requirement either through their fourth credit of math, third credit of science, or elective focus credit. This graduation requirement applies to students who enroll in 9th grade in the 2024-25 school year and each school year thereafter. Revisions also include various clerical changes to align with the Graduation Requirements Rule.

Graduation with Honors, State Honors and State Distinction

T.C.A. § 4-5-102 outlines what must be contained in an agency rule rather than policy. At the July 22, 2022 quarterly meeting, the State Board approved on first reading revisions to the Graduation Requirements Rule 0520-01-03 which moved the local and state graduation distinctions to the rule. As such, this item deletes the distinction requirements from the policy because they will now be contained in rule.

Work-Based Learning Framework

Chapter 946 of the Public Acts of 2022 (PC 946) requires the State Board to develop an Industry 4.0 diploma distinction for high school students interested in pursuing a career in a high-need, high-skill industry after graduation beginning in the 2022-23 school year. PC 946 also includes a detailed breakdown of how LEAs assign credit to students enrolled in work-based learning courses. This item adds this breakdown from PC 946 to the Work Based Learning Framework section of the policy.

Plan of Study

This item also presents revisions to high school plan of study requirements. State Board Rule 0520-01-03-.03 governs the academic standards and courses of study in public schools, including the requirement for students to create a plan of study to prepare for success in and after high school. This policy further defines the purpose and steps to develop this plan. In July 2020, the State Board established its five-year strategic goals as part of the Master Plan and set a goal of “100% of students complete a High School and Beyond Plan, or a Transition Plan for students with IEPs, by the time they finish 11th grade”. In pursuit of this goal, State Board staff partnered with the Department of Education’s College, Career and Technical Education team to meet with stakeholders and propose changes to its rule and subsequent middle grades and high school policies.

In January 2022, State Board staff convened a focus group of counselors from across the state representing rural, suburban and urban districts to gain insight into the current implementation process of the four-year plan of study and to propose extending the plan to include the two (2) years beyond high school graduation. State Board staff also met with the Department of Education's School Counselor Advisory Council to discuss the proposed updates and solicited feedback from several stakeholder groups including Tennessee Education Association, American School Counselor Association, Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents, Tennessee School Counselor Association, and Professional Educators of Tennessee.

Based on the feedback received from the various stakeholder groups, the following changes have been made to this section of the policy:

- Changed the name of the four-year plan of study to the "High School and Beyond Plan" (the plan) in alignment with State Board rule;
- Restructured the order of the section to begin with an overview of the plan followed by setting the purpose and explaining the steps for completion;
- Clarified the timeline for implementation of each step within the plan;
- Allows a student's IEP Transition Plan to fulfill the requirements of the plan;
- Expanded the list of those eligible to support students in the development and revision of the plan to include trained educators or school staff;
- Requires students to identify an elective focus by the end of grade ten (10);
- Requires the plan to include to the two (2) years after high school graduation; and
- Includes a current version of the plan as part of a student's cumulative record.

Occupational Industry Professionals

Lastly, this item introduces language encouraging LEAs to partner with local occupational industry professionals to support occupational instruction and work-based learning opportunities.

The Fiscal Analysis Impact:

T.C.A. § 49-1-212 requires that the Department prepare a fiscal analysis of any policy, rule, or regulation proposed to the State Board of Education. This item has no financial impact on an LEA.

Policy Justification:

T.C.A. § 4-5-230 requires that justification for adopting an item as a policy instead of a rule be submitted to the chair of the Government Operations Committee. This item is proposed to be adopted as a policy because it defines or explains the meaning of a statute or rule and/or concerns only the internal management of state government that does not affect private rights or privileges.

The Recommendation:

The Department of Education recommends acceptance of this item on first reading. The SBE staff concurs with this recommendation.