
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. State Board staff met with the Department of Education's School Counselor Advisory Council 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. No changes have been made since first reading.

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.

Between first and final reading additional changes were made to align the Move on When Ready ACT benchmark scores with updated ACT benchmark scores approved by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission at their January 2023 Commission meeting.

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.

Connection to the [Master Plan](#):

This item supports the State Board's strategic focus on Postsecondary and Career outlined in the Master Plan by ensuring students have access to computer science education for evolving workforce needs, and by extending a student's high school plan to include postsecondary and career goals for the two (2) years after high school graduation.

The Recommendation:

The Department of Education recommends approval of this item on final reading. The SBE staff concurs with this recommendation.