Uniform Grading Rule

Paragraph (3) of Rule 0520-1-3-.05 State Curriculum, Requirement D is amended so that as amended the paragraph shall read:

(3) Grading and Promotion.

(a) Each school shall evaluate and report in writing to the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) each student's progress in each subject, at least every nine weeks, in accordance with the school system's evaluation plan. A parent or legal guardian will sign or otherwise acknowledge the report and return it to the teacher. Local school systems may choose not to require parental acknowledgement of the grade report for students in grades 7-12. If parental acknowledgement is not required, schools must publish annually the dates and method of reporting student progress and must provide ample opportunities for parents to notify the school of any concerns.

(b) Local school systems shall develop and implement grading, promotion, and retention policies for grades K-8. The policies shall be communicated annually to students and parents.

(c) Local school systems shall use the following uniform grading system for students enrolled in grades nine through twelve (9-12). Students' grades shall be reported for the purposes of application for postsecondary financial assistance administered by the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation using the uniform grading system.

Uniform Grading System – *Weighting for Advanced Coursework*				
Grade	**% Range**	Honors Courses & National Industry Certification	*Statewide Dual Credit Courses*	Advanced Placement & International Baccalaureate
A	93 – 100	May include the addition of **3 percentage points** to the grades used to calculate the semester average.	*May include the addition of 4 percentage points to the grades used to calculate the semester average.*	May include the addition of **5 percentage points** to the grades used to calculate the semester average.
B	85 – 92			
C	75 – 84			
D	70 – 74			
F	0 – 69			

Assigning additional quality points above 4.0 for honors courses, AP, IB, and National Industry Certification courses is not allowed for the purpose of determining eligibility for the lottery scholarships.

All course types, as defined below, shall be used for reporting student grades for the determination of eligibility for HOPE scholarships.

(d) State approved courses. State approved courses shall meet all appropriate content standards, learning expectations, and performance indicators as approved by the State Board of Education and are eligible for the points listed above.

(e) Honors Courses and National Industry Certification courses. Local education agencies may elect to offer honors courses and National Industry Certification (NIC) courses. Local educational agencies electing to offer honors courses will ensure that the approved honors courses substantially exceed the content standards, learning expectations, and performance indicators as approved by the State Board of Education. Further, each local education agency offering honors courses will ensure that additional rigor is being provided by implementing the framework of standards for honors courses listed below:

1. Framework of Standards for Honors Courses.

Honors courses will substantially exceed the content standards, learning expectations, and performance indicators approved by the State Board of Education. Teachers of honors courses will model instructional approaches that facilitate maximum interchange of ideas among students: independent study, self-directed research and learning, and appropriate use of technology. All honors courses must include multiple assessments exemplifying coursework (such as short answer, constructed-response prompts, performance-based tasks, open-ended questions, essays, original or creative interpretations, authentic products, portfolios, and analytical writing). Additionally, an honors course shall include a minimum of five (5) of the following components:

(i) Extended reading assignments that connect with the specified curriculum.

(ii) Research-based writing assignments that address and extend the course curriculum.

(iii) Projects that apply course curriculum to relevant or real-world situations.

These may include oral presentations, power point, or other modes of sharing findings. Connection of the project to the community is encouraged.

(iv) Open-ended investigations in which the student selects the questions and designs the research.

(v) Writing assignments that demonstrate a variety of modes, purposes, and styles.

(I) Examples of mode include narrative, descriptive, persuasive, expository, and expressive.
(II) Examples of purpose include to inform, entertain, and persuade.
(III) Examples of style include formal, informal, literary, analytical, and technical.

(vi) Integration of appropriate technology into the course of study.

(vii) Deeper exploration of the culture, values, and history of the discipline.

(viii) Extensive opportunities for problem solving experiences through imagination, critical analysis, and application.

(ix) Job shadowing experiences with presentations which connect class study to the world of work.

All course types which meet the above framework will be classified as honors, eligible for additional percentage point weighting.

Career and technical courses that offer a National Industry Certification through a nationally recognized examination may be weighted by adding three (3) points to all grades used to calculate the semester average.

If honors courses and courses that offer National Industry Certification are offered, the local education agency shall annually approve the list of such courses. This list of National Industry Certification courses and of approved honors courses with a complete syllabus for each course shall be approved by the local education agency and made readily available to the public.

Each local education agency shall adopt policies for honors courses and career and technical courses that offer national industry certification that may allow for the addition of three (3) points to all grades used to calculate the semester average.

2. *Statewide Dual Credit Courses.*

A statewide dual credit course is an existing high school course that incorporates postsecondary learning objectives and is aligned with an approved dual credit challenge exam. Students who pass these challenge exams will earn college credit accepted by all Tennessee public postsecondary institutions. Local education agencies must ensure all statewide dual credit courses incorporate the postsecondary learning objectives and that all students sit for the challenge exam. The courses must provide advanced learning opportunities for students. Local education agencies will also ensure that statewide dual credit teachers receive professional development and support to provide the rigorous level of instruction necessary for the courses.

3. Advanced Placement Courses and International Baccalaureate Courses. Local education agencies may elect to offer Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses. If Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses are offered, the local education agency shall annually approve a list of such courses. This list of approved courses shall be made readily available to the public. Local education agencies will ensure that approved courses substantially incorporate the learning objectives and course descriptions as defined by the College Board or International Baccalaureate Agency.

Each local education agency shall adopt policies for the approved Advanced Placement courses and International Baccalaureate courses that have end-of- course national examinations that may allow for the addition of 5 points to all grades used to calculate semester averages. Only Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses that have end-of-course national examinations qualify for the addition of 5 points.

(f) *Implementation and Guidance. In order to ensure fidelity to the Uniform Grading System in the calculation of the Grade Point Average (GPA) to be used in the determination of eligibility for the HOPE Scholarship, the following guidance is given for implementation by each Local Education Agency (LEA):*

1. *Rounding. When determining the grade to be awarded, numerical averages with a decimal point of .5 or higher shall be rounded up to a whole number and a decimal point of .4$\overline{9}$ or lower shall not be rounded up. For example, a numerical average in a course of 92.50 shall be rounded up to a 93 and awarded an A for the GPA calculation. Further, a numerical average of 92.49 shall not be rounded up and awarded a 92 or B for the GPA calculation. This methodology shall apply to reporting period grades as well as semester and/or final average grades.*

2. *Weighting for Honors Courses, National Industry Certification, Statewide Dual Credit Courses, Advanced Placement Courses, Cambridge and International Baccalaureate Courses. The addition of percentage points to weight these courses should be made at each reporting period as well as to any semester exam or other grade used to determine the semester average. Do not add to the semester or final average since the points are already in the grade.*

   Example: An AP class where the semester average is calculated by adding each six weeks grade twice and adding the semester exam grade once and dividing by 7:

1st Six Weeks	2nd Six Weeks	3rd Six Weeks	Sem. Exam	Sem. Avg.
88 + 5 = 93	90 + 5 = 95	85 + 5 = 90	89 + 5 = 94	93

$$93 + 93 \quad + \quad 95 + 95 \quad + \quad 90 + 90 \quad + \quad 94 \quad = \quad 650$$

$$\text{Sem. Avg.} \quad = \quad \frac{650}{7} \quad = \quad 92.8 \quad = \quad 93 \quad = \quad A$$

3. *Calculation of the Uniform Grading System GPA. GPA calculation shall be on a 4.0 scale by assigning the following grade points: A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1 and F = 0. The grade point average (GPA) is the official method for calculating HOPE Scholarship eligibility, and shall be calculated by multiplying the quality points assigned to each course for the semester, trimester, or final course average (for the block schedule) by the credit available for each course and dividing by the total number of credits available. This calculation shall be based on grades at the end of any semester or trimester, not on a grade that spans the entire school year.*

   This example represents a student's final average GPA based upon a six-period day with five year-long courses and two semester-long courses

$$GPA = \frac{\text{Sum of Grade Points for Each Course}}{\text{Sum of Credits Available}} \text{ (per credit)}$$

$$GPA = \frac{B+A+A+B+B+B+C}{1+1+1+1+1+.5+.5} = \frac{3(1)+4(1)+4(1)+3(1)+3(1)+3(.5)+2(.5)}{6}$$

$$GPA = \frac{19.5}{6} = 3.25 \text{ GPA}$$

4. *For purposes of the HOPE Scholarship Eligibility Grade Point Average, a student may repeat any failed course and the failing grade for the first attempt will not be considered in the HOPE Scholarship Eligibility Grade Point Average calculation. The grade of all repeats of the course shall be counted as part of the HOPE Scholarship Eligibility Grade Point Average. LEAs may allow students to replace failed course grades through credit recovery or similar programs without HOPE Scholarship Eligibility Grade Point Average penalty and is not to be considered a repeat.*

5. *The GPA shall be reported to the nearest 100th. The thousandth digit must be a 5 or higher to round up to the next hundredth. For example, a GPA of 3.296 would round up to 3.30. A GPA of $3.294\overline{9}$ would round down to 3.29.*

6. *The GPA used to determine eligibility for the HOPE Scholarship shall be reported on the student's transcript as the "Hope Scholarship GPA."*

7. *The Department of Education will provide guidance for LEAs to insure this rule is implemented uniformly across Tennessee.*

8. *The Department of Education will monitor the calculation of the HOPE Scholarship GPA as part of the routine LEA audits.*