

Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction

Frequently Asked Questions

On April 29, 2022, [T.C.A. § 49-6-420](#) codified requirements for the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction into legislation. The Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction was developed for high school students who are interested in pursuing a career in a high-need, high-skill industry after graduation. Below are responses to frequently asked questions related to this legislation and its associated Tennessee State Board of Education (State Board) Rules and Policies.

1. **What is the purpose of the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction?**

The Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction is a diploma distinction that was developed for high school students who are interested in pursuing a career in a high-need, high-skill industry after graduation. Students who earn the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction will be more prepared to seamlessly transition into the workforce.

2. **What are the requirements for a student to earn the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction?**

[State Board Rule 0520-01-03-.06](#) outlines all graduation requirements for students pursuing the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction. To earn the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction, a student is obligated to do the following:

- Before the end of grade 10, the student must:
 - notify the student’s counselor or school principal of the student’s intent to pursue an Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction;
 - provide the student’s counselor or school principal with documentation signed by the student’s parent or legal guardian indicating that the student’s parent or legal guardian is aware of the requirements for the parent’s or legal guardian’s student to obtain an Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction and consenting to the student’s intent to pursue the diploma distinction;
 - register with an American Job Center (AJC) or other career counseling or community partner approved by the student’s school; and
 - enroll in work-based learning (WBL) or dual enrollment courses for the student’s grade 11 school year.
- During the student’s grade 11 school year, the student must:
 - meet no less than once per month with a career coach;
 - successfully complete all coursework required to progress toward graduation; and
 - enroll in WBL or dual enrollment courses for the student’s grade 12 year.
- During the student’s grade 12 school year, the student must:
 - meet no less than once per month with a career coach; and
 - successfully complete all coursework required for graduation.

3. **What are the requirements for all public high schools, including public charter schools, to support students pursuing the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction?**

Public high schools, including public charter schools, must do the following for students every school year:

- notify all grade 9 and grade 10 students of the opportunity to pursue an Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction biannually, no later than ten days after the first day of each semester of the school

- year;
- require a student to earn nine credits of dual enrollment or WBL, which may be satisfied by the student’s successful completion of dual enrollment coursework, WBL experiences, on-the-job training, or other mentorships or structured educational experiences that allow the student to apply the student’s knowledge and skills in a work environment to develop an understanding of workplace expectations; and
- allow a student to earn at least one science credit and at least one math credit through course substitutions approved by the State Board, including, but not limited to, dual enrollment and WBL courses that are aligned to a student’s chosen career path.
 - The [State Board Graduation Substitutions Policy 3.103](#) lists all graduation substitutions. Students pursuing the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction may substitute any courses listed in this policy to satisfy graduation requirements as they pursue the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction.

4. Who can be a career coach and what are the requirements?

The following individuals can be a career coach:

- an AJC career coach;
- a career counseling or community partner approved by the United States Department of Labor’s regional office for the State of Tennessee;
- a certified school counselor; or
- an educator who holds an active WBL credential from the department.

The requirements of a career coach are as follows:

- At least once per month during each assigned student’s grade 11 and grade 12 school years, the career coach should conduct one-on-one meetings to assist with:
 - developing the personal attributes required for success in the workforce, such as time management, networking, communication, teamwork, creative thinking, and conflict resolution;
 - applying for dual enrollment grants or other available financial aid opportunities such as grants and scholarships administered by the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation;
 - identifying the best combination of dual enrollment, WBL, and internship opportunities available to the student; and
 - preparing for standardized assessments.

5. How can a school prepare for students pursuing the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction?

Schools can prepare for students pursuing the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction by ensuring they have the capacity to fulfill all requirements. The department recommends the following best practices to allow for optimal student outcomes:

- Prepare communications to inform students and parents about the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction.
- Increase the number of teachers and school counselors with an active WBL certificate.
- Increase the number of dual enrollment course offerings with postsecondary partners to align with the existing career and technical education (CTE) programs of study and the high-growth, high-wage, in-demand occupations in the community.
- Contact the nearest AJCs to identify career coaches who can mentor students pursuing the

Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction.

- Partner with local businesses that offer high-wage, high-growth, in-demand occupations to offer more high-quality WBL opportunities.

6. How should local education agencies (LEAs) and public charter schools notify grade 9 and grade 10 students of the opportunity to pursue an Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction no later than ten days after the first day of each semester of the school year?

LEAs and public charter schools may determine the best procedure to notify students of the opportunity to pursue an Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction based on local needs. Below are recommended best practices:

- Create a communication form that includes space for the student's parent or legal guardian to indicate they are aware of the requirements for the student to obtain an Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction, consenting to the student's participation.
- Inform staff of the requirement to distribute Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction information to students no later than ten days after the first day of each semester of the school year.
- Allow department chairs to reinforce the requirement to distribute Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction information to students.
- Provide the staff responsible for distributing Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction information with a list of all students they are responsible for providing the information.
- Communicate to parents, via phone, text, email, and/or other district communications channels, that information related to the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction will be distributed.
- Ensure the staff can accurately document that all students have received Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction information.
- Establish a process for students to provide the counselor or school principal with their intent to pursue the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction.

7. How many high school credits are earned by passing a qualified dual enrollment course?

Passing a qualified dual enrollment course will result in a student earning one credit toward the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction.

8. Will non-CTE dual enrollment courses be eligible to count toward Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction attainment?

The law does not specify that the dual enrollment courses must be in a specific content area. As written, non-CTE dual enrollment courses should be counted toward the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction requirements.

9. Will credits in Advanced Placement (AP) courses count toward Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction attainment?

The statute, State Board Rule, and State Board Policy specify credits of dual enrollment or work-based learning courses only. If an AP course does not meet these criteria, the AP course does not count. State Board Rule 0520-01-03-.06(31)(g) specifies that "A student receiving an Industry 4.0 diploma distinction shall earn nine (9) credits of dual enrollment or work-based learning in grades nine (9) through twelve (12)."

Further, State Board Rule 0520-01-03-.06(31)(f) provides that "a student pursuing an Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction may earn at least one (1) science credit and at least one (1) math credit through

course substitutions approved by the State Board, including, but not limited to, dual enrollment and work-based learning courses that are aligned to a student's chosen career path. Work-based learning course substitutions may only fulfill a student's third (3rd) credit of science and/or fourth (4th) credit of math. Pursuant to State Board Rule 0520-01-03-.03, high schools shall accept dual enrollment courses as a substitution for an aligned graduation requirement course."

10. Can LEAs and public charter schools allow students to substitute one science and one math credit to attain the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction?

Yes. [State Board Graduation Substitutions Policy 3.103](#) lists all allowable WBL and dual enrollment course substitutions available for students pursuing the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction.

11. Can meetings with a Career Coach be done in a group setting with multiple students pursuing the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction?

This would be up to the LEA, as the law does not specify that meetings with students must be done individually. However, LEAs should consult with their legal counsel to ensure adherence to all privacy laws and policies.

12. Can classroom instruction in CTE courses, specifically by an educator who holds an active Work-Based Learning credential, count toward the requirements of meeting with a Career Coach?

Any educator who holds an active WBL credential provided by the department may be a career coach. The WBL: Career Practicum course standards align with the content that a Career Coach may address.

13. Can a Work-Based Learning course completed during the summer term count toward the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction?

Yes. Credit-bearing WBL courses are allowed during the summer term. However, they will not generate TISA funding, as the average daily membership (ADM) for TISA is collected only for reporting periods 1-9 (RP 1- RP 9).

14. What if a student says they wants to pursue the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction but has not been enrolled in a CTE program of study during grades 9 and 10?

The law requires the opportunity to pursue the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction to be available to all students. However, the law also states that students must "successfully complete all coursework required for graduation." School counselors and administrators should review whether the student can fulfill all the requirements and proceed accordingly, detailing what coursework and scheduling will be necessary for the student to attain the distinction.

15. Can LEAs limit the opportunity to pursue the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction to specific programs of study?

No. The law requires the opportunity to pursue the Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction to be available to all students.