
Middle Grades Policy 2.102

The Background:

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. Middle Grades Policy 2.103 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 policies regarding these plans.

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 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 updates have been made to this 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 during the middle grades;
- Clarified the timeline for implementation of each step occurring during the middle grades and referred to the high school policy for review of the remaining steps;
- Confirmed that a student’s IEP Transition Plan fulfills 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; and
- Required a current version of the plan as part of a student’s cumulative record should a student transfer schools.

In addition, a section has been added to articulate ways in which districts can partner with industry leaders to support occupational instruction in the middle grades. This item also removes the requirement for LEAs to submit verification to the Department on implementation of project-based civics assessments. The requirement was removed in the 2022 legislative session through Public Chapter 686.

The Recommendation:

State Board staff recommends acceptance of this item on first reading.