
Graduation Requirements Rule 0520-01-03-.06

The Background:

The Tennessee State Board of Education Graduation Requirements Rule 0520-01-03 outlines the academic and instructional requirements for courses and programs of study within public education. Section -.06 outlines the types of diplomas, credits that must be obtained for graduation, and state and district distinctions available.

This item includes a revision to remove the requirement that students take a mathematics course or approved mathematics course substitution in each of the four years of high school and replaces it with a requirement that students take a mathematics course or approved mathematics course substitution in at least three years of high school. Under this proposal, students would still be required to take four credits of mathematics to graduate but could do so within a three-year period. Removing the four-year requirement will provide students with the flexibility to take courses aligned to their area of interest or pathway during their fourth year of high school. This may include mathematics-adjacent courses (such as STEM or CTE courses) or courses that are better aligned to their proposed field of study, regardless of focus.

This revision also includes the addition of Cambridge International Education on the criteria list for graduation with “state distinction.” It is proposed that students attaining a B or better grade point average and attaining a score of E/e or higher in at least two (2) Cambridge International Education A or AS exams will be recognized as graduating with “state distinction.”

This item also clarifies that to earn a traditional high school diploma students must complete 0.5 credit of Physical Education and 1 credit of Lifetime Wellness and revises language related to students substituting JROTC for Physical Education, Lifetime Wellness, and Personal Finance. These revisions align the rule with High School Policy 2.103 and Graduation Substitutions Policy 3.103.

State Board staff will hold a rulemaking hearing between first and final reading to collect public feedback.

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.

Connection to the [Master Plan](#):

This item supports the State Board’s strategic focus on Postsecondary and Career outlined in the Master Plan by increasing flexibility for students seeking to take courses aligned to their area of interest and college or career pathway and by increasing student opportunities to qualify for state graduation distinction.

The Recommendation:

The SBE staff recommend acceptance of this item on first reading.