
Career and Technical Education (CTE) Courses Standards

The Background:

T.C.A. § 49-1-302(a)(8) authorizes the State Board of Education to “approve all academic standards and adopt rules and policies governing courses of study in the public schools.” Additionally, State Board Rule 0520-01-03-.03(1) calls for the State Board to approve standards for each subject area, grades K-12. The approved standards are to be the basis for planning instructional programs in each local school system.

The TN Department of Education previously reviewed Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses on a three (3) year cycle; however, beginning in 2023-24 and moving forward, the department intends to review each course annually to ensure the courses are up-to-date and align with department postsecondary and workforce goals. Reviewing courses may not necessitate changes each year. Districts will receive prior notice of any course changes during CTE director meetings, so that they may plan for any course changes and corresponding implications, such as staffing, curriculum, etc.

This item includes revised course standards for the following CTE career clusters:

- Healthcare and Human Services
- Middle School Career Awareness, Career Exploration, and Career Advising and Planning

This item also includes a new Program of Study (POS), Technology in Production Agriculture, for the Agriculture CTE career cluster. Two new courses are included in the POS

- Agriscience Technologies
- Precision Agriculture

The CTE courses have been updated based on educator feedback to align more closely with industry and postsecondary needs. Industry partners and secondary and postsecondary educators have reviewed these new and revised standards.

Below is a summary of the revisions to Healthcare and Human Services career cluster:

The **Nursing Education** course has been updated to better align with industry-recognized credentialing terminology and certification requirements. Key terminology changes were made throughout the standards to ensure consistency with credential language, including the addition of terms such as “healthcare facility,” “Patient Care Technician (PCT),” and “Certified Patient Care Technician (CPCT)” to reflect credential-specific roles. The term “certified nurse assistant” was revised to “certified nurse aide,” and references to “resident” and “elderly” were updated to include “patient”, broadening the scope of care and applicability. Additional terminology, such as “patient in a healthcare facility” and “resident or patient,” was incorporated to emphasize various care settings. New standards were also introduced to align with certification requirements by including essential clinical skills such as oral and tracheal suctioning, postmortem care, feeding tube maintenance, antiembolism stockings, incentive spirometry, IV and dressing changes, phlebotomy, specimen collection, and EKG use. To reflect the full range of patient

care competencies, the standards were expanded to include infants, adolescents, adults, and elderly individuals. Finally, new standards were added to address behavioral and chronic health needs, including the care of patients with non-emergent diseases, suicide risk in the geriatric population, and substance or illicit drug abuse among elderly individuals.

Below is a summary of the revisions to the middle school career course standards:

Course updates aim to improve alignment with current state policies and provide students with clearer, more relevant career preparation pathways. New standards have been added to promote awareness and exploration of careers within Tennessee state government agencies, with a particular focus on non-elected roles. These updates emphasize the importance of public service careers that play a critical role in government operations but are often less visible to students.

Terminology has also been updated to reflect policy and programmatic changes. The term “statewide dual credit” has been replaced with “local dual credit” to align with the phase-out of statewide offerings. Additionally, the “Academic Plan” is now referred to as the “High School & Beyond Plan”, with added detail to help students understand its purpose and connection to future planning. This change brings the course into alignment with the state’s Middle Grades and High School Policy, ensuring consistency in language and intent across grade levels.

Below is a summary of the two Agriculture courses for the new Technology in Production Agriculture program of study:

Agriscience Technologies is an applied science course that focuses on the use of scientific methods and data analysis to solve real-world problems. Emphasizing agricultural, food, and natural resource systems, this course provides students with hands-on experience in using technology and biology to address challenges in these fields. Students will develop a strong foundation in scientific principles and techniques, learning how to apply them to the development, implementation, and management of innovative solutions. Through practical application, students will gain insight into how science and technology can enhance agricultural practices and contribute to sustainable resource management.

By the end of this course, proficient students will be equipped with the knowledge and skills needed for continued success in the third-year course, Precision Agriculture, as well as further postsecondary education or training in related fields.

Precision Agriculture is an applied course that addresses the technological innovation in agriculture that thrives on new advances, sustainable practices and secures future farms and farming communities. The course covers a wide range of topics in biotechnology, precision agriculture in the crop and livestock industry, and sustainable practices in the food and fiber industry. Upon completion of this course, students will have learned the basics of computer and data science in the agricultural industry.

Additional feedback will be solicited between first and final reading. Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-1- 309, the State Board will submit the proposed changes to the education committees of the House and Senate prior to final reading. These CTE courses and standards changes will go into effect for the 2026-27 school year.

Below are the career clusters with revised course standards.

*Indicates a proposed new course

| Agriculture Career Cluster | |
|--|-------------------|
| Agriscience Technologies* | New course |
| Precision Agriculture* | New course |
| Health Science | |
| Nursing Education | Revised Standards |
| Middle School Career Awareness Courses | |
| Career Awareness | Revised Standards |
| Career Exploration | Revised Standards |
| Career Advisement and Planning | Revised Standards |

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 ensuring that students develop and demonstrate readiness for their postsecondary or career plans.

The Recommendation:

The Department of Education recommends acceptance of this item on first reading. The SBE staff concurs with this recommendation.