
Innovative School Districts Chapter 0520-01-25

The Background:

Chapter 1053 of the Public Acts of 2024 (PC 1053), now codified at T.C.A. §§ 49-8-1501, et seq., established a new type of local education agency (LEA) called an Innovative School District (ISD).

In Tennessee, state colleges and universities may contract with LEAs to run training schools for grades pre-K–12 at which the college or university’s teacher candidates may gain experience in the classroom. These training schools have been allowable under T.C.A. § 49-8-105 for many years and operate in LEAs across the state. PC 1053 established a pathway by which public universities that operate training schools may apply to the Tennessee Department of Education (the Department) to gain recognition as an ISD and operate as an LEA, rather than operating under a contract with a separate LEA.

This item proposes rules to establish a process by which eligible universities may apply to operate their training school(s) through an ISD, including the submission of a plan comprised of components listed in PC 1053 and that ensure compliance with all federal and state laws, rules, and regulations.

State Board staff held a rulemaking hearing on July 24, 2025, to collect public feedback. No public comments were received. Revisions between first and final reading include clarifying the appeals process to specify that the Department will only consider timely filed appeals by a public university to become an innovative school district. to become an innovative school district.

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 beyond any impact of the authorizing statute.

Connection to the [Master Plan](#):

This item supports the State Board’s strategic focus on Engagement and Accountability, outlined in the Master Plan, by establishing clear processes and expectations by which Innovative School Districts may be approved and implemented.

The Recommendation:

The Department of Education recommends approval of this item on final reading. The State Board staff concurs with this recommendation.