
Accountability Hearings Rules 0520-09-02-.01 through -.04

The Background:

T.C.A. § 49-3-112 authorizes the State Board of Education (State Board) to call for a hearing an LEA that operates a public school or a public charter school that receives a “D” or “F” letter grade to report on the school’s performance and how spending decisions may have affected its performance goals. Following an Accountability Hearing, the State Board may recommend that the Tennessee Department of Education (Department) impose a corrective action plan or conduct an audit and investigation of the LEA or public charter school’s academic programming and spending. The Department shall report on the outcomes of a recommended corrective action to the State Board.

Development and Stakeholder Engagement:

State Board staff began researching accountability models around the country in 2022 and connected with Maryland’s and Colorado’s Department of Education to learn more about new accountability processes in place in these two states. While neither state currently operates with a similar hearings process as outlined in T.C.A., State Board staff gained valuable insight into how these accountability structures were established.

Between 2023 and 2024, State Board staff consulted with two national education groups, Bellwether and The Aspen Institute, to develop the initial framework for the hearings and to conduct focus groups with key stakeholders. Throughout the development process, State Board staff routinely engaged with the following stakeholders:

- State Legislators
- State Board Members
- State Board Staff
- Tennessee Department of Education
- Tennessee Organization of State Superintendents (TOSS)
- Directors of Schools
- District Leaders
- Educators
- School Leaders
- Charter School and Authorizer Leaders
- Tennessee School Boards Association (TSBA)

Crafting the Rules:

In June 2024, State Board staff began drafting this item, re-engaging the stakeholders listed above as well as conducting specific outreach to gather feedback additional stakeholders including: SCORE, Tennessee Charter School Center, the Department's School Turnaround Team, Assessments and Accountability Team and the Office of Academics, and districts that operate higher performing schools with similar contexts as some of our state's lowest performing schools. State Board staff also presented updates on the development of these rules at TSBA's Annual Convention in November 2024 and Summer Law Institute in July and August 2025, TOSS's Legislative Conference in February 2025, and through Superintendent Study Council meetings.

Changes since first reading include:

- Clarifying eligibility criteria for LEAs and charter schools called for an Accountability Hearing;
- Revising required documentation for closed and closing schools;
- Adding the list of required attendees to be included in State Board's hearing notification letter;
- Clarifying that school board chairs and governing body chairs may be excused from appearing for an Accountability Hearing only in the event of an unavoidable conflict;
- Cross-referencing State Board Policy 1.600 for further definitions of the corrective actions;
- Adjusting the order of corrective action options;
- Adding a requirement for the Department to notify the State Board of its decision and rationale to implement the recommended corrective action(s); and
- General language clean-ups to ensure overall clarity.

Connection to the [Master Plan](#):

This item supports the State Board's strategic focus on Engagement and Accountability outlined in the Master Plan by developing a process for conducting the Accountability Hearings defined in the TISA Act.

The Recommendation:

State Board staff recommends approval of this item on final reading.