
Graduation Requirements Rule 0520-01-03 -.06

The Background:

Tennessee State Board of Education Graduation Requirements Rule 0520-01-03-.06 outlines the graduation requirements for students in Tennessee. The rule outlines diploma options for high school students (e.g., traditional, special education, occupational, alternate academic high school diploma), and specific credit requirements needed to earn each diploma type.

During the May 30, 2025, quarterly meeting of the State Board, Chairman Eby requested a study of the World Language graduation requirement and expressed a desire to create more flexibility for students who are interested in pursuing postsecondary pathways that do not require World Language courses. In July 2025, Chairman Eby and State Board staff convened a World Language Working Group to discuss potential policy recommendations and understand areas of interest and concern. During the August 27, 2025, State Board quarterly workshop, the Chairman discussed the requirement and feedback from the Working Group with members, and members shared their perspectives on the issue.

During the November 2025 quarterly workshop, Chairman Eby presented a revised approach based on stakeholder feedback. Members reacted to this proposal, sharing their own perspectives. Chairman Eby directed board staff to draft a series of revisions to the rule in advance of the February 2026 quarterly meeting and asked members to gather additional information to inform their position on the matter.

These rule revisions reflect the changes proposed by Chairman Eby and include the following:

- Reducing the required credits in World Language from two (2) to one (1) for students graduating after the 2025-26 school year;
- Increasing elective credits by adding a new “additional elective” credit requirement that is separate but complementary to the existing elective focus credits, and allows a student to take an additional elective either in their area of focus or in another area of interest;
- Adding language encouraging the use of High School and Beyond Plans and Dual Enrollment when selecting and scheduling students for elective courses;
- Removing the requirement that if students take two credits of World Language, they must be in the same language;
- Adding World Language as an area a student can earn credits in for the purpose of elective focus credits; and
- Adding language directing the Department to develop guidance to support districts in developing waivers of the World Language and Fine Arts requirements.

The Fiscal Analysis Impact:

This item has no financial impact on an LEA.

Connection to Master Plan

This action supports our overall Master Plan and the mission of the State Board in providing each individual student with options to improve outcomes and prepare for post-secondary success. Specifically, the item supports the State Board strategic focus areas of 1) Postsecondary and Career ; i.e., all students are prepared for success in high school, postsecondary and career; and 2) Engagement and Accountability; i.e., the State Board will annually identify its rules and policies for review and update based on changes in law or opportunities to improve outcomes, as needed.

The Recommendation:

The SBE staff recommends approval of this item on first reading.