

TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

GRADUATION PERMISSIONS AND SUBSTITUTIONS POLICY

3.103

POLICY SECTIONS:

- I. Purpose
- II. Approved Course Permissions for Specific Graduation Requirements
- III. Approved Course Substitutions for Specific Graduation Requirements

I. Purpose

- (1) Students may substitute the courses listed in this policy (e.g., AP Computer Science A) for certain graduation credit requirements listed below in this policy (e.g., Fourth Credit Math). Substitution decisions must be made on a student-by-student basis, based on their High School and Beyond Plan and elective focus in accordance with State Board of Education High School Policy 2.103. The State Board of Education Graduation Requirements Rule 0520-01-03-.06 and High School Policy 2.103 outline graduation requirements overall.
- (2) In addition to the specific courses listed in this policy, pursuant to State Board of Education Academic Program Requirements Rule 0520-01-03-.03(7), local education agencies (LEAs) shall accept postsecondary credits as a substitution for an aligned graduation credit requirement, including for general education and the elective focus courses, for students who take and pass dual enrollment courses at an accredited postsecondary institution for credit. The decision to permit a postsecondary course at an accredited postsecondary institution not contained in this policy to count as a substitution for a graduation credit requirement listed in this policy is to be determined at the local level based on a review of whether the postsecondary course covers the state standards for the graduation credit requirement.
- (3) Pursuant to State Board of Education Middle Grades Policy 2.102, students in middle school may take coursework for high school credit. If a sStudents who successfully completes any State Board-required high school credits before grade nine (9), they shall receive graduation credit for that coursework.
- (4) Any course listed in this policy as approved to substitute for more than one (1) graduation requirement can only be used by a student to substitute for one (1) graduation requirement course, with the following exceptions:
 - (a) One (1) full-credit course may substitute for two (2) half-credit courses.
 - (b) A course used to substitute for a graduation requirement course may also fulfill the requirements toward the student's elective focus, provided that the student meets all other requirements for the student's diploma type.
 - (c) Pursuant to State Board of Education High School Policy 2.103 and T.C.A. § 49-6-1209, if, during high school, a student enlists in a branch of the United States

TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

GRADUATION PERMISSIONS AND SUBSTITUTIONS POLICY

3.103

military or in the national guard through the military delayed entry program, the national guard split training option or other similar early entry program and completes basic training before graduation from high school, the student shall receive high school credit towards graduation for basic training. Credit for basic training may be substituted, upon the choice of the student, for the required credit in lifetime wellness and credit in one (1) elective course or for credit in two (2) elective courses. A student who completes basic training and chooses basic training to substitute for the required credit in lifetime wellness shall be given credit for JROTC I.

- (5) [The State Board of Education Approved High School Courses Policy 3.205 outlines courses that may be offered for credit in grades 9-12.](#)

II. Approved Course Permissions for Specific Graduation Requirements

(1) Fourth Math

Students pursuing a traditional high school diploma are required to complete four (4) credits of math. Three (3) of the required four (4) credits of mathematics must include Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry, or the equivalent Integrated Math I, II, and III. Students may complete the fourth (4th) math credit at any point before, in between, or following the sequence, provided they meet the requirements in State Board of Education High School Policy 2.103 and Graduation Requirements Rule 0520-01-03-.06 and take all three (3) required courses. [The fourth \(4th\) credit shall be in another mathematics course that extends the student's knowledge in mathematics.](#) The following list includes allowable course substitutions for the fourth (4th) math credit.

Programs of Study

International Baccalaureate Mathematics Program
Cambridge Mathematics Program
Advanced Placement Mathematics Program

Statewide Programs

Dual Enrollment Mathematics Program
Statewide Dual Credit Pre-Calculus¹
Statewide Dual Credit Statistics

Math

[Calculus](#)
[Mathematical Reasoning for Decision Making](#)
[Precalculus](#)
[Statistics](#)

¹ Beginning in the 2025-26 school year, Statewide Dual Credit will be phased out over a three-year period. Courses listed in this policy that are set to be phased out are noted in italics.

TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

GRADUATION PERMISSIONS AND SUBSTITUTIONS POLICY

3.103

Science

Physics

AP Physics C: Electricity & Magnetism
AP Physics C: Mechanics
AP Physics I: Algebra-Based
AP Physics II: Algebra-Based
AP Computer Science Principles
AP Computer Science A

Computer Science²

International Baccalaureate Computer Science Program
Cambridge International Computer Science Program
Dual Enrollment Computer Science Program
Computer Science
AP Computer Science Principles
AP Computer Science A
Computer Science Foundations
Coding I
Coding II
Coding Practicum
Cybersecurity I
Cybersecurity II
Cybersecurity Practicum
Data Science I
Data Science II
Mobile App Development

CTE Course Substitutions

Agricultural Fabrication & Biosystems Engineering
Principles of Farm and Agribusiness Management

Work-Based Learning Courses³

Coding Practicum
IT (Information Technology) Clinical Internship
Web Design Practicum
Cybersecurity Practicum
Manufacturing Practicum
Engineering Practicum

² Pursuant to State Board of Education Graduation Requirements Rule 0520-01-03-.06, students may fulfill their required computer science graduation requirement by substituting a computer science course for the 4th credit of math.

³ Pursuant to State Board of Education Graduation Requirements Rule 0520-01-03-.06, a student pursuing an Industry 4.0 Diploma Distinction may substitute their 4th credit of math with a work-based learning course.

TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

GRADUATION PERMISSIONS AND SUBSTITUTIONS POLICY

3.103

STEM IV: Practicum
Supply Chain Management Practicum
Teaching as a Profession Practicum (Math Placement)

(2) Third Lab Science

Students pursuing a traditional high school diploma are required to complete three (3) credits of science. Two (2) of the three (3) credits of science must include Biology and Chemistry or Physics. The third (3rd) science credit must be a lab science. Students may complete the third (3rd) lab science credit at any point before, in between, or following the required Biology and Chemistry or Physics courses. The third (3rd) lab science must be in another course that extends the student's knowledge in science. The following list includes allowable course substitutions for the third (3rd) lab science.

Programs of Study

International Baccalaureate Science Program
Cambridge Science Program
Advanced Placement Science Program

Statewide Programs

Dual Enrollment Science Program
Statewide Dual-Credit Science Program

Science

Biology II
Chemistry I
Chemistry II
Earth and Space Science
Ecology
Environmental Science
Geology
Human Anatomy and Physiology
Physical Science
Physical World Concepts
Physics I
Physics II
Scientific Research

Computer Science⁴

International Baccalaureate Computer Science Program
Cambridge International Computer Science Program

⁴ Pursuant to State Board of Education Graduation Requirements Rule 0520-01-03-.06, students may fulfill their required computer science graduation requirement by substituting a computer science course for the 3rd lab science.

TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

GRADUATION PERMISSIONS AND SUBSTITUTIONS POLICY

3.103

Dual Enrollment Computer Science Program
Computer Science
AP Computer Science Principles
AP Computer Science A
Computer Science Foundations
Coding I
Coding II
Coding Practicum
Cybersecurity I
Cybersecurity II
Cybersecurity Practicum
Mobile App Development

CTE Course Substitutions

Advanced Food Science
Agriscience
Applied Environmental Science
BioSTEM I
BioSTEM II
BioSTEM III
Engineering Design I
Engineering Design II
Food Science & Safety
Anatomy & Physiology
Natural Resources Management
Nutrition Science & Diet Therapy
Plant & Soil Science
Principles of Engineering & Technology (PLTW)
STEM I: Foundations
STEM II: Applications
STEM III: STEM in Context
Veterinary Science Technologies

Work-Based Learning Courses⁵

Coding Practicum
IT (Information Technology) Clinical Internship
Web Design Practicum
Cybersecurity Practicum
Clinical Internship
Nursing Education
Emergency Medical Services Practicum
BioStem Practicum

⁵ Pursuant to State Board of Education Graduation Requirements Rule 0520-01-03-.06, a student pursuing an Industry 4.0 diploma distinction may substitute their 3rd lab science with work-based learning courses.

TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

GRADUATION PERMISSIONS AND SUBSTITUTIONS POLICY

3.103

STEM IV: Practicum

III. Approved Course Substitutions for Specific Graduation Requirements

(1) Economics

Courses substituting for an Economics course must contain economics content that extends the student's knowledge in economics. The following list includes allowable course substitutions for the Economics course.

Programs of Study

AP Microeconomics

AP Macroeconomics

Statewide Programs

Dual Enrollment Business Program

Dual Enrollment Economics Program

CTE Course Substitutions

Agricultural Business & Finance

Business Economics

Entrepreneurship

Marketing & Management I: Principles

Retail Operations

(2) English III or IV

Students pursuing a traditional high school diploma are required to complete four (4) credits of English. Two (2) of the four (4) credits of English must include English I and English II. Courses substituting for a third (3rd) or fourth (4th) English course ~~should~~ must contain English content that extends the student's English knowledge beyond English II or English III content. Therefore, substitute course credit for English III or IV must be earned after completing English II or English III credit, respectively, unless the substitution is taken concurrently with required English I and II courses (i.e., taking AP Research and AP Seminar towards the AP Capstone Diploma Program). The following list includes allowable course substitutions for the third (3rd) or fourth (4th) credit of English.⁶

Programs of Study

AP English Language & Composition

AP English Literature & Composition

⁶ Pursuant to State Board of Education English as a Second Language Programs Rule 0520-01-19-.03, for students who are English learners, two (2) high school English as a Second Language (ESL) courses must be counted toward the four (4) required English credits required for graduation. At least one (1) of the ESL courses counted toward graduation credit must be counted toward credit in an English course with an end-of-course assessment.

TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

GRADUATION PERMISSIONS AND SUBSTITUTIONS POLICY

3.103

AP Research
AP Seminar
Cambridge International English Program
International Baccalaureate English Program

Statewide Programs

Dual Enrollment English Program
~~Statewide Dual Credit: Speech and
Communication~~

Economics

~~Courses substituting for an Economics course should contain economics content that extends the student's knowledge in Economics. The following list includes allowable course substitutions for the Economics course.~~

Programs of Study

~~AP Microeconomics
AP Macroeconomics~~

Statewide Programs

~~Statewide Dual Credit Introduction to Agricultural Business
Statewide Dual Credit Introduction to Business
Dual Enrollment Business Program
Dual Enrollment Economics Program~~

CTE Course Substitutions

~~Agricultural Business & Finance
Business Economics
Entrepreneurship
Marketing & Management I: Principles
Retail Operations~~

(3) Fine Arts

Courses substituting for a Fine Arts course ~~must~~^{should} contain content that extends the student's knowledge in Fine Arts. The following list includes allowable course substitutions for the Fine Arts course. [The State Board of Education Approved High School Courses Policy 3.205 lists Fine Arts courses that fulfill the graduation requirement.](#)

CTE Course Substitutions

Digital Arts & Design I
Floral Design and Operations
Foundations of Fashion Design
Foundations of Interior Design
Landscaping & Turf Science
Web Design Foundations

TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

GRADUATION PERMISSIONS AND SUBSTITUTIONS POLICY

3.103

(4) Lifetime Wellness

Courses substituting for a Lifetime Wellness course must contain wellness content that extends the student's knowledge in lifetime wellness. The following list includes allowable course substitutions for the Lifetime Wellness course.

JROTC I

Basic Training (JROTC I)⁷

(5) Personal Finance

Courses substituting for a Personal Finance course must contain personal finance content that extends the student's knowledge of business or finance. The following list includes allowable course substitutions for the Personal Finance course.

Statewide Programs

Dual Enrollment Business Program

CTE Course Substitutions

Agricultural Business and Finance

Business Management

Entrepreneurship

Other Course Substitutions

JROTC III⁸

(4)(6) Physical Education⁹

Courses substituting for a Physical Education course ~~must~~ should contain physical education content that extends the student's knowledge in ~~p~~Physical ~~e~~Education. The following list includes allowable course substitutions for the Physical Education course.

JROTC II

⁷ See I.(4)(c) above for further clarification.

⁸ JROTC III may substitute for one-half (½) credit of U.S. Government and Civics and one-half (½) credit of Personal Finance if the JROTC instructor attends the Personal Finance training as stipulated in State Board Employment Standards Rule 0520-02-06-.02.

⁹ ~~Pursuant to State Board of Education High School Policy 2.103, t~~The Physical Education requirement may be met by substituting a documented and equivalent time of physical activity in marching band, JROTC, cheerleading, interscholastic athletics, school sponsored intramural athletics, and other areas approved by the local board of education.

TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

GRADUATION PERMISSIONS AND SUBSTITUTIONS POLICY

3.103

~~(5)(7)~~ U.S. Government and Civics

Courses substituting for a U.S. Government and Civics course ~~must~~^{should} contain U.S. Government and Civics content that extends the student's knowledge in U.S. Government and Civics. The following list includes allowable course substitutions for the U.S. Government and Civics course.

Programs of Study

AP United States Government and Politics
AP United States History

Statewide Programs

Dual Enrollment U.S. or American History Program
Statewide Dual Credit American History

CTE Course Substitutions

Pre-Law I, Pre-Law II, and Pre-Law III
American Business Legal Systems

Other Course Substitutions

JROTC III¹⁰

~~Lifetime Wellness~~

~~Courses substituting for a Lifetime Wellness course should contain wellness content that extends the student's knowledge in Lifetime Wellness. The following list includes allowable course substitutions for the Lifetime Wellness course.~~

~~JROTC I
Basic Training (JROTC I)¹¹~~

~~Personal Finance~~

~~Courses substituting for a Personal Finance course should contain personal finance content that extends the student's knowledge of business or finance. The following list includes allowable course substitutions for the Personal Finance course.~~

~~Statewide Programs~~

~~Dual Enrollment Business Program
Statewide Dual Credit Introduction to Business~~

~~CTE Course Substitutions~~

~~Agricultural Business and Finance~~

¹⁰ Students who complete JROTC III may substitute that course for one-half (½) credit of Personal Finance and one-half (½) credit of U.S. Government and Civics.

~~¹¹ See I.(4)(c) above.~~

TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

GRADUATION PERMISSIONS AND SUBSTITUTIONS POLICY

3.103

~~Business Management
Entrepreneurship~~

~~Other Course Substitutions
JROTC III¹²~~

¹² ~~JROTC III may substitute for one-half (½) credit of U.S. Government and Civics and one-half (½) credit of Personal Finance if the JROTC instructor attends the Personal Finance training.~~