
Special Courses Policy 3.201

The Background

State Board of Education Rule 0520-01-03-.03(4) and Special Courses Policy 3.201 permit local education agencies (LEAs) and public charter schools to apply to offer special courses not listed in the Approved High School Courses Policy 3.205. The Tennessee Department of Education annually reviews special course applications and assigns subject-specific course codes to courses approved for one, three, or six years.

This item proposes the following revisions to the Special Courses Policy 3.201:

- Clarify that special courses are elective courses and must not be substituted for a graduation credit requirement.
- Update the maximum approval period from six (6) years to eight (8) years to align approval cycles with the State Board's standards revision schedule.
- Direct the Department to establish a process beginning in school year 2026-27 to identify high-frequency special courses as candidates for conversion to permanent courses listed in the Approved High School Courses Policy 3.205 with approved permanent courses available for LEA offering beginning in school year 2027-28.

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.

Policy Justification:

T.C.A. § 4-5-230 requires that justification for adopting an item as a policy instead of a rule be submitted to the chair of the Government Operations Committee. This item is proposed to be adopted as a policy because it defines or explains the meaning of a statute or rule and/or concerns only the internal management of state government that does not affect private rights or privileges.

Recommendation

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