Tennessee State Board of Education **Agenda**
November 20, 2026 **Final Reading Item: VI. A.**

Education Freedom Scholarships Rules 0520-01-24-.02 through -.08 and -.12 through -.15

Background:

The Education Freedom Scholarships (EFS) Program is a school choice program that allows Tennessee students who attend Category I, II, or III private schools, as defined by State Board Rule 0520-07-02, to access state scholarship funds to apply toward educational expenses. The Education Freedom Scholarships Rules 0520-01-24 define key terms, establish application and eligibility processes, establish appeals procedures, and set forth other logistical matters necessary to effectuate the EFS Program.

The proposed revisions to the EFS rules reflect changes that Chapter 963 of the Public Acts of 2026 (PC 963) made to the authorizing statute for the EFS Program. Accordingly, revisions are proposed to the Prioritization of Awards Rule in order for the Tennessee Department of Education to award Education Freedom Scholarships in a revised order in compliance with PC 963. Other revisions are proposed for clarity and effective implementation of the program.

State Board staff held a rulemaking hearing on October 22, 2026, to collect public feedback. Three sets of comments were received and were shared with board members and the Department for review.

There are small grammatical changes to the rules between first and final reading.

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.

Connection to the Master Plan:

This item supports the State Board's strategic focus on Literacy & Numeracy and College, Career, and Military Readiness outlined in the Master Plan by providing choices in K-12 educational opportunities for Tennessee students.

The Recommendation:

The Tennessee Department of Education recommends approval of this item on final reading. The State Board Executive Director's recommendation concurs.