
Non-Public School Approval Process Rule 0520-07-02

The Background:

The State Board of Education rule 0520-07-02 establishes the requirements for six categories of non-public schools in Tennessee. In an effort to provide greater clarity and remove outdated language within the non-public school approval process rules, the Department recommends updated language to provide clearer requirements for each non-public school category. Among the proposed changes, the Department recommends the removal of category VI in its entirety. Additional changes are proposed to align language with current standards for minimum kindergarten age, student reporting requirements, and testing. All proposed rule changes have been reviewed and approved by the Tennessee Non-public Advisory Council.

Below is a brief summary of the changes (page numbers refer to the version with tracked changes):

- **Page 1:** Removes reference to "Pre-K schools". Pre-K programs are approved and monitored by the department's Office of Early Learning and governed by the provisions in rule 0520-12-01.
- **Page 1:** Removes category VI as an option for non-public schools.
- **Page 2:** Clarifies requirements for teacher evaluation and testing.
- **Page 5:** Removes contradictory language around minimum kindergarten age requirements.
- **Page 6:** Updates required tested grades in category II schools to align with the minimum requirements in public schools.
- **Page 6:** Adds clarifying language around minimum kindergarten age and student reporting requirements for category III schools.
- **Page 7:** Adds the Tennessee Alliance of Church Related Schools to reflect this recent update to T.C.A. § 49-50-801.
- **Page 8:** Removes confusing language around hours taken to earn a bachelor's degree and updates required tested grades in category V schools to align with the minimum requirements in public schools.
- **Page 8 – 11:** Removes category VI as a non-public school option. Category VI would permit a university to apply to the department/state board as an approval agency for high schools located outside of the country. No universities have ever expressed an interest in doing this.

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.

The Recommendation:

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