



TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

REGULAR CALENDAR ITEM: VII.

MEETING DATE: January 27, 2023
SUBJECT: *Move on When Ready Act* - ACT Thresholds
ITEM TYPE: Action
ACTION RECOMMENDATION: Approval

BACKGROUND

In 2011, the *Move on When Ready Act* (T.C.A. § 49-6-8103) established an early high school graduation program through which a student may complete high school and be considered for college admission in fewer than four years. Traditionally, an individual must either have successfully completed all four years of high school or have completed their High School Equivalency (GED or HiSET) to enroll in higher education as a degree-seeking student. Among other rigorous criteria high school students must meet, T.C.A. § 49-6-8103(c)(4) states a student must “[s]core on either the ACT or the SAT at or above benchmarks set by the Tennessee higher education commission for mathematics and English.” In addition to ensuring the student is HOPE eligible as required by the T.C.A. § 49-6-8105, the determined math and English ACT scores should signal, with an increased level of certainty, the student is likely to be successful at a Tennessee university or community college. The ACT threshold provides a measure of assurance that students are prepared for the rigors of higher education despite having completed high school in fewer than four years. Students must still apply and be accepted to the higher education institution. The Tennessee State Board of Education (SBE) oversees the administration of T.C.A. § 49-6-8103.

In 2012, the Commission adopted English and math ACT scores of 27 for *Move on When Ready* eligibility. SBE Policy 2.103(2) describes the protocol and requirements for students seeking early graduation but prescribes a recommended benchmark of an ACT Composite score of 21. As part of a review of policies in consultation with the SBE, THEC staff evaluated the ACT thresholds for parallels among students with a high school GPA of 3.2, the minimum GPA required by T.C.A. § 49-6-8103, and the first-year outcomes of first-time HOPE Scholarship recipients, including scholarship renewal and retention at a public college or university. For students with at least a 3.2 HS GPA, THEC staff observed that first-time HOPE recipients with ACT Composite scores of 25 have a similar likelihood of fall-fall scholarship renewal and retention as students with the highest ACT Composite scores. Therefore, THEC staff recommend students with math and English ACT scores of 25, or corresponding SAT scores, should satisfy the ACT component of T.C.A. § 49-6-8103.

THEC staff consulted with SBE on the proposed threshold revision. Pending approval from the Commission, the SBE will review the policy change for implementation at its meeting on February 10, 2023.

RECOMMENDATION

THEC staff recommend the adoption of mathematics and English ACT scores of 25, or corresponding SAT scores, to meet the ACT requirement of the *Move on When Ready Act*. These scores would not need to come from the same test administration.