

Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation

September 26, 2024

Decision Item E

Tennessee Middle College Scholarship – Rulemaking Hearing Rule

Staff Recommendation

(1) Approve the Rulemaking Hearing Rule, Chapter 1640-01-29, Tennessee Middle College Scholarship, as amended.

(2) Authorize the Executive Director to make any necessary technical corrections to this Rule, including changes required by the Tennessee Attorney General.

Background

This Rule provides for the following substantive changes to the existing rule.

- Adds a definition for “Eligible Program of Study.”
- Adds clarifying language for award amounts to be based on three-quarter-time and part-time enrollment.
- Removes specified application deadlines and replaces with the “Application deadline shall be determined by the TSAC Executive Director and published on TSAC’s website” and further authorizes the Executive Director “to modify published application deadlines for well-documented extraordinary cause if necessary to protect the public interest.”

A public Rulemaking Hearing was held on September 26, 2024. Pending approval by the Board, these rules will be implemented following approval by the Tennessee Attorney General and subsequent filing with the Secretary of State.

**RULES
OF THE
TENNESSEE STUDENT ASSISTANCE CORPORATION**

**CHAPTER 1640-01-29
TENNESSEE MIDDLE COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

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1640-01-29-.01 INTRODUCTION.

- (1) ~~These rules implement the~~ The Tennessee Middle College Scholarship Program, as authorized in T.C.A., Title 49, Chapter 4, Part 9, ~~as amended by 2017 Tennessee Public Acts, Chapter 405 (the Act). The Act~~ provides scholarships to high school students who attend a middle college program ~~beginning with the 2018-2019 academic year.~~

Authority: T.C.A §§ 49-4-201, 49-4-909, and 49-4-924. **Administrative History:** Original rules filed April 3, 2018; effective July 2, 2018.

1640-01-29-.02 DEFINITIONS.

- (1) Eligible Program of Study: The term is defined in T.C.A § 49-4-902.
- ~~(1)(2)~~ Full-time Student: The term is defined in T.C.A § 49-4-902.
- ~~(2) Grade Point Average: The grade point average used to determine eligibility as determined by the high school.~~
- (3) Middle College: The term is defined in T.C.A. § 49-4-902.
- (4) Semester: The term is defined in T.C.A. § 49-4-902.
- (5) TSAC: The term is defined in T.C.A. § 49-4-902.

Authority: T.C.A §§ 49-4-201, 49-4-909, and 49-4-924. **Administrative History:** Original rules filed April 3, 2018; effective July 2, 2018.

1640-01-29-.03 SCHOLARSHIP AWARD AMOUNT.

- (1) The Middle College scholarship provides financial assistance to offset educational expenses for high school juniors and seniors who are pursuing an associate degree at an eligible middle college.
- (2) The Award amount for the program shall be determined in accordance with T.C.A. § 49-4-909 and shall be set in the General Appropriations Act. The amount of the Middle College award shall be based on the number of credit hours attempted in a semester that are applicable to the student's eligible program of study, not to exceed the full-time amount established in T.C.A. § 49-4-909. A student enrolled in nine (9), ten (10), or eleven (11) credit hours in an eligible

program of study will receive three-fourths (3/4) of the full-time award. A student enrolled in six (6), seven (7), or eight (8) credit hours in the student's eligible program of study will receive one-half (1/2) of the full-time award.

- (3) The receipt of the Middle College scholarship is contingent upon admission to and enrollment in an eligible Middle College program.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-4-201, 49-4-909, 49-4-924, and 49-4-914. **Administrative History:** Original rules filed April 3, 2018; effective July 2, 2018.

~~TENNESSEE MIDDLE COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM~~ ~~CHAPTER 1640-01-29~~

1640-01-29-.04 APPLICATION PROCESS.

- (1) ~~Students shall apply for the Middle College Scholarship by completing the Middle College Scholarship Application using a procedure determined by TSAC staff. Application deadlines shall be determined by the TSAC Executive Director and published on TSAC's website. Students participating in the Middle College Scholarship Program shall complete an annual application no later than September 1 for each academic year. It is the responsibility of the student to submit the application in a timely manner to ensure it is received by the published deadlines. If the deadline occurs on a weekend or holiday, then the application deadline will be the next business day.~~
- (2) The TSAC Executive Director is authorized to modify published application deadlines for well-documented extraordinary cause, if necessary to protect the public interest.
- (3) The Middle College scholarship application shall serve as the only application. No additional application shall be required.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-4-201, 49-4-909, and 49-4-924. **Administrative History:** Original rules filed April 3, 2018; effective July 2, 2018.

1640-01-29-.05 ELIGIBILITY.

- (1) To be eligible for the Middle College Scholarship a student shall meet the requirements of T.C.A. § 49-4-909(a).
- (2) To continue to be eligible for the Middle College Scholarship, a student shall meet the requirements of T.C.A. § 49-4-909(b).

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-4-201, 49-4-909, and 49-4-924. **Administrative History:** Original rules filed April 3, 2018; effective July 2, 2018.

1640-01-29-.06 TERMINATING EVENTS.

- (1) A student may receive the Middle College Scholarship until reaching a terminating event as described in T.C.A. § 49-4-909(c).

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-4-201, 49-4-909, and 49-4-924. **Administrative History:** Original rules filed April 3, 2018; effective July 2, 2018.

1640-01-29-.07 CERTIFICATION.

- (1) Each eligible Middle College shall be responsible for certifying to TSAC that the student has met all eligibility requirements.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-4-201, 49-4-909, and 49-4-924. **Administrative History:** Original rules filed April 3, 2018; effective July 2, 2018.

1640-01-29-.08 DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS.

- (1) Scholarship funds shall be disbursed to each eligible Middle College on behalf of students eligible for and enrolled in the program.
- (2) In no case shall funds be disbursed directly to students.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-4-201, 49-4-909, and 49-4-924. **Administrative History:** Original rules filed April 3, 2018; effective July 2, 2018.

1640-01-29-.09 REFUNDS.

- (1) If a recipient of a Middle College scholarship fails to complete a semester for any reason, the eligible Middle College shall apply its refund policy to determine whether a refund may be required and funds returned to TSAC. The eligible Middle College shall provide the student with a notice indicating the amount to be returned to the student or the amount to be refunded to TSAC. Additionally, the eligible Middle College shall also be responsible for obtaining repayment from the student. The student shall be ineligible for student aid from TSAC until the refund is paid.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-4-201, 49-4-909, and 49-4-924. **Administrative History:** Original rules filed April 3, 2018; effective July 2, 2018.

1640-01-29-.10 POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT.

- ~~(1) Middle College graduates shall have sixteen (16) months to enroll in a four-year eligible postsecondary institution after completion of high school meet the academic and nonacademic requirements described in T.C.A. § 49-4-909(e)(1). Failure to enroll in a four-year eligible postsecondary institution within sixteen (16) months shall render a student permanently ineligible for the HOPE Scholarship.~~
- ~~(2)(1)~~ Enrollment at any ineligible postsecondary non-regionally accredited institution between graduation from Middle College and prior to enrollment at a four-year eligible postsecondary institution shall make a student permanently ineligible for the HOPE Scholarship.
- ~~(3) To be eligible for the HOPE Scholarship upon transfer to an eligible four-year postsecondary institution, a Middle College graduate shall have met all academic and non-academic requirements of the HOPE Scholarship while previously enrolled in any regionally accredited postsecondary institution.~~

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-4-201, 49-4-909, and 49-4-924. **Administrative History:** Original rules filed April 3, 2018; effective July 2, 2018.

1640-01-29-.11 SUBSTITUTE COURSES.

- (1) An eligible middle college program may accept early postsecondary opportunity courses ~~taken by middle college students in high school~~ for purposes of determining ~~full-time~~ enrollment as a full-time student and for associate degree graduation requirements, so long as postsecondary credit for such courses is not based on results from an end-of-course summative assessment.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-4-201, 49-4-909, and 49-4-924. **Administrative History:** Original rules filed April 3, 2018; effective July 2, 2018.