

Tennessee Department of Education

Division of Accountability, Teaching & Learning



High School Transition Policy

Frequently Asked Questions

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Revised: April 26, 2010

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General Questions:

What is meant by credit recovery and how can it be accomplished?

Credit Recovery is traditionally defined as a way to “recover” credit for a course that a student was previously unsuccessful in earning academic credit towards graduation. Credit Recovery programs, in general, have a primary focus of helping students stay in school and graduate on time. LEAs may choose how they address and offer credit recovery within these department guidelines developed in 2005:

Credit Recovery is defined as a course-specific, skill-based extended learning opportunity for students who have previously been unsuccessful in mastering content or skills required to receive course credit or earn promotion.

LEAs shall develop Credit Recovery program rules, regulations, and processes and shall provide them in writing to students, parents, and guardians. At a minimum, they must address the following standards for admission and removal, instruction, content and curriculum, and grades:

1. Admission and Removal

- a. LEA rules, regulations, or procedures for admission to and removal from Credit Recovery programs may include but not be limited to attendance, discipline, availability of coursework, availability of space, appropriate progress, and grades. At a minimum, they must:
 - i. Require students to complete an application process as determined by the LEA.
 - ii. Require parent or guardian consent for students to apply for Credit Recovery.
 - iii. Require students to have earned a failing grade not less than 50% in the course. LEAs may establish a higher minimum score for admission.
- b. LEAs shall not require students to participate in Credit Recovery programs.

2. Instruction

- a. Credit Recovery Facilitators:
 - i. Shall be endorsed and certified.

- ii. Shall receive training pertaining to course organization, online instruction management, and related technology.
- b. Students in Credit Recovery programs:
 - i. Shall complete a course skill-specific diagnostic to determine skill-specific goals.
 - ii. Shall meet individual skill-specific goals in a flexible time frame as established by identified student need.
 - iii. Shall master all individualized skill-specific goals as established by the diagnostic process in order to earn credit.

3. Content and Curriculum

- a. Credit Recovery content may be delivered through instructional technology.
- b. Credit Recovery curriculum shall align with Tennessee Curriculum Standards approved by the State Board of Education.

4. Grades

- a. LEAs are responsible for establishing specific uniform procedures for evaluation of student progress and awarding of final grades in Credit Recovery programs.
- b. LEAs shall establish a grading formula that includes the original failing grade in the calculation of the final credit recovery grade.

FOR EXAMPLE:

Equal Weighted Original Grade	50
Equal Weighted Credit Recovery Grade	90
Final Transcript Grade Calculation	140/2
Final Transcript Grade Posted	70

- c. Grades awarded in Credit Recovery programs shall adhere to the State Board of Education uniform grading scale.
- d. Grades awarded in Credit Recovery programs shall be posted under the name of the original teacher of record. The original failing grade may be retained on the transcript.
- e. LEAs shall establish a naming convention to differentiate a Credit Recovery transcript grade from all other transcript grades.

LEAs shall establish administrative procedures to enter grades to student transcripts and student information systems, and to report grades to students and parents/guardians

Please clarify how to factor into the teacher assigned student grade the weight of the end of course examination on the student’s semester average. Is the percentage a minimum or is it an exact percentage to be applied in a uniform manner statewide?

Before the first administration of the end of course tests, the State Board of Education was required to develop and approve a schedule to allow for **phasing up** to the 25% weight for the test grade. End-of-course examinations will be given in English I, English II, English III, Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, U.S. History, Biology I, Chemistry and Physics. Further, the results of these examinations will be factored into the student’s grade at a percentage determined by the State Board of Education in accordance with T.C.A. §49-1-302 (2).

- The end-of-course test grade will count 20% of the second semester grade for the 2009/2010 and the 2010/2011 school years and 25% of the second semester grade in subsequent school years.
- Students will not be required to pass any one examination, but instead students must achieve a passing score for the course in accordance with the State Board of Education’s uniform grading policy.

Are the three examinations (ACT or College Board equivalent) given for the purpose of assessing student readiness and success in post secondary training required for all students or are the examinations required to be offered to all students?

Tennessee Code Annotated 49-6-6001(b) states:

“As a strategy for assessing student readiness to enter and succeed in postsecondary training, every public school student **shall** take a series of three (3) examinations, one (1) administered at grade eight (8), one (1) administered at grade ten (10), and one (1) at grade eleven (11). These assessments shall be approved by the commissioner of education and provide educators with diagnostic information to assist in developing interventions for the purpose of increasing high school graduation rates and improving student preparation for postsecondary achievement....”

What is the latest information regarding implementation of the new grad rate calculations?

The graduation rate improvement tracks will be in place as they currently are unless we receive US office permission to allow for a change in the future. For this year's 2009-10 graduation rate the NGA cohort calculation will be used where students will be assigned to a school's cohort four years from the year entered ninth grade. In this calculation ELL students & SWD will still have 5 years and a summer to be considered "on-time" which means they will be included in the graduation rate cohort 5 years beyond the year entered ninth grade. (Because we lag a year in the use of graduation rate with AYP, the 2009-10 graduation rate will not be used until the following year.)

However, beginning with the 2010-11 graduation rate calculation, new federal guidance requires every state to report a strict four year cohort calculation but also allows states to request permission to also calculate an extended cohort graduation rate. The federal guidance can be found online at:

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/hsgrguidance.pdf>.

When will the new EOCs be operational?

New End of Course exams for Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology I, and US History will be administered during the 2009-2010 school year. Algebra I, English II, and Biology I will continue to be used for AYP purposes. These EOC tests will be followed by Algebra II and English III as college and career ready anchors. Finally, Chemistry, Geometry, and Physics will be the last to come on line.

What is the transition plan and testing schedule for the Gateway/EOC assessments?

The Gateway assessments will continue to be administered to repeat takers that have not satisfied their diploma requirement by passing the assessment at the proficient or above level. These Repeat Takers would have fulfilled their credit requirement and would no longer be in a class for instruction. These students would continue to have access to an intervention for the Gateway assessments.

Three of the new EOC assessments have been designated as AYP assessments. Algebra I and English II will provide the percent and level of performance for AYP calculations in Math and Reading/Language Arts required by NCLB. According to NCLB, science must be assessed as well and Biology I will serve as this assessment.

All students enrolled in the three AYP EOC courses for instruction must be tested during the windows in the Fall, Spring, and Summer. The Gateway and AYP EOC assessments must be given in the same window so that appropriate student and Federal Reporting may take place in a timely manner.

All other EOC tests must be given within the last 10 "instructional" days of the course. As a reminder, Administrative and Exam days would not be considered "instructional" days for this 10 day count.

Is there an updated version of the Blueprint for Learning that matches the new standards?

No. The Tennessee Diploma Project has moved the state forward with the development of new standards for math, E/LA, and science that focus on achieving understanding within the grade level, making it unnecessary to spread state performance indicators across multiple grade levels. State Performance Indicators will still provide the basis for student accountability and continue to be used by the state to prepare standardized test items that are aligned with corresponding Grade or Course Level Expectations.

Is there a state pacing guide for the 2009-2010 curriculum standards online?

There is not a model for a pacing guide because those guides will likely utilize your system's official adopted textbook. The state does not determine exactly which textbook you adopt or what methodology you use to teach the standards. That responsibility rests with the authority of your local school board.

You may find the resources on the Tennessee Electronic Learning Center (www.tnelc.org) such as the Mathematics User's Guide helpful in your work. The math user's guide provides sample correlations of SPIs, checks, and GLEs and codes the GLE's according to Webb's Depth of Knowledge and ACT Benchmarks.

Who can teach Personal Finance?

Any secondary licensed teacher who meets the employment training standards set by the State Board of Education may teach Personal Finance. Training is comprised of 14 hours (clock hours) of training by state approved organizations/trainers using the state approved curriculum as their guide. Any teacher who is already licensed and endorsed in Economics, Business, Marketing or Family & Consumer Sciences is not required to complete additional training.

How should students meet the requirement for a year of computer education?

Students need to be using technology to enhance their learning, rather than using it only in an isolated class. The state has adopted standards for technology integration in education.

<http://state.tn.us/education/ci/computer/index.shtml>

A student being taught these standards beginning in kindergarten through eighth grade will meet the requirement of one year computer education and also the NCLB requirement for Information Literacy. In grades K-8, these standards may be taught in a stand-alone environment, but the preferred method is the integration in the various subject areas as students perform daily work. Also, in Standard I an objective for the mastery of the touch typing system by the end of the 4th grade is included. The Computer Literacy Course offered at the high school level is another option for meeting the requirement.

How does a school with block scheduling deal with a transfer student from a school with a traditional schedule?

Accepting the content on transcripts is an LEA decision. LEAs are encouraged to review transcripts and course syllabi in order to transfer as much credit as possible. The TDOE is available to help school counselors decipher transcripts.

How can course codes be clarified in a consistent manner?

LEAs should refer to TDOE's course code document at the following link:

http://state.tn.us/education/schapproval/course_code_corr.shtml

How will work based learning be available to all students?

Those schools wishing to offer work based learning opportunities for their students must have supervising teachers trained. The schedule for work based learning training may be found at the following link:
<http://www.tennessee.gov/education/cte/wb/>.

Is the “capstone experience” described in the new high school policy a requirement or a recommendation?

Neither state board policy or the state rules and regulations require the capstone experience.

TN MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE APPROVAL OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS (Rule 0520-1-3-.06) (2) Graduation Requirements states the following:

Effective with the ninth (9th) grade class of 2009-2010 and thereafter,

Local boards of education are encouraged to consider requirements for students to complete a capstone experience such as, but not limited to:

- (i) senior project
- (ii) Virtual Enterprise
- (iii) internship
- (iv) externship
- (v) work-based learning
- (vi) service learning (minimum of forty (40) hours)
- (vii) community service (minimum of forty (40) hours)

How is the role of the school counselor affected in planning for implementation of the new policy for the freshman class of 2009-2010?

School counselors are to be accountable for working with students and parents not only on creating a plan of study but also using it as an advising tool throughout high school. During the second semester of 8th grade, students along with their parents, school counselors and administrator will jointly prepare an initial 4, 5, or 6 year plan of study. It outlines the courses students plan to take in their 4 years of high school plus their potential plans 2 years after high school. There is flexibility with these plans (if schools use them appropriately). The plans should be reviewed each year by the school counselor or teacher advisor, parent and student. Changes may be made at any time. Additional guidance can be found at these web sites:
www.collegefortn.org and: www.kuder.com.

With regard to contextual academic courses (Technical Algebra, Technical Geometry, Communications for Life, and Principles of Technology I/II), are these courses acceptable by all of the following: TBR, UT system, and NCAA?

TBR and UT publish a list of courses approved for credit. NCAA requirements must be determined on a case by case basis.

When using courses to substitute for required courses such as technical geometry, technical algebra, principles of technology I/II, economics, personal finance, lifetime wellness, PE, etc; how should these substitutions be adequately reflected on the transcript?

Most of the contextual academic course titles have been changed in the 2009-10 course codes document to reflect its academic counterpart. The transcript may simply reflect the course that substitutes and not the course it substitutes for.

If a student earns 4 JROTC credits, are they able to waive personal finance, US Government, Lifetime Wellness and Physical education?

Yes, if the local education agency allows the substitution. Remember, in order for JROTC to satisfy the US government requirement, the instructor must also meet the highly qualified requirements for teaching government.

Will JROTC substitute for Lifetime Wellness and PE or just Lifetime Wellness?

Yes, two years of JROTC may substitute for the Lifetime Wellness requirement and one additional year may substitute for the PE requirement.

Can the additional ½ credit in physical education be met by marching band?

Yes. The physical education requirement may be met by substituting a documented and equivalent time of physical activity in other areas including marching band, JROTC, cheerleading, interscholastic athletics, and school sponsored intramural athletics, or other areas (such as dance) approved by the local board of education.

How should a substitution for the .5 PE (such as band participation, sports, cheerleading) be reflected on the transcript?

The system may choose how they reflect the participation on the transcript, with notation that it substitutes for the half credit in PE.

What online professional development is available from the state?

The Tennessee Department of Education has launched the Electronic Learning Center (ELC). This resource provides students, teachers, and parents educational resources any time and any where. The ELC can be accessed at www.TNelc.org.

Mathematics Questions:

Do Algebra IA & IB have to be completed in a calendar or school year?

Algebra I A and I B should be completed in the same **academic** (fall, spring, summer) year for regular education students. There are separate modifications for Students with Disabilities (SWD). See the questions related to SWD at the end of this document.

What is Bridge Math?

The Bridge Math course is designed for students who have not scored 19 or higher on the ACT by the beginning of the senior year and is in the development stage. It is intended that successful completion of this course will enable the student to enter a college level math course without the need for a developmental math course at the college level.

When will the Bridge Math course standards be ready?

As this is a senior level course, plans are to have the course developed within an appropriate time frame for those students who fall under the new high school policy.

What mathematics courses are required for graduation?

The new policy requires students to take a mathematics course each year while in high school to complete a 4 credit core that must include Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II (or the equivalent of these courses) and one advanced math course. **Students must be enrolled in a mathematics course each school year.**

See the TBR and UT list of courses to identify accepted math courses for college entrance requirements.

Can regular education students take an Algebra IA and Algebra IB course of study?

Yes, however, the A course earns elective credit only. The mathematics credit is awarded with the B course. Students must complete both the A and B course within the same school calendar year. Further, the A course will not count as part of a student's elective focus. For guidance regarding students with disabilities, refer to the section at the end of this document. Course codes have been developed for the A and B options. Systems are no longer required to complete a special course application for A and B courses beginning with the 2009-2010 school year.

What math course should students take after completing Algebra II?

Currently, many students have access to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics) focused courses such as Pre-Calculus, Calculus, Discrete Mathematics, Statistics, Advanced Algebra & Trig. or an Advanced Placement course. These options will still be available to any student who wishes to take them according to local school board policy. The state is developing options for students who do not wish to take a traditional STEM course.

Under the new high school policy when should students take Algebra I?

Local school systems can choose to offer an Algebra I course prior to high school and award high school credit; however, students will still be expected to complete a four year course of study while in high school. The standard course of study for the middle grades will prepare all students for a comprehensive Algebra I course in the 9th grade.

What is an enrichment level math course?

There is no terminology for “enrichment” math courses in the high school policy. However, Foundations Math I & II will continue to be offered as elective math credit courses only. The Foundations Math courses may be used concurrently with an algebra level course during the ninth grade. The Technical Mathematics course (equivalent to a Foundations course) will no longer be offered.

Must Algebra I and/or Geometry be taken in high school or can a student accelerate to take 4 years of higher math and still fulfill math core requirements?

The student may take courses for credit prior to high school, but still must complete one math course each of their four years in high school. Students may only “accelerate” in anticipation of taking very rigorous courses during the junior and senior year, not to complete math requirements early. This type of acceleration may allow students to create a more robust elective focus.

Can students earn 2 credits in math in one year? (Geometry/Algebra II in same year)? What if a student earns 4 math credits in 3 years (non-middle school), do they need to take an additional year of math their senior year?

Students may earn multiple math credits in one year, but they must still complete a math course each year they are enrolled. These students will graduate with a number of credits well above the minimums required for graduation.

Science Questions:

What changes have occurred in science as a result of the implementation of the new high school policy in 2009-2010?

- Students must take Biology, Chemistry OR Physics, and an additional laboratory science course to graduate. All science courses are expected to include active and/or laboratory learning experiences. [\[Minimum Rules and Regulations 0520-1-3-.05 c\]](#) It is recommended that these types of experiences occur approximately forty percent of the instructional time.
- Life Science will no longer be offered.
- Physical World Concepts will be a ninth or tenth grade option. (See Science High School Sequence chart document at the Electronic Learning Center <http://www.tnelc.org/Science.html> for more information.)

Checks for Understanding are recommended for assessing science learning in the classroom. Formative assessments are typically embedded within a lesson or smaller unit of instruction and used to determine if a specific skill or bit of knowledge has been mastered or acquired by the student. Such assessments provide immediate feedback that teachers can use to monitor ongoing student performance and inform instruction. Summative assessments provide information about whether a student has met a particular Grade or Course Level Expectation.

For additional resources related to the Checks for Understanding found within the curriculum standards, visit the science page at the Curriculum Resources link on the Tennessee Electronic Center at: <http://www.TNelc.org/>.

How is the department responding to the concerns of school districts regarding "Conceptual Physics?"

In an effort to advance and support educational reform, the Department has issued notice concerning a change in the name of a new science course approved for implementation by the State Board of Education January 2008. **The course previously titled "Conceptual Physics" will now be known as "Physical World Concepts."**

Physical World Concepts focuses on providing students with a conceptual foundation in physics and is comprehensive and sequential in its scope. This course is designed to provide a strong foundation for all students for taking higher level science courses, and serves as a solid foundation for success in Physics 3231, and AP Physics B & C. Taking "Physical World Concepts" will ensure that students pursuing STEM as a post-secondary major will have the necessary preparation for success in college work.

This course will count as a laboratory science course for high school graduation, but does not meet the Physics or Chemistry requirement for graduation.

Features of Physical World Concepts include:

- A necessary first step in building a comprehensive foundation as a pre-requisite for learning physical, earth and life science concepts in subsequent high school courses.

- For college bound as well as students who do not have the necessary math background to be successful in a traditional physics course.
- Course content is sequenced, in a coherent manner to ensure deeper understanding of the content and associated mathematical relationships. Standards for Physical World Concepts include:
 - Inquiry
 - Mathematics
 - Technology and Engineering
 - Mechanics
 - Thermodynamics
 - Waves and Optics
 - Electricity and Magnetism
 - Nuclear Science
- Embedded Mathematics strand enables students to utilize mathematical skills in much greater depth, e.g. analyzing, interpreting, articulating, assimilating, modeling, demonstration.
- Instruction is inquiry-based and employs applications for technology and engineering.

Licensure and Training:

Endorsements required for teaching Physical World Concepts are physics and/or chemistry. Only teachers who have these endorsement and Highly Qualified status are eligible to teach this course.

Teachers who are currently endorsed to teach Physics and Chemistry and desire professional development experiences that assist in effectively implementing Physical World Concepts should contact the TMSTEC STEM Director at MTSU, Dr. Richard Audet, at raudet@mtsu.edu or 615-898-5768, for dates and details concerning future workshop events.

For additional information about the Physical World Concepts course content or professional development opportunities, please contact Linda Jordan, K-12 Science Coordinator, 615-532-6285 Linda.K.Jordan@tn.gov

Also see Science Professional Development Opportunities listed on the science page.
<http://www.tnelc.org/Science.html>

Agriscience may count as a laboratory science credit required for high school graduation for students currently in high school, as well as students who are incoming 9th graders beginning with the 2009-10 school year.

Agriscience does not replace the Biology I requirement for students in either graduation grouping, nor does it replace the Physics requirement for students entering the 9th grade in 2009-10. Agriscience is currently accepted by University of Tennessee and Tennessee Board of Regents as one of the optional natural/physical science units required for college entrance. See the TBR and UT System school list of approved lab science courses.

Biology I and the Biology I course previously named Biology for Technology will be taught with the Biology I 3210 curriculum standards and be recorded with the same course number (3210). Biology instructors must have a Biology endorsement. Biology students will take the same end of course exam. If the course is taught with the previously named Biology for Technology contextual methodology approach, it will be designated with an internal fifth digit on the end of the course code to indicate compliance with CTE federal guidelines

concerning training, class size, etc.

What endorsement is needed to teach Principles of Technology I and II?

A teacher must be endorsed in Chemistry or Physics to teach Principles of Technology I.

Teachers who teach this course must hold proper endorsement and have attended the state-approved, five-day training. This course may satisfy a laboratory science credit required for graduation.

A teacher must be endorsed in Chemistry or Physics to teach Principles of Technology II.

Teachers who teach this course must hold proper endorsement and have attended the Principles of Technology I state-approved, five-day training. This course satisfies one science credit required for graduation. The completion of Principles of Technology I and II is equivalent to Physics.

Foreign Language Questions:

Are all students required to meet the foreign language requirement?

In exceptional circumstances, schools may waive the foreign language requirement for students who are not planning to attend a university to expand and enhance their elective focus. In this case, students could take an additional three credits to enhance or add a program of study. **Department of Education legal counsel recommends that parents sign off on this waiver.**

There is a reference to "exceptional circumstances" in which Foreign Language may be waived. What are those circumstances? What is the accountability? Clarification April 26, 2010

Waivers were not created as an approach to exempt students from the foreign language and fine art requirement; waivers are for exceptional circumstances to serve the needs of CTE students. The purpose of the waiver of the foreign language and fine art requirement was intended primarily for CTE students to expand and enhance their elective focus beyond what would otherwise be possible. For example, students in a six period day who could attend a TN Technology Center for two years part time when in high school could earn up to eight credits in the elective focus area. If there is no opportunity of expanding the CTE elective focus area then you would not be able to waive the foreign language and fine art requirements.

Does foreign language taken in 8th grade count as a core credit or an elective focus credit?

It would count as a required credit. An elective focus is three credits PLUS the core requirements. In this case, 2 foreign language credits plus 3 additional credits would complete the focused program of study in humanities.

Elective Focus Questions:

What is an Elective Focus/Program of Study?

These are interchangeable terms that relate the concept of a student completing at least three units in a related academic or CTE area. The State Board of Education's "High School Policy" requires that all students, beginning with the 9th grade class of 2009-2010, complete an approved academic elective focus or a CTE program of study.

Can high school courses taken in the middle school count toward an elective focus?

Courses taken in middle school may count toward the required core courses. Algebra I, for example, taken in eighth grade, would count toward the core requirement; the core plus three additional courses in math and/or science could complete the elective focus. Remember, a student will still be required to take at least one math course each year regardless of how many credits a student earns in middle schools

What are the approved areas of elective focus?

The elective focus may be CTE, science and math, humanities, fine arts, AP/IB, or other areas approved by the local board of education. Students completing a CTE elective focus must complete three units in the same CTE program area. To complete an approved focus in Trade and Industrial (T & I), three courses must be in one of the following:

- Transportation
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Criminal Justice
- Cosmetology
- Culinary Arts
- Communication
- Arts

Can an AP course fulfill BOTH core requirements AND satisfy the requirement of an elective focus if a student elects to have an AP focus?

Yes. There are no AP courses in the core requirements as there are in the other focus areas. Dr. Gary Nixon, Executive Director of the State Board of Education has provided some examples of what focus areas might look like on his blog at: www.garynixon.wordpress.com

The intent was to let CORE subjects in AP and IB count to meet the AP or IB Elective Focus in order to encourage more students to take AP and IB courses. While the AP and IB elective focus courses may not be beyond or on top of the core courses the way we count them for a math and science elective focus, they truly are beyond or deeper than the content of the regular core classes they replace.

In regard to Programs of Study (POS), if a student in a POS such as marketing uses a marketing course to substitute as an economics credit; does the student take 2 or 3 more marketing courses to complete the marketing elective focus?

Students must take three elective classes in the POS whether they substitute or not, so in the above scenario, they would take two more in addition to the marketing course substituting for economics. Students would receive one credit in marketing and satisfy the requirement for .5 credit in economics.

For an academic elective focus, what are the requirements?

For math and science, three additional math and/or science courses (electives) are required in addition to the four math and three science required courses. For a humanities focus, any combination of courses in English, Language Arts, Foreign Language and Social Studies above the core requirements will satisfy the humanities focus area. Fine arts require any three courses above the core requirements.

What about four credits of JROTC? Would that count as an elective focus?

JROTC is not a state recognized elective focus area, but a local education agency is permitted to approve this, or any other, set of related courses to meet the requirement.

Graduating with Honors and Distinction Questions:

Is graduating with Honors determined solely on ACT or do local boards have options?

Students who score at or above all of the subject area readiness benchmarks on the ACT or equivalent score on the SAT will “graduate with Honors.” Local boards of education have the flexibility to go beyond “graduating with “Honors” by establishing an “Honors” program.

Does the new graduation policy allow a student to graduate in less than 4 years? If so, how does that affect the math requirement?

Yes, students may graduate early. The policy requires students to take a math course each year while in high school. The purpose is to be and stay ready mathematically for college and not to skip a year. The policy also requires four units of math to be completed (i.e. Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II (or their equivalent) and an additional advanced math credit). This means a student will take one math course each year. However, a student may accelerate and graduate early as long as they complete the 4 credits of math and take math each year that they are enrolled in high school.

What are the criteria for graduating with distinction?

Students will be recognized as graduating with “distinction” by attaining a B average and completing at least one of the following:

- earn a nationally recognized industry certification
- participate in at least one of the Governor’s Schools
- participate in one of the state’s All State musical organizations
- be selected as a National Merit Finalist or Semi-Finalist
- attain a score of 31 or higher composite score on the ACT
- attain a score of 3 or higher on at least two advanced placement exams
- successfully complete the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme
- earn 12 or more semester hours of transcribed postsecondary credit

Each local school board shall develop a policy prescribing how students graduating with “distinction” will be noted and recognized.

Special Education Questions:

Recently the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) issued a letter stating that students with an IEP were eligible for all services regardless of their disability. For the math requirements, the state policy says the student must have a qualifying disability in math in order to get the accommodations such as increased seat time and an alternate assessment. Does this not go against OSEP's advice?

34 CFR 300.320(a)(6)(i) provides that an IEP team must include in a child's IEP " a statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on State and district-wide assessments, consistent with section 612(a)(16) of the Act." Since the federal regulation supersedes the state policy, children with disabilities must be afforded accommodations as provided by the IDEA. The letter referred to in the question is *Letter to Anonymous*, June 3, 2008, where in OSEP reiterates its longstanding position that special education and related services are based on the identified needs of the child and not on the disability category in which the child is classified. In developing the child's IEP, the factors that the child's IEP Team must consider include the strengths of the child, the concerns of the parent for enhancing the education of their child, the results of the child's initial or most recent evaluation, and the academic, developmental, and functional needs of the child. The guidance of the letter is consistent with 34 CFR 300.320 and Tennessee special education rules and regulations.

Will teachers with a SPED endorsement be able to teach a core class, offered for high school credit if they are highly qualified in that course but not licensed?

An appropriately endorsed SPED teacher who has demonstrated HQ status in a core content area may serve as the teacher of record and award credit to SPED students (only). The department recommends that school districts make every effort to place special education students in general education classes whenever possible, and to begin the process of getting S.E. teachers endorsed in the core academic courses they are to teach. This is not mandatory at this time, but the state anticipates that it will be mandated in the near future.

What are the additional exit options for SWD?

A Transition Certificate may be awarded to SWD who, at the end of the 4th year of high school, have failed to earn a regular diploma (22 units of credit) but have satisfactorily completed an IEP, and have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct.

SWD may continue to work towards the high school diploma through the end of the school year in which they turn twenty-two years old.

An IEP certificate will be awarded to SWD who have (1) satisfactorily completed an IEP, (2) successfully completed a portfolio, and (3) have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct. This replaces the old "Special Education Diploma"

What will SWD have to do to qualify for a regular diploma?

Students with disabilities must complete the 22 credits required with certain documented exceptions.

What modifications will be made to the graduation requirements for students with disabilities?

Students with qualifying disabilities as documented in the IEP shall be required to achieve at least Algebra I and Geometry (or equivalent). The required number of credits in math will be achieved through increased instructional time, appropriate methodologies, accommodations and other differentiated instruction as determined by the IEP team. These students may earn mathematics credit for Algebra IA and for Algebra IB as well as math credit for Geometry A and Geometry B.

Students with qualifying disabilities as documented in the IEP are required to achieve at least Biology I and two other lab science credits. The required number of credits in science will be achieved through increased instructional time, appropriate methodologies, and accommodations and other differentiated instruction, as determined by the IEP team.

Only one additional lab course is needed if Biology IA and IB are taken for credit.

Students failing to earn a yearly grade of 70 or higher in a course that has an end-of-course test and whose disability adversely affects performance in that test will be allowed, through an approved process, to add to their end-of course assessment by demonstrating the state identified core knowledge and skills contained within that course through an alternative performance-based assessment. These assessments will be operational in the 2009-2010 school year.

How will the department address deficiencies in preliminary reporting resulting from implementation of A and B courses in both traditional and block scheduling?

Should deficiencies in reporting occur due to errors in the reporting of A and B courses for Students with Disabilities, the department will conduct site visits to the affected districts/schools in order to ensure that appropriate programming is being provided. If programmatic changes are needed, recommendations for addressing the deficiencies will be made and timelines for correcting the deficiencies will be outlined.

How will the department address deficiencies in preliminary reporting resulting from situations where SPED teachers are teaching multiple subjects in one class period?

We are working toward resolving this and other reporting issues. However, should deficiencies still occur during this initial year of implementation, the department may conduct site visits to the affected districts/schools in order to ensure that appropriate programming is being provided.

What is the department position regarding school districts/schools that have no Highly Qualified Sped teachers?

The department recommends that school districts use the options available in the state Highly Qualified Plan to help SPED teachers demonstrate HQ status in core content area(s). SPED teachers who are HQ **may** serve as a teacher of record and award credit to SPED students (only). The department also recommends that school districts make every effort to place special education students in general education classes whenever possible. School districts are also encouraged to develop strategies designed to help SPED teachers become endorsed in core academic courses.