

SENATE BILL 2560

By Crowe

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,  
relative to technical education.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 4, Part 9, is amended by  
adding the following as a new section:

**49-4-945.**

(a) As used in this section, "eligible postsecondary institution" means:

(1) A Tennessee college of applied technology; or

(2) A private, nonprofit technical school that:

(i) Has had its primary campus domiciled in this state for at least  
seventy-five (75) consecutive years;

(ii) Is accredited by the Council on Occupational Education; and

(iii) In addition to offering diploma, certificate, and associate  
degree programs, offers a baccalaureate degree through an articulation  
agreement with a regionally accredited postsecondary institution.

(b) THEC shall administer the Tennessee technical middle college program for  
high school students interested in receiving a high school diploma and a certificate or  
diploma from an eligible postsecondary institution upon graduation from high school.

(c) A high school student is eligible to participate in the program, if the student:

(1) Is enrolled in an eligible postsecondary institution:

(A) That is partnering with the student's LEA to offer the technical middle college program to students beginning in the fall semester of the student's freshman year of high school; and

(B) As a dual enrollment student pursuant to § 49-4-930;

(2) Is not ineligible for a dual enrollment grant under § 49-4-904;

(3) Is a resident of this state, as classified pursuant to § 49-8-104;

(4) Applies for the dual enrollment grant each academic year in which the student takes a dual enrollment course; and

(5) Applies for the program, as prescribed by the Tennessee student assistance corporation.

(d) To remain eligible for the program, a student must:

(1) Meet all nonacademic requirements of the program;

(2) Maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 at the end of each semester for all courses attempted as part of the program; and

(3) Be enrolled in the program full-time.

(e) If a student drops out of the program, fails to maintain eligibility for the program at the end of a semester, or fails to maintain full-time enrollment status, then the student is no longer allowed to participate in the program. This subsection (e) does not affect a student's eligibility for a dual enrollment grant under § 49-4-930.

(f) A student may participate in the program until the student has earned a certificate or diploma from an eligible postsecondary institution or completed high school, whichever occurs first.

(g)

(1) A student who is participating in the program is eligible to receive a dual enrollment grant for each course offered by the eligible postsecondary

institution that is attempted by the student for purposes of the program. The maximum award at an eligible postsecondary institution shall not exceed the maintenance fees associated with the attempted average clock hours weighted by program participation among dual enrollment students. The award amount must be calculated annually using the maintenance fees established by the state university and community college system.

(2) Subject to appropriation, TSAC shall annually disburse grants to LEAs partnering with eligible postsecondary institutions to offer the Tennessee technical middle college program to its students to assist the LEAs in purchasing necessary supplies, equipment, and materials for the program. TSAC shall determine the amount of grants awarded based, in part, on labor market data for the community served by the LEA applying for a grant, with a focus on the community's need for training opportunities in high-skill or high-wage fields or for coursework identified by TSAC's board of directors as high-need.

(h)

(1) If a student participating in the program achieves a math sub score of 19 or greater on the ACT, or a concordant equivalent score on the SAT, or earned a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) for achieving the silver, gold, or platinum levels on the ACT WorkKeys® assessments, then the student may substitute Math 1050 for Algebra II. A student who substitutes Math 1050 for Algebra II must take Precision Measurement or Bridge Math as the student's fourth and final math credit required for high school graduation. A student who earns an NCRC for achieving the gold level on the ACT WorkKeys® assessments is a Ready Graduate for accountability purposes.

(2) Students may earn up to eight (8) work-based learning credits for participating in the program. Each work-based learning credit earned is the equivalent of an early postsecondary opportunity.

(3) Students participating in the program earn one (1) high school credit for every one hundred thirty-five (135) hours of eligible postsecondary institution coursework completed by the student through the program.

(i)

(1) A student who successfully completes the program and receives both a high school diploma and certificate or diploma from an eligible postsecondary institution is eligible to receive a Tennessee HOPE scholarship at the time of transfer to an eligible four-year postsecondary institution in pursuit of a baccalaureate degree, if the student:

(A) Meets all academic and nonacademic requirements for the Tennessee HOPE scholarship;

(B) Meets the requirements of § 49-4-911(a)(1) or (a)(2);

(C) Transfers to the eligible four-year postsecondary institution no later than sixteen (16) months after graduation from high school; and

(D) Applies for the Tennessee HOPE scholarship.

(2) To remain eligible for a Tennessee HOPE scholarship at the end of subsequent semesters when eligibility is checked, the student must meet the requirements of § 49-4-911.

(3) Time enrolled in an eligible postsecondary institution as a Tennessee technical middle college student does not count toward the terminating events under § 49-4-913.

(j) A student who participates in the program, but does not successfully complete the program and does not receive a certificate or diploma from an eligible postsecondary institution is eligible for a Tennessee HOPE scholarship upon enrolling in an eligible postsecondary institution, as defined in § 49-4-902, no later than sixteen (16) months after completing high school, if the student:

- (1) Is not ineligible for the scholarship under § 49-4-904;
- (2) Meets the requirements of § 49-4-905(a); and
- (3) Meets the requirements of § 49-4-907 or § 49-4-908.

(k) THEC and the board of regents shall develop transfer pathways between Tennessee colleges of applied technology (TCAT) and community colleges. The board of regents shall submit a report to the chairs of the education committees of the senate and house of representatives no later than December 1, 2022, identifying the transfer pathways that may be implemented beginning with the 2023-2024 academic year.

(l) A student who does not participate in the program in the fall semester of the student's freshman year of high school is not eligible to participate in the program.

(m) A student who receives a certificate or diploma from an eligible postsecondary institution upon completing the program is ineligible for a Wilder-Naifeh technical skills grant under § 49-4-921 or a Wilder-Naifeh reconnect grant under § 49-4-923.

(n) The Tennessee technical middle college program must be available to students entering high school as freshman in the 2023-2024 school year.

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-4-902, is amended by deleting subdivision (28) and substituting instead the following:

(28) "Middle college" means:

(A) A program operated by an eligible public two-year postsecondary institution in partnership with an LEA that permits students in the fall semester of the students' junior year of high school to enter the eligible public two-year postsecondary institution and to earn a high school diploma and an associate degree in two (2) years; or

(B) A program operated by an eligible postsecondary institution, as defined in § 49-4-945, in partnership with an LEA that permits students in the fall semester of the students' freshman year of high school to enter the eligible postsecondary institution, as defined in § 49-4-945, and to earn a high school diploma and a certificate upon the students' graduation from high school;

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-4-930(c), is amended by deleting the language "A student receiving a dual enrollment grant" and substituting instead the language "Except as provided in subsection (k), a student receiving a dual enrollment grant".

SECTION 4. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-4-930(d), is amended by deleting the language "A student receiving a dual enrollment grant" and substituting instead the language "Except as provided in subsection (k), a student receiving a dual enrollment grant".

SECTION 5. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-4-930(f), is amended by adding the following language at the end of the subsection:

This subsection (f) does not apply to coursework completed by a student participating in the Tennessee technical middle college program pursuant to § 49-4-945.

SECTION 6. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-4-930(g), is amended by adding the following as a new subdivision:

(3) Notwithstanding subdivision (g)(2), subject to the amounts appropriated by the general assembly and any law relating to a shortfall in funds available for postsecondary financial assistance from the net proceeds of the state lottery, a student

participating in the Tennessee middle college program is eligible to receive a dual enrollment grant for each course offered by the eligible postsecondary institution, as defined in § 49-4-945, that is attempted by the student for purposes of the program. The maximum award at an eligible postsecondary institution, as defined in § 49-4-945, shall not exceed the maintenance fees associated with the attempted average clock hours weighted by program participation among dual enrollment students. The award amount must be calculated annually using the maintenance fees established by the state university and community college system.

SECTION 7. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-4-930, is amended by adding the following as a new subsection:

(k)

(1) A student participating in the Tennessee technical middle college program may enroll in more than one (1) course per semester at an eligible postsecondary institution, as defined in § 49-4-495, while receiving a dual enrollment grant, if authorized by the rules of the program promulgated by the Tennessee higher education commission. A student participating in the Tennessee technical middle college program is eligible for a dual enrollment grant for a semester beyond the first semester of receipt in an academic year if the student continues to meet all eligibility requirements for the dual enrollment grant and if the student achieves a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 for all eligible postsecondary institution courses attempted under a dual enrollment grant for purposes of the program. Subdivision (c)(2) applies to students participating in the Tennessee technical middle college program.

(2) Notwithstanding subsections (h) and (i), a student participating in the Tennessee middle college program is eligible to receive a dual enrollment grant

for each course offered by the eligible postsecondary institution, as defined in § 49-4-945, that is attempted by the student for purposes of the program.

SECTION 8. The Tennessee higher education commission and Tennessee student assistance corporation shall promulgate rules to effectuate this act. The rules must be promulgated according to the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, compiled in Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4, Chapter 5.

SECTION 9. For purposes of promulgating rules, this act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it. For all other purposes, this act takes effect July 1, 2023, the public welfare requiring it, and applies to the 2023-2024 school year and thereafter.