

# Shelby County Board of Education

5005

Issued Date: 08/26/10

Revised: 07/30/13, 1/30/18, 03/01/22

## ADVANCED COURSES

### I. PURPOSE

To ensure equitable student access to advanced courses including, but not limited to, Honors, Local and Statewide Dual Credit, Capstone Industry Certification-Aligned, Dual Enrollment, Advanced Placement (AP), Cambridge International, College Level Exam Program (CLEP), and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses.

### II. SCOPE

This policy applies to equitable enrollment practices for advanced courses for students in grades seven through twelve (7-12).

### III. POLICY STATEMENT

Shelby County Schools believes in the basic principle that academic rigor and the opportunity to accelerate learning are powerful motivators for students to meet intellectual challenges and excel in the academic environment. The District will endeavor to uphold the standards of the State Board of Education which require schools to minimize tracking of students by ability, eliminate central classes taught below the college preparation level, and provide all students a challenging course of study.<sup>1</sup> To that end, the District supports advanced courses and programs that promote academic acceleration.

The District is committed to implementing strategies to remove barriers for the identification and enrollment of students in advanced courses. It is therefore the District's policy to encourage student participation in advanced courses through methods such as communicating information about advanced courses to students and parents/guardians, offering District-wide counseling to students about the benefits of advanced level courses, and annually reporting on the District progress toward increasing students' readiness and participation for advanced courses.

#### **Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment in Advanced Courses**

The Board supports the use of equitable identification practices to ensure that all students in grades seven through twelve (7-12) who demonstrate readiness and meet eligibility criteria have the opportunity to enroll in available advanced courses. In instances where multiple advanced course options exist, students will be encouraged to enroll in those most aligned to their

postsecondary aspirations. Criteria established by postsecondary institutions, as applicable, shall apply.

## **Advanced English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science Courses<sup>2</sup>**

### **A. Eligibility Criteria**

Students meeting the following criteria shall be eligible to enroll in available advanced ELA, mathematics, and science courses.

- **Statewide Dual Credit:** A grade of B or higher in Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) prerequisite course (if applicable), and a score of *On Track/Mastered* for TCAP Achievement/EOC.
- **Dual Enrollment:** A grade of B or higher in the college partner's enrollment prerequisite course(s) (as applicable), and a score of *On Track/Mastered* for TCAP Achievement/EOC or ACT score of 19 or higher. Students must meet the individual college's admission requirements.
- **Honors:** A grade of B or higher and a score of *On Track/Mastered* for the TCAP Achievement/EOC in the previous content area course (i.e., ELA, mathematics, science).  
\*Automatic enrollment - *see section 2 below.*
- **Advanced Placement:** A grade of B or higher in previous content area course, College Board prerequisites per course, and a score of *On Track/Mastered* on any of the following assessments: TCAP Achievement/EOC or District/School-determined PSAT/SAT/ACT.
- **International Baccalaureate (IB):** A grade of B or higher in previous content area course, IB prerequisites per course, and a score of *On Track/Mastered* on any of the following assessments: TCAP Achievement/EOC or District/School-determined PSAT/SAT/ACT.
- **Local Dual Credit:** Successful completion of all required pre-requisite courses aligned to the program of study, and a score of *On Track/Mastered for TCAP Achievement/EOC.*
- **Industry-Certified:** Successful completion of all required pre-requisite courses aligned to the program of study, and a score of *On Track/Mastered for TCAP Achievement/EOC.*

### **B. Additional Factors For Students Not Meeting Eligibility Criteria**

The Board authorizes the Superintendent (designee) to consider the following factors to expand student access to advanced ELA, mathematics, and science courses.

- Student test results (e.g. National, State including out-of-state, Local assessments)
- A student's high school plan of study
- Student/Parent self-nomination
- District/School staff recommendation (e.g. Principal, Teacher, Counselor, PLC Coach, Instructional Facilitator)
- Evidence of academic success (e.g. student work samples)
- Evidence of negative impact on student performance during the previous year due to trauma or social-emotional event

The Superintendent (designee) shall provide guidelines for administrators to follow when weighing factors in determining eligibility for enrollment in advanced ELA, mathematics, and science courses.

**C. \*Automatic Enrollment in Honors ELA, Mathematics, and Science Courses**

Students meeting Honors eligibility criteria set forth in this policy (see section A above) shall be **automatically enrolled** in the content area course (i.e. ELA, mathematics, science). To opt a child out of automatic enrollment in an Honors course, written notification must be received from the parent in accordance with District guidelines.

**D. Notification**

Parents/guardians shall be provided written notification of the student's eligibility for advanced ELA, mathematics, and science courses.

**Other District-Offered Advanced Courses**

Eligibility criteria for enrollment into advanced courses other than advanced ELA, mathematics, and science courses (see above) shall be established by the Superintendent (designee). Such criteria, at minimum, shall consider (1) the individual college/career goals of the student, (2) student attendance and discipline standards/expectations, (3) criteria for continuation in advanced courses, and (4) procedures for students encountering difficulty and/or wishing to drop advanced courses.

**Financial Obligations**

Students/parents shall be responsible for financial obligations required by a postsecondary institution in association with enrollment in an advanced course or with course requirements (e.g., dual enrollment), unless such funding is otherwise available through grants; state, local, or federal entities; or the District (e.g. TSAC funding for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students).

Moreover, fees requested by the District in association with an advanced course (e.g., AP, IB, Dual Enrollment, etc.) shall be in accordance with applicable state law<sup>3</sup> and Policy 6047 School Fees and Debts.

Each school that administers the AP and PSAT/NMSQT examinations shall provide notice of the dates on which the school will administer the examinations on the school's web site. The notice shall include the availability of AP and PSAT/NMSQT examinations and the availability of outside financial assistance to low-income and needy students to take the AP and PSAT/NMSQT examinations.<sup>4</sup>

#### **IV. RESPONSIBILITY**

The Superintendent (or designee) is responsible for:

- ensuring the development and/or identification of procedures and processes to effectuate this policy, including procedures for continuation in advanced courses; and
- administering this policy.

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Legal References:

1. Tennessee State Board of Education  
High School Policy 2.103
2. T.C.A. §49-6-1012
3. T.C.A. §49-2-110
4. T.C.A. §49-6-3050
5. Tennessee State Board of Education  
Rule §0520-01-03-.03;.05
6. Tennessee State Board of Education  
Uniform Grading Policy 3.301
7. T.C.A. §49-6-407
8. T.C.A. §49-6-414

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Cross References:

1. 6047 School Fees and Debts
2. 6036 Valedictorian and Salutatorian

# ADVANCED COURSES

Administrative Rules and Regulations

**Issued Date: 01/30/18**

**Revised: 05/28/19, 03/23/21, 03/01/22**

## A. General

In accordance with state law, beginning with the 2018-2019 school year, the District shall make available to students enrolled in its high schools opportunities to take at least four (4) early postsecondary opportunities, as defined by the Tennessee State Department of Education. These opportunities may be provided through traditional classroom instruction, online or virtual instruction, blended learning, or other educationally appropriate methods.

In accordance with SBE policy 3.301, additional percentage points shall be added to the grades used to calculate the semester average for students enrolled in advanced courses. Upon receiving a passing grade in an advanced course, additional quality points will be awarded to calculate the SCS weighted GPA. (Also see SCS policy 6036.)

In accordance with state policy and guidance, high school credit shall be awarded to students who successfully complete college level courses aligned to a graduation requirement course, including general education and elective focus courses.

## B. Advanced Courses and Early Postsecondary Opportunities

Advanced courses provide opportunities for students to earn postsecondary credits, obtain recognized industry certifications, and/or substantially exceed existing content standards of high school courses. The following advanced courses, advanced programs, and career-technical pathways offer equitable opportunities without barriers for all students to be challenged with a rigorous curriculum.

### 1. Honors Courses

Honors courses will provide additional rigor and substantially exceed the academic standards approved by the State Board of Education. Teachers of honors courses will model instructional approaches that facilitate maximum interchange of ideas among students: independent study, self-directed research and learning, and appropriate use of technology. All honors courses must include multiple assessments exemplifying coursework (such as short answer, constructed-response prompts, performance-based tasks, open-ended questions, essays, original or creative interpretations, authentic products, portfolios, and analytical writing). Additionally, an honors course shall include a minimum of five (5) of the following components:

- a) Extended reading assignments that connect with the specified curriculum.
- b) Research-based writing assignments that address and extend the course curriculum.

- c) Projects that apply course curriculum to relevant or real-world situations. These may include oral presentations, PowerPoint, or other modes of sharing findings. Connection of the project to the community is encouraged.
- d) Open-ended investigations in which the student selects the questions and designs the research.
- e) Writing assignments that demonstrate a variety of modes, purposes, and styles.
  - (i) Examples of mode include narrative, descriptive, persuasive, expository, and expressive.
  - (ii) Examples of purpose include to inform, entertain, and persuade.
  - (iii) Examples of style include formal, informal, literary, analytical, and technical.
- f) Integration of appropriate technology into the course of study.
- g) Deeper exploration of the culture, values, and history of the discipline.
- h) Extensive opportunities for problem-solving experiences through imagination, critical analysis, and application.
- i) Job shadowing experiences with presentations which connect class study to the world of work.

All course types which meet the above framework will be classified as honors and shall include the addition of three (3) percentage points to the grades used to calculate the semester average. Additionally, in accordance with SCS policy 6036, one-half (1/2) quality point shall be added to the numerical quality point value corresponding to the letter grade received for an honors course to calculate the SCS weighted GPA.

## **2. Industry Certification-Aligned Courses**

Career and technical education courses that are aligned to a capstone industry certification recognized by the Tennessee Department of Education shall include the addition of four (4) percentage points to the grades used to calculate the semester average for students who sit for the identified industry certification exam. \*Additionally, in accordance with SCS policy 6036, one (1) quality point shall be added to the numerical quality point value corresponding to the letter grade received for the course in a capstone industry certification course to calculate the SCS weighted GPA.

## **3. Statewide Dual Credit Courses**

A statewide dual credit course is a high school course that incorporates postsecondary learning objectives and is aligned with an approved dual credit challenge exam. All statewide dual credit courses offered through the District shall incorporate the postsecondary learning objectives.

All students enrolled in an identified statewide dual credit course offered through the District must sit for the challenge exam. Students who pass the challenge exam will earn college credit accepted by all Tennessee public postsecondary institutions.

Statewide dual credit courses shall include the addition of four (4) percentage points to the grades used to calculate the semester average for students who sit for the identified

statewide dual credit challenge exam. Additionally, in accordance with SCS policy 6036, one (1) quality point shall be added to the numerical quality point value corresponding to the letter grade received in a statewide dual credit course to calculate the SCS weighted GPA.

#### **4. Local Dual Credit Courses**

A local dual credit course is a high school course that incorporates postsecondary learning objectives and is aligned with a challenge exam that is approved by a local postsecondary institution through an articulation agreement with a local education agency. Students who pass a local dual credit challenge exam will earn college credit at the specific postsecondary institution(s) participating in the articulation agreement. Local dual credit courses shall include the addition of four (4) percentage points to the grades used to calculate the semester average for students who sit for the identified local dual credit challenge exam. Additionally, in accordance with SCS policy 6036, one (1) quality point shall be added to the numerical quality point value corresponding to the letter grade received in a local dual credit course to calculate the SCS weighted GPA.

#### **5. Dual Enrollment Courses**

Eligible students in grades 9-12 (except where otherwise provided by federal or state law and/or rules, regulations, or guidance (e.g., IEP, etc.)) have the opportunity to enroll in college level courses and earn both college credits and credits toward their high school diplomas through dual enrollment.

A dual enrollment course is a course taught for postsecondary credit that is also recognized by a local education agency for high school credit and is taught by postsecondary faculty (e.g., a bona fide college professor or a licensed SACS approved adjunct secondary teacher) in accordance with an agreement between the participating institution of higher learning and Shelby County Schools. The institution of higher education must be accredited by the state or by a state-approved accrediting agency.

Dual enrollment courses may be taught at a postsecondary institution, at a high school, or virtually. Dual enrollment courses that are recognized for high school credit shall include the addition of four (4) percentage points to the grades used to calculate the semester average for students who pass the dual enrollment course. Additionally, in accordance with SCS policy 6036, one (1) quality point shall be added to the numerical quality point value corresponding to the letter grade received in a dual enrollment course to calculate the SCS weighted GPA.

Schools must accept postsecondary credits as a substitution for an aligned graduation requirement course, including general education and elective focus courses for those students who take and pass dual enrollment courses at a postsecondary institution for credit.

**6. Advanced Placement (AP), Cambridge International, International Baccalaureate (IB), and College Level Exam Program (CLEP) Courses**

Shelby County Schools may elect to offer Advanced Placement, Cambridge International, or International Baccalaureate courses, or align its existing courses to College Level Exam Program (CLEP) exams. The District will ensure that these courses incorporate the learning objectives and course descriptions as defined by the College Board, Cambridge International, or International Baccalaureate, respectively, and prepare students for culminating national exams that, if passed, may be accepted for postsecondary credit by postsecondary institutions. Advanced Placement, Cambridge International, and International Baccalaureate, and the CLEP shall include the addition of five (5) percentage points to the grades used to calculate the semester average for students who sit for the aligned culminating exam. \*Additionally, in accordance with SCS policy 6036, one (1) quality point shall be added to the numerical quality point value corresponding to the letter grade received in the course for an AP, Cambridge International, or IB course to calculate the SCS weighted GPA.

\*The District may award additional percentage points to the grades of students who have completed an AP, Cambridge International, or IB course, or a course aligned with an Industry Certification or CLEP exam, prior to the student sitting for the culminating exam. Students are required to participate in the culminating exam to receive the additional percentage points.