

## **ADVANCED COURSES**

### **I. PURPOSE**

To outline guidelines for advanced courses such as 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 advanced courses within the Shelby County Schools.

### **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. To that end, the District supports advanced courses and programs that promote academic acceleration.

The District also believes in encouraging student participation in advanced courses through methods such as communicating information about advanced courses to students and parents; 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.

## **Requirements for Advanced Courses**

### Program Requirements

The Superintendent or designee(s) shall ensure the development and/or identification of program stipulations, eligibility criteria, student attendance and discipline standards/expectations, and criteria for continuation in advanced courses, and shall ensure the development and/or identification of 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 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.

## **IV. RESPONSIBILITY**

The Superintendent (or designee) is responsible for administering this policy.

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#### Legal References:

1. Tennessee State Board of Education Rule § 0520-01-03-.05
2. Tennessee State Board of Education Uniform Grading Policy 3.301
3. TCA 49-6-407

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#### Cross References:

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

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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.

## **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:

- i. Extended reading assignments that connect with the specified curriculum.
- ii. Research-based writing assignments that address and extend the course curriculum.
- iii. 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.
- iv. Open-ended investigations in which the student selects the questions and designs the research.
- v. 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.
- vi. Integration of appropriate technology into the course of study.
- vii. Deeper exploration of the culture, values, and history of the discipline.
- viii. Extensive opportunities for problem-solving experiences through imagination, critical analysis, and application.

- ix. 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 state law, one-half (1/2) quality point shall be added to the numerical quality point value corresponding to the letter grade received for the course in an honors course (applicable beginning with the SY 2016 – 2017 ninth grade class).

*Note: All high school courses, including honors courses, taken prior to high school enrollment will count as elective credit, unless state or federal guidance provides otherwise (e.g., Early High School Graduation Program under the Move on When Ready Act., etc.).*

### **Capstone 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 state law, one-half (1/2) 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 (applicable beginning with the SY 2016 – 2017 ninth grade class).

### **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 state law, three-fourths (3/4) quality points shall be added to the numerical quality point

value corresponding to the letter grade received for the course in a statewide dual credit course (applicable beginning with the SY 2016 – 2017 ninth grade class).

### **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.

### **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 state law, one (1) quality point shall be added to the numerical quality point value corresponding to the letter grade received in the course for a dual enrollment course (applicable beginning with the SY 2016 – 2017 ninth grade class).

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.

### **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, International Baccalaureate, and CLEP courses 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 state law, 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 (applicable beginning with the SY 2016 – 2017 ninth grade class).

\*The District may award the additional weighting 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. However, the quality points will be removed if the student does not participate in the culminating exam by the end of the school year in which the course was completed.