

**RULES  
OF  
THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**CHAPTER 0520-02-05  
OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATOR SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

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**0520-02-05-.01 PURPOSE.**

The purpose of these rules is to effectuate the Occupational Educator Scholarship Program (“the Program”) as required by T.C.A. § 49-11-102. The program provides a scholarship for prospective educators seeking a Tennessee occupational teaching license.

**Authority:** T.C.A. §§ 49-1-302 and 49-11-102. **Administrative History:** Original rules filed March 26, 2020; effective June 24, 2020.

**0520-02-05-.02 DEFINITIONS.**

- (1) “Department” means the Tennessee Department of Education.
- (2) “Distressed Rural County” means any county that qualifies as an “eligible county” under T.C.A. § 67-6-104(b)(3)(B).
- (3) “EPP” means a Tennessee educator preparation provider that is approved by the State Board of Education for the preparation of educators.
- (4) “Full-Time Teaching Service” means a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the Recipient’s weekly workload is devoted to teaching, exclusive of administrative, teaching assistance, after-school programs, counseling, or other assigned duties.
- (5) “Good Standing” means a satisfactory standard of progress toward completion of an educator preparation program as defined by the EPP the Recipient attends.
- (6) “Occupational Teacher License” means an Occupational Teacher License, as defined by Chapter 0520-02-03, that meets the qualifications to teach occupational career and technical education courses in a Tennessee public school.
- (7) “Prospective Educator” means an individual seeking a Tennessee Occupational Teacher License and enrolled in an eligible educator preparation program.
- (8) “Recipient” means an individual Prospective Educator who is selected to receive the occupational educator scholarship award based upon the fulfillment of specific eligibility criteria and in accordance with the terms outlined under this Chapter.
- (9) “Rural Community” means any community located outside of a major urban or suburban area, as defined by the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development.
- (10) “Tuition and Mandatory Fees” means those fees required for the enrollment or attendance of a student at an eligible institution that are charged to all students, and shall not include fees

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charged for books, supplies, or other fees, even if such fees are considered necessary for enrollment.

**Authority:** T.C.A. §§ 49-1-302 and 49-11-102. **Administrative History:** Original rules filed March 26, 2020; effective June 24, 2020. Amendments filed September 20, 2023; effective December 19, 2023.

#### **0520-02-05-.03 ELIGIBILITY.**

- (1) In order to be eligible for an occupational educator scholarship, the Prospective Educator must:
  - (a) Be a Tennessee resident for one (1) year immediately preceding the date of application for a scholarship;
  - (b) Submit to the Department an application for an occupational educator scholarship;
  - (c) Be admitted to an EPP;
  - (d) Agree to teach occupational career and technical education courses in a Tennessee public school for a minimum of three (3) consecutive academic years; and
  - (e) Enter into a written agreement with the state of Tennessee in which the Prospective Educator agrees to repay the scholarship to the state of Tennessee according to a repayment schedule if the Prospective Educator does not fulfill the three (3) consecutive academic years of teaching required under (d), unless it is impossible for the Prospective Educator to fulfill the requirements of (d) because of the Prospective Educator's death or permanent disability under the standards established by T.C.A. Title 8, Chapter 36, Part 5, for determining disability for members of the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System.

**Authority:** T.C.A. §§ 49-1-302 and 49-11-102. **Administrative History:** Original rules filed March 26, 2020; effective June 24, 2020. Amendments filed September 20, 2023; effective December 19, 2023. Amendments filed September 11, 2024; effective December 10, 2024.

#### **0520-02-05-.04 APPLICATION AND SELECTION.**

- (1) To be eligible to receive an occupational educator scholarship, eligible individuals must submit an application to the Department that includes:
  - (a) Verification of enrollment in an EPP;
  - (b) Verification of employment in a Tennessee public school or a letter of intent to hire from a Tennessee director of schools or public charter school leader; and
  - (c) A signed statement of intent to teach at least three (3) years in a Tennessee public school in an occupational career and technical education course.
- (2) Preference for the scholarship program shall be as follows:
  - (a) First priority shall be given to applicants from Rural Communities or applicants who are seeking employment in a Rural Community with additional priority for employment in a Distressed Rural County.
  - (b) Second priority shall be given to applicants seeking endorsement in occupational subject areas that are in demand as determined by the Department.
  - (c) All other eligible individuals.

(Rule 0520-02-05-.04, continued)

**Authority:** T.C.A. §§ 49-1-302 and 49-11-102. **Administrative History:** Original rules filed March 26, 2020; effective June 24, 2020. Amendments filed September 20, 2023; effective December 19, 2023. Amendments filed September 11, 2024; effective December 10, 2024.

#### **0520-02-05-.05 TERMS OF THE SCHOLARSHIP.**

- (1) Each Recipient of a scholarship under this Chapter shall remain in Good Standing with the EPP during the time of enrollment in order to continue to receive the scholarship.
- (2) Each Recipient shall maintain an active and valid Occupational Teacher License for the required three (3) years of employment.
- (3) A Recipient shall not accept any other financial assistance that carries with it a conflicting service obligation after graduation or program completion.
- (4) The total amount of a scholarship shall not exceed the cost of Tuition and Mandatory Fees at the EPP where the Recipient is enrolled, less all other gift aid, which must be credited first to the eligible Prospective Educator's Tuition and Mandatory Fees.
- (5) Funds shall be disbursed by the Department directly to the EPP on behalf of the Recipient. No funds shall be disbursed directly to scholarship Recipients.
- (6) The scholarship award may be transferred from one (1) EPP to another provided the transfer is approved by the Department.
- (7) Repayment.
  - (a) If the Recipient is determined to have received the scholarship based on inaccurate application information, the full amount of the scholarship received shall become due immediately to the state of Tennessee.
  - (b) The scholarship must be repaid should the Recipient fail to complete the EPP or fail to honor the terms and conditions of the scholarship agreement. Repayment for Recipients shall begin on the first day of the month following notification to the Recipient from the EPP of failure to complete the EPP program or notification of failure to honor the terms and conditions of the scholarship agreement.
  - (c) For each consecutive academic year of Full-Time Teaching Service the Recipient completes prior to any default under the terms and conditions of the scholarship agreement, the Recipient shall receive a credit of twenty-five percent (25%) of the scholarship amount. This credit shall not begin until the Recipient completes the EPP for which the scholarship was provided.
  - (d) Repayment may be made in whole or in monthly installments over a period of not more than four (4) years from the date of notification to the Recipient of failure to complete the educator preparation program or notification of failure to honor the terms and conditions of the scholarship agreement.
  - (e) If a Recipient issues a check, draft, warrant, or electronic funds transfer which is subsequently returned to the state of Tennessee for reason of insufficient funds, a stop payment order by the issuer, or any other reason, it will be considered non-payment.
  - (f) A Recipient shall be delinquent if the Recipient fails to make an installment payment after thirty calendar (30) days of the due date. Upon delinquency, the Department shall send

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notice to the Recipient of the delinquency and inform the Recipient of the consequences of default.

- (g) The Department shall consider a Recipient to be in default if the Recipient fails to make a payment for a period of two hundred seventy (270) consecutive calendar days. The Department will refer all defaulted accounts to the Office of the Attorney General for collection.
- (h) If it becomes impossible for the Recipient to fulfill the requirements of 0520-02-05-.03(1)(d) above due to the Recipient's death or permanent disability under the standards established by T.C.A. Title 8, Chapter 36, Part 5, for determining disability for members of the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System, then the Recipient shall no longer be required to repay any remaining unpaid scholarship amounts currently due.

**Authority:** T.C.A. §§ 49-1-302 and 49-11-102. **Administrative History:** Original rules filed March 26, 2020; effective June 24, 2020. Amendments filed September 20, 2023; effective December 19, 2023. Amendments filed September 11, 2024; effective December 10, 2024.