
Cambridge International Education Programme

The Background:

Rules, Regulations, and Minimum Standards of the State Board of Education 0520-01-03-.05(1) calls for the State Board of Education to adopt curriculum standards for each subject area, grades K-12. The approved standards are to be the basis for planning instructional programs in each local school system. Section 3.205 Approved High School Courses of the State Board of Education Policy identifies those courses which have been approved by the Board for instruction across the state.

Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) is an internationally recognized provider of international education for students ages 5 to 19, offering a continuum of studies from primary levels to upper secondary levels. CIE is a department within the University of Cambridge, founded in 1858 with the aim of raising standards in education through exam administration and school inspections. The Cambridge learning community includes over 10,000 schools, in more than 160 countries. The courses are comparable in rigor to those offered by the International Baccalaureate (IB) and College Board's Advanced Placement programs. All instructors undergo a selection process and receive training from program experts. Cambridge students take validated tests at the summation of the courses.

Cambridge international education programmes are instructionally aligned systems with curricula, assessments and pedagogy designed for students ages 5-19 years. There are two types of Cambridge courses for high schools: IGCSE and AS and A level. In U.S. schools, AS and A Level courses are sometimes called AICE which references a diploma which may be earned by passing a battery of AS/ A Level examinations.

- The International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) courses are generally taken by freshmen and sophomores and are known to foster the literacy skills needed by students in future academic pursuits.
- The Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) courses are generally taken by juniors and seniors, sometimes by sophomores, passing the corresponding AS and/or A Level examinations can result in the AICE Diploma. Depending on their examination performance and college/university recognition policies, students can be awarded post-secondary credit.

In American schools, the IGCSE courses are sometimes called pre-AICE. Taken together the IGCSE and AICE courses comprise the Cambridge Programme for high schools in the States.

Juniors and seniors may earn the Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) Diploma. In order to be eligible for the AICE Diploma, demonstration of knowledge and skills from a variety of subjects in 3 different groups is required: Math & Science, Languages, Arts and Humanities. Students must also take the Diploma Core: Cambridge Global Perspectives™ and demonstrate mastery of critical thinking analysis, argumentation, collaboration and research skills.

The Cambridge International Examinations program is flexible, can be tailored to student interests, and can allow for enrollment in additional programs. All AICE courses emphasize international relevance and focus on developing 21st Century Skills. Similar to International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advanced Placement (AP) courses, AICE scores may meet credit requirements at top colleges and universities throughout the world.

Metro Nashville and Bradley County Public Schools are currently offering Cambridge courses. These school systems have made the philosophical and monetary commitment to offer Cambridge courses by offering the appropriate teacher training and maintaining the Cambridge standards.

The Tennessee Department of Education has reviewed the Cambridge courses and agree that the program meets the current Tennessee state standards and graduation requirements for English language arts, science, mathematics, fine arts, and foreign language. The department has created a ‘Cambridge Programme Pathways to TN Diploma’ document that outlines what courses students enrolled in the Cambridge Programme will need to take in order to receive a Tennessee high school diploma.

After reviewing the Cambridge Courses and assessments, the department recommends that students who take a math, English language arts, science, and/or social studies IGCSE course (usually in 9th and 10th grade) will take a Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) test, if available. Students who take the AS/ A Level (AICE) course (usually taken in 11th and 12th grade) will take the Cambridge AS/ A Level (AICE) exam for that course and will not be required to take a TCAP exam for that course. For a list of the courses and the testing requirements for each course, please see the ‘Cambridge Programme Pathways to TN Diploma’ attachment.

Students who complete the Cambridge Program should be recognized as graduating with “state distinction.”

The Fiscal Analysis Impact:

This item has no financial impact on an LEA.

The Recommendation:

The Department of Education recommends acceptance of this item on first reading. The SBE staff concurs with this recommendation.