



Annual Joint Report of Pre-Kindergarten through Higher Education in Tennessee

February 1, 2018



Tennessee State Board of Education
Tennessee Higher Education Commission

State Board of Education

The State Board of Education is the governing and policymaking body for the Tennessee system of public elementary and secondary education. The board's statutory charge touches all facets of state policy and governance, including school and district accountability, educator evaluation, instructional standards, and educator preparation. The State Board of Education's vision is to work with educators and stakeholders across the state to prepare all Tennessee children for postsecondary and workforce success.

Tennessee Higher Education Commission

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission is the state's coordinating agency for higher education. Guided by the 2015-2025 Master Plan for Tennessee Postsecondary Education, THEC oversees an array of finance, academic, research, and consumer protection initiatives that promote student success and support the state's completion agenda for postsecondary education. THEC actively seeks to develop policy recommendations, programmatic initiatives, and partnerships that increase educational attainment in the state while improving higher education access and success for all Tennesseans.

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Introduction

The *Annual Joint Report on Pre-Kindergarten through Higher Education in Tennessee* complies with the requirements established in T.C.A. § 49-1-302(a)(10). State law directs the State Board of Education (SBE) and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) to provide an annual report to the Governor, the General Assembly, all public schools, and postsecondary institutions and their respective boards. This report includes, but is not limited to, discussion of the following four areas:

1. State Needs in Public Education
2. Master Plan Fulfillment
3. Duplication in Elementary, Secondary, and Postsecondary Education
4. Compatibility of Graduation and Admission Requirements

This year's report focuses on the state's current needs in Pre-K-16 education and how, through each agency's Master Plan, the SBE and THEC strive to deliver results in these priority areas.

Continuous improvement has been the common theme in Tennessee's education system. The SBE's recently updated Master Plan places an intense focus on three ambitious student achievement goals, and the state is making significant progress toward these goals. In recent years, Tennessee has improved its national ranking on NAEP and raised its average ACT score. This success is due, in large part, to the generous support of Governor Haslam and the Tennessee General Assembly, who have invested an additional \$1.3 billion in Pre-K-12 education since the beginning of the Haslam administration.¹

In higher education, the policy landscape is evolving in support of the Governor's Drive to 55, with the implementation of programs such as Tennessee Promise, Tennessee Reconnect, and the Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP). In response, the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR), the University of Tennessee System, and the six locally-governed institutions continue to develop innovative programs and initiatives to ensure affordability for students and the economic viability of their institutions. Early indicators of success are evident; Tennessee's filing rate for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) has led the nation for three consecutive years, and the college-going rate has increased substantially since the implementation of Tennessee Promise in 2015. The unprecedented state support for higher education will continue to pay dividends for years to come, as students complete their postsecondary credentials and enter the workforce.

¹ For additional information about the progress of K-12 education in Tennessee, please see this recent press release from the Governor's Office: <https://www.tn.gov/governor/priorities/tennessee-education-transformation.html>

State Needs in Public Education

Drive to 55

Governor Bill Haslam’s Drive to 55 initiative is critical to the state’s economic development and the long-term growth of its workforce. The goal of the Drive to 55 is to increase the percentage of working-age Tennesseans (age 25-64) with a postsecondary certificate or degree to 55 percent by the year 2025.

Using data from Lumina Foundation’s *A Stronger Nation* report,² THEC estimates that 39.7 percent of working-age Tennesseans held a postsecondary credential as of 2015. To reach the Drive to 55, Tennessee needs 728,035 additional credentialed individuals by 2025, which translates to 80,893 credentialed individuals each year from 2017 through 2025.³ **Table 1** displays the growth needed to meet this goal compared to the current postsecondary attainment in Tennessee.

Table 1: Number of Degrees Needed to Meet Drive to 55 Goal

Number of credentialed residents in 2016 who will not age out by 2025	1,231,660
<i> Holders of an associate degree or higher</i>	<i>1,119,807</i>
<i> Certificate holders (estimated at 4% of population)</i>	<i>111,853</i>
Number of credentialed individuals needed in 2025 to reach 55% attainment	1,959,695
Total number of credentialed individuals needed to meet the Drive to 55 goal	728,035
Annual number of credentialed individuals needed to meet the Drive to 55 goal	80,893

Source: THEC, 2017

SBE’s Student Achievement Goals

To meet this need, the SBE collaborated with the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) to develop three overarching student achievement goals that guide its efforts to increase postsecondary preparedness, leading to increased postsecondary enrollment and completion:

1. Tennessee will rank in the top half of states on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) by 2019.
2. The average ACT composite score in Tennessee will be a 21, or a comparable score of 990 on the SAT, by 2020.
3. The majority of high school graduates from the class of 2020 will earn a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree.

Progress toward each of these student achievement goals is explained in the sections that follow.

² For more information about Lumina Foundation’s *A Stronger Nation* report, please visit their website at <http://strongernation.luminafoundation.org/report/2017/#nation>

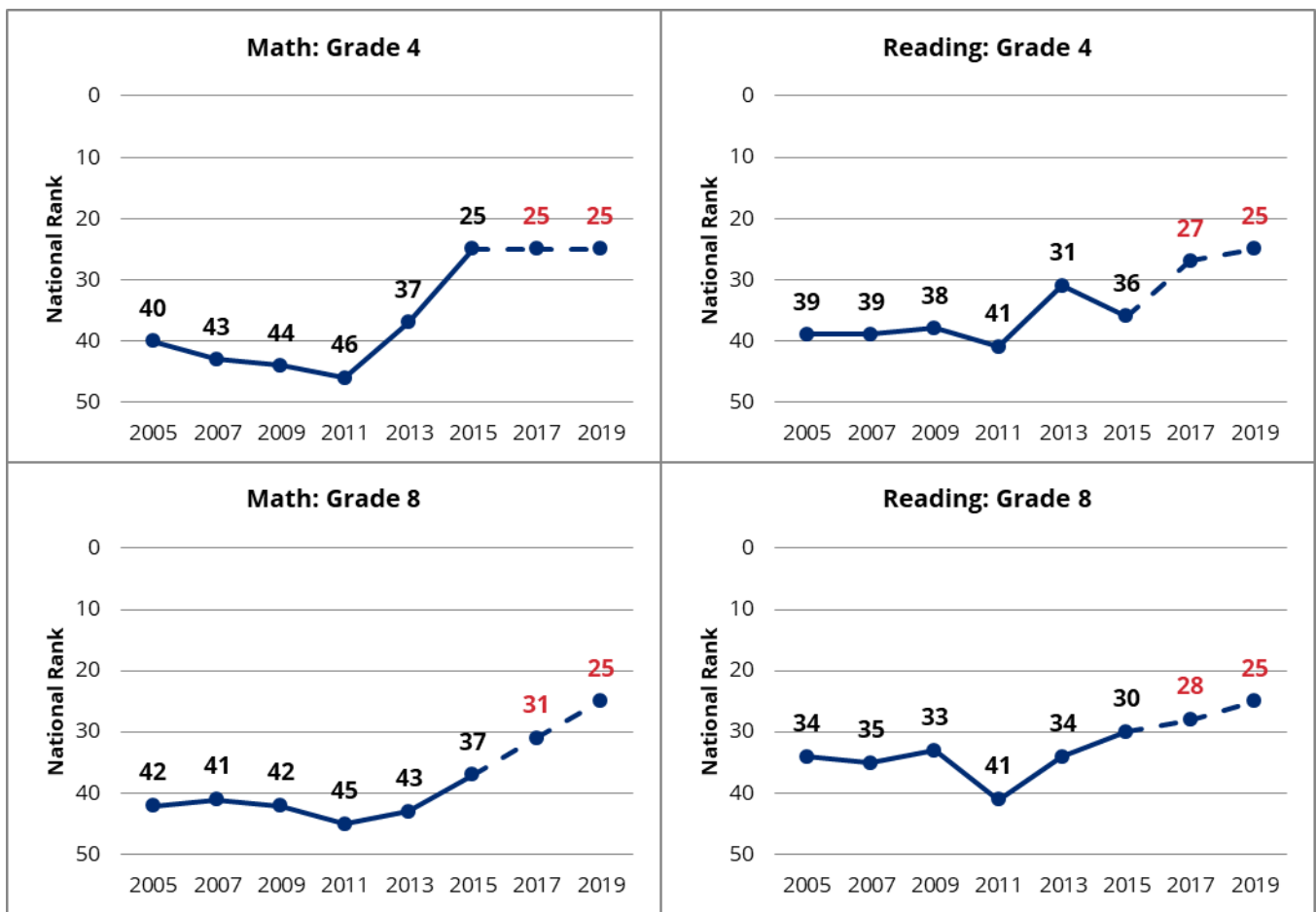
³ American Community Survey, 2016, One-year estimates. Analysis by THEC.

NAEP

The first of these goals is that Tennessee will rank in the top half of states on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) by the year 2019. In 2013, Tennessee recorded its greatest improvement in the history of NAEP, and in 2015, Tennessee maintained its status as the fastest-improving state in the nation. The state achieved another milestone in 2015 by ranking 25th in the nation in 4th grade math – the first time Tennessee has ever ranked in the top half of states in any subject or grade.⁴

Figure 1 displays the change in NAEP scores for 4th and 8th graders from 2005 to 2015 (represented by the black numbers connected with a solid line), as well as the continued improvement required to move into the top half of states by 2019 (represented by the red numbers connected with a dashed line). Meeting the targets set by the Drive to 55 will require that students enter postsecondary education prepared to succeed. Increasing Tennessee’s overall performance and national ranking on NAEP is one important way of measuring students’ readiness to complete high school with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in higher education.

Figure 1: Progress toward the Top Half of States on NAEP

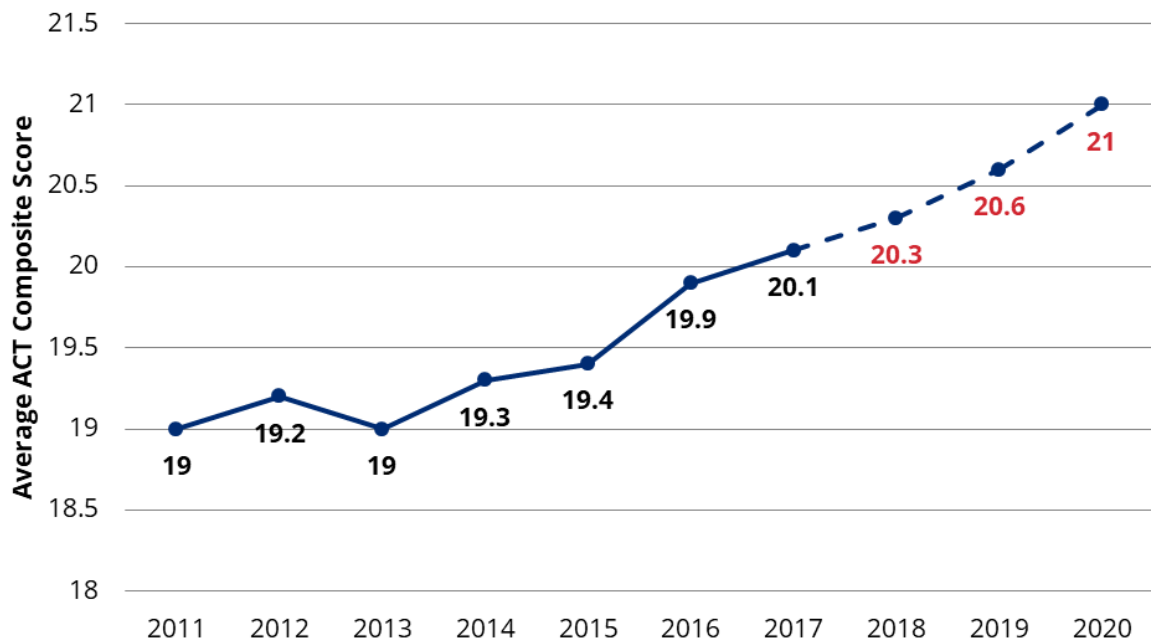


⁴ 2015 NAEP results are available on TDOE’s website at <https://www.tn.gov/education/data/naep-results.html>

ACT Composite Score

The SBE's second goal is to increase Tennessee's average ACT composite score to 21 by 2020. Tennessee has seen the average ACT score for public high school students increase from 19.0 to 20.1 between 2011 and 2017.⁵ **Figure 2** displays the progress made between 2011 and 2017 (shown by the black numbers connected with a solid line), as well as the additional improvement necessary to achieve a statewide average score of 21 by 2020 (shown by the red numbers connected with a dashed line). As the SBE continues to push for greater workforce and postsecondary preparedness, tracking growth in ACT scores will provide valuable information about whether the state's high school students are meeting postsecondary readiness benchmarks in the tested subject areas.

Figure 2: Progress toward Average ACT Composite Score of 21

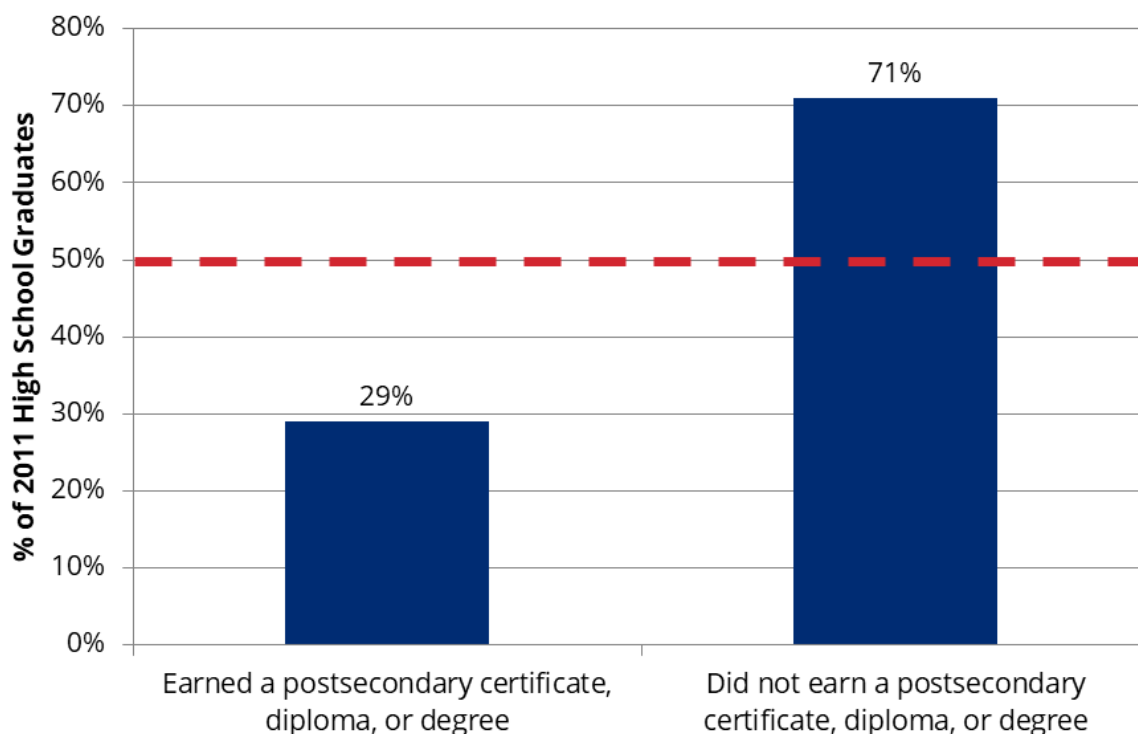


⁵ The statewide average ACT Composite score in 2017 is available on TDOE's State Report Card at <https://www.tn.gov/education/data/report-card.html>

Postsecondary Completion Rate

The SBE's third goal is for the majority of high school graduates from the class of 2020 to earn a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree within six years of high school graduation. The high school class of 2016 enrolled 61.5 percent of graduates into some form of postsecondary education in fall 2016.⁶ However, the state's goals extend beyond enrollment to *completion*. Only 29 percent of the high school class of 2011 had attained a postsecondary degree within five years, but that share will increase when the sixth year of completion data are available.⁷ To prepare for a future in which most Tennessee jobs will require a postsecondary credential, the SBE aspires to push this rate to over 50 percent of the graduating high school class of 2020. The blue bar in **Figure 3** represents the five-year postsecondary completion rate for the high school class of 2011, and the red dashed line represents the goal of 50 percent postsecondary attainment.

Figure 3: Progress toward 50% Postsecondary Completion Rate



Because the key components of the Drive to 55 span the K-12 and higher education continuum, achieving this goal will require engaging multiple stakeholders, adopting innovative ideas and initiatives, and closely tracking data benchmarks. New programs representing collaborations between K-12 and higher education, such as Tennessee Promise and LEAP, are particularly relevant to this report.

The following sections of this report detail how the SBE and THEC are working to implement programs in alignment with the Drive to 55 and undertake other important initiatives to support the state's efforts to achieve the ambitious goals laid out by Governor Haslam.

⁶ Data from THEC's college-going rate calculations, 2017

⁷ Data from TDOE, December 2017. The sixth year of completion data will be available in summer 2018.

Master Plan Fulfillment

State Board of Education

In January 2017, the SBE approved a new Master Plan detailing their current efforts to maintain Tennessee's status as the fastest-improving state in the nation and enter the top half of all states on NAEP performance by 2019. These efforts are built on the SBE's guiding principles of supporting students on their pathways to success and ensuring transparency in the SBE's work.

Given the continuity of the SBE's work over the past year, the 2017 Master Plan preserved the strategic priority areas established in the SBE's 2016 Master Plan. The four strategic priority areas are as follows:

1. High Quality School Options
2. Great Teachers and Leaders
3. High Standards and Quality Measures
4. Public Engagement and Oversight

The following sections detail some of the major policy initiatives the SBE pursued in 2017 within each of these four strategic priority areas and provide insight into the SBE's work for 2018 and beyond.

High Quality School Options

Charter School Authorization

The SBE achieved a significant milestone this year with the successful opening of the first SBE-authorized charter school, Bluff City High School (BCHS), in Memphis. BCHS opened for its first academic year in fall 2017. SBE staff's pre-opening work for this school included signing a performance contract with Green Dot Tennessee that was approved at the January 2017 SBE meeting; drafting and reviewing required authorizer policies, which were approved at the July 2017 SBE meeting; and creating a website for the school. BCHS enrolled 150 ninth graders at the start of the 2017-18 academic year, and the school has already begun its lottery process for adding a second grade of students for the next academic year. SBE staff have made consistent visits to the school since the official opening and will continue to work closely with staff there to maintain efficient operations and to provide regulatory oversight.

SBE staff have also begun pre-opening work with KIPP Nashville Primary, the second SBE-authorized school, which is scheduled to open in fall 2018. KIPP has already identified a location and a school leader for this school and has just begun the enrollment process for the school's first academic year. SBE staff will continue to meet with KIPP staff monthly in preparation for the school's opening.



Great Teachers and Leaders

Educator Preparation Programs

In 2016, the SBE undertook a redesign process for the Teacher Preparation Report Card. The redesigned Report Card website launched on December 15, 2016, offering stakeholders ranging from leaders at Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs) to school district administrators to aspiring teachers an accessible, user-friendly source for data on all of the state's EPPs. In 2017, SBE's goal was to build on the foundation set by the 2016 Report Card and to continue to enhance the quality and expand the audience of this valuable resource.

Throughout spring 2017, SBE staff gathered feedback about the changes made in the Report Card's redesign process to determine additional features to include in the 2017 Report Card. SBE staff also conducted outreach to stakeholders at the school district and EPP levels through presentations at conferences for the Tennessee Association of School Personnel Administrators and the Tennessee Association of Colleges of Teacher Education to strengthen understanding of the Report Card. Finally, the staff then consulted with a new advisory council during the summer and fall regarding key decisions based on the feedback that was gathered and state considerations for the Report Card's future. Pursuant to legislation passed by the General Assembly during the 2017 legislative session, the newly updated Teacher Preparation Report Card will launch on February 15, 2018.

TDOE also released the first version of their Annual Reports on Educator Preparation to EPPs in March 2017.⁸ While the SBE's redesigned Teacher Preparation Report Card provides public, institution-level data about the state's EPPs, TDOE's Annual Reports contain disaggregated, program-specific data and are shared directly with each EPP. This targeted data specific to the teachers that EPPs are preparing in particular grade levels or subject areas is intended to encourage leaders to promote a data-driven process of continuous improvement.

Additionally, these Annual Reports are being integrated into the approval process, both for the Educator Preparation Provider as a whole and for individual Specialty Area Programs. The data comprising the Annual Reports will be a factor that the SBE considers in both mandatory comprehensive reviews as well as interim reviews. The 2018 version of the Annual Reports will include performance thresholds for each metric that will provide information on whether or not the state's teacher training programs are meeting expectations.

The SBE also set a goal of expanding its educator preparation work to include a stronger focus on leader preparation. SBE staff conducted an initial literature review regarding best practices in leader preparation and began preparations to streamline leader preparation policies in the upcoming year. In particular, efforts toward improving the existing policies in this area will focus on ensuring that institutions

⁸ For additional information about TDOE's Annual Reports, please see their *Preparation through Partnership* report at https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/reports/Preparation_through_Partnership.pdf

preparing future school leaders are meeting reporting and instructional requirements that the state is working to establish in educator preparation.

Teacher Licensure

The SBE continued to emphasize its role in upholding high standards in teacher licensure discipline this past year. In addition to hiring a new staff attorney and improving process flow and data systems in partnership with TDOE, the SBE has been working to pass a new rule and policy that sets clear expectations for the new standard used by the staff during the decision-making process on all parties involved in licensure discipline actions. To ensure that all relevant stakeholders are aware of this new rule and are well-informed about the changes it entails, SBE staff has continued outreach through such avenues as presenting at the Tennessee Association of School Personnel Administrators conference and sharing relevant information at Day in the District events with local superintendents.

The SBE has also attempted to ensure that Tennessee's standards for incoming teachers are appropriate by taking steps to review the licensure assessments used in the licensure application process. This year, SBE staff began reviewing the content assessments used in secondary math and elementary reading to determine whether or not those exams were optimally aligned with the state's goals of licensing great teachers for all students. This process involved assembling content review teams of Tennessee educators who are subject area experts, briefing them on common practices with licensure assessments in other states, and working with Educational Testing Services and Pearson Education to determine recommendations on the assessments in these areas. SBE staff have reviewed these recommendations internally and with the Board Members and created a survey based on the recommendations to solicit further input. This work is ongoing, and SBE plans to continue to assess the grade and subject areas where similar review is needed.

High Standards and Quality Measures

Standards Review Process

The SBE is charged by the Tennessee General Assembly with reviewing all sets of academic standards at least every six years.⁹ In 2015, this review process was revised significantly by the General Assembly to include a public website that allows all Tennesseans to provide feedback on the standards and proposed changes.¹⁰ The new standards review process also capitalizes on the expertise of Tennessee educators and higher education faculty by involving them in the review of public feedback and the revision of standards. From 2015 through 2017, the SBE spent a significant portion of time implementing this revised review process for math, English language arts (ELA), science, and social studies, as well as several additional subjects on a smaller scale.

The SBE ensured that the review process for all standards was transparent and rigorous. For each subject, the SBE received thousands of pieces of feedback through the website – up to 300,000 on the

⁹ T.C.A. § 49-1-302

¹⁰ T.C.A. § 49-1-311

social studies standards alone. Further, the SBE held teacher and parent roundtables to further increase public involvement in the standards review process. In addition to engaging Tennessee educators, the SBE and its staff solicited feedback from stakeholders in higher education through such measures as conducting a separate higher education review on the draft of each set of new standards. Additionally, the legislatively-appointed Standards Recommendation Committee played a fundamental role in determining needed revisions and facilitating action on those revisions to the standards.

After that substantial review process, the Board adopted the new Tennessee Academic Standards. Implementation of those standards is staggered across several academic years so that educators have adequate time to prepare for the transition. TDOE is providing standards-focused professional development and instructional resources for each subject in the year prior to its implementation. **Figure 4** provides a snapshot of the standards adoption and implementation timeline.

Figure 4: Timeline for Adoption and Implementation of Tennessee Academic Standards



The SBE produced a public report documenting the standards review process, and it is currently available on SBE's website.¹¹ Several other states have expressed an interest in learning from Tennessee's standards review process as it was one of the most thorough and comprehensive in the nation in recent years.

Finally, to continuously refine the standards, the SBE is conducting a first-year implementation check of the ELA standards. From December 1, 2017 through January 31, 2018, the SBE collected feedback on the ELA standards for K-12 as well as the high school electives. A small team of educators from the original standards review committees will analyze the feedback and propose clarifying changes to the SBE at its July 2018 meeting. The SBE will repeat this process for mathematics in 2019. Beyond collecting additional input, these implementation checks will also resynchronize ELA and math standards adoption with the state textbook and instructional materials adoption cycle; these were out of alignment when the ELA and math standards were reviewed ahead of schedule in 2015. This realignment will ensure that in the future, all students and teachers will have aligned textbooks and instructional materials at the same time new standards are implemented in the classroom.

¹¹For more information about the SBE's standards review process, please visit their website at https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/stateboardofeducation/documents/standards/238179_Setting_the_Standards_Report_Book_FINAL_7-25-17.pdf

Public Engagement and Oversight

Board Member Engagement

The SBE promotes public engagement and effective oversight throughout its work, as these are essential components of the SBE's efforts to maintain transparency. Board members have made efforts to increase their own public engagement through Day in the District events, which are specifically coordinated to allow members from neighboring districts to participate. Such events allow the SBE to bring together teachers, administrators, and community members from several of the members' congressional districts and encourage productive collaboration moving forward.

Members have also participated in regional superintendent study councils, worked with local stakeholders throughout their districts, and increased their legislative involvement by working more closely with local members of the General Assembly. Finally, the SBE and its members have continued to strengthen relationships with local and statewide media. The SBE is encouraged by these efforts and aims to continue to promote increased media and community engagement at the local and state levels through both their work in an individual capacity as well as through the body as a whole.

Policy Audit

In 2016, SBE staff began a comprehensive audit of rules and policies in conjunction with TDOE. Over the course of 18 months, each rule or policy was reviewed to determine whether it remained relevant and in alignment with state priorities, required changes, or needed to be repealed. Items that required changes or repeal were brought before the SBE between July 2016 and January 2018.

To ensure rules and policies are reviewed regularly moving forward, the SBE and TDOE policy teams created an audit cycle. They assigned each rule or policy to the most relevant work team at one of the two agencies and created a schedule for each item to be reviewed at least once every two years. For example, rules and policies regarding special education were assigned to the Division of Special Populations and Student Support at TDOE, while rules regarding SBE-authorized charter schools were assigned to the charter team at the SBE. The policy teams at each agency are responsible for ensuring each team completes its share of the audit and identifies any necessary revisions; the agencies are using a shared spreadsheet noting the date of last review and whether any changes were proposed to stay in alignment.

Tennessee Higher Education Commission

The 2015-2025 Master Plan for Tennessee Postsecondary Education responds to the charge for THEC to partner with the Tennessee Board of Regents, the University of Tennessee system, and the locally-governed institutions to guide the future development of public universities, community colleges, and Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs). The purpose of the Master Plan is to direct higher education to be accountable for increasing postsecondary attainment among Tennesseans. Additionally, the Master Plan seeks to address the state's economic development, workforce development, and research needs; ensure increased degree production within the state's capacity to support higher education; and use institutional mission differentiation to realize statewide efficiencies through increased collaboration and minimized redundancy. Six components comprise the framework of the 2015-2025 Master Plan, which include:

1. Making the case for the continued, focused pursuit of the Drive to 55;
2. Taking stock of important achievements since the passage of the Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010;
3. Calculating statewide, sector-specific degree and certificate production targets necessary for meeting the statewide goal;
4. Recognizing three historically underserved student populations worthy of focused policy and programmatic attention throughout the coming decade;
5. Identifying tools and strategies for serving these three historically underserved student populations; and
6. Offering observations and recommendations intended to guide policymakers, system leaders, and campuses as they carry out their appropriate roles relative to the Drive to 55.

Some of the policy levers and programs currently operating toward fulfilling the 2015-2025 Master Plan are described below.¹²

Key Populations to Meet the Drive to 55 Goal

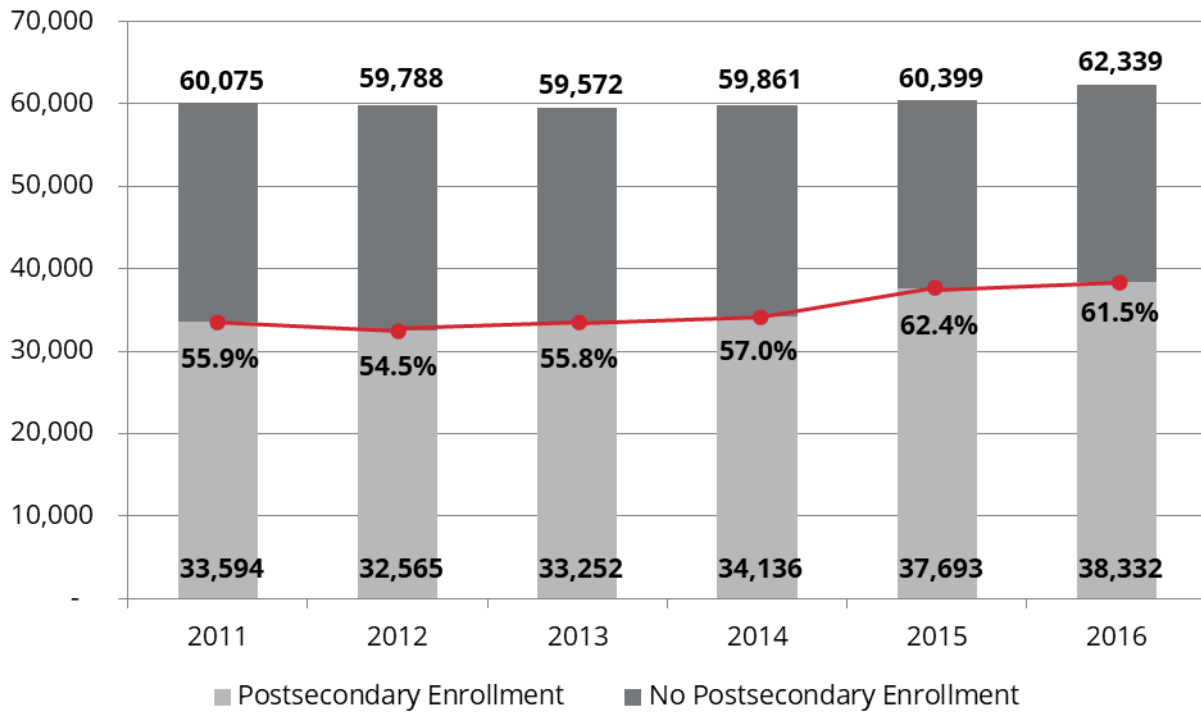
Tennessee cannot meet the Drive to 55 goal without increasing the focus on enrolling student populations with a history of underrepresentation in higher education. THEC's Master Plan recommends that three groups take priority in terms of programmatic focus and funding: (1) adult students; (2) low-income students; and (3) academically underprepared students.

Figure 5 shows that college enrollment rates of recent high school graduates have increased steadily over the last six years (shown by the red line). However, projections provided in THEC's Master Plan demonstrate that the 55 percent postsecondary attainment goal is not achievable merely by improving Tennessee public high school graduation rates, increasing recent high school graduates' enrollment in postsecondary education, or improving their postsecondary progression and completion rates. The

¹² The full Master Plan is available at <https://www.tn.gov/thec/research/redirect-research/master-plan.html>

approximately 750,000 working-age Tennesseans with some college but no degree¹³ represent a population that must be leveraged to achieve the Drive to 55 goal.

Figure 5: Total High School Graduates and Postsecondary Enrollment, 2011-2016



Low-income students are at particular risk of not enrolling or completing college.¹⁴ Living on the “economic edge” makes a student more likely to stop or drop out when circumstances (such as family events or changes in responsibilities) upset their financial status.¹⁵ Of particular concern are students who take out loans and do not complete a postsecondary degree due to such circumstances, making them especially vulnerable to loan default.¹⁶

Academically underprepared students (defined as students with an ACT composite score below 19) are also a focus population. In the past, academically underprepared students entering postsecondary education were required to pay for and complete remedial courses at a postsecondary institution before entering credit-bearing courses. The Seamless Alignment and Integrated Learning Support (SAILS) program provides high school seniors with the opportunity to complete all remedial math requirements before graduating high school and to enroll in college-level math as a credit-bearing course when they enroll at a postsecondary institution.¹⁷ Additionally, a “co-requisite” model of remedial instruction while

¹³ American Community Survey, 2016, Five-year estimates.

¹⁴ Bowen, W. G., Chingos, M. M., & McPherson, M. S. (2009). *Crossing the finish line: Completing college at America's public universities*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Hillman, N. W. (2014). College on credit: A multilevel analysis of student loan default. *Review of Higher Education*, 37(2), 412-438.

¹⁷ For more information about the SAILS program, please visit THEC's website at <https://www.tn.gov/thec/bureaus/academic-affairs-and-student-success/academic-programs/sails.html>

enrolled in a credit-bearing course has become the primary pedagogical method for community colleges in Tennessee.¹⁸

Tennessee Promise

One policy tool available to actualize the Drive to 55 is the Tennessee Promise, which covers tuition and mandatory fees beyond the amount covered by the Pell grant, HOPE scholarship, or other state grant aid. Students may use the scholarship to attend any of Tennessee's 13 community colleges, 27 TCATs, or eligible public and private four-year institutions offering approved associate degree programs.¹⁹

In addition to reducing the financial burden of attending college, Tennessee Promise provides students with individualized guidance from a mentor who assists in navigating the college application process. Attending meetings with these mentors is mandatory for students to remain eligible for the program. Additionally, students must complete the FAFSA prior to the designated deadline,²⁰ perform eight hours of community service per semester enrolled, attend full-time, and maintain satisfactory academic progress at their institution.

Of the 58,286 students who applied in the first year of Tennessee Promise, 16,291 enrolled at community colleges and TCATs throughout the state in fall 2015. As a result, first-time freshmen enrollment at Tennessee public institutions increased by 11.8 percent from fall 2014 to fall 2015, including a 27.7 percent increase at community colleges and a 20 percent increase at TCATs. This first cohort had a retention rate of 63 percent from fall 2015 to fall 2016.

The second application cycle for Tennessee Promise yielded 59,598 applicants, and 16,790 of those students enrolled in fall 2016. The third and fourth application cycles yielded 60,500 and 62,860 total applications, respectively. Additional data about the progression of the second cohort and the enrollment of the third and fourth cohorts are forthcoming.

LEAP

The Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP) ensures that Tennessee community colleges and TCATs are producing graduates that have the necessary skills to meet the requirements of high-skill and high-technology jobs demanded by industry leaders in the state. LEAP accomplishes this goal by providing grant funding to communities that develop a framework for regional partnerships comprised of TCATs, community colleges, industry partners, workforce development professionals, and K-12 educators. These collaboratives create tailored workforce pipelines designed to provide the technical skills that local employers need. Altogether, these collaboratives serve 67 counties across the state, shown on a map in

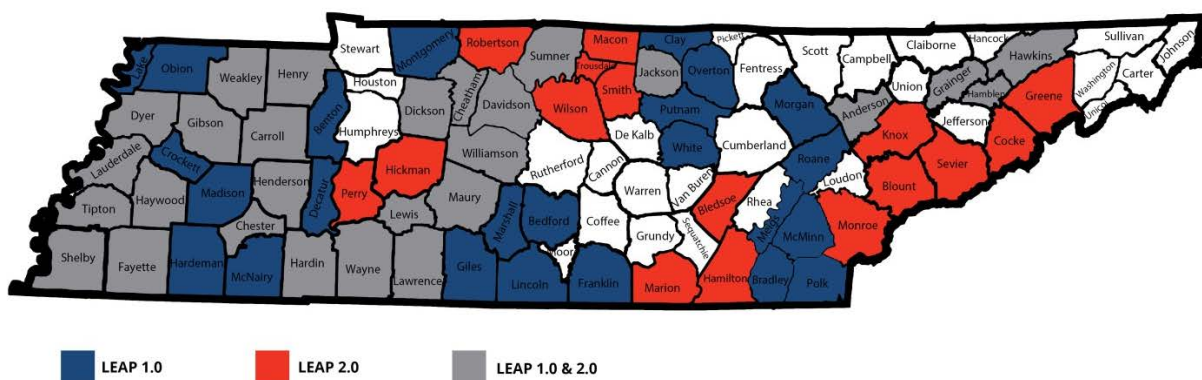
Figure 6.

¹⁸ For more information about co-requisite remediation, please visit TBR's website at <https://www.tbr.edu/academics/co-requisite-remediation>

¹⁹ The complete list of Tennessee Promise-eligible postsecondary institutions and programs during the 2017-18 academic year is available at http://tennesseepromise.gov/files/TNPromiseListofInstitutions_101817.pdf

²⁰ The new FAFSA deadline, beginning with the third cohort, falls in mid-January. For the first two cohorts, the FAFSA deadline was February 15.

Figure 6: Service Map for LEAP 1.0 & 2.0



The grant period for LEAP 1.0 began in January 2015 and ended in January 2017. These projects served 5,468 students at 62 high schools, 17 TCATs, and 9 community colleges. The grant period for LEAP 2.0 began in January 2017 and will end in May 2019. To date, the LEAP 2.0 projects have served more than 2,400 students at 70 high schools, 16 TCATs, and 7 community colleges. Enrollment and participation in LEAP 2.0 grant activities is expected to increase during the remainder of the grant period.²¹

College Access and Success

THEC oversees several programs that ensure students' academic preparation for postsecondary coursework and support students through the college-going process. With this end in mind, THEC's Division of College Access and Success designs and implements initiatives to empower communities, local education agencies, and partner organizations to create a statewide culture of college-going and attainment. Several of the Division of College Access and Success's programs are described below.²²

Path to College Events

THEC has continued implementation of Path to College Events, a suite of school-based college access initiatives aimed at building a college-going culture. Path to College Events, which center on key college-going milestones, include College Planning Night (planning), College Application Week (applying), Tennessee FAFSA Frenzy (paying), and College Signing Day (going). Combined, the four Path to College Events serve as a venue to inform students and their families of college options and the benefits of each option. Particular emphasis is placed on helping students pursue the college choice that is best suited for their goals and needs. The events are typically hosted by high schools, college access organizations, and elementary and middle schools. In the 2016-17 academic year, 305 schools across the state participated in at least one Path to College Event.

²¹ For additional information about LEAP, please see the 2018 LEAP Annual Report, available at <https://www.tn.gov/thec/for-institutions/grant-programs-for-institutions/leap/leap-annual-reports.html>

²² For a full description of programs managed by THEC's Division of College Access and Success, please visit their website at <https://www.tn.gov/thec/bureaus/student-aid-and-compliance/college-access.html>

CollegeforTN.org

CollegeforTN.org, Tennessee's web-based career and educational planning system, provides career, academic, college, and financial aid planning resources to all Tennesseans at no cost. The site assists students to enhance self-awareness, build individualized education and career plans, and prepare for the postsecondary transition. The results of all online student activities are stored in an interactive portfolio. Educators can engage with students through online management tools and resources. THEC relaunched the site in 2016 with enhanced capabilities and is expanding the use and implementation of the web portal through robust educator professional development, creating instructional resources and collateral materials, and increasing alignment with Drive to 55 initiatives. Specifically, THEC is partnering with TDOE to implement an Institute for Education Sciences (IES) grant focused on leveraging technology to build a college-going culture.

GEAR UP TN

In spring 2012, the United States Department of Education awarded a Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) grant to THEC in the amount of \$29.5 million. GEAR UP, a seven-year discretionary grant program, aims to increase the number of low-income, first generation students enrolling and succeeding in college. Tennessee's program, GEAR UP TN, began implementation in fall 2012, with direct services across the state beginning in January 2013.

Currently, GEAR UP TN sub-grants fund programs in 15 school districts across the state, providing direct services in 88 schools. The program is structured to serve approximately 5,000 seniors in GEAR UP TN high schools each year in addition to the approximately 7,500 students in the Class of 2018. The Class of 2018 cohort began receiving services in 7th grade and will continue to be served by the program through their first year of postsecondary education. Direct services provided to students and their families include academic support, mentoring, advising, college and job site visits, family engagement, and financial aid counseling. Sub-grant funding also provides professional development for teachers, counselors, and school administrators on best practices for creating and sustaining a college access culture.

In fall 2017, the United States Department of Education awarded another GEAR UP grant to THEC, in the amount of \$24.5 million. This grant will provide Tennessee with \$3.5 million each year over a seven-year grant period. Services will begin in spring 2018 for the Class of 2023 cohort, and approximately 2,750 seniors at participating high schools will also receive GEAR UP services each year.

Advise TN

Advise TN is a college advising and capacity-building program developed by THEC and the Office of Governor Bill Haslam. Advise TN aims to increase the number of Tennesseans accessing higher education



by partnering with high schools and providing college advising services to up to 10,000 junior and senior students across Tennessee. Thirty schools currently have an Advise TN college advisor.²³

Advisors provide services to all juniors and seniors at each participating high school to help students enroll at the postsecondary institution where they will be most likely to succeed and persist to a degree or credential – be it a four-year university, community college, TCAT, or other form of quality postsecondary education.

SAILS

The SAILS program targets students that have not reached college readiness benchmarks by introducing the college developmental curriculum into the high school senior year. Developed by K-12 teachers and higher education faculty, SAILS embeds the TBR Learning Support competencies into the high school senior year math and English courses, allowing students to begin their higher education career prepared for credit-bearing coursework. SAILS uses a blended learning model that allows students to work at their own pace using online instruction and receive assistance as needed from a licensed K-12 teacher.

By taking SAILS Math during their senior year, students who have not achieved ACT's college readiness benchmarks can demonstrate mastery of all five TBR math competencies while earning high school Bridge Math credit. In the 2016-17 school year, the SAILS Math program was available to over 17,000 Tennessee high school students, representing over half of the 30,000 students who had not met college readiness benchmarks by their senior year of high school. Since SAILS Math was implemented in 2012, there has been a 15.6 percentage point decrease in the share of students that enter community college in need of math remediation. Additionally, the SAILS English program is currently being piloted at 18 Tennessee high schools to address both reading and writing deficiencies prior to enrolling in postsecondary education.

²³ For a list of partnering high schools, please visit the Advise TN webpage at <https://www.tn.gov/thec/bureaus/student-aid-and-compliance/college-access/redirect-college-access-and-success/advise-tn.html>



Duplication in Elementary, Secondary, and Postsecondary Education

Both the SBE and THEC have developed Master Plans to guide policy development and resource allocation in public education. These Master Plans emphasize student achievement from pre-kindergarten through higher education, while minimizing duplication across all levels of education. The two subsections that follow demonstrate progress in this area.

Overlap Between Secondary and Postsecondary Education

Governor Haslam's Drive to 55 has placed a significant focus on increasing postsecondary attainment across the state. It is clear that strengthening the collaboration between secondary and postsecondary education is necessary to achieve the ambitious goal of 55 percent postsecondary attainment by 2025. As described in the preceding section, THEC and the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (TSAC) have many existing partnerships with high schools across the state to provide additional support and resources for high school students and their parents throughout the college-going process.

For instance, Path to College events are hosted by high schools and designed to build momentum and excitement around college during a student's junior and senior year of high school. GEAR UP TN aims to expand the college-going culture by providing support services to low-income and first generation students across the state. Similarly, the Advise TN program provides a full-time college advisor to each of 30 underserved high schools. TSAC staff travel to high schools across the state, teaching students about the financial aid available and helping them complete the FAFSA. The SAILS program allows students to complete remedial coursework while still in high school so they are able to enroll in credit-bearing courses when they get to college.

The aforementioned programs (and others not mentioned here) exist not to replace or duplicate the efforts of high school counselors but to enhance the services we provide for students who aspire to attend college. By partnering with high schools, THEC and TSAC are able to reach more students, bridge the gap between secondary and postsecondary education, and ultimately bolster the success of all in pursuit of the Drive to 55.

P20 Connect

Through the development of the P20 Connect statewide longitudinal data system in 2015, Tennessee has expanded its use of data to provide a more comprehensive view of student achievement and the factors that influence it. Multiple data sources are linked to inform stakeholders, guide policymakers, and support data-driven decision making across K-12 and higher education. The data allow for identification of areas where duplication may be present and subsequently minimized. Currently, TDOE, THEC, the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD), and the Department of Children's Services regularly provide data to P20 Connect, and approved research personnel at each agency receive direct access to the database.

Also in 2015, the University of Tennessee's Boyd Center for Business and Economic Research staff partnered with TDLWD to submit a Workforce Data Quality Initiative grant application to the U.S. Department of Labor for the upgrade and expansion of P20 Connect data and dashboards, along with policy research.²⁴ This expansion project was awarded over \$1 million from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2018.

²⁴ For more information about this grant program, please visit the U.S. Department of Labor's website at https://www.doleta.gov/performance/workforcedatagrants_rounds_Archive.cfm



Compatibility of Graduation and Admission Requirements

The requirements for high school graduation are compatible with the admission requirements at Tennessee's public universities. In 2007, Tennessee joined the American Diploma Project network, implementing the Tennessee Diploma Project (TDP) shortly after. Based on the priorities of the TDP, high school graduation requirements were revised to better align with undergraduate admission requirements beginning with the high school graduating class of 2013. Specific high school graduation requirements are included in **Table 2** below.

The admission requirements of TBR require that students have a high school diploma or equivalent. Effective January 1, 2014, TBR agreed to accept the academic standards set by the SBE with the implementation of the 2009 TDP. Admission is granted to freshmen applicants who hold a recognized high school diploma that includes a distribution of college preparatory courses, such as those required in the core elements of the Tennessee High School Diploma (as outlined in **Table 2**). Applicants who hold a high school diploma but graduated prior to the adoption of the TDP curriculum by TBR are exempt from the diploma requirements. Out-of-state applicants are subject to the same admission requirements as in-state applicants.²⁵

Institutions within the TBR system do not have a minimum GPA or ACT score for admission, but TBR requires degree-seeking students with ACT subject scores below 18 in writing or below 19 in reading or math to be placed in learning support for diagnostic assessment and appropriate intervention to develop specific competencies for their chosen field of study.²⁶ Institutions within the University of Tennessee system and the locally-governed institutions determine the minimum required GPA and ACT score for admission at the campus level and may also establish specific placement requirements and placement examination threshold scores.

²⁵ For more information about TBR's admission policies, please visit their website at <https://policies.tbr.edu/policies/admissions#Provisions-for-all-Institutions>

²⁶ For more information about TBR's policy on learning support, please visit their website at <https://policies.tbr.edu/guidelines/learning-support>



Table 2: Tennessee High School Graduation Requirements²⁷

Students Beginning High School Before Fall 2009	Students Beginning High School Fall 2009 or Later
Total credits required: 20	Total credits required: 22
Math: 3 credits Including either Geometry or Algebra II	Math: 4 credits Including Algebra I, II, Geometry, ²⁸ and a fourth higher-level math course
Science: 3 credits Including one Physical Science course and Biology	Science: 3 credits Including Biology, Chemistry or Physics, and a third lab course
English: 4 credits	English: 4 credits
Social Studies: 3 credits	Social Studies: 3 credits Including U.S. History and Geography, World History and Geography, U.S. Government and Civics, and Economics
Wellness: 1 credit	Physical Education and Wellness: 1.5 credits
Elective: 6 credits	Personal Finance: 0.5 credits
	Foreign Language: 2 credits Fine Arts: 1 credit May be waived under certain circumstances to expand the elective focus
	Elective Focus: 3 credits Consisting of Math and Science, Career and Technical Education, Fine Arts, Humanities, Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB), or other locally determined areas of focus

²⁷ The high school graduating class of 2013 was the first cohort to complete these requirements.

²⁸ Integrated Math I, II, and III can be substituted for Algebra I, II, and Geometry to meet the course standards.



Conclusion

In today's increasingly globalized and knowledge-based economy, education is more important than ever before. Recent SBE initiatives, such as the standards review process and its charter authorization role, support the SBE's commitment to ensuring that all Tennessee students are ready for postsecondary education and the workforce. THEC's transitional programs, such as SAILS and the Tennessee Promise, help to bridge academic and financial gaps that would otherwise serve as barriers to postsecondary enrollment and attainment.

Tennessee has made impressive progress toward its education goals, both for Pre-K-12 education and postsecondary education. However, achieving these goals will require continued collaboration among THEC, the SBE, and TDOE. With the support of the Governor and the General Assembly, the aforementioned agencies will work to ensure that Tennessee continues to serve as a national model for education reform and student success.

