Partnering with High Schools to Sell the TBR Experience

SEM Conference

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Session Presenters

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Examining the Current Landscape of College Access and Success
College-Going Rate Over Time

Source: THEC SIS; NSC StudentTracker Data
Racial Disparities Widening

Source: THEC SIS; NSC StudentTracker Data
Statewide Call to Action

Next Step

*Stakeholder engagement process:* THEC convenes and coordinates partners and stakeholders to assess the problem and issues to identify solutions and outline plan of action.

Potential Outputs

- Determine and set big goals.
- Outline core strategies to improve the college-going rate, persistence, and completion.
- Cultivate network of stakeholders for increased collaboration toward common objectives.
- Address opportunities and challenges through policy and programmatic recommendations.
THEC College Access & Success Division

Purpose

To create and implement resources and initiatives to significantly increase the number of Tennessee students who enroll and succeed in higher education.
Direct Service Programs
Funding: $2.4 million in state allocated funds

Overview: college access and capacity building program that assists students with transactional processes that lead to college enrollment

Students: 12,000 junior and senior students at 30 high schools across Tennessee served by 33 full-time, trained college access professionals embedded in partner high schools

Key Feature: School partnership is the key to success.

- Advisors are placed in partner high schools that have articulated their strong commitment to building a college-going culture.
- Schools were selected through a competitive bid process.
- Services are rooted in research and best practices from TN and around the nation.
Schools and Counties Served by Advise TN

High Schools

- Alvin C. York Institute
- Austin East High School
- Bledsoe County High School*
- Brainerd High School
- Cheatham County High School
- Chuckey-Doak High School
- Dickson County High School
- Dyer County High School
- East Hickman High School
- Franklin County High School
- Fulton High School
- Grundy County High School*
- Halls High School*
- Hancock County High School*
- Hickman County High School
- Humboldt Jr. & Sr High School
- Hunters Lane High School
- Jefferson County High School
- Kenwood High School
- Lake County High School*
- La Vergne High School
- Lenoir City High School
- Lincoln County High School
- Mitchell High School
- North Greene High School
- Northwest High School
- Overton High School
- Sequoyah High School
- Van Buren County High School
- White County High School

*These high schools are located in counties identified as economically distressed by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).
Outcomes

**Advising:** In AY 2020-2021, Advise TN advisors held over 22,000 advising sessions with 8,170 seniors.

**FAFSA:** 13 percentage point increase in FAFSA filing as compared to pre-program baseline

**College enrollment:** Increase of 1.4 percentage points over pre-program college-going rate (The state rate declined during this time.)

- Prior to the pandemic, nearly half of Advise TN schools saw an increase of over 5 percentage points in college enrollment. Several schools increased their rate in excess of 15 percentage points.
**Funding:** Competitive US Department of Education grant requiring a dollar-for-dollar state match

**Overview:** State-led, federally-funded initiative that aims to dramatically increase the number of Tennesseans who access and succeed in higher education

**Duration:** GEAR UP grants typically last seven years

**Key Features:** The federal grant funds college access grants to local communities across TN. Additionally, the grant supports much of the College Access and Success Division’s work statewide.
Current grant includes subgrants to 15 sites.

**Schools:** 18 high schools and 31 middle schools
- at least 50% free or reduced-price lunch populations and college-going rate below the state average
- selected through a competitive bid process

**Students:** 6,000 annually - Class of 2023 cohort and high school seniors

**Staff:** Each site hires a site coordinator who dedicates 100% of their time and effort to coordinating grant implementation

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Gear UP TN 1.0
2005 - 2011
$21 million

Gear UP TN 2.0
2012-2019
$29.5 million

Gear UP TN 3.0
2017-2024
$24.5 million
Schools and Counties Served by GEAR UP TN

High Schools

Clinton High School • Bradley Central High School • Campbell County Comprehensive High School • Jellico High School
• Fayette-Ware High School • Haywood High School • Henry County High School • Jackson County High School
• Johnson County High School • Fayetteville High School • Meigs County High School • Whites Creek High School
• Livingston Academy • Copper Basin High School • Polk County High School
• Springfield High School • Kingsbury High School
Outcomes: Cohort Students

GEAR UP TN 1.0 (2005 - 2011)

• Students: 6,164 students from nine school districts
• College Enrollment: 10.7 percentage point increase over baseline

GEAR UP TN 2.0 (2012 - 2019)

• Students: 51,887 students participated in 2,887,007 hours of direct services
• College Enrollment: 10 percentage point increase over baseline
• FAFSA: 17 percentage point increase over the grant comparison group
• College Retention: 70% fall-to-fall retention rate, an eight percentage point increase over the grant comparison group
GEAR UP TN 3.0 (2017 - 2024)

• The current grant’s cohort will graduate in May 2023.

• **Financial Aid:** On average, at least *90 percent* of seniors complete the Tennessee Promise application each year, with *90 percent* of Tennessee Promise applicants also filing a FAFSA by the deadline.

• **Services:** Last year (2020-21), despite pandemic-related school closures, *7,135 students* participated in over *109,000 hours* of direct services.
Since 2005, GEAR UP TN and Advise TN have provided direct services to approximately 130,000 Tennessee students.
Statewide Services
Scaling Effective Practice

Examples

• TN College Application Week/Month
• TN Signing Day
• TN FAFSA Frenzy
• Next Guides
• FAFSA working group
• CollegeForTN.org resources
CollegeForTN.org

Relaunched in Fall 2021

Website Includes:

- Profiles for 77 Tennessee colleges
- 926 career field profiles
- FAFSA filing information and assistance
- Information about all Tennessee financial aid programs
- Student budgeting tools
- Resources for schools and parents
TN Electronic Transcript Exchange

Free electronic transcript services for high schools and colleges

In 2020-2021, Tennessee students sent 43,719 transcripts using the Exchange.

Over 172 participating high schools have registered to send transcripts using the Exchange.

Participation: 47 higher education institutions, representing 79 percent of the students enrolled in postsecondary institutions
Path to College Events

Statewide events designed to create and foster a college-going culture in TN elementary, middle, and high schools

- TN College Application & Exploration Month
- TN FAFSA Frenzy
- TN Signing Day
- TN College and Career Planning Night

700 participating schools
Ideas from the Field

• College orientation during the school year on high school campuses
  • Cleveland State Community College - success coach school visit + Cougar Days. Students leave high school with a schedule and with as many holds resolved as possible.

• Infuse recruitment and application opportunities into dual enrollment courses

• Relationship building between high schools and colleges

• Data sharing between high schools and colleges – who has applied, what is outstanding for enrollment, etc.
Ideas from the Field

• Orient school counselors and college access professionals to campus offerings and student support services available on campus

• Partner with high school to complete key college-going milestones (i.e., FAFSA, financial aid process, etc.)

• Communicate the value proposition for higher education – what do students gain for enrolling and completing

• Choice architecture – sell students on the institutional experience and include a clear, linear course pathway – what course will I take and when? When will I be finished?
Early Postsecondary Opportunities
Leveraging Updated Legislation

• Dual Enrollment Grant (DEG) Expansion
  • Pays tuition and fees for 5 courses and 1296 TCAT clock hours
  • Extends eligibility to students in grade 9 and 10
  • Removes payback provision for DEG courses 6-10
    • Money awarded will not be reduced from their initial HOPE scholarship
  • Lowers DEG renewal GPA to 2.0
    • Class of 2023 students who lost DEG eligibility due to achieving less than a 2.75 DE GPA may have the DEG eligibility status restored this fall
Align HS graduation requirements and TCAT program

Review student eligibility list with counselors

Align HS graduation requirements and DE offerings
"Local high 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."

- Tennessee State Board of Education's High School Policy 2.103
What is SkillsUSA?

SkillsUSA is a partnership of **students**, **teachers** and **industry** working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. We help each student excel. A nonprofit national education association, SkillsUSA serves middle-school, high-school and college/postsecondary students preparing for careers in trade, technical and skilled service (including health) occupations.
SkillsUSA’s Mission & Vision

Mission
SkillsUSA empowers its members to become world-class workers, leaders and responsible American citizens. We improve the quality of our nation’s future skilled workforce through the development of SkillsUSA Framework skills that include personal, workplace and technical skills grounded in academics.

Vision
To produce the most highly skilled workforce in the world, providing every member the opportunity for career success.
SkillsUSA serves more than 372,655 students and instructors annually. This includes 20,598 instructors who join as professional members. Including alumni, SkillsUSA membership totals over 434,000. SkillsUSA has served 13.6 million annual members cumulatively since 1965 and is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Labor as a successful model of employer-driven workforce development.
SkillsUSA Partners

More than 650 business, industry and labor organizations actively support SkillsUSA at the national level through financial aid, in-kind contributions, and involvement of their people in SkillsUSA activities. Many more work directly with state associations and local chapters. Commitment by industry to the annual national SkillsUSA Championships is valued at more than $36 million.
SkillsUSA Programs

SkillsUSA offers local, state and national opportunities for students to learn and practice personal, workplace and technical skills. These three components comprise the SkillsUSA Framework, a blueprint for career readiness. Local chapters conduct a full program of work and many students also attend a district or state conference. At the SkillsUSA Championships, more than 6,500 students compete in more than 100 occupational and leadership skill areas each June. These national technical competitions help establish industry standards for job skill training and entry-level workers.
The High School Connection

• SkillsUSA operates a middle school, high school, and college/postsecondary division.
• SkillsUSA is the only TBR system-wide Career and Technical Student Organization recognized at the high school level.
• In Tennessee, we partner with the high school division to host the annual SkillsUSA State Leadership and Skills Conference.
Contact Us

Thank you for your time!

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