

POSTSECONDARY ATTAINMENT IN TENNESSEE

Key Takeaways

DINNER REMARKS

RESOURCE EXPERT

✉ **Mike Krause**, Executive Director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission & Tennessee Student Accountability Corporation

KEY TAKEAWAYS

■ Across three governors representing both political parties, Tennessee set and has made progress towards an ambitious postsecondary attainment goal through the Drive to 55 initiative. By 2025, at least 55 percent of Tennessean's aged 25-64 years old will have a postsecondary credential.

■ To make progress towards the goal, Tennessee worked to disrupt previously held thoughts about college, especially community college, including who had access and why it was a necessity.

- ▶ This messaging to students and parents was supported by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, local chambers of commerce, non-profit organizations, and others.

■ One of the key programs that has helped in increasing postsecondary attainment is [Tennessee Promise](#).

- ▶ The program offers **high school graduates the opportunity to attend any in-state community college tuition-free after receiving all eligible federal student aid (e.g., Pell Grants).**

▶ In the fall of 2015, the first year of Tennessee Promise, 16, 206 students enrolled at a community college under this program; two years later, 17,782 students were enrolled. The program was estimated to cost \$30 million in that year. A complete report of the program's outcomes can be found in the *Key Resources* section below.

▶ In addition to financial support, the program offers holistic support through [tnAchieves](#). This program provides access to mentors and services on campus to ensure that students have guidance and support while they are pursuing a certificate or degree.

- **tnAchieves mentorship program is staffed entirely by volunteers at no cost to the state and plays a critical role in ensuring completion.**

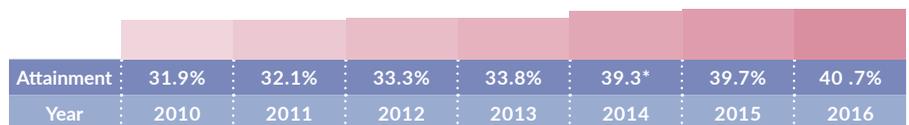
■ **Tennessee Promise is complimented by [Tennessee Reconnect](#), a last-dollar scholarship designed specifically for adult learners.**

▶ The program, similar to TN Promise, requires all students to complete the FAFSA and be a resident of Tennessee, but they must also be independent students and not currently hold an associate or bachelor degree.

▶ The program accepted its first cohort of students in 2018 and enrolled 14,026 students, who were awarded \$31,486,949 in scholarships.

▶ Students who receive the Reconnect scholarship must complete a Success Plan and participate in an advising program.

TENNESSEE'S PROGRESS TOWARDS ITS POSTSECONDARY ATTAINMENT GOAL



Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Attainment	31.9%	32.1%	33.3%	33.8%	39.3*	39.7%	40.7%

* 2014 State and Lumina Foundation begin to include certifications and licenses under postsecondary attainment.

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- Another necessity in this work is collaborating on a **data system that allows schools, parents, students, and employers to be able to track student progress.**
 - ▶ In Tennessee, **the Measure Tennessee Longitudinal Data System links the Tennessee Department of Education, Higher Education Commission, and Department of Labor and Workforce Development to track students from kindergarten into the workforce.**
 - ▶ The data help to identify how individual regions respond to various initiatives and which regions and counties need targeted support to benefit from the state's programs.

ACTION STEPS

- In addition to developing an ambitious goal for postsecondary attainment, states should identify partner government agencies, nonprofits, and other stakeholders to work collaboratively towards the goal. It is also important to include distinct goals for subgroup populations such as Black, Hispanic, and American Indian students, as well as English language learners and students with disabilities.
- In North Carolina, policymakers should identify how myFutureNC can help play a critical role in making similar progress in the state.
- Align K-12, higher education, and workforce development goals to ensure that student and workforce needs are met.
- Create a statewide data system that will allow the state to track and monitor student progress, making it possible to predict and intervene when students are not making progress toward completion. Data should be disaggregated by subgroup populations.
- Consider if the governance structure of your state's higher education system(s) meets the needs and priorities of your students and workforce.

KEY RESOURCES

- [The Master Plan for Tennessee Postsecondary Attainment](#)
- [The Hunt Institute's Issue Brief on Postsecondary Attainment and Governance in Tennessee](#)
- [Tennessee Promise Annual Report 2018](#)

POSTSECONDARY ATTAINMENT IN TENNESSEE

PANEL DISCUSSION - SETTING A VISION FOR ATTAINMENT IN RUTHERFORD COUNTY

RESOURCE EXPERTS

- ✉ **Ms. MC Belk Pilon**, President and Board Chair, The John M. Belk Enowment
- ✉ **Mr. Dan Caldwell**, Senior Manager for Learning Pathways, Nissan North America
- ✉ **Ms. Beth Duffield**, Senior Vice President of Education & Workforce Development, Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce
- ✉ **Dr. Carol Puryear**, Interim President, Tennessee College of Applied Technology - Murfreesboro (TCAT) – Murfreesboro & Vice Chancellor, Economic & Community Development, Tennessee Board of Regents

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **The partnership between the TCAT – Murfreesboro and Nissan was spurred by the needs of industry, Rutherford County, and the support of former Governor Bill Haslam.**
- **The partnership required strategic planning and collaboration by the Tennessee Board of Regents**, who oversees all TCATs, and Nissan North America. The Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce was also engaged as a thought partner in developing outreach and workforce alignment.
 - ▶ These partners played an integral role in outlining the curriculum offered to students, how the partnership would benefit current workers, and how all stakeholders would be involved.
- There is a shared feeling of **responsibility and accountability across the partners for the successes and challenges facing the school and community.**
- **Partnerships like this can be replicated and will depend on local businesses, government agencies, and higher education institutions to come to the table and work together towards success.**

ACTION STEPS

- Encourage local communities to come together to determine workforce needs and existing programs that can support alignment.
- Consider state policies governing course articulation agreements that allow students to transfer credits between community colleges and four-year institutions of higher education within your state.
- Foster collaboration between K-12 entities to align curriculum at the secondary and postsecondary levels to meet local workforce needs.

KEY RESOURCES

- [The Aspen Institute's Report on Community College Transfers](#)
 - ▶ This resource can help support understanding of course articulation agreements, transfer pathways, and state examples of successful community college to four-year transfers.
- [Press Release from The Tennessee Board of Regents](#)