Tennessee

Analyzing the learner continuum in Tennessee.

Tennessee’s focus on postsecondary credential attainment, starting with the Complete College Tennessee in 2010, has helped build momentum and traction in strengthening learner pathways. Leveraging the Drive to 55 as the statewide unifier, Tennessee has pioneered innovative policies such as last dollar/last mile scholarships, statewide dual credit options and co-requisite remediation. However, more work can be done to increase cross-agency alignment and use learner outcomes data in decision-making to ensure quality and equity throughout its pathways.

STRENGTHS

• Tennessee’s last dollar (TN Promise) and last mile (TN Reconnect) programs that support learners financially to seek and earn a postsecondary credential.

• Tennessee’s comprehensive approach to supporting students needing remediation in both high school and postsecondary.

• Tennessee’s statewide transfer articulation agreements to ensure earned credit transfers across institutions.

OPPORTUNITIES

• Establish a cross-agency initiative to identify and promote high-value stackable credentials from K-12 through postsecondary.

• Expand the annual CTE program of study justification process to a full return on investment analysis of secondary and postsecondary offerings for alignment, quality and equitable access.

• Provide greater incentives for employers to engage in work-based learning opportunities.
LEARNER PATHWAYS

*Ensure vertical alignment to workforce needs, robust funding, collaboration across agencies and equitable access for all students.*

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<tr>
<th>K–12</th>
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<tr>
<td>HIGH-QUALITY CTE PROGRAMS</td>
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<td>TARGETED CTE PROGRAM FUNDING</td>
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<tr>
<td>STATE CROSS-AGENCY SHARED PRIORITIES</td>
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**HIGH-QUALITY CTE PROGRAMS**
Align all CTE programs with high-demand, high-skill and high-wage occupations that reflect the state’s economic and workforce priorities. Ensure that these programs feature the academic and technical skills and knowledge learners will need to be successful.

**TARGETED CTE PROGRAM FUNDING**
Dedicate state funding for CTE programs—but only if they are aligned to high-demand, high-skill and high-wage occupations. Target specific funds for pathway completion and demonstrated learner outcomes.

**RETURN ON INVESTMENT ANALYSIS**
Conduct a biennial return on investment (ROI) analysis of CTE programs to assess whether all learners have access to high-demand, high-skill and high-wage pathways. Collect school- and student-level data to evaluate outcomes of CTE programs against established shared metrics for quality and equity.

**STATE CROSS-AGENCY SHARED PRIORITIES**
Establish shared priorities and collective accountability across state agencies and education systems for learner pathway development, supports and success. Ensure that business and industry have a seat at the table and can lead discussions related to demand and training requirements.
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

There is no formal statute in place to address vertically aligned, high-quality state CTE programs of study. Program development and approval occur separately for K–12 and postsecondary.

Tennessee has a long history of supporting CTE. Over the past decade, Tennessee has engaged business and industry to strengthen vertical alignment with postsecondary and workforce and ensure the state standards are reflective of current expectations. Tennessee aligns with the 16 nationally recognized career clusters. At the K–12 level, the state annually reviews the programs of study, comparing the courses to labor and economic development data as well as reviewing postsecondary and certification programs to ensure the programs of study are aligned to state priorities. Tennessee’s vertical alignment and quality programs of study are supported by the Tennessee Pathways Initiative. Tennessee Pathways creates alignment between K–12, postsecondary education and employers so that students have a clear and guided pathway to move seamlessly into the workforce. Tennessee Pathways has nine regional coordinators, who help lead the alignment of local education agencies and employers.

At the postsecondary level, the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) has a separate review and approval process outlined in the Approval of Academic Programs, Units, and Modifications. The Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT) system has industry councils that provide regular feedback and discussion around the skills training and employability of TCAT graduates.

In 2022, Tennessee created an Industry 4.0 diploma distinction. This label identifies students who have earned 9 credits of work-based learning and/or dual-enrollment classes and participated in regular career counseling with a certified career coach. Math and science courses required for graduation might be substituted by work-based learning.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Tennessee can continue to integrate and strengthen the vertical alignment across K–12 and postsecondary, particularly with the community college system, to ensure alignment across the systems and with the state economic and workforce priorities. Postsecondary can continue to increase engagement with industry advisory councils, particularly with the community college system, in reviewing and adding CTE-related credentialed programs.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Delaware – Career and Technical Education Programs
- Texas – Program of Study Initiative

RESOURCES

- TN Perkins V State Plan
- Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) Career Clusters
- Program of Study Justification Process
- Tennessee Pathways
- Tennessee Board of Regents

POLICIES

- TBR Policies 2.01.01.00, Approval of Academic Programs, Units, and Modifications
- TN Code Annotated 49-11-104, CTE
- HB2429 Industry 4.0 diploma
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

In 2022 Tennessee passed the Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement (TISA) Act, which will fund K-12 schools using a weighted student funding formula beginning in 2023-24. TISA includes:

- Direct allocations for CTE based on student enrollment in CTE courses. The amount of direct CTE funding generated for each CTE course enrollment is determined by:
  - the “wage-earning potential” of the CTE program of study (based on demand and wages of aligned occupations);
  - the “year” of the course within the program of study sequence, with higher amounts generated by higher-level courses; and
  - additional consideration of high-cost programs.
- Outcomes-based funding focused on industry-recognized credential attainment. A school will receive 10% of the base for a student who earns a Tier II or Tier III industry credential, and 20% of the base if that student is identified as economically disadvantaged.

Tennessee has a robust history of prioritizing supplemental state CTE funding at the K–12 and postsecondary levels. A few major initiatives include: (1) LEAP Grants to develop employer-driven K–14 career pathways; (2) CTE Equipment Grants for programs aligned with the state’s highest priority sectors; (3) middle school STEM and CTE career exploration grants; and (4) the GIVE Act, which supports regional partnerships to develop postsecondary work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities and provides additional funding for K-12 dual enrollment.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Following TISA implementation, Tennessee can consider evaluating the effectiveness of TISA’s Direct CTE Allocations and Outcomes-Based Funding to ensure that each component of the formula is resulting in the intended student, program and funding outcomes. The state can also consider additional funding strategies that 1) continue the state’s support for the development, implementation, and/or expansion of high-quality, aligned programs—through recurring (rather than one-time) funding; 2) reduce barriers and/or offset costs for students; and/or 3) incentivize longer-term student outcomes such as postsecondary credential/degree attainment, employment, and wage earnings.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Indiana – Funding Methodology
- Ohio – Innovative Workforce Incentive Program
- Texas – House Bill 3

RESOURCES

- LEAP Report
- GIVE
- TDOE CTE Equipment Grant
- BEP Blue Book
- CTE and STEM Start-Up Grants

POLICIES

- TN Code Annotated 49-6-701, LEAP
- Public Chapter No. 966 Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement Act (TISA)
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

There is no formal statute in place to address equitable access to high-quality CTE programs of study, although the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) has implemented an annual review process through a program of study justification.

To ensure that students have relevant options for a career path in the state, the TDOE undertakes an annual review of its programs of study and courses using labor and economic development data and a program and credentials review of the state’s postsecondary program and certificate offerings to determine which programs of study hold continued relevance. Student participation rates by district and school are also collected during this process. Often, the department’s annual program of study justification process results in adjustments to programs of study including changes to course standards or the retiring or adding of new courses or programs of study. The results of the program of study justification process are reviewed by all of the department’s CTE industry advisory councils. There is one industry advisory council per career cluster.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Tennessee can codify in policy the annual CTE programs of study review process and continue to support districts and schools in remaining aligned with the updates and expanding to include postsecondary. Tennessee can ensure that the annual review retains the strong alignment to in-demand, high-skill, high-wage programs of study and promoted industry credentials and that the process includes a review of student access, enrollment and attainment by items such as gender, race, socioeconomic status, disability and region.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Colorado – Return on Investment Reports
- Florida – Executive Order 19-31 and House Bill 7071

(NOTE: While promising, both could be strengthened by more focused analyses on equity and quality of offerings.)

RESOURCES

- Program of Study Justification Process

POLICIES

N/A
Tennessee’s Workforce Development System (TWDS), led by the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, is a consortium of state agencies including the Tennessee Board of Regents, Tennessee Higher Education Commission, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, Tennessee Department of Corrections, Tennessee Department of Human Services, Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE), Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and others. These agencies are charged with executing a cohesive workforce development strategy. Tennessee’s Workforce and Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) plan notes that the TWDS will receive support from a broad-based advisory community that has not been formed yet.

Tennessee developed and submitted a combined Perkins V and WIOA state plan.

Tennessee also has the TN Council for CTE, which includes 15 members appointed by the governor and speakers of the general assembly. The TN Council for CTE advises the TDOE and Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology system in areas such as the state plan; policies on CTE, with particular attention to programs for students with disabilities; and evaluation criteria for CTE and to recommend procedures to ensure and enhance the participation of the public and employers.

The work of the TWDS appears to be in its early stages. The TWDS, including the TN Council for CTE, can consider developing a shared vision and priorities as they pertain to K–12 CTE programs to strengthen the state’s approaches to economic and workforce development with clear stakeholder transparency around their progress.

**PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES**
- Delaware – Advisory Council on Career and Technical Education (DACCTE)
- Indiana – Governor’s Workforce Cabinet
- Washington – Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

**RESOURCES**
- TN Perkins V State Plan
- TN WIOA Plan

**POLICIES**
**POSTSECONDARY ACCELERATION**

Streamline postsecondary learning and empower high school students to earn credit to reduce the time required to earn postsecondary degrees.

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<td>REMEDIATION</td>
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**COLLEGE ACCELERATION**
Provide and incentivize a range of options for learners to earn college credit while in high school. Ensure that all learners have access and financial support to accelerate their journey to a postsecondary credential.

**CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING AND CREDENTIALS**
Implement a consistent state policy for awarding postsecondary program or elective credit for prior learning, work experience and earned industry credentials.

**COLLEGE ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS**
Establish statewide articulation agreements to ensure college credits earned in K–12 or at one institution transfer and count toward a degree at another. Minimize or eliminate credit loss and misalignment for transitioning learners.

**REMEDIATION**
Replace outdated developmental and remedial education with college credit bearing options paired with intensive supports. Adopt co-requisite remediation programs or offer remediation to learners before they graduate high school.
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Tennessee offers eight early postsecondary opportunities (EPSOs): local dual credit, statewide dual credit, dual enrollment, Cambridge International examination, International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, College Level Examination Program and industry certifications. In 2018–19 all K–12 districts were required to offer at least four EPSOs as part of the state’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan. The state’s ESSA ready graduate indicator is the percentage of students scoring 21 or higher on ACT/SAT equivalent exams OR completing four EPSOs OR completing two EPSOs plus earning industry certification OR completing two EPSOs plus scoring a state-determined designated score on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Armed Forces Qualifying Test.

Statewide dual credit is a Tennessee-specific EPSO that was created through the Consortium for Cooperative Innovative Education and is offered at no cost to students. Statewide dual credit classes are college-level courses taught at the high school level by trained high school teachers. Course learning objectives are developed by Tennessee high school and college faculty to ensure alignment with postsecondary standards. All students enrolled in a statewide dual credit course take the online challenge exam, which is used to assess mastery of the postsecondary-level learning objectives. Students who meet or exceed the exam “cut score” receive college credit that can be applied to any Tennessee public postsecondary institution. Additionally, Tennessee has early college high schools across the state.

In 2021, Tennessee increased college acceleration opportunities through two bills. SB 0414 requires a local board of education or charter school governing body to develop and adopt a policy that establishes criteria for students in grades 7 –12 to enroll into available advanced English language arts, mathematics, and science courses. SB0482 increased the number of dual enrollment courses that the state would pay tuition and fees from 2 to 4.

As of 2022, each Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) is required to establish partnerships with each LEA in the county to provide EPSOs for students. This legislation also encourages the board of regents to expand the presence of TCATs throughout the state.

Tennessee’s dual enrollment grant, funded by the Tennessee Lottery, provides funding for one course per semester (and two courses if students meet the HOPE scholarship requirement). The Governor’s Investment in Vocational Education (GIVE) Act increased funding for up to four courses. Students may receive funding for up to 10 courses over their junior and senior year.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Providing additional funding for dual enrollment in the GIVE Act was a strong step toward ensuring that all students are able to access and obtain college acceleration credits while in high school; however, sustained funding across the portfolio of college acceleration opportunities would help ensure greater access for all students. Tennessee can consider providing additional funds for items, such as books, that can be barriers for students. Tennessee can consider including EPSOs and attainment in its annual audit, with a focus on equity to help promote and develop strong programs in underserved areas, schools or student groups within the state. Tennessee can consider evaluating the outcomes of students in early college high schools and work to expand the model, considering implementation of P-Tech schools.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

• Florida – High School Acceleration Programs and Statewide Agreements on Credit
• Idaho – Advanced Opportunities Funding
• Louisiana – TOPS-Tech Early Start Program
• North Carolina – Automatic Enrollment

RESOURCES

• EPSOs
• Tennessee Higher Education Commission Scholarships
• Tennessee Department of Education ESSA Plan

POLICIES

• TN Code Annotated 49-6-414, Early Postsecondary Credit Courses
• TN Code Annotated 49-15-103 49-15-104, Consortium for Cooperative Innovative Education
• TN Code Annotated 49-4-930, Dual Enrollment Grant
• Public Chapter 967, Statewide Dual Credit
• HB1959 and SB2370 TCAT partnerships with LEAs
Credit for Prior Learning and Credentials

STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
Tennessee created Timewise TN (prior learning assessment) so that students can earn credit for what they already know. Through this program, the state allows students to earn credit three ways: credit by examination, credit recommendations for past training and portfolio assessments. Credit by examination includes credit for Advanced Placement, College Level Examination Program, statewide dual credit challenge exams, International Baccalaureate and others. In 2012, a Prior Learning Assessment Task Force drafted and approved prior learning assessment standards to be used by Tennessee institutions of higher education—these standards ensure that institutional requirements are consistent and accessible for all students to earn credits based on prior learning. Additionally, the Tennessee Department of Education established an agreement with the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology on the acceptance of industry certifications earned in high school for credit.

The Tennessee Board of Regents’ Awarding of Credits Earned Through Extra-Institutional Learning to Community Colleges policy authorizes the community colleges to develop procedures for the recognition of equivalent extra-institutional learning processes that include the awarding of credit for Advanced Placement. This results in a variation across the state on what is considered for postsecondary credit.

Passed into law in 2014, the Tennessee Veterans Education Transition Support (VETS) Act establishes a program of recognition for higher education institutions that allocate resources for veterans’ successful transition from military service to college enrollment. An institution receiving VETS Campus certification not only prioritizes outreach to veterans but also successfully delivers the services necessary to create a supportive environment in which student veterans can prosper while pursuing their education. A VETS Campus must create and maintain a process for the assessment of prior learning that grants academic credit to veterans for transferable training and experience attained through services in the armed forces.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
Tennessee can consider standardizing the requirements for extra-institutional learning across community colleges.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
- Colorado – Prior Learning Assessment Credit Policy
- Kentucky – Prior Learning Initiative
- Ohio – Military Strategic Implementation Team

RESOURCES
- Timewise TN
- Servicemember Opportunity Portal

POLICIES
- TN Code Annotated 49-7-1307. Tennessee Veterans Education Transition
- TBR Policy 2.01.00.04. Awarding of Credits Earned Through Extra-Institutional Learning to Community Colleges
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Tennessee Code requires the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) to promote transferability of credits and require all state institutions of higher education to collaborate and develop transfer policies. The THEC is also required to report to the Legislature every year the progress made toward full articulation between all public institutions. To meet the requirements of Tennessee Code, the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR), the University of Tennessee System and the THEC developed a Tennessee Transfer Pathways Program. According to Tennessee statute, a transfer pathway must include 60 hours of instruction that can be transferred toward the requirements of a bachelor's degree. (A student, however, may complete 40 hours and then transfer even if they have not yet earned the two-year degree.) This program created 51 transfer pathways between the state’s community colleges and public universities. Tennessee community colleges and the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology entered into a statewide partnership, created in accordance with TBR policies and procedures, to promote student transfer and program articulation. Tennessee does have a common course number system, which helps streamline transfer articulation.

As noted in the “Credit for Prior Learning and Credentials” section, Timewise TN includes credit by examination, which provides credit for college acceleration such as Advanced Placement, College Level Examination Program, statewide dual credit challenge exams, International Baccalaureate and others. Although some statewide articulation agreements exist, they are not comprehensive.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Tennessee can explore increased flexibility for the transfer pathways, permitting some course deviation (i.e., one to three courses) while allowing the student to maintain the transferable block of courses to the four-year university. Tennessee can consider increasing system to system articulation agreements between secondary and postsecondary statewide for additional college acceleration options.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Florida – Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreements
- Indiana – Core Transfer Library
- Kentucky – Transfer Articulation Agreements

RESOURCES

- Tennessee Transfer Pathways Transfer Admission Guarantee
- THEC Articulation and Transfer in Tennessee Higher Education 2020 Report

POLICIES

- TBR Policies 2.00.01.06, Articulation and Transfer
- TN Education Code 49-7-202, THEC Duties
- TBR. Systemwide Articulation Agreements
- TN Code Annotated 49-7-202(r), THEC Duties
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Tennessee’s Board of Regents (TBR) has pioneered the concept of co-requisite remediation. Co-requisite remediation places students in supplemental learning support classes while also enrolling them in their first credit bearing courses.

TBR has also implemented the Seamless Alignment and Integrated Learning Support (SAILS) program. SAILS targets students who have not achieved college readiness benchmarks by introducing the college developmental curriculum into the senior year of high school. Developed by K–12 teachers and higher education faculty, SAILS embeds the TBR Learning Support competencies into the senior year Bridge Math, helping students to begin their higher education career prepared for credit bearing coursework. SAILS is not in legislation but is a recurring line item in the budget.

The TN Promise Summer Bridge Program is a remediation support for students utilizing Tennessee Promise. The Summer Bridge Program, hosted by the community colleges, is a free three-week program designed to help incoming students start on a more college-ready level, both academically and socially. On the last day of the program, students have a chance to test out of learning support courses at the college they plan to attend.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Tennessee can consider implementing co-requisite remediation in the senior year of high school so that students not only are able to place out of remediation but also can earn college credit. Tennessee can continue to assess the structure and impact of the SAILS program. Research has revealed that while this program has eliminated students’ delay in entering college-level courses, this program has not improved math achievement, nor does it increase the likelihood a student will pass college math.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Georgia – Complete College Georgia
- North Carolina – Multiple Measures of Placement Policy

RESOURCES

- Co-Requisite Remediation
- SAILS
- Summer Bridge Program
- Center for Education Policy Research Evaluation of SAILS

POLICIES

N/A
POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT

Reduce barriers—such as funding, lack of alignment and missed opportunities—to help more students attain postsecondary credentials.

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<tr>
<td>REVERSE TRANSFER CREDENTIALS</td>
<td>Establish a statewide policy to allow students to earn an associate degree while continuing to work toward a bachelor’s degree. Ensure two-year and four-year college credits can be combined toward the credential.</td>
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<td>LAST DOLLAR/LAST MILE FINANCIAL AID</td>
<td>Provide dedicated state financial aid to qualifying learners that fills in gaps in federal assistance (last dollar) and promotes attainment for learners just shy of completing a degree (last mile).</td>
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<td>OUTCOMES-BASED FUNDING</td>
<td>Transition postsecondary funding models from those based on learner enrollment to ones based on learner outcomes. Dedicate more funding to programs and institutions that show demonstrated success in meeting success metrics such as job placement and long-term wage earnings.</td>
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<td>STACKABLE DEGREES AND CREDENTIALS</td>
<td>Define and promote a combination of industry and academic credentials that reflect articulated pathways to advanced learning and employment. Ensure that postsecondary credential programs are widely accessible to all learners and reflect value in the labor market.</td>
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Reverse Transfer Credentials

STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

The Tennessee Reverse Transfer Program is a process that allows transfer students who are currently attending a four-year postsecondary institution to combine four-year college credits with earned community college credits to receive an associate degree. Each spring and fall semester, Tennessee’s two-year and four-year colleges and universities collaborate to notify transfer students if they are eligible to receive their Reverse Transfer associate degree.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Tennessee can consider continuing to strengthen the communication process to encourage more students to opt in to the audit, which identifies if they are eligible. Tennessee can also consider studying the data for student participation by factors such as race, disability and socioeconomic status to help ensure that there is equitable access to the process.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Colorado – Reverse Transfer Process
- Florida – Reverse Transfer Statewide Articulation Agreements
- Texas – Reverse Transfer Process

RESOURCES

- Tennessee Reverse Transfer Program

POLICIES

- TN Code Annotated 49-7-150. Reverse Articulation or Reverse Transfer Agreements
- TBR Policies 2.02.00.02. Reverse Transfer
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
Tennessee provides dedicated funding, through the Tennessee Promise Scholarship, to cover the remaining costs associated with tuition and other required fees for students seeking an associate degree, certificate or diploma from an eligible postsecondary institution; this includes those costs not met already by the Pell Grant, Tennessee HOPE Scholarship or Tennessee Student Assistance Award. To be eligible for the Promise Scholarship, recipients must be Tennessee residents, have recently graduated from high school or received a GED, and enrolled in an eligible postsecondary institution full time in the term immediately following graduation. Recipients must maintain a grade point average of 2.0 and participate in mentoring and community service programs, among other requirements. Students are eligible for this scholarship until a diploma or an associate degree is achieved or the student has been a Tennessee Promise Scholarship student for five semesters.

Tennessee also has a last dollar (last mile) grant—Tennessee Reconnect—for eligible adults. The Tennessee Reconnect grant is available for adults who want to pursue an associate degree, a technical degree or a technical diploma at a Tennessee community college or technical college and have not started or completed requirements for a postsecondary degree. In 2020 Tennessee passed the Financial Aid Simplification for Tennesseans Act, making a student who receives a Reconnect grant immediately eligible for the Tennessee HOPE Non-Traditional Scholarship, which provides students with supplemental funds to cover additional expenses such as housing. (Note: Both the Tennessee Promise and Tennessee Reconnect fall under the statewide umbrella initiative of the Drive to 55 postsecondary attainment goal.)

In 2021, Tennessee passed a new pilot program, the Completion Grants for Tennessee Promise Pilot, to provide emergency funds for items such as childcare, medical, or transportation for students experiencing financial hardship that may prevent them from obtaining a degree or credential.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
Tennessee’s last dollar and last mile programs are pioneers nationally. Tennessee can continue to analyze the outcomes data on student persistence to help drive decision-making on additional student financial supports, such as supplemental funds for books and travel, that fall outside the funds provided for tuition.
Outcomes-Based Funding

STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

The Complete College Tennessee Act, passed in 2010, requires Tennessee public technical colleges, community colleges and four-year universities to be funded based on outcomes, such as student progression, completion and efficiency measures. These measures include student credit hour accumulation, the number of degrees awarded and degrees awarded per 100 full-time equivalent students. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) created a funding formula that uses a three-year average of specified student outcomes. Institutions may receive additional funding through the Quality Assurance Funding by meeting standards for student learning, engagement and access. The state also considers certain at-risk populations, including adult students, students from low-income families and academically underprepared students, and provides premiums for these focus populations’ success.

Outcomes-based funding differentiates its funding models for community colleges and universities. Community colleges and Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology have a job placement metric outcome that they receive funding for in terms of how they grow on that metric each year.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Tennessee can consider continuing to streamline and strengthen the performance-based budgeting data being reported and help create additional incentives for institutions to make the necessary changes to increase their outcomes and alignment to workforce needs.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Missouri – Performance Funding
- Texas – State Technical College Funding Model

RESOURCES

- Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010
- 2020–21 Outcomes-Based Funding Formula Resources
- Comptroller Process Chart
- THEC Policy Manual

POLICIES

- TN Code Annotated 49-7-202, THEC Duties
- Tennessee Department of Education, 2015–20 Outcomes-Based Funding Formula
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Tennessee’s Perkins plan indicates that the Department of Education is planning on working collaboratively across postsecondary and workforce agencies to revise the current statewide promoted student industry certification process and criteria to fully align to increase postsecondary articulation and the ability to earn stackable certifications, credentials and degrees in in-demand, high-skill, high-wage career pathways.

The Tennessee Pathways Certification, a designation for school districts and their partners, recognizes strong alignment between high school programs of study, postsecondary partners and high-quality employment opportunities in each region of the state. The Tennessee Pathways Certification includes the requirement that pathways should provide the opportunity for a student to stack credentials.

Additionally, the THEC is currently piloting technical college credential articulation to a four-year public university.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Tennessee can consider establishing a cross-agency committee that affirms what constitutes stackable credentials from K–12 through postsecondary, including skills retraining certificates. The committee can help ensure that all stackable credentials hold market value in the workforce. Recommendations from the committee would then inform appropriate policy changes or additions to support seamless progression for the student.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Colorado – Stackable Credential Legislation
- Idaho – SkillStack
- Indiana – Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant

RESOURCES

- TN Perkins V State Plan
- Tennessee Pathways Certification

POLICIES

N/A
WORKFORCE READINESS

Ensure the skills, credentials and apprenticeships students pursue help to prepare a strong workforce within the state.

WORK-BASED LEARNING
Establish a statewide K–12 and postsecondary work-based learning program that promotes learning through a series of progressive learner experiences both in the classroom and in a work setting. Provide guidance and support for how education and business and industry collaborate to achieve mutual priorities.

APPRENTICESHIPS
Establish clearly defined program guidance for state-promoted apprenticeships outlining prerequisites, requirements, funding, stakeholder incentives and participant outcomes.

INDUSTRY-VALUED CREDENTIALS
Ensure all industry credentials earned in K–12 or postsecondary are aligned with high-demand, high-skill, high-wage occupations and valued by state and regional employers.

SKILLS RETRAINING/ CREDENTIALING
Identify and promote non-degree programs and credentials that support new, transitioning and displaced learners in career change and advancement. Ensure that supports include funding supports for learners and incentives for participating employers who train or retrain them.
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
Tennessee includes work-based learning at both the K–12 and postsecondary levels. For K–12 the work-based learning framework is codified in state board policy. Tennessee’s work-based learning framework spans elementary to high school and progresses from industry awareness up to and through career preparation and training. In middle school students can take a career awareness elective course, and in high school, they can take a credit bearing capstone course with a required personalized learning plan.

At the postsecondary level, the Tennessee Board of Regents system and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission coordinate the curriculum development and resource materials to support workplace training and placement.

In 2018 Governor Haslam’s Rural Task Force recommended the Work-Based Learning Grants to be awarded to projects that promote community-led work-based learning to improve the career awareness and readiness of students and improve local/regional talent pipelines. These projects could be new or expansions of existing programs. In the first round 29 recipients were awarded, and then a second round was awarded to 10 recipients.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
Tennessee can continue to analyze the data on work-based learning experiences and outcomes to provide appropriate supports to enhance equity in the offerings and experiences.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
- Delaware – Work-Based Learning Practicum
- Georgia – Work-Based Learning Framework
- Rhode Island – PrepareRI Work-Based Learning Navigator

RESOURCES
- Work-Based Learning
- Work-Based Learning Grant
- Tennessee Rural Task Force

POLICIES
- State Board Policy 2.103, Work-Based Learning Framework
- TN Code Annotated 49-7-1205, Labor Education Alignment Program Curriculum and Materials
Apprenticeships

STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
Apprenticeship TN is a statewide initiative led by the Tennessee Workforce Development System and developed to create a greater awareness of apprenticeship opportunities for employers and workers in every area of Tennessee. TWDS is a consortium of state agencies (Tennessee Board of Regents, Tennessee Higher Education Commission, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, Tennessee Department of Corrections, Tennessee Department of Human Services, Tennessee Department of Education, Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and others). Tennessee also established an Office of Apprenticeships, with three regional directors. These directors work directly with employers, communities, associations and organizations to develop and implement new programs.

Under Apprenticeship TN, the state also supports a youth apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship program. Youth apprenticeship is a learning system that prepares students for work by giving them a combination of classroom instruction and paid on-the-job training. In this education model, students obtain a set of well-defined occupational abilities by learning concepts in the classroom and applications in a work setting. The Tennessee program is designed for individuals ages 16 to 24 and is part of a registered apprenticeship program. A youth apprenticeship can be either full time or part time and is a paid position. A pre-apprenticeship program is coursework or training designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a registered apprenticeship program. Once the participant completes the pre-apprenticeship program, they typically have the opportunity to interview for a registered apprenticeship program. A pre-apprenticeship program, by definition, has a documented partnership with at least one registered apprenticeship program. Pre-apprenticeships are not paid positions.

In 2021, Tennessee strengthened their registered apprenticeship programs by requiring each public high school to designate an apprenticeship program contact that is responsible for serving as the point of contact for students, families, and the apprenticeship programs with the high school.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
To build on its steady progress, Tennessee can consider establishing a scholarship program for students who are in registered apprenticeship programs for reimbursement of tuition, books, required tools and other approved expenses required for participation in the program.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
• Iowa – Earn and Learn
• Kentucky – Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky and Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship
• New Jersey – Apprenticeship Network
• South Carolina – Apprenticeship Carolina

RESOURCES
• Apprenticeship TN

POLICIES
• TN Code Annotated 62-76-201. Apprenticeship Training
• HB 842 Apprenticeship Training Contact
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
The Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) works cross-agency to develop a list of promoted student industry certifications, but it has not codified them in policy. In Perkins V, TDOE outlines the goal of working to increase alignment with postsecondary on stackable credentials.

Annualy, multiple Tennessee state agencies work together to align the review process and create common criteria to recognize industry certifications and credentials across Tennessee’s education and workforce systems. Each credential must be aligned with a recognized program of study, and all promoted industry credentials are aligned with postsecondary and employment opportunities. Each credential is reviewed and assigned to one of three tiers. Tier I—Recognized is the minimal level at which an industry certification can be promoted statewide. If an industry credential does not get approved, it can be reviewed for local alignment and approved for use in an individual district.

Additionally, Tennessee has undertaken the process of developing Tennessee-specific credentials for program areas that do not have nationally recognized credentials but are important sectors in Tennessee. The TDOE Division of College, Career and Technical Education established the Tennessee Specific Industry Certification (TSIC) Key Partners advisory council, which includes industry, governmental, professional, and both secondary and higher education partners to serve as key leaders who are instrumental in driving industry advancement. Tennessee has created certifications in Animal Science, Dietetics and Nutrition, Horticulture Science, and Human and Social Sciences in the 2017–18 academic school year.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
According to ExcelinEd’s research with Burning Glass for CredentialsMatter.org, in 2017–18, just 31 percent of industry credentials earned by Tennessee K–12 students were asked for by employers and were associated with occupations that pay at least $15 per hour. Tennessee’s annual review process can continue to be a collaborative review process, with strong input from employers to ensure that promoted credentials fully align to workforce demand and are valued. Additionally, Tennessee can continue to monitor student participation and pass rates across local education agencies to address equitable access concerns regarding the attainment of credentials of value.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
- Indiana – Promoted Industry Certifications
- Kentucky – Valid Industry Certifications
- Louisiana – Industry-Based Certification State Focus List

RESOURCES
- 2018–19 Approved List of Tennessee Promoted Industry Certifications
- Tennessee Promoted Student Industry Certifications FAQ
- TSIC Resources
- Tennessee Promoted Student Industry Credentials

POLICIES
N/A
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

The Tennessee Reconnect grant is a last-dollar grant that pays the remaining balance of tuition and mandatory fees after other state and federal financial aid have been applied. The Tennessee Reconnect grant is available for eligible adults who want to pursue an associate degree, a technical degree or a technical diploma at a Tennessee community college or technical college.

The Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT) programs have a warranty. The warranty guarantees that students who have earned an associate of applied science degree, diploma or technical certificate of credit from a Tennessee Board of Regents college have the competencies needed to perform critical work functions identified in the program of study. If a student is unable to perform one or more of the trained competencies, the TCAT will retrain the student at no cost to the student or the student’s employer.

The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development offers grants to employers to provide on-the-job, incumbent worker and apprenticeship training. Additionally, Tennessee has the Skill Up program, which provides training and employment services to eligible Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program participants.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

TCAT warranty is a great step in ensuring that the education students are receiving is aligned with workforce needs. Tennessee can consider expanding and promote counseling services to ensure that the skills retraining is the best fit for the individual and provides the greatest opportunities.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Indiana – Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant
- Ohio – TechCred
- Washington – Worker Retraining Program

RESOURCES

- TN Reconnect
- Department of Labor and Workforce Development Training Program
- TCAT Warranty
- Skill Up

POLICIES

- TN Code Annotated 49-4-944, Tennessee Reconnect Grant
EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

*Incentivize workforce engagement in student pathways and reduce the barriers that keep employers from participating.*

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INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT INCENTIVES

Establish, sustain and promote a comprehensive set of industry and employer engagement incentives for supporting education to workforce pathways. Incentives may include grant funds, tax credits, or local and regional support services.

LEGAL BARRIERS

Remove or lessen legal barriers such as liability insurance, workers’ compensation and worksite age restrictions to provide more learners with work-based learning opportunities.
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

The Qualified Work-Based Learning Grant was found in statute, but no information could be found on if the grant was actually funded or disseminated. In the statute the Tennessee Higher Education Commission is charged to administer a qualified work-based learning grant program to incentivize employer participation in work-based learning for $5,000 per employer in any calendar year.

Additionally, in 2019 the Department of Economic and Community Development had a work-based learning grant that awarded up to $25,000 to new or established projects promoting community-led work-based learning. This work was part of a recommendation from Governor Haslam’s Rural Task Force.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Tennessee can consider providing more expansive financial incentives or tax credits for employers to engage in work-based learning placements. This could include the hiring of students participating in a formal work-based learning program or funding reimbursement for employers who train, hire and retain new or incumbent workers to fill in-demand positions within recognized job fields.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Georgia – Work-Based Learning Premium Credit
- Indiana – Next Level Jobs Employer Training Grant
- Iowa – Tax Credit

RESOURCES

- Work-Based Learning Grant
- Tennessee Rural Task Force

POLICIES

- TN Code Annotated 49-11-903. Qualified Work-Based Learning Grant
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

It is required in policy that each local education agency (LEA) implementing a work-based learning program maintains student accident insurance coverage. The Department of Education, in coordination with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the Bureau of Workers’ Compensation, and the Department of Economic and Community Development, makes information available to employers and LEAs on applicable wage and hour laws, child labor laws, safety and health laws, workers’ compensation, accident insurance, and liability insurance.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Tennessee can consider implementing policies to reduce legal barriers for employers engaging in K–12 and postsecondary worksite-based learning. The state can consider a partnership with an external third-party company to employ work-based learning students who are then placed at businesses. This helps to reduce many of the burdens such as workers’ compensation liability and other restrictions. Tennessee can also consider allowing public schools to purchase certain insurance coverage for the benefit of businesses and students participating in CTE programs and provide for some immunity from liability of certain public school students participating in these programs.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

• Kentucky – Apprenticeship Programs & Partnerships
• Rhode Island – Work Immersion Training Grant
• Texas – Insurance Coverage

RESOURCES

N/A

POLICIES

• TN Code Annotated 49-11-902. Maintenance of Student Accident Insurance Coverage—Making Information Available to LEAs and Employers
DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

To ensure the strength of all the other policies, there must be cross-sector agreement on outcomes, strategies to get there and data to track progress.

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<td>STATE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM</td>
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PROGRAM QUALITY MEASURES
Establish shared statewide definitions and measures for quality of and success in education to workforce pathways. Ensure these shared priorities extend across agencies and systems and inform decisions about program offerings, funding and outcomes.

STATE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM
Ensure the state’s cross-agency data system collects and reports on data needed to evaluate education workforce programs against shared metrics for quality and success. Data should span agencies and education systems and into the workforce to inform decision-making and drive outcomes.
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
Tennessee’s cross-agency credentials goal is known as the Drive to 55. The initiative, and its many layers, is designed to get 55 percent of Tennesseans equipped with a college degree or certificate by the year 2025. Using data from the graduating class of 2016, the Tennessee Department of Education along with Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the Governor’s Office created the Drive to 55: Pathways to Postsecondary report to share back with districts. The report included postsecondary enrollment by student group, academic achievement, coursework and program of study alignment. Through the creation of the report the participating agencies worked together to identify the central data elements to support and track to drive toward the state’s postsecondary attainment goal.

Tennessee requires DoE to submit a report on the high school graduation rate and to annually report on the state report card information related to state, LEA, and school level indicators of postsecondary readiness by graduating class. (SB 1340)

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
Tennessee can consider renewing the statewide attainment goal with a focus on historically underserved student groups and narrowing gaps between students of color and white students. Tennessee can continue to articulate what metrics are being tracked and the progress toward the attainment goal. Outcomes can annually be reported back to districts and postsecondary institutions to utilize in decision-making.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
- Colorado – Talent Pipeline Report
- Indiana – Governor’s Workforce Cabinet
- Rhode Island – PrepareRI

RESOURCES
- Drive to 55
- Drive to 55: Pathways to Postsecondary Report

POLICIES
N/A
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

The Measure Tennessee Longitudinal Data System (TLDS) is Tennessee’s public education state longitudinal data system governed by the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE). The TLDS, created for the purpose of collecting and analyzing Tennessee public education data at the individual, course, institution and system levels, aggregates data records from the breadth of the Tennessee public education systems. Tennessee partner agencies initially included the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, TDOE, and Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Since then, partners have expanded to include the Department of Human Services, Department of Economic and Community Development, and Department of Children’s Services.

In 2012, the Tennessee House of Representatives introduced House Bill 212, which allowed sharing of data between state agencies for required evaluation imposed by state or federal law. It also allowed sharing of data for research questions approved by the Tennessee P–20 Council. (Note: This information was obtained from a supplemental website. No policy could be found, and it is unclear if the P–20 Council still exists.)

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Tennessee can consider strengthening the P–20 system connection points so an individual student can be followed to and through postsecondary and into the workforce and leveraging the data in decision-making across stakeholders.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Colorado – Talent Pipeline Report
- Florida – Talent Development Council
- Kentucky – KYStats

RESOURCES

- TLDS Original Memorandum of Understanding
- Education Commission of the States TLDS Profile

POLICIES

N/A