



# Tennessee Commission on Education Recovery and Innovation

February 11, 2022

# Today's goals and agenda

## We have two primary goals for our time together today:

- 1) Further align on the success metrics to offer to the General Assembly
- 2) Drive toward initial decisions about recommendations to include in the Year 3 report

### Friday, February 11

Start	Activity	Facilitator
9:00	Gaveling, roll call, business items	Chair Tara Scarlett
9:05	Goals, agenda, and Year 3 overview	Ms. Jennifer Schiess
9:15	Legislative session updates	Chair Tara Scarlett
9:45	Propel America: The Jobs-First Higher Education Model	Mr. Paymon Rouhanifard
10:35	ExcelinEd: How State Policies Build a Skilled, Educated Workforce	Ms. Adriana Harrington and Ms. Sarah Bishop-Root
11:25	Western Governors University: The Pathways to Opportunity are Paved with Skills	Dr. Kimberly K. Estep, Ms. Kacey Thorne, Mr. Darin Hobbs
12:15	Lunch	
12:35	Policy ideas + success metrics discussion	Ms. Jennifer Schiess, Dr. Paul Beach
2:55	Closing + next steps	Ms. Jennifer Schiess
3:00	Adjourn	Chair Tara Scarlett

# Review of where we've been and the plan for where we're going during the rest of Year 3

May 14 meeting

Independent work

July 7-8 meeting

Independent work

August 16 meeting  
(September 2)

Independent work

November 5 meeting

December 3 meeting

In Year 2, between May and December 2021, we alternated between:

- Meetings focused on gathering input from guests and engaging in substantive discussion.
- Independent work periods focused on reviewing shared materials on topics of interest, one on one conversations, and feedback opportunities.

That work culminated in ERIC's Year 2 report, released in December 2021.

# Our workplan for Year 3 follows a similar cadence, with the addition of a potential site visit, culminating in a final report

<b>February 11 Meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Discuss content and recommendations related to remaining topic areas</li><li>● Guest speakers on innovation, workforce readiness, &amp; postsecondary pathways</li></ul>
Independent work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Bellwether creates preliminary framework for the Year 3 report; gathers feedback from commissioners</li><li>● Bellwether tracks the legislative session and updates commissioners</li></ul>
<b>March 4 Meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Finish content discussion from February meeting</li><li>● Align on framework for Year 3 report</li></ul>
Independent work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Bellwether creates preliminary Year 3 outline</li><li>● Follow-up 1:1s with commissioners</li><li>● Bellwether tracks the legislative session and updates commissioners</li></ul>
Potential site visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Optional site visit to K-12 and/or community college settings (date TBD)</li></ul>
<b>April 29 Meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Discuss content/recommendations related to school choice; Finalize recommendations</li><li>● Finalize Year 3 report outline</li></ul>
Independent work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Bellwether drafts the Year 3 report; gathers 1:1 feedback; and revises report</li><li>● Bellwether tracks the legislative session and updates commissioners</li></ul>
<b>June 10 Meeting (Final)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Discuss feedback and make final revisions to the Year 3 report</li><li>● Adopt the Year 3 report</li></ul>

# Legislative session update

# Legislative Updates 1/2

Bill Number	Sponsors	Aim	Priority Alignment	Status
HB 2300 SB 2328	Rep. Kirk Haston (R)  Sen. Joseph Hensley (R)	<b>Early graduates counted for LEA attendance:</b> high school student who graduates early will be counted as enrolled in LEA for the remainder of school year for budget allocation purposes.	Strengthen alignment across the K-12, postsecondary, and workforce systems	<b>2/7/22 - HB 2300</b> assigned to K-12 Subcommittee  <b>2/3/22 - SB 2328</b> referred to Senate Education Committee
HB 2057 SB 2181	Rep. John Ragan (R)  Sen. Ferrell Haile (R)	<b>Literacy Success Act annual report:</b> "requires the department of education to produce an annual report concerning the efficacy of training on reading instruction provided by educator preparation providers; requires revocation of state approval for educator preparation providers that fail to meet certain standards."	Ensure students master literacy and numeracy skills	<b>2/2/22 - HB 2057</b> assigned to Education Instruction Subcommittee <b>2/3/22 - SB 2181</b> referred to Senate Education Subcommittee
HB 1863 SB 2578	Rep. Tandy Darby (R) (and 7 others)  Sen. Rusty Crowe (R)	<b>School nurses and counselors:</b> increases BEP funded, full-time public school nurses from previous 1:3000 student ratio to 1:750; BEP formula for FT counselors at a ratio of 1:250 students or one full-time counselor per LEA, whichever is greater.	Equip schools and districts to address students' well-being needs	<b>1/25/22 - HB 1863</b> assigned to K-12 subcommittee  <b>2/7/22 - SB 2578</b> referred to Senate Education Subcommittee
SB 2369 HB 1964	Sen. Jon Lundberg (R)  Rep. Tim Rudd (R) (and 6 others)	<b>Virtual Learning Drills/EPP/materials:</b> "requires LEAs to conduct virtual learning drills; requires that educator preparation providers provide instruction on skills to administer virtual instruction to candidates seeking licensure to teach; requires LEAs to adopt, and the textbook commission to recommend for adoption, textbooks and instructional materials that are electronically accessible."	Optimize capacity for flexible, high-quality school options	<b>2/3/22 - SB 2369</b> referred to Senate Education Subcommittee  <b>1/28/22 - HB 1964</b> assigned to Education Instruction Subcommittee

# Legislative Updates 2/2

Bill Number	Sponsors	Aim	Priority Alignment	Status
HB 1948	Rep. Tim Hicks (R)	<b>TCAT programs for high school students:</b> requires THEC to administer TN Tech middle HS program for students who want to receive "a high school diploma and a certificate from an eligible postsecondary institution upon graduation from high school; revises various requirements for dual enrollment grants to allow students participating in the program to receive a grant for each eligible postsecondary course."	Redesign high school to ensure students have access to flexible pathways to college and career	<b>1/28/22 - HB 1948</b> assigned to Higher Education Subcommittee
HB 1865	Rep. Glen Casada (R)  Rep. Scott Cepicky (R)	<b>High school course test out:</b> "requires LEAs to offer high school students high school credit for a course in which the student is not enrolled but for which the student has satisfied the course requirements through an examination - Amends TCA Title 49."	Redesign high school to ensure students have access to flexible pathways to college and career	<b>2/8/22 - HB 1865</b> deferred to 2/22/22 in Education Instruction Subcommittee
HB 2115 SB 2531	Rep. Rick Eldridge (R) plus 6 others  Sen. Ferrell Haile (R) and 6 others	<b>Dual admissions to a 2-year and public university:</b> "removes the geographic or programmatic considerations when THEC adopts a dual admissions policy in which a person who satisfies the admissions requirements of a two-year institution governed by the board of regents and a public university while pursuing a degree program within a transfer pathway program of study is authorized to be admitted to both such institutions"	Redesign high school to ensure students have access to flexible pathways to college and career	<b>2/7/22 - HB 2115</b> assigned to Higher Education Subcommittee  <b>2/7/22 - SB 2531</b> referred to Senate Education Committee
SB 1674 HB 1671	Sen. Mike Bell (R) Sen. Todd Gardenhire (R)  Rep. Mike Curcio (R) +2	<b>School Vouchers:</b> As introduced, , "extends eligibility for an education savings account to students zoned to attend a school in an LEA that, at any time during the three-year period immediately preceding September 1, 2025, or thereafter, did not offer students 180 days of in-person learning each school year due to COVID-19" or <i>[removed mask mandate school language]</i>	school choice (potentially)	<b>1/19/22 - SB 1674</b> recommended for passage with amendments; refer to Senate Calendar Committee <b>1/12/22 - HB 1671</b> assigned to Education Instruction Subcommittee

**Paymon Rouhanifard,  
Propel America**



**Sarah Bishop-Root and  
Adriana Harrington,  
ExcelinEd**

**Dr. Kimberly Estep, Kacey Thorne,  
and Darin Hobbs  
Western Governors University**

**Success metrics**

# Commissioners decided in Nov/Dec of 2021 to create metrics to help measure the success of any adopted recs

During ERIC's November 2021 meeting, commissioners discussed the need to provide legislators with metrics to support them in measuring the success of any of the adopted recommendations. During the December 2021 meeting, commissioners decided to identify a set of metrics aligned to each of the nine priority areas identified in the Year 2 report.

**Based on guidance from commissioners, Bellwether drafted a set of metrics that are:**

- manageable in number at 14.
- ambitious and achievable.
- aligned to the nine priority areas.
- connected to existing data sources for establishing baseline data.

**In January and early February, Bellwether held 1:1 interviews with every commissioner to gather feedback on the success metrics. We asked commissioners:**

- what metrics they felt strongly about including or excluding from the Year 3 report.
- if there were any metrics not tied to the priority areas that they want to include.
- if they felt strongly about the number and structure of the metrics themselves.
- if they wanted to revise any specific metrics.

**In the following slides we summarize the high-level feedback from commissioners and with respect to specific success metrics.**

# We've interviewed every commissioner to discuss the success metrics, the learning agenda, and the Y3 report

Below is the feedback we heard from commissioners on the success metrics

- **Coverage**

- Review the metrics to ensure we cover all the priorities adequately.

- **Adding in new recommendations or evaluate certain policy issues**

- Add more recommendations around innovation (from the January 2022 content module).
- Elevate teacher recruitment, retention, and development.
- More directly measure students' preparedness for college and careers.
- Include more metrics tied to outcomes aligned to TCATs.

- **Structure**

- Apply an equity lens to the metrics because taking the universal approach could lead to the exacerbation of inequities across student groups.
- Move up the deadline in some cases to some year earlier than 2030, which may be particularly relevant with broadband and remediation metrics.
- Indicate what government agency is responsible for each individual metric.
- Attach interim or process measures to some metrics.
- Use a theory of change model to present the metrics and recommendations (e.g., if the legislature passes X, Y, and Z they will meet this metric).

# Success metrics (slide 1 of 2)

Priority	Draft success metrics
Ensure students master literacy and numeracy skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Growth in percent of third graders scoring proficient in reading on the TNReady outpaces state accountability targets every year with no gaps by race/ethnicity, income, disability, or status as an English learner, with the goal of 100% proficiency by 2030</li> <li>2. Growth in percent of eighth graders scoring proficient in math outpaces state accountability targets every year with no gaps by race/ethnicity, income, disability, or status as an English learner, with the goal of 100% proficiency by 2030</li> </ol>
Address learning remediation and acceleration needs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. By 2030, the percentage of first-time freshmen attending community colleges requiring remediation in one or more subjects will decrease by half</li> <li>4. By 2030, Tennessee will reach a 95% four-year adjusted cohort high school graduation rate across all subgroups of students</li> </ol>
Strengthen, retain, expand, and diversify the state's education professionals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. By 2030, Tennessee will retain a larger share of its highly effective teachers (those rated Levels 4 or 5) than its less effective teachers (those rated Levels 1, 2, or 3) statewide and across districts with no gaps based on school geography or student population</li> <li>6. By 2030, the percentage of educators who identify as people of color will double</li> </ol>
Equip schools and districts to address students' well-being needs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. By 2030, 100% of schools will be fully funding support staff (i.e., nurses, school counselors) in line with recommendations outlined in the BEP</li> </ol>

## Success metrics (slide 2 of 2)

Priority	Draft success metrics
Optimize capacity for flexible, high-quality school options	8. By 2030, 100% of schools will have the broadband access and device capacity necessary to support their students in a virtual capacity
Redesign high school to ensure students have access to flexible pathways to college and career	9. By 2030, the percentage of high school graduates ready for postsecondary and career will double 10. By 2030, more than half of all high school students will participate in at least one early postsecondary opportunity (EPSO) with no gaps across student subgroups
Streamline postsecondary systems to facilitate lifelong learning	11. By 2025, 55% of Tennesseans will hold a postsecondary degree or certificate 12. By 2030, Tennessee will close the skills gap for in-demand jobs
Strengthen alignment across the K-12, postsecondary, and workforce systems	13. By 2030, Tennessee's K-12, postsecondary, and workforce systems will be aligned on which agency is accountable for the goals outlined here and will have a process in place to track progress
Incentivize locally led innovation	14. By 2030, Tennessee's innovation hub will have provided at least \$X million in grants to districts, schools, and/or educators to support local innovation

# Policy ideas discussion



# As a reminder, last July we aligned on a framework for whether an option or idea should be included, refined, or eliminated

We asked you for suggestions on criteria. This is what you said....

1. **Scale of impact** → how many students/people are affected?
2. **Equity of impact** → which students/people are affected? how are students/people furthest from opportunity benefitting?
3. **Evidence base** → what does research tell us about the idea? exemplars from other places?
4. **Innovation** → leave room for a lower evidence threshold and new ideas (not contraindicated by evidence? consider any guardrails?)
5. **Policy feasibility** → is this something that policy can reasonably address?
6. **Political feasibility** → is this something that we can envision as politically possible?
7. **Practical feasibility** → can the idea be implemented?
8. **Necessity** → is the idea additive to what's already in place?
9. **Cost** → does the idea meet some threshold of reasonableness in terms of cost?
10. **Timeline of impact** → does the idea address an immediate or short-term challenge? does it contribute to long-term goals?
11. **Measurability** → can we track impact? can we know it's working?
12. **Accountability** → what structures are in place to ensure high-quality implementation?

**Are these still the right criteria for whether a policy recommendation should be included in the final report? What criteria should be added, removed, or revised?**

# We've structured the rest of this afternoon around the four content modules that commissioners received in January

## We'll follow a similar format for each content module we discuss:

- Where is there already considerable alignment among commissioners on this topic (based on [survey data](#))?
- What questions or concerns need to be raised and discussed?
- On which recommendations is there emerging alignment among commissioners?
- Where can we address questions to determine which recommendations are on and off the table?

## Next steps

- Identify clear next steps for moving forward:
  - Are there pieces the commission is ready to vote on?
- Take preliminary votes on additional recommendations as needed, based on today's discussion.

## Commissioners received the following content modules in January 2022

1. Innovation
2. Postsecondary course options
  - Hybrid learning
  - Core curriculum requirements
  - Non-degree credentials
3. Secondary-postsecondary transition
4. School accountability
5. Curriculum
6. Teacher compensation and benefits
  - Teacher compensation
  - Teacher retirement benefits

We have a lot to cover today, so we're going to do our best to keep us moving productively toward consensus. If we're getting bogged down, we'll move on and revisit that topic during the March 4th ERIC meeting.

# Innovation

Potential Policy Recommendations	Yes	Maybe	No
Revise the existing iZone legislation beyond the state’s lowest performing schools to allow districts to create networks based on other criteria (e.g., high-performing schools, schools with particular focus areas such as STEM).	4	4	1
Create new grant opportunities focused on innovation (e.g., postsecondary transitions, early literacy and math).	9	0	0
Create an office of innovation within TDOE to serve as the “innovation hub” recommended in the Year 2 report.	5	2	2
Provide funding to support the launch of an education-focused accelerator.	6	0	3

# Postsecondary course options: Hybrid education

Potential Policy Recommendations	Yes	Maybe	No
Recommend a review of TBR and state university system hybrid programs and courses to determine which institutions are offering them, evaluate their value to students and faculty, and identify how the state can best support hybrid learning.	7	2	0
Access previous partnerships between EdX and University of Tennessee programs to evaluate how those programs or courses were received by students, and what lessons could be learned.	6	2	1
Identify an established online provider such as EdX to develop a pilot program in partnership with one or more public Tennessee universities and/or colleges, ideally in a high-demand career area.	6	1	2

# Postsecondary course options: Core curriculum requirements

<b>Before considering potential policy recommendations, commissioners were asked the following:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Maybe</b>	<b>No</b>
Do you believe the current TBR and University of Tennessee general (core) education requirements are aligned with producing well-educated individuals prepared for life and citizenship?	1	7	1
<b>If they answered yes or maybe, commissioners considered the following recommendations:</b>			
Add a “first year experience”-type course to help support students as they transition to postsecondary.	4	2	2
Add courses such as computing or coding that are aligned to the skills needed in many in-demand jobs.	5	2	1
Add courses such as foreign languages that are aligned to the needs of an increasingly globalized world.	3	2	3
The state should reassess the balance of credits in the TBR system (e.g., currently, 9 of the 41 required credits in the TBR system are in the field of communications, while just 3 are in math. Is that the right balance?).	5	2	1

# Postsecondary course options: Non-degree credentials

Potential Policy Recommendations	Yes	Maybe	No
Recommend that the work of THEC, TDOE, and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development is aligned to avoid duplicating efforts and to ensure youth and adults seeking quality non-degree credentials are provided with consistent information.	9	0	0
Ensure that the agencies tasked with tracking non-degree credentials are collecting adequate data including industry trends, outcomes, and individual demographics.	9	0	0
Ensure that the agencies tasked with overseeing non-degree credentials develop partnerships with organizations outside of higher education that offer non-degree credentials as well as those that provide technical assistance and implementation support.	8	1	0

# Secondary-postsecondary transitions

Potential Policy Recommendations	Yes	Maybe	No
Create a separate high school course that focuses exclusively on content related to postsecondary transitions (e.g., application and financial aid processes, selecting programs and career paths) and potentially results in one postsecondary credit.	5	2	2
Adopt and implement a program that includes content related to postsecondary transitions (e.g., application and financial aid processes, selecting programs and career paths) and operates after school, during the summer, or during school breaks.	5	3	1
Embed transition content into an existing, required high school course (e.g., civics).	4	1	4
State partners with and/or incentivizes districts to partner with nonprofit organizations to provide postsecondary transition services to students (e.g., FAFSA completion support, mentorship programs).	4	3	1
Strengthen the individualized learning plan process to include deliberate postsecondary and career planning aspects.	8	1	0
Use the senior year capstone structure to provide transition planning.	4	4	1

# School accountability

We asked commissioners for their interest in revisiting a recommendation related to A to F and/or accountability	Yes	Maybe	No
Should commissioners consider a recommendation related to implementation of Tennessee's A-F accountability system and communicating with parents and stakeholders about what the ratings mean and how to use them?	6	2	0
Potential Policy Recommendations	Yes	Maybe	No
Create a different measure of school quality and success from that currently in Tennessee's ESSA. Examples of other potential indicators include suspension or expulsion rates, ratings of school safety, access to effective career guidance and counseling, or teacher attrition, retention, and mobility.	4	4	1
Consider other changes the state could make within its approach to federal accountability requirements under ESSA, which could include one, some, or all of the following: changes to the type of standardized testing the state uses to assess students and schools; adjustments to how the state identifies schools for comprehensive, targeted, and additional support; any other state-level choice where ESSA provides flexibility and discretion.	3	4	2



# Curriculum

Potential Policy Recommendations	Yes	Maybe	No
Develop common definitions of high-quality curriculum and objective rubrics to evaluate materials.	9	0	0
Incentivize districts to use the highest-rated materials.	8	1	0
Increase curriculum-based professional development.	9	0	0

# Teacher compensation and benefits

Potential Policy Recommendations	Yes	Maybe	No
Reinstate statewide financial support for hiring and retention bonuses for teachers in hard-to-staff positions and low-performing schools.	9	0	0
Direct the Tennessee Department of Education and Tennessee Higher Education Commission and Student Assistance Corporation to better communicate loan forgiveness and fellowship opportunities on their websites.	7	2	0
Update data collection process and guidance around differentiated pay.	6	3	0
Increase interest credit on early withdrawal.	5	2	2
Increase alternatives for retirement options.	7	1	1
Increase portability of the defined benefit (DB) component of the plan.	6	2	1
Decrease the teacher vesting period to three years.	4	2	3

**Next steps**

**Adjourn**

# Appendix

# During 1:1 interviews, commissioners generally agreed on the overall direction and format for the final report

## Bellwether heard during 1:1 calls with commissioners that the Y3 report should:

- Begin with **framing around the purpose of the commission, its vision, and its charge**
- **Be shorter** than the Y2 report
- **Stand alone** from the Y2 report
- Provide a **short recap of the Y2 priorities** and a **discussion of any legislative actions** related to those priorities and corresponding recommendations
- **Include fewer policy recommendations** (i.e., describe the Y2 recommendations that have been revised and any new recommendations that come from the Y3 ERIC meetings)
- **Be forward looking** and make strong recommendations for the high-level areas of focus that the state needs to address in order for these recommendations to be realized
- **Include a strong focus on action** and **charge the state with not losing the momentum** the commission has created
- **Be visionary** and describe what is possible in the future (grounded in the success metrics) if the state takes up the commission's recommendations
- **Provide a narrative arc** that connects the Y1, Y2, and Y3 reports for readers

# Innovation — week of 1/24

## Overview

- There are four primary ways that states promote and support innovation in districts, schools, and classrooms: (a) innovation schools, zones, and districts; (b) innovation grants; (c) innovation learning networks; and (d) offices of innovation.
- In addition to these state actions, so-called “accelerators” can help entrepreneurs develop, test, and scale their ideas in local schools and communities.
- Tennessee’s Innovation Zone (iZone) policy allows school districts with multiple priority schools (those in the bottom 5% of achievement statewide) to create iZones – networks of that district’s lowest-performing schools.
- Tennessee also has several innovation grants in place (e.g., IDEA Innovation Grant).
- Tennessee launched the Tennessee Rural Acceleration and Innovation Network (TRAIN) in fall 2020 to create a network for rural districts to address the challenges of teaching and learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Potential Policy Recs

- Revise the existing iZone legislation beyond the state’s lowest performing schools to allow districts to create networks based on other criteria (e.g., high-performing schools, schools with particular focus areas such as STEM).
- Create new grant opportunities focused on innovation (e.g., postsecondary transitions, early literacy and math).
- Create an office of innovation within TDOE to serve as the “innovation hub” recommended in the Year 2 report.
- Provide funding to support the launch of an education-focused accelerator.

# Postsecondary course options (slide 1 of 3) – week of 1/24

## Overview

- Hybrid models are typically characterized by alternating between in-person instruction within a traditional school setting and at-home (or another alternative site) instruction, where students attend in-person at school on designated days of the week, benefitting from direct instruction and classroom interaction, and complete assignments at home on the remaining days of the week.
- Proponents of hybrid learning claim it can increase educational innovation and participation by increased flexibility, improving assessments, and providing better access for students.
- Challenges to hybrid education include lack of teacher training and experience, less familiarity among older and nontraditional students, and inadequate software and broadband infrastructure.
- There's little to no research on the effectiveness of hybrid learning at the K-12 level, given its recent emergence.
- Many of Tennessee's community colleges and some four-year institutions offer hybrid courses.

## Potential Policy Recs

- Recommend a review of TBR and state university system hybrid programs and courses to determine which institutions are offering them, evaluate their value to students and faculty, and identify how the state can best support hybrid learning.
- Access previous partnerships between EdX and University of Tennessee programs to evaluate how those programs or courses were received by students, and what lessons could be learned.
- Identify an established online provider such as EdX to develop a pilot program in partnership with one or more public Tennessee universities and/or colleges, ideally in a high-demand career area.



# Postsecondary course options (slide 2 of 3) – week of 1/24

## Overview

- In general, postsecondary institutions require a set of general education courses in order to build the core competencies and skills that students need to lead productive lives post-graduation, regardless of their specific major or career path.
- The Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) states that the purpose of general education requirements is “to equip every student to pursue a challenging career, experience a rewarding personal life, and inspire others to do the same.
- Each TBR community college in Tennessee requires at least 41 hours of coursework from the following 6 categories (course hours required): (a) communication, (b) humanities/fine arts, (c) social/behavioral sciences, (d) history, (e) natural sciences, and (f) mathematics.
- The UT system does not appear to have a universal set of core curriculum requirements, based on a review of individual and system websites.
- UTK completed a review of its core course requirements in 2017 and will implement new requirements beginning in the fall of 2022. Currently, its general education requirements align closely with the TBR requirements.

## Potential Policy Recs

### **(If revisions are deemed necessary, consider the following)**

- Add a “first year experience”-type course to help support students as they transition to postsecondary.
- Add courses such as computing or coding that are aligned to the skills needed in many in-demand jobs.
- Add courses such as foreign languages that are aligned to the needs of an increasingly globalized world.
- The state should reassess the balance of credits in the TBR system (e.g., currently, 9 of the 41 required credits in the TBR system are in the field of communications, while just 3 are in math. Is that the right balance?).

# Postsecondary course options (slide 3 of 3) – week of 1/31

## Overview

- All non-degree credentials provide a mechanism for individuals to show they possess a certain set of defined competencies.
- Examples of non-degree credentials include: (a) subbaccalaureate for-credit certificates, (b) non-credit certificates, (c) industry certifications, (d) occupational or professional licenses, (e) apprenticeships, and (f) badges and other microcredentials.
- The research base on non-degree credentials is severely limited due to the lack of definitional clarity in the field and from a lack of valid and reliable data.
- There is significant variation in the design, quality, and market value of non-degree credentials in general and within particular occupations and industries.
- The market and academic value of non-degree credentials is dependent on economic differences across regions and the degree requirements at postsecondary institutions.
- A THEC task force on Defining Quality Credentials is currently working to establish a definition for quality credentials.
- The TDOE worked with several state agencies and other stakeholders to develop a system that provided secondary and postsecondary students with a list of “department-promoted” industry certifications.

## Potential Policy Recs

- Recommend that the work of THEC, TDOE, and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development is aligned to avoid duplicating efforts and to ensure youth and adults seeking quality non-degree credentials are provided with consistent information.
- Ensure that the agencies tasked with tracking non-degree credentials are collecting adequate data including industry trends, outcomes, and individual demographics.
- Ensure that the agencies tasked with overseeing non-degree credentials develop partnerships with organizations outside of higher education that offer non-degree credentials as well as those that provide technical assistance and implementation support.

# Secondary-postsecondary transitions — week of 1/10

## Overview

- Research on other states' approaches points to three ways that states and districts help students obtain the information they need to identify and access postsecondary opportunities:
  - Partnerships with nonprofit organizations
  - Individualized learning plans
  - Senior year capstone experiences
- Across the country, states and districts have partnered with nonprofit organizations focused on postsecondary access and success, such as College Advising Corps or Naviance, to support students' access to in-person or virtual college advisors.
- Individual learning plans can be a document and process students use to explore their career interests and determine what courses and activities to participate in.
- Some schools and districts offer high school seniors the opportunity to participate in a “capstone” project or experience. Most commonly, senior capstone projects take the form of long-term research projects that culminate in a written and/or oral presentation to teachers and classmates.

## Potential Policy Recs

- Create a separate high school course that focuses exclusively on content related to postsecondary transitions (e.g., application and financial aid processes, selecting programs and career paths) and potentially results in one postsecondary credit.
- Adopt and implement a program that includes content related to postsecondary transitions (e.g., application and financial aid processes, selecting programs and career paths) and operates after school, during the summer, or during school breaks.
- Embed transition content into an existing, required high school course (e.g., civics).
- State partners with and/or incentivizes districts to partner with nonprofit organizations to provide postsecondary transition services to students (e.g., FAFSA completion support, mentorship programs).
- Strengthen the individualized learning plan process to include deliberate postsecondary and career planning aspects.
- Use the senior year capstone structure to provide transition planning.

# School accountability (slide 1 of 2) — week of 1/10

## Overview

- While accountability systems themselves do not raise student achievement or address inequities across student groups, they can do several important things:
  - Set clear expectations that schools must raise the achievement of all students
  - Communicate with stakeholders and the public whether schools are meeting expectations
  - Celebrate schools that are meeting expectations and prompt action in those that are not
  - Direct additional resources to struggling schools
- The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) created the baseline expectations for states' accountability systems. It requires states to:
  - Set goals on specific measures of student performance
  - Place schools in need of support and improvement into three categories: (a) comprehensive support and improvement schools, (b) targeted support and improvement schools, and (c) additional targeted support and improvement schools
  - Annually and publicly report state and district accountability data
- ESSA provides considerable flexibility to states to design an accountability system that best meets the needs of the schools and students in that state.

## Potential Policy Recs

- Create a different measure of school quality and success from that currently in Tennessee's ESSA. Examples of other potential indicators include suspension or expulsion rates, ratings of school safety, access to effective career guidance and counseling, or teacher attrition, retention, and mobility.

# School accountability (slide 2 of 2) — week of 1/10

## Overview

- Tennessee’s A-F school rating system has been on the books since 2016, but has yet to be implemented.
- TDOE assesses each public school using 6 indicators:
  - Achievement
  - Growth
  - Ready Graduate
  - Graduation rate
  - Chronically out of school
  - English language proficiency assessment
- School performance is assessed in each area for the following student groups:
  - All students
  - Black/Hispanic/Native American students
  - English learners
  - Students with disabilities
  - Economically disadvantaged students
  - Combined (including students across the 4 subgroups)
- Final A-F grades are calculated by weighting the “all students” group and subgroup grades at 60% and 40%, respectively. Schools are then assigned one of three designations:
  - Priority schools
  - Focus schools (Targeted support and improvement and Additional targeted support and improvement)
  - Rewards schools

## Potential Policy Recs

- Consider a recommendation related to implementation of Tennessee’s A-F accountability system and communicating with parents and stakeholders about what the ratings mean and how to use the.
- Consider other changes the state could make within its approach to federal accountability requirements under ESSA, which could include one, some, or all of the following: changes to the type of standardized testing the state uses to assess students and schools; adjustments to how the state identifies schools for comprehensive, targeted, and additional support; any other state-level choice where ESSA provides flexibility and discretion.

# Curriculum — week of 1/31

## Overview

- **Standards** describe what students will know or be able to do upon completion of a grade level or course.
- **Curriculum** provides the instructional roadmap and content required to gain that knowledge or skill.
- In Tennessee, the State Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission is responsible for recommending an official list of textbooks and instructional materials that is approved by the State Board of Education.
- Aside from publishing its state-approved list of curriculum materials, Tennessee does not provide statewide supports for curriculum implementation.
- A 2017 RAND analysis found that 96% of teachers use Google and 75% of teachers use Pinterest to find lessons and materials; still more use materials from prior years and sites like TeachersPayTeachers, or work alone or with colleagues to design their own resources.
- The culmination of this research shows that districts, schools, and teachers need technical support for both identifying and implementing high-quality curriculum materials.

## Potential Policy Recs

- Develop common definitions of high-quality curriculum and objective rubrics to evaluate materials.
- Incentivize districts to use the highest-rated materials.
- Increase curriculum-based professional development.

# Teacher compensation and benefits (slide 1 of 2) — week of 1/31

## Overview

- Some research shows that teachers with higher salaries relative to non-teaching salaries in the same county are more likely to stay in teaching.
- Some research suggests teacher loan forgiveness and service scholarship programs can support the recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers into the fields and communities where they are most needed.
- Some research has shown that bonuses have also been found to increase recruitment and retention.
- The research is mixed with respect to pay for performance.
- Tennessee pays its teachers using a salary schedule that accounts for a teachers' education and years of service, meaning teachers earn more money the longer they work and if they have an advanced degree (e.g., Master's, EdD, PhD). The salary schedule represents the minimum salary requirements, with districts encouraged to provide additions to the base for factors like hard-to-staff positions and retaining highly qualified teachers.
- Tennessee has implemented several types of financial incentives to recruit and retain high-quality teachers: (a) signing and retention bonuses, (b) diversified and pay-for-performance, (c) loan forgiveness and fellowship programs, (d) Grow Your Own Teaching Apprenticeship Program, and (e) discounts for dependents of public school teachers.

## Potential Policy Recs

- Reinstate statewide financial support for hiring and retention bonuses for teachers in hard-to-staff positions and low-performing schools.
- Direct the Tennessee Department of Education and Tennessee Higher Education Commission and Student Assistance Corporation to better communicate loan forgiveness and fellowship opportunities on their websites.
- Update data collection process and guidance around differentiated pay.

# Teacher compensation and benefits (slide 2 of 2) — week of 1/31

## Overview

- Thirty-six states and the District of Columbia provide teachers with a traditional defined benefit (DB) pension plan as the default retirement option. In a DB pension plan, teachers and their employers (the state or local government) make contributions to the pension system, and teachers receive a guaranteed level of benefits when they retire.
- In three states, they have default retirement plans that are more like a 401(k). Under these plans, which are also known as defined contribution (DC) plans, teachers and employers annually contribute a percentage of a teacher's salary into an individual account for that teacher.
- Ten states — including Tennessee — use hybrid retirement plans as the default option for teachers. These plans incorporate features from both the DB and DC plans.
- In Tennessee, teachers who started prior to July 2014 are a part of the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System, which also includes all state employees.
- Since July 2014, new teachers are enrolled into the state's Hybrid Retirement Plan for State Employees and Teachers, which combines elements of a pension plan and a defined contribution (DC) plan.
- Overall, Tennessee ranked 2nd in the country in a Bellwether Education Partner analysis. Tennessee had high scores for long-term teachers and ranked 2nd in the country, but for short-term teachers the ranking dropped to 6th. Bellwether noted that Tennessee has solid overall funding, but lacks an alternative retirement option and scored low on interest credit on early withdrawal.

## Potential Policy Recs

- Increase interest credit on early withdrawal.
- Increase alternatives for retirement options.
- Increase portability of the defined benefit (DB) component of the plan.
- Decrease the teacher vesting period to three years.