



# PATHWAYS

## TENNESSEE

### **Pathways Tennessee Strategic Plan**

#### **Statement of Purpose:**

In June 2012, Tennessee joined the Pathways to Prosperity Network - a six state consortium with the common goal of ensuring more youth complete high school and attain a postsecondary credential with strong currency in today's labor market. This sought-after membership came in response to the Pathways to Prosperity report, which was published in February 2011 by the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

The Tennessee state network (Pathways Tennessee) was formed in December 2012 with the creation of the State Planning & Implementation Team and the identification of two pilot regions in Tennessee (Upper Cumberland and Southeast). The mission of Pathways Tennessee is to provide Tennessee students rigorous academic/career pathways, which are linked to economic and labor market needs and trends. These pathways must: (1) have multiple entry and exit points in education, (2) transition seamlessly from secondary to postsecondary, allowing for college credit and industry certifications in high school, and (3) encourage/support active industry involvement in student learning. Pathways Tennessee is a statewide initiative and is sustained through regional leadership with various levels of support through cross agency collaborations at the state level.

#### **Vision Statement:**

To advance transitions in education and career through secondary, postsecondary, and industry collaborations that seamlessly allow students the opportunity to pursue a postsecondary credential with value in the regional/state labor market.

#### **Mission Statement:**

To provide Tennessee students in grades 7-14/16 access to rigorous academic/career pathways, which are interlinked with local, regional, and state economic/labor market needs and trends in order to develop and promote a workforce that is educated and skilled in their chosen fields.

#### **Core Priority Overview:**

- **Promote the Development of Rigorous Braided Academic/Career Pathways Across Tennessee**

- **Cultivate Strong Statewide and Regional Collaboratives**
- **Ensure Regionally and Locally Sustainable Academic/Career Pathways**
- **Develop and Promote Communication Strategies Regarding Pathways Tennessee**
- **Ensure Continuous Improvement of Pathways Tennessee Opportunities**
- **Critically Evaluate the Pathways Tennessee Initiative Process and Outcomes**

### **Core Priorities:**

#### **Core Priority 1: Promote the Development of Rigorous Braided Academic/Career Pathways Across Tennessee**

Secondary education students must be able to graduate and advance successfully into postsecondary education and employment. Each student’s pathway must promote the skills needed to be successful academically and career-wise, incorporate the Common Core State Standards, and develop 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills.

#### **Strategies**

1. Increase student access to relevant, rigorous academic/career (7-14/16) pathways, which embed work-based learning and early postsecondary opportunities, through the adoption and expansion of Pathways Tennessee (Pathways TN) across the state’s identified regions.
2. Promote and employ various state data to support the development and adoption of braided academic/career pathways in school districts across the state.
3. Partner with the Department of Education (TDOE), the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), the University of Tennessee (UT) system, and the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) system to increase student participation in early postsecondary opportunities.
4. Partner with industry leaders to increase their engagement in course curricula and competencies reviews and meaningful work-based learning experiences.
5. Identify, align, and establish (where needed) state policies, which support the growth of academic/career (7-14/16) pathways across Tennessee.
6. Eliminate logistical barriers (e.g., financial, geographic, or administrative), which prohibit the development and adoption of academic/career pathways for secondary students.

#### **Core Priority 2: Cultivate Strong Statewide and Regional Collaboratives**

Through technical support – and where applicable directed financial support – Pathways TN creates and promotes meaningful stakeholder (education, industry, government, and non-government) collaborations, which reflect the educational, economic and employment strengths and opportunities of the state.

#### **Strategies**

1. Establish criteria, which identify effective regional intermediary organizations to convene and lead diverse stakeholders in the adoption and support of meaningful academic/career pathways.
2. Identify, recruit, and cultivate key stakeholders in each recognized region who will commit to building and participating in meaningful collaborations.
3. Conduct ongoing asset mapping studies, which focus on statewide and regional economic, labor, and educational strengths and opportunities, in order to set statewide and regional collaborative priorities and foci.
4. Secure ongoing engagement and commitment of the State Planning & Implementation Team members in order to promote Pathways TN and ensure its success.
5. Remove organizational silos and align current policies and programs longitudinally at state, regional, and local levels to effectively move forward as a united entity.

**Core Priority 3: Ensure Regionally and Locally Sustainable Academic/Career Pathways**

The vision and mission of Pathways TN must be embedded in and reflected through the regional and local pathways that are adopted and implemented.

Strategies

1. Provide initial and ongoing assistance to regions using the resources committed by statewide planning team members so that adopted pathways reflect the opportunities of each region and are implemented with fidelity.
2. Promote continuous communication and collaboration among diverse statewide and regional stakeholders in order to develop and grow nontraditional pairings, leading to sustainable pathways.
3. Ensure that each regionally adopted pathway reflects the opportunities and priorities of that region and can be implemented in a timely manner using existing resources, as identified by stakeholders. This assurance will be reflected through regional strategic plans and project plans.
4. Explore and promote immediate and long-term supports (e.g. policy, funding, etc.), which will positively impact sustainability efforts.
5. Demonstrate flexibility and leadership when data suggests changes to current work-based learning, industry partnerships, or educational foci; orchestrate changes where or when necessary.

**Core Priority 4: Develop and Promote Communication Strategies Regarding Pathways Tennessee**

Students, parents, educators, and industry must have access to comprehensive and accurate information about Pathways TN, as well as adopted pathways at the local level. State, regional, and local stakeholders must also be shown relevant and meaningful ways to engage.

Strategies

1. Through a variety of media, market and promote relevant pathways information to middle and high school students, their families, and educators.

2. Provide resources to secondary and postsecondary counselors in order to better engage students and families in postsecondary and career planning, preparation, and participation.
3. Maintain partnerships and open lines of communication among key stakeholders, resulting in meaningful engagement in the development and utilization of information around the pathways initiative.
4. Develop awareness of Pathways TN using various media outreaches and holding group meetings across the state with potential stakeholders.

**Core Priority 5: Ensure Continuous Improvement of Pathways Tennessee Opportunities**

Continuous evaluation of Pathways TN and the adopted regional and local academic/career pathways will guide decisions for revisions and improvement.

Strategies

1. Establish a tracking system to collect information about student participation, progress, and outcomes and the sequential attainment of employment.
2. Establish systems and processes for collecting and sharing data in order to provide participant outcomes, evaluate successes, and continually improve the effectiveness of various collaboratives that form the statewide pathways initiative.
3. Report student outcomes to appropriate stakeholders in order to revise pathways for improvement and to expand opportunities.

**Core Priority 6: Critically Evaluate the Pathways Tennessee Initiative Process and Outcomes**

Develop measures of success and address the strengths and opportunities of the Pathways TN initiative overall.

Strategies

1. Partner with the TDOE, THEC, Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOL), and the Department of Economic and Community Development (ECD) to establish evaluative metrics, which are agreed upon by the State Planning & Implementation Team.
2. Using approved metrics, identify strengths and opportunities and redirect the initiative and its deliverables as needed.
3. Evaluate the rigor and relevance of currently offered pathways to reflect the local, regional, and state workforce needs.

## **Benchmark Dates 2011-16**

### **February 2011:**

- Pathways to Prosperity Report published

### **June 2012:**

- Tennessee is accepted into the Pathways to Prosperity Network
- Identification of pilot regions: Upper Cumberland & Southeast

### **September 2012:**

- Asset Mapping of Upper Cumberland and Southeast regions completed

### **November 2012:**

- Pathways to Prosperity Project Manager hired

### **December 2012:**

- Formation of the State Planning & Implementation Team
- State network created (Pathways TN)
- Southeast Convening held

### **January 2013:**

- Southeast Region decides on Health Sciences and Advanced Manufacturing pathways for 2013-2014

### **April 2013:**

- Selection of the next three Pathways TN regions: Southwest, Greater Memphis, East

### **June 2013:**

- Statewide Teacher Externships

### **July 2013:**

- Statewide Teacher Externships
- Perkins Reserve Grant funds released to support the Pathways TN Initiative

### **August 2013:**

- Communication materials ready for distribution
- Pathways Tennessee branding developed
- Upper Cumberland pathways begin in grade 7 (May modules- Health Sciences and Advanced Manufacturing)
- Statewide dual credit pilot for:
  - College Algebra/Advanced Algebra/Trigonometry
  - Introduction to Agribusiness/Agriculture Business Finance
  - Introduction to Agriculture Leadership/Leadership Communications
  - Introduction to Ornamental Horticulture/Greenhouse Management

### **September 2013:**

- Asset Mapping for Southwest and Greater Memphis
- Southwest Convening
- Phase Two curriculum presented to State Board of Education meeting

**October 2013:**

- Identify intermediary and regional steering committee for Southwest

**November 2013:**

- Southwest regional priorities are identified and submitted

**January 2014:**

- Asset Mapping for East TN
- Greater Memphis Convening

**February 2014:**

- Identify intermediary and regional steering committee in Greater Memphis

**March 2014:**

- Greater Memphis regional priorities are identified and submitted

**April 2014:**

- State Planning & Implementation Team to approve two additional regions to join Pathways TN for 2014-2015

**May 2014:**

- East TN Convening

**June 2014:**

- Statewide Teacher Externships

**July 2014:**

- Identify intermediary and regional steering committee for East TN
- Statewide Teacher Externships
- Ongoing assessment of the Pathways TN Initiative

**August 2014:**

- Upper Cumberland grade 8 curriculum in place
- Southeast pathways begin in #? Grade
- Southwest pathways begin in #? Grade
- East TN regional priorities are identified and submitted
- Work-Based Learning program updated
- Statewide dual credit pilot for:
  - Art Appreciation
  - Health Informatics
  - Introduction to Criminal Justice
  - Introduction to Sociology
  - Pre-Calculus
  - World History

**November 2014:**

- Roll out of identified region 1

**April 2015:**

- Roll out of identified region 2
- State Planning & Implementation Team to approve the final two regions to join Pathways TN for 2015-16

**June 2015:**

- Statewide Teacher Externships

**July 2015:**

- Statewide Teacher Externships
- Ongoing assessment of the Pathways TN Initiative

**August 2015:**

- Statewide dual credit courses

**November 2015:**

- Roll out of identified region 3

**April 2016:**

- Roll out of identified region 4

**Sustainability:**

Pathways TN will be sustained through regional leadership and ongoing statewide support. Key partners for sustainability also include: non-government organizations (NGO's), school districts (LEA), and industry partners.

**Definitions:**

**7-14/16:** The grades identified by the State Planning & Implementation Team as the range in which the initiative will work. The initiative will begin in grade 7 and move seamlessly based on student interests to a postsecondary credential (14 being a two-year certification or degree and 16 being a four-year degree).

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills:** The Pathways to Prosperity report describes 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills as critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, communication, collaboration, adaptability, accountability, leadership, responsibility, global awareness, and financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy.

**Academic/Career Pathways:** Advanced programs of study that provide seamless transition from secondary to postsecondary and include early postsecondary opportunities (awarding college credit for classes completed in high school), work based learning, and are relevant to current and future labor market needs and trends in a region. Pathways will be developed to reflect the regional needs within the 16 identified career clusters in the TDOE.

**Common Core State Standards:** Tennessee has adopted the [Common Core State Standards](#) to prepare students with the knowledge and skills to attain higher education or careers and compete in an increasingly competitive work environment. These standards emphasize critical thinking, problem solving, and reflect rigorous learning benchmarks for college and career. The transition will also include new assessments that will give students, parents, and educators better information about college- and career-readiness based on performance beyond multiple-choice tests.

**Local Education Agency (LEA):** Public school district

**Postsecondary Credential:** A certification or degree offered by an accredited Tennessee Board of Regents College or University of Tennessee school. These include all Tennessee College of Applied Technology institutions (TCAT) in addition to two-year and four-year institutions.

**Postsecondary Institution:** A postsecondary institution is one that provides opportunities past a high school diploma. This can include TCATs, community colleges, and universities.

**Regions:** The State Planning & Implementation Team has aligned Pathways TN to the nine regions designated by ECD and its Jobs Base Camps. <http://www.tn.gov/eCD/Directors/index.shtml>

**Secondary:** kindergarten to high school education (K-12)

**State Planning & Implementation Team:** The guiding body created at the state level for visioning and alignment of resources and support of Pathways TN in the nine identified regions.

**Technical Assistance:** Technical assistance can range from funding, advocacy, legislation reform, curriculum development assistance, marketing and communications, and various paraphernalia.

**Work Based Learning:** Out-of-class experiences which reinforce in-class learning in the form of internships, apprenticeships, school based enterprises, etc.

Appendix A



STATE OF TENNESSEE

**BILL HASLAM**  
GOVERNOR

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
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**KEVIN**  
COMMISSIONER

Nancy Hoffman  
Vice President and Senior Advisor  
Jobs for the Future  
88 Broad Street, 8th floor  
Boston, MA 02110

April 9, 2012

Dear Dr. Hoffman,

With a strong sense of commitment and possibility, I am excited to submit this letter as Tennessee's official request to partner with you in your Pathways to Prosperity work. Tennessee has the right capacity in the education and business community, the need to further our career and technical programming, and the political and fiscal climate to manage high-level innovation at scale.

As you know, Tennessee was one of the first two winners of the federal Race to the Top competition. We also recently were among the first states to receive a waiver from No Child Left Behind; the Center for American Progress rated our comprehensive accountability plan among the top two submitted (along with Massachusetts). We are excited about the potential of our plans, but neither Race to the Top nor our waiver came as a result of outstanding classroom performance. Indeed, on the last NAEP assessment, our students scored 46<sup>th</sup> in math and 41<sup>st</sup> in reading in the fourth grade.

Our awards and recognition, despite our current achievement levels, underscore that the state has recognized its challenges, and has built the political and educational coalition to take on underlying issues impacting our results. We are at an exciting and critical juncture in our work. It is this combination

– the extensive need for better results, mixed with the strong internal capacity to support change – that make Tennessee the perfect partner for Pathways to Prosperity.

Currently, 21% of adults in Tennessee have a four-year college degree. Clearly that must improve. At the same time, though, we must build the pathways for all students that prepare them for future careers to achieve their dreams. Tennessee has a number of assets: strong technology centers, access to community colleges, the ability to cross-register for post-secondary courses while in high school, and a robust career and technical education program across the state. Nonetheless, we are failing to adequately connect the dots for our students. Too many students take CTE courses that do not prepare them for a high-growth career, and also do not prepare them for post-secondary education. Our counseling fails to make students and families aware of future options. And our employers and industry leaders do not feel sufficiently connected to our schools. We can and must change that.

### Leadership

Tennessee has strong leadership across multiple sectors ready to support reform work focused on career readiness.

- Governor Bill Haslam. The Governor has explained his two priorities quite succinctly: better jobs for the present, and better education for the future. In Tennessee, I am a direct report of the Governor, and spend significant time discussing strategic planning with him. He is very invested in reforming our education system, and connecting our work to employers.
- Harry Brooks, Representative, Tennessee General Assembly, member of education committee. Representative Brooks has played a key leadership role in career and technical education in Tennessee over time. He is very interested in ensuring that we update our course offerings, look at apprenticeship opportunities, and connect students to real world experiences.
- Hans-Herbert Jagla, Executive Vice President of Human Resources, Volkswagen Group of America. Mr. Jagla hosted a recent summit on career and technical education at his plant in Chattanooga. Because of his familiarity with the German educational model, he is an excellent spokesperson for industry-led engagement in education, and has served as a convener of the business community.
- Bob Obrohta, Executive Director, Tennessee College Access & Success Network. The Network serves as a critical convener of discussions about post-secondary access, and is particularly focused on the need for better student counseling in secondary schools.
- Ellen Thornton, Executive Director, Tennessee Business Roundtable. The Business Roundtable pulls employers together to work collectively on key policy issues, including K-12 education. They helped lead the effort to revamp academic standards, and are a key political ally in education reform.

We see a number of key challenges in moving from our current system into implementation of strong models articulated in Pathways to Prosperity. We need to ensure that we update our course

offerings to align with fields of growth in Tennessee, and ensure that we stop teaching courses that are disconnected from current employment opportunities. We need to build strong local councils of employers to engage with our school districts to drive more relevant course offerings. We need excellent counseling for young people to help identify interests and direct them down the right paths. We need to ensure that post-secondary institutions are increasing dual enrollment opportunities and are themselves aligned with jobs of the future. And we need industry leaders to create apprenticeship opportunities that allow enterprising districts to pilot strong programs.

All of these challenges are surmountable because of leadership. At every level of the system and industry, we have leaders who want us to reform our work in career and technical education.

### Choosing regional labor markets for our work

The Tennessee Department of Education has nine regional field service centers throughout the state:

- Memphis/Shelby County
- Northwest
- Mid-Cumberland
- South Central
- Southeast
- Upper Cumberland
- Southwest
- East Tennessee
- First Tennessee

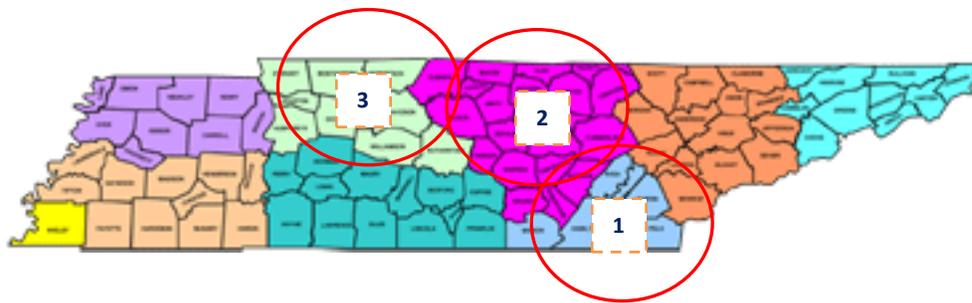
These regions are aligned roughly with regions used by the Departments of Economic and Community Development (ECD) and Labor & Workforce Development.



According to Governor Haslam's 2011 economic report<sup>1</sup>, almost all counties in the state saw unemployment rates trending downward, and most industry sectors in the state saw growth. This growth is projected to continue in 2012.

Three of the more notable areas of growth are expected in the transportation, healthcare and technology sectors.

Of these regions, we believe the most promising for this type of initiative are the Southeast, Upper Cumberland, and Mid-Cumberland regions due to their (1) existing industry-education coalitions, (2) industry and labor markets, and their (3) larger potential to regionally cross-collaborate on a grander scale.



The strongest industry sectors of these regions include:

- 1) Southeast
  - a. Large increase in manufacturing and distribution, mainly in automotive including a recent addition of more than 3,000 jobs in Hamilton Co with expansion from companies such as Volkswagen, but also in home appliances (Whirlpool) and distribution (Amazon). Note: This region has by far the largest new projects in manufacturing, doubling the investment that has taken place in middle and west Tennessee over recent years
  - b. Continued development of chemical and solar energy companies (Wacker Chemie), amid growing demand, as well as the larger energy sector, including (TVA)
  - c. The region also has a very large foreign investment; as compared to other regions (five times that of West Tennessee)
- 2) Upper Cumberland
  - a. Predominately service-oriented businesses and occupations, with some groups in manufacturing/production (about 18% of jobs)

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.tn.gov/ecd/pdfs/Economic\\_Report\\_Governor.pdf](http://www.tn.gov/ecd/pdfs/Economic_Report_Governor.pdf).

- b. Strong growth expected in: Agriculture/goods producing, Healthcare (with high growth rates expected for home health, pharmacy, rehab/physical therapy, and Nursing), and for automotive technology and related engineering manufacturing
  - c. Several large companies operate in this region, including Flowserve, TACO Metals, TUTCO, Hutchinson, and Nyrstar
- 2) Mid-Cumberland
- a. Nashville/Davidson Co is the major hub for this region, and it has a very diverse industry portfolio. This includes healthcare, music, education, publishing, banking and transportation industries. Largest industry sectors (by employees) include healthcare, public administration and manufacturing, including automotive
  - b. Fastest growing occupations include those in healthcare, information technology, and manufacturing and distribution
  - c. Manufacturing companies include: (Nissan, Hemlock SemiConductor, Unipres, Electrolux, AO Smith Water, Bridgestone, Trane)
  - d. Healthcare companies include: HCA, Caremark, Community Health Systems, National Healthcare Corp, and several large area hospital and medical center networks

In each of the above regions, we know of districts that have the local leadership necessary to pilot reforms to our course offerings, and we have business connections that will support this work. In these regions, we see some strengths, and some challenges that we will need to address moving forward.

- Postsecondary courses related to career and technical education (CTE) are fairly aligned with regional and local industry needs in order to increase the likelihood of immediate job placements for their students upon graduation. Postsecondary institutions also make appropriate, timely adjustments to their areas of focus/majors in order to better prepare graduates for careers. Despite these strengths, postsecondary institutions need to cultivate stronger partnerships and articulation agreements around programming and dual enrollment and dual credit with their local and regional secondary systems. We recognize that stronger partnerships require commitments from both sides, and so we identify this also as a secondary shortcoming.
- There are pockets of strength currently at the secondary level; however, there is great opportunity as well. Most of the ingredients for a successful, long-term strategic plan are present already, but they have not been developed and promoted appropriately. The Department of Education is currently focusing its efforts to increase the relevance and alignment of its CTE-related programs and coursework to better align with its postsecondary and industry partners.
- There is a limited presence of career academies (Nashville having one of the strongest) across the state. The same is the case for early colleges or middle colleges. There is no preferred policy or model practices that the Department of Education promotes. Instead, it is left to local school districts to determine which approaches or models to promote and fund.
- Dual enrollment is widely promoted and accessed by secondary districts and students. Dual credit, however, is not utilized as much due largely to existing (or lack of) articulation agreements between institutions and systems. Funding for dual enrollment is provided by the State; unfortunately, funding does not cover 100% of the tuition costs. Districts and/or students are responsible for the remaining balance, which is a

very real barrier for economically disadvantaged students. This current funding model remains an ongoing, hotly debated issue at the state level.

- In terms of systematized work-based learning at the secondary and postsecondary systems, there remains a great deal of opportunity. WBL has already been identified as a growth area by the DOE CTE Division. Though not as acute, the State's technology centers and community colleges have also voiced a need to develop agreements with industry partners so that their students can participate in WBL as part of their overall studies.

### Needs in early career advising

One key challenge that Tennessee must take on if we are to create stronger pathways is enhancing our counseling of high school students. The state requires very minimal early career advising by guidance counselors at the secondary level. Largely, the advising comes in the form of brief counseling and is mainly limited to scheduling classes. Many school systems use basic written and online interest tools, including Kuder Career Assessments which is promoted by the CTE Division, but the State does not see these being effectively utilized or communicated to students or parents. The ACT, ACT Plan, and ACT Explore are required at grades 11<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup>, respectively, but again, it is rare when the full portfolio of resources tied to these tests is promoted by counselors. This is an immediate area where the formal advising system can be improved.

Tennessee requires that each student must have a "focus area" of 3 elective credit hours in addition to their core academic coursework in order to graduate. These can include Career and Technical Education (CTE) coursework, science and math, humanities, fine arts, or AP/IB. The intent of this requirement is to move students toward areas of interest in order to increase graduation rates. There are additional career advising opportunities, including regional "jobs base camps" and comprehensive career centers in the local workforce investment areas. However, these resources typically serve individuals who have already graduated from high school and are not meant to serve as early career advising for students.

Improvement in career advising has occurred in limited systems where teachers are aligned to students in an advisory capacity in order to mitigate the typically high student to counselor ratios or through other initiatives such as implementing a career management curriculum as required early secondary coursework.

To improve advising, a comprehensive assessment of these sporadic initiatives should be completed and guidelines for successful programs should be shared with systems across the state. There may also be an opportunity to harness industry to create a statewide technology solution to assist students in career advising.

### Key intermediaries

Each of the three regions has robust capacities to link and serve as the “glue” across various entities. (See below.) For each region, we will need to identify which individual leaders to engage based on the representation found in that region. Communication, buy-in, and coordination, will be key to making the initiative successful not only with the initial regions, but ultimately across the state. The Department of Education will serve as lead in convening the needed intermediaries.

In general, representative groups – across all three regions - will include:

- Department of Education - Field Service Centers and CTE Directors for each local office
- K-12 School Districts; representative technology centers, community colleges, and 4-year public/private universities, as well as P-16 Councils
- Local Chambers of Commerce and the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce (very active in education and a strong supporter of state-wide reform)
- Department of Labor - Local Workforce Investment Career Centers and Boards
- Tennessee Business Roundtable (a very active leader in resetting standards in the state, and an active participant in the Chattanooga summit on career and technical education).
- Public Education Foundations: Nashville Public Education Foundation, Public Education Foundation of Chattanooga, Benwood Foundation of Chattanooga, and the Upper Cumberland Educational Foundation in Cookeville, Tennessee
- Department of Economic and Community Development, Regional Entrepreneurial Accelerators:
  - *Southeast Region*: The Company Lab, Chattanooga
    - Partners (sampling): The Enterprise Center, Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce, Lyndhurst Foundation, Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise, Chattanooga Technology Council, Chattanooga Regional Manufacturers Association, and University of Tennessee Chattanooga.
  - *Upper Cumberland Region*: Roane State Community College, Crossville
    - Partners (sampling): Tennessee Technological University, Upper Cumberland Development District, Tennessee Small Business Development Centers, Motlow State Community College, Fentress County Chamber of Commerce, Byrdstown-Picket County Chamber of Commerce, Crossville-Cumberland County Chamber, and University of Tennessee Center for Industrial Services.
  - *Northern Middle (Mid-Cumberland) Region*: Entrepreneur Center, Nashville
    - Partners (sampling): Belmont University; Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce; Nashville Capital Network; Nashville Healthcare Council; Nashville Technology Council; Pinnacle Financial Partners; Vanderbilt University; Williamson County Economic Development; Middle Tennessee Industrial Development Association; Chambers of Commerce for Cheatham County, Dickson County, Humphreys County, Robertson County, and Rutherford County, and the Clarksville-Montgomery County Economic Development Council.

#### State staffing and asset mapping

The Division of Career and Technical Education (CTE), in the Tennessee Department of Education, will have dedicated staff members, including the assistant commissioner for CTE, assigned to this initiative.

Additionally, there are existing funds within the CTE Division, which can be designated for research and project planning, leading to a stronger statewide CTE master work plan.

Tennessee is one of the few states which, by statute, has an assistant commissioner level role specifically to manage career and technical education. This speaks to the legislative commitment to having robust career paths articulated through the high school curriculum. While our pathways need work, the commitment is strong and we have a strong team in place to help manage change at the state level.

### Conclusion

In Tennessee, we are focused on many state-wide reforms, ranging from evaluating teachers and principals to implementing the common core state standards, to turning around our lowest performing schools. Each of these efforts is predicated on one vision: ensuring that our students leave high school college or career ready.

We know that to achieve our vision, we must improve our work in career and technical education. We must build strong and relevant pathways for our students. We must give students richer and better opportunities to learn from the industries that will later seek to employ them. We must ensure the courses and counseling in high schools set them on a path to success.

We are thrilled to have the opportunity to partner with you in your groundbreaking work. We have the commitment, leadership, policy environment, and partnerships across the state to help lead change, and we hope we have the chance to work together.

Please feel free to reach out to me or Danielle Mezera, assistant commissioner for career and technical education, if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,



Kevin Huffman