

# Tennessee Higher Education Commission Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation

# 2015 Year in Review

January 7

CollegeforTN.org, in partnership with TSAC and tnAchieves, hosts first **FAFSA webinar** in an on-going series of resources for Tennessee Promise mentors.

February 9

Governor Bill Haslam announces expanded initiatives for adult learners through **Tennessee Reconnect**.

May

First group of **reverse transfer students** receives Associate's degrees from Tennessee community colleges.

May 18

Governor Haslam signs legislation, which enables Tennessee's participation in **State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)**, which establishes comparable national standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance education courses and programs.



June 8-10  
GEAR UP TN  
**Youth Summit**  
hosts 160 rising  
10th graders at  
MTSU.

June 30

Year-long moratorium ends on **submission of new academic program proposals**.

July 23

THEC adopts new Master Plan, Public Higher Education Funding Formula, and Quality Assurance program at outset of **2015-2020 planning cycle**.



THEC-TSAC host first annual reception for **Ned McWherter Scholars**, high achieving Tennessee students attending college in-state.

August

By end of August, 50,611 high school seniors filed a FAFSA. **Tennessee is the no. 1 state for FAFSA filing**, with a filing rate of 68% of high school seniors.

January 29

THEC adopts policy revisions to evaluation and approval of **new and modified academic program proposals**.

March

THEC completes transmission of **nine annual reports to the General Assembly**, Governor's Office, and higher education leaders, published on THEC's website under "Legislative Reports."

May 1

THEC hosts Tennessee's first statewide **College Signing Day** in nearly 70 high schools across Tennessee.

May 21

THEC awards over \$522,000 in **Tennessee Promise Forward grants** to 7 community colleges to focus on increasing retention and completion of Tennessee Promise students.

June 17

**THEC-TSAC hold staff retreat** to plan for upcoming fiscal year and discuss the functions, mission, and core values of the agencies.



June 29

Tennessee becomes **27th state to join SARA** and the 6th SREB state; 8 days later, THEC receives its first SARA application from a TN institution, with 44 completing the process by November.

July 1

THEC-TSAC brings **eGrants financial aid data system in-house** to allow for more efficient management of financial aid programs.



July 20

THEC selects Graduation Alliance as vendor for **CollegeforTN.org**, Tennessee's college and career exploration web portal. THEC will launch the new CollegeforTN.org in Spring 2016. A few weeks later, THEC selects National Student Clearinghouse as vendor for the electronic transcript exchange.

## September

TSAC notifies US Dept of Education of intent to rescind **federal loan portfolio** and replace with default prevention services to campuses.



THEC releases the first annual **Tennessee Adult Student Fact Book**.

TSAC receives **59,621 applications for Tennessee Promise Year 2 cohort**.

THEC hosts strategic and operational planning event with the **3 Tennessee Reconnect Communities** in coordination with The Graduate! Network.

Tennessee, selected by the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) association as an exemplar state in development and effective use of P-20 education data systems, hosts **site visit for upcoming SHEEO: Strong Foundations report**.

**September** 16,291 freshmen enroll in college as the **first Tennessee Promise cohort**.

THEC convenes 180 leaders from 39 public and private institutions for a day-long kickoff meeting for **Tennessee Reconnect + Complete**. TSAC's Loan division hosts a follow-up webinar regarding defaulted loan borrowers.

THEC's four-year **Lumina Foundation Latino Student Success** grant to increase college attainment among the Latino population in Memphis comes to an end. The students served by the program had a 90% college-going rate.

THEC receives the **2015 Institutional Services Award** from Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL).

In partnership with the Office of Governor Bill Haslam, THEC launches **TNReconnect.gov**, a web portal focused on providing resources to adults enrolling in or returning to postsecondary education.

**September 21** Governor Haslam convenes the **Drive to 55 Summit** to review the progress of the Drive to 55 and focus higher education efforts on the future.



THEC hosts Tennessee's eighth annual **College Application Week** in 271 schools to build excitement around the college-going process by providing time during the school day for every senior to apply to college.



THEC and TSAC staff attend the **Reach Higher FAFSA Completion Convening hosted by the White House**. Tennessee is recognized as the country's leader in FAFSA completion.

US Dept of Education adopts "**prior-prior year**" tax information for the **FAFSA**, enabling earlier FAFSA filing by students to qualify for aid, including, Tennessee Promise, HOPE, and TSAA.

THEC presents **FY 2016-2017 higher education budget recommendation** at its winter quarterly meeting, featuring new approaches to funding for outcomes, capital, and innovation.

THEC and Ford Foundation release research **paper on impact of Tennessee's outcomes-based funding formula**, authored by Erik Ness and colleagues at the University of Georgia.

**December 2** **Lumina Strategy Lab** in Denver features Tennessee as exemplar state for western states considering outcomes-based higher education funding.

**Changes to the Commission & TSAC Board** Ms. Mintha Roach, Mr. David Kustoff, and Ms. Siri Kadire are appointed to the Commission. Mr. Evan Cope is elected chair of the commission. Mr. Keith Wilson and Mr. Kustoff are elected co-chairs. Mr. Will Cromer, serving as Governor's designee, is elected to chair the TSAC Board of Directors.

# 2015 by the Numbers

## FAFSA Completion

**#1**

Tennessee's nationwide rank for FAFSA completion

**68%**

Tennessee's FAFSA completion rate

**7.7%**

Increase in FAFSA completion from 2014 to 2015 in Tennessee

## TSAC Outreach

<b>60,856</b>	Calls received by the TSAC call center
<b>4,788</b>	LiveChat conversations with the TSAC call center
<b>Over 8,500</b>	High school seniors personally assisted by TSAC on the FAFSA
<b>257</b>	FAFSA Nights hosted by TSAC in January & February

<p><b>GEAR UP TN</b> <b>22,177</b> HS students served*</p> <p><b>789</b> HS educators served*</p> <p><small>*Numbers indicate most recent reporting year from 4/1/14 to 3/31/15</small></p>	<p><b>SAILS</b> <b>239</b> High schools served</p> <p><b>17,801</b> Students currently served</p> <p><b>16,018</b> Total completers to date</p>	<p><b>Diversity in Teaching</b></p> <p><b>44</b> Educator participants</p> <p><b>10</b> School districts served</p>	<p><b>Postsecondary Authorization</b></p> <p><b>78</b> Institutional representatives trained on THEC's authorization process</p>
<p><b>CollegeforTN.org</b> <b>130,660</b> Account log-ins</p> <p><b>2,941,275</b> Page views</p> <p><b>31,639</b> Accounts created</p>	<p><b>Path to College Events</b></p> <p><b>252</b> College App Week schools</p> <p><b>77</b> College Planning Night schools</p> <p><b>68</b> College Signing Day schools</p>	<p><b>Improving Teacher Quality</b></p> <p><b>319</b> Teachers served</p> <p><b>32</b> School districts served</p>	<p><b>TSAC License Review Program</b></p> <p><b>6,440</b> Borrowers previously in default now in good standing through TSAC License Review program</p>

**13**

**VETS Campus Designated Institutions**  
Designated by THEC through the VETS Act as providing quality services to student veterans.

**38**

**Tennessee Reconnect + Complete Institutions**  
Institutions participating in outreach to enroll students with some college, but no degree.

**25**

**TN Adult Learning Focused Institutions**  
Designated by Council for Adult and Experiential Learning as committed to serve adult learners.

# Subgrants Awarded

<b>Veterans Reconnect</b> <b>\$1,064,697</b> Awarded <b>11</b> Institutions	<b>Tennessee Promise Forward</b> <b>\$522,635</b> Awarded <b>7</b> Institutions	<b>Improving Teacher Quality</b> <b>\$932,715</b> Awarded <b>8</b> Institutions	<b>GEAR UP TN</b> <b>\$2,246,115</b> Awarded annually* <b>15</b> School districts <small>*Currently in Year 4 of 7 year program.</small>
<b>Ready to Reconnect</b> <b>\$718,668</b> Awarded <b>16</b> Institutions	<b>Tennessee Reconnect Communities</b> <b>\$707,000</b> Awarded <b>3</b> Communities	<b>Diversity in Teaching</b> <b>\$395,884</b> Awarded <b>4</b> Institutions	<b>SAILS</b> <b>\$2,500,000*</b> Awarded to participating schools and institutions <small>*Number reflects 2015-2016 contract year.</small>

## Grants Received

<b>\$350,000</b>	<b>\$14,000</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
From <b>Lumina Foundation</b> to support community-based services to adults.	From <b>National College Access Network</b> to support College Goal Tennessee events.	From <b>Ford Foundation</b> for programmatic support for Tennessee Reconnect Communities.

## 2015 In the Headlines

**Murfreesboro Attorney Evan Cope Elected THEC Chairman**  
*Daily News Journal*  
 February 7, 2015

**Haslam's Budget Invests Heavily in Higher Ed**  
*The Tennessean*  
 February 10, 2015

**Tennessee Tops Nation in FAFSA Submissions**  
*The Tennessean*  
 March 4, 2015

**The Impact of Free Tuition**  
*Inside Higher Ed*  
 March 17, 2015

**Colleges get \$522,000 for Tennessee Promise students**  
*The Tennessean*  
 May 21, 2015

**States to Colleges: Prove You're Worth It**  
*Stateline Daily*  
 July 28, 2015

**More Tennessee Colleges Pursue Adults Who Never Finished Their Degrees**  
*WPLN*  
 September 25, 2015

**LEAP Grants Aim to Fill Void in Tennessee Workforce**  
*The Tennessean*  
 October 12, 2015

## THEC & TSAC Staff Honors

TSAC's **Jane Pennington** was awarded the TASFAA Distinguished Service Award during the Spring TASFAA Conference.

THEC's **Tom Morrison** selected as a Tennessee Outstanding Veteran Employee by Governor Bill Haslam.

THEC's **Jessica Gibson** named as a finalist for the Nashville Emerging Leader Awards program from the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce and YP Nashville.