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State of Tennessee Rolls Out Series of Fall Events to Promote College Access

NASHVILLE, TN – September 28 –The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) and the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (TSAC), along with many state partners, are launching a series of initiatives focused on increasing college enrollment in the state. TN FAFSA Frenzy, Scholarship Saturday, and College Application Week are designed to connect students and educators with resources to apply for college and financial aid, while continuing to boost the growing college-going rate in Tennessee, which increased to a historic high of 62.5 percent in 2015. The launch of the events coincides with the opening of the 2017-18 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) filing period on October 1.

“Through the Tennessee Promise and other Drive to 55 programs, we are changing the conversation around going to college in Tennessee,” Governor Bill Haslam said. “We want students to know that in Tennessee, college isn’t just an option, it’s an expectation, and that we, as a state, are committed to helping students find the right postsecondary path for them.”

THEC and TSAC collaborated with the Tennessee Department of Education, Tennessee Board of Regents, and the three Tennessee Promise partnering organizations, tnAchieves, REDI, and the Ayers Foundation, to roll out these events throughout the fall.

The three primary events include:

- **College Application Week:** The week-long event kicked off on Monday and will continue through Friday. High schools around the state are hosting a variety of events to assist high school seniors in filling out college applications and Tennessee Promise applications. Many participating schools set aside time in computer labs for seniors to work with counselors and other volunteers to submit applications, while also setting aside time for younger students to plan out their paths to college. College Application Week is also celebrated in elementary and middle schools across the state as a time to foster college goals for students of all ages. More information on College Application Week is available [here](#).

- **Scholarship Saturday:** Tennessee's community colleges will be hosting open houses on Saturday, October 1 for potential Tennessee Promise and Tennessee Reconnect students. Staff will be available to help students submit the Tennessee Promise application, fill out the FAFSA, and learn more about academic programs available at the schools. Each event will take place from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m., local time, at the community college main campuses. More information on Scholarship Saturday is available on the websites of each community college.
- **TN FAFSA Frenzy:** Beginning on October 1 through early January, schools and organizations across Tennessee will host events to promote filing the FAFSA. Many schools, in partnership with the TSAC outreach specialist team, will host financial aid nights for families and provide information on how to pay for college, including many grants and scholarships available from the state of Tennessee. Students will also get assistance in completing the FAFSA before the January 17 Tennessee Promise deadline. More information on TN FAFSA Frenzy is available [here](#).

"Students don't have to go far for help with any step of the college process," THEC Executive Director Mike Krause said. Krause most recently served as the executive director of the Drive to 55 and Tennessee Promise. "Financial aid assistance, help filling out college applications, and one-on-one advising are available to more Tennessee students than ever. Partners at the state, regional, and local levels are making sure that those resources are always reaching further."

This fall's college access events also coincide with the launch of Advise TN, a college advising program that will be implemented this fall in [30 high schools across the state](#).

Since the launch of the Drive to 55 in 2013 and Tennessee Promise in 2014, Tennessee has seen unprecedented growth in both college-going and access to financial aid. Tennessee leads the nation in FAFSA filing rates. In 2016, Tennessee's filing rate stood at 70.3 percent, nearly ten percentage points higher than Massachusetts, the state that came in second for FAFSA filing.

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission was created in 1967 by the Tennessee General Assembly. The Commission develops, implements, and evaluates postsecondary education policies and programs in Tennessee while coordinating the state's systems of higher education, and is relentlessly focused on increasing the number of Tennesseans with a postsecondary credential.

The Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation is the State of Tennessee's non-profit corporation responsible for the administration of postsecondary financial aid programs. TSAC provides financial assistance for postsecondary educational opportunities to Tennessee residents and other students who have established eligibility in accordance with program guidelines. TSAC also provides outreach services to schools and students to assist with making responsible financial aid decisions, emphasizing responsible borrowing and repayment.