

# Student Access & Success Data

Quarterly Meeting of the Tennessee Board of Regents

December 2020

# Updates on Student Access & Success

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# The Impact of COVID-19 on Low-Income Students

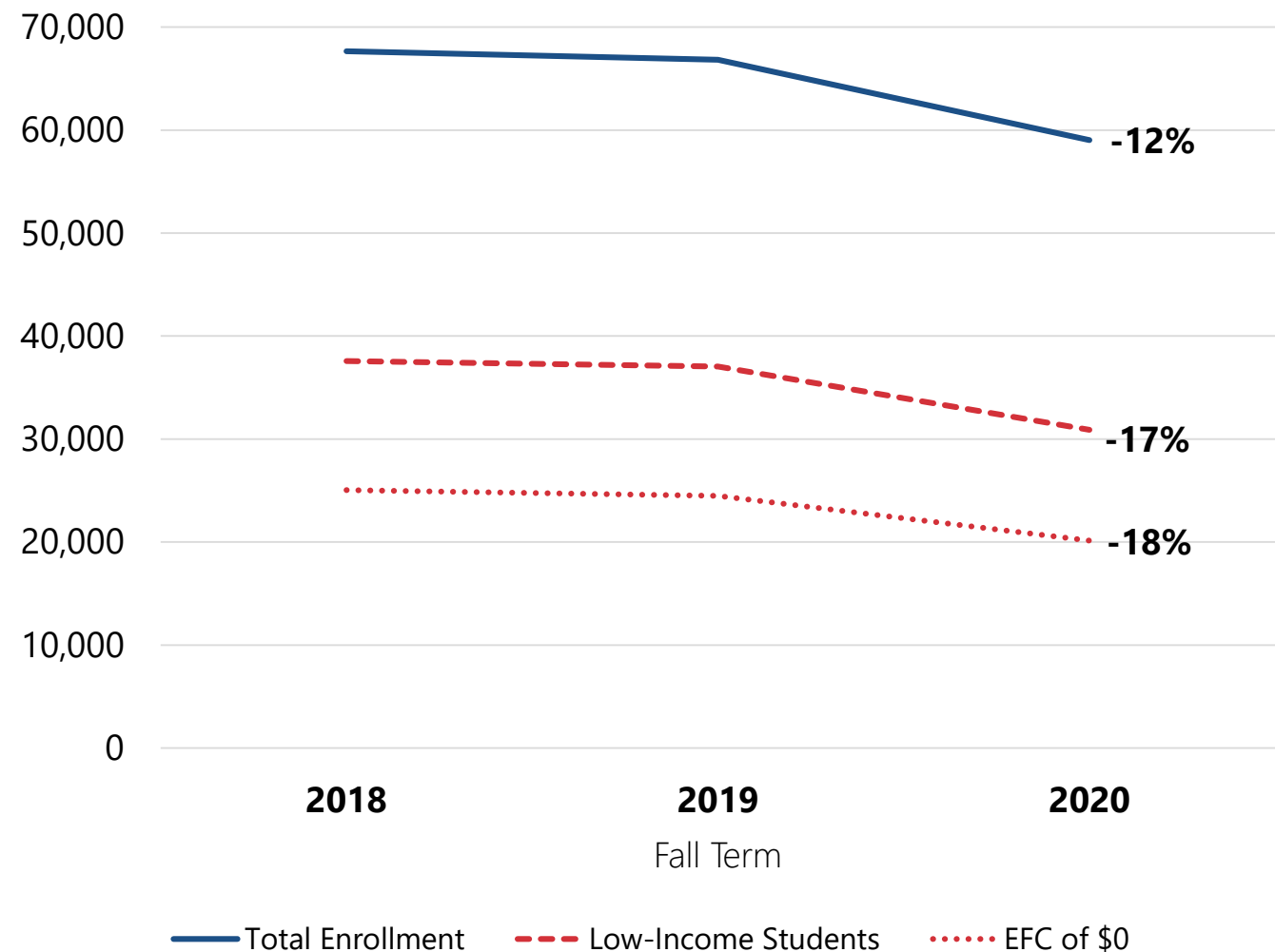
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This fall, enrollment by low-income students declined more sharply than enrollments by other students.

Among all students, enrollment at community colleges declined 12% from fall 2019 to fall 2020.

However, enrollment by low-income students declined **17%**. That translates to 4,300 fewer low-income students.

Enrollment at Community Colleges, Fall 2019 to Fall 2020



\*Fall 2020 enrollment is preliminary and based on census enrollment data. This data excludes dual enrollment students and non-degree seeking students. Low-income students are those whose EFC (expected family contribution) falls below what is required to be eligible for a Pell grant.

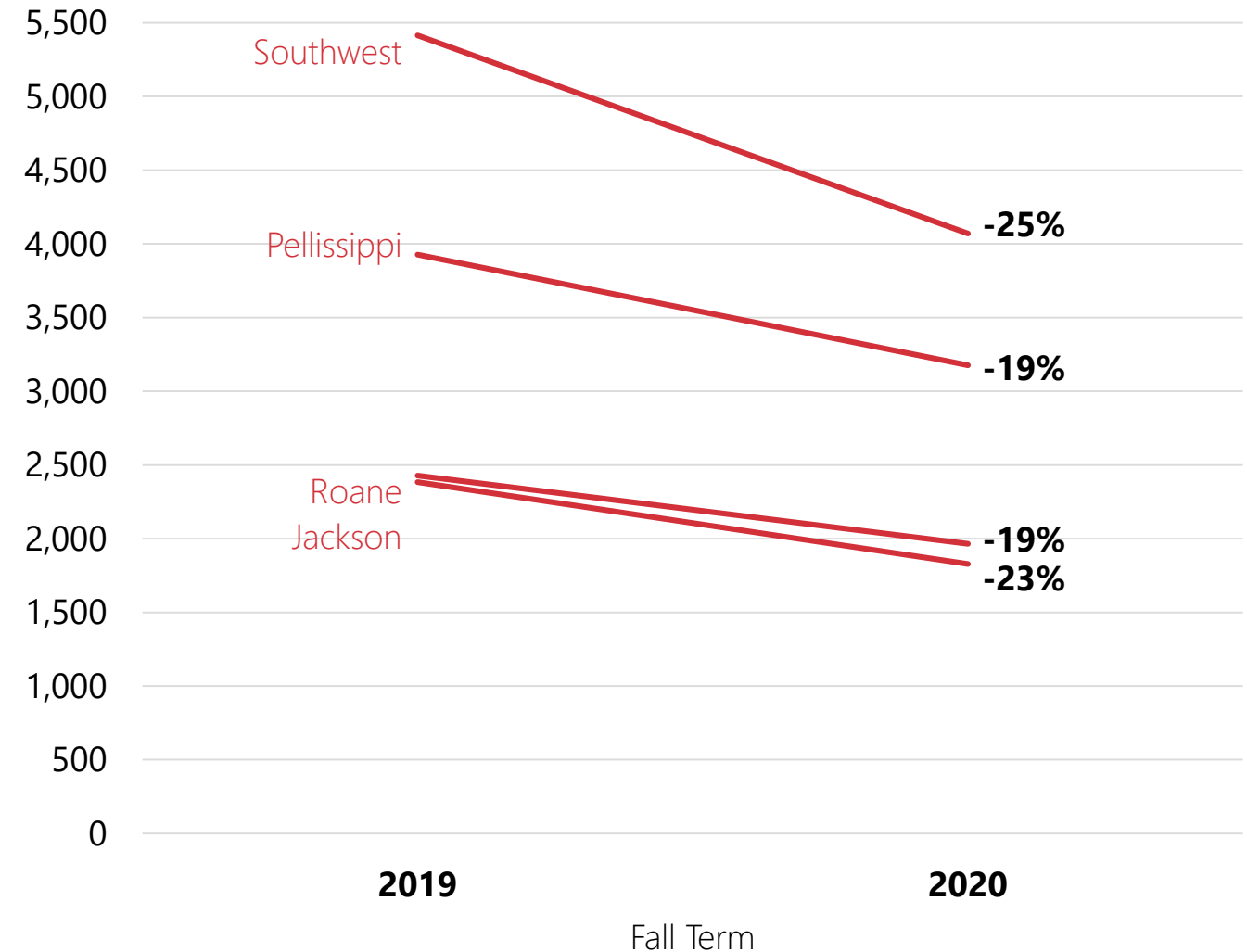
# Enrollment declines among low-income students were especially pronounced at some colleges.

Enrollment by low-income students at Southwest declined 25% from fall 2019 to 2020.

That's 1,300 fewer students.

Enrollment by students with an EFC of \$0 declined 27% at Southwest.

## Number of Low-Income Students at Community Colleges

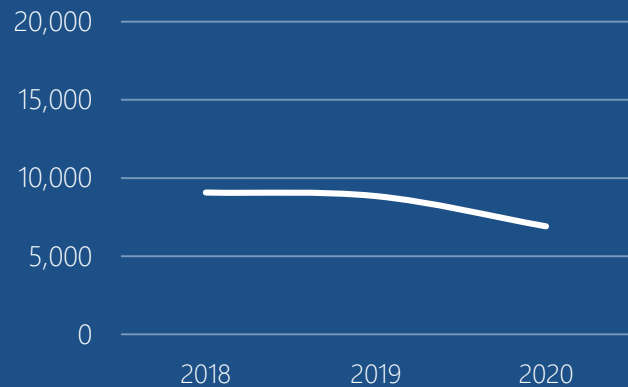


\*Fall 2020 enrollment is preliminary and based on census enrollment data. This data excludes dual enrollment students and non-degree seeking students. Low-income students are those whose EFC (expected family contribution) falls below what is required to be eligible for a Pell grant.

# Enrollment declines were more significant among Black low-income students.

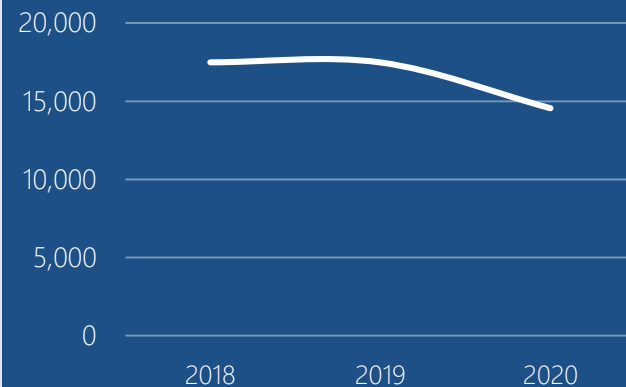
## Enrollment by Black low-income students

declined **22%** from 2019 to 2020.  
That's 1,900 fewer students.



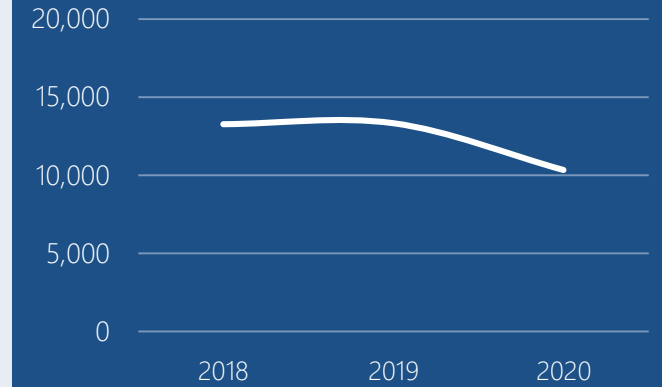
## Enrollment by low-income first-generation college students

declined **17%** from 2019 to 2020.  
That's 2,900 fewer students.



## Enrollment by academically underprepared low-income students

declined **22%** from 2019 to 2020.  
That's 3,000 fewer students.



# Rethinking Remediation & Placement

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# More than half of first-time students at community colleges require additional learning support.

*In fall 2019, before COVID-19...*

**59%**

of first-time, full-time students at Tennessee community colleges required learning support in at least one subject area.

*Learning support is a key part of colleges' work to close equity gaps.*

**81%**

of first-time, full-time Black students were placed into learning support in fall 2019, along with 64% of Hispanic students.

*Colleges use test scores to identify learning support needs.*

However, research shows that students' learning support needs may be more accurately identified through **multiple measures** of readiness (like ACT score plus high school GPA).



# The multiple measures pilot allows students to be placed out of remediation based on high school GPA.

In March 2020, the Tennessee Board of Regents approved a multiple measures pilot study for all community colleges.



The pilot adds high school GPA as a method for placement (alongside traditional measures like ACT scores).



Students with a high school GPA of 3.6 or higher can bypass remediation, regardless of their test scores.



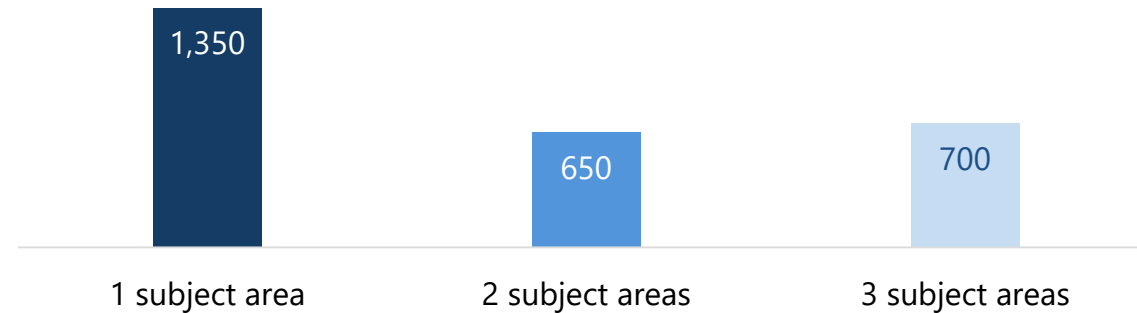
At three colleges, students can provisionally place out of remediation if their high school GPA is between 2.8 - 3.6.

# More than 2,700 students have potentially placed out of remediation through the multiple measures pilot.

In Fall 2020, 2,700 first-time-freshman, recent high school graduates were potentially impacted by this pilot.

- These students could bypass remediation based on their high school GPA.
- Compared to students who did not need learning support, the pilot students were more likely to be Black and female.
- Grant funding from the Education Commission of the States will allow TBR to evaluate the effectiveness of this pilot and further refine these efforts.

**Half of these students could bypass remediation in multiple subject areas.**



**85% of these students needed additional support in math.**

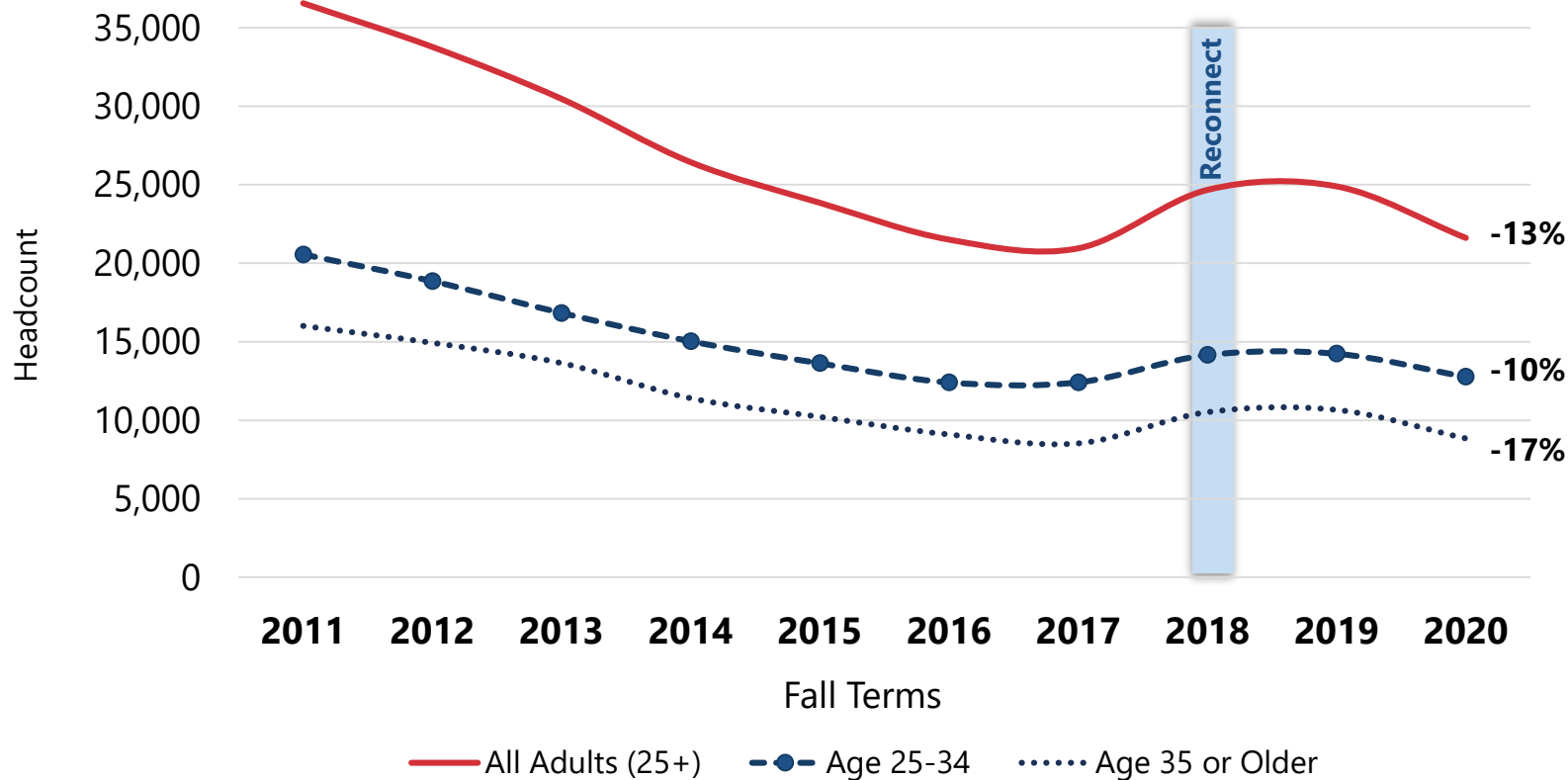


\*Preliminary fall 2020 enrollment is based on census enrollment data. Includes first-time freshmen who entered college within a year of high school graduation. Preliminary placement data is based on ACT scores & GPA, not whether students enrolled in learning support.

# New Strategies for Supporting Adult Students

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In fall 2020, 21,600 adult students enrolled at community colleges, a decline of 13% compared to last fall.



\*Preliminary fall 2020 enrollment is based on unedited census (14th day) enrollment data.

Enrollment of adult students (age 25+) at Tennessee community colleges peaked during the Great Recession.

From 2011 to 2017, adult enrollment declined 43%, representing a decrease of 15,600 students.

Tennessee Reconnect launched in 2018 and helped adults attend community colleges free of tuition and fees. Adult enrollment increased 18% from 2017 to 2018.

In fall 2020, adult enrollment declined to pre-Reconnect levels.

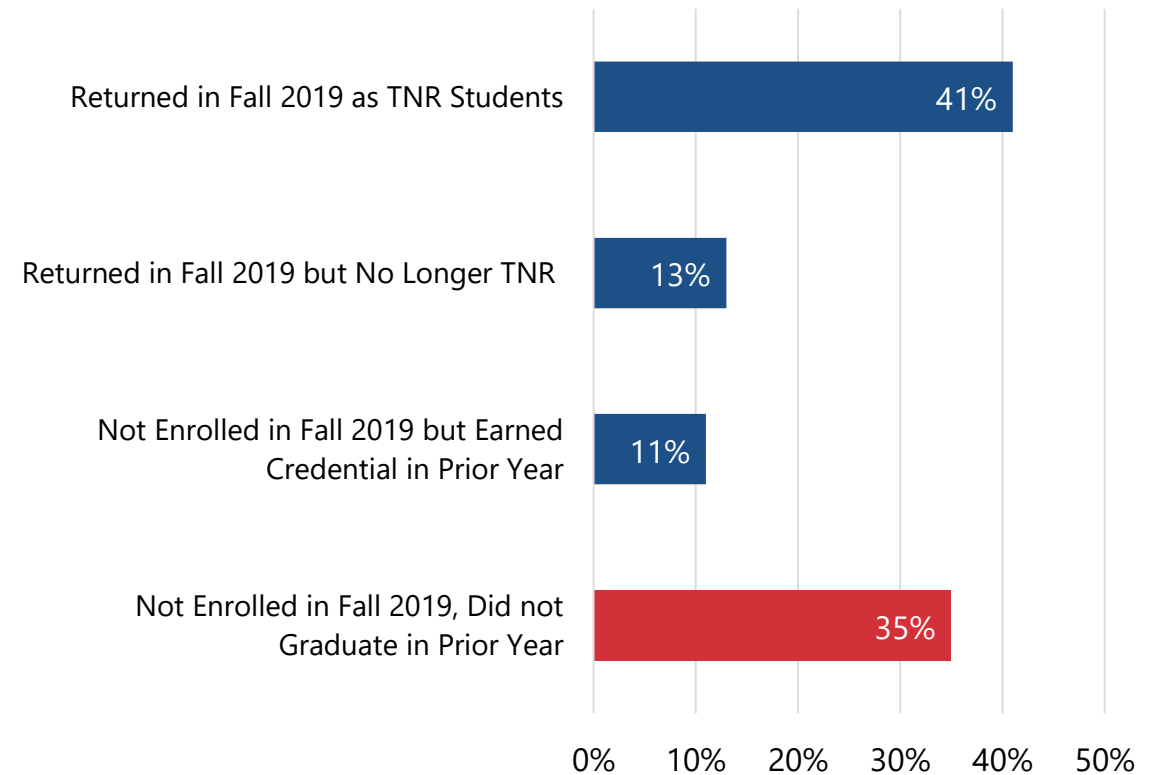
# Tennessee Reconnect helped drive increases in adults, but adult retention rates show room for improvement.

In 2018-19, more than **17,000 students** at community colleges participated in Tennessee Reconnect.

- **Only 52% of these students returned** to community colleges the following year and continued as Reconnect students (or graduated in the meantime).
- Student focus groups helped us understand the challenges faced by Reconnect students.

Support from Lumina Foundation and partnership with the University of Virginia Nudge4 Lab helped colleges identify strategies to support these students.

**Outcomes for Tennessee Reconnect Students at Community Colleges**  
*Students from the 2018-2019 Academic Year*



# Colleges are piloting new strategies to ensure adult students remain enrolled and Reconnect-eligible.

## **Direct outreach**

through targeted “nudges.”

In spring and summer 2020, colleges sent targeted messages to adult students through campus portals, emails, and text messages (with support from experts at the University of Virginia Nudge Lab).

## **Faculty outreach**

through class time dedicated to Reconnect.

In fall 2020, faculty at Nashville and Southwest were invited to help. Participating faculty reserved class time to help students apply or reapply for Reconnect. Over 350 faculty participated.

## **Peer outreach**

from mentors to new Reconnect students.

In spring 2021, Nashville State and Southwest will engage experienced Reconnect students to serve as peer mentors to new Reconnect students. Up to 500 students will be selected to receive a Reconnect mentor.

# Early Data on Fall 2020 Outcomes

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# Early data on fall 2020 outcomes

Course withdrawal rates have increased slightly at some colleges, but total student withdrawals have not changed significantly.

- **Course Withdrawals in Fall 2020**

- At 8 community colleges, the number of course withdrawals in fall 2020 increased slightly compared to fall 2019.
- Some positive exceptions:
  - Course withdrawal rates improved at Northeast State. In fall 2020, 7.7% of students withdrew from a class, compared to 9.0% in fall 2019.
  - Motlow State saw a slight uptick in the rate of course withdrawals compared to last year. However, withdrawals rates from online and hybrid courses improved over fall 2019.

- **Student Complete Withdrawals in Fall 2020**

- At most community colleges, the number of complete student withdrawals (where the student drops out of the college) held steady compared to last year.
- At Nashville State, the rate of complete student withdrawal improved from 6.4% in fall 2019 to 5.1% in fall 2020.



# Key Findings

- New data on fall 2020 enrollment tells the story of COVID-19's impact on low-income students. At Tennessee community colleges, **enrollment by low-income students declined 17% compared to last fall.**
- Through a pilot project, colleges are using *multiple measures* to identify who needs additional learning support. **As many as 2,700 students were affected by the pilot this fall.**
- Colleges are testing new strategies to support and retain Reconnect students through **faculty outreach, peer mentorship, and other “nudges.”**
- Early data on fall 2020 outcomes shows the positive impact of colleges' efforts this fall. Although some colleges saw slight upticks in course withdrawals, **student withdrawal rates are not increasing** at most community colleges.