



High School Senior Opinion Survey

Class of 2017

August 25, 2017



Tennessee Higher Education Commission

Tennessee Higher Education Commission

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Executive Summary

In March 2017, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) conducted a survey of high school seniors (N=1,617) from 12 public high schools and 1 private high school. The purpose of this survey was to collect information about students' post-high school plans, factors influencing their plans, their knowledge of financial aid for postsecondary education, and background information about their academic preparation. The survey results clarify the many factors that affect students' decisions about whether and where to attend a postsecondary institution.

Postsecondary Plans

- 87.2 percent of survey respondents planned to pursue postsecondary education. The majority of students (56.2 percent) planned to attend a four-year institution, and 21.5 percent planned to attend a community college.

Demographic and Academic Characteristics

- Racial/ethnic minority students, first generation students, and students from low-income households were less likely to plan on postsecondary education than their white, continuing generation, and higher-income peers.
- Students with an ACT score below 18 and a GPA below 2.0 were less likely to plan on postsecondary education than their peers with higher ACT scores and GPAs.

Academic Background

- The majority (88.3%) of students had spoken with a guidance counselor about postsecondary education. Students were most likely to discuss financial aid options, filling out the FAFSA, and different types of postsecondary institutions with their counselor.
- 43.1 percent of students had attempted Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses, and 43.8 percent had attempted dual enrollment courses.

College Consideration

- Students who first considered college in elementary school (96.4 percent) or middle school (95.2 percent) were more likely to plan on postsecondary enrollment than students who did not consider college until their senior year (67.6 percent).
- Students who planned to enroll at a community college often had higher attainment goals than an associate degree: 37.8 percent hoped to earn a bachelor's degree, 10.5 percent hoped to earn a master's degree, and 5.5 percent hoped to earn a doctoral or professional degree.

Financial Considerations

- 70.1 percent of students who planned to enroll in postsecondary education indicated they will work part-time or full-time during college.
- 79.3 percent of students who planned to enroll in higher education indicated concerns about paying for college. This was especially true of students from households earning below \$40,000, with an ACT score below 21, and racial/ethnic minority students.
- Students expressed a high level of familiarity with the Tennessee Promise program (92.6 percent), and approximately half (49.3 percent) planned to complete all steps in the application process to maintain eligibility for Tennessee Promise.

Impact of Lottery Scholarship

- 13.8 percent of respondents indicated that their eligibility for a lottery scholarship will have a big impact on their decision whether or not to attend college.
- 8.7 percent of students reporting no postsecondary plans indicated they would attend college if they were eligible for a lottery scholarship. These students were more likely to be black or Hispanic.

Choice of College

- At the time of the survey, 87.4 percent of students had applied to at least one postsecondary institution; 41.7 percent had been accepted to an institution.
- Cost was one of the most important factors in a student's decision about where to attend college. Other important factors were academic reputation of programs, the city or environment of the institution, and proximity to home.

Plans during Postsecondary Enrollment

- 23.5 percent of students planned on majoring in a STEM field, and 19.5 percent planned on majoring in allied health or nursing.

Reasons for Deciding Not to Attend College

- Financial concerns were the most consistent reason that students chose not to attend college: 65.5 percent of students indicated the cost of college is too high, and 56 percent indicated that they need to support family instead of going to college.

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Introduction

In Spring 2017, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) conducted a survey of high school seniors (N=1,617) from 12 public high schools and 1 private high school. The survey contained questions about students' post-high school plans, factors influencing their plans, their knowledge of financial aid for postsecondary education, and background information about their academic preparation. This survey is administered to consenting schools and districts approximately every 2 years.

Methodology

This section provides a brief overview of the methodology employed for the 2017 survey administration. Fifty public and private high schools were randomly selected to participate in the survey. THEC then contacted the 50 schools to solicit participation in the survey. Of the 50 schools contacted, 13 agreed to administer the survey to their current senior class, resulting in a total valid sample of 1,617 students.

Table 1 shows that the schools included in the survey sample are quite diverse, in terms of demographic, socioeconomic, and academic characteristics.¹ (Values included in the table are rounded to the nearest percent, point, or hundred dollars to protect the confidentiality of participating schools.) Among the 12 public schools surveyed, the share of non-white students varied from 1 percent to 95 percent. The average ACT scores spanned ten points (from 15 to 25), and the college-going rate varied widely, from 32 percent to 85 percent. The public high schools that participated in the survey reflect the substantial demographic, socioeconomic, and academic diversity among public schools across the state.

Table 1. 2015-16 Characteristics of Participating Public High Schools

	Minimum Value	Maximum Value
Non-white	1%	95%
Economically Disadvantaged	0%	67%
Average ACT Composite Score	15	25
Met All 4 ACT Readiness Benchmarks	1%	48%
Eligible for HOPE Scholarship	6%	100%
High School Graduation Rate	73%	100%
Per Pupil Expenditure	\$7,800	\$9,800
College-going Rate	32%	85%

Table 2 provides a comparison of the gender and race/ethnicity of survey respondents to all ACT-tested seniors in the class of 2016 (prior year). This comparison indicates that male students and white students are overrepresented in the survey sample, while black and Hispanic students are underrepresented in the survey sample. It is important to note that the survey sample is relatively small, with only 2.1 percent

¹ Data for all public schools in Tennessee are available through the Tennessee Department of Education's annual Report Card, available at <https://www.tn.gov/education/topic/report-card>

of the approximately 75,000 public and private high school seniors participating. Therefore, the opinions expressed by the survey respondents may not be representative of all high school seniors in the state.

Table 2. Comparison of Survey Respondents to ACT-tested Class of 2016 (Tennessee)

	Survey Respondents, Class of 2017	ACT-tested Tennessee Students, Class of 2016*
Gender		
<i>Male</i>	51.7%	46.0%
<i>Female</i>	45.2%	48.6%
<i>No response</i>	3.1%	5.4%
Race/Ethnicity		
<i>Black/African American</i>	10.8%	17.6%
<i>American Indian/Alaska Native</i>	0.5%	0.3%
<i>White</i>	77.1%	60.9%
<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	3.6%	6.0%
<i>Asian/Other Pacific Islander</i>	1.0%	2.0%
<i>Two or more races</i>	1.8%	3.1%
<i>Other/No response</i>	5.3%	10.1%

*The most recent ACT data available were for the Class of 2016.

THEC began administering this survey in 2000 and has adapted it over time to include questions about relevant programmatic efforts (e.g., TELS program and Tennessee Promise). This year’s version included a few new items to assess students’ knowledge of the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs) and to evaluate the impact of programs such as Tennessee Promise and Advise TN. The survey instrument with response frequencies for each item is included in **Appendix A**. Not all 1,617 students responded to every survey item; therefore, the count of valid responses varies by item. All results represent the responses to each survey item as a share of the number of students responding to that specific item.

Postsecondary Plans

Most of the survey respondents recognized the importance of higher education and planned to enroll in some form of postsecondary education. **Figure 1** displays if and where students planned to attend college. The vast majority of seniors (87.2 percent) planned to enroll in postsecondary education; the majority (56.2 percent) planned to enroll at a four-year college or university. A small share of students indicated that they did not plan to attend college (5.7 percent), and 7.1 percent of students were not sure of their postsecondary plans at the time of the survey.

Figure 1. Postsecondary Plans of 2017 High School Seniors

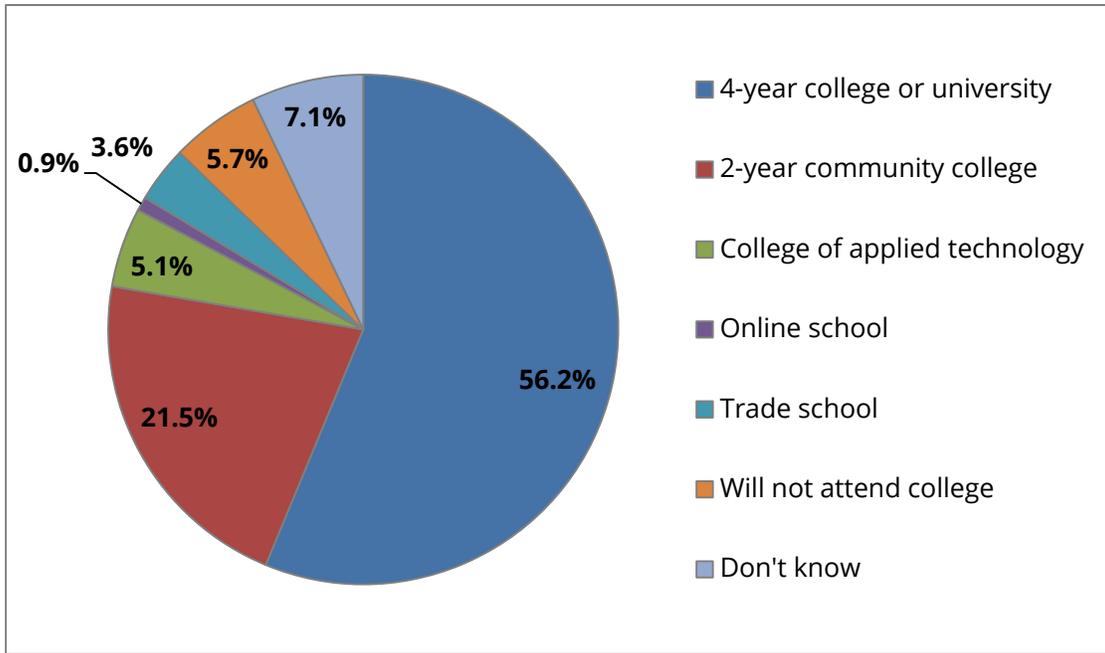
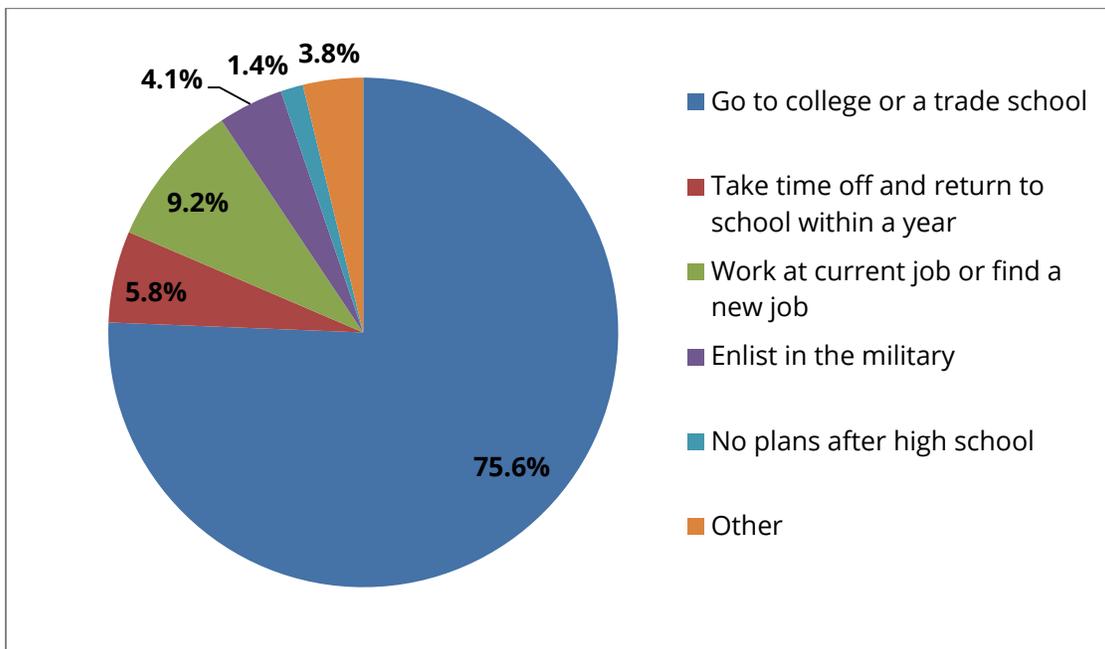


Figure 2 shows high school seniors' plans for Fall 2017, the semester immediately after their high school graduation. Approximately three-quarters of students planned to go to college or a trade school immediately following high school graduation, which is 12 percentage points lower than the share of students who planned to pursue postsecondary education at some point (shown in **Figure 1**). This indicates that some students planned to delay their enrollment in postsecondary education to work (9.2 percent), take time off (5.8 percent), or serve in the military (4.1 percent).

Figure 2. Fall Semester Plans of 2017 High School Seniors

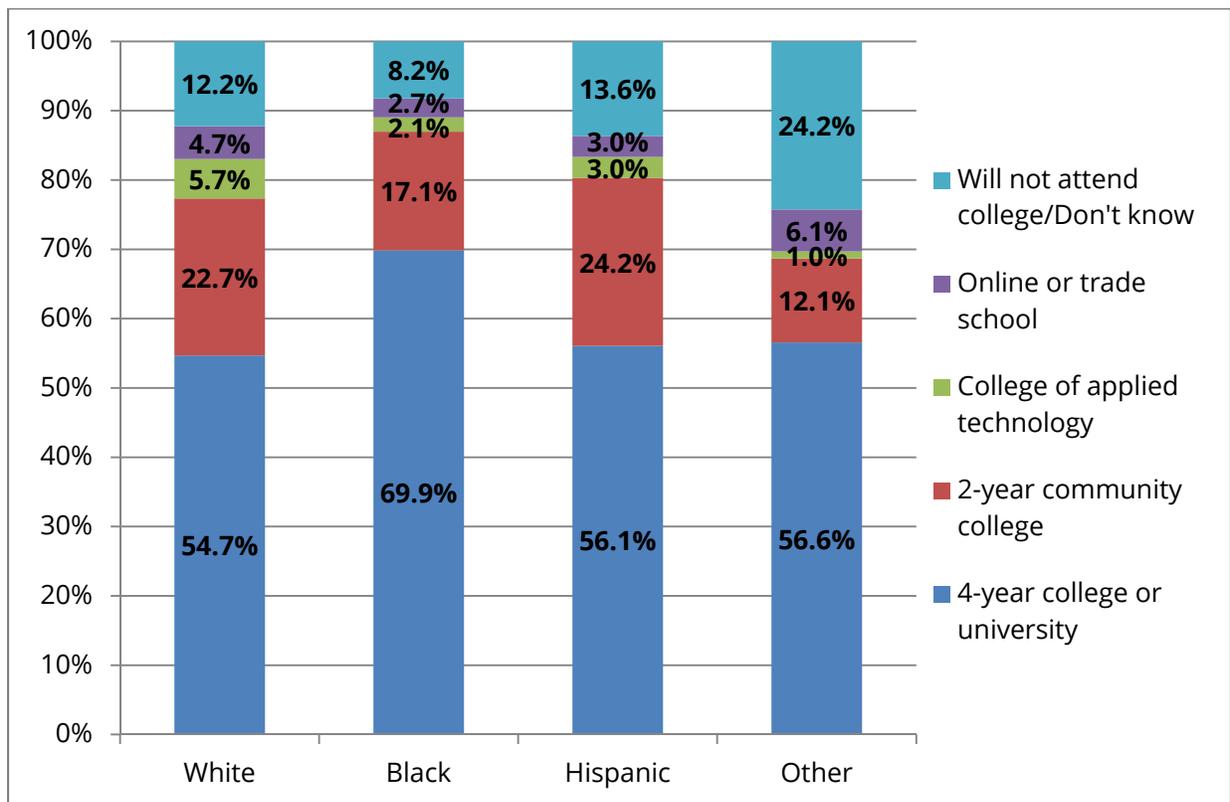


Demographic and Academic Characteristics

Figures 3 through **7** provide insight about surveyed students' postsecondary plans, disaggregated by selected demographic and academic characteristics. Students' postsecondary plans are grouped into five response categories: (1) will not attend college/don't know, (2) attend an online or trade school, (3) attend a college of applied technology, (4) attend a community college, or (5) attend a four-year institution.

Figure 3 shows the notable differences in students' postsecondary plans based on race/ethnicity. Students in the "Other" category² were least likely to plan on postsecondary enrollment of any type, as 24.2 percent indicated they would not attend college or were unsure of their postsecondary plans. By contrast, black students were the most likely to plan on postsecondary enrollment, as only 8.2 percent indicated they would not attend college or were unsure of their postsecondary plans. The share of black students who planned to enroll at a four-year institution was nearly 70 percent, the highest among all racial/ethnic groups. Approximately 56 percent of white, Hispanic, and Other students planned to enroll at a four-year institution. White and Hispanic students were most likely to plan on community college or TCAT enrollment. These results emphasize the importance of informing students about various postsecondary options (community colleges, TCATs, and online/trade schools) so that they will be empowered to choose a school that is the right fit.

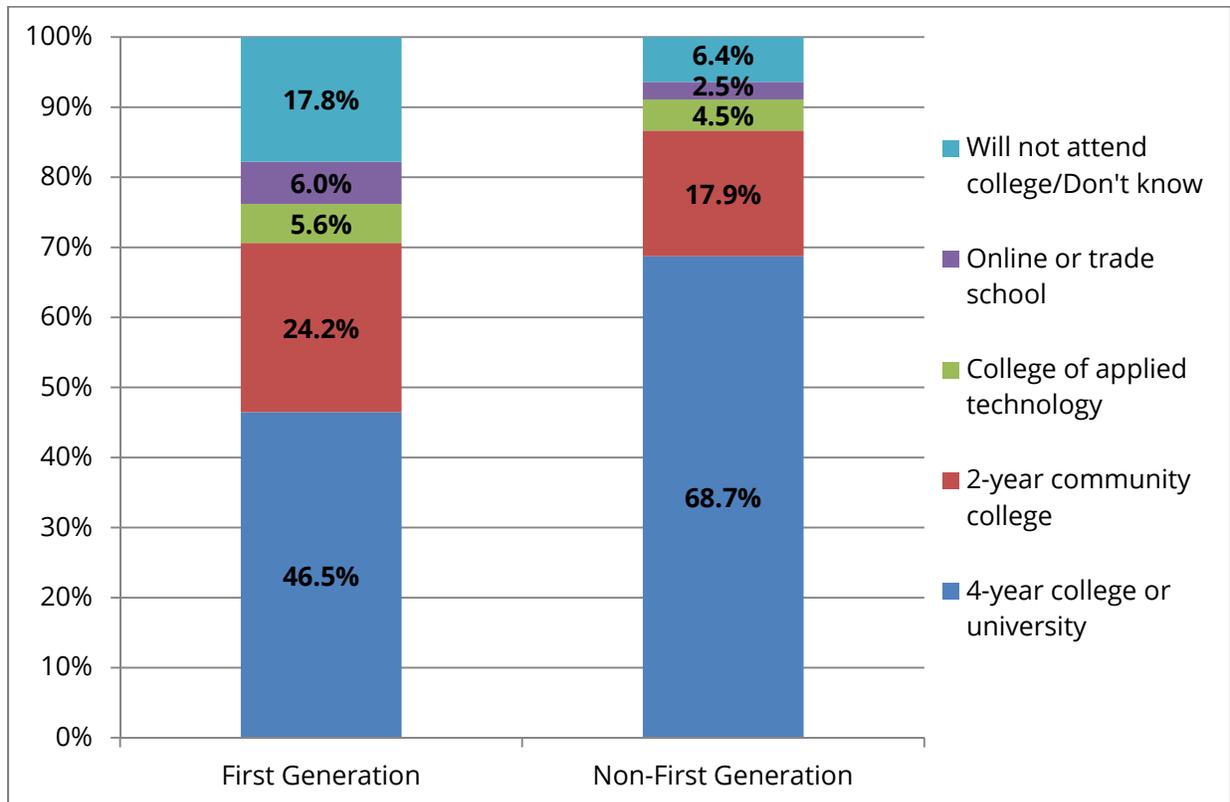
Figure 3. Postsecondary Plans by Race/Ethnicity



² The "Other" race/ethnicity category includes the five following survey response options: American Indian/Native American, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, Multiracial, and Other.

Figure 4 indicates that parents' educational attainment also influenced students' postsecondary plans.³ Compared to their non-first generation peers, a much higher share of first generation students did not plan to attend college/were unsure of their postsecondary plans (17.8 percent) or planned to enroll at a lower-cost institution: a community college (24.2 percent), a TCAT (5.6 percent), or an online or trade school (6 percent). Only 46.5 percent of first generation students planned to enroll at a four-year institution, compared to 68.7 percent of non-first generation students. These data support existing evidence that parental educational attainment is associated with students' postsecondary plans.

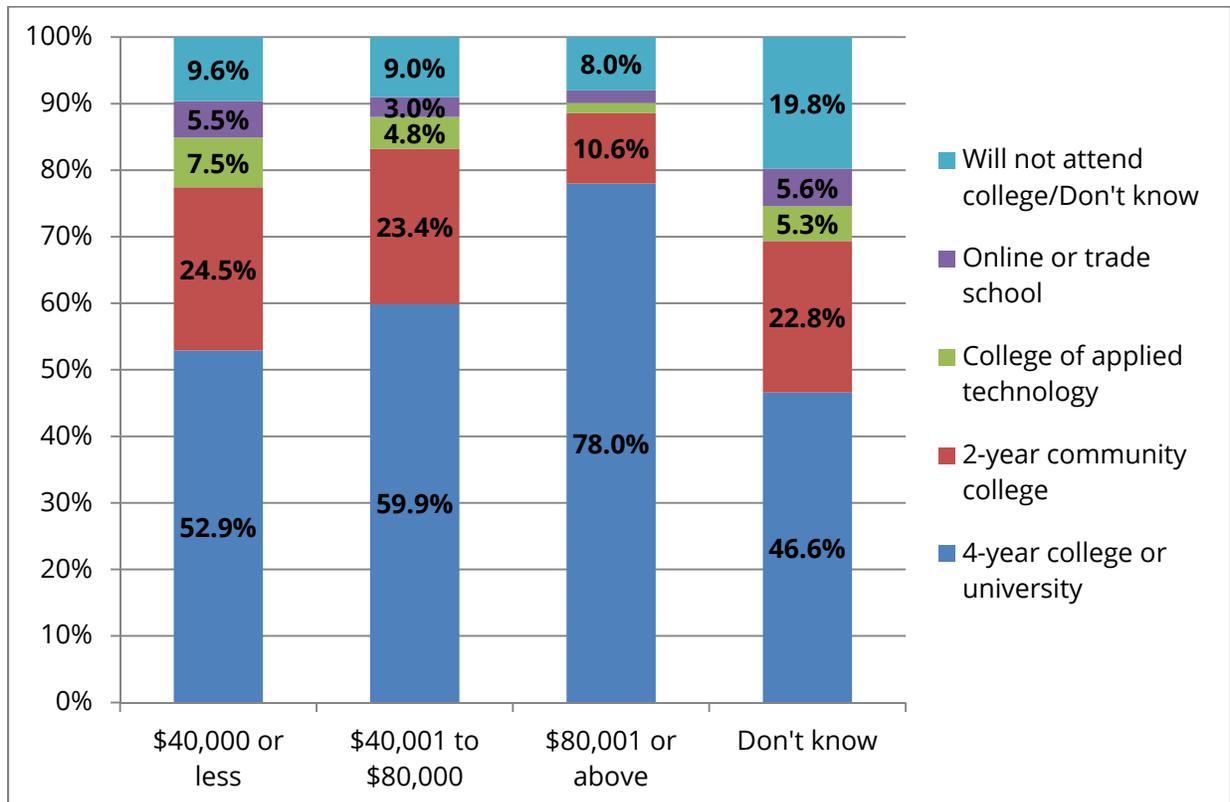
Figure 4. Postsecondary Plans by First Generation Status



³ In this analysis, a first generation student is a student whose parents do not have a college degree or technical certificate. Non-first generation students have at least one parent with a college degree or technical certificate. 54.4 percent of respondents are considered first generation students.

Figure 5 depicts the relationship between annual family income and students' postsecondary plans.⁴ Consistent with prior work on this topic, the low-income group (\$40,000 or less) had the lowest share of students who planned to enroll at a four-year institution (52.9 percent) and a higher share of students who did not plan to attend college (9.6 percent). By comparison, middle-income (\$40,001 to \$80,000) and high-income (\$80,001 or above) students had a higher share of students who planned to enroll at a four-year institution (59.9 and 78 percent, respectively). These results indicate that students from more affluent families planned to enroll at a four-year institution more frequently than their low-income peers.

Figure 5. Postsecondary Plans by Estimated Family Income



⁴ Students were asked to estimate their family's income bracket (response options were in \$20,000 increments); a substantial share of students (36 percent) selected the "Don't know" response option.

Figure 6 shows that students' ACT score (self-reported) also played a role in students' postsecondary plans. Predictably, students with higher ACT scores were more likely to plan to enroll at a four-year institution as compared to their lower-scoring peers. One-third of students in the lowest ACT bracket (composite score of 1-17) planned to enroll at a four-year institution, compared to 87.6 percent of students with a score of 29-36. Conversely, students with lower ACT scores were less likely to plan to enroll in any type of postsecondary education. Approximately 21.5 percent of students with an ACT score of 1-17 indicated they would not attend college or were unsure of their postsecondary plans, compared to 1.3 percent of students with an ACT score of 29-36. Students with an ACT score below 21 were more likely to plan to enroll at a community college or TCAT.

Figure 6. Postsecondary Plans by Highest ACT Score

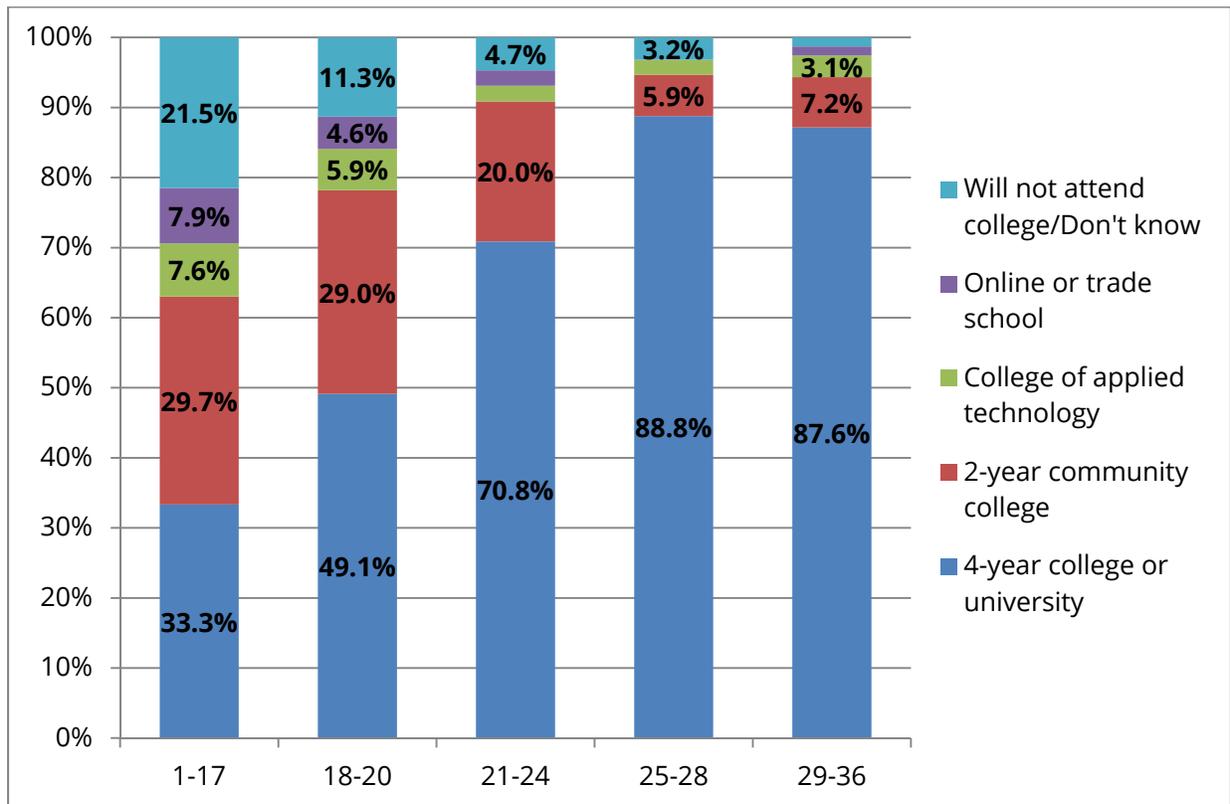
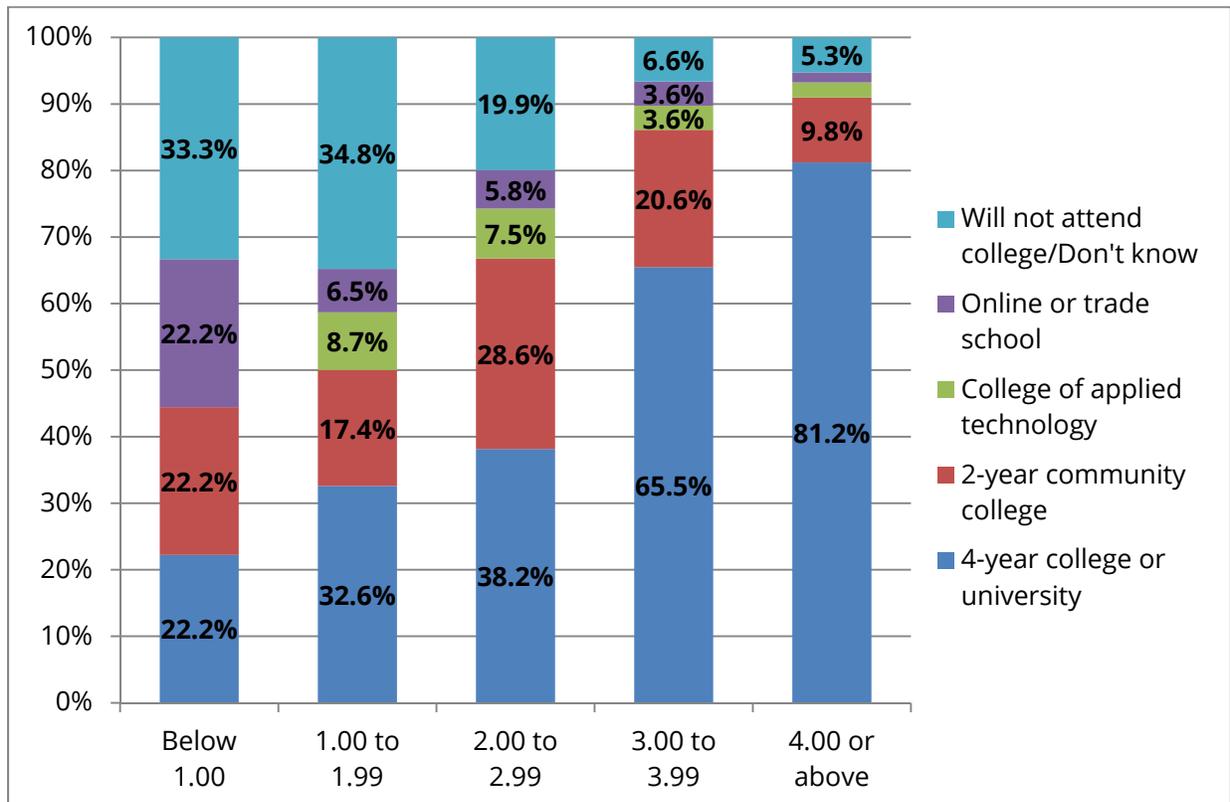


Figure 7 shows students' postsecondary plans disaggregated by self-reported high school GPA. As expected, students with a higher high school GPA were more likely to indicate plans to enroll at a four-year institution. Only 22.2 percent of students in the lowest GPA bracket (below 1.00) planned to enroll at a four-year institution, compared to 81.2 percent of students with a GPA of 4.00 or higher. One-third of students with a GPA below 1.00 indicated they would not attend college or were unsure of their postsecondary plans, compared to 5.3 percent of students with a GPA of 4.00 or higher.

Figure 7. Postsecondary Plans by High School GPA



Academic Background

Students were asked to estimate how often (in the last year) they discussed continuing their education after high school with a parent/guardian or a high school guidance counselor. Results indicate that students were much more likely to discuss postsecondary education with a parent/guardian rather than a guidance counselor. Approximately 10.6 percent of students responded that they did not discuss postsecondary education with their parent/guardian in the last year, compared to 27.3 percent who did not discuss postsecondary education with a guidance counselor. Furthermore, students discussed college options more regularly with a parent/guardian. Exactly half (50 percent) of students reported discussing postsecondary education with a parent/guardian at least once a week, whereas only 13.5 percent of students reported discussing postsecondary education with a guidance counselor at least once a week. This may be at least partly attributable to the fact that many public high schools across the state exceed the maximum recommended student-to-school counselor ratio. The mean student-to-school counselor

ratio in Tennessee is 439:1, though the national recommendation is 250:1.⁵ Measuring against this national benchmark, over 90 percent of school districts in Tennessee have a counselor shortage, making it difficult for school counselors to adequately serve all students.

Table 3 shows the share of students who had ever discussed the eight topics listed below with a guidance counselor. For each of the eight topics, more than 60 percent of students responded “yes.” Students were most likely to have discussed financial aid options (77.2 percent), completing the FAFSA (71.7 percent), and different types of postsecondary institutions (70 percent) with a guidance counselor. These results suggest that high school guidance counselors are communicating with the majority of high school students and providing them with the appropriate information about higher education.

Table 3. Topics Discussed with Guidance Counselor

Topics Discussed with High School Guidance Counselor	Yes	No	Count
Financial aid available to pay for college (scholarships, grants, loans, etc.)	77.2%	22.8%	1,485
How to fill out the FAFSA	71.7%	28.3%	1,476
Different types of institutions (technical colleges, community colleges, 4-year universities, public versus private institutions, etc.)	70.0%	30.0%	1,499
Whether or not to go to college	68.1%	31.9%	1,493
Possible majors in college	63.1%	36.9%	1,489
The cost of college	61.5%	38.5%	1,491
What classes to take in order to prepare for college	60.6%	39.4%	1,484
Career options (with or without college)	60.1%	39.9%	1,483

The survey also inquired about students’ knowledge of and participation in early postsecondary opportunities such as Advanced Placement (AP) courses, International Baccalaureate (IB) courses, and dual enrollment (DE) courses. Approximately 57 percent of students had not attempted any AP or IB courses, and a similar share (56.2 percent) had not attempted any DE courses. When asked how well the school had informed them about DE courses, less than half (48.1 percent) of students indicated that they knew what DE courses are and how to take them. **Tables 4** and **5** disaggregate these numbers by students’ postsecondary plans. The results are predictable: more than half of students who planned to enroll at a four-year institution attempted at least one AP/IB course (51.6 percent) or DE course (52 percent), whereas students who did not plan to enroll at a four-year institution were much less likely to have taken AP/IB or DE courses (31.1 and 32.8, respectively).

⁵ Data about the student-to-school counselor ratio in Tennessee were provided in the Tennessee Department of Education’s *Seamless Pathways* report, available at https://tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/rpt_high_school-seamless_pathways.pdf

Table 4. AP/IB Courses Attempted by Postsecondary Plans

Postsecondary Plans	No AP/IB Courses	1 or More AP/IB Courses	Total
4-year college or university	48.4%	51.6%	864
Community college	63.9%	36.1%	319
TCAT	77.5%	22.5%	71
Online or trade school	69.8%	30.2%	63
Will not attend college/Don't know	74.0%	26.0%	173

Table 5. DE Courses Attempted by Postsecondary Plans

Postsecondary Plans	No DE Courses	1 or More DE Courses	Total
4-year college or university	48.0%	52.0%	863
Community college	68.8%	31.2%	324
TCAT	62.0%	38.0%	71
Online or trade school	54.7%	45.3%	64
Will not attend college/Don't know	70.9%	29.1%	175

College Consideration

Students who planned to enroll in postsecondary education began considering college at an early age. **Figure 8** shows that students who first considered college in elementary school were much more likely to plan on postsecondary enrollment than students who did not consider college until their senior year (96.4 versus 67.6 percent). Further, students who first considered college in elementary school were more likely to plan to enroll at a four-year institution than those whose first consideration of college was later in their academic career. Approximately 78.9 percent of students who first considered college in elementary school planned to enroll at a four-year institution, compared to 24.3 percent of students who first considered college as a senior in high school. These data demonstrate the importance of early awareness of postsecondary opportunities; the earlier students are exposed to the idea of going to college, the more likely they are to plan on postsecondary enrollment.

Figure 8. Postsecondary Plans by First Consideration of College

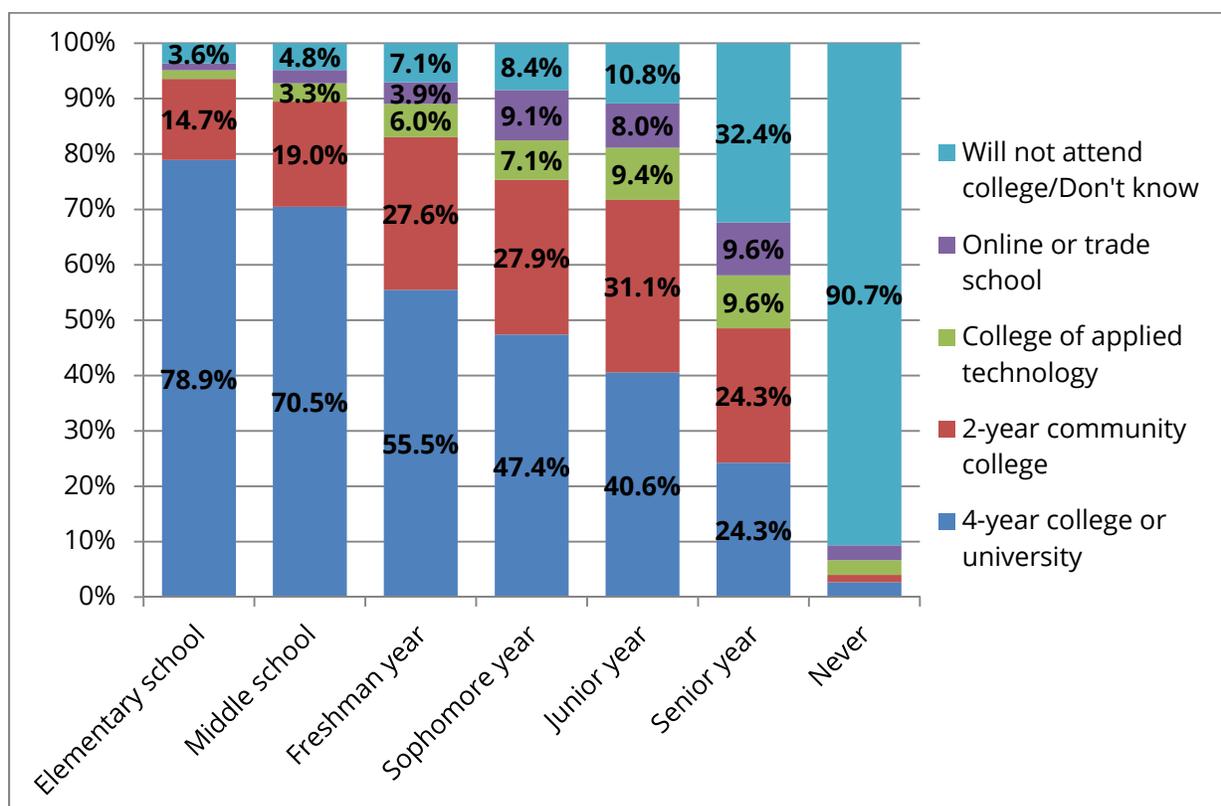


Figure 9 shows students' highest degree desired disaggregated by their postsecondary plans. The majority of students who planned to enroll at a four-year institution (52.8 percent) hoped to earn a graduate degree, with an approximately even split between master's degree and doctoral/advanced professional degree (25.8 and 26.9 percent, respectively).

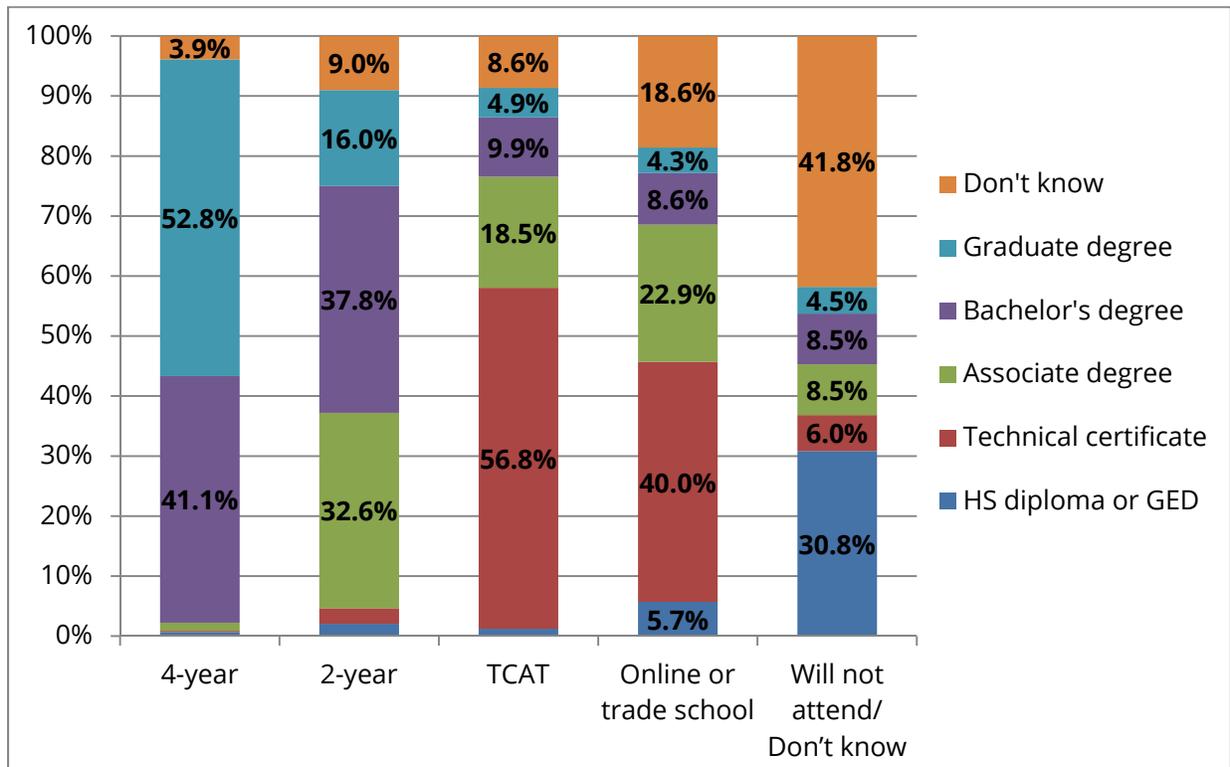
Results also show that most students who planned to enroll at a community college hoped to continue their education beyond an associate degree; 37.8 percent aimed for a bachelor's degree, and 16 percent aimed for a graduate degree. These data are mutually exclusive, meaning that (in total) 53.8 percent of students who planned on community college enrollment hoped to earn at least a bachelor's degree. However, only 26.3 percent of Fall 2010 first-time, full-time freshmen actually graduated with an associate or bachelor's degree in the six years following their enrollment at a Tennessee community college,⁶ indicating a mismatch between students' postsecondary plans and their actual attainment.

In contrast to those who planned on community college or university enrollment, many of the students who planned to enroll at a TCAT (56.8 percent) expected a technical certificate to be the highest degree they earn. This is not surprising, considering their prospective careers. However, an additional 18.5 percent hoped to earn an associate degree, and 14.8 percent hoped to progress to a bachelor's degree or higher.

⁶ Graduation rate data from THEC's 2016-2017 Tennessee Higher Education Fact Book, available at http://tn.gov/assets/entities/thec/attachments/2016-17_Fact_Book_Suppressed_Final_2.pdf

Students who did not plan to enroll at a postsecondary institution after graduation expressed substantial uncertainty about their postsecondary goals, as 41.8 percent indicated that they did not know what their highest desired degree was at the time of the survey. However, 8.5 percent hoped to earn a bachelor’s degree in the future, and 4.5 percent hoped to earn a graduate degree. It may be the case that students without postsecondary plans need more time and more information to make a decision about their postsecondary goals.

Figure 9. Highest Degree Desired by Postsecondary Plans



Financial Considerations

Postsecondary education typically entails substantial expense. Survey respondents (both those with and without postsecondary plans) tended to overestimate the cost of public institutions and underestimate the cost of small private and online for-profit institutions, as shown in **Table 6**. Survey respondents were generally concerned about covering these costs, but also planned to earn the necessary funds. Concerns about paying for college were especially prevalent among students from Hispanic and Other racial/ethnic groups, students from low-income households, and students with lower ACT scores.

Table 6 shows the results of a survey item that asked students to estimate the cost of tuition and fees (excluding the cost of housing, meal plans, books, etc.) at various types of institutions. **Table 6** indicates the share of students who estimated below the actual cost, estimated correctly, and estimated above the actual cost for each institution or institution type. For each of the in-state public institutions, the majority of students estimated above the actual cost. Conversely, students tended to underestimate the cost of a

small private school (e.g., Freed-Hardeman University, Christian Brothers University) or online for-profit institution (e.g., University of Phoenix). These results emphasize prior findings that students generally lack information about the cost of higher education. Public institutions in particular may benefit from being proactive about providing prospective students with tuition information, since these data indicate that students tended to overestimate the cost of a public institution.

Table 6. Estimated Tuition Costs at Various Institutions

How much do you think tuition costs?	Estimated below actual	Estimated correctly	Estimated above actual	Total
APSU	20.6%	23.0%	56.3%	1,407
Large private university	37.7%	62.2%	0.0%	1,396
Nashville State	19.5%	23.9%	56.6%	1,393
Chattanooga State	21.1%	21.9%	57.1%	1,363
UTK	20.2%	19.6%	60.3%	1,400
Small private school	65.2%	20.0%	14.8%	1,409
Online, for-profit institution	62.9%	17.9%	19.2%	1,401
TSU	17.3%	21.1%	61.7%	1,399
Out-of-state public university	37.5%	26.2%	36.5%	1,418

The vast majority of students who planned to pursue postsecondary education were concerned about paying for college. (79.3 percent indicated “Some” or “Major” concern.) **Table 7** shows that students’ level of concern varied by gender, race/ethnicity, ACT score, and income. “Major” concerns were more prevalent among students in the Hispanic and Other racial/ethnic groups (33.3 and 24.6 percent, respectively), from households earning \$40,000 or less (32.5 percent), and with an ACT score below 21 (24.5 percent). As expected, students from households earning \$80,001 or more were least likely to express concern about paying for college. (37.2 percent indicated “No concern.”)

Table 7. Concern about Paying for College by Gender, Race, ACT, and Income

	No Concern	Some Concern	Major Concern	Total
Gender				1,281
<i>Male</i>	24.6%	56.5%	18.9%	618
<i>Female</i>	17.2%	59.4%	23.4%	638
<i>Prefer not to answer</i>	20.0%	44.0%	36.0%	25
Race/Ethnicity				1,262
<i>White</i>	21.6%	57.5%	20.8%	1,027
<i>Black</i>	19.1%	60.9%	20.0%	115
<i>Hispanic</i>	15.7%	51.0%	33.3%	51
<i>Other</i>	18.8%	56.5%	24.6%	69
Highest ACT Score				1,182
<i>1 to 17</i>	23.0%	53.9%	23.0%	243
<i>18 to 20</i>	19.9%	54.5%	25.6%	312
<i>21 to 28</i>	19.3%	62.1%	18.6%	538
<i>29 to 36</i>	19.1%	65.2%	15.7%	89
Family Income				1,285
<i>\$40,000 or less</i>	12.1%	55.5%	32.5%	348
<i>\$40,001 to \$80,000</i>	18.2%	64.9%	16.8%	285
<i>\$80,001 or more</i>	37.2%	49.8%	13.0%	223
<i>Don't know</i>	20.3%	59.0%	20.7%	429
Total	20.8%	57.6%	21.7%	1,296

As shown in **Table 8**, nearly three-quarters of students (74.5 percent) who planned to enroll in postsecondary education will use scholarships to pay for college. Approximately 70 percent of students planned to pay for college by working a part-time or full-time job while enrolled, and a substantial share of students planned to pay for college using personal savings (43.9 percent) or a college savings fund (40.5 percent). These results show that students planned to be proactive about financing their education, rather than relying heavily on loans or credit cards to pay for college (34.5 and 4.5 percent, respectively).

Table 8. Plans to Pay for College

Do you plan to pay for college this way?	Yes	No	Don't know	Total count
Scholarships from the college	74.5%	7.6%	17.8%	1,334
Part-time/full-time job while in college	70.1%	12.7%	17.2%	1,326
My personal savings	43.9%	35.2%	20.8%	1,322
College savings fund	40.5%	37.9%	21.6%	1,324
My parent or guardian's income	39.6%	36.8%	23.6%	1,323
Federal or private loans	34.5%	37.4%	28.1%	1,320
Credit cards	4.5%	73.4%	22.1%	1,309

Table 9 shows students' familiarity with various types of financial aid programs. Students expressed a high level of familiarity with two state financial aid programs, the Tennessee Promise program (92.6 percent) and the HOPE scholarship program (71.2 percent). These results demonstrate that

communication with high school students about the availability of state financial aid programs is effective. Students expressed less familiarity with need-based federal financial aid programs such as the Pell grant and work study (57.7 and 35.8 percent, respectively). Of the students who were unfamiliar with the Pell grant, 62.9 percent were either from a low-income household (\$40,000 or less) or did not know their household’s income. This indicates that high schools and postsecondary institutions should work to provide information to all students – especially those from lower-income families – about the full range of financial aid programs available both at the state and federal level.

Table 9. Familiarity with Types of Financial Aid

Are you familiar with this type of financial aid?	Familiar	Unfamiliar	Total
Tennessee Promise	92.6%	7.4%	1,533
HOPE Award	71.2%	28.8%	1,522
Pell Grant	57.7%	42.3%	1,526
College work study	35.8%	64.2%	1,516
TSAA Grant	27.1%	72.9%	1,517
Stafford/Perkins loans	15.9%	84.1%	1,515
ASPIRE Award	15.7%	84.3%	1,511
General Assembly Merit Scholarship (GAMS)	14.7%	85.3%	1,514
Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant	10.1%	89.9%	1,509
Access Award	9.5%	90.5%	1,511

A new survey item asked students to indicate which steps in the Tennessee Promise application process they completed/planned to complete. As **Table 9** indicates, there was widespread familiarity with Tennessee Promise, and the data in **Table 10** show that the majority of students participated in at least a portion of the application process. In fact, of the 1,415 respondents who completed all seven parts of this survey item, approximately half (49.3 percent) planned to complete every step in the application process to maintain eligibility for Tennessee Promise. In reality, we know that many students lose eligibility because they fail to complete various steps in the process or because they choose to attend an institution that is not eligible to receive Tennessee Promise funds (e.g., public or private universities, out-of-state institutions). However, it is encouraging to see that students were well-informed of the application process and indicated commitment to completing the required steps. The challenge in the coming years will be to increase the number of students who follow through and complete all steps in the application process.

Table 10. Tennessee Promise Application Process

Tennessee Promise Application Process	Completed/ Plan to Complete	N=
Submit a Tennessee Promise application	77.5%	1,530
Complete the FAFSA	86.0%	1,532
Attend the first mandatory meeting	71.2%	1,512
Attend the second mandatory meeting	66.8%	1,481
Apply to a community college or technical college	65.1%	1,493
Complete and report 8 hours of community service	67.9%	1,516
Complete FAFSA verification (if required by institution)	79.2%	1,515

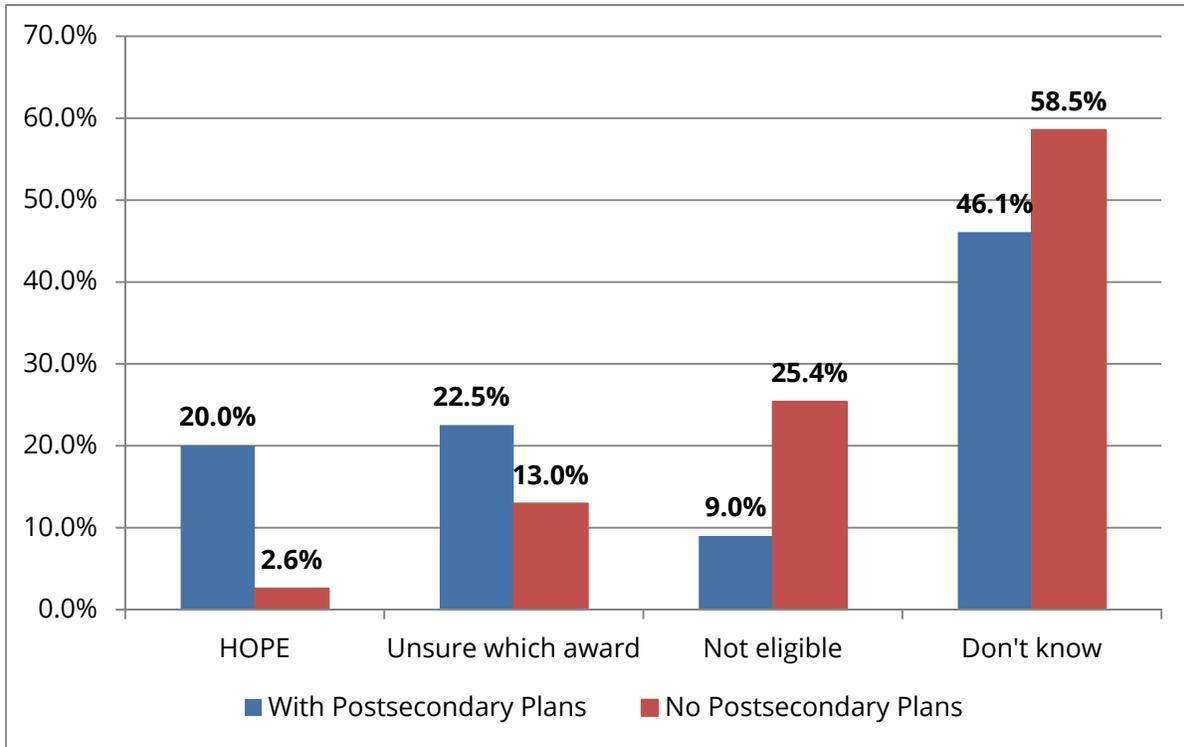
Impact of Lottery Scholarship

Survey results showed that the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship (TELS) program had a positive impact on incoming postsecondary students' decision to pursue higher education and to do so in-state. This section describes findings regarding students' expected eligibility for TELS awards, along with a demographic, socioeconomic, and academic profile of students who plan to remain in Tennessee for their postsecondary education because of TELS eligibility/funding.

Of all students in the sample, 41.5 percent expected to be eligible for a TELS award, and 47.5 percent were unsure whether they would be eligible for a TELS award. Based on self-reported GPA and ACT scores, 67.2 percent of the sample appeared eligible to receive the HOPE scholarship (by earning a GPA of 3.0 or an ACT score of 21), about 25 percentage points higher than the share that was aware of their eligibility. This finding suggests that informing students about their potential eligibility for financial aid (particularly merit aid) is a powerful tool for increasing the number of students who plan to pursue postsecondary education.

Figure 10 provides a comparison of respondents' expected eligibility based on whether or not they planned to enroll in postsecondary education. The figure shows that students with no postsecondary plans were markedly less aware of their potential eligibility (58.5 percent responded "Don't know") than students with plans to continue their education (46.1 percent). Students who did not plan to continue their education were more likely to assume they were not eligible for any type of TELS award (25.4 percent), compared to only 9 percent of students with postsecondary plans. These doubts also existed for the HOPE scholarship specifically; only 2.6 percent of students without postsecondary plans expected to be eligible for HOPE, while 20 percent of students who planned to continue their education expected to be eligible.

Figure 10. Expected TELS Eligibility by Postsecondary Plans



Tables 11 and 12 provide responses to the question, “Did your eligibility for the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship have an impact on your decision whether or not to attend college?” disaggregated by demographic, socioeconomic, and academic characteristics of respondents. Only 13.8 percent of respondents indicated that their eligibility for a TELS award had a large impact on their decision to attend college. The vast majority of students (75.6 percent) indicated they would attend a postsecondary institution regardless of being eligible for a TELS award. This percentage was slightly higher for students with high incomes (83.5 percent for households earning above \$80,000 annually) and slightly lower for students scoring below 18 on the ACT (62.8 percent), first generation college students (70 percent), and students with a high school GPA below 2.00 (56.6 percent).

Tables 11 and 12 also show that less than one in ten students (8.7 percent) who did not plan on continuing their education indicated they would pursue college if they were eligible for the lottery scholarship. Overrepresented among students who would attend if they were eligible are black and Hispanic students (8 and 12.3 percent, respectively). A fair number of students with postsecondary plans (7.1 percent for students planning on a university, 9.1 percent for community college, 7.7 percent for TCAT) indicated they would not continue their education without eligibility for a lottery scholarship. Students choosing this response were more likely to be in the black or Other racial/ethnic categories, first generation, and low-income (\$40,000 or less annually).

Table 11. TELS Impact by Race, First Generation, Income, and Postsecondary Plans

	No: Will attend with or without TELS	No: Never planned to attend	Big: Will not attend without TELS	Big: I would attend if I received TELS	Total
Race/Ethnicity					1,499
<i>White</i>	78.2%	9.2%	6.5%	6.1%	1,207
<i>Black</i>	63.8%	15.9%	12.3%	8.0%	138
<i>Hispanic</i>	69.2%	10.8%	7.7%	12.3%	65
<i>Other</i>	65.2%	21.3%	10.1%	3.4%	89
First Generation	70.0%	12.8%	8.7%	8.6%	829
Family Income					1,523
<i>\$40,000 or less</i>	70.5%	9.7%	10.6%	9.2%	404
<i>\$40,001 to \$80,000</i>	81.4%	8.5%	5.2%	4.9%	328
<i>\$80,001 or more</i>	83.5%	7.3%	4.8%	4.4%	248
<i>Don't know</i>	72.7%	13.8%	7.0%	6.4%	543
Postsecondary Plans					1,528
<i>4-year</i>	84.9%	3.7%	7.1%	4.4%	873
<i>2-year</i>	77.7%	4.0%	9.1%	9.1%	328
<i>TCAT</i>	73.1%	12.8%	7.7%	6.4%	78
<i>Online/trade school</i>	60.6%	15.2%	7.6%	16.7%	66
<i>Won't attend/ Don't know</i>	33.9%	53.0%	4.4%	8.7%	183
Total	75.6%	10.6%	7.2%	6.6%	1,539

Table 12. TELS Impact by Academic Profile

	No: Will attend with or without TELS	No: Never planned to attend	Big: Will not attend without TELS	Big: I would attend if I received TELS	Total
ACT Score					1,377
<i>1 to 17</i>	62.8%	19.4%	7.2%	10.6%	320
<i>18 to 20</i>	79.6%	8.5%	6.6%	5.3%	378
<i>21 to 28</i>	85.6%	3.8%	6.0%	4.6%	582
<i>29 to 36</i>	88.7%	4.1%	3.1%	4.1%	97
High School GPA					1,417
<i>Less than 2.00</i>	56.6%	30.2%	3.8%	9.4%	53
<i>2.00 to 2.99</i>	68.3%	15.0%	6.9%	9.9%	334
<i>3.00 to 3.99</i>	81.5%	6.2%	6.8%	5.5%	899
<i>4.00 or more</i>	84.7%	6.1%	6.1%	3.1%	131
Total	75.6%	10.6%	7.2%	6.6%	1,539

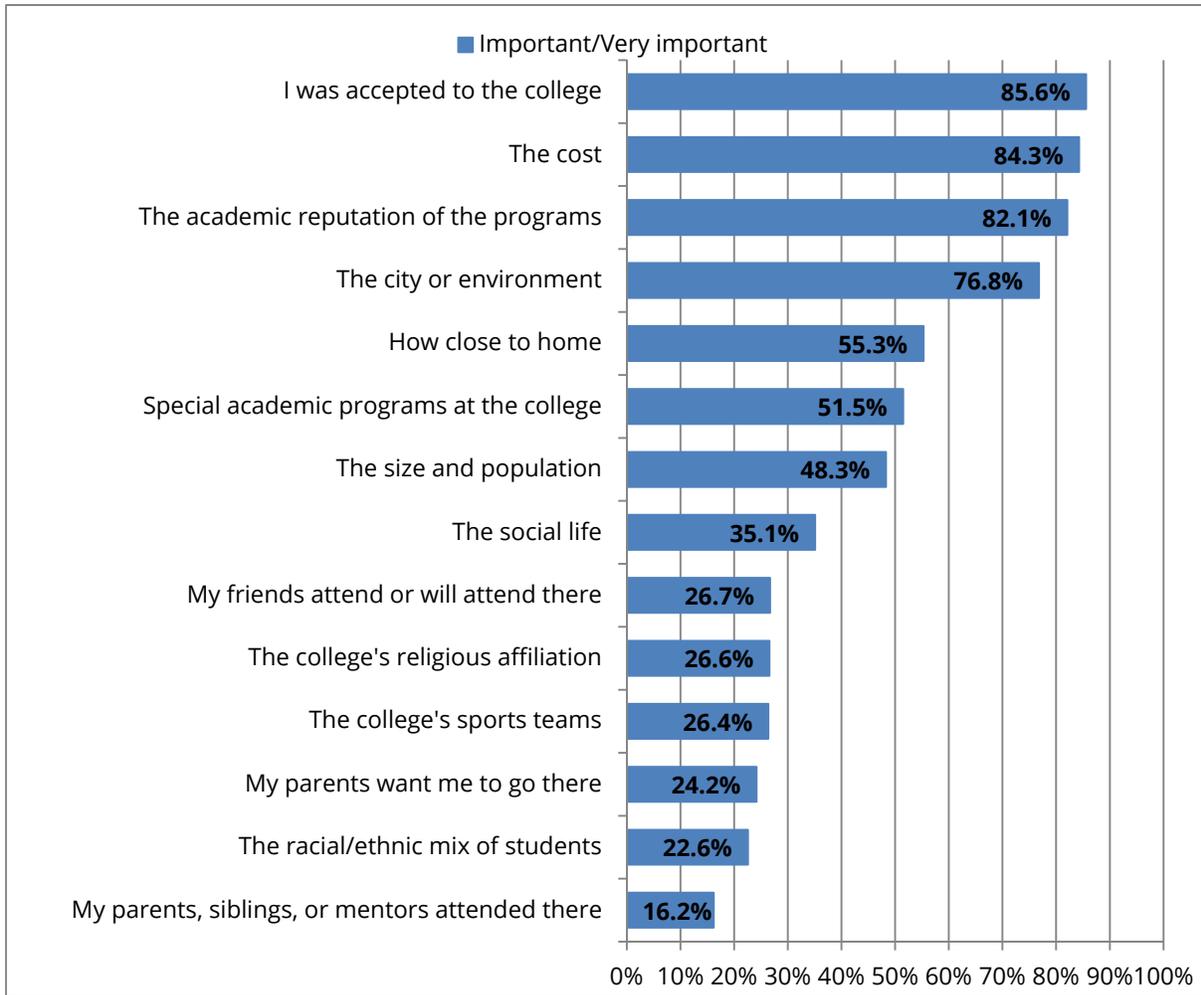
Choice of College

Most students were proactive in the college search process. 85.3 percent of students indicated that they attended at least one event related to postsecondary education (including presentations, speakers, and college fairs) within the last year. More than half (53.8 percent) responded that they attended between two and four events within the last year. At the time of the survey (late March), 87.4 percent of students had applied to at least one postsecondary institution, and more than one-third (34.9 percent) had applied to three or more institutions. Moreover, 87.4 percent of respondents had completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Of the students who planned to pursue postsecondary education, 41.7 percent had already been accepted to a college, and 40.4 percent had made a final decision about which college to attend.

Students were asked to indicate their first choice institution if money were not an obstacle. Approximately 8 percent of students responded that they would not continue their education after high school regardless of the cost. Nearly half (49 percent) indicated their first choice institution would be an in-state public school or trade school, and 9 percent would choose an in-state private school. Interestingly, 34 percent of students indicated their first choice institution would be an out-of-state public or private school. As discussed previously, however, both the TELS program and Tennessee Promise provide additional financial incentive for students to remain in Tennessee for their postsecondary education. These data suggest that financial concerns outweigh other considerations when students decide where to attend college.

Figure 12 shows the results of a survey item that asked students to rate the importance of fourteen factors in deciding where to attend college. The figure shows the responses in descending order by share of students selecting the “important” or “very important” response options. As expected, cost was near the top of the list of important factors (84.3 percent), second only to whether a student was accepted to the college (85.6 percent). Other factors deemed “important” or “very important” by the majority of students were academic reputation (82.1 percent), the city or environment of the college (72.8 percent), proximity to home (55.3 percent), and special academic programs (e.g., study abroad, honors college) available at the institution (51.5 percent).

Figure 12. Factors Influencing Where Students Decide to Attend College



Plans during Postsecondary Enrollment

Table 13 shows the intended enrollment intensity (full-time or part-time) of seniors who planned to enroll in postsecondary education, disaggregated by the sector in which they planned to enroll. Full-time enrollment was clearly the intention of university-bound students, as 83.8 percent planned to enroll full-time. The majority of those who planned to enroll at a community college (56.6 percent) or TCAT (63.9 percent) also showed a preference for a full-time schedule. Students who planned to enroll at an online or trade school indicated uncertainty about their enrollment intensity; the majority (53.3 percent) responded that they were not sure whether they would enroll full-time or part-time.

Table 13. Planned Enrollment Intensity by Postsecondary Plans

Postsecondary Plans	Full-Time	Part-Time	Don't Know	Total
4-year university	83.8%	5.5%	10.6%	847
2-year community college	56.6%	18.0%	25.3%	316
TCAT	63.9%	15.3%	20.8%	72
Online or trade school	23.3%	23.3%	53.3%	60
Total	69.3%	10.8%	19.9%	1,381

Table 14 shows the intended major of respondents who planned to enroll in postsecondary education. Nearly one-fifth of students (19.5 percent) indicated they planned to major in allied health or nursing. Other common major choices were business/marketing (10.5 percent) and natural/physical science (10.2 percent). Majors within the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields totaled 23.5 percent of these responses. These intended majors generally align with workforce demand across the state; over the next five to seven years, increased demand is projected for trained professionals in both the health and STEM career areas.⁷

Table 14. Intended Major

Intended Major	Count	Percent
Humanities	42	2.8%
Social Sciences	94	6.3%
Natural or Physical Sciences	152	10.2%
Industrial Work	87	5.9%
Engineering/Mathematics	116	7.8%
Computer Science/Technology	81	5.5%
Business/Marketing	155	10.5%
Education	83	5.6%
Allied Health/Nursing	289	19.5%
Other	242	16.3%
Undecided	142	9.6%
Total	1,483	100.0%

Reasons for Deciding Not to Attend College

Table 15 displays the results of a survey item that asked students to rate the importance of twelve factors in their decision *not* to pursue postsecondary education. The table is in descending order by share of students selecting the “very important” response option.

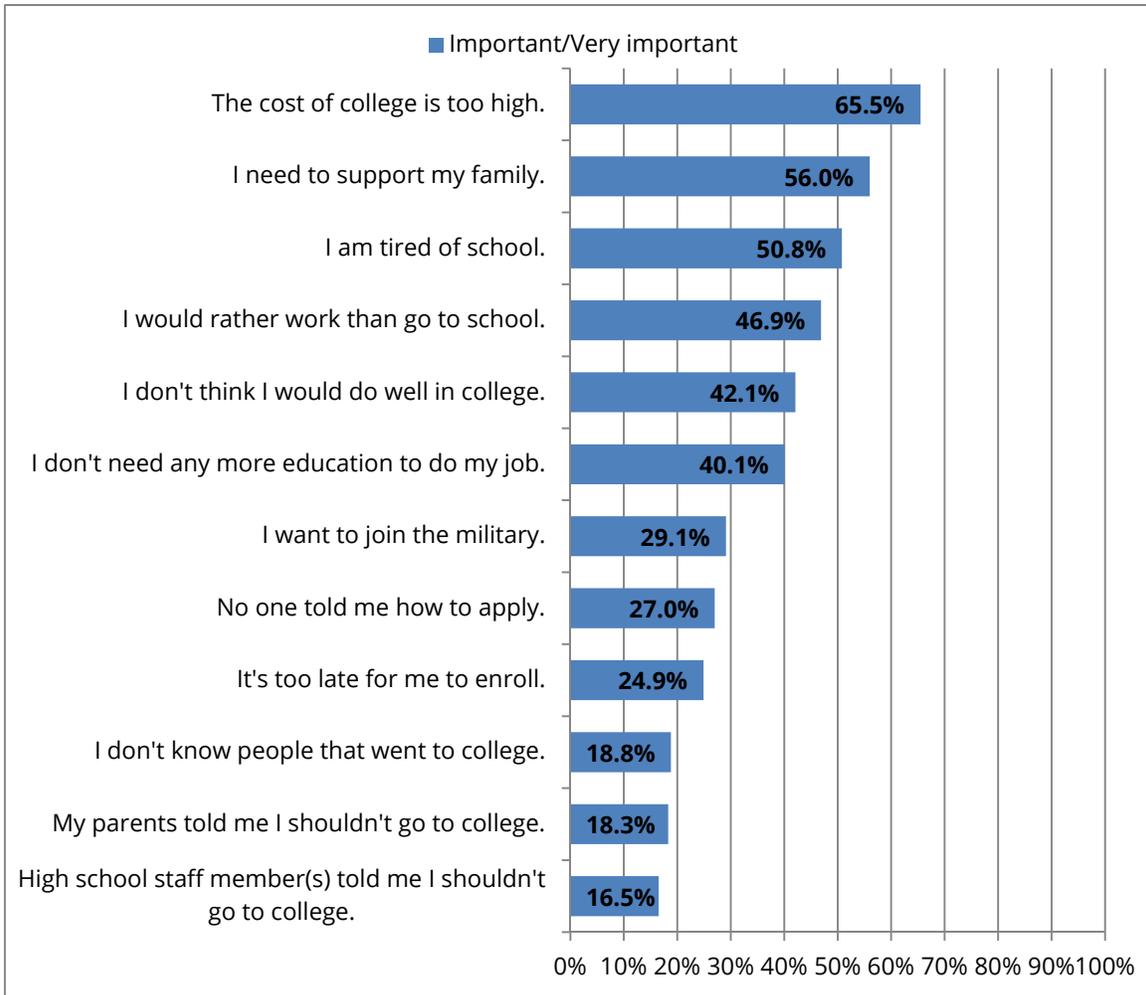
⁷ For more information about workforce demand in Tennessee, please see THEC’s 2017 Academic Supply and Occupational Demand Report. This report is available at http://tn.gov/assets/entities/thec/attachments/Academic_Supply_Occupational_Demand_-_Final_Version.pdf

Table 15. Importance of Reasons for Deciding Not to Attend College

	Very Important	Important	Hardly Important	Not Important	Total
The cost of college is too high.	32.3%	33.2%	17.0%	17.5%	464
I need to support my family.	28.1%	27.9%	16.3%	27.7%	448
I am tired of school.	24.4%	26.4%	23.0%	26.2%	492
I would rather work than go to school.	24.3%	22.6%	27.2%	25.9%	456
I don't need any more education to do my job.	16.6%	23.5%	22.4%	37.5%	464
I don't think I would do well in college.	16.2%	25.9%	26.8%	31.0%	451
I want to join the military.	16.1%	13.0%	13.7%	57.2%	460
No one told me how to apply.	10.5%	16.5%	21.4%	51.7%	449
It's too late for me to enroll.	10.3%	14.6%	22.5%	52.6%	445
My parents told me I shouldn't go to college.	8.9%	9.4%	13.0%	68.7%	447
I don't know people that went to college.	8.3%	10.5%	20.8%	60.4%	447
High school staff member(s) told me I shouldn't go to college.	7.8%	8.7%	13.4%	70.0%	447

Figure 11 shows the share of students who selected “important” or “very important” for each factor in descending order. Financial concerns were clearly the most important reason that students chose not to attend college; 65.5 percent of students indicated that the cost of college is too high, and 56 percent indicated that they need to support family instead of going to college. Other frequently cited reasons were: being tired of school, preferring to work instead of attending college, and concern about one’s ability to do well in college. In contrast, the three reasons most frequently cited as “unimportant” or “very unimportant” were as follows: (1) high school staff advising against college; (2) parents advising against college; and (3) not knowing other people who went to college.

Figure 11. Reasons for Deciding Not to Attend College



Recommendations and Conclusions

These survey results provide valuable information about Tennessee's high school seniors. However, it is important to remember that the sample size is small, representing only 2.1 percent of the approximately 75,000 public and private high school seniors; therefore, the results may not be generalizable to all high school seniors in the state. The results provide a general indication of students' postsecondary plans and knowledge of the college-going process, but in future survey administrations, a larger sample size is necessary to ensure representativeness.

That being said, an overwhelming 87.2 percent of students indicated that they planned to pursue postsecondary education after high school; the majority (56.2 percent) planned to enroll at a four-year institution, 21.5 percent planned to enroll at a community college, and 5.1 percent planned to enroll at a TCAT. These results indicate a slight shift from previous surveys, as more students planned to enroll at a community college than in previous years. This shift is likely attributable to Tennessee Promise, which allows all high school graduates to attend a community college (or TCAT) tuition-free. Another

contributing factor could be the increased statewide focus on career and technical education. Students today are likely more aware of the various postsecondary options, which include community colleges, TCATs, and trade schools.

Students who did not plan to pursue postsecondary education shared many demographic, socioeconomic, and academic characteristics. These students tended to be first generation, from households earning less than \$40,000 annually, and from racial/ethnic minority groups. Academically, these students were often less prepared than their peers, reporting a high school GPA below 2.0 and an ACT score below 18. These students also tended to have significant financial concerns about college; they indicated that the cost of college and the need to support their family were two of the most important factors in their decision not to attend college. If financial concerns were alleviated for this group, more of them may have chosen to pursue postsecondary education directly after high school graduation, rather than entering the workforce or joining the military.

The majority of students who planned to enroll at a community college (53.8 percent) hoped to eventually earn a bachelor's degree or higher. However, the most recent data on six-year graduation rates from Tennessee's community colleges show that only 26.3 percent of first-time freshmen at these institutions complete a degree of any kind.⁸ The discrepancy between students' postsecondary plans and their actual attainment highlights the need for additional support at all types of institutions, which should include academic support, transfer planning, and career counseling.

The survey results provided clear evidence that many students were proactive in the college search and application processes. At the time of the survey, 87.4 percent of students had applied to at least one postsecondary institution. Moreover, 87.4 percent of respondents had completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which is an important milestone in the process of applying to college. Of the students who planned to pursue postsecondary education, 40.4 percent had made a final decision about which college to attend. These results indicate that students receive sound guidance throughout the college-going process; the challenge in future years will be providing the necessary information and support to previously underserved populations.

This survey highlighted significant financial concerns among students of all backgrounds (79.3 percent). "Major" concerns were more prominent among students in the Hispanic and Other racial/ethnic groups, from households earning \$40,000 or less, and with an ACT score below 21. Tennessee has many financial aid programs (both need-based and merit-based) to assist students with postsecondary expenses. High schools and postsecondary institutions should work to provide information about the full range of state and federal financial aid programs available, especially need-based programs for low-income students (e.g., Pell grant, work study, TSAA grant). Though Tennessee is making great strides toward the Drive to 55, it is crucial to ensure that all students (regardless of their demographic, socioeconomic, or academic background) have access to postsecondary opportunities.

⁸ Completion data from THEC's 2016-2017 Tennessee Higher Education Fact Book, available at http://tn.gov/assets/entities/thec/attachments/2016-17_Fact_Book_Suppressed_Final_2.pdf

Appendix A. Survey Instrument with Response Frequencies

Directions

- 1: Please read each question and all responses carefully before selecting your answer.
- 2: Please completely fill in the bubble for each answer you provide.
- 3: Please provide only ONE response for each question unless instructed otherwise.
- 4: Please respond thoughtfully. The results from this survey will be used to understand the opinions of high school seniors across the state.
- 5: Your responses are voluntary and will remain confidential. Responses will not be identified by individual student. All responses will be compiled together and analyzed in aggregate.

1. What is your gender?	<u>N=1,594</u>
a. Male	51.3%
b. Female	46.2%
c. Prefer not to answer	2.5%
2. What is your race or ethnicity?	<u>N=1,571</u>
a. African American / Black	9.4%
b. American Indian / Native American	4.3%
c. Asian American / Pacific Islander	1.0%
d. Caucasian / White	79.9%
e. Hispanic / Latino	0.6%
f. Middle Eastern	0.3%
g. Multiracial	2.0%
h. Other	0.4%
i. Prefer not to answer	2.1%
3. What is your home zip code?	<u>N=1,563</u>

4. Are you employed during the school year? If so, how many hours do you work per week?	<u>N=1,602</u>
a. No, 0 hours	46.6%
b. Yes, 1 - 10 hours	10.5%
c. Yes, 11 - 20 hours	18.5%
d. Yes, 21 - 30 hours	17.7%
e. Yes, 30 or more hours	6.6%

5. What is your best estimate of your family's total income from last year?	<u>N=1,596</u>
a. \$20,000 or less	13.7%
b. \$20,001 - \$40,000	12.5%
c. \$40,001 - \$60,000	11.8%
d. \$60,001 - \$80,000	9.3%
e. \$80,001 - \$100,000	7.1%
f. More than \$100,000	9.5%
g. Don't know	36.2%
6. Do you currently receive free or reduced price school breakfast or lunch?	<u>N=1,596</u>
a. Yes	53.3%
b. No	38.9%
c. Don't know	7.8%
7. How many siblings do you have (including brothers, sisters, half-brothers, half-sisters, step-brothers, or step-sisters)?	<u>N=1,592</u>
a. 0	5.2%
b. 1	25.7%
c. 2	25.3%
d. 3	16.2%
e. 4 or more	27.7%
8. Are you the parent/legal guardian of any children?	<u>N=1,579</u>
a. Yes	3.8%
b. No	96.2%
9. How many parents or guardians (grandparents, step-parents, foster parents) live in your home?	<u>N=1,587</u>
a. No parents or guardians live in my home.	2.0%
b. One parent or guardian lives in my home.	27.3%
c. Two parents or guardians live in my home.	67.9%
d. Three or more parents or guardians live in my home.	2.8%
10. What is the highest level of education earned by your MOTHER or female guardian?	<u>N=1,595</u>
a. Less than high school	7.7%
b. High school diploma or equivalent (GED)	30.2%
c. Some college, no degree	13.9%
d. Technical certificate	3.6%
e. 2-year certificate or college degree	10.2%
f. 4-year college degree	14.4%
g. Master's degree	6.9%
h. Ph.D. or other advanced professional degree (law, medicine, etc.)	2.4%
i. Don't know	10.0%
j. Not applicable	0.8%

11. What is the highest level of education earned by your FATHER or male guardian?	<u>N=1,593</u>
a. Less than high school	11.9%
b. High school diploma or equivalent (GED)	35.8%
c. Some college, no degree	9.2%
d. Technical certificate	5.1%
e. 2-year certificate or college degree	5.2%
f. 4-year college degree	11.2%
g. Master's degree	4.1%
h. Ph.D. or other advanced professional degree (law, medicine, etc.)	1.9%
i. Don't know	13.4%
j. Not applicable	2.3%
12. Do you plan to attend college after you graduate?	<u>N=1,602</u>
a. No	5.7%
b. Yes, a 4-year college or university	56.2%
c. Yes, a community college	21.5%
d. Yes, a college of applied technology	5.1%
e. Yes, an online school	0.9%
f. Yes, a trade school	3.6%
g. Don't know	7.1%
13. What is the highest academic degree you hope to earn?	<u>N=1,604</u>
a. High school diploma or equivalent (GED)	5.0%
b. Technical certificate	6.1%
c. 2-year certificate or college degree	10.7%
d. 4-year college degree	33.2%
e. Master's degree	17.4%
f. Ph.D. or other advanced professional degree (law, medicine, etc.)	16.8%
g. Don't know	10.8%
14. When did you begin to think about going to college after you graduate from high school?	<u>N=1,593</u>
a. I have never thought about continuing my education after high school	4.8%
b. Before 6 th grade	24.5%
c. Between 6 th and 8 th grade	21.0%
d. Freshman year of high school	17.8%
e. Sophomore year of high school	9.7%
f. Junior year of high school	13.4%
g. Senior year of high school	8.7%

15. What will you do in the fall after graduating from high school? N=1,547
- a. Go to college or a trade school 75.6%
 - b. Get a new job or continue working at my current job 9.2%
 - c. Enlist in the military (Navy, Army, Marines, etc.) 4.1%
 - d. Take time off and go back to a college or trade school within a year 5.8%
 - e. I have no plans after I graduate from high school 1.4%
 - f. Other 3.8%

IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND A COLLEGE OR TRADE SCHOOL AFTER GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL, PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 17 AND CONTINUE TAKING THE SURVEY.

IF YOU DO NOT PLAN TO ATTEND COLLEGE AFTER GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL, ANSWER QUESTION 16 AND THEN SKIP TO QUESTION 25.

16. Please indicate the importance of each factor in your decision to not attend college and **then skip to question 25.**

Reasons why I chose not to continue my education	N=	Not Important	Hardly Important	Important	Very Important
I am tired of school.	492	26.2%	23.0%	26.4%	24.4%
I don't need any more education to do my job.	464	37.5%	22.4%	23.5%	16.6%
The cost of college is too high.	464	17.5%	17.0%	33.2%	32.3%
I would rather work than go to school.	456	25.9%	27.2%	22.6%	24.3%
I need to support my family.	448	27.7%	16.3%	27.9%	28.1%
I don't think I would do well in college.	451	31.0%	26.8%	25.9%	16.2%
No one told me how to apply.	449	51.7%	21.4%	16.5%	10.5%
It's too late for me to enroll.	445	52.6%	22.5%	14.6%	10.3%
High school staff member(s) told me I shouldn't go to college.	447	70.0%	13.4%	8.7%	7.8%
My parents told me I shouldn't go to college.	447	68.7%	13.0%	9.4%	8.9%
I don't know people that went to college.	447	60.4%	20.8%	10.5%	8.3%
I want to join the military.	460	57.2%	13.7%	13.0%	16.1%

NOW SKIP TO QUESTION 25

17. How far along is your college search process? (Answer all that apply.) N=1,375*
- a. I plan to attend college. 41.0%
 - b. I have applied to a college. 31.2%
 - c. I have been accepted to a college. 41.7%
 - d. I have made a final decision about which college I'll attend. 40.4%

**Please note the percentages do not equal 100% because students were instructed to select all that apply.*

18. Do you plan to attend college full-time or part-time?	<u>N=1,389</u>
a. Full-time (12 or more credit hours per semester)	69.1%
b. Part-time (fewer than 12 credit hours per semester)	10.9%
c. Don't know	20.0%
19. When you enter college in the fall, which of the categories below best matches your intended major or area of study?	<u>N=1,379*</u>
a. Humanities (English, History, Foreign Language, Philosophy, etc.)	3.0%
b. Social Sciences (Psychology, Political Science, Sociology, Economics, etc.)	6.8%
c. Natural or Physical Sciences (Agriculture, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, etc.)	11.0%
d. Industrial Work (HVAC, Welding, Automotive, etc.)	6.3%
e. Engineering / Mathematics	8.4%
f. Computer Science / Technology	5.9%
g. Business or Marketing	11.2%
h. Education	6.0%
i. Allied Health or Nursing	21.0%
j. Other	17.5%
k. Undecided	10.3%

**Please note the percentages do not equal 100% because 86 students selected more than one major.*

20. What type of classes do you want to take after high school?	<u>N=1,377</u>
a. I would like to attend classes on campus (no online classes).	61.9%
b. I would like to attend classes on campus and take some online.	23.7%
c. I would like to take all of my classes online.	2.5%
d. I'm not sure.	11.8%
21. How many colleges or trade schools have you applied to?	<u>N=1,380</u>
a. 0	12.6%
b. 1	29.1%
c. 2	23.3%
d. 3	17.3%
e. 4	7.9%
f. 5 or more	9.7%

22. Please indicate the importance of each factor in your decision about where to attend college. Then please select **ONLY ONE FACTOR** as the **MOST IMPORTANT**.

Factors in College Choice	N=	Not Important	Hardly Important	Important	Very Important	Most Important N=	Most Important
The cost for me to attend (including scholarships and financial aid the college offered)	845	7.7%	8.0%	44.3 %	40.0%	502	30.5%
The city or environment where the college is located	1,236	7.7%	15.5%	50.7%	26.1%	99	6.0%
The size and population of the college (too big or too small)	1,279	16.1%	35.6%	37.3%	11.0%	55	3.3%
The academic reputation of programs in which I'm interested	1,094	6.9%	11.1%	45.7%	36.4%	233	14.1%
My friends attend or will attend there	1,294	33.1%	40.3%	21.2%	5.5%	32	1.9%
How close the college is to my home	1,221	19.1%	25.6%	38.1%	17.2%	106	6.4%
I was accepted to the college	977	7.8%	6.7%	41.9%	43.7%	335	20.3%
The social life at the college (Greek life, parties, etc.)	1,272	31.4%	33.6%	26.9%	8.2%	54	3.3%
The college's sports teams	1,273	44.5%	29.1%	18.5%	7.9%	52	3.2%
Special academic programs (study abroad, honors, etc.)	1,285	20.9%	27.6%	37.2%	14.3%	45	2.7%
My parents, siblings, or other mentors attended	1,310	57.1%	26.7%	12.8%	3.4%	23	1.4%
My parents want me to go there	1,296	48.7%	27.2%	20.3%	3.9%	34	2.1%
The college's religious affiliation	1,292	47.0%	26.5%	20.3%	6.3%	39	2.4%
The racial/ethnic mix of students	1,299	54.1%	23.3%	17.9%	4.7%	38	2.3%

23. Do you have any concerns about your ability to pay for college? N=1,296
- a. None (I know that I will have/receive enough money to pay for college.) 20.8%
 - b. Some (I might have/receive enough money to pay for college.) 57.6%
 - c. Major (I am doubtful that I have/will receive enough money to pay for college.) 21.7%

24. The following question lists different ways that families and students may choose to pay for college. For each option, please indicate whether you plan to pay for college using this method.

Source of Funding for College	N=	Yes, I plan to pay for college this way.	No, I do not plan to pay for college this way.	I don't know
Scholarships from the college	1,334	74.5%	7.6%	17.8%
My parent or guardian's income	1,323	39.6%	36.8%	23.6%
College savings fund	1,324	40.5%	37.9%	21.6%
Part-time/full-time job while in college	1,326	70.1%	12.7%	17.2%
Federal or private loans	1,320	34.5%	37.4%	28.1%
Credit cards	1,309	4.5%	73.4%	22.1%
My personal savings	1,322	43.9%	35.2%	20.8%

25. The following question lists different types of financial aid (scholarships, grants, loans, etc.). For each type of financial aid, please indicate whether you are familiar with the type of financial aid (meaning you have a good idea of how much money this type of aid offers and how you earn it) or unfamiliar with it (meaning you may have heard of it, but you don't know how much money this type of aid offers or how to earn it).

Type of Financial Aid	N=	Familiar	Unfamiliar
Pell Grant	1,526	57.7%	42.3%
Tennessee Promise	1,533	92.6%	7.4%
HOPE Award	1,522	71.2%	28.8%
ASPIRE Award	1,511	15.7%	84.3%
General Assembly Merit Scholarship (GAMS)	1,514	14.7%	85.3%
Access Award	1,511	9.5%	90.5%
Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant	1,509	10.1%	89.9%
College work study	1,516	35.8%	64.2%
Stafford/Perkins Loans	1,515	15.9%	84.1%
TSAA Grant	1,517	27.1%	72.9%

26. Have you completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)? N=1,577
- a. Yes, I have completed the FAFSA. 87.4%
 - b. No, I have not completed the FAFSA but plan to do so. 5.7%
 - c. No, I have not completed nor am I familiar with the FAFSA. 3.4%
 - d. No, I have not completed the FAFSA because I don't plan to attend college. 3.6%

27. Are you eligible, or do you expect to be eligible, to receive a TN Education Lottery Scholarship? N=1,572
- a. No 10.9%
 - b. Yes, but I'm not sure which one 21.4%
 - c. Yes, HOPE Award 18.0%
 - d. Yes, HOPE Award with Need Supplement 1.2%
 - e. Yes, General Assembly Merit Scholarship 0.4%
 - f. Yes, Access Award 0.1%
 - g. Yes, Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant 0.4%
 - h. Don't know 47.5%

28. How did your eligibility for the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship (TELS) impact your decision whether or not to go to college? N=1,539
- a. No impact: I never planned to attend college. 10.6%
 - b. No impact: I will attend college with or without the lottery scholarship. 75.6%
 - c. Big impact: I don't plan to attend college but would if I received a lottery scholarship. 6.6%
 - d. Big impact: I will not attend college if I don't receive the lottery scholarship. 7.2%

29. Please indicate which steps in the Tennessee Promise application process you have completed, did not complete (**for deadlines that have passed**), plan to complete, or do not plan to complete.

Steps in the Tennessee Promise application process	N=	Completed	Did not complete (for deadlines that have passed)	Plan to complete	Do not plan to complete
Submit a Tennessee Promise application by Nov. 1, 2016	1,530	74.6%	9.4%	2.9%	13.1%
Complete the FAFSA by Jan. 17, 2017	1,532	82.8%	6.0%	3.2%	8.0%
Attend the first mandatory meeting	1,512	53.9%	11.8%	17.3%	16.9%
Attend the second mandatory meeting	1,481	23.0%	12.1%	43.8%	21.2%
Apply to a community college or technical college	1,493	47.0%	6.2%	18.1%	28.8%
Complete and report 8 hours of community service by July 1, 2017	1,516	20.3%	7.8%	47.6%	24.2%
Complete FAFSA verification by Aug. 1, 2017 (if required by institution)	1,515	37.7%	4.6%	41.5%	16.3%

30. If money were not an obstacle, what would your first choice institution be? N=1,500
- a. I will not continue my education after high school regardless of the cost. 7.9%
 - b. I would attend an in-state, trade school if money weren't an obstacle. 6.7%
 - c. I would attend an in-state, 2-year public school if money weren't an obstacle. 8.3%
 - d. I would attend an in-state, 4-year public school if money weren't an obstacle. 34.0%
 - e. I would attend an in-state, private school if money weren't an obstacle. 9.0%
 - f. I would attend an OUT-OF-STATE public school if money weren't an obstacle. 21.1%
 - g. I would attend on OUT-OF-STATE private school if money weren't an obstacle. 12.9%

31. How much do you think it would cost to attend each of these colleges per year? (“Cost” includes in-state/out-of-state tuition but **DOES NOT INCLUDE** housing, meal plans, or books. **DO NOT** adjust for financial aid and scholarships.)

Types of Colleges	N=	\$0 to \$2,499	\$2,500 to \$4,999	\$5,000 to \$9,999	\$10,000 to \$14,999	\$15,000 to \$19,999	\$20,000 to \$29,999	\$30,000 or more
Austin Peay State University	1,407	8.2%	12.4%	23.0%	23.3%	17.2%	9.5%	6.3%
A large private university (e.g., Vanderbilt, Harvard, or Stanford)	1,396	4.8%	3.4%	4.4%	6.4%	7.2%	11.5%	62.2%
Nashville State Community College	1,393	19.5%	23.9%	22.4%	17.2%	8.1%	5.3%	3.6%
Chattanooga State Community College	1,363	21.1%	21.9%	20.5%	18.3%	9.0%	5.7%	3.6%
University of Tennessee, Knoxville	1,400	5.0%	4.8%	10.4%	19.6%	20.9%	24.9%	14.5%
A small private school (e.g., Freed-Hardeman, Christian Brothers, Cumberland, Lee, or Lipscomb)	1,409	7.9%	6.2%	12.8%	19.5%	18.8%	20.0%	14.8%
University of Tennessee, Martin	1,406	6.5%	8.6%	20.2%	26.1%	20.8%	11.8%	6.0%
An online, for-profit school (e.g., University of Phoenix)	1,401	20.0%	20.6%	22.3%	17.9%	9.4%	5.6%	4.2%
Tennessee State University	1,399	6.7%	10.6%	21.1%	26.1%	17.7%	11.5%	6.4%
Out-of-state public university (e.g., Ole Miss, University of Alabama, or Louisiana State University)	1,418	4.7%	2.6%	5.8%	11.4%	13.0%	26.2%	36.5%

32. If you don't attend college, how much money do you think you'll make per year at age **25**? N=1,465
- a. \$20,000 or less 31.6%
 - b. \$20,001 - \$40,000 37.2%
 - c. \$40,001 - \$60,000 17.9%
 - d. \$60,001 - \$80,000 6.6%
 - e. \$80,001 - \$100,000 3.3%
 - f. More than \$100,000 3.4%

33. If you graduate from college, how much money do you think you'll make per year at age **25**? N=1,393
- a. \$20,000 or less 6.1%
 - b. \$20,001 - \$40,000 10.6%
 - c. \$40,001 - \$60,000 27.9%
 - d. \$60,001 - \$80,000 30.3%
 - e. \$80,001 - \$100,000 15.9%
 - f. More than \$100,000 9.2%

34. How many events related to continuing your education after high school (presentations, speakers, college fairs, meeting with guidance counselors) have you attended during the past school year? N=1,542
- a. 0 14.7%
 - b. 1 10.7%
 - c. 2-4 53.8%
 - d. 5-7 12.6%
 - e. 8 or more 8.1%
35. In the last year, about how often have you and your parents/guardians discussed continuing your education after high school? N=1,506
- a. Never 10.6%
 - b. Once a month 19.2%
 - c. Twice a month 20.2%
 - d. Once a week 23.5%
 - e. More than once a week 26.5%
36. In the last year, about how often have you and a school guidance counselor discussed continuing your education after high school? N=1,460
- a. Never 27.3%
 - b. Once a month 40.8%
 - c. Twice a month 18.4%
 - d. Once a week 7.1%
 - e. More than once a week 6.4%
37. Please indicate whether or not you have ever discussed the following topics with your high school guidance counselor.

Topics discussed with high school guidance counselor	N=	Yes	No
Whether or not to go to college	1,493	68.1%	31.9%
Different types of institutions (technical colleges, community colleges, 4-year universities, public versus private institutions, etc.)	1,499	70.0%	30.0%
The cost of college	1,491	61.5%	38.5%
Possible majors in college	1,489	63.1%	36.9%
Career options (with or without college)	1,483	60.1%	39.9%
Financial aid available to pay for college (scholarships, grants, loans, etc.)	1,485	77.2%	22.8%
What classes to take in order to prepare for college	1,484	60.6%	39.4%
How to fill out the FAFSA	1,476	71.7%	28.3%

38. What is your best estimate of your current GPA (0.00 - 4.00)?		<u>N=1,420</u>
	1.00-1.99	2.2%
	2.00-2.99	24.4%
	3.00-3.99	64.4%
	4.00 or higher	9.0%

39. What is your highest ACT Composite score (English, Math, Reading, and Science combined)?		<u>N=1,446</u>
<i>If you have not taken the ACT, please bubble in "00"</i>	Below 18:	25.4%
<i>If you scored a 9 on the ACT, please bubble in "09"</i>	18-20:	27.0%
	21-23:	22.6%
	24-26:	13.8%
	27-29:	6.4%
	30 or above:	4.7%

40. Whether you passed or not, how many Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses have you attempted?		<u>N=1,500</u>
a. 0		56.9%
b. 1		13.5%
c. 2		11.7%
d. 3-4		10.1%
e. 5 or more		7.7%

41. How many AP or IB courses does your high school offer?		<u>N=1,499</u>
a. 0		18.0%
b. 1		3.9%
c. 2		5.3%
d. 3-4		11.7%
e. 5 or more		20.1%
f. I don't know		41.0%

42. Whether you passed or not, how many dual enrollment courses (courses taken through a community college for college credit) have you attempted?		<u>N=1,508</u>
a. 0		56.2%
b. 1		13.3%
c. 2		12.1%
d. 3-4		11.9%
e. 5 or more		6.6%

43. How well have high school faculty and staff informed you about dual enrollment courses?		<u>N=1,507</u>
a. Very well, I know what dual enrollment courses are and how to take them.		48.1%
b. Somewhat, I know what dual enrollment courses are but not how to take them.		38.4%
c. Not well, I do not know what dual enrollment courses are or how to take them		13.5%

END OF SURVEY - THANK YOU