

DATE: November 15, 2007

SUBJECT: Status of the P-16 Initiative

ACTION RECOMMENDED: Information

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The November, 2007, P-16 update to the Commission has two parts: (1) Implications for higher education in implementing American Diploma Project standards and (2) THEC contributions to Tennessee’s ADP and P-16 goals.

PART 1

Update on Tennessee’s implementation of American Diploma Project goals and implications for higher education

The American Diploma Project is serving as a blueprint for Tennessee’s goals for bringing increased rigor and relevance to the high school diploma. Higher education is a partner in this endeavor with Tennessee K-12, the State Board of Education, the Governor’s office, and business and community.

New requirements for Tennessee high school graduation will be considered by the State Board of Education for final approval at their January 2008 meeting. The State Board will also consider rewritten State K-12 curriculum standards for mathematics, science, and language arts. All students graduating from a Tennessee high school in Spring 2013 and thereafter must meet the new requirements.

The high school redesign has implications for higher education policy and practice. Discussions about these implications are occurring in meetings hosted by THEC and the State P-16 Council. These implications include:

Standards: What a student should know and be able to do at college entry

- University admission requirement changes (from 3 to 4 units in math; prescribed science courses)
- Actualize the goals of the Teacher Quality Initiative
- Bring to scale the SREB school leaders programs
- Audit college first-year math and English courses to ensure that they build on and do not replicate high school content

Professional Development:

- Colleges of Education and Arts and Sciences revise teacher preparation curricula to address new K-12 math, science, and language arts standards

- Colleges and universities stand ready to provide professional development to K-12 classroom teachers
- Local P-16 councils engaged in community-based school-college professional development

K-12 and Higher Education faculty collaboration:

- K-12 and college faculty work together in designing new senior year high school math “bridge” and advanced math courses
- Higher education respond to state invitations for assessment support

Math and science teacher pool:

- Seek and maximize resources to attract and retain interested students

Paths to early admission to college:

- Increase participation in dual enrollment
- Initiate PC 459 innovative and collaborative programs between secondary and postsecondary institutions

Communication:

- Use existing web portal, collegeforTN.org, to inform students, parents, and all constituents about high school graduation and university admission standards changes
- Establish multi-faceted communication campaign about the Tennessee Diploma Project

PART 2

THEC contributions to Tennessee’s ADP and P-16 movement

State Leadership

State P-16 Council. THEC provides leadership for the state council. The Council is the coordinating body for state K-12 and higher education improvement initiatives, such as the Tennessee Diploma Project and higher education’s responses to it. The Council also serves as the steering committee for the GEAR UP federal grant and implementation of PC 459 (establish innovative and cooperative programs between secondary and post-secondary).

School Leaders Education Commission. THEC serves as co-sponsor with the State Board of Education’s participation in the Southern Regional Education Board’s school leader preparation and certification standards reform.

Governor’s Tennessee Diploma Project Leadership Team. THEC staff serves on the team of State Department of Education, State Board of Education, higher education, and business and community leaders in implementing the goals of the Tennessee Diploma Project.

GEAR UP Tennessee

CollegeforTN.org is the online, one-stop college shop where students can plan, prepare, pay and apply for college. THEC is responsible for management and implementation of CollegeforTN.org.

Direct services to over 6,000 students in Campbell, Cocke, Grundy, Hardeman, Johnson, Lake, Meigs, Union and Wayne counties. These services include academic enrichment, college access guidance, career preparation and tuition assistance.

Direct services to K-12 faculty in the nine selected counties. Professional development and curriculum alignment workshops are seen as a way to create sustainability of the program. THEC has partnered with the Tennessee Department of Education on several of these initiatives. GEAR UP TN funds have also been used to provide teachers with instructional equipment and technology.

Piloting EPAS in the nine selected counties. Through ACT workshops and registration assistance, GEAR UP TN helps students plan, prepare and register for the EPAS exams. Currently, GEAR UP TN is analyzing the 2006 PLAN data from the nine counties and working to make the data more user-friendly and applicable for future school/teacher planning.

Enhance students' opportunities to take part in dual enrollment and dual credit courses. By encouraging participation and providing tuition aid, GEAR UP TN allows students to become more comfortable in the college environment and to get a step ahead in postsecondary academics.

Statewide college access conference. GEAR UP TN works to facilitate communication among all college access programs across the state. In an effort to share best practices, GEAR UP TN hosts an annual statewide college access and success conference.

Professional development. GEAR UP TN has been involved with the State P-16 council's math curriculum alignment efforts. GEAR UP TN and THEC are offering professional development opportunities for K-12 math faculty through partnerships with selected postsecondary institutions.

Public awareness campaign provides students, parents, educators and business and community leaders with information about college access. GEAR UP TN collaborates communication efforts with the TSAC outreach specialists to ensure all Tennessee students receive clear messages about planning, preparing, paying and applying for postsecondary education. Parents are also a focus for GEAR UP TN. Outreach and college access activities such as financial aid nights and college tours provide parents with the necessary information to help their students complete the required steps for entering postsecondary education.

Policy, Planning, and Research Support

High school feedback reports. In cooperation with ACT, THEC provides an annual *Freshman Success Report* to every Tennessee high school and public school district, college, and university. The report provides an overview of how ACT-tested high school seniors who enrolled in college immediately after graduation fared academically during their freshman year at a Tennessee public institution. Tables provide comparative data on ACT scores, high school GPA, the need for remedial or developmental coursework, college freshman year GPA, and retention. Statistics are disaggregated to allow comparisons between the following student groups: 1) lottery scholarship recipients and non-recipients; and 2) students who did and did not complete the ACT-recommended academic “core” in high school.

Lottery scholarship research and reports. As required by statute, the Commission produces an annual research report on lottery scholarship qualification, retention, and success. In addition, in April of 2007, an ad hoc committee chaired by Mayor A C Wharton produced a follow-on report recommending program modifications designed to improve educational attainment levels in Tennessee. Since that time, THEC has convened representatives of the higher community to develop consensus on policy priorities, and associated fiscal notes, for the upcoming legislative session. The THEC staff has taken the lead on a feasibility study for a statewide early commitment program, involving a representative from the Department of Education.

Teacher supply and demand. Teacher supply and demand. In collaboration with researchers at Vanderbilt and the State Board of Education, THEC is participating in a study of teacher supply and demand. Data collected by THEC from teacher education programs in the state will be combined with Department of Education data on participation in the teacher workforce. This study will identify the true gaps in teacher supply and project the demand for teachers within specific academic areas.

Data sharing agreements. Through a collaborative arrangement with the Center for Business & Economic Research at UT Knoxville and another that is currently under development with the National Student Clearinghouse, THEC will be able to produce tracking studies that follow the flow of recent Tennessee high school graduates into colleges nationwide and into the Tennessee workforce, comparing earnings by students’ level of educational attainment.

DOE Data Management Committee. THEC has participated in the Department of Education’s Data Management Committee to share recent research and reporting developments and discuss matters of P-16 data policy.

Tennessee County Health Rankings. The Tennessee Institute of Public Health annually publishes County Health Rankings based on a variety of measures representing Health Determinants and Health Outcomes. Socioeconomic factors, which account for 40% of the Health Determinants ranking, incorporate data on high school graduation rate and educational attainment level by county.