



**Media Contact**

Jessie Greene

[Jessie.Greene@tn.gov](mailto:Jessie.Greene@tn.gov)

615-519-7730

## **Early Findings from Advise TN Highlight Significant Impact on College Enrollment Rates Across Tennessee**

**NASHVILLE, TN** – November 19, 2024 – The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) announced today recent findings on the success of Advise TN, a statewide initiative to increase the number of Tennessee high school students who enroll in college or technical training.

Since 2017, Advise TN has placed dedicated college and career advisors in up to 30 high schools across the state each year, meeting one-on-one with students and their families to determine their plans for life after high school. This includes helping students navigate the college application process, identify majors, apply for financial aid, and even connect with apprenticeships or other work-based training.

In partnership with researchers from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, THEC has begun studying the effects of Advise TN on college enrollment. Preliminary results indicate that Advise TN has shown an immediate and persistent positive effect on college-going and is making a measurable difference in helping students enroll in postsecondary institutions immediately after high school graduation.

### **Key Findings:**

- **Increased College-Going Rates:** Since the program's inception, Advise TN has increased college-going by 6% in the schools it serves. The positive effects can be seen immediately in 2017 when Advise TN advisors began working in schools and has persisted over time (including during the Covid-19 pandemic), showing that, while enrollment rates have fallen across the nation and in Tennessee, Advise TN services kept students' college-going behaviors at higher rates than they would have been without the program.
- **Higher Impact for Some Populations:** The effects of Advise TN were particularly pronounced in rural schools, where college-going rates increased by 8%, as well as among women (up 7%) and Hispanic students (up 16%). Advise TN's impact was seen across all types of higher education institutions, including career/technical schools, community colleges, and universities, both public and private.
- **Advising Intensity:** The study also examined the intensity of advising services, revealing that students who engaged more frequently with their Advise TN advisors are more likely to enroll in college or technical training. Students who met with an advisor 4 or more times, or just once per semester during 11th and 12 grade, were 31% more likely to pursue postsecondary education than students who met with an advisor only once. These findings underscore the importance of sustained and personalized advising in promoting college enrollment.

To assess the impact of Advise TN, researchers compared outcomes for students at Advise TN high schools to those at similar schools that did not receive Advise TN services over the past decade. This preliminary analysis focused on students' immediate college enrollment outcomes, including whether and where they enrolled after graduation. Future analyses will explore long-term outcomes, including college retention, completion, and other critical college-going tasks such as FAFSA completion and Tennessee Promise Scholarship applications.

Dr. Steven Gentile, Executive Director of THEC, commented on the findings: "These early results demonstrate the significant role that Advise TN plays in supporting our students' educational journeys. By providing stable, professional advisors and focusing on a range of college-preparation activities, Advise TN is helping to ensure that more Tennessee students have the opportunity to pursue higher education and achieve their goals."

The program is designed to serve a diverse population of students, with the only criteria for school selection being a college-going rate below the state average. Advise TN schools serve a high number of first-generation students, as well as students from low-income families or those that are Pell eligible. By providing individualized support, Advise TN ensures that all students have the opportunity to pursue higher education, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Dr. Taylor Odle, Assistant Professor of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and lead researcher on the project noted: "The effects we see from Advise TN are among the strongest in the nation for programs of this kind. This is due in part to the strong design of the program, which goes beyond just providing students with information. Advisors are accompanying students every step of the way as they think about and take action on their college and career plans. This plays out in the data: Advise TN is working."

For more information about Advise TN and how it is transforming college access in Tennessee, please visit [CollegeForTN.org/Advise-TN](http://CollegeForTN.org/Advise-TN).

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The Tennessee Higher Education Commission was created in 1967 by the Tennessee General Assembly. The Commission develops, implements, 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.