

TENNESSEE STUDENT ASSISTANCE CORPORATION

Minutes of the Fall Meeting

Conference Room E, 3rd Floor, Tennessee Tower

312 Rosa L. Parks Ave.

Nashville, TN

September 23, 2021

Link to recording:

[TSAC Board Meeting 9/23/2021 \(tn.gov\)](#)

- Chairman Niknejad called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Member	PRESENT	ABSENT
Chairman Tony Niknejad (for Gov. Bill Lee)	X	
Ashley Nabors (for Treasurer David Lillard)	X	
Lauren Spires (for Comp. Jason Mumpower)	X	
Greg Turner (for Commissioner Butch Eley)	X	
Commissioner Penny Schwinn	X	
Heidi Leming (for Chancellor Flora Tydings)	X	
Linda Martin (for President Randy Boyd)		X
Claude O. Pressnell, TICUA	X	
Jeff Norrod, TASFAA	X	
Cyrus Vatandoost, TPBSA	X	

At the start of the meeting four members were physically present, Chairman Tony Niknejad, Ms. Lauren Spires, Dr. Claude Presnell, and President Cyrus Vatandoost. There were four members, Ms. Ashley Nabors, Mr. Greg Turner, Dr. Heidi Leming, and Mr. Jeff Norrod, participating via telephone, with Commissioner Penny Schwinn joining via telephone shortly after the meeting began. Total members participating in the meeting was nine. There was not a quorum physically present at the meeting.

ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION NECESSITY

Chief Aid and Compliance Officer Peter Abernathy read the following statement:

As you may have determined from the introductions, we do not have a quorum that is physically present here today. As such, Tenn. Code Ann. § 8-44-108(b)(2), requires that the Board make a determination that a necessity exists in order for a quorum of members to participate by electronic or other means of communication.

A "Necessity" means that the matters to be considered by a public body at a meeting require timely action by the body, that physical presence by a quorum of the members is not practical within the period of time requiring action, and that participation by a quorum of the members by electronic or other means of communication is necessary.

In this case, two facts support a determination of necessity:

First, today's agenda items require timely action by the Board to allow TSAC staff, our institutions of higher education, and other partners and stakeholders to continue to serve students effectively and efficiently.

Second, scheduling conflicts and other commitments prevented a quorum of members from being physically present today.

Dr. Pressnell made a motion that the electronic participation is necessary for this meeting. Mr. Turner seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 8 ayes.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Dr. Pressnell made a motion to adopt the agenda. President Vatandoost seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously with 8 ayes. Commissioner Schwinn was not yet in attendance.

APPROVAL OF February 25, 2021 MINUTES

Commissioner Schwinn joined the meeting, participating via telephone. Ms. Spires made a motion to approve the minutes. President Vatandoost seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously with 9 ayes.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Chairman Niknejad delivered his report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:

Executive Director Dr. House provided her report. James Snider, Director of Tennessee Promise and Reconnect, gave a report on Tennessee Promise and Tennessee Reconnect. Questions were asked by board members and a discussion followed.

I. Decision Items

A. Changes to the Tennessee Student Assistance Award

Dr. Emily House presented information to the board regarding TSAC's decision to increase the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) requirements for the Tennessee Student Assistance Award (TSAA) for the 2021-2022 academic year. Current appropriation levels compared to recent years' take up rate allowed for this increase to occur. The increase brings the qualifying EFC for the TSAA to the same level as that of the Federal Pell Grant. Board members expressed appreciation for the increase to the EFC, which would ultimately serve an approximate 4,000 students.

Dr. Emily House next presented the recommendation to the board that the award amounts for TSAA be increased to \$2,000 for TCATS and community colleges for the 2022-23 academic year. Current award amounts are \$1,000 at the TCATS and \$1,300 at the community colleges. The policy objectives behind these increases is to: ensure more TSAA funding is awarded to those in need; assist students who have not taken advantage of Tennessee Promise and are not yet eligible for Tennessee Reconnect; and support the state's efforts to grow enrollment in workforce-ready credential programs.

Questions were asked by board members and a discussion followed. A motion to approve was made by Dr. Pressnell. Dr. Leming seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, the motion passed with 9 ayes.

B. Tennessee Promise Counties by Partnering Organization

Mr. Abernathy presented an updated list of assigned Tennessee Promise Partnering Organizations for each Tennessee County for the 2021-2022 academic year.

Board members asked questions and a discussion followed. A motion to adopt the changes was made by Dr. Pressnell. Ms. Spires seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, the motion passed with 9 ayes.

C. Board Officers for 2021-22

Mr. Abernathy presented information for the election of board member officers for the 2021-2022 academic year. A motion to approve the board officers was made by President Vatandoost. Ms. Spires seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, the motion passed with 9 ayes. The board voted to approve the following board member officers:

Chairman – Governor Bill Lee
Vice Chairman – Dr. Flora Tydings, Board of Regents
Treasurer – David Lillard, Jr., Treasury
Secretary – Dr. Claude Pressnell, TICUA

II. Discussion Items

A. 2021-21 TELS and 2020-21 Grants and Scholarship Reports

Tim Phelps, Senior Director of Grants and Scholarships, summarized expenditures in both grant and scholarship programs for the 2020-21 academic year. The Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship (TELS) programs provided over \$399 million to over 151,000 students participating among 15 programs. An additional approximate \$110 million in state-based program aid was awarded to more than 60,000 students. Board members asked questions and a discussion followed.

III. Other Business

With no further business, Chairman Niknejad adjourned the meeting at 2:28 p.m.


Dr. Claude Pressnell
TSAC Secretary