

THRIVE: Federal Advocacy and Policy Update

Carrie Warick-Smith
Vice President, Public Policy
May 25, 2022





The Association of Community College Trustees

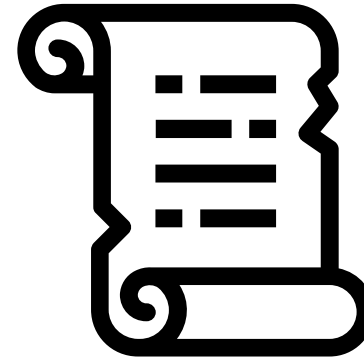
The Voice of Community College Trustees

Main Topics:

Shifting Trends in Advocacy



Legislative Update



ACCT



Shifting Trends in Advocacy

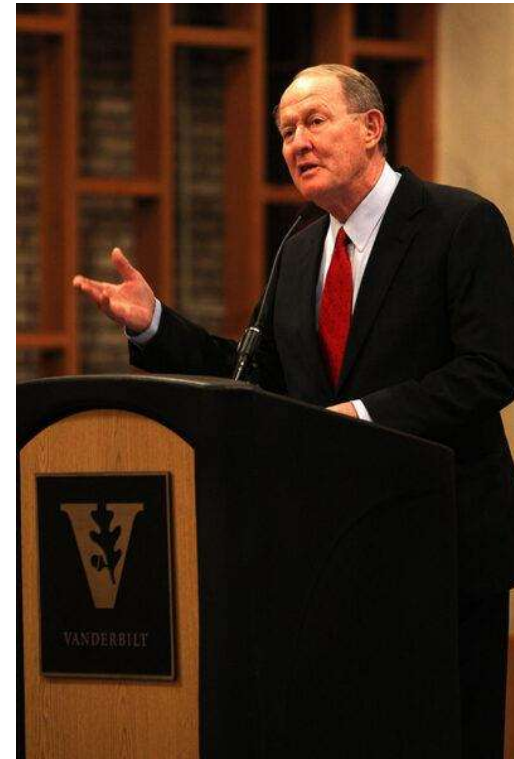
- Pandemic and Jan 6th brought changes to operations on Capitol Hill
- Greatly increases value of:
 - **In District Meetings**
 - District staff provide constituent services
 - Also can help amplify to Washington staff
 - **Video Conferencing with the Hill**
 - Most offices have some level of telework
 - Some staff prefer virtual even if they're in the office because it's faster
 - Materials/links are still important – send ahead or after electronically
 - Don't forget to follow-up and include links, etc!

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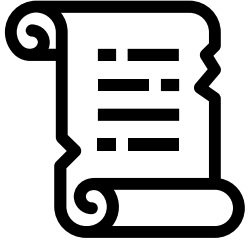
Shifting Trends in Advocacy

- How To Tip: Story, Stat, Ask
- Types of “Asks”
 - Introduce a bill
 - Vote for/against a bill
 - Earmark in appropriations
 - School appropriations support
 - Resolution
 - Campus/School Visit
 - Offer use of space
 - Speaker at event
 - Field Trip/Tour



<https://news.vanderbilt.edu/2021/02/23/portrait-of-a-statesman-retired-u-s-sen-lamar-alexander-leaves-legacy-of-education-reform-and-job-creation/>

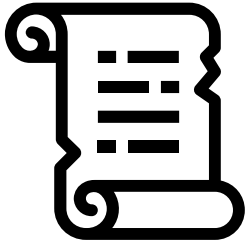
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Federal Update: Appropriations 1/2

- February – President submits budget proposal
- Spring – Public Comment, Member Day, Hearings
- Summer – Committee work
- September – Pass 12 bills by Sept 30
- Once in last two decades did Labor-HHS-Education bill pass on time

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Federal Update: Appropriations 2/2

FY22 Appropriations - [Factsheet](#)

Passed in March, 2022 – 5.5 months late

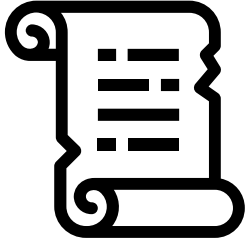
- Pell Grant maximum award increased to \$6,895 (\$400 above FY21)
- \$50 million for Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants (SCCTG) (\$5 million above FY21)
- \$5 million creation of Student Success and Retention Grant

President Biden's Budget Request FY23

State of the Union: First March Delivery

- Pell Grant maximum award increased to \$8,670 (\$1775 above FY22; \$500 from discretionary funding)
- \$110 million for Student Success and Retention Grant
- \$100 million for SCCTG (\$50 million above FY22)

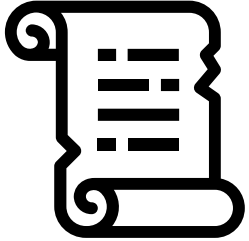
5/25/2022



Federal Update: June-November

- Additional Ukraine funding finally passed
- Additional COVID funding still being debated
- Bipartisan Innovation Act – Short-Term Pell
- Appropriations (likely a continuing resolution)
- Very long shot: Build Back Better / Reconciliation

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Federal Update: Upcoming Changes

- Second Chance Pell: July 1, 2023
- New FAFSA: July 1, 2024
- Short-Term Pell (if passed): July 1, 2024

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Thank You and Questions

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Vice President, Public Policy

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May 25, 2022

www.acct.org/advocacy



State

ADVOCACY/POLICY

WENDY BLACKMORE



State Legislative Visits

PREPARATION

To be most effective, do your homework

**RESEARCH THE
LEGISLATOR**

**BRING A SUPPORT
MATERIALS**

**FOLLOW UP AND
FOLLOW THROUGH**



Communicate Effectively and Efficiently



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legislator

RESEARCH

- District Represented
 - Bring constituents if possible
- Party of affiliation
- Committees on which they serve
- Voting history
- Any relevant/relating bills they are carrying or have co-signed



legislator
RESEARCH



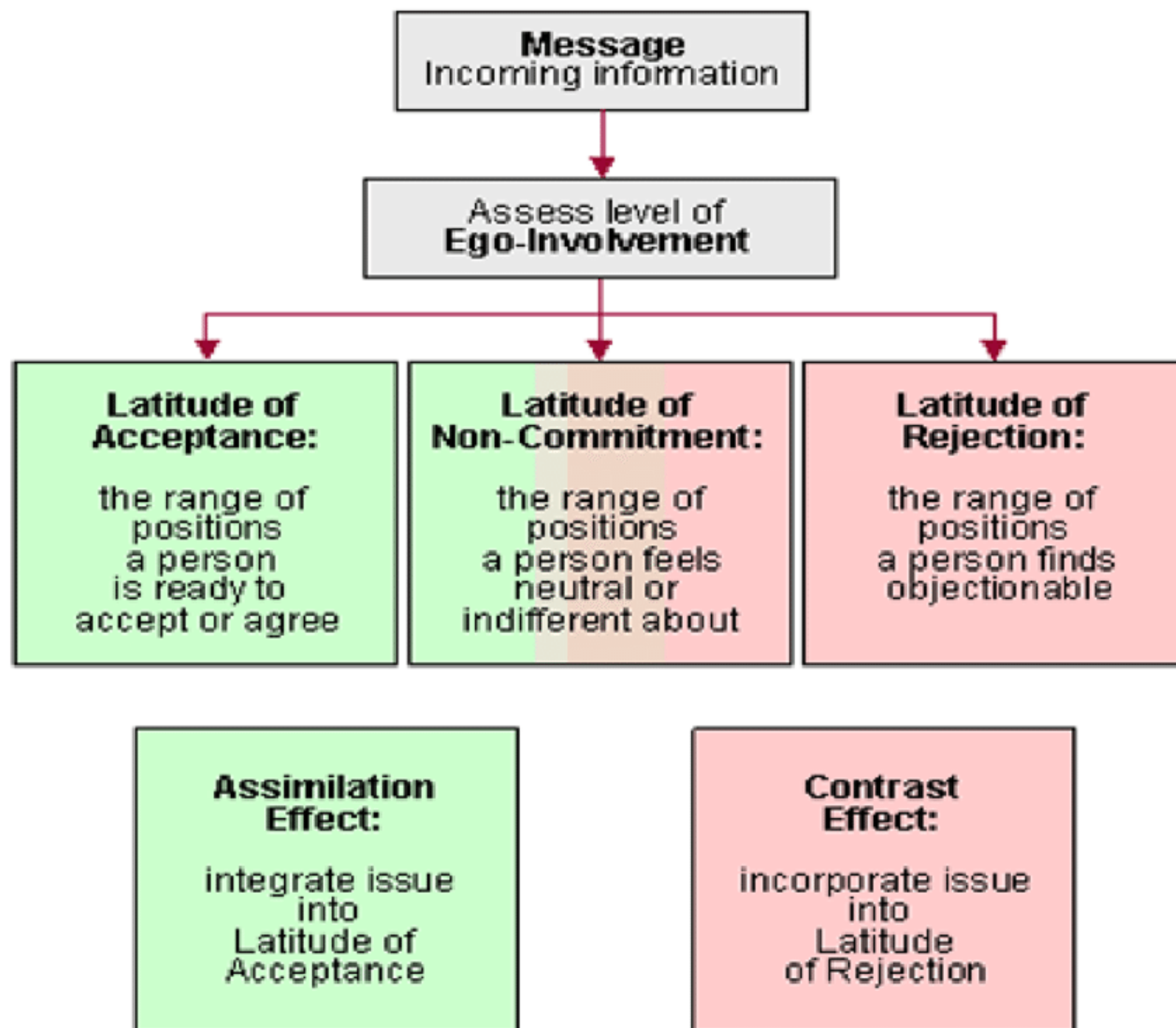
Representative Craig Fitzhugh

D – Ripley

District 82: Lauderdale, Crockett and
Haywood Counties

- B.S. Finance, University of Tennessee '72
- J.D., University of Tennessee '75
- Major in US Air Force Reserve
- Deacon, First Baptist Church
- Member, House Finance, Ways and Means Committee
- Member, House Government Operations committee
- Member, House Education Administration and Planning Committee
- Member, House Calendar and Rules Committee
- Member, House Finance, Ways and Means Subcommittee
- Member, Joint Government Operations Education, Health and General Welfare subcommittee
- Member, Joint Government Operations Commerce, Labor, Transportation and Agriculture Subcommittee
- Member, Joint Pensions and Insurance Committee
- Co-sponsored bill that requires LEAs to conduct eighth grade conferences with parents and teachers and guidance counselors to discuss high school graduation requirements, to set the classes that the students will take in high school, and to provide information about financial aid for college

Social Judgment Process (Sherif)



CASE STUDY

Dual Enrollment

You are a school counselor at Tennessee High School. You have several students who want to enroll in dual enrollment courses via the Dual Enrollment Grant, but they do not meet the minimum ACT requirement. You believe these students would benefit from earning early college credit and that they are capable of succeeding in the courses. You talk to your principal about enrolling them in the classes through the DE Grant, but you learn there is nothing you can do; the minimum ACT score is a state policy requirement, determined by the legislature. You connect with several others who also want to change this policy and prepare for a day at legislative plaza.

Representative Kooler is from your district, and she chairs the House Education Committee. Through your research, you learn that she is not very keen on making changes of any kind to any TN Education Lottery Scholarship Program. She is a staunch advocate of using standardized tests to determine college readiness. She has been quoted saying, "GPA cannot be a true indicator of student capability; as we know not all teachers grade with the same critical eye."

Determine where each of the messages below falls on Rep. Kooler’s Attitude Scale. Then select the one message you think would most successfully persuade her to consider removing the minimum ACT score from the Dual Enrollment Grant eligibility requirements.

- (A) “Removing the minimum ACT score is essential to best serve the interests of our community.”
- (B) “Oh the whole, the interests of our community will be best served if we remove the minimum ACT score rather than keep it.”
- (C) “It seems the interests of our community will be better served if we remove the minimum ACT score rather than keep it.”
- (D) “It is probable that the interests of our community may be better served if we remove the minimum ACT score rather than keep it.” *”Here are some reasons why...”
- (E) “From the point of view of our community’s best interest, it is hard to decide whether it is preferable to remove the minimum ACT score or keep it.” *”Let’s review this data that shows how it impacts certain communities.”
- (F) “It is probable that the interests of our community may be better served if we keep the minimum ACT score requirement rather than remove it.” *”Here are some reasons why...”
- (G) “It seems the interests of our community will be better served if we keep the minimum ACT score requirement rather than remove it.”
- (H) “Oh the whole, the interests of our community will be best served if we keep the minimum ACT score requirement rather than remove it.”
- (I) “Keeping the minimum ACT score requirement is essential to best serve the interests of our community.”

Statement E is the most discrepant without creating a boomerang/rejection effect

(A) "Removing the minimum ACT score is essential to best serve the interests of our community."

(B) "Oh the whole, the interests of our community will be best served if we keep it."

(C) "It seems the interests of our community will be better served if we remove the minimum ACT score rather than keep it."

(D) "It is probable that the interests of our community may be better served if we remove the minimum ACT score rather than keep it." *"Here are some reasons why..."

(E) "From the point of view of our community's best interest, it is hard to decide whether it is preferable to remove the minimum ACT score or keep it." *"Let's review this data that shows how it impacts certain communities."

(F) "It is probable that the interests of our community may be better served if we keep the minimum ACT score requirement rather than remove it." *"Here are some reasons why..."

(G) "It seems the interests of our community will be better served if we keep the minimum ACT score requirement rather than remove it."

(H) "Oh the whole, the interests of our community will be best served if we keep the minimum ACT score requirement rather than remove it."

(I) "Keeping the minimum ACT score requirement is essential to best serve the interests of our community."

Lattitude of Rejection

Lattitude of Acceptance

*Provide materials for
review*

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TRANSPORTATION

a barrier to higher education for low-income, first-generation college-goers

Many low-income, first-generation college-goers, both rural and urban, face difficulties getting to and from a college campus. Most are unable to access/afford a personal vehicle and must rely on public transit or friends and family members for rides. On average, rural students travel 52 miles round-trip to attend college¹, and urban students must juggle class schedules with public transit schedules. It is not uncommon for commute times to exceed one hour. The process is further complicated for the many low-income, first-generation students who work while attending college.

Faculty members cite seeing attendance issues when a car breaks down or a ride falls through. A change in which family member drives the family vehicle to work can result in a student dropping out.

Even when students can access a personal vehicle, they are often unprepared for dealing with the costs associated with transportation to and from campus: car payment, insurance, gas prices and a campus parking decal.²

Why this Matters in Tennessee

Commuting rural Tennessee students often must travel long distances and times to get to a college campus. Public transit is not an option in these areas, therefore low-income, first-generation students must be able to access a personal vehicle or find a consistent ride if they aim to complete a degree program. Commutes to campuses by low-income, first-generation students in Tennessee's urban cities are often restricted by public transit routes and schedules, which are not always conducive to the time constraints of working college-goers. For example, in Nashville, it takes 76 minutes to travel from Cane Ridge High School to Nashville State Community College at Hickory Hollow using public transit.³

Questions to Consider

- How can the state support higher education institutions that want to improve transit options for commuting students?
- What proven strategies could Tennessee implement to help alleviate transportation challenges for rural and urban students?
- Does state funding to higher education provide opportunities for institutions to assist students with transportation needs in order to help students persist and complete their degree programs?

On average,
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It takes **76 minutes**
to travel from Cane Ridge
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State Community College
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using public transit.

¹ Randy Smith, president of the Rural Community College Alliance, et al. in "Finding a Ride," Inside Higher Ed

² Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, *Straight from the Source: What Works for First-Generation College Students*, page 35

³ Transit time calculated using Google Maps travel time estimates for a standard travel date and time.

DUAL ENROLLMENT

an opportunity to increase higher education access and success for low-income, first-generation college-goers

Dual enrollment, or when a high school student takes college-level courses for college credit and often high school credit, is correlated with higher rates of college completion¹. Dual enrollment has been identified as an Early Postsecondary Opportunity (EPSO) by the Tennessee Department of Education.

Students can access dual enrollment opportunities by taking classes on the campus of a postsecondary institution, by having college-level courses taught in the high school building, or accessing the course online. Many rural districts in Tennessee use dual enrollment as an option to provide advanced coursework to students when the school or district size may make offering courses like Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) cost ineffective. Even in schools where AP or IB are offered, anecdotes suggest that students may experience a confidence boost in completing college-level courses for credit that affects their later college success.

Unlike K-12 offerings which are free to the student, dual enrollment courses include costs such as fees and other costs associated with the college admissions process, since a student taking dual enrollment must be admitted as a student at the institution offering the course; tuition and fee costs for the course itself; and indirect costs such as transportation costs if the student must travel to the college campus, textbook costs, and in some cases, costs for extra supplies particular to the course the student is taking. The Tennessee Dual Enrollment Grant, a Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship, defrays some of these costs but only covers tuition and fee expenses up to \$500 per course. Additional costs may be a factor limiting the number of students who are able to access dual enrollment opportunities.

Why this Matters in Tennessee

Dual enrollment is a proven strategy to increase student success and allow students to begin accumulating college credit as a high school student. Credit accumulation is critical to students being able to complete their postsecondary program on time, allowing them to move into the workforce and reduce time and money spent on college. However, the way the Tennessee Dual Enrollment Grant is currently structured, tuition and fees for students' first two courses are covered but subsequent courses are not covered at the same level; if a student completed four dual enrollment courses as a high school student, they would be faced with a gap of \$800 between the cost of tuition and fees and what is covered by the state grant.² Tennessee's current dual enrollment funding for high school students does not cover additional admissions costs or indirect costs the student may incur; these costs likely prevent low-income students from accessing dual enrollment opportunities.

Questions to Consider

- How can dual enrollment be expanded to serve more students?
- What opportunities exist to assist low-income students in covering the costs involved with accessing dual enrollment opportunities?
- Would fully funding tuition and fee expenses for up to four courses (instead of the current two courses) help students accumulate more college credit while still in high school?

¹ Tennessee Department of Education <https://www.tn.gov/education/early-postsecondary.html>

² Tennessee Department of Education, *EPSO Implementation Guide* (2017)

³ Tennessee Department of Education, *Dual Enrollment Myths and Facts* (2017)

Even though
EPSOs like
dual
enrollment
are available
in 92% of high
schools, only
41% of
Tennessee
students
complete
these
opportunities.²

*Thank yous and
friendly reminders*

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Questions?

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THRIVE

An initiative of **The Education Trust in Tennessee**

About The Session:

Federal and state policies can have positive and negative influences over college and career success.

As practitioners, we know certain policies need “edits” and others need to be created. Participants will be provided an overview of advocacy practices to implement at the state and federal level.

Key Takeaways:

1. When meeting with legislators, do your research, be prepared, follow up.
2. Using Social Judgement Theory can help you to change attitudes.
3. Remote advocacy is now possible, with federal congressional offices open to video conferencing.
4. Meeting in district offices is a great way to build relationships with federal legislators.

Resources:

1. [TN General Assembly, Find My Legislator](#)
2. [2022 State Aid Legislation Recap](#)
3. [Weekly Washington Update](#)

THE EDUCATION PLAYERS

