The Drive to 55 is Governor Bill Haslam’s initiative to meet our future workforce needs by having 55% of Tennesseans equipped with a college degree or certificate by the year 2025.
The Challenge Facing States

• How do we develop a state workforce with the educational credentials employers need for the future?

• What can be done to address the “Skills Gap” for employers today?

• What role can higher education play to develop candidates possessing the requisite skills for the future job market?
Diagnosing the Need: 72,865 Students
2007 Cohort of High School Freshmen

10,545 students did not graduate high school

22,334 students entered the workforce

$9,030 average income

40,235 students enrolled in postsecondary

16% chance of earning above minimum wage
2015 Higher Education Attainment by State

TN: 33.8%
43rd

Source: Lumina Foundation
What is Tennessee Promise?

- Free “last-dollar” scholarship for Tennessee students attending an eligible institution.
- Key part of our Drive to 55 initiative, which seeks to have 55% of our state’s residents in possession of a higher education credential by 2025.
- Students are required to perform 8 hours community service and meet all other program deadlines to maintain eligibility.
- Students complete the FAFSA form and exhaust all federal and state gift aid opportunities; thereafter, Tennessee Promise applies and covers remaining mandatory tuition and fees.
- To maintain eligibility, students must remain enrolled full-time and keep at least a 2.0 GPA.
Tennessee Promise
Theory of Action

Financial Aid  Mentorship  Success Framework
Timeline of Student Requirements

- **Nov 2**: Application Closes
- **Jan-Feb 15**: First Mandatory Meeting
- **February 15**: FAFSA Completion Deadline
- **Mar-April**: Second Mandatory Meeting
- **August 1**: Community Service Deadline
Year 1 Results

Fall 2015 Enrollment: 16,291

Tennessee now #1 FAFSA state in nation-68% completion rate

14% Community College enrollment jump

Culture change in Tennessee
  • Out of a 600 student sample, 82% indicated TN Promise strongly influenced their decision to attend college
Changing Our Narrative

Report: Tennessee tops nation in FAFSA completion  
*WBIR*

“First class of TN Promise will start college this fall...the nation is already watching.”  
*Politico*

Tennessee Picking Up Tab For Community College Students  
*CNN*

The Free Community College Experiment Everyone is Watching  
*PBS NewsHour*
Signed up for that tn promise so my momma can shut up.

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1 FAVORITE
What is LEAP?

- A workforce alignment program passed into law in 2013 by Senate Majority Leader Mark Norris and House Majority Leader Gerald McCormick.

- Aligns higher education and K-12, industry, local economic development agencies, as well as state agencies.

- Designed to provide the credentials and technical skills needed by existing and prospective industries and to facilitate communication and alignment among government, education and industry.

- Two part alignment strategy: local alignment for specific workforce solutions; at the state government level among agencies with overlapping responsibilities.
State Agency Alignment

- Alignment is not limited to local efforts in the LEAP program
- Governor’s Workforce Subcabinet: Higher Ed, ECD, Department of Labor and Workforce Development, K-12 education, Department of Human Services
- Required dialogue has allowed state government agencies to identify overlap and leverage efficiencies
- Comprehensive policy conversations = efficiency and engagement
LEAP programs receiving funding demonstrated:

- Local industry partnerships with written commitments for internships
- Buy-in from local higher education campuses and K-12 administrators /CTE faculty
- Participation from economic development agents: local chambers and workforce boards
- Data and supporting analysis evidencing local industry need
- Proposal served the workforce needs of at least three Tennessee counties
- A strong plan for long-term sustainability beyond the grant period
Preliminary Progress by the numbers:

• **1,698** high schools students are now dually enrolled in LEAP courses. Students completing coursework in LEAP courses will earn college credit toward degrees in a variety of high demand fields such as advanced manufacturing and mechatronics. These students will serve as the foundation for new workforce pipelines that will benefit the state for years to come.

• **475** full time and part time post-secondary students enrolled in courses supported by LEAP-funded equipment and instructors. These students will be eligible to complete degrees such as a Mechatronics Certificate, and an Associates of Applied Technology.

• **Statewide, 109** local industry partners are participating in the regional collaboratives to support programs by providing:
  – Student internships
  – Additional training opportunities for current employees
  – Hosting educator externships
  – Classroom visits and project-based learning
  – Direct financial support to LEAP training efforts.

  This pool of industry partnerships is still growing as more employers learn of LEAP programs and the coalitions that are supporting their efforts.

• **LEAP programs currently serving 44 counties directly.**