

# Tennessee's College- and Career-Ready Commitment

## The Economic Imperative

Today, nearly every good job requires some postsecondary education and/or training (e.g., an associate's or bachelor's degree, certificate, or apprenticeship or significant on-the-job training). All students need to be academically prepared to compete for good jobs in the global economy.

In 1950, 60% of jobs were classified as unskilled, attainable by young people with high school diplomas or less. Today, less than 20% jobs are considered to be unskilled.<sup>i</sup>

- **81%** of Tennessee's jobs are middle or high skills (i.e., require some postsecondary education or training).
- Yet only **32%** of Tennessee's adults have some postsecondary degree (associate's or higher).<sup>ii</sup>

More education is associated with higher earnings and higher rates of employment in Tennessee.<sup>iii</sup>

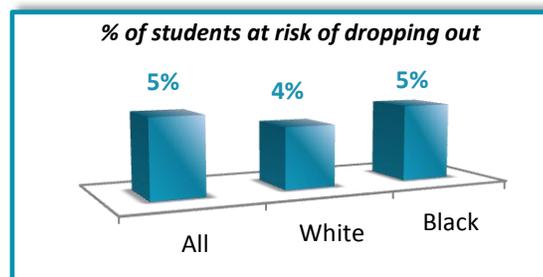
Mean Income	Education Level	Unemployment
\$9,679	HS Dropout	22%
\$22,389	HS Graduate	13%
\$28,223	Some College	6%
\$56,523	Bachelors & Above	4%

## The Equity Imperative

Far too many students drop out or graduate from high school unprepared for success, closing doors and limiting their options and opportunities – in particular minority and low-income students.

Tennessee's achievement gaps begin in the earliest grades and extend through college enrollment and admissions.<sup>iv</sup>

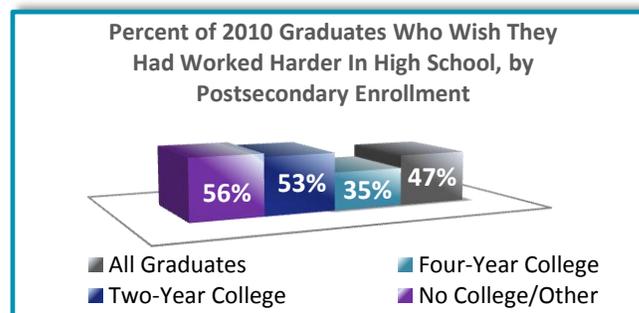
	All	White	Black	Hispanic	Low SES
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math Proficiency	30%	36%	12%	19%	19%
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Proficiency <sup>v</sup>	27%	31%	12%	24%	17%
HS Graduation Rate <sup>vi</sup>	76%	79%	68%	68%	N/A
College Completion Rate <sup>vii</sup>	50%	53%	41%	49%	N/A



## The Expectations Gap

The bar has been set too low for too long, keeping students from reaching their full potential. If we want students to achieve more, we need to expect more.

- **54%** of Tennessee's students in two-year colleges and **18%** of Tennessee's students in four-year colleges require remediation.<sup>viii</sup>
- Only half (**50%**) of students who enter public colleges in Tennessee earn their degrees.
- **34%** of employers deem the preparation of newly hired employees with only a high school diploma as "deficient," (and only 16% find their preparation "excellent.")<sup>ix</sup>
- **49%** of employers surveyed noted they anticipate requiring higher levels of education for most jobs – and another **60%** noted more specific technical skills will be required – in the next 3-5 years.<sup>x</sup>



All too often, students regret not working harder once they leave high school.<sup>xi</sup>

# Tennessee's College- and Career-Ready Commitment

## The College- and Career-Ready Agenda

Over the past five years, states have driven the college- and career-ready agenda – a policy agenda that seeks to ensure all students graduate high school, and graduate ready for their next steps.

Tennessee is among the states that have made college and career readiness a priority for all students.<sup>xii</sup>

- In 2009, Tennessee adopted academic standards aligned with college- and career-ready expectations. In August 2010, Tennessee adopted the Common Core State Standards.
- Tennessee is a Lead State Partner in the development of the Next Generation Science Standards.
- In 2008, Tennessee adopted the Tennessee Ready Core, raising their graduation requirements to the college- and career-ready level, and eliminating a two-tiered diploma system that tracked students based in their perceived academic abilities.
- The Tennessee Ready Core requirements are in alignment with the admissions requirements set by the Tennessee Board of Regents.

*Tennessee is one of only 24 states (including DC) with requirements at this level*

- Tennessee administers the ACT to all 11th-grade students as part of the state's assessment system.

*Tennessee is one of 18 states with high school tests used by higher education for placement decisions letting students know if they are ready for college-level coursework while still in high school to give them time to address any readiness gaps*

- Tennessee is a Governing State in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), a consortium of states working to develop a common assessment system using Race to the Top Common Assessment funds.
- Tennessee has met seven of the ten State Actions identified by the Data Quality Campaign, providing a foundation for strong and sound student-level data collection and use.
- While Tennessee's data system is capable of collecting a variety of college- and career-ready student data, the state needs to make use of a range of indicators in a variety of ways to get a more complete picture of how their students are faring in K-12 and beyond.

College- and Career-Ready Indicator	Publicly Reported	State Set Goal	Incentive to Improve	Accountability Formula
CCR Diploma		YES		
CCR Assessment				
Postsecondary Remediation				
Exceeding CCR				

## How Tennessee Can Further Advance the College- and Career-Ready Agenda

- ✓ ...Fully realize the promise of the CCSS by implementing them fully and successfully, taking into account the related curricular and policy changes.
- ✓ ...Remain committed to the goals of PARCC and developing and administering a next-generation, computer-based assessment system anchored by college- and career-ready tests in high school that will let students know if they are ready for college-level coursework and measure the full range of the CCSS.
- ✓ ...Re-examine the state's K-12 accountability system to determine how it can further reward measures of college and career readiness, in alignment with the state's standards, course requirements and assessments.
- ✓ ...Focus efforts around increasing the state's graduation rate (and decreasing the dropout rate) through student support programs and partnerships with higher education.

<sup>i</sup> Carnevale, Anthony P. and Donna Desrochers (2003). *Standards for What? The Economic Roots of K-12 Reform*, Education Testing Services. [www.learndoearn.org/For-Educators/Standards-for-What.pdf](http://www.learndoearn.org/For-Educators/Standards-for-What.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> Skills to Compete <http://www.skills2compete.org>

<sup>iii</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2011). *Current Population Survey*. Figures are based on the total persons in the civilian labor force.

[www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpssc/cps\\_table\\_creator.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpssc/cps_table_creator.html)

<sup>iv</sup> Annie E. Casey Foundation. Kids Count Data Center. 2010. <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/acrossstates/Rankings.aspx>

<sup>v</sup> Analysis of NAEP data downloaded from nationsreportcard.gov

<sup>vi</sup> Education Week (2009). *Graduation in the United States*.

[www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2012/06/07/](http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2012/06/07/)

<sup>vii</sup> NCES. *IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey*, analyzed by National Center for Management of Higher Education Systems.

<sup>viii</sup> Governor's Office of Student Achievement. <http://gaosa.org/Index.aspx>

<sup>ix</sup> Corporate Voices for Working Families & Civic Enterprises (2011). *Across the Great Divide: Perspectives of CEOs and College Presidents on America's Higher Education and Skills Gap*. [www.civicenterprises.net/pdfs/across-the-great-divide.pdf](http://www.civicenterprises.net/pdfs/across-the-great-divide.pdf)

<sup>x</sup> Achieve/SHRM

<sup>xi</sup> College Board (2011). *One Year Out: Findings From A National Survey Among Members Of The High School Graduating Class Of 2010*.

[www.collegeboard.org/OneYearOut](http://www.collegeboard.org/OneYearOut)

<sup>xii</sup> Achieve (2012). *Closing the Expectations Gap 2011: 50-State Progress Report on the Alignment of High School Policies with the Demands of College and Careers*.