



The Weekly Update

Tennessee General Assembly
House of Representatives

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Last week I reported on the “Race to the Top” bill which both the Senate and House passed. This week I would like to give you some information on the “Complete College Tennessee Act” which passed the House 93 to 2 and passed the Senate 32 -0.

Tennessee lags the nation in college graduation rates. We are 40th in bachelor degree completions and 45th in associate degree completions. On average, less than half of our full time students graduate in six years, and only 12% of our full time community college students get an associate degree in three years.

We felt it was critical that whatever steps were made had to be done without putting the burden back on the taxpayers. No new state appropriations to fund these activities will be made. Under the Complete College Tennessee Act, Tennessee will change existing funding to state universities as follows:

*Fund higher education based in part on success and outcomes, including higher rates of degree completion.

*Make community colleges the centerpiece in Tennessee’s strategy by expanding common programs and common courses to promote consistency and quality.

*Create a statewide transfer policy so that any student who earns a two year degree at a community college can move on to a four year university as a junior.

*Require the Tennessee Board of Regents and the University of Tennessee to establish dual admission and dual enrollment policies at all two and four year colleges and universities, so students of one school can get their degrees faster.

While college is not for everyone, this legislation helps streamline our colleges and universities to help graduate more students who desire to graduate. I will post more as we begin our committee process to get bills to the floor.

Gary

Weekly Update is for informational purposes only.