THRIVE: Federal Advocacy and Policy Update

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

Shifting Trends in Advocacy  Legislative Update
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!

ACCT
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

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
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)
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
Federal Update: Upcoming Changes

• Second Chance Pell: July 1, 2023

• New FAFSA: July 1, 2024

• Short-Term Pell (if passed): July 1, 2024
Thank You and Questions

Carrie Warick-Smith
Vice President, Public Policy
cwsmith@acct.org / @CarrieWarick

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

- Research the Legislator
- Bring a Support Materials
- Follow Up and Follow Through
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
• 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 Planing 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

Representative Craig Fitzhugh
D – Ripley
District 82: Lauderdale, Crockett and Haywood Counties
Social Judgment Process (Sherif)

Message
Incoming information

Assess level of Ego-Involvement

Latitude of Acceptance:
the range of positions a person is ready to accept or agree

Latitude of Non-Commitment:
the range of positions a person feels neutral or indifferent about

Latitude of Rejection:
the range of positions a person finds objectionable

Assimilation Effect:
integrate issue into Latitude of Acceptance

Contrast Effect:
incorporate issue into Latitude of Rejection
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.”
(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 it rather than remove it.”

(I) “Keeping the minimum ACT score requirement is essential to best serve the interests of our community.”
Provide materials for review

- Research the Legislator
- Bring a Support Materials
- Follow up and Follow Through
Many low-income, first-generation college-goers feel barriers to higher education for financial reasons, rural and urban students may not be able to access public transit. Rural students need to travel long distances to attend college, and urban students must juggle class schedules with public transit schedules. It is not uncommon for commuting 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 fails through. A change in which family members drive the family vehicle can work well, but may be difficult for students without access to a personal vehicle.

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. Students may be financially unable to access a personal vehicle or find a consistent ride if they are required to complete a degree program. Commutes to campuses by public transit, for low-income, first-generation students in Tennessee's urban areas, 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 using public transit. It takes 76 minutes to travel from Cane Ridge High School to Nashville State Community College using public transit.

**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 available in these areas, so low-income, first-generation students must be able to access a personal vehicle or find a consistent ride if they are required to complete a degree program. Commutes to campuses by low-income, first-generation students in Tennessee’s rural 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.

**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, rural students travel 52 miles round trip to attend college.**

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

**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 completion. 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 district or school size may make offering courses like Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) cost prohibitive. Even in schools where AP or IB are offered, many students do not have access to these courses due to the cost of tuition and fees. It is estimated that students who participate in dual enrollment have a higher rate of college completion and are more likely to complete their degree.

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

Dual enrollment is a proven strategy to increase student success and allow students to begin accumulating college credit as a high school student. Dual enrollment opportunities are critical to students being able to complete their postsecondary program on time, allowing them to ease the workforce and reduce the cost of tuition. However, the Tennessee Dual Enrollment Grant is currently structured with significant restrictions, and the state is considering changes to the program. The following questions are critical to evaluating the success of 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 fees for up to four courses instead of the current two courses help students accumulate more college credit while still in high school?
Thank yous and friendly reminders

- Research the Legislator
- Bring a Support Materials
- Follow Up and Follow Through
Questions?

Wendy Blackmore
Director of Operations
TN College Access and Success Network
wblackmore@tncollegeaccess.org
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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEC</th>
<th>TSAC</th>
<th>TDOE</th>
<th>TN SBE</th>
<th>LEGISLATURE</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TN HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION</strong></td>
<td><strong>TN STUDENT ASSISTANCE CORPORATION</strong></td>
<td><strong>TN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION</strong></td>
<td><strong>TN STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION</strong></td>
<td><strong>TN GENERAL ASSEMBLY HOUSE AND SENATE</strong></td>
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<td>State higher education coordinating board</td>
<td>Falls under THEC Executive Director, State Aid Admin.</td>
<td>State agency for public PK–12 schools</td>
<td>Governing and policy-making board for elementary and secondary schools</td>
<td>Legislative authority of the state - elected officials</td>
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<td>Roles: Funding-based formula, approval of academic degree programs, research and analysis, regulation of proprietary institutions, veteran education benefits, etc</td>
<td>Roles: Administers over 20 different state student financial aid programs, including the HOPE scholarship, Tennessee Promise, Tennessee Reconnect, Tennessee Student Assistance Award, and the Dual Enrollment grant.</td>
<td>Roles: Professional development, teacher certification, education data research and analysis, grants and programming, etc.</td>
<td>Roles: Establishes rules and policies (district operations, instructional standards, personnel, and charter schools) governing all aspects of K–12 education</td>
<td>Roles: Present bill/resolutions, vote, create laws regarding P–16 education</td>
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