

EARLY POST-SECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES IN TENNESSEE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Under the new ESSA grading system for Tennessee, 25% of a high school's grade is based on college, career, and military readiness. One of the measures for this indicator is access to early postsecondary opportunities (EPSOs).

What is an Early Post Secondary Opportunity? A course and/or exam that gives students a chance to obtain postsecondary credit while still in high school. In Tennessee, there are eight kinds of EPSO opportunities, including, Advanced Placement, Cambridge International Examinations, College Level Examination Program, International Baccalaureate, Local Dual Credit, Statewide Dual Credit, Dual Enrollment and Industry Certification.

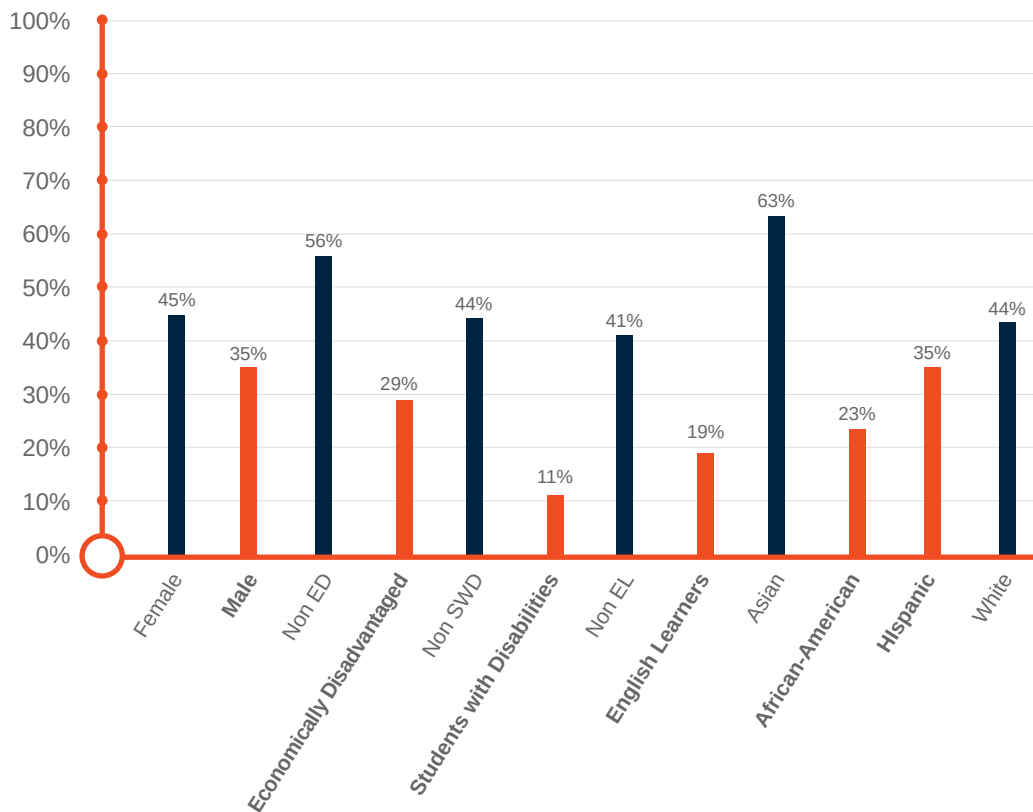
WHY DO EARLY POST-SECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES MATTER?

Research has shown that students who participate in EPSO courses are more likely to enroll and persist in college. EPSOs allow students to develop confidence and skills for success in their postsecondary education— this is particularly important for our first generation college-going students to become familiar with postsecondary expectations, and decrease the time and cost of completing a certificate or degree by earning postsecondary credits while in high school. Research has also shown a correlation between student participation in EPSOs and higher outcomes on college and career readiness assessments, such as the ACT.

Additionally, graduation rates at schools that do not offer at least one EPSOs are drastically different than those that offer one or more. **In Tennessee, the graduation rate in schools without at least one EPSO is nearly 60%.** In comparison, schools in Tennessee with at least one EPSO have a graduation rate of 88.5%.

WHO LACKS ACCESS TO EARLY POST-SECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES IN TENNESSEE?

GAPS IN EPSO ENROLLMENT



DID YOU KNOW?

- 8% of high schools in Tennessee do not offer a single early postsecondary opportunity
- Nearly 1200 students in Tennessee attend a school that does not offer a single early postsecondary opportunity.
- Non-economically disadvantaged students are twice as likely as economically disadvantaged students to have access to an early post-secondary opportunity.

Sources:

1. Tennessee Department of Education. (2017). Every Student Succeeds Act: Building on Success in Tennessee, ESSA State Plan. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/ESSA_state_plan.pdf.
2. Tennessee Department of Education. (2017). Early Postsecondary Opportunities. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from <https://www.tn.gov/education/section/early-postsecondary>.
3. Tennessee Department of Education. (2017). Tennessee Succeeds: ESSA in Tennessee Accountability, A-F School Grades, and School Improvement. July 25, 2017.
4. Tennessee Department of Education. (2017). Retrieved August 15, 2017 from <http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/education/>.



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THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA)

WHAT THE FEDERAL LAW REQUIRES

The **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**, passed by Congress in December 2015, contains a number of meaningful levers that advance education equity for all students. For example, ESSA requires states to include in their accountability framework at least one “indicator of school quality” which is an additional way, beyond test scores, to assess how well their school is serving students. Specifically, ESSA requires that this additional indicator:

- allow for meaningful differentiation in school performance
- is valid, reliable, comparable, and statewide
- may include one or more measures

ESSA allows each state the flexibility to choose what this “indicator of school quality” is as long as they meet the three criteria above.

WHAT THE TENNESSEE ESSA PLAN DOES

The Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) submitted their final ESSA state plan on April 13, 2017. They chose to select two indicators to measure school quality and student success, and one of these is the Ready Graduate indicator. This indicator is a measure of college, career, and military readiness. A component of this indicator is access to Early Post-Secondary Opportunities.

School Accountability

The Ready Graduate indicator will measure percent of high school graduates who demonstrate the necessary skills for postsecondary, military and workforce readiness by meeting either ACT, EPSO or military criteria.

Schools can demonstrate readiness using two pathways:

1. Absolute achievement (relative to other schools) or
2. Performance against an Annual Measureable Objective (AMO) targets (growth in the “Ready Graduate” indicator)

The Ready Graduate indicator will be calculated by multiplying the school’s graduation rate by the percentage of students that meet one of the following criteria*:

1. Scoring 21 or higher on ACT, or
2. Completing 4 EPSOs, or
3. Completing 2 EPSOs + earning industry certification (in approved CTE program of study, EPSOs may be general education or included in CTE pathway, or
4. Completing 2 EPSOs + designated score to be determined on Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)

*Students can only be counted once in one of the four criteria.

Source:

1. U.S. Government Publishing Office. (2017). Every Student Succeeds Act Law. Retrieved August 1, 2017 from <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-114s1177enr/pdf/BILLS-114s1177enr.pdf>.
2. Tennessee Department of Education. (2017). Every Student Succeeds Act: Building on Success in Tennessee, ESSA State Plan. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/ESSA_state_plan.pdf.

THE COST OF EARLY POSTSECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES IN TENNESSEE

Early Postsecondary Opportunity	Typical Associated Costs	Available Funding Options
Advanced Placement (AP)	<p>Required Costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student exam fees (About \$94 per exam) • Potential (not required): • Teacher training • Purchase of materials or curriculum supplements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ State Exam Fee Assistance Pilot ▶ Federal Grants: ESSA Title IV Block Grant (TBD), Title I ▶ Perkins Basic (only when course is within a Program Of Study) ▶ College Board economically disadvantaged fee waivers ▶ Local Chamber of Commerce or industry partnership
Cambridge International Exams (CIE)	<p>Required Costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student exam fees (From about \$89.90 – \$258.57) <p>Potential (not required):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher training • Purchase of materials or curriculum supplements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ State Exam Fee Assistance Pilot ▶ Federal Grants: ESSA Title IV Block Grant (TBD), Title I ▶ Perkins Basic (only when course is within a Program Of Study) ▶ College Board economically disadvantaged fee waivers ▶ Local Chamber of Commerce or industry partnership
CLEP Exam	Student exam fee (About \$85 per exam)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Perkins Basic (only when course is within a Program Of Study)
International Baccalaureate (IB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application and/or teacher training costs to become an IB World School • Student exam fees (About \$110 per exam, plus an additional \$190 for registration and processing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ State Exam Fee Assistance Pilot ▶ Federal Grants: ESSA Title IV Block Grant (TBD), Title I ▶ Perkins Basic (only when course is within a Program Of Study) ▶ College Board economically disadvantaged fee waivers ▶ Local Chamber of Commerce or industry partnership
Dual Enrollment	<p>Required Costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuition cost • Mandatory fees <p>Potential Costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course-specific fees • Textbooks or other materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dual Enrollment Grant ▶ Perkins Basic (only when course is within a Program Of Study) ▶ Scholarships/Gap costs covered by some institutions
Local Dual Credit	Standard fee of \$25 across all community colleges	
Statewide Dual Credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required teacher training travel costs • Student exam fees (covered by department) 	Exam costs fully covered by TDOE
Industry Certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student exam fee • Licensure application fee • Professional organization registration fee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Perkins Basic ▶ Perkins Reserve Grant

Source: Tennessee Department of Education. Office of Early Postsecondary.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: WHY ARE EPSOS IMPORTANT FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS?

A: Research shows that EPSOs are positively correlated with student persistence and better college grades. Tennessee data from the 2015 graduating class show that students successfully completing at least 4 EPSOs in high school had at least a 50% chance of scoring a 21 on the ACT. However, less than 17% of students in the class of 2015 completed four or more EPSO credits. In fact, less than 40% completed even one or more EPSOs.

Q: WILL A SCHOOL/DISTRICT RECEIVE CREDIT FOR HOW MANY STUDENTS TAKE AN EPSO OR FOR HOW WELL THEY PERFORM?

A: Under the current Tennessee ESSA state plan, a school or a district receives credit for any student that completes an EPSO course. Points are not assigned based on student performance in the class, or on performance on any exam related to the EPSO. TDOE plans to focus initially on increasing access to EPSOs. The criteria will be based on student participation in and completion of both the course and any accompanying qualifying exam, as applicable. Over the first three years of the new accountability framework, the department will evaluate moving to a performance-based criteria, which requires that the credit be awarded and/or a minimum score earned on the qualifying exam. However, we believe that our initial strategic focus must be to ensure that all students are engaged in rigorous coursework that prepares them for postsecondary studies.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Examine access to EPSOs rates and trends at your local school.

Under the Tennessee ESSA plan schools and districts will report on college, career and military readiness rates across student groups. This includes access to EPSOs. Are there student groups, or grades, that have less access to EPSOs? Are there trends in student participation by subgroup? How many EPSOs are offered at your local schools? This information must be the basis for any school or district plan to address access to EPSOs and will provide opportunities for community engagement on solutions.

Find out how you can support students in courses that provide an EPSO or industry certification.

Many EPSO courses greatly benefit from partnerships and volunteers. Consider offering to come and speak to a class, or assist a teacher in developing an internship or externship opportunity for students in your community. These types of opportunities can greatly enhance the experience for a student enrolled in an EPSO.

Source:

Tennessee Department of Education. (2017). Every Student Succeeds Act: Building on Success in Tennessee, ESSA State Plan. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/ESSA_state_plan.pdf.