



For Immediate Release

## **Tennessee Higher Education Commission Announces New Cohort of Advise TN High Schools to Increase College Access and Enrollment**

**NASHVILLE, TN** – April 7, 2025 – The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) announced today the selection of a new cohort of high schools for its Advise TN program, in anticipation of its tenth year of service to schools across the state.

This new cohort represents an important step in enhancing support for Tennessee students, particularly in communities where most students have never been served by a college access program. High schools that will be served by the new cohort of Advise TN include:

**Cannon County High School  
Chester County High School  
Crockett County High School  
Forrest School  
Gibson County High School  
Giles County High School  
Heritage High School  
Marion County High School  
Monterey High School  
Sequatchie County High School  
Smith County High School  
Sweetwater High School**

“We are thrilled to welcome this new cohort of high schools into the Advise TN program,” said Sarah Ligas, Director of College Access Initiatives. “Expanding access to personalized advising and college and career preparation is crucial for all students across Tennessee. Advise TN will help them explore all their post-high school opportunities, setting them on the path to success.”

Since its inception in 2016, Advise TN has provided dedicated college and career advisors to its partner high schools, helping over 62,000 students navigate the process of applying to college, securing financial aid, and exploring career pathways. The new group of schools falls below the state average in college enrollment rates and are particularly important in Tennessee's continued efforts to increase college enrollment and degree attainment.

[The Advise TN program has already made a significant impact.](#) Early research conducted by THEC in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin-Madison has shown that Advise TN plays a critical role in improving college enrollment, with notable

## Cannon County Schools

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increases among rural, female, and Hispanic students. From 2019 – 2021, college-going rates at Advise TN high schools increased by 6%. This research also shows that students who engage more frequently with their advisors are 31% more likely to pursue postsecondary education.

Advise TN has proven to be particularly effective for first-generation college students and those from low-income families, helping them understand the range of opportunities available to them and guiding them through the process of securing financial aid and applying for scholarships.

As the Advise TN program enters its tenth year, the transition to new schools reflects THEC's commitment to leveling the playing field for all Tennessee students, ensuring they have the guidance and support needed to achieve their higher education goals.

“We believe that every student deserves the chance to pursue higher education, and Advise TN is one of the most effective tools we have to make that a reality,” said Dr. Steven Gentile, THEC Executive Director. “By expanding to schools that don't have full-time embedded college and career advising, we are opening doors for students who may have otherwise fallen through the cracks.”

Cannon County Schools Director Bonnie Patterson states, “We are excited to add this layer of support for our students at Cannon County High School to have every opportunity to pursue post-secondary education.”

For more information on Advise TN and how it is transforming college access in Tennessee, visit [CollegeForTN.org/Advise-TN](https://CollegeForTN.org/Advise-TN).

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The Tennessee Higher Education Commission was created in 1967 by the Tennessee General Assembly. The Commission develops, implements, evaluates postsecondary education policies and programs in Tennessee while coordinating the state's systems of higher education, and is relentlessly focused on increasing the number of Tennesseans with a postsecondary credential.

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