

DATE: April 25, 2013**SUBJECT:** GEAR UP TN Status Report**ACTION RECOMMENDED:** Information

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: GEAR UP TN provides Tennessee students with a clear path to college. Funded through a seven-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education and administered by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, GEAR UP TN works with Collaboratives in 15 counties across the state to promote college readiness and success. GEAR UP TN Collaboratives serve a cohort of students in the current seventh grade class follow the cohort through high school, while also serving participating high school seniors each year of the grant. GEAR UP TN is designed to promote student achievement and expand the college-going culture statewide, especially in areas of the state that are traditionally underserved.

The College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) is a federal formula grant program focused on developing partnerships to promote college access and success. CACG creates professional development opportunities for college access professionals and enhances the services offered to high-need students. The program expands current college access programs via the Tennessee College Mentor Corps. The overall goal of Tennessee's CACG is two-fold: (1) make college accessible to more Tennessee graduates through college access and success focused mentoring, and (2) facilitate the transition between high school and community college, and community college and four-year institutions, thereby aiding in college retention and completion.

In October 2011, the Lumina Foundation for Education awarded the Tennessee Higher Education Commission a Latino Student Success Grant aimed at increasing the number and percentage of Latinos completing higher education in Memphis. Through the development of collaborative partnerships with Memphis-area organizations, the project aims to achieve Latino student success through: 1) an intensive mentoring program designed to facilitate the transition between high school and community college, and community college and four-year degree programs; 2) support to ensure maximization of student financial aid opportunities; and 3) a bilingual marketing and information campaign designed to expand college access in the Latino community.

The Tennessee College Access and Success Network connects college access and success programs with like-minded organizations with the purpose of increasing the number of Tennesseans participating and succeeding in postsecondary opportunities. The Network was established through a Lumina Foundation grant and expanded through Race to the Top. Its purpose is to create a college-going culture in communities across the state by expanding and creating new college access and success programs, educating professionals, facilitating statewide advocacy, and cultivating organizational and Network development.