

SCARLETT FAMILY FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP NEWSLETTER

PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT TO MIDDLE TENNESSEE STUDENTS OF ALL AGES

Summer Melt

An Old Problem Gets New Attention

Every year, high school graduates who have been accepted to college, applied for financial aid, and who clearly intend to go, fail to enroll in college when fall arrives.

This "summer melt," as it has come to be known, affects between 10% and 40% of college-intending students, and most of those are from low-income families.

Those who have not grown up in a "go-to-college" family or culture are at a distinct disadvantage in obvious ways, but the list of things that could prevent a qualified and enthusiastic student from not showing up on registration day is long and sometimes surprising.

For example, some students find themselves being discouraged by circumstances, friends, and even family. Graduation from high school is an expensive time for some families. After springing for a cap and gown, a class ring, graduation gifts, or whatever, if an institution requires an unexpected deposit, the grumblings of a cash-strapped parent might be all it takes to begin the melt.

Financing is an obvious concern for many low-income families, but just the busy work required to secure financial aid, whether loans or scholarships, can also undermine students' efforts. Obtaining the tax returns and other documents needed to prove their family's low-income status is often overwhelming. This is especially true if the student doesn't fully understand what this means, doesn't have guidance, and is afraid to ask a parent who may already have complained about the cost of college. Parents may be embarrassed to share financial information and reluctant to cooperate.

Add to those financial challenges the emotional issues that accompany a student leaving friends and family behind to do something that's not necessarily embraced by their culture, and it's easy to see how "summer melt" takes its toll.

So what to do about it? An [NPR story from July of 2013](#) discussed the problem and reported a promising common-sense solution based on a case study conducted by Fulton County Schools in Georgia: Engage and support at-risk students over the summer.

Keeping guidance counselors at work during the summer costs money, and some schools may not even know if they have at-risk students, so the Harvard University Center for Education Policy Research has published the [Strategic Data Project Summer Melt Handbook: A Guide to Investigating and Responding to Summer Melt](#).

This resource provides principals, teachers, guidance counselors, and other education leaders with a step-by-step approach to assessing their students' risk, diagnosing their particular problem, and addressing "summer melt." Educators can download the [SDP Summer Melt Handbook](#), as well as a few [Academic Research Papers](#), and the [Fulton County Schools Case Study](#).

Students: What do you want to be when you grow up?

Choosing a Major, Choosing a Career

As children we all had our dream jobs; astronauts, firefighters, doctors, ballerinas, circus performers, veterinarians, pro athletes, school teachers and the list goes on. As we got older that list began to change. Perhaps we were influenced by the career of family member, a college professor, or the need to take the first job that came along. Whatever the reason, you want a career that will be fulfilling, challenging and rewarding. After all - you'll spend about 1/3rd of your life working and you might as well enjoy what you do.

As a high school student; how do I choose a career? Start by understanding your interests. Your high school guidance counselor can recommend a good assessment. Next - are you good at the skills required for that profession? Not good at math? Then being an accountant or an engineer is probably not right for you. As your list begins to narrow - think long term. Will the career require an advanced degree? Will there be [jobs available](#) in this field when I graduate? Is the field growing? Can I support a family on that [salary](#)?

The ACT offers a good advice around [career planning](#) and choosing a [college major](#). Take advantage of job shadowing, apprenticeships, and volunteering in a field of interest. [BigFuture](#) offers [videos](#) featuring college students and leaders who discuss how they made their choices.

Tennessee Promise

Community College: A Great Option!

This month, Tennessee state lawmakers approved Governor Haslam's plan to cover the full cost of two-year college tuition for every high school graduate starting in fall 2015.

The plan also calls for reducing the amount of Hope Scholarships for freshmen and sophomores at state universities to \$3,500, a cut of \$500 per year. Juniors and seniors would receive \$4,500.

[Video of Governor Haslam discussing Tennessee Promise](#)

Featured Resource

What are the most affordable colleges in Tennessee?

CollegeCalc.org features information on over 4,000 colleges and universities. Listings include tuition for public, private, not-for-profit, and for-profit schools.

Tennessee Board of Regents is considering a 4% to 6% tuition increase for fall 2014. Visit [CollegeCalc.org](#) for the current list of the most affordable schools in Tennessee.

Tips for Rising High School Seniors

1. **Build Your Resume This Summer** - Working part-time in high school looks great on your resume, plus you can use the cash! Regardless of whether you land a summer job; consider doing volunteer work. Admissions officers want to see community minded applicants.

2. **Job Shadow** - Still not sure about your career choice? Explore career options by spending a few days shadowing a friend or family member at work. You might find that career you are interested in...is not so interesting!

3. **Take the ACT** - June is a great time to take the ACT. School is out and you can take several practice tests to prepare. You have until May 9th to register for the June 14th test.

3. **Visit College Campuses** - Summer may not be the ideal time to visit as many students are away, but your family schedule may be more flexible in the summer. Take advantage of the opportunity.

4. **Get Organized** - Start gathering your reference letters. What email address will you use? Now is a good time to ditch the cutesy, silly email address.

5. **Begin the Scholarship Search** - It's never too early to start the search process. Visit the [Resources](#) page of our website for dozens of listings.

6. **List Your Top Colleges** - start researching the admissions requirements, financial aid, and application deadlines.

Spring Deadlines

ACT: Register by May 9th for the June 14th test.

SAT: October test dates to be released soon.

