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PHIL BREDESEN
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Chancellor Charles Manning, Tennessee Board of Regents,
President Jan Simek, The University of Tennessee
Dr. Claude Presnell, Tennessee Independent Colleges and
Universities Association
Chancellors and Presidents of Tennessee Higher Education
Institutions

FROM: Richard G. Rhoda, Executive Director of the Tennessee Higher
Education Commission

DATE: August 17, 2010

SUBJECT: Race to the Top Opportunities

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), in collaboration with the Tennessee Department of Education, the Governor's Office of State Policy and Planning, and the First to the Top Advisory Committee, has been working diligently on implementing the first phases of the Tennessee Race to the Top (RTTT) plan. In late July, the US Department of Education approved Tennessee's \$501 million overall budget and the state's work-plan. The magnitude of the reforms proposed and approved in the Race to the Top application will require close collaboration among all educational stakeholders.

To ensure successful implementation, several operational and communication processes have been put into place. First, THEC formed a new division for Race to the Top. This office will be responsible for implementing projects funded at over \$20 million that are directly related to higher education. These projects will strengthen the ability of teachers to use data in improving student outcomes, provide accountability in teacher preparation to strengthen programs, and increase the state's competitiveness in science, technology, engineering, and math. The Race to the Top division at THEC will be visiting every region in the state to update campus administration and faculty on Race to the Top opportunities and to solicit feedback. We hope to schedule those workshops throughout the month of September and will notify you of those dates and locations.

Second, THEC has a dedicated Race to the Top e-mail address. We will use this address to send out RTTT updates as well as announcements for funding opportunities. If you or your staff would like to be included on these lists, please

send an e-mail to THEC.RTTT@tn.gov. Along with THEC-specific communications, list subscribers will also receive updates that are sent out by the Department of Education and the Governor's office.

Finally, please find attached a brief overview of THEC's responsibility in implementing the Race to the Top reforms. We look forward to working with each of you over the next four years and are excited about the many forthcoming opportunities. If you have any questions, please contact me or Katrina Miller, THEC Director of Race to the Top (Katrina.Miller@tn.gov).

cc: Linda Doran, THEC
Katrina Miller, THEC