Texas Higher Education Strategic Plan:
2015–2030

60×30TX

By 2030, at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.

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Current as of July 23, 2015

Table of Contents

Preamble to the 2015-2030 Texas Higher Education Plan iv
Executive Summary v

THE *60x30TX* PLAN

Introduction 1
The Challenge Ahead 5
Some Benefits of Higher Education 9
Into Higher Education and Through Completion 11

THE GOALS AND TARGETS

The 2030 Higher Education Goals for Texas 12
The Overarching Goal: 60x30 13
The Second Goal: Completion 16
The Third Goal: Marketable Skills 22
The Fourth Goal: Student Debt 26
Conclusion 31

REFERENCES AND APPENDICES

References 32
Appendix A: History of the Texas Higher Education Strategic Planning Committee 33
Appendix B: Glossary 34

Preamble to the 2015-2030 Texas Higher Education Plan

Higher education improves the lives of Texans. Our colleges and universities educate our teachers, nurses, and technicians. They find cures for life-threatening diseases and develop technologies that make our lives easier. They inspire, educate, and equip our students to be their best, encouraging them to be more civic-minded, helping them interact in diverse communities, and giving them a passion for lifelong learning. They retrain our adult population, including veterans, helping them find meaningful careers. They enrich us through the arts and new ideas. The impact of higher education is immeasurable.

Because of the importance of higher education, Texans united around the goals of the previous statewide plan, *Closing the Gaps by 2015*. Over a 15-year period, beginning in 2000, the Legislature established and funded new higher education institutions, appropriated $3.3 billion for TEXAS Grants to help low-income students attend college, and increased funding for programs in critical fields. Institutions of higher education in the state responded by increasing access and improving completions. In 2014, they enrolled more than 1.6 million students – an increase of almost 600,000 since 2000. The institutions also awarded almost 250,000 bachelor's degrees, associate degrees, and certificates – approximately 130,000 more than in 2000.

Texas institutions have distinctive strengths that include conducting world-class research, serving underrepresented student populations, and developing new certificate and degree programs quickly in response to local workforce needs. Yet, they have one thing in common: They help students succeed. The new higher education plan, *60x30TX*, focuses on this common goal by striving for 60 percent of the 25- to 34-year-old Texas population to hold a certificate or degree by 2030. The plan seeks to increase student success through the combined expertise and resources of many stakeholders. Because of these collaborative efforts, Texas institutions of higher education will have more opportunities to grow, which will enrich students and the state.

The *60x30TX* higher education plan is bold. Because of the creativity and hard work of the faculty, administrators, and staff at our institutions of higher education, as well as the hard work of K-12 educators over the past 15 years, Texas is ready. Our foundation is strong. We have the potential to achieve things we could not have imagined 15 years ago. We invite you to join us as we work together to make higher education attainable for Texans of all backgrounds.

Executive Summary

The *60x30TX* ("60 by 30 Tex") higher education strategic plan contains four broad goals. Each goal contains a set of targets that will move the state toward reaching one or more goals. Many stakeholders across Texas will need to develop and implement a wide range of strategies to meet each target.

Without bold action, Texas faces a future of diminished incomes, opportunities, and resources.

THE OVERARCHING GOAL: 60x30

By 2030, at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.

The 60x30 goal is essential to the future prosperity of Texas. Without bold action, Texas faces a future of diminished incomes, opportunities, and resources. The *60x30TX* Plan is designed to ensure that a competitive and prosperous future remains for students seeking to better their lives and the lives of their families.

The first goal in the plan, the 60x30 goal, aims to increase the percentage of 25- to 34-year-olds in Texas who hold a certificate or degree. The goal focuses on 25- to 34-year-olds as an indicator of the economic future of the state and its ability to remain globally competitive. The state's large population makes the Texas economy similar in size to that of many countries. Within this global context, the state has seen a relative decline in educational attainment among this younger population.

The 60x30 goal also uses 25- to 34-year-olds as a yardstick to answer the question: How prepared is Texas for the future? Through the focused efforts of industry, government, community organizations, K-12, and institutions of higher education, the state can respond positively to this question and achieve this goal.

THE SECOND GOAL: COMPLETION

By 2030, at least 550,000 students in that year will complete a certificate, associate, bachelor's, or master's from an institution of higher education in Texas.

The completion goal complements the 60x30 goal by supplying graduates of all ages from all two- and four-year institutions of higher education in Texas. The state will need to continue the degree production increases of recent years to reach this goal, with large increases required among targeted groups. Growth in certificates and degrees among two- and four-year colleges is critical for reaching the 60 percent in the 60x30 goal and educating a skilled workforce, but it is only part of the solution for reaching that goal.

THE THIRD GOAL: MARKETABLE SKILLS

By 2030, all graduates from Texas public institutions of higher education will have completed programs with identified marketable skills.

The marketable skills goal emphasizes the value of higher education in the workforce. Students need to be aware of the marketable skills embedded in their academic programs, and institutions must make certain that students graduate with marketable skills. This goal charges two- and four-year public institutions in Texas with documenting, updating, and communicating the skills students acquire in their programs. Private institutions of higher education in Texas may opt to participate in this goal.

The marketable skills goal does not diminish higher education's obligation to produce well-rounded and well-informed individuals familiar with all fields of human activity and with a strong understanding of our country's founding principles.

THE FOURTH GOAL: STUDENT DEBT

By 2030, undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.

The student debt goal aims to help students who graduate with debt complete their programs with manageable debt. This goal challenges stakeholders to balance the levels of student loan debt with a graduate's earning potential the first year after college.

The intent of this goal is to hold student loan debt in Texas to 60 percent of first-year wages after college – 60 percent being the current level of loan debt for students who graduate with debt.

MAINTAINING EXCELLENCE, FOCUSING ON SKILLS

Since the adoption of the former higher education plan in 2000, Texas increasingly has become engaged in a global economy dependent on skilled and knowledgeable workers. Most of those workers must come from the state's institutions of higher education. While continuing to pursue increased knowledge and higher standards of excellence in teaching, research, and innovation, two- and four-year colleges in Texas will need to consider more explicitly the primary reason most students attend college: to get a better job and achieve a better life.

For Texas to solve problems and address public concerns now and in the future, it must have a large workforce with the skills and knowledge to push the state forward. This workforce must be educated and able to adapt and compete at the highest levels to maintain a strong state economy.

The four goals in the *60x30TX* Plan are essential to the future prosperity of Texas.

THE OVERARCHING GOAL: 60x30

At least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.

- *Supports the economic future of the state*

THE SECOND GOAL: COMPLETION

At least 550,000 students in 2030 will complete a certificate, associate, bachelor's, or master's from an institution of higher education in Texas.

- *Requires large increases among targeted groups*

THE THIRD GOAL: MARKETABLE SKILLS

All graduates from Texas public institutions of higher education will have completed programs with identified marketable skills.

- *Emphasizes the value of higher education in the workforce*

THE FOURTH GOAL: STUDENT DEBT

Undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.

- *Helps students graduate with manageable debt*

The plan provides latitude for two- and four-year institutions and encourages local creativity in pursuing the *60x30TX* goals as institutions pursue their own distinct missions.

SHIFTS IN DEMOGRAPHICS

As this plan moves forward, the 25- to 34-year-old population in Texas will be increasingly Hispanic. Hispanics, along with African Americans, have traditionally been underrepresented in the state's higher education institutions but are critical to the success of the *60x30TX* Plan. It includes key targets for these and other groups that will be important for achieving the goals in this plan.

STUDENT-CENTERED

By charting a student-centered course and prioritizing higher education completion and workforce readiness, this plan enables the state, institutions of higher education, and the private sector to set Texas on a path toward continued prosperity. To compete and remain relevant in the future, Texas students must earn quality postsecondary credentials with skills that employers need. If graduates are to contribute to the state's revenue and have the means to pursue personal goals, they must also complete their programs with no debt or with manageable debt, relative to their starting wage after college.

LATITUDE IN PURSUING THE GOALS

Although the *60x30TX* Plan focuses on higher education in Texas and its relationship to the workforce, one size does not fit every institution of higher education in the state. The plan provides latitude for two- and four-year institutions and encourages local creativity in pursuing the *60x30TX* goals as institutions pursue their own distinct missions.

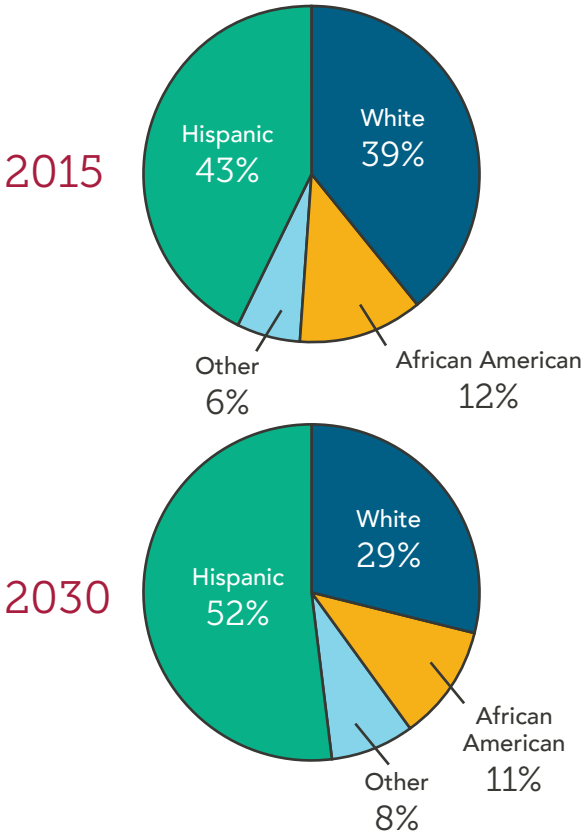
The *60x30TX* Plan addresses students' desires for a better life, employers' desires to remain competitive, and the state's need for a robust economy. This plan also strengthens the excellence and quality in Texas higher education by challenging the state's two- and four-year institutions to prepare students for the jobs of the future, while also inspiring them to contribute to a greater Texas society. The *60x30TX* Plan sets goals for Texas higher education that cannot be postponed without postponing the progress of Texas. ■

Introduction

Texas has become increasingly engaged in a global economy dependent on skilled and knowledgeable workers. Most of those workers must come from higher education. Although Texas is improving at increasing college completions for students from groups that traditionally have not earned certificates or degrees in large numbers, the state has not improved quickly or broadly enough to keep up with changes in demographics. Completions in higher education in Texas must reflect the population as a whole.

Given that the workforce will be more diverse in the future (Figure 1), the challenge is clear: Students of all backgrounds must complete certificates or degrees in larger numbers if the 25- to 34-year-old workforce of Texas is to be globally competitive in 2030. Failure to educate students of all backgrounds in larger numbers will result in lower incomes and a lower percentage of educated Texans in 2030 than in 2015. Those losses will spell a decline in the economic future of Texas and the opportunities available to its people. Without bold action, Texas faces a future of diminished incomes, opportunities, and resources.

Figure 1. Race/ethnicity distribution of projected Texas population, ages 25-34.



While continuing to pursue increased knowledge and higher standards of excellence in teaching, research, and innovation, two- and four-year colleges in Texas will need to consider more explicitly the primary reason most students attend college: to get a better job and achieve a better life.

LOCAL CREATIVITY ENCOURAGED

How can Texas two- and four-year colleges achieve their missions, as well as educate students to enter the workforce and compete in a global market? In response, the *60x30TX*

Two- and four-year colleges in Texas will need to consider more explicitly the primary reason most students attend college.

Plan lays out ambitious goals for statewide educational attainment; completions of two- and four-year certificates and degrees; marketable skills; and student loan debt.

The aim of this plan is to help students achieve their educational goals and help the state remain globally competitive for years to come. Although the *60x30TX* Plan focuses on higher education and its relationship to the workforce, one size does not fit every institution of higher education in Texas. The *60x30TX* Plan provides the latitude for institutions to pursue the state's higher education goals while pursuing their distinct missions and institutional goals. The plan also encourages local creativity in pursuing the *60x30TX* goals and targets.

SKILLS DEFICITS, ATTAINMENT, AND COMPLETION

In 2012, the globally focused Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) showed Texas as one of several states experiencing skills deficits. Essentially, some employers in Texas could not hire enough workers with the required skillsets to meet workforce demand, which likely resulted in lost revenue for the state. Although Texas saw a large in-migration of workers and the state met most of its goals and targets set in the former higher education plan, only 35 percent of the 25- to 34-year-old population held an associate or higher degree in 2013, far less than many other states and nations. Adding certificates earned by this age group only increased the number of graduates with a postsecondary credential to about 38 percent.

Some sectors of the state's economy could not hire enough workers with the required skillsets to meet workforce demand.

The percentages suggest a link between the number of Texans holding a certificate or degree and the state's deficit in skilled workers. Certainly, Texas made big strides during the years of the former higher education plan, *Closing the Gaps by 2015*. At the outset of *Closing the Gaps* in 2000, about 116,000 students annually completed an associate degree, a bachelor's degree, or a certificate. The goal of that plan was to reach 210,000 postsecondary awards annually by 2015. The state reached this goal in 2011, four years ahead of schedule. By Fiscal Year 2014, the annual number of undergraduate awards had increased to about 251,000.

WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT

Yet those successes are only the beginning. The demand for skilled and knowledgeable workers continues to outpace workforce supply in Texas. For the state to remain competitive and prosperous, it will need *approximately 60 percent of its 25- to 34-year-olds to hold a quality certificate or degree by 2030*. (Indeed, some experts, such as Anthony Carnevale of Georgetown University, believe that Texas will need to reach this goal even sooner.)

Aligning higher education in Texas with the workforce is important, in addition to teaching students in broad ways that allow for flexibility in career choices. Texas students need both skills and broader learning to succeed in the workplace.

The *60x30TX* Plan, however, recognizes that differences of interpretation exist about workforce needs for the future. Estimates from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), for example, are sometimes used to show that significantly fewer than 60 percent of workers will need a college credential to satisfy future workforce demand. The BLS, however, has clarified that its estimates, while useful for a range of purposes, are based on *current* education requirements for typical *entry-level* workers. These estimates are not meant to account for workers needed at *all* levels or to project overall educational demand for *future* workers. Specific details aside, what everyone can agree on is that having a degree matters – and employers are willing to pay for it.

Aligning higher education in Texas with the workforce is important, in addition to teaching students in broad ways that allow for flexibility in career choices.

A degree isn't enough, however. Texas students will need to match their credentials to employer needs. The role of higher education in helping students and employers coordinate their efforts is essential. Otherwise, as Jeff Strohl of Georgetown University points out, "Without this [collaboration], increased education can just mean increased unemployment and higher levels of mismatch."

GREATER REPRESENTATION, DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS

The goal of 60 percent attainment by 2030 will require solutions from both public and private sectors but is achievable only if a wide and representative range of Texans has access to a postsecondary education. Appealing to a wide range of Texans will be important given the population increase among Hispanics, who accounted for 65 percent of the state's population growth in the 2010 census. Other minority populations also grew significantly, while the numbers for the white population remained relatively flat. The demographic changes in the state underscore the need to achieve greater educational attainment among Texans of all backgrounds.

SOCIAL MOBILITY AND AFFORDABILITY

Preparing students to enter community colleges and universities and supporting them through the completion of certificates and degrees will mean demonstrating that higher education is still the best path toward greater social and economic mobility. Although college is not appropriate for every student, striving toward educational

parity between economically disadvantaged students and their non-disadvantaged counterparts is important for achieving an adaptable, innovative, and diverse workforce in Texas. Not all the solutions are up to two- and four-year colleges, but they will play a critical role.

History proves more education is good for the economy and good for the middle class as well. By expanding the educated workforce, the GI Bill brought a great economic boon after the 1940s. In *Soldiers to Citizens*, Suzanne Mettler states, "Millions used generous, dignified benefits to seize opportunities and become more actively engaged citizens." Supporting students through completion to become more actively engaged citizens and to strengthen the Texas economy requires higher education stakeholders to address college affordability and make explicit the workplace skills students learn in their programs.

The intention of the goals and targets is to help students, institutions of higher education, employers, and the state to succeed using a shared vision of excellence for higher education in Texas.

STUDENT-CENTERED

The *60x30TX* Plan lays out a comprehensive approach that focuses heavily on the needs of students and will require the support of both public and private stakeholders to succeed. Students, after all, are the ones who will decide to pursue higher education. Their decisions will influence the future prosperity of Texas and will affect the state's ability to meet its needs for educated and skilled workers.

The intention of the goals and targets described in this plan is to help students, institutions of higher education, employers, and the state to succeed and flourish using a shared vision of excellence for higher education in Texas. Developed with input from school administrators, higher education leaders, community leaders, private industry leaders, elected officials, former faculty, and other stakeholders, the *60x30TX* Plan establishes ideals for higher education that will help Texas secure its place in a global economy.

A LIVING DOCUMENT

Like its predecessor, the *60x30TX* Plan seeks to create qualitative results built on quantitative foundations. A living document, the plan will track the state's progress toward its higher education goals.

The Challenge Ahead

According to the OECD's rankings, the U.S. provides the least economic mobility among developed nations. The Social Mobility Index, which focuses on higher education policy related to economic disparities among students, ranks Texas higher education 21st among states in providing students with opportunities for economic and social mobility. These rankings are not likely to improve without bold and sustained efforts.

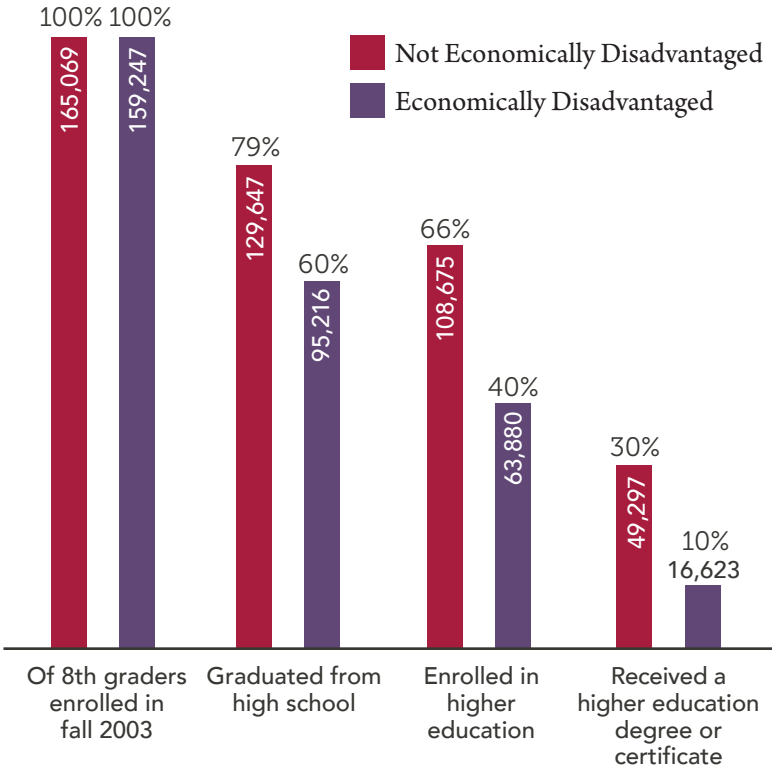
ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE, DEMOGRAPHICS, AND THE WORKFORCE

The pipeline to the state's higher education starts with a K-12 public school population in which 60 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches. The graduation reports for Texas for fiscal years 2004 to 2014 show that only about 10 percent of the poorest eighth-grade students in Texas attain a postsecondary credential when tracked for 11 years.

Sadly, economic disadvantage is the best indicator in determining an individual's likelihood of attaining education past high school (Figure 2). For the state to remain competitive in the future, its two- and four-year colleges will need to make substantial efforts to reach out to students from all backgrounds.

Anthony Carnevale (Georgetown University) has stated that a majority of future jobs in the nation and in the state will require a postsecondary credential. He asserts that as early as 2020, "Fewer jobs will be available to people with less than high school or only a high school diploma." This is important because of the state's shift in demographics. The 25- to 34-year-old population, the target age group of the 60x30 goal, is projected to grow 41 percent among Hispanics between 2015 and 2030. Although the state has made strides among Hispanic Texans, poverty among this population has increased, especially among those with lower levels of education.

Figure 2. Economic status is a major factor for completion.



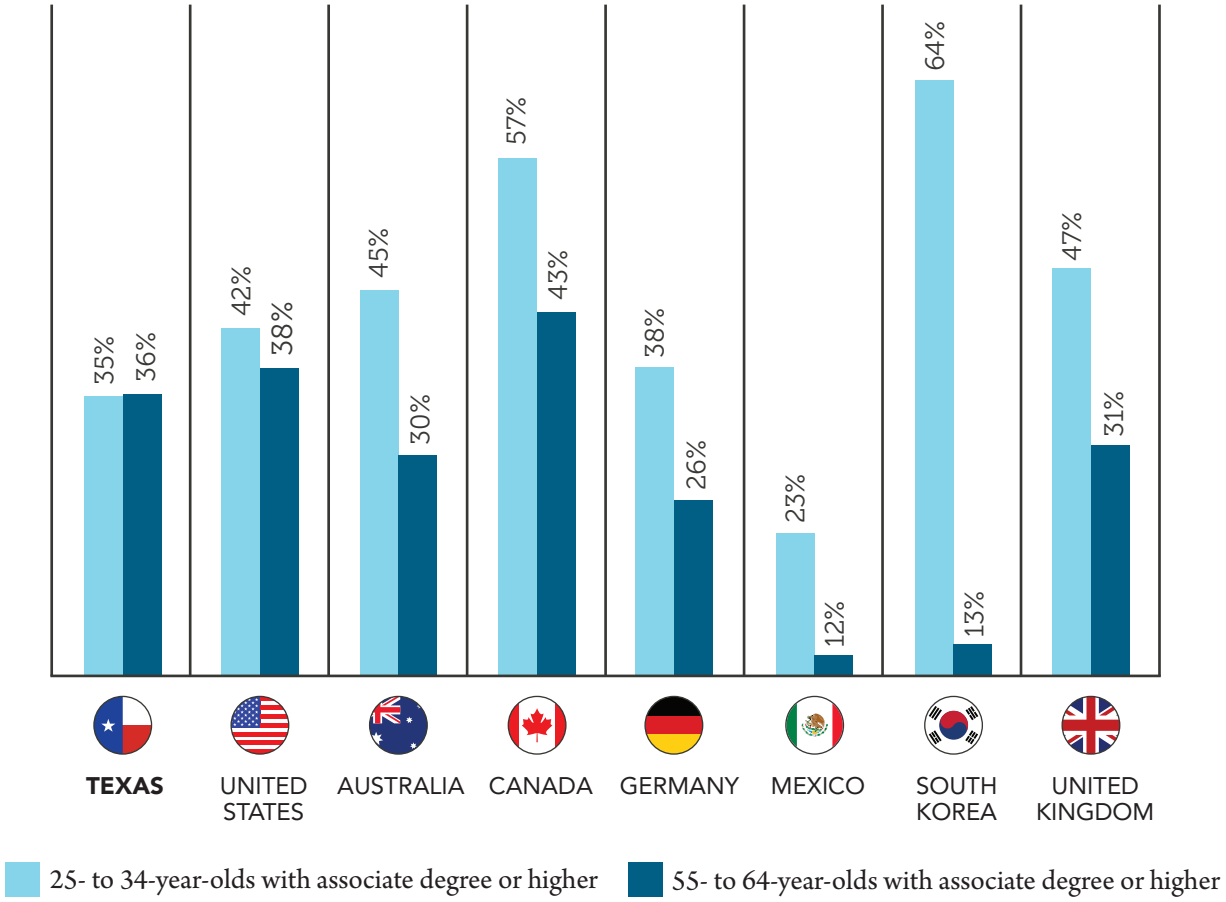
Source: THECB FY 2004 (Fall 2003) 8th Grade Cohort Tracked through FY 2014

As former Texas and U.S. demographer Steve Murdock points out in *Changing Texas*, workers of all backgrounds who possess only a high school education or less will increase from 48 percent in 2010 – unless the state takes bold action. In the absence of such action, the state will experience more pronounced and long-term workforce shortages. Texas must continue working toward parity for traditionally underrepresented populations in higher education to avoid this outcome.

DECREASE IN GLOBAL RANKING

The population and geographic size of Texas is greater than that of many countries. Thus, placing the state in this context helps highlight the state's relative decline in educational attainment over time. In 2013, Texans of ages 25-34 fell between the 23rd and 24th highest-ranking OECD nations in educational attainment (Figure 3) with only

Figure 3. Texas is losing ground globally.

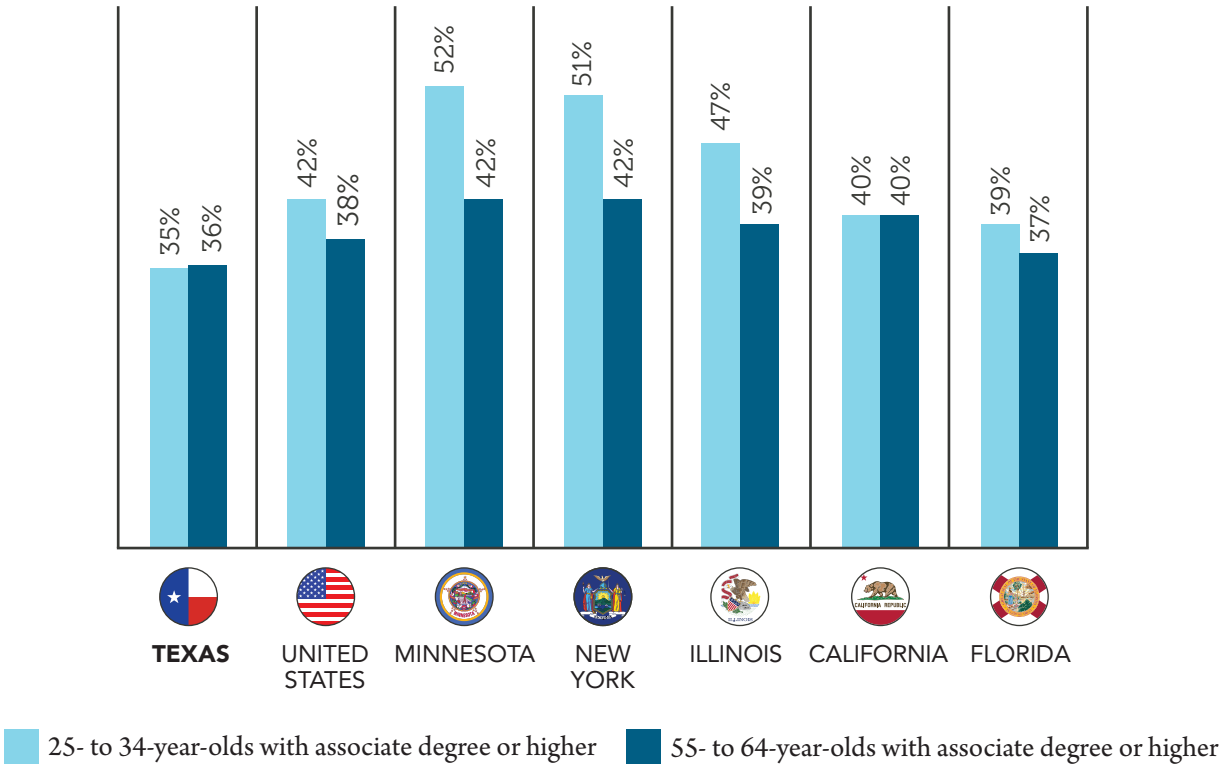


Source: Education at a Glance 2013, OECD Indicators and American Communities Survey Public Use Microdata Sample 2013

35 percent of this age group holding an associate or bachelor's degree. One generation ago, the same age group fell between the 3rd and 4th highest-ranking OECD countries. In other words, 30 years ago our young adult population was one of the most educated in the world. That is no longer true.

Figure 4 shows the percentage of the 25- to 34-year-old population's attainment of associate and bachelor's degrees relative to other states in the U.S. Although Texas has seen gains in the educational attainment of this population, the state's progress has been slow.

Figure 4. Texas is losing ground nationally.



Source: American Communities Survey Public Use Microdata Sample 2013

Building on *Closing the Gaps*, Texas must continue to re-imagine "college" and "college-going" to meet the state's workforce needs.

RE-IMAGINING COLLEGE

In 2000, *Closing the Gaps* changed the educational emphasis from high school graduation to college access and success. The *60x30TX* Plan focuses on college completion and workforce readiness. Building on *Closing the Gaps*, Texas must continue to re-imagine "college" and "college-going" to meet the state's workforce needs.

For some students, college will mean earning a certificate in a yearlong program. For other students, college will mean earning an associate or bachelor's degree by attending traditional classes or by participating in competency-based programs. For still others, college will mean earning associate degrees through dual credit or early college high school programs.

College may take place on a brick-and-mortar campus or on a device in a student's living room. Regardless of the credential or method used to attain it, a college education will translate into more engaged citizens and greater prosperity for individuals, which will mean greater economic prosperity for the state.

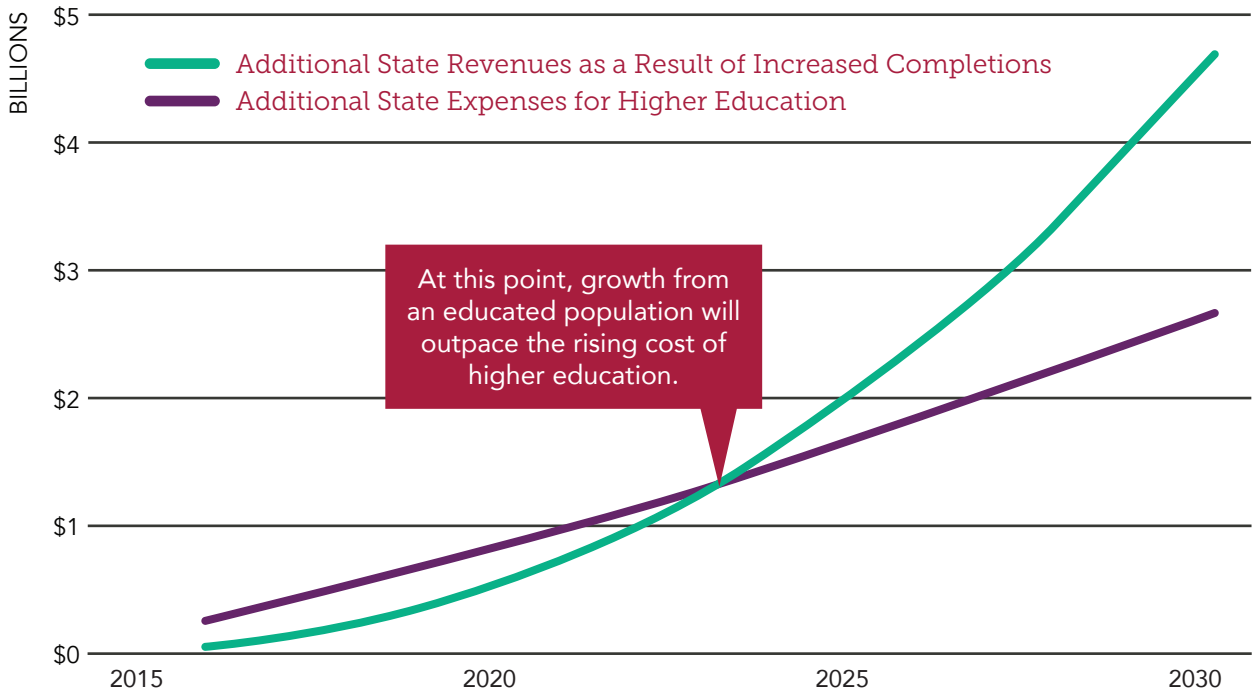
Some Benefits of Higher Education

Higher education is not only about producing degrees and doing research, but also about spurring new businesses. Economic growth, productivity, and development flourish when paired with the skills and new ideas students gain from higher education. Entrepreneurship programs and small business institutes, for example, nurture new businesses.

Higher education also increases knowledge and skills and results in greater individual marketability, wealth, and self-reliance, which reduces dependence on public programs. As college completions increase, wages go up and state tax revenues go up (Figure 5), leading to a reduction in public expenditures in areas such as Medicaid and corrections. Individuals with postsecondary degrees and credentials are less likely to need public assistance programs or to enter the correctional system.

Throughout the 15 years of the plan, the benefits of educating more students will increasingly exceed state expense. Headlines about student loan debt often fail to acknowledge those benefits or the skills graduates gain in college – all of which provide a boon to the state's economy.

Figure 5. Educated Texans produce economic growth.



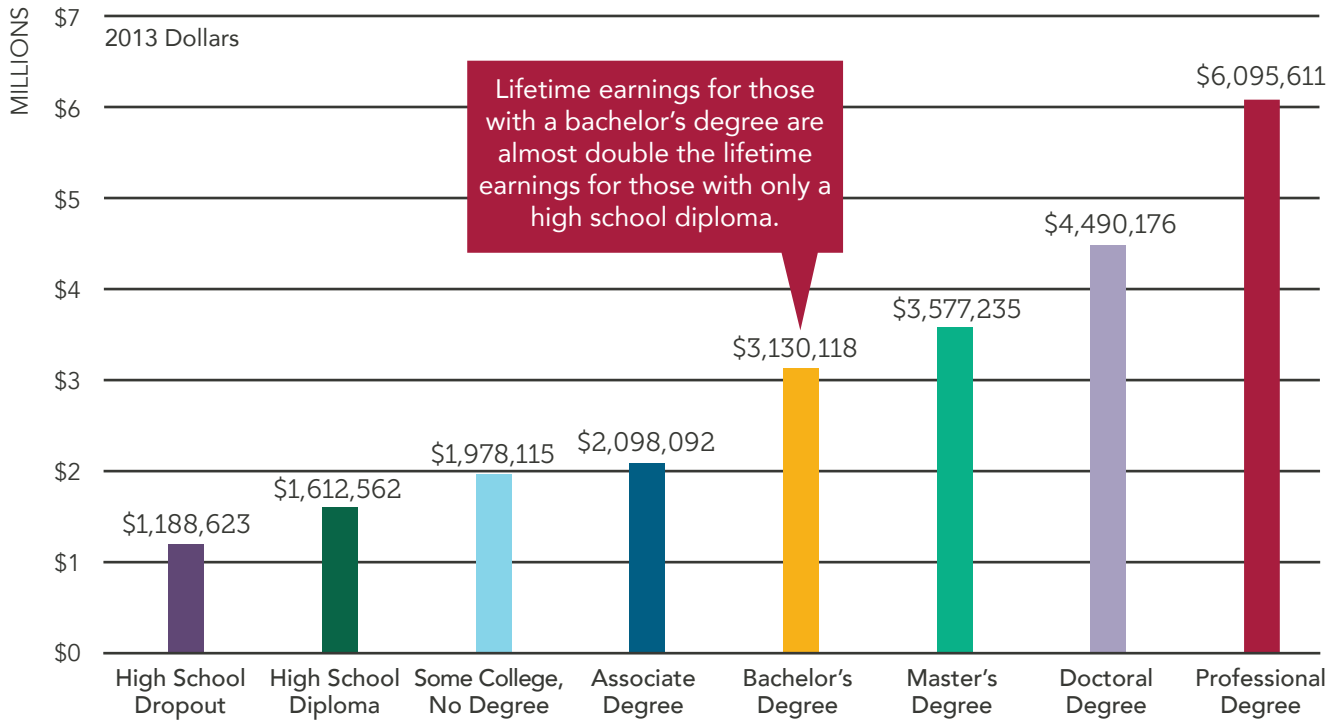
Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples (2001–2013); National Association of State Budget Offices. State Expenditures Report. Fiscal Year 2009.

Savings in public programs mean more money for the state and for individuals in Texas. The nationally focused College Board report *Education Pays* found that 12 percent of high school graduates, versus 2 percent of graduates with bachelor's degrees, lived in households that relied on SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits in 2011.

INDIVIDUAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Experts from the Brookings Institution's Hamilton Project found that, "On average, the benefits of a four-year degree are equivalent to an investment that returns 15.2 percent per year." A 2015 report by the Economic Modeling Specialists International supports this claim and asserts that Texas students who complete degrees will account for $524.9 billion in added income during their working lives. Combined data from 2011-2013 show that someone with a bachelor's degree will receive nearly double the lifetime earnings of a high school graduate (Figure 6). Higher education benefits the state, the individual, the workforce, and society in measurable and specific ways that must be encouraged and strengthened.

Figure 6. Higher education pays off.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011, 2012, and 2013.
Texas' 3-year average inflation-adjusted earnings summed for Texans ages 25 to 64 by educational attainment for those working more than 32 hours per week and 49 weeks per year.

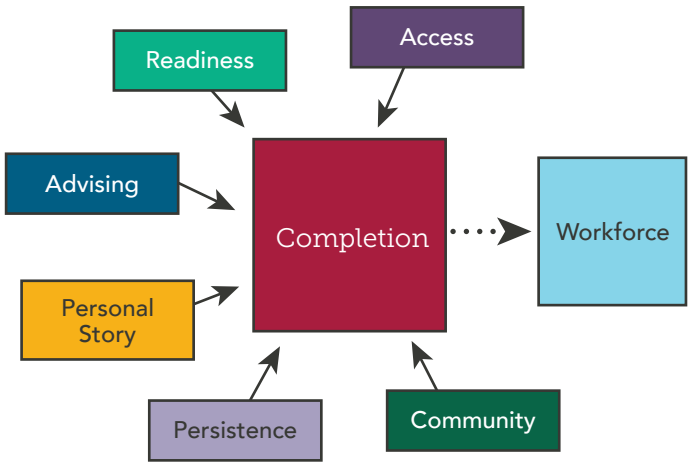
Into Higher Education and Through Completion

The overarching 60x30 goal of this plan is for 60 percent of 25- to 34-year-olds in Texas to hold a certificate or degree by 2030. Tracking the attainment levels for this age group may reveal future workforce deficits in areas that require postsecondary training.

All Texas two- and four-year institutions of higher education, whether public, independent, or for-profit, will play a crucial role in meeting the 60x30 overarching goal. Aligning postsecondary programs with the state's workforce needs will require a thoughtful process that not only acknowledges the value of workforce demands, but also acknowledges the creativity, diversity, and varied strengths of students.

Many of those workforce skills will include soft skills and knowledge not easily aligned with a specific job or industry. Liberal arts studies, for example, often hone these skills and over time create flexibility and resourcefulness for individuals, allowing them to adapt nimbly to the jobs of the future while meeting the needs of today.

Figure 7. Many components influence student completion.



ALIGNMENT AMONG K-12, TWO-YEAR, AND FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS

The state will achieve its goals for higher education through many strategies that will influence students to complete certificates and degrees. Creating pathways for students into higher education and through completion to the workforce will require higher levels of cooperation among higher education, K-12 education, and workforce leadership (Figure 7). For example, two- and four-year colleges will need to collaborate and align lower-division curricula so that students receive a coherent and rigorous general education, while being assured that their courses will transfer and count toward degrees. In addition, Texas will need more online education and innovation, such as applied baccalaureates (e.g., Bachelor of Applied Technology and Bachelor of Applied Science degrees) offered through community colleges or baccalaureates offered through universities in competency-based programs.

Texas institutions of higher education will need to work together more closely on such issues as teacher training, professional development, and college readiness. These strategies and others will help Texas reach the targets in this plan and will produce greater outcomes for students and for the state. ■

The 2030 Higher Education Goals for Texas

Vision for the *60x30TX* Higher Education Strategic Plan		
Higher education is attainable for Texans of all backgrounds through challenging and diverse learning environments that foster individual potential and maximize the societal and economic contributions of graduates.		
THE OVERARCHING GOAL: 60x30		
THE SECOND GOAL: COMPLETION	THE THIRD GOAL: MARKETABLE SKILLS	THE FOURTH GOAL: STUDENT DEBT

The pages that follow lay out the goals, targets, and strategies of the *60x30TX* Plan.

Goals: The goals contain broad language to provide latitude in achieving them. Although measurable, each goal's design allows institutions to respond according to the role they have in achieving that goal within the state's higher education system. The result of many meetings and discussions, this plan's goals rest on a careful assessment of the possible.

Targets: The targets under each goal are the keys to achieving each goal. Additional targets could easily have been included in the plan, but the ones chosen are critical for the state's future workforce needs and prosperity. One plan cannot respond to every educational aspiration or take into account the mission of every two- and four-year college in the state, but a statewide plan can drive success in key areas through focused goals and targets. If the state and its institutions of higher education implement successful strategies to reach the targets, the state will reach the goals.

Strategies: Developing and implementing strategies to reach each target will require the work of many stakeholders across the state. Successful strategies will require both top-down and bottom-up approaches at institutions of higher education and will require public and private partnerships. Institutions will need to collaborate with state agencies, such as the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), and the Texas Education Agency (TEA), as well as local, regional, and national companies. The challenge will be to develop fluid strategies that produce changes over time. The strategies presented are only some of the strategies that will help institutions to reach the goals and targets of the *60x30TX* Plan.

THE OVERARCHING GOAL: 60x30

By 2030, at least **60 percent** of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.

The overarching 60x30 goal asks industry, government, two- and four-year institutions of higher education, and community organizations in the state to strive for greater prosperity for Texas and its nearly 27 million residents. The goal focuses on *25- to 34-year-olds who hold a certificate or degree* because this age group represents the future of the state and its ability to compete and prosper.

Learning leads to earning, and higher education unlocks opportunities for individuals whose resources might otherwise remain limited. The ability to explore intellectually, to aspire, and to realize those aspirations are the hallmarks of higher education and the foundation for the best and most resourceful workers. In turn, those workers can help to create the most dynamic workplaces.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE WORKPLACE

Higher education increases freedom from poverty, affords social mobility, and encourages greater participation in the public arena. It often produces individuals who are more skilled at solving problems and have a greater capacity for navigating their lives. A competitive Texas economy depends on its people having opportunities to increase their income and improve their quality of life.

Far from resting solely on the shoulders of institutions of higher education in the state, this goal belongs to those who desire to train and retain a globally competitive workforce. It also belongs to those who desire greater prosperity for Texans from all backgrounds.

The 60x30 Goal at a Glance

- Measures the percent of the Texas population with a postsecondary credential and counts each individual once, including:
  - Those who migrate into Texas with credentials
  - Those who receive credentials in-state
- Targets 25- to 34-year-old residents
- Includes credentials earned over multiple years
- Includes professional and doctoral degrees
- Focuses on the percentage of credentials needed to supply workforce demand and remain globally competitive

Reaching the 60x30 goal is essential for Texas to remain globally competitive and for its people and communities to prosper.

BIG STATE, BOLD NUMBERS

The 60x30 goal takes into account both graduates of Texas institutions and the in-migration of new residents who hold certificates or degrees. The goal includes those living in Texas who have earned a certificate or degree in or out of state. For this reason, the state will need to retain graduates from Texas institutions of higher education, as well as attract graduates from other states. The state will also need to improve its rate of attainment to a rate better than the average that has occurred in the five best years since 1998.

Bold but achievable, the 60x30 goal will translate into 2.7 million 25- to 34-year-old Texans who have certificates or degrees in 2030. This goal, however, is interdependent with the state's economy. In 2013, Texas attracted into the state a net of about 56,000 people ages 25-34 who had a postsecondary credential. If Texas loses its competitive edge, it will not attract the skills of educated workers from outside the state, and it may lose more educated workers than it gains. Texas must have a vibrant and diversified economy to attract and retain credentialed workers to meet the 60x30 goal.

In 2013, American Community Surveys data showed that an estimated 1.3 million Texans ages 25-34 (35%) had attained a degree. Although this number seems impressive, for the state to have reached the 2013 U.S. educational attainment level of 42 percent, it would have needed 235,004 more associate and bachelor's completions. If such shortfalls continue, Texas will become poorer and less competitive. Reaching the 60x30 goal is essential for Texas to remain globally competitive and for its people and communities to prosper.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL

TEA data show that Hispanics and African Americans make up more than 60 percent of the K-12 pipeline for higher education in Texas – a reason for government, institutions, community organizations, and business leaders to rally around the common cause of ensuring Texans of all backgrounds have access to higher education and the means to pursue it.

Leaders will also need to encourage and support economically disadvantaged students in their pursuit of higher education. With more than 60 percent of the state's high school graduates of all backgrounds being economically disadvantaged, Texas cannot hope to reach the 60x30 goal without their participation and completions.

Two-year institutions can support efforts to reach this goal by strengthening connections and partnerships with local and regional organizations and local school districts. Four-year institutions can help by building or strengthening their connections to local or regional organizations and school districts.

Goal and Interim Benchmarks	2020	2025	2030
Increase the percent of Texans ages 25-34 with a certificate or degree to at least…	48%	54%	60%

These benchmarks ensure progressive improvement of state educational attainment throughout the plan years. (38.3% as of 2013)

Strategies

Respond to the needs of the changing population of Texas so students are supported into and through higher education.

For example:

- Aggressively **promote college attainment** to students and parents prior to high school.
- Develop and implement **education and curriculum delivery systems** (e.g., competency-based programs) to make higher education available **to a broader and changing population.**
- Provide **high-quality** education programs for **educationally underserved adults.**
- Develop practices to encourage **stop-outs** with more than 50 semester credit hours to return and complete a degree or certificate.
- Collaborate with the TWC to identify **critical fields** and to update them periodically.

THE SECOND GOAL: COMPLETION

By 2030, at least **550,000** students in that year will complete a certificate, associate, bachelor's, or master's from an institution of higher education in Texas.

The completion goal, unlike the 60x30 goal, pertains solely to credentials produced by Texas institutions of higher education, and it applies to students of all ages. To meet the future workforce needs of Texas, the state's two- and four-year colleges will need 550,000 completions by students in 2030, a significant annual increase in the number of postsecondary awards. During the 15 years of this plan, Texas will award 6.4 million certificates or degrees.

THE TARGET POPULATIONS FOR THIS GOAL

The targeted increase in awards recognizes expected population increases and requires an annual growth rate of about 4 percent for certificate and degree completions. This rate of growth is aggressive given that the completion goal's targets challenge Texas institutions of higher education to educate students from all backgrounds in proportion to the share of the population. This challenge includes economically disadvantaged students and students from a range of ethnicities.

Institutions of higher education will also need to target female STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) students, veterans, adults who have completed courses and left without completing degrees (stop-outs), and students in adult basic education programs, among others. Reaching this goal will require greater numbers of college-ready high school graduates and will require directing more adults who do not attend college

The Completion Goal at a Glance

- Measures the number of credentials Texas institutions of higher education produce each year
- Targets students of all ages in higher education
- Identifies the number of credentials needed to reach this goal by ethnicity, gender, and economic disadvantage
- Strengthens the 60x30 goal by increasing the number of educated Texans who contribute to the state's workforce

During the 15 years of this plan, Texas will award 6.4 million certificates or degrees.

immediately after high school toward certification and degree programs. Reaching, enrolling, and graduating students who are at risk of forgoing or failing to obtain a degree because of economic factors also will be important, and institutional innovation can address some of these issues. Although overlap exists among the targets (e.g., a student may be both Hispanic and economically disadvantaged), reaching each target will make a difference in the state's future and will move Texas toward higher levels of education and greater prosperity.

TIME-TO-DEGREE FACTORS

Substantial evidence suggests institutions need to be more prescriptive in their efforts to help students narrow their choices as they navigate higher education. Of students who failed to complete their higher education between 2008 and 2012, 48,000 four-year students had 90 or more semester credit hours (SCHs), and 161,000 two-year college students had 55 or more SCHs. Helping students navigate their early academic careers will help them persist.

Since 2000, Texas has made measurable progress in improving graduation rates, but it must strengthen these efforts to compete successfully with other states and countries. As of 2014, the state's six-year graduation rate was 60.5 percent for public four-year institutions, but removing the data for the two most selective public universities in the state drops the overall graduation rate to around 53 percent. For two-year institutions, the current six-year graduation rate for associate degrees is about 28 percent.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL

Texas institutions of higher education need to support students earlier in their educational careers to help them persist in their higher education. This may include:

- Expanding co-requisite course opportunities for developmental education students. These courses allow students to take credit-bearing courses while they take developmental education courses to improve their skills.
- Implementing competency-based programs that allow an adult student to demonstrate essential skills or knowledge either by exam or course completion, and then move through blocks of classes based on what the student knows, for a fixed semester cost, regardless of the number of courses the student completes successfully in one semester.
- Using assessments, such as the Texas Success Initiative Assessment, which enables institutions to accurately determine students' strengths and weaknesses and gives advisers the ability to provide better counseling to students based on this information.
- Implementing electronic degree plans that allow students to input their majors into a computer and receive a list of the required courses needed to complete a specific degree in four years, which may help students avoid taking classes unnecessarily and could shorten the time to a degree.

P-16 councils, adult education learning programs, dual credit programs, early college high school programs, and affordable baccalaureates will help connect institutions to local and regional groups and will support more completions statewide. Two- and four-year institutions working together can also support each other in reaching this goal.

Studies show that achieving 30 SCHs in Texas during the first year of college is critical for students to persist and complete. Attaining 30 SCHs in the first year might happen in a number of ways, including: (1) by students taking two semesters of 15 SCHs during the traditional academic year, or (2) by students taking two semesters of 12 SCHs during the traditional academic year and one session of 6 SCHs during the summer. Reducing the time to a degree will help students persist in completing postsecondary credentials.

Inherent in increasing completions is the need to strengthen guided pathways between two- and four-year colleges and to align lower-division curricula across institutions and degree programs. Doing so will place students on paths to receive coherent and rigorous educations that will transfer between colleges and count toward degrees.

Growth in certificates and degrees among two- and four-year colleges will be critical for reaching the 60 percent in the 60x30 goal and for educating a skilled workforce.

HOW THE COMPLETION AND 60x30 GOALS DIFFER

The completion goal closely relates to, but differs from, the 60x30 goal in important ways. The completion goal tracks annual awards earned for students of all ages; the 60x30 goal tracks the educational attainment level of the state's 25- to 34-year old population. The 60x30 goal includes the in-migration of educated 25- to 35-year-olds and includes only Texas graduates who remain in the state. The completion goal includes only those who graduate from Texas colleges and universities. Graduates who leave Texas for further education or employment opportunities are not included in the 60x30 goal.

The completion goal contains targets that build toward 550,000 awards earned solely from two- and four-year colleges in Texas. Growth in certificates and degrees awarded among two- and four-year colleges is critical for reaching the 60 percent in the 60x30 goal and for educating a skilled workforce, but it is only part of the solution for reaching that goal.

The completion goal helps ensure that growing numbers of Texans, and the state as a whole, reap the personal and economic benefits that come from completing high-quality degrees and certificates.

Goal and Interim Benchmarks	2020	2025	2030
Increase the number of students completing a certificate, associate, bachelor's, or master's from an institution of higher education in Texas to at least…	376,000	455,000	550,000

The first four targets are directly related to the completion goal. To reach this goal, Texas will need to maintain the strong degree production increases that it has experienced in recent years. (298,989 as of 2014)

Targets to Reach the Goal	2020	2025	2030
Increase the number of Hispanic students completing a certificate or degree to at least…	138,000	198,000	285,000

This target and the next one will help increase parity across completers for groups that have traditionally been underrepresented. (Hispanics 89,355 as of 2014; African Americans 37,658 as of 2014)

Increase the number of African American students completing a certificate or degree to at least…	48,000	59,000	76,000
Increase the number of male students completing a certificate or degree to at least…	168,000	215,000	275,000

The percentage of women enrolled in and graduating from higher education institutions has grown and men are not keeping pace. This target provides a means to monitor progress toward gender parity. (122,744 as of 2014)

Targets to Reach the Goal (cont.)	2020	2025	2030
Increase the number of economically disadvantaged undergraduate students (Pell Grant recipients) completing a certificate or degree to at least…	146,000	190,000	246,000

Economically disadvantaged students are less likely to succeed in higher education than their non-economically disadvantaged peers. This target emphasizes the importance of improving completion rates for this subgroup. (107,419 as of 2014)

Increase the percentage of all Texas public high school graduates enrolling in an institution of higher education in Texas by the first fall after their high school graduation to at least…	58%	61%	65%

Students who enroll directly from high school into college are much more likely to be college ready. This target helps to ensure high school graduates enroll in higher education at rates that support the completion goal. (54.2% as of 2014)

Strategies

Support the completion pipeline by providing access to multiple postsecondary options.

For example:

- Scale up and share practices that **guide students** to higher education.
- **Collaborate with K-12** in improving college and career readiness.
- Increase the participation of **economically disadvantaged** high school students in dual credit and other **college-level courses.**
- **Build credentials** at each level with the aim of reducing coursework duplication and time to subsequent degrees.

Strategies (cont.)

Improve academic preparation and academic support for students to enter and complete higher education.

For example:

- Scale up and share practices that support students in their **academic preparation** for postsecondary education.
- **Streamline credential pathways** through the P-16 continuum to ensure that secondary education graduation plans, including endorsement coursework, prepare high school graduates for completing a postsecondary credential.
- Scale up and share practices that **support underprepared students** to increase persistence and completion and to reduce their time to degree.

Structure programs and support services to be responsive to the changing needs of the student population to help students persist through key transitions in higher education.

For example:

- Use **innovative approaches for content delivery** (e.g., block scheduling) and assessment to improve completion and reduce student cost.
- Employ **High-Impact Practices** (HIPs). HIPs are evidence-based teaching and learning practices shown to improve learning and persistence for college students from many backgrounds. Various practices demand considerable time and effort, facilitate learning outside of the classroom, require meaningful interactions with faculty and students, encourage collaboration with diverse others, and provide frequent and substantive feedback.
- Increase use of **predictive analytics** to identify and assist students at risk of not completing.

THE THIRD GOAL: MARKETABLE SKILLS

By 2030, all graduates from Texas public institutions of higher education will have completed **programs with identified marketable skills.**

This goal challenges institutions to think more explicitly about the programs they offer and the job skills that students learn within those programs. Marketable skills in this plan are defined as: *Those skills valued by employers that can be applied in a variety of work settings, including interpersonal, cognitive, and applied skill areas. These skills can be either primary or complementary to a major and are acquired by students through education, including curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities.*

Clearly, many students in Texas are graduating from two- and four-year colleges with marketable skills. Public institutions of higher education, for example, adhere to the Texas higher education Core Curriculum and its six Core Objectives, which include the marketable skills of communications, critical thinking, and teamwork. Students who complete the Core Curriculum learn those skills at a basic level. Students, however, are not always aware of the value of these skills or able to articulate them to employers. Two- and four-year institutions can advance this goal by making students aware of the skills they learn within the Core Curriculum and other coursework.

THINKING EXPLICITLY ABOUT SKILLS

The programs at many institutions already include learning outcomes within their courses. The marketable skills goal challenges institutions to go further and think explicitly about the job skills students learn within their programs, so that students can articulate those skills to potential employers. Knowing the job skills they are learning may also motivate students to complete their degrees when they see how their coursework will benefit them in the workplace.

Identifying marketable skills for each program may seem daunting but speaks to why most students pursue higher education. In a 2012 UCLA study, 88 percent of surveyed students identified getting a better job as the motivation for going to college. Given students' desires to get better jobs and employers' desires to hire the best workers, identifying the skills gained through higher education is essential. Although this goal focuses on public two- and four-year colleges, private and independent institutions may opt in to this process.

Where identified marketable skills exist within programs, institutions need to promote them; where identified skills don't exist, institutions need to incorporate them.

Where identified marketable skills exist within programs, institutions need to promote them; where identified skills don't exist, institutions need to incorporate them. The list of marketable skills that institutions develop for their programs will be varied and extensive and may require frequent updates but are important because neither academia nor business can predict how skills will evolve over the next 15 years. No student, however, should graduate from any program without basic computer skills, e.g., the ability to effectively use word processing programs and online tools.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL

Institutions may need to consult chambers of commerce, workforce development boards, and other workforce-related organizations to identify marketable skills for particular jobs and industries. Students should be encouraged to take advantage of extracurricular activities that offer opportunities for them to acquire workplace skills outside their coursework. Institutions will also need to implement strategies, such as building networks of paid internships that count as college credit.

CONNECTION TO THE 60x30 AND COMPLETION GOALS

The marketable skills goal connects to the 60x30 goal by aligning higher education with workforce needs. It connects to the completion goal by providing students with a clearer picture of how courses relate to jobs.

Targets to Reach the Goal	2020	2025	2030
By 2020, institutions will have created and implemented a process to identify and regularly update marketable skills for each of their programs, in collaboration with business and other stakeholders.	100% Implemented	Continuously Updated	

Students need to be aware of the marketable skills affiliated with their programs. The targets above ensure that institutions document, update, and communicate to students the skills acquired in their programs so that students can communicate those skills to potential employers. Target years can be modified to accommodate institutional program review cycles.

Maintain the percentage of students who are found working or enrolled within one year after earning a degree or certificate.	80%	80%	80%

Having a substantial portion of Texas completers who remain in the state and are employed or who are pursuing additional education after completing a credential is important for the state's future. (77.1% as of 2013)

Strategies

Identify marketable skills in every higher education program.

For example:

- **Convene a statewide group** to explore general characteristics of marketable skills by meta-majors. This group should include representatives from institutions, industry, and other relevant stakeholders.
- Establish **collaborations** between institutions and state, regional, and local employers to define desirable skills, and identify in-demand programs and courses that offer those skills.
- **Leverage existing efforts** (e.g., the Liberal Education and America's Promise – LEAP – initiative) to ensure that marketable skills are addressed in every program.

Strategies (cont.)

Communicate marketable skills to students, families, and the workforce.

For example:

- Increase the quality and availability of information targeted to students about the transition from **higher education to the workforce,** including information about the transferability and alignment of skills. This information should be available through **academic and career advising** strategies.
- Ensure marketable skills are integrated into curricula so that students can **demonstrate and communicate those skills** through established mechanisms.

THE FOURTH GOAL: STUDENT DEBT

By 2030, undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed **60 percent** of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.

The student debt goal addresses balancing and managing student loan debt. The intention is to address student loan debt in Texas before it becomes unmanageable and deters greater numbers of students from seeking a degree. Each Texas public institution of higher education may address this goal and its targets differently, but every institution should seek to create an environment in which the debt students carry after graduation is manageable. Institutions have done much to be cost-efficient and must continue this work.

WHO INFLUENCES COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

College affordability impacts student debt load, and unchecked student debt impacts life choices such as buying a house, raising a family, and saving for retirement. The health of Texas depends on an economically healthy population that has discretionary income. College affordability is key.

As with other states, about half of the Texas budget comes from taxes. The more discretionary income individuals have, the greater their purchasing power and the greater the state's potential revenues. Individual purchasing power also affects local governments that heavily depend on property taxes for their operating budgets. A population that can contribute to these tax bases is vital, and students saddled with unmanageable loan debt will be hard pressed to contribute.

THE CHALLENGE OF MORE EFFICIENCY

The state's public institutions ranked 28th nationally in 2013 in state funding, with students receiving an amount of state support also on par with the national average, at about $5,300 per full-time

The Student Debt Goal at a Glance

Three groups directly influence college affordability:

- **Students** – Make an impact by maintaining the lowest possible debt levels and making good decisions about their time and finances during and after college, by maintaining affordable college lifestyles, and by understanding the total cost of borrowing money.
- **Two- and four-year colleges** – Affect affordability by striving to reduce expenses, while maintaining quality and ensuring that students know what they are buying and where their educational choices will lead them after college. Institutions have done much to be cost-efficient and must continue this work.
- **The state** – Can influence affordability by adequately funding higher education.

student equivalent. This plan, however, can succeed only if institutions of higher education in Texas continually strive for greater cost efficiencies. All stakeholders must increase efforts to improve cost efficiency, with the aim of holding down the expense of higher education to both the state and the student.

The challenge is that Texas ranked 23rd in the U.S. in 2013 in the percentage of undergraduate students considered economically disadvantaged, a population projected to grow. To achieve the completion and student debt goals, higher education must become more affordable to more of the population. One way to do that is for all stakeholders to work together to reduce the cost per degree.

TEXAS STUDENT DEBT ON THE RISE

Although Texas student debt has not reached national levels, it is on the rise at a rate of 8 to 9 percent annually. At this pace, student debt will become a deterrent to much larger numbers of Texans making decisions about pursuing higher education. To help students avoid debilitating debt after graduation, Texas public institutions of higher education will need to examine the affordability of attaining a certificate or degree. The less affordable a higher education is, the more debt students will accrue and the more access will be denied for those with the greatest financial need. This goal focuses on student loan debt in relation to first-year earnings with the understanding that college affordability is critical to achieving this goal and the other higher education goals in this plan.

STUDENTS WITH DEBT BUT NO DEGREE

The student debt goal also considers default rates in maintaining a healthy balance between debt levels and earning power. Data from Texas Guaranteed, which are included in the *State of Student Aid and Higher Education in Texas* report, indicate default rates have risen in the last 10 years and that a larger share of students with small loans default when compared to students with large loans. For students who borrow and do not complete their degrees, the average default rate is higher. The state comptroller's data show that about one-quarter of Texas student borrowers borrow less than $5,000 and leave college without a degree; of those, one in four defaults.

This issue highlights the connection between the student debt and completion goals in this plan. Because loan debt undermines the perceived return on investment in higher education, this issue affects the decisions of potential students to pursue college, which has long-term repercussions for students' earning power and the state's workforce needs. Given the higher income and tax base associated with education past high school, the state's revenues will suffer if some students perceive that higher education is an option reserved only for some Texans.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL

Two- and four-year institutions will need to steer students toward degree plans early in their postsecondary careers. Complete College America and others suggest that institutions of higher education need to be more prescriptive in helping students narrow their choices when navigating through higher education. Emphasis in this area will help students avoid taking excessive semester credit hours (SCHs), which lead to greater costs and more debt in pursuit of an associate or bachelor's degree. As of 2014, Texas Guaranteed found that students in Texas averaged 98 SCHs to complete a two-year degree and 145 SCHs to complete a four-year degree, while most programs of study require only 60 and 120 SCHs, respectively. Excessive semester credit hours for degree completion in Texas contribute to student debt and less than timely completions.

Continued institutional emphasis on on-time completion will be integral to helping students avoid the higher costs associated with attending college for a fifth or sixth year in pursuit of a degree. Many studies have shown that the costs associated with the fifth and sixth years of continuous study among six-year graduates are much higher than the first four years and produce much greater student debt. Returning to an expectation that students graduate in four years will help to reduce student debt.

Texas could experience greater shortages in important fields if student loan debt spikes to the point that a majority of students choose programs based solely on potential income.

PROGRAM CHOICES BASED ON TALENT, INTERESTS

Another intention of this goal is to balance costs relative to areas of study so that students can choose programs based on their talents and aspirations and not solely based on the needs of the job market or the starting salary for a particular field. Loan debt, for example, might discourage some students from pursuing a career in K-12 teaching because teachers' starting salaries are generally lower than the mean for all starting salaries of four-year graduates. The same is true for social workers, journalists, artists, and community workers. As a result, Texas could experience greater shortages in important fields, such as teaching and social work, if student loan debt spikes to the point that a majority of students choose programs based solely on their potential income.

CONNECTION TO THE 60x30 GOAL

The intent of the student debt goal is to increase access and persistence, expand students' options for careers after graduation, and advance other life choices. Helping students complete credentials and balance debt load will help the state reach the 60x30 goal and will help two- and four-year colleges in Texas reach the completion goal. The student debt goal also will lead to healthier individual finances among graduates and a stronger state economy.

Goal and Interim Benchmarks	2020	2025	2030
Maintain undergraduate student loan debt at or below 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.	60%	60%	60%

These benchmarks ensure student loan debt levels stay in balance with the earning potential of the credential. (60% as of 2012)

Targets to Reach the Goal	2020	2025	2030
Decrease the excess semester credit hours (SCHs) that students attempt when completing an associate or a bachelor's degree.	12	6	3

This target focuses on decreasing the total SCHs to degree to reduce costs and debt. (21 as of 2014)

Work to limit debt so that no more than half of all students who earn an undergraduate degree or certificate will have debt.	50%	50%	50%

This target focuses on decreasing the overall number of students who have student loan debt. (50.7% as of 2014)

Strategies

Finance higher education in a manner that provides the most effective balance among appropriations, tuition and fees, and financial aid.

Make higher education more affordable for students.

For example:

- **Fully fund grants** for eligible students.
- **Support innovative approaches** for more affordable credentials.
- Reduce time to degree through **alternate degree pathways** to completion.

Build the financial literacy of Texans to promote a better understanding of how and why to pay for higher education.

For example:

- Implement personal **financial literacy** programs to support students going to college.
- Convene a statewide advisory group to determine ways to better **advise students and parents on financial aid** options and the impact of those options on students' finances before, during, and after their college careers.

Conclusion

The purpose of the *60x30TX* Plan is to set goals for higher education in Texas for the next 15 years. This plan takes bold steps toward helping the state to meet the needs of its workforce, communities, and individuals.

To compete and remain relevant in the future, Texas students must attain quality postsecondary credentials, and they must complete those credentials and exit their programs with the skills employers need. If students are to graduate, contribute to the state's revenue, and become more engaged citizens, they also must exit their programs with no debt or with manageable debt, relative to their incomes. This plan addresses each of these areas through higher education goals aimed at the continued progress of Texas.

A Texas future without bold action is a Texas without a bold future.

By design, this plan is Texas-bold and Texas-achievable. As Abraham Lincoln said, "You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today." Aiming for a Texas workforce in which 60 percent of 25- to 34-year-olds in 2030 have attained a higher education is a great stride toward assuming responsibility for the future. Some may say this goal is too great to accomplish, but it must be accomplished – a Texas future without bold action is a Texas without a bold future. ■

(For more information about how this plan was developed, see Appendix A.)

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Appendix A: History of the Texas Higher Education Strategic Planning Committee for the *60x30TX* Plan

On Dec. 9, 2013, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) staff distributed a memorandum requesting nominations for advisory committee members to all the chancellors and presidents of Texas institutions of higher education. The THECB sought: (1) former governing board members of Texas institutions of higher education, or (2) former presidents and chancellors of higher education institutions. THECB staff also sent requests to the business community and asked for nominations for business representatives who would be willing and able to contribute meaningfully to the work of the committee. The deadline for all nominations was Jan. 10, 2014.

After THECB staff received nominations, they reviewed them to ensure statewide coverage and even representation of all stakeholders. THECB staff then verified that nominees were willing to serve and recruited members from unrepresented areas. Many of the former presidents and chancellors also had worked in faculty positions during their careers.

On Jan. 6, 2014, the 30-day comment period ended for the new rules concerning the establishment of the Higher Education Strategic Planning Committee with no comments received.

At the quarterly meeting of the THECB on Jan. 23, 2014, the THECB: (1) adopted the rules for the Texas Higher Education Strategic Planning Committee (TxHESPC), and (2) voted to authorize the Board Chair and the Chair of the Board Committee on Affordability, Accountability and Planning to approve the membership of the Higher Education Strategic Planning Committee.

Final membership of the Higher Education Strategic Planning Committee was approved in late February 2014, with formal invitation letters sent to Strategic Planning Committee members on Feb. 21.

With the exception of July and December 2014 and June 2015, members of the 2014-15 TxHESPC met monthly from March 2014 through July 2015. The election of the chair and vice chair and the charge to the committee occurred at the first meeting. Every meeting included presentations by one or two guest speakers and THECB staff, followed by substantial committee discussion. Speakers included both regional and national experts on topics related to the goals. These discussions led to the goals, targets, and strategies of this plan.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE *60x30TX* PLAN

The TxHESPC focused on these characteristics for the next long-range higher education plan for Texas. It needed to:

- Be concise and focused
- Contain two to five goals
- Set measurable targets
- Contain broad strategies
- Respond to statewide needs
- Respond to regional needs
- Stimulate creativity and adaptability

Members of the 2014-15 Texas Higher Education Strategic Planning Committee

Woody Hunt, *Chair*

Larry R. Faulkner, Ph.D., *Vice Chair*

James R. Anderson, Ph.D.
Martin Basaldua, M.D.
Jerry Bawcom, Ph.D.
Laurie Bricker, M.Ed.
James Dickerson, J.D.
Ramon H. Dovalina, Ph.D.
Bernie Francis
Robert Furgason, Ph.D.
E. D. "Doug" Hodo, Ph.D.
Wright Lassiter, Jr., Ph.D.
Steve Lyle
Donald "Dee" Margo
Jerry Massey, M.P.A.
Cathy Obriotti Green
Shirley (Neeley) Richardson, Ed.D.
Lionel Sosa
Jerry Turner, J.D.

Steve Murdock, Ph.D., *Special Advisor for Demographics*

Appendix B: Glossary

Adult degree completer:
Any student who has several years of life and/or work experience and previous college coursework who returns to an institution of higher education and completes a postsecondary credential.

Affordable baccalaureate:
The Texas Affordable Baccalaureate (TAB) program is a lower-cost degree. As of 2015, the TAB program offers one program of study, Organizational Leadership. Tuition for this degree is $750 per term. Students are able to accelerate through as many courses per term as possible, provided they demonstrate mastery of the subjects. A student entering the program with no prior college credit should be able to complete the degree in three years for between $13,000 and $15,000.

Competency-based education:
Competency-based education is a flexible way for students to get credit for what they know; build on their knowledge and skills by learning more at their own pace; and earn high-quality degrees, certificates, and other credentials that help them in their lives and careers. Students in these programs show what they know and how well they know it through multiple ways of evaluating their learning. This is another choice for learning offered at some institutions through a variety of programs, with full support to help students when needed.

Co-requisite courses:
Courses required to be taken at the same time.

Economically disadvantaged:
High school students are identified as economically disadvantaged if they receive free or reduced-price lunches while attending high school. College students are identified as economically disadvantaged if they receive Pell Grants at any time while earning their degree.

Guided pathways:
A structured plan that clearly delineates the requirements and sequence of a program of study.

Marketable skills:
Those skills valued by employers that can be applied in a variety of work settings, including interpersonal, cognitive, and applied skill areas. These skills can be either primary or complementary to a major and are acquired by students through education, including curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities.

Meta-major:
A grouping of courses to guide a first-year student toward a major in an area (e.g., science, business, arts and humanities, education) while the student still progresses toward graduation. All degrees in a meta-major share common courses. Undecided students can use a meta-major pathway to make more focused, intentional progress toward a degree, thus eliminating the accumulation of unnecessary courses and credits.

Postsecondary credential:
A degree or a level I, II, or III certificate.

Soft skills:
Skills broadly applicable to the workplace, but also broadly applicable to higher education. Included are skills such as communication, both written and oral; critical thinking; and teamwork.

Stop-out:
A student who temporarily withdraws from school or delays the pursuit of higher education with the intention of re-enrolling in the future.

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