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Texas to Develop New Statewide Diagnostic and Placement System for Institutions of Higher Education

NEW YORK — Last month, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved the awarding of a contract to the College Board for the development of a new comprehensive diagnostic and placement testing system to further the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) goal of preparing all Texas students to be college ready and to achieve college success. To be known as the TSI Assessment, this new assessment system will be powered by the ACCUPLACER® platform and will be a customized tool aligned to the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards. As a new comprehensive assessment system, the TSI Assessment will be designed to help institutions of higher education determine whether, and at what level, incoming students are prepared to enroll and succeed in entry-level college courses, as well as offer developmental intervention options. It also will help educators plan classroom instruction according to student strengths and weaknesses. The TSI Assessment will be unique in its ability to address not only the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards but also educational functioning level descriptors for adult basic education. The overarching goal is to help all students successfully transition to postsecondary degree paths, certificate programs and the workplace.

"This effort is unprecedented and will break new ground in the area of student assessment," said Deputy Commissioner David Gardner. "Our collaboration with the College Board will allow us to better understand the relative level of preparedness, particularly for those students who are well below college readiness thresholds. In so doing, Texas institutions of higher education can more appropriately tailor remediation programs and direct students to the most appropriate support services, resulting in better student outcomes."

The new program, combined with focused student support services, will help:

- Distinguish the preparedness of students at three levels: (1) college ready, (2) within two years of college ready and (3) adult basic education;

- Identify strengths and weaknesses of individual students;
- Measure student preparedness before and after arriving in college;
- Foster enhanced alignment of K–12 and higher education expectations through a suite of comprehensive reporting capabilities and data available online;
- Design intervention programs modeled on analyses of students' strengths and weaknesses derived from individual, aggregate and statewide data;
- Reduce the amount of developmental course work required by students as they start college;
- Increase postsecondary matriculation, retention and graduation rates;
- Validate the statewide common cut-score policy to confirm that assessments and curricula are aligned; and
- Monitor and manage the amount of overremediation through effective tools, and successfully accelerate students more quickly and more effectively toward completion goals.

"Texas should be seen as a national model for creating a college and career readiness culture that aligns K–12 and higher education," said College Board President Gaston Caperton. "The College Board is honored to contribute to this new effort to serve students in the critical community college sector as part of our ongoing work with the state."

With the expert guidance of David Conley and the Educational Policy Improvement Center, much of that work in Texas has sought to foster college and career readiness by expanding the concept of college readiness and improving college- and career-ready assessment tools. Now in the final phase of those efforts, the TSI Assessment will provide new college readiness classifications and diagnostics, adult basic education level and diagnostic components, and related supporting products and services, including training and documentation for Texas educators and test administrators.

The system will be put in place in the summer of 2013 for the 2013-14 academic year.

About the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
In 2000, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) launched *Closing the Gaps by 2015* to expand access, increase postsecondary completions, facilitate more research and improve quality at Texas institutions of higher education. The goal is to make Texas more competitive in the national economy by 2015. An economic analysis found that if the state achieves these goals, Texas will realize an increase of $489 billion in total spending, $194 billion in gross state product, $122 billion in personal income, as well as the creation of over 1,023,000 new jobs by the year 2030. The state's return on its investment in higher education is estimated at $8.08 for every $1 invested.

About the College Board:
The College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board was created to expand access to higher education. Today, the

membership association is made up of over 6,000 of the world's leading educational institutions and is dedicated to promoting excellence and equity in education. Each year, the College Board helps more than seven million students prepare for a successful transition to college through programs and services in college readiness and college success — including the SAT® and the Advanced Placement Program®. The organization also serves the education community through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators and schools.

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