



Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

1200 East Anderson Lane • P.O. Box 12788, Austin, Texas 78711-2788 • www.thecb.state.tx.us

THECB releases preliminary 2012 data on *Closing the Gaps*

October 19, 2012 – Austin, Texas – Today, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) released preliminary 2012 data on enrollments and completions at institutions of higher education at the Capitol during a meeting of the House Committee on Higher Education. For the first time since the launch of *Closing the Gaps*, the THECB is releasing projections before the Texas Legislature meets in January to help inform policymakers on the status of the state’s higher education master plan.

The THECB estimates that Texas public and independent colleges and universities have added approximately 12,000 students this fall semester—an increase of less than 1 percent over fall 2011 enrollments. Including the fall 2012 projections, total enrollments at Texas universities and community/technical colleges have increased by 53 percent (or 544,800 students) since 2000.

The THECB also released projections for undergraduate degrees and certificates awarded in FY 2012. According to uncertified data, Texas increased annual undergraduate postsecondary awards (to include Bachelor’s, Associate’s and certificates) by 12 percent. The 208,500 awards in FY 12 place the state within striking distance of the 2015 goal of 210,000 annual degrees and certificates.

“As we approach the end of *Closing the Gaps*, we are especially encouraged by the significant increase in annual postsecondary awards,” explained THECB Chairman Fred W Heldenfels IV. “The Board believed it was critical to release this information ahead of the legislative session so policymakers know where Texas stands, and understand the challenges ahead.”

The FY 12 projections for enrollments and completions show that Texas is ahead of annual targets for the statewide participation and success goals set forth in *Closing the Gaps by 2015*.

Recent data released by the U.S. Department of Education show that enrollments in higher education actually declined two-tenths of one percent from fall 2011 compared to fall 2010. While national data for fall 2012 is not yet available, Texas continues to outperform national averages year over year.

“While we are pleased with our progress toward 2015 and the strength of our enrollments compared to recent national trends, we are concerned about the decline in enrollment growth this fall compared to last fall,” said Higher Education Commissioner Raymund Paredes. “With more institutional data available later this year, we will be in a better position to identify the dynamics responsible for this trend.”

Universities and colleges will submit final certified data later this year, to include data submitted by career colleges, which may result in changes to preliminary data released by the THECB today. The complete FY 2012 data for public higher education will be released next spring in the annual *Texas Public Higher Education Almanac*.

###



Fall 2012 Enrollment

Frequently Asked Questions

How do fall 2012 enrollments compare to fall 2011 enrollments?

Overall enrollments increased a little less than 1% over fall 2011 enrollments (approx. 12,000 new students).

Why is enrollment growth slowing?

First, it is important to remember that we are still tracking above our annual targets for *Closing the Gaps*. However, the enrollment growth this year is the second smallest since 2000.

Since fall 2007, enrollment growth has averaged 74,000 new students. This includes a record year in 2009 of 121,000 new students followed by the second highest year of enrollment growth (84,000 new students). The enrollment growth in fall 2012 was considerably less than these recent trends.

The THECB cannot conduct a comprehensive analysis to help explain the slower growth rate until certified data is released later this year. However, there are some key factors that could explain the trend.

- 1) Some regions of the state are experiencing positive economic forces that may push students toward the workforce rather than higher education. The data below shows enrollments by region. The regions with some of the most significant decline are also those with strong regional economies. For example, South Texas enrollments are off by almost 3%. The energy boom in the Eagle Ford Shale may explain some of this trend.

Region	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Change	% Change
High Plains	74,766	75,522	756	1.0%
Northwest	28,022	27,180	-842	-3.0%
Metroplex	361,623	373,733	12,110	3.3%
Upper East Texas	59,052	55,830	-3,222	-5.5%
Southeast Texas	40,513	41,215	702	1.7%
Gulf Coast	303,913	311,080	7,167	2.4%
Central Texas	263,449	264,569	1,120	0.4%

South Texas	258,694	251,749	-6,945	-2.7%
West Texas	26,747	26,140	-607	-2.3%
Upper Rio Grande	52,713	54,563	1,850	3.5%

- 2) We know of anecdotal reports from the community college sector that the new requirement for students to show proof of the Bacterial Meningitis vaccine prior to enrolling has created a financial and administrative barrier for some students. We have no data to substantiate these claims or to measure the magnitude of the impact. However, we know that community college enrollment in particular was lower than robust growth we have witnessed in this sector in recent years.

Once certified data is available, the THECB will conduct a more comprehensive analysis to identify the factors behind the slower enrollment growth.

How do Texas enrollment trends compare to national trends?

According to the most recent data released by the U.S. Department of Education, national enrollments actually declined by two-tenths of a percent in fall 2011. Texas enrollments are beating the national average, however enrollment growth in Texas has slowed reflecting a broader trend in higher education across the country.

Why is this data preliminary and how will that impact final enrollment figures?

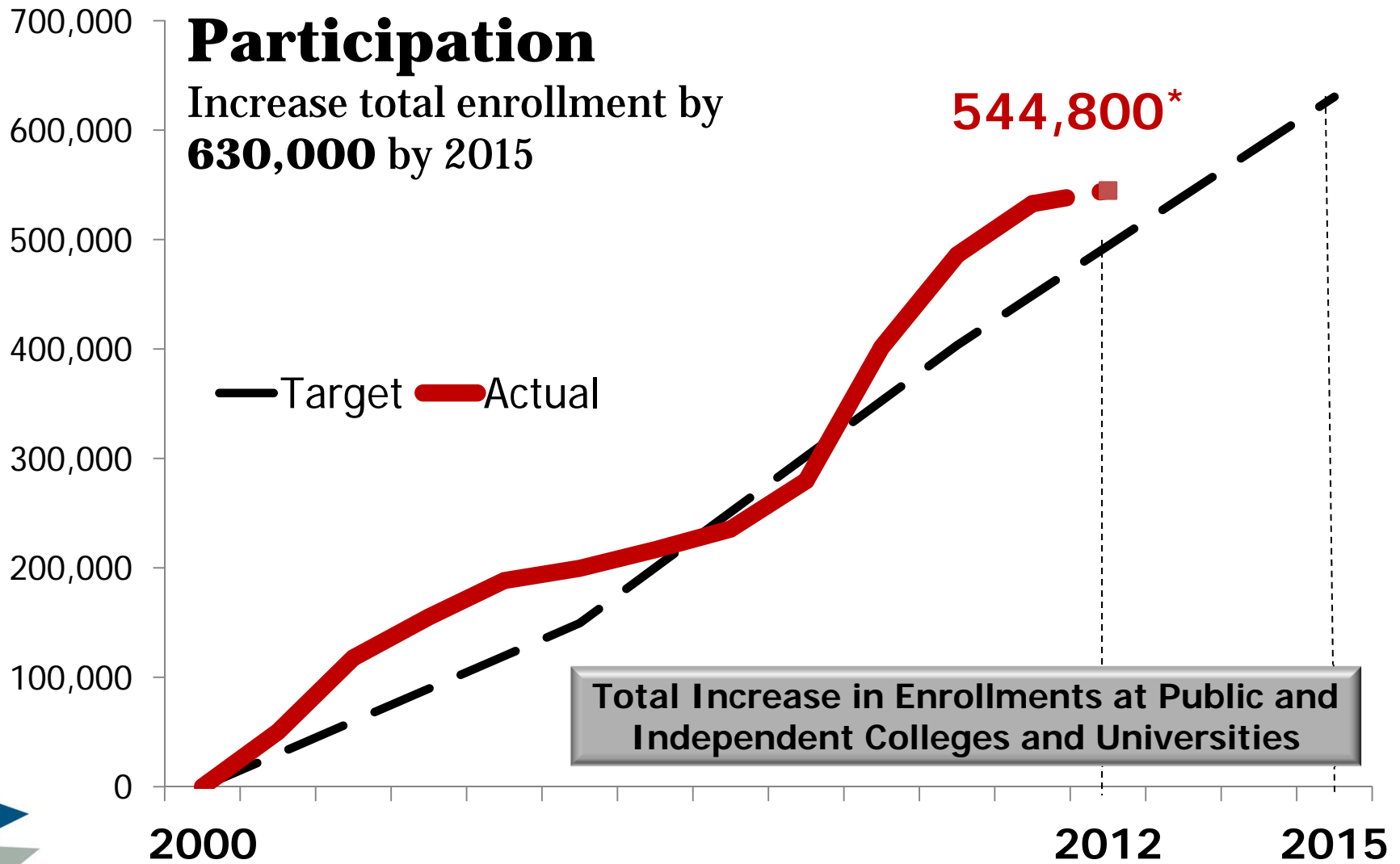
The THECB typically receives preliminary enrollment data at the end of October. This year, data was requested earlier so state enrollments could be reported in near real-time as institutions report enrollments locally after the start of school. The preliminary data are rough estimates and do not include data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and other metrics that are reported later in the year when institutions certify their enrollments with the THECB.

There are three factors that may affect the final certified enrollment figures:

- 1) In a typical year, certified enrollments are generally between 3% and 6% less than preliminary data;
- 2) Because these preliminary data were reported earlier than ever before, community college enrollments may be under-reported because of the rolling admissions that occur at many community colleges; and

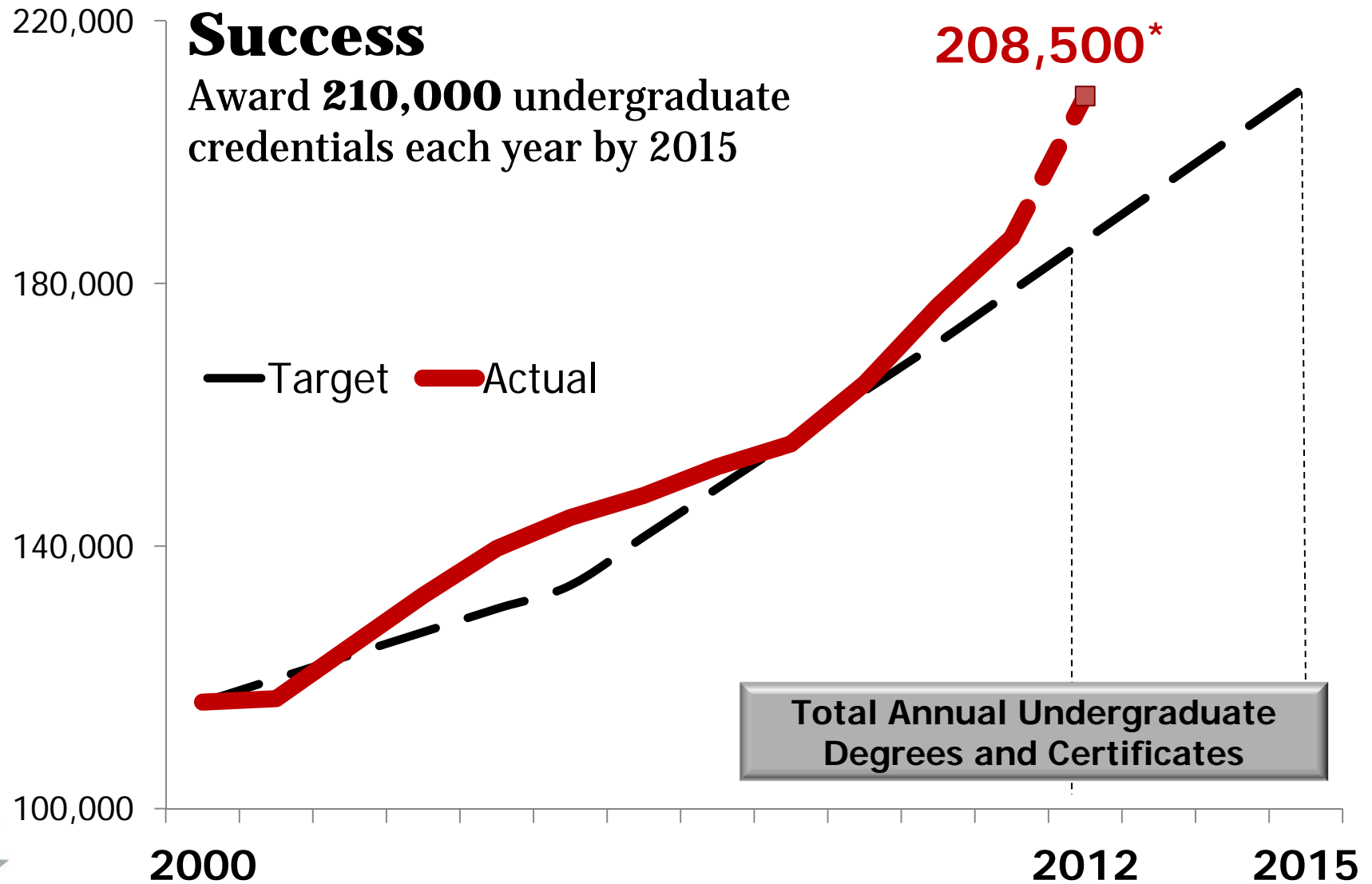
3) Career schools do not report preliminary enrollments to the THECB, only final certified enrollments—for this preliminary analysis we assumed flat enrollments at career schools.

Closing the Gaps



* Projection based on preliminary 2012 fall enrollments and estimate for career colleges.

Closing the Gaps



* FY projection based on uncertified Fall 2011, Spring 2012 and historical ratios.

Texas Public and Independent Institution Enrollment

Fall 2011 vs. Fall 2012 (projected)

	Certified Fall 2011	Preliminary Fall 2012	Enrollment Change	Percent Change
Public Universities and Colleges				
Universities	568,938	576,880	7,942	1.4%
Community and State Colleges 1/	740,635	744,153	3,518	0.5%
Texas State Technical Colleges 1/	12,353	11,459	-894	-7.2%
TOTAL	1,321,926	1,332,492	10,566	0.8%
Independent Universities and Colleges				
Senior Colleges and Universities	122,624	123,707	1,083	0.9%
Junior Colleges	1,066	559	-507	-47.6%
TOTAL	123,690	124,266	576	0.5%
Public Medical, Dental, and Health-Related Institutions				
Public Medical, Dental and Health-Related				
Medical	5,849	6,068	219	3.7%
Dental	1,141	1,262	121	10.6%
Academic	12,680	12,947	267	2.1%
Audiology (AUD)	42	39	-3	-7.1%
Pharmacy (PharmD) 2/	925	943	18	1.9%
Physical Therapy (DPT)	675	911	236	35.0%
TOTAL	21,312	22,170	858	4.0%
Independent Medical, Dental, and Health-Related Institutions				
Medical	728	751	23	3.2%
Academic	721	774	53	7.4%
Chiropractic	1,115	1,128	13	1.2%
TOTAL	2,564	2,653	89	3.5%
Career Schools and Colleges*				
TOTAL	81,270	81,270	0	0%
TOTALS -- All Institutions				
	1,550,762	1,562,851	12,089	0.8%

* = Preliminary data on Career Schools and Colleges are currently unavailable. For projection purposes, enrollments for this sector held constant.