P-16 College Readiness and Success Strategic Action Plan

PROGRESS REPORT
December 1, 2012

Overview

Texas Education Code (TEC) §61.0761 (House Bill 1, 79th Texas Legislature, Third Called Session) requires that the state P-16 Council recommend to the Commissioner of Education and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) a College Readiness and Success Strategic Action Plan (referred to hereafter as "the Plan") with the goal of increasing student success and decreasing the number of students enrolling in developmental course work in institutions of higher education. Additionally, the statute requires that an update of progress toward meeting the plan's goal be provided to the Texas Legislature and the Office of the Governor by December 1 of every even-numbered year. In December 2006, a baseline report that provided the goal and objectives recommended by the P-16 Council and adopted by the Commissioner of Education and THECB was provided to the Texas Legislature. In December 2008 and 2010, updates on the status of work related to implementation of the Plan were adopted by the P-16 Council and THECB and provided to the Texas Legislature.

Unlike past progress reports, the 2012 update provides general information on the Plan without the detailed action items previously included as an appendix. This is a result of the elimination of funding by the 82nd Texas Legislature for almost all of the college readiness initiatives for the 2012-2013 biennium for both the THECB and Texas Education Agency (TEA). While some initiatives are funded by the THECB and TEA until August 31, 2013, this progress report highlights successful initiatives funded since 2006 and those with promising outcomes. Recommendations for the future of college readiness and success that could be considered by the 83rd Texas Legislature are also provided.

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Highlights

The 81st Texas Legislature expanded the role of college readiness in the Texas public education system with the adoption of House Bill 3. For the first time, college readiness performance standards have been integrated into the K-12 accountability system, requiring public schools to increase the number of students performing at the college readiness level to an amount that achieves an academic distinction rating. House Bill 3 also established a college readiness performance standard on the English III and Algebra II End-of-Course (EOC) assessments and guarantees that students who meet this standard will be placed in entry-level college courses in Texas public colleges and universities.

The 81st Texas Legislature also focused attention on higher education and college readiness. Through innovation and specifically targeted funding, these efforts seek to improve developmental and adult basic education, helping ensure that entering college students who are not college ready have the instruction, curriculum, and support necessary to achieve college readiness as quickly as possible.

Goal – To ensure that every Texas student is prepared by their P-12 education to be college-ready when exiting high school and has the skills to successfully compete in a global economy.

Objective 1 – Define standards and expectations for college readiness for the state that address what students must know and be able to do to succeed in entry-level college/university courses and the skilled workforce.

With the adoption of the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) by the Commissioner of Education and the THECB in 2008, the State Board of Education (SBOE) has incorporated the CCRS into the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). In addition, TEA staff has engaged public and higher education faculty, and other experts, in the development of professional development materials to support teachers who are responsible for teaching the more rigorous TEKS. This effort has resulted in the Project Share initiative that blends face-to-face and online professional development. CCRS instructional strategies, professional development for educators, and student support materials are available through Project Share.

Along with integration of college readiness into the public school assessment and accountability system, TEA also has engaged educators and assessment experts in the development of Texas' new State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) assessments, which include 15 EOC assessments. Initially, college readiness performance standards will be included in the Algebra II and English III EOC tests, with research conducted in science and social studies to determine whether college readiness can be assessed in those two content areas.

To ensure the CCRS are integrated into developmental education and entry-level college courses, the THECB staff engaged vertical teams of high school/college faculty to develop model College Readiness Assignments (CRAs) with scoring rubrics. These CRAs are designed to help educators target specific assignments to the needs of students who are challenged by the increased rigor of the TEKS. A comprehensive field test of the CRAs will conclude in spring 2013 with statewide dissemination of appropriate CRAs beginning fall 2013. In addition, the THECB funded various Regional Vertical Alignment Projects, also known as the Texas Pathways Project. Through these alignment activities, public secondary and postsecondary institutions collaborate to share student-level data and, through the work of faculty vertical teams, use these data to inform interventions in policy, curriculum, and faculty development to improve students' transitions from secondary to postsecondary education.

OBJECTIVE 2 – Align exit-level assessments of public education with entry-level expectations of higher education and the skilled workforce.

In 2008, TEA, in collaboration with the THECB, developed a plan to provide a framework for the implementation of the college-readiness and advanced-course readiness components within the STAAR EOC assessment program. The plan was developed after convening a panel of nationally recognized college-readiness experts to review critical issues associated with assessing and promoting college readiness within the program. The plan was updated in summer 2010 to reflect changes resulting from revisions made during the TEKS revision process, including incorporation of the CCRS in all four core content subject areas (English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies). House Bill 3 clarified requirements for setting college-readiness performance standards on assessments.

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In 2009, the first of several validity and linking studies was conducted to help set standards and support the interpretations of performance standards on the STAAR EOC assessments. Various advisory committees were convened between 2010 and 2012 to establish the performance categories and labels, to consider policy implications of the performance standards and empirical study results, and to recommend performance standards and cut scores for each STAAR EOC Assessment. In March 2012, the Commissioner of Education set the performance standards and cut scores, and information was provided to the school districts and other stakeholders in April 2012.

In addition to the collaborative work with TEA on EOC assessments, the THECB staff are working to align college readiness assessments used by public institutions of higher education under Texas Education Code §51.3062, Texas Success Initiative, with the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS). As a first step, the THECB commissioned a 2009 study of the THECB-recognized college readiness assessments to determine the degree to which the various tests assess the CCRS by examining depth of knowledge, content coverage, rigor and cognitive demand. Key findings of the study determined that the CCRS performance expectations are, on average, more cognitively demanding and more rigorous than the 2,500 test items provided by the testing companies for analysis in the study.

House Bill 1244 of the 82nd Texas Legislature provided the THECB with the authority to adopt a single assessment (or set of assessments) to measure college readiness in order to more accurately assess the rigor and cognitive demand of the CCRS performance expectations. As a result, the THECB issued a Request for Proposals in February 2012 for testing companies interested in designing a new assessment (or assessments) for Texas. House Bill 1244 also eliminated the authority for each Texas public institution of higher education to set higher performance standards on the assessment(s) used to determine college readiness under the Texas Success Initiative (Texas Education Code, Section 51.3062). Under contract to the College Board, the THECB will have one new TSI assessment with placement and diagnostic capabilities that will determine whether a student is college ready, within two years of college ready and needing remediation, or below eighth-grade competencies and more appropriately served through adult education programs and services.

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Objective 3 – Infuse prekindergarten, elementary, middle, and high school curricula with appropriate rigor to academically prepare students, including those with special needs, for success in college/university courses and career pursuits.

The goals of Objective 3 support statewide efforts to maintain a P-16 education system that focuses on ensuring a good start for students, raising academic standards, improving teacher quality, and smoothing transitions from one level of learning to the next. These goals not only focus on helping all students meet the levels needed to excel at the next education level, but also to succeed in the workforce.

State-approved curricula, selected locally, must all be aligned to the 2008 Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, which in turn are vertically aligned with the kindergarten TEKS. Approved curriculum is infused with age-appropriate rigor to prepare students academically for elementary school. The guidelines also incorporate strategies for effective instruction for students who are English language learners throughout each domain.

In 2011, TEA produced Early Childhood Outcomes and Prekindergarten Guidelines Alignment, a companion document to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines for instructors of students with developmental delays. Using the Prekindergarten Guidelines as a foundation, this document extends the guidance to include Early Childhood Outcome guiding questions for providers, the correlating Early Childhood Outcome established by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a more extensive developmental continuum that spans 36 to 48 months of age, foundational skills for those with disabilities, and guidance for differentiation of instruction for children with learning differences.

Prekindergarten Guidelines Webpage:
http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2147495508&menu_id=2147483718

The Kindergarten Readiness System (KRS) is a new project, developed from previous "Texas School Ready!" (TSR!) certification work. It is authorized under TEC Sec. 29.161. School Readiness Certification System. TEA is required to adopt a school readiness certification system for use in certifying the effectiveness of prekindergarten, Head Start, and licensed child-care programs in preparing children for kindergarten. Significant features:

- The system is voluntary except for Texas Literacy Initiative and TSR! grant participants, for whom it is mandatory.
- The system accommodates all early childhood education (ECE) program types – public prekindergarten, Head Start, and licensed child care.
- The system is the only one in the nation that accommodates all program types and uses input data from a student's ECE institution and output data from the kindergarten reading diagnostic instrument to determine impact of the ECE program.
- Designations of a PreK Center of Excellence will be awarded by the Texas Education Agency in 2013.

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TEA's prekindergartenprepares.com outreach website and toolkit includes a parent information page titled *Healthy Child*. The website, available in English and Spanish, includes links to best practices and resources under the categories of Immunization, Child Passenger Safety, Exercise, Healthy Meals, Fun and Crafts, WIC, CHIP and Children's Medicaid, and the National Free or Reduced Lunch Program. TEA used Title I state-level funds to establish the site and conducted extensive stakeholder input and market research in its development. The website has been widely distributed by and among interagency partners including the Texas Early Learning Council, the Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition, 20 Regional Education Service Centers, the Texas Head Start Collaboration Office, and UT Health Children's Learning Institute.

The Children's Learning Institute at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston administers the TSR! program. TSR! is a high-quality early childhood model, based on proven school readiness components including:

- High quality, developmentally appropriate, and rigorous curriculum;
- Continuous student progress monitoring;
- Professional development for teachers; and
- Creating and implementing a School Readiness Integration Partnership to coordinate services among school districts, childcare providers, and Head Start programs

The TSR! program serves public school districts, open enrollment charter schools, Head Start Programs, and childcare programs (profit/nonprofit, faith and community-based organizations) conducting an early childhood or prekindergarten program with eligible students:

- Public school districts with three-and four-year-old eligible prekindergarten students
- Nonprofit or for-profit childcare settings serving at least a 50% at-risk population of children or children eligible under federal childcare assistance funded program

The TEA funds a School Readiness Integration (SRI) specialist at each Regional Education Service Center to provide professional development, training, and technical assistance to early childhood education providers within the ESC region. The SRI specialists coordinate the implementation of the Texas Kindergarten Readiness System (KRS), formerly known as the Texas School Readiness Certification System (SRCS), which evaluates the effectiveness of prekindergarten, Head Start, and community-based licensed childcare programs in preparing children for kindergarten. Additionally, the SRI will strive to maintain a cost-effective SRI model that brings together school districts, childcare providers, and Head Start programs to prepare prekindergarten children for transition into school.

In November 2006, the SBOE adopted the "4x4" curriculum for the Recommended High School and Distinguished Achievement Programs. Students who entered the ninth grade in academic year 2007-2008 were the first graduating class in 2011 required to take four credits each in mathematics, science, social studies and English/language arts. Requirements that all school districts offer a minimum of 12 semester credit hours of college credit through dual credit courses, Advanced Placement, and/or International Baccalaureate courses went into effect during the 2008-2009 academic year. These requirements continue to support vertical alignment collaborations between public and higher education faculty throughout the state. In addition, TEA enhanced professional development and instructional support to educators for preparing all students to succeed under increasingly rigorous academic requirements.

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In recognition of the key role algebra plays in preparing students to successfully complete high school and transition to college, TEA has created an Algebra Readiness grant program designed to increase the readiness of middle school students to meet the standards and pass state assessments in Algebra I. Funds support strategies to increase teachers' mathematic content knowledge, equip school leaders to support and facilitate teachers' efforts to increase student achievement in mathematics, and provide targeted intervention services for middle school students at risk of failing to meet the required standards. Other grant programs supported by House Bill 2237, 80th Texas Legislature, including Texas Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics academies and Early College High Schools, are designed to ensure that high school students are well equipped to move seamlessly into a rigorous college environment.

The THECB funded higher education intensive and bridging programs between 2007 and 2011 in an effort to determine whether early intervention and support programs offered in intensive summer timeframes, or before/after school or weekends, can increase student performance for a variety of high school and underprepared college students. Based on evaluation results, the THECB determined that successful intensive and bridging programs for underprepared students share similar features. Components of successful programs include:

- Begin planning activities nine to 12 months before program offered
- Establish a budget ranging from $1,200 to $1,700 per student participant

- Begin recruiting students early, which generally requires well-established relationships with local high schools
- Involve parents, as appropriate
- Involve faculty early in the development of the curriculum that is solidly based on the College and Career Readiness Standards
- Tailor accelerated curriculum to address the needs of the targeted population
- Integrate instruction on learning and study skills into the content curriculum
- Provide a wide range of academic and social support services
- Require tutoring and mentoring as part of the integrated curriculum
- Use technology to differentiate instruction, particularly in mathematics

OBJECTIVE 4 – Establish sound accountability measures for college readiness in public education and for persistence and timely graduation in higher education.

Since 2006, TEA's Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) report has included college readiness indicators. These indicators, which consider advanced course enrollment, completion and test results, provide a picture of college preparedness at a given high school and can be used by educators as they work to ensure that students are able to perform college-level course work at institutions of higher education. In 2007, a new College-Ready Graduate indicator was added to measure the progress toward preparation for postsecondary success. To be considered college-ready as defined by this indicator, a graduate must have met or exceeded established college-ready criteria in English language arts and mathematics on the TAKS exit-level test, the SAT, or the ACT. This indicator provides an overall measure of both subjects combined and is tied to the campus and district from which the student graduated.

The state accountability ratings that will be assigned in August 2014 in the new accountability system will include ratings evaluations based on postsecondary readiness standards on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR). Also, a number of the proposed indicators for the distinction designations that will be awarded to campuses in August 2013 for outstanding academic achievement in reading/English language arts (ELA) and mathematics will be based on measures of postsecondary readiness.

The THECB enhanced its data collection, analysis, and reporting to provide better information on the college readiness of students who have entered higher education. For example, the THECB's high school developmental education report has been redesigned to provide information to high schools in a more useful format. The THECB also publishes a report on the grade point average of recent high school graduates during their first year in higher education and now posts, for three-year cohorts, the number of students by high school who earn a bachelor's degree at a Texas institution within six years of high school graduation. Ongoing discussions with the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Association of School Administrators, and the Texas Association of School Boards aim to continue enhancements of data reporting of higher education metrics important to public education.

Objective 5 – Create a college going culture in every public prekindergarten, elementary, middle and high school in Texas.

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Objective 5 emphasizes the need for coordinated outreach strategies between public education, higher education, and students and parents across the state. A number of public education initiatives, including Generation Texas (GenTX), Texas Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program (GEAR UP), and the Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) program, provide coordinated outreach strategies for fostering a college-going culture. These programs have netted positive outcomes for providing resources to educators, students, and parents to enhance the early postsecondary awareness, access and success of secondary students. Available resources include video and print materials that are housed at www.GenTx.org, www.TexasGearUp.com, and www.OwnYourOwnFuture.com respectively.

Public schools throughout the state continue to foster a college-going culture through various means. During *"Education: Go Get It Week"* , districts are required by statute (TEC §29.911) to designate one week during the school year to provide college and career information. During the designated week, each campus serving middle and high school students must provide comprehensive grade-appropriate information regarding the importance of higher education and sponsor at least one public speaker as part of its activities. HB 2909 updates the statute by replacing references to the Education: Go Get It higher education campaign with the recently launched Generation TX campaign. Further, the legislation requires that the college and career readiness standards be included in the information provided to students, along with the already required information. In addition, many districts and campuses are now able to sponsor college tours, cover tuition fees for dual credit and advanced courses and exams, and implement other college-readiness and awareness activities through the use of High School Allotment funds. The High School Allotment program, created by the 79th Legislature, provided $328 million during the 2008-2009 school year and $334 million during the 2009-2010 school year to help school districts implement strategies and activities to help underachieving students between grades six and 12 become college ready.

The federally funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, known as Texas Afterschool Centers on Education or Texas ACE, emphasizes college and workforce readiness for students served in grades Kindergarten through 12 and whom attend Title I Schools or schools that serve 40 percent or more economically disadvantaged students. Federal requirements for this program, which is funded to states via formula from the US Department of Education, include provision of academic assistance and enrichment activities to students when school is not in session and provision of program opportunities for literacy and related educational development for parents of participating students. A fourth component required for Texas ACE programs is to provide activities in support of College and Workforce Readiness. Texas ACE programs do this in a variety of ways, both by embedding hands-on academic instruction aligned to the TEKS into all afterschool activities, as well as by providing educational field trip experiences to higher education institutions across the state for students and their families.

TEA's recently developed College Readiness Initiative for Middle School Students was designed to close achievement gaps at campuses with disproportionately high numbers of students who have been identified as unlikely to meet college readiness standards by the end of the 11th grade. The program prepares seventh- and eighth-grade middle school students to be successful on the Algebra I and English I End Of Course exams, provides middle school mathematics and English teachers with increased content knowledge and instructional strategies to increase college readiness for all students, and enables middle schools to foster a college-going culture to prepare students for rigorous high school and postsecondary studies.

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The Early College High School (ECHS) program is another successful initiative that promotes a college-going culture. The program provides students who would not otherwise consider attending college an opportunity to simultaneously earn a high school diploma and an associate's degree or up to 60 college credit hours at no additional cost to them. The ECHS model emphasizes increased academic rigor and immersing students in a college-going culture while providing academic and social support structures that enable students to increase their college readiness. In 2010, 11 of the state's 41 early college programs graduated seniors, with the students earning scholarships totaling more than $5.6 million. Six of these schools also offer an associate of arts (AA) degree, and 308 of the graduating seniors enrolled in these six programs earned an AA degree in addition to earning a high school diploma. In all, more than 900 students graduated from early college high schools in May 2010.

In 2010, TEA began providing Online College and Career technical assistance to eligible pilot schools and has expanded this initiative to include a statewide college and career resource site available to all students, parents, and school staff in Texas public and private non-profit charter schools. Using the resource site, secondary students are able to complete career interest and ability inventories, research matched careers, search and match for colleges, prepare resumes and college applications, search for scholarships, and develop their college financial plan. Students communicate with their parents and school staff through the tool to provide updates on their postsecondary planning and access progress. The statewide online resource is available through August 2013 at www.texascollegeandcareer.org.

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Objective 6 – Prepare education professionals in public and higher education, from prekindergarten through Grade 16, to assist students, including those with special needs, in meeting college readiness and skilled workforce expectations and standards.

With the increased expectations of Texas public schools in preparing students for the demands of higher education and the skilled workforce, more attention must be paid to the needs of the educators from kindergarten through high school.

Objective 6 has been strengthened to include educator professional development on the CCRS. In 2008, the THECB funded four Faculty Collaboratives representing the four content areas of the public education curriculum. Through the collaboratives, faculty from both colleges of education and the colleges of arts and sciences work together to ensure that pre-service educator preparation programs support new teachers on the implementation of the CCRS. In addition, funded in 2009, the College and Career Readiness Initiative Educator Preparation Demonstration Site project establishes networks of cooperating P-16 education organizations to support enhanced teacher preparation programs at institutions of higher education. With additional funding from other resources, the demonstration site network could serve as an ongoing mechanism to bridge educator preparation theory and practice to allow the thoughtful demonstration of teaching in action, particularly to answer the need for current and future teachers to be prepared to deliver the content and teach the thinking skills embodied in the CCRS.

In addition, the THECB is committed to encouraging Texas public institutions of higher education to provide professional development for in-service teachers. A request to redirect

funding from other sources in the THECB's 2014-2015 Legislative Appropriations Request would allow the THECB to direct resources to support professional development activities for teachers who teach in public high schools with low college-going rates in Houston and Dallas. Also, the THECB will be working with institutions to provide faculty and staff with opportunities for professional development to address the needs of underprepared students more effectively.

Additionally, TEA's Department of Standards and Programs has developed teacher training and resources to ensure that teachers understand the skills and college readiness expectations in the new state standards and how to prepare students for the new more rigorous end-of-course assessments. The agency developed and began delivery of training in science, mathematics, and English language arts in the summer of 2010 and added social studies in the summer of 2011. Training strategies include the integration of three sets of standards and support frameworks: the CCRS, the Texas English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) for helping English language learners, and Response to Intervention (RTI), as well as strategies to improve reading among secondary school students. Professional development in mathematics focused on key skills students need to know to be successful in Algebra I, one of the first end-of-course exams students must master. Continuing the development and delivery of professional development based on STAAR-result data will be critical to the continued success of teachers' efforts.

Moreover, in continued efforts to align curricula with the CCRS, the TEA's Division of Educator Standards works closely with the Curriculum Division to revise certification examinations and inform programs how to prepare pre-service teachers to teach college readiness skills. As described under Objective 1, ongoing professional development is available both face-to-face and online through the Project Share initiative. With the delivery of these training modules and their focus on college readiness, critical steps are under way to improve the college readiness of Texas students.

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Objective 7 – Coordinate college readiness and success plan objectives with strategies for persistence and timely graduation included in the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's *Closing the Gaps* plan.

The THECB implemented a number of activities to address both the College Readiness and Success Strategic Action Plan's goal to decrease the number of students enrolling in developmental education as well as the participation and success goals of the *Closing the Gaps by 2015* higher education plan. Higher education intensive and bridging programs were implemented annually from 2007 through 2011 to provide short-term academic instruction and support to high school juniors and seniors, recent high school graduates, first-year college students at risk of dropping out of college, and adult GED recipients not ready for entry-level college courses (See Objective 3 for details on these programs).

The THECB began implementation of the Texas Course Redesign Project in 2007 to improve student learning and reduce the cost of course delivery through the effective use of technology. Eighteen of 25 entry-level courses and several developmental education courses were redesigned and are in different stages of implementation. To support this work, several related grants were made for other efforts, including the development of the Texas Learning Objects Repository and online faculty professional development modules in college mathematics, reading comprehension, critical thinking, foreign language instruction, and online/hybrid

education. A final report of the Texas Course Redesign Project was submitted to the Texas Legislature in January 2011.

Objective 8 – Provide greater access to student academic preparation programs, including challenging advanced academic courses and programs, in all public high schools in Texas.

Innovative school models such as Early College High Schools and college readiness initiatives made possible through the High School Allotment program provide greater access to student academic preparation programs across the state. In addition, the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN), created by the 80th Texas Legislature, began providing electronic courses to students in grades nine through 12 in the spring semester of the 2008-2009 school year and dual credit courses in the Fall of 2009. Through an ongoing competitive process, a list of professional development providers and options are available to offer teachers the training required prior to teaching an electronic course offered through the network. Additional information about course offerings, approved professional development providers, and participation in the TxVSN is available at http://www.txvsn.org/. While the state has provided greater access to academic preparation programs both in the classroom and electronically, more improvements are sought. TEA and THECB staff continue to work together to identify and seek solutions to barriers that may be preventing larger numbers of students from taking advantage of opportunities under the College Credit Program (TEC, §28.009).

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Recommendations

As state policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders work together to increase the preparation of students graduating from Texas public schools and those entering Texas colleges and universities, activities that support college readiness and student success will continue to play an important role if Texas is to achieve the goal, as outlined in House Bill 3 [Texas Education Code, §39.053(f)], of ranking among the top 10 states in terms of students' readiness for college by the 2019-2020 academic year. To help achieve that goal, the THECB and TEA offer recommendations to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House and other members of the Texas Legislature.

Recommendation 1: Require the Commissioner of Education and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to periodically review and revise, as appropriate, the College and Career Readiness Standards developed under Texas Education Code §28.008.

Rationale for Recommendation 1:

House Bill 1, enacted by the 79th Texas Legislature, Special Called Session (2006), provided for the development and implementation of college readiness standards. The Coordinating Board and Commissioner of Education adopted the College and Career Readiness Standards in 2008. The State Board of Education (SBOE) was given responsibility for incorporating them in to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), which is ongoing as the TEKS have come up for review by the SBOE. As the SBOE regularly reviews the TEKS, requiring the CCRS to be reviewed and revised regularly would ensure that the CCRS are appropriate for the changing needs of higher education and the skilled workforce.

Recommendation 2: Fund professional development activities for Texas public schools across the state to ensure all students are receiving instruction at the level required for the increased rigor and cognitive demand of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills aligned to the College and Career Readiness Standards.

Rationale for Recommendation 2:

Based on the outcomes of the spring 2012 STAAR End-of-Course assessments, students may not achieve the performance expectations required for college readiness when these students enroll in Texas public institutions of higher education beginning fall 2015. With the alignment of the college readiness performance measure on the STAAR End-of-Course assessments with the new TSI Assessment that will be effective fall 2013, public school students will be expected to perform at much higher levels to enroll in entry-level college courses. With the added costs of developmental education incurred by students, parents, institutions, and both the federal and state governments, more must be done to prepare high school students effectively to reduce the economic burden on all contributors to their education.

Recommendation 3: Extend funding for the 2014-2015 biennium to provide professional development opportunities for developmental and adult education faculty and staff to increase their understanding of the needs of underprepared students.

Rationale for Recommendation 3:

Teacher quality directly affects student performance outcomes. A 2011 report published by MDRC and titled "Unlocking the Gate" noted that the majority of developmental education classes are taught by adjunct, or part-time, faculty, who are often disconnected from departmental decision-making and the piloting of new program strategies. Also, according to the publication, developmental instructors, regardless of full- or part-time status, tend to have limited training in instructing students trying to learn basic academic skills. If developmental and adult education students are to be successful, instructors must understand the needs of underprepared students and be able to provide quality and effective instruction. Educators, policymakers, and researchers must develop more integrated approaches to professional development that are designed to provide ongoing support to faculty as they implement new reforms and bring them to scale (Rutschow and Schneider, 2011).

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References

Rutschow, E., & Schneider, E. (2011). *Unlocking the Gate: What We Know About Improving Developmental Education*. New York: MDRC.

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P-16 COLLEGE READINESS AND SUCCESS STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

GOAL

To ensure that every Texas student is prepared by their P-12 education to be college-ready when exiting high school and has the skills to successfully compete in a global economy.

OBJECTIVES

Texas leaders recognize that over 90 percent of new jobs that will be available to students in the 21st century require some postsecondary education[1] and we cannot afford to have any student unprepared for this reality. The following objectives are aimed at ensuring that all students are academically prepared for postsecondary opportunities in the new millennium. It is imperative that stakeholders from all levels of education and the workforce collaborate to address the challenges that exist in public and higher education in Texas, so that all students are ready for college and ready for work, ensuring their readiness for life.

OBJECTIVE 1

Define standards and expectations for college readiness for the state that address what students must know and be able to do to succeed in entry-level college/university courses and in the skilled workforce.

OBJECTIVE 2

Align exit-level assessments of public education with entry-level expectations of higher education and the skilled workforce.

OBJECTIVE 3

Infuse prekindergarten, elementary, middle and high school curricula with appropriate rigor to academically prepare students, including those with special needs, for success in college/university courses and career pursuits.

OBJECTIVE 4

Establish sound accountability measures for college readiness in public education and for persistence and timely graduation in higher education.

OBJECTIVE 5

Create a college-going culture in every public prekindergarten, elementary, middle and high school in Texas.

OBJECTIVE 6

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[1] 1 U.S. Department of Education, A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education. Washington, D.C., 2006.

Prepare education professionals in public and higher education, from P through 16, to assist students, including those with special needs, in meeting college readiness and skilled workforce expectations and standards.

OBJECTIVE 7
Coordinate college readiness and success plan objectives with strategies for persistence and timely graduation included in the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's "Closing the Gaps" plan.

OBJECTIVE 8
Provide greater access to student academic preparation programs, including challenging advanced academic courses and programs, in all public high schools in Texas.

NOTE: *This is the original Plan approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and P-16 Council in 2007.*

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