



Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 12, 2013

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Releases 2013 Texas Public Higher Education Almanac

AUSTIN – Today, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) released the 3rd edition of the *Texas Public Higher Education Almanac*.

In 2004, under a directive of Governor Rick Perry, the THECB launched an online Accountability System for public institutions of higher education. Since then, the THECB has continuously improved the system to include more data and information — achieving national recognition as a “best practice” model for collecting and disseminating higher education data. In 2011, the THECB distilled the most relevant data from the Accountability System into a printed *Almanac* designed for higher education officials, policymakers, and other stakeholders.

“The *2013 Almanac* represents a sustained investment in transparency and accountability, while reinforcing the value of higher education to Texas taxpayers, including students and their families,” said THECB Chairman Fred W. Heldenfels IV. “The *Almanac* has proven to be an invaluable tool for helping higher education leaders and policymakers better assess what Texas is doing well in higher education, and where we must improve.”

The most significant change in the *2013 Almanac* is the inclusion of the “8th Grade Cohort” data. Partnering with the Texas Education Agency, the THECB is able to track students who were enrolled in a Texas high school in 8th grade through six years of postsecondary education. The current data shows that **only 19 of every 100** Texas 8th graders completed a degree or workforce certificate. The data is also disaggregated by gender and economic status.

“We increasingly recognize that closing the gaps in education requires close collaboration between public and higher education,” explained Higher Education Commissioner Raymund Paredes. “The 8th grade cohort data is by far the best indicator of how effective the P-16 pipeline is in helping create an educated workforce. It is clear based on current data that we have a lot of work ahead.”

The *2013 Almanac* is a collaborative effort between the THECB and various private philanthropy groups working to improve higher education in Texas. The THECB acknowledges the College for All Texans Foundation, the Houston Endowment, Inc. and the Lumina Foundation for Education for providing financial support to produce the *2013 Almanac*.

The *2013 Almanac* is available online at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s website at www.theccb.state.tx.us/almanac.

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2013 Texas Public Higher Education Almanac

A public-private partnership to improve transparency, accountability, and value of higher education in Texas

The *Texas Public Higher Education Almanac* has become an invaluable tool for promoting transparency, accountability, and the value of higher education to Texas taxpayers. The *Almanac* is designed to place the most relevant data and information on institutional performance in the hands of policymakers, students, parents, and the general public. These efforts represent a working collaboration between a state agency and philanthropic organizations dedicated to improving higher education in Texas – a true model for public-private partnership.

Key Data and Information

- Enrollment in all Texas higher education institutions (two-year and four-year public, independent, and career institutions) has **increased 53 percent** since 2000. (p. 15)
- The annual number of degrees and certificates awarded at all Texas higher education institutions has increased by **69 percent** since 2000. (p. 16)
- Texas **ranks 25th nationally** in attainment of Bachelor's degrees. (p. 7)
- Texas **ranks 44th nationally** in attainment of Associate degrees. (p. 7)
- Texas **ranks 25th nationally** in average tuition at public, four-year institutions (\$6,742). (p. 7)
- Texas **ranks 3rd nationally** in average tuition at public, two-year institutions (\$1,585). (p. 7)
- **22 percent** of students enrolled at a public four-year university were enrolled part-time. (p.26)
- **72 percent** students enrolled at a public community college were enrolled part-time. (p. 48)
- Of every 100 students who enrolled in a Texas 8th grade classroom in 2001, **19** eventually earned a higher education degree or certificate.
- Of every 100 students enrolled (full- or part-time) at a public university, **57** students earned a postsecondary degree within six years; **30** students were no longer enrolled at any institution and earned no degree at the six-year mark. (p. 10)
- Of every 100 students enrolled (full- or part-time) at a public community college seeking a degree, **28** students earned postsecondary degree or certificate within six years; **60** students were no longer enrolled at any institution and earned no postsecondary award at the six-year mark. (p. 10)
- On average, a full-time student needed **5 years** and **142 credit hours** to complete a Bachelor's degree that requires 4 years and 120 credit hours. (p. 10)



2013 Texas Public Higher Education Almanac FAQs

Why did the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) create the *Texas Public Higher Education Almanac*?

The THECB, under directive from Governor Rick Perry, created a comprehensive Accountability System for public institutions of higher education in 2004. Since its creation, the THECB has refined the system (available on the THECB website: www.thecb.state.tx.us) to include more metrics and information, all of which can be used by policymakers and the public to gauge the relative performance of institutions.

Although the system has been nationally recognized as a “best practice” model for providing robust data about our public institutions, the current Accountability System is passive. Users must know where the data is and what data they want.

In response to this challenge, the THECB launched the *Texas Public Higher Education Almanac* in 2011 as an effort to make the data more interactive and promote a higher degree of transparency to a larger audience. Additionally, it is designed to provide an annual status of gains made relative to the state's higher education plan, *Closing the Gaps by 2015*. This is the 3rd annual edition of the *Almanac*.

Where did the THECB get its data for the *Almanac*?

National data is collected from a variety of sources described on page 90 of the *Almanac*.

Texas institutional data is collected and certified by each institution and submitted to the THECB. Some measures, such as graduation rates, are calculated by the THECB based on data provided by the institutions.

Why does the *Almanac* not include a ranking of institutions by any of the included metrics?

The *Almanac* is designed to provide greater transparency related to the performance of public institutions of higher education on a wide variety of metrics. While the *Almanac* does provide data on where Texas ranks relative to other states, the *Almanac* was not intended to rank institutions. The data however is presented in a variety of formats that allows readers to compare the relative performance of institutions across various metrics.

On the national comparison of 6-Year Graduation Rate at Four-Year Institutions (p. 7), the 6-year graduation rate for Texas is 49%. However, under the profile of Texas Four-Year Public Institutions (p. 26) statewide 6-year graduation rate is 59%. Why the difference?

Both of these measures capture 6-year graduation rates for Texas institutions. However, the federal definition of graduation rate used by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) captures only first-time entering, degree-seeking students who enrolled in a minimum of 12 semester credit hours their first fall semester and graduated from the same institution within six years.

In contrast, the THECB data system captures the identical students over the same period of time, but includes them in the rate if they graduated from any Texas public or independent institution, regardless of where they started and ended their career. Not all states have the capability to capture data in this manner, so for national comparison purposes we default to the IPEDS graduation rate which is more restrictive.

Why does the *Almanac* include various graduation rates for full-time and part-time students at public universities and community colleges?

Public institutions of higher education in Texas serve diverse populations of students and include a variety of missions. These factors can impact an institution's graduation rate. The 4-year graduation rate is largely recognized as an ideal for universities. The 6-year graduation rate is the metric used by the U.S. Department of Education as the standard for comparing universities. The THECB also calculates 10-year graduation rates as a way to capture non-traditional students, and those that may stop-out of higher education for a period of time.

The U.S. Department of Education and most other states do not report data for part-time students. However, the Texas Public Higher Education Accountability System allows us to track and report progress of part-time students who enroll in our institutions. Because more than 1 in 5 students at our public universities (and 7 in 10 at our public community colleges) enroll part-time, it is important to include various graduation rates for these students to offer a more comprehensive view of state and institutional performance relative to this segment of our student body.

What is the "8th Grade Cohort" on page 9 of the *Almanac*?

In collaboration with the Texas Education Agency, the THECB is able to track the educational progress of 8th graders through to postsecondary completion (whether at a 2-year college or 4-year university). The "8th Grade Cohort" data on page 9 shows the most recent data set which tracked the progress of Texas students who were enrolled in an 8th grade class in the 2001-02 academic year and followed their progress through 2012 (or approximately 6 years of potential postsecondary education).

The THECB has disaggregated this data set by both gender and economic status to provide additional context of how well students move through the P-16 pipeline.

Is there an online version of the *Almanac*?

Later this month, the THECB will launch *CompareCollegeTX*, an interactive tool that will allow users to compare Texas public higher education institutions side-by-side on a wide variety of facts and performance measures also found in the printed *Almanac*.

Stay tuned for more information soon.

Who funded the *Almanac*?

This year's *Almanac* was a public-private partnership between the THECB and a number of philanthropic organizations including the College for All Texans Foundation, Lumina Foundation for Education, and Houston Endowment, Inc. The THECB compiled and organized existing data for use in the *Almanac*. Private funding paid for the design, printing and delivery.

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