

Goal #1: By 2030, at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree

Arlington

- Increase student awareness early about college as an option, postsecondary training, and what leads to careers. Get started early.
- Engage with families and parents; they have aspirations for their children, but if we really want to help them move that young person into college through high school we have to start earlier and we have to engage the parents.
- Leverage the momentum of engagement in recruitment. We're much more engaged in recruitment, but we have to keep that engagement going throughout our efforts to retain and move a student through to completion and need to develop better ways of addressing this.
- Re-engage those who have left, go to where they are.

East Texas

- Learn more about the specificity of the certificates and start this knowledge process early. Students in 4th and 5th grades are the students we are talking about.
- Be very real in the discussion about barriers posed to these students and very bold, brave, and creative in our thinking about the solutions.
- Consider factors of those students that are not always seen.
 - Monetary.
 - Time concerns.
 - Family issues and attitudes.
 - Cultural awareness.
- Continue partnerships with public schools and community colleges. Provide ways to remain in contact with our students to provide "Super Service" to all.
- Assist students at all levels with their academic degree plans; this could even help prevent increasing debt from too many excess semester credit hours accumulated beyond those needed for degree attainment.
- Provide more community outreach and more exposure for students in elementary schools (and their parents) to the many possibilities in higher education. Family attitudes about higher education make a difference.
- Help students earn certificates along with high school diplomas so that they have a way to pay for their education and their debt is limited.
- Establish new models where students who earn certificates, for example in information technology, might also take liberal arts courses to round out their marketable skills and make them job ready.
- Come up with messaging about earning certificates, associate, and bachelor's degrees for this region. Let students know about careers starting in elementary/middle school.
- Make certifications available completely online.

San Antonio

- Reduce the number of credits to complete a bachelor's degree.
- Allow courses taken years in the past not to expire and have to be retaken.
- Reduce the number of credits in the major to allow students to take more credits elsewhere. Allow more general education credits to transfer.
- Expand the number of credits allowed to transfer.
- Reduce the number of prerequisites to prevent road blocks to timely completion.
- Examine more ways to assess prior learning (competency-based learning) to increase recognition of work experience.
- Increase authorization for alternative language experiences (military training and service abroad) and computer languages.
- Look at ensuring common courses or identified equivalencies to assure students' courses will count when transferred.
- Increase number of preliminary certificates to recognize completed competencies (critical thinking, communication, quantitative reasoning, computer skills, etc.).
- Create shortened classes (four-week, eight-week) to meet the needs of working adults.
- Use less costly books and other learning materials. Use online and free resources. This will particularly help early college high school students' participation.
- Keep college offices open at times when students attend (e.g., early morning, nights).
- Teach in locations off campus with employer assistance (change accreditation blockages to off-campus instruction).
- Increase employer support for education. It costs less to advance current employees than to search for and hire new employees.
- Provide greater parental education in the middle school grades about college readiness and opportunities.
- Integrate the foster care system with higher education awareness and opportunity.
- Pay for public employees' education through state funds.
- Tie state educational aid to work requirements/needs in the state.

Houston

- Create certificate programs in conjunction with industries to identify what specific competencies they need.
- Focus on bringing knowledge to students as early as possible regarding different career paths, particularly those that are in demand and provide good incomes.
 - But also need to be forward-looking. What will be the hot industry in 20 years?
- Focus on helping students understand marketable skills so they can adapt to a changing workforce.
- Create seamless pathways for students through public education, higher education, and the workforce.
 - Need to make sure everyone has a path that's right for them.
 - Make education a lifelong mission, not something that ends with a degree.

- Need to engage families/parents regarding the potential career outcomes of different pathways.
- Make it easier to transfer, particularly from career and technical education to academic programs.
- Expand stackable credentials.
- Offer Level 1 certificate programs in a language other than English.
 - Could involve a workforce focus paired with language instruction.
- Create completion plans that clarify students' intent throughout their education.
- Invest in long-term collaboration between kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) and higher education regarding student needs and options.
- Step back and look at the culture of higher education institutions; some still have the attitude that their job is to weed people out.
- Bring students into the conversation about how to best address their needs; it can't just be faculty and administrators deciding what's best for them.
- Create a college-going culture in the community; it's important.
- Highlight the benefits of attending a community college to both students and parents. Many still see the community college as "secondary" to a four-year higher education institution.
- Identify those students who accumulated significant dual credit in high school and may be very close to an associate degree. Let them know that they could quickly get a degree at a community college.
- Provide more incentive to school districts to get more involved in dual credit, particularly funding.
- Consider adopting something similar to the HOPE Scholarship in Georgia.
- Improve advising so that high school students are informed regarding the career options of different pathways.
- Focus on student success from the first time students arrive on campus.
- Speed up how fast programs can be created and approved, particularly Level 1 certifications.
- Create structured schedules and guided pathways to degrees to eliminate excess semester credit hours (SCH).
 - Students accumulating excess SCH leads to stop outs and dropouts.
 - Help students plan in advance and monitor to ensure they're staying on track.
- "Enroll" high school juniors and seniors in a degree program at their preferred institution so that they can get a sense of what their schedule, teachers, etc., would be like. Most colleges offer a college experience to high school students, but this would focus on specific programs of study.
- Intensify interactions with students to determine their needs and address them.
- Encourage the Legislature to address the fact that some community colleges can afford to waive tuition and fee charges for dual credit and some can't. This creates a disparity in the availability and affordability of these classes. Additional state funds could help.

El Paso

Missing notes

Harlingen

- Consider existing models.
 - For example, [RGV Focus](#) and its Rio Grande Valley Collective Impact initiative involves 16 independent school districts (ISDs), all higher education institutions (IHEs) in the region, as well as many community-based organizations and businesses. RGV Focus works to strengthen the educational pipeline and align community resources to provide the support learners need to succeed throughout high school and postsecondary education to pursue a meaningful career in the Rio Grande Valley and beyond.
- Use data to look regionally at how many certificates versus degrees are being produced and if it's matching need; look at how many high school students are going to postsecondary institutions.
 - Brownsville, for example, is using labor/market data to assess gainful employment relative to education.
- Assess dual credit. See how many students could earn a degree by the time they leave high school.
- Establish more paid internships.
- Improve developmental education.
 - One participant said that many students would not pursue certificates or associate degrees when they found out they needed developmental math. There is much anxiety around math. However, by offering co-requisite courses in developmental math and college algebra to students, more students began to take courses and succeed as well as receive college credit for the algebra course. The course offerings have increased from two to three courses of developmental math per semester to six courses a semester – a 200-300 percent increase. The program is dubbed "[MAMBO](#)" (Math Como Course). Students who needed a lot of help are succeeding, too.
- Keep in mind that some students don't test well and may have math anxiety. To help get to goal, look at better aligning Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Assessment for students who do pass in one area, such as math.
- Do more data sharing between IHEs and ISDs, etc.
- Use data to look at students who repeat courses and place them in accelerated courses and provide support services to help them be successful. Co-requisite courses connecting developmental education math courses with college algebra produce good results for students.
- Look past high school, and begin to promote college-going culture very early in the community, starting with very young children.
 - Currently, some of those in the 60x30 goal's age group are in kindergarten. Finding ways to collaborate with kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) will promote college readiness and decrease the need for developmental education in the future.
- Promote other careers in the classroom, aside from doctor, lawyer, and teacher.

- Look at data to drill down into ISDs and see which ones institutions of higher education need to partner with or focus more on to promote college-going culture. Set high expectations.
- Plant seed of college early.
 - Create a “got milk”-type campaign for higher education in the region.
 - The lingo starts early – in Pre-K, tell kids “Yes, you can!”
 - All literature, etc., about college needs to be bilingual for students with non-English-speaking parents.
- Beef up skills (soft skills, for example) and start early.
- Create project-based and contextualized learning to make what students learn relevant to jobs and the world outside the classroom.
- Look at countries that have made substantial increases in education in one or two generations and see what they are doing in preschool through 6th grade (P-6).
 - Mexico and South Korea were given as examples.
- Consider the problems and projects assigned in school – some need to come from employers so students can see that what they are doing directly correlates to skills they will use for a job.
- Make students aware that “college” is not only a four-year degree.
- Translate affordability to parents who think they can’t afford college. Help people understand that the college a student chooses makes a difference, too.
 - A participant stated that 80 percent of students at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) qualify for financial aid, which makes it very affordable.
 - A participant also noted UTRGV and Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi are good values and are very affordable compared to private college or the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, for example.
- Create flexibility through eight-week courses and/or co-requisite courses.
- Establish more partnerships between two- and four-year IHEs.
- Offer financial aid literacy workshops with parents while students are taking ACT, SAT, or TSI tests.
- Allow students to take credit courses, such as technology courses, before taking developmental education courses to encourage them to stay in school.
- Consider that students not going into science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) may not need algebra. College readiness and data and alignment with K-12 may produce other pathways/solutions.
 - The [Mathways Project](#) is a possible model for math requirements. It contains three pathways: STEM, STATS, and Liberal Arts. Degree plans are adapted to help students meet requirements and keep going so math isn’t an obstacle.
- Invite department chairs at community colleges to meet with high school faculty to observe and collaborate during dual credit. This has a profound impact on students, e.g., those students who want to pursue engineering. Also bring in industry professionals to discuss what they do, e.g., in healthcare.
- Get support of secondary administration to help students connect to IHEs and connect support services – advising is very important!

- Expand competency-based education.
- Increase data sharing.
- Look at whether we are producing enough faculty for all our programs.
- Start advising at early age and contextualize college and training for advisors. Advising is very important.
- Partner with businesses to create paid internships as part of programs, e.g., go to class for six months and meet certain attendance and success factors for a certificate; get a paid internship to encourage class attendance and persistence.
- Consider splitting advising responsibilities.
 - Texas State Technical College-Harlingen, for example, splits advising between divisions so that advisors are more specialized and can keep up with curriculum changes.
- Take advantage of college prep courses.
 - Possible model: [College prep courses at Region One Education Service Center](#) are available at no cost to high schools.

Lubbock

- Expand dual credit. Two- and four-year colleges need to reach parents and families and help them understand the benefits. P-16 councils are an excellent way to do this, but funding has been cut for the councils; the funding needs to be reinstated to help reach families.
 - Information for families' needs to be in Spanish and English.
- Increase career and technical education (CTE) dual credit opportunities, especially for Level 1 certificates, so students graduate from high school with a diploma and a Level 1 certificate or higher.
- Increase funding for certificates at the high school level, maybe similar to awarding bonuses for at-risk students, by awarding bonuses to schools per at-risk student who completes a diploma and a Level 1 certificate.
- Help families understand that if students don't do well in dual credit, it could affect their financial aid eligibility.
- Examine the viability and accountability of Texas Common Core Numbering System (TCCNS) and Core Curriculum and how these work for transfer at institutions. For example, four-year institutions are not required to play by the same rule in regard to Core Curriculum and what counts toward a major or program of study.
- Continue to increase and work with reverse transfer so students get associate degrees when they reach the required number of semester credit hours (SCH).
- Enable each school and organization to do what it is uniquely positioned to do.
 - Institutions of higher education (IHEs) don't need to compete but need to build partnerships and coordinate efforts to get students to certificates and degrees.
- Emphasize how the 60x30TX plan does not place more value on attaining a degree versus a certificate. It places value on students attaining some kind of postsecondary credential.

- Encourage IHEs to have honest conversations about vocation, workforce, and academics – how they connect and intersect.
- Consider that we can't just tell kids that going to college is enough.
 - We need to help them understand its value.
- Encourage IHEs to think more deliberately about how to reach elementary and middle school students to build college-going cultures.
- Focus on literacy in the early grades; even a Level 1 certificate will require reading in order to learn the skills and pass licensing tests.
- Find ways to create more access to education and postsecondary credentials.
- Help low-income students who want to become teachers but can't stop working to do the required 40 hours per week student teaching. We need to remove this barrier by being creative about how this requirement can be met.
- Enable more qualified teachers to teach CTE without needing a teacher certification. If the individual is licensed in their field and experienced, they need to be able to teach, and funding is needed to support this effort.
- Look at and consider implementing competency-based programs.
- Better target adult students, so they don't go to proprietary schools and end up with a lot of student debt.
- Put together stackable credentials and credential clusters to allow adults to return to school or to allow more flexibility – more fluid options.
- Consider how to make Grad TX more viable for increasing the number of dropouts and stop outs who return – use partnerships to get students back to persist and finish credentials.
- Innovate.
 - One participant's school ran a pilot study in healthcare in a rural community. They loaned 12 students iPads and offered all classes online. All 12 completed the certificate program and returned the iPads; it was a small effort but a boon for those students and community.
 - Create and use partnerships between high schools and agricultural centers to promote certificates.
- Recognize that income is a barrier for students.
 - A participant told the story of one student who wanted to go to the police academy, but he was required to be enrolled in at least one college course and could not afford the course, so he didn't go to the academy.
 - Need to find and help these students.
- Come together to discuss the return on investment in college, coordinate services, and articulate agreements.
- Create handouts that show students the savings of finishing degrees in four years versus six or eight years.

Dallas

- Encourage more collaboration between high schools, community colleges, and universities so students exit more quickly with credentials.

- Use consistent language to encourage females to enter critical STEM fields and fill labor shortages.
- Send ambassadors to high schools who look like the high school population.
- Find money that could be used for retention or other achievements, on top of success points.
- Partner with employers and offer on-site opportunities to get students ready for completion and jobs.
- Reach students in pre-K and kindergarten to support the P-16 pipeline. Require pre-K for all students so that the state can have students reading on level in the third grade.
- Organize credits for prior learning.
- Provide information about higher education to parents from high school all the way through college.
- Help parents better understand college costs by including a personal finance piece in the K-8 Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).
- Include and partner with community-based organizations to provide information about higher education.
- Link adult education and literacy (AEL) jobs with partnerships that encourage students to further their education.
- Define programs for returning adults so that programs are linked to jobs they can achieve.
- Create more stackable credentials.
- Align the TEKS with the first year of college; especially align grade 12 with the first year of college more closely.
- Align Texas Success Initiative (TSI) program with the end-of-course assessment given in high school; communicate this idea to the Legislature and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) staff.
- Address hand-off (transfer) by looking at the United States Department of Veterans Affairs GI Bill model that marries career assessment with college financial planning and planning in majors and is mapped to the labor market.
- Increase the college counselors on high school sites to help students move from high school to community college or university with fewer obstacles.
- Develop engaging high school presentations that are relevant and thematically attractive for engaging and attracting high school students toward higher education.
- Encourage the state to get behind P-20 approach to professional development so that faculty buy into the state's higher education goals.
- Advocate for more funding for high schools and community colleges in the Legislature.
- Implement college attainment for students in high school through dual credit – provide more of it and more information to students and parents.
- Get career information out to students in middle school.
- Think about best practices and how to streamline operational processes to connect better with students.
- Increase TSI rates so that students who take special boot camps in the summer or during the year don't need to take developmental education courses in college.

- Start promoting more open resource textbooks so that students don't start semesters without books.
- Improve and prescribe more academic pathways programs.
- Take a two-prong approach to credits and retention. Promote dual credit in high school and allow students to take developmental education courses and regular courses at the same time.
- Do strategic scheduling: eight-week courses that allow students more flexibility.
- Encourage and proactively reach out to students who are close to reaching a credential, even those not currently enrolled.
- Make sure to reach out to high school students in low-income areas using technology or methods that will actually make an impact, especially when there may not be technology at home.
- Move more students through first-year experience courses.
- Become more consumer-based with marketing to reach students, including adults, who are not and have not considered higher education. Need to reach current non-consumers of higher education to reach 60x30 goal.
- Address emotional and social issues of students.
- Allow students on probation to progress.
- Give more college credit for work experience.
- Become deliberate in working with advisors and research teams at colleges to find students who stopped out; seek, find, and encourage those students to return and form completion teams between staff from different college divisions to support those students to completion.
- Educate and include every staff member in achieving the 60x30TX goals – everyone from the receptionist to the dean. A receptionist may be the first and only contact with a potential student.
- Implement programs or courses in high school and explain career planning (certificate or degree) and fill gaps among students who may have special needs or think higher education is not for them; need a mandatory component so that every child is given a path.
- Establish partnerships with colleges for employers/working adults so that employers get discounts/incentives for returning to school.
- Contact students who have 10-20 semester credit hours (SCH) to complete.
- Give success points for workforce certificate completions.
- Come up with more funding to support minority males in higher education.
- Utilize the Dallas Regional Chamber of Commerce to connect postsecondary schools to local business and industry to identify needs.
- Track progress and make necessary changes to ensure adequate positive change is occurring.
- Organize more cohort groups from the first day of class. The group does not have to be formal but will allow relationship building, getting students comfortable with one another and the environment sooner.

- Encourage students who are not TSI ready to complete Level 1 certificate while they are taking developmental education classes.
- Link high school career and technical education (CTE) programs to college certificates and associate degrees – aggressively articulate courses.
- Expedite new program approval from the THECB and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), especially SACS.
- Attend community organization meetings at churches, etc., to recruit students.
- Improve retention of transfer students so they complete a degree using clear degree maps with fewer choices.
- Promote courses to businesses for employees to obtain credentials to become promotable.
- Create graduation completion coordinators for every college.
- Create budgets that include not only enrollment/contact hour metrics but also goals for “re-enters,” students that dropped out or withdrew and need to return and finish.
- Refine career pathways and specific degree plans without all the elective options.
- Develop more early college high schools.
- Simplify residency and application processes and offer rolling enrollment dates.
- Develop a plan of action to establish partnerships to develop and map strategies to begin educating parents and students. Plan will include pre-K through 12.
- Recognize that teachers are an integral part of the process. They must do more than just teach in the classroom.
- Re-develop a love for learning and for attaining a higher education, starting in the elementary grades.
- Look at the job market to identify hot fields required by business and industry.
- Develop prior learning credit for continuing education (CE) programs so students can use their CE learning toward a certificate or degree.
- Require faculty advising as part of contract.
- Strengthen CTE programs with new CTE facilities in partnerships between high schools and higher education institutions. Provide evening and weekend opportunities.
- Continue to strengthen Level 1 certificate access and attainment.
- Encourage more internships in more types of industries.
- Expand mentoring from community members, college staff, faculty, and alumni.
- Develop a program to assist students in study skills, test taking, time management, career exploration, etc.
- Create occupational skill awards at community colleges.
- Rewrite developmental education curriculum to align with credential course requirements to ensure successful completion the first time around.
- Implement academic and workforce advisors for “at risk” students to help facilitate success.
- Work on partnerships between high schools and community colleges to pass the TSI to be college-ready. (Less focus on STARR.)
- Guide students to discover their abilities and strengths.
- Provide more education forums to inform parents about processes.

- Create more self-paced options.
- Offer more 7th and 8th grade field trips to colleges.
- Create programs in which colleges “adopt a high school.”
- Program systems that lock students into their programs and don’t allow them to enroll in just any course.
- Embed interpersonal skills into college curriculum.
- Set GED graduates up for seamless continuation on degree pathway.
- Provide free TSI testing to every incoming 9th grade student to develop high school path to meet college readiness standards.
- Allow prior learning assessment for 25-34 year olds from work to gain credentials to be promoted.
- Align early college high school and dual credit curriculum with meta majors so students are not taking unnecessary classes.
- Develop a plan to better integrate advising and career services positions to reach students in a one-stop approach.
- Leverage dual credit and early college high schools to help students earn Level 1 and Level 2 Certificates and associate degrees.
- Develop better technology to track students between K-12 and higher education to the workforce to identify trends.
- Engage community and industry in valuing higher education investments.
- Invest in student success at community colleges by offering scholarships or tuition assistance to four-year colleges.
- Increase independent school district (ISD) graduates who are TSI ready.
- Improve quality of advisement for students at high school and two-year college levels.
- Improve transfer process to include more consistency in degree requirements between/among institutions of higher education.
- Help develop parents’ understanding of what is occurring in education and the workforce and the importance of education for their children and themselves.
- Expose students prior to college to different career fields by creating internships with companies during the summer.
- Offer more prior learning assessments (PLA)/competency based education (CBE).
- Increase certificate offerings.
- Create programs in niche fields.
- Enhance advising.
- Open satellite locations in densely populated areas.
- Utilize K-12 1980s premise of Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and Communication across the community college curriculum deliberately.
- Build opportunities for certificate or degree completion where students are, e.g., their place of employment.
- Align middle school courses to benefit high school in the feeder pattern.
- Use meta-majors and intrusive advising.
- Modularize awards.
- Create parent universities for first-generation college students.

- Develop mandatory career exploration class for 7th and 8th graders.
- Consistently conduct parent sessions regarding college financial aid in middle school.
- Broaden contextualized learning for basic skills.
- Celebrate intermediate student achievements, e.g., recognition of 30 semester credit hours (SCH) toward 60-SCH degree.
- Start TSI testing as early as 8th grade to ensure students who are ready can take college courses starting in 9th grade.
- Create career exploration camps with industry sponsorship.
- Communicate programs are available to population through advertising.
- Establish more Texas Affordable Baccalaureate (TAB) programs, PLA exploration, and applied CBE programs.
- Hold routine parent events prior to high school that are focused on information and benefits of higher education.

Goal #2: 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.

Arlington

- Strengthen the connection between kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) and higher education.
 - Higher education does the research, but do they share it in usable ways?
- Continue processes and programs when people turn over throughout the pipeline – find the personality that will make that program a continuous effort.
- Consistently align curriculum and dual-credit. Students and teachers need to know what the expectations are when the student exits from a class and what the expectations are when he/she enters the next class, because if those don't match, the curriculum is not aligned.
- Make transfer work – curriculum does change; we cannot make changes in higher education that we don't communicate to the two-year campuses.
 - Too many credits to degrees; too much time to degrees.
 - What happens when there is not a curriculum that can be followed straight forwardly and easily?
- Bring back and re-train, as needed, those who have degrees.
- Apply math to something that the student is interested in; if this is done, the student's likelihood of success goes right up.
 - New math pathways program; if you don't know about it, find out about it.
 - Everybody needs the same math, so let's get real about what the students really need and the kind of major and career they want and make sure they get that math. Not everybody needs pre-calculus.
- Get data and use them; if the data don't show that it's helping and students aren't succeeding in it, stop doing it, regroup, and try something else.
- Consider that the best math students don't make the best math teachers.
 - Who does make the best teacher in various areas and disciplines?
 - And is there such a difference in those who might be going on to graduate school in mathematics and those who have opted for teaching in a high school?

East Texas

- Integrate career advising with academic advising and financial aid advising. Cross train advisors.
- Start up "Micro-scholarships."
- Use program advisory boards, internships, employer paid tuition/training, payroll deduction plans for college debt, and continuing education.
- Establish partnerships between preschool through 12th grade (P-12) and higher education; for example, Eustace Independent School District (ISD) and Trinity Valley Community College.
- Help pay for college tuition/graduate tuition.

- Conroe ISD Foundation pays graduate tuition for teachers pursuing advanced degrees; they also have a paraprofessional pipeline to earning a teacher certification.
- Stephen F. Austin State University has an online completion program for paraprofessionals with 22 community colleges; this addresses rural critical teaching shortages.
- Use early college high schools and dual credit.
 - Lufkin ISD earned a national certificate in Phlebotomy with Angelina College.
 - Panola College has an applied tech certificate/degree program.
- Use transfer agreements/partnerships.
- Freeze tuition.

San Antonio

- Create more early college high schools.
 - Implement performance-based funding or outcomes-based funding on a per 60x30TX goal basis; a study may be needed prior to implementation.
- Develop a comprehensive stop out strategy to encourage people to return and complete a credential, i.e., develop “express lane programs” to degree.
- Develop an alumni career day to provide firsthand stories of success.
 - Elementary schools.
 - Chamber of Commerce Career Day events.
 - Adopt-a-school activities.
- Redesign organizational structures within higher education institutions that revolve around students.
- Create Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Boot Camps.
- Partner with local organizations.
- Better promote and utilize robust Texas data.
 - *Almanac*.
 - Internet.
 - Data fellows to promote and train institutions to use.
- Re-conceptualize a degree.
 - Distance learning.
 - Align requirements.
 - Bridge programs.
 - TSI.
 - Boot Camps.
 - High impact practices.
 - Integrate independent school districts.
- Create better pathways for dual credit/concurrent enrollment.
- Promote extracurricular opportunities aligned with leadership to support students with soft skills.
- Focus on faculty and staff development.
 - Advisors.

- Best practices.
- Create competency-based education opportunities.
 - Tie with marketable skills.
- Work with area employers to align curriculum and workforce.
- Use Predictive Analytics.
 - Early alerts to avoid stop-outs.
- Implement holistic advising.
- Look at faculty pay structure/incentives to keep the best and brightest.

Houston

- Develop more collaborative efforts, such as Houston Community College's Pathways to Success, to increase completion rates in the greater Houston area.
- Align dual credit pathways for both academic and career pathways.
- Improve collaboration and communication to achieve House Bill 5 transitions, and streamline pathways for endorsement options.
- Revamp the tutoring system. Mandate tutoring for those with less than a C grade; hire full-time tutors.
- Fix the disconnect between the academic side and the student services side of higher education so that everyone speaks the same language and helps to coordinate student services from high school to community college to four-year institutions.
- Create compassionate centers for management of student success that are receptive to stop-outs returning to campus; find ways to close the gaps, and allow them to finish what they started.
- Provide tuition guarantees (fixed tuition).
- Improve experiential learning opportunities.
- Develop better relationships between independent school districts and higher education institutions.
- Develop writing centers that include tutorial development for faculty.
- Focus on stop outs; promote guidance centers.
- Overcome developmental education stigma and cost; expand co-requisite opportunities.
- Build educational communities that create a sense of belonging and connection for students; cohorts encourage relationships, allowing students to lean on each other.
- Assign academic and career coaches for outreach.
- Create intrusive engagement to keep students from slipping through the cracks.
- Develop a 2+2+1 pathway from community college to four-year institution to graduate school.
- Develop data analytics to better align tutoring and other student services with early intervention.
- Maintain rigor so that a credential is more than just a piece of paper; review courses to ensure best opportunities for students without sacrificing rigor.
- Align required courses; provide regular faculty review, such as the University of Houston's math reforms.

- Provide academic support to assist students; develop pilot programs but ensure scalability.
- Use data mining to triage student populations and determine who needs advising or mentoring.
- Provide crucial outreach to needy students as well as their parents; first to college is a paradigm shift for the entire family.
- Develop a “road show” where professors present to middle school students to motivate and create connections.
- Develop customer-service-focused staff within higher education to better encourage a collaborative feeling for students.
- Address life issues, life coaching, and financial literacy to help students from stopping out.
- Provide “test out” opportunities (competency-based education).
- Improve onboarding from high school to higher education.

El Paso

- Develop and sustain collaborative partnerships among high schools, community colleges, and industry to determine appropriate areas of career technical education (CTE) study.
- Scale up CTE programs to improve campus to career opportunities.
- Improve dual credit and early college high school opportunities.
- Advocate for degree plans to improve transfer of credit.
- Expand parental involvement opportunities to overcome cultural barriers.
- Improve support for peer-to-peer advising in both high school and postsecondary institutions.
- Improve transition pathways from high school to higher education.
- Develop teachers and faculty as mentors to students.
- Address tuition issues so that students can continue moving toward completion rather than stop out.
- Provide Go Centers to support high school to higher education opportunities for students.
- Educate school boards on the *60x30TX* plan.
- Educate teachers and faculty on the *60x30TX* plan.
- Improve teacher effectiveness through professional development opportunities.
- Improve collaboration between high school and higher education faculty.

Harlingen

- Provide more options (online, weekend, competency-based education) for students with some credit but no credential to entice them to finish what they started.
- Develop holistic advising.
- Promote financial literacy among students, especially stop outs, to help them understand how completion will help their future earnings.

- Develop and promote financial incentives for on-time completions, such as UTRGV's guaranteed tuition rates for on-time completers.
- Talk one-on-one with stop outs to determine why they quit; develop services to help overcome issues/barriers to completion.
- Make advising mandatory.
- Develop programs to help high school students, college freshmen, and sophomores to understand benefits of on-time completions – "start early, start fast."
- Work with business and industry to develop paid internships to help students obtain marketable skills.
- Develop strategies to help part-time students become full-time students and understand the benefits of on-time completion.

Lubbock

- Enhance academic programs, including online, hybrid, nights/weekends options, and competency-based education to encourage stop outs to return and finish what they started and to deter students from dropping out if traditional programs do not fit their needs.
- Consider offering multiple start dates/alternate schedules for courses and programs.
- Work with industry to offer more certificates that align with workforce needs.
- Recognize more transfer credits.
- Offer accelerated learning programs.
- Enhance outreach efforts to reduce drop rates.
- Offer GED transition programs for adult learners.
- Develop better engagement programs for GED/adult learners.
- Develop marketing campaigns to "glamorize" higher education opportunities.
- Develop College for Knowledge (C4K) programs.
- Enhance Grad TX and other programs to communicate with stop outs.
- Enhance Accelerate TX programs.
- Develop or enhance student services, including advising, financial literacy, work study, and industry partnerships.
- Offer tuition benefits such as fixed tuition.
- Redesign learning resource centers to enhance tutoring.
- Encourage early career aptitude testing to develop educational pathways.
- Understand budget issues that could increase potential dropouts.
- Promote certificates; don't look down on this postsecondary option.
- Align kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12), higher education, and workforce to better meet needs.
- Offer "open advising" locations for better access.
- Develop programs to encourage on-time completions.
- Decrease choices and align pathways to reduce extra semester credit hours.
- Encourage better advising in high school through college.
- Develop and promote stackable credits.

- Provide parent advising.
- Define and coordinate high school endorsements that are aligned with higher education majors.
- Improve career assessment.
- Offer block scheduling.
- Bridge the literacy gap.
- Offer incentives for on-time completion.
 - For example, Angelo State University offers free housing for summer students.
- Develop arts and sciences certificates similar to career and technical education programs to provide marketable skills.
- Improve 2+2 programs.
- Encourage better use of summer for internships and summer classes.
- Offer more early college high school programs.
- Increase minority participation in advanced placement/international baccalaureate/dual credit.
- Encourage Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) enrollment.
- Offer more dual credit options.
- Provide opportunities for internships, practicums, and community partnerships.
- Improve collaborative efforts among institutions, high schools, and industry.
- Encourage more coordination between public and private institutions.
- Instill on-time completion goals at a young age.
- Offer prep courses for the Texas Success Initiative.
- Offer early intervention tutoring and advising to avoid dropouts.

Dallas

- Support the completion pipeline by providing access to multiple postsecondary options:
 - Increase outreach to parents, employers, and the community to expand recruitment of students with some college and provide guided pathways to completion and employment, including competency-based, marketable skills.
 - Continue to expand alignment of K-12 and higher education through increased collaboration of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the THECB and financial support of K-12 and higher education institutions for rigorous dual credit courses and joint professional development of faculty and counselors/advisors.
 - Streamline course options through guided pathways; ensure transferability and applicability of community college courses to universities; and provide clear, coherent, web-based information through a common technology platform.
 - Remove the barrier to seamless transfer of academic and technical education courses from community colleges to universities by combining the *Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM)* and *Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM)* into one course manual that is adopted by both community colleges and universities.
- Improve academic preparation and academic support for students to enter and complete higher education:

- Provide early assessment of college readiness in high school through standardized tests (TSI, PSAT, SAT, ACT) to identify needs for additional high school instruction and remediation in English, Reading, and Math.
- Better align high school and college curriculum through joint professional development of faculty and identification of instructional gaps that need to be addressed collaboratively.
- Provide additional and improved advising and career counseling throughout K-12 and higher education institutions focused on career pathways to employment.
- Increase state and institutional funding of these scalable strategies, aligning fiscal and human resources with goals and outcomes.

Goal #3: By 2030, all graduates from Texas public institutions of higher education will have completed programs with identified marketable skills.

Arlington

- Define and agree on marketable skills; what are they?
- Highlight communication and working in groups.
- Help students develop these skills, help students communicate these skills, and help faculty understand what skills are already built into the curriculum and what skills they could build into the curriculum.
- Provide educators with better information about what they are doing that is working and what they could add to the student experience.
- Educate the faculty about the core curriculum; there are 42 semester credit hours (SCH) there that every student takes. Are they gaining marketable skills in those 42 SCH? Yes, they are. What are they, and how do we let students know what they've gained and ensure they can articulate what they have gained?
- Connect students earlier with the options of college and connect students earlier with the work force.
- Consider meta-majors. Where, for example, you show students that health careers are over here. Business and education, they are broad categories; if students take the interest test they can guide themselves, but it's not cast in stone.
- Adapt to the culture of work and constantly learn.
- Discuss making boundaries more porous for teachers who are in their classrooms. How do we allow business and industry in and get teachers out?
 - One participant noted hearing about teacher internships in the business industry.

East Texas

- Develop formal definitions of applicable terms.
 - Also need operational definitions of these terms.
- Improve communication with faculty; there is confusion over implementation.
- Incorporate a reflective piece where skills are discussed with leadership groups.
 - IOWA Grow (See: <https://vp.studentlife.uiowa.edu/initiatives/grow/>.)
 - Interviewstream (See: <https://interviewstream.com/>.)
- Think about certificates in a different way.
- Communicate certificates that exist and cross-pollinate with marketable skills.
- Get data and show them to faculty.
- Start marketing these skills in pre-K.
- Identify component skills.
- Get GenTX website up to speed.
- Identify what, why, and how.
- Help faculty think differently about teaching these skills.
- Enable students to announce marketable skills in a three-minute speech.

Note: The following information was extracted from the journal article "The Co-Curricular Connection: The Impact of Experiences Beyond the Classroom on Soft Skills," which was shared

with meeting participants by Dr. Adam Peck, the Stephen F. Austin State University breakout session facilitator, and a co-author of the article.

- Qualities that employers identify as important:
 - Ability to work in a team structure;
 - Ability to make decisions and solve problems;
 - Ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work;
 - Ability to verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organization;
 - Ability to obtain and process information;
 - Ability to analyze quantitative data;
 - Technical knowledge related to the job;
 - Proficiency with computer software programs;
 - Ability to create and/or edit written reports; and
 - Ability to sell or influence others.
- In spring 2014, the National Association for Campus Activities and NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation, with the support of their respective boards, launched a working group to look at how the skills gained through participation and employment in co-curricular experiences helped to prepare students for their careers.
- The work team developed the white paper "Considering the Impact of Participation and Employment of Students in Campus Activities and Collegiate Recreation on the Development of the Skills Employers Desire Most."
- Co-curricular experiences can provide a place for transformative educational experiences to grow in a variety of educational structures, because experiential learning focuses on the development of the whole student.
- Models for fostering skill development:
 - One model with promise is the University of Iowa's "Iowa Grow" program, which uses brief, structured conversations between student employees and their supervisors to help students connect the skills and knowledge they are gaining in the classroom with their student work, and vice versa. These conversations occur twice a semester and can be done in triads or dyads. (See: [https://vp.studentlife.uiowa.edu/initiatives/grow/.](https://vp.studentlife.uiowa.edu/initiatives/grow/))
 - The University of Memphis Professional Connections Program connects business professionals with a group of student leaders for guided conversations about professional and personal development. The three-part curriculum includes instruction on personal branding, network development, and interview preparation that focuses on highlighting skills gleaned from co-curricular experiences. (See: [http://www.memphis.edu/leadership/careerfocus/proconnect.php.](http://www.memphis.edu/leadership/careerfocus/proconnect.php))
 - The University of Florida Campus Recreation Department has connected students with mentors. (See: [http://hhp.ufl.edu/index.php/current-students/current-students/student-organizations/mentor-mentee-program/.](http://hhp.ufl.edu/index.php/current-students/current-students/student-organizations/mentor-mentee-program/))

- At the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, "Seahawks Taking Flight" is a co-curricular capstone program that helps students recognize and articulate the skills they have gained from a variety of experiences in college.
(See: <http://uncw.edu/TakingFlight/>.)
- In the Certified Student Leader program at Stephen F. Austin State University, students can apply for certification in five areas related to key soft skills: written and verbal communication skills, organization skills, ability to influence, decision-making skills, and ability to work in a team.
(See: <http://www.sfasu.edu/studentaffairs/1168.asp>.)
- Project CEO study:
 - A group of student affairs assessment professionals from across the country launched a national benchmarking study of the development of co-curricular experience in spring 2014. Forty institutions signed up for the Project CEO study.
 - The study sought to measure which experiences students found most impactful with regard to developing the skills identified through the *Job Outlook* survey. Experiences considered in the survey were students' classes, internships, co-curricular experiences, and a student's job on or off campus.
 - In all skills, students indicated that the classroom was the experience that had a significant impact on their skill development. However, our enthusiasm for developing employment skills through classroom learning must be checked with the knowledge that the classroom has a significant advantage over other learning experiences. It is the only element considered in this study that is required of all students.
 - Considering non-classroom experiences, in six of the 11 skills investigated in the Project CEO study, co-curricular experiences were the most likely to be selected by students as significantly contributing to their knowledge of the skills employers desired.
 - In four of the skills, internships were more influential.

San Antonio

- Request the state provide a common definition of marketable skills to avoid miscommunications.
 - For example, one participant suggested that "soft skills" should be called "essential skills."
 - Clarify if there is a difference in the learning outcomes already mandated for general education courses (such as communication, team work) and marketable skills.
- Request that the state provide a template for institutions to use in identifying marketable skills for each program.
- Request that the state conduct a pilot to see how long it actually takes an institution to identify skills for all programs.
- Request that the Coordinating Board make marketable skills part of the curriculum approval process. (Many are already embedded in learning outcomes mandated by

- state and/or by externally mandated professional standards. This should reduce the time it takes to meet the goal.)
- Create an official award that is included in the *Workforce Education Course Manual* or that can be transcribed.
 - Assess for core competencies (many community colleges already do this) and provide the assessment to students.
 - Use e-portfolios to help students articulate their skills.
 - Acknowledge that important skills can be developed through co-curricular activities; identify/document the skills in co-curricular transcripts.
 - Consider replicating Texas Lutheran University’s Connect Program and its “Reflective Modules” approach. *The Connect Program and the general education curriculum (called the Compass program) complement each other by linking learning inside and outside the classroom to broader social and job skills valued by prospective employers. Connect also helps organize student involvement outside the classroom and related competencies that are similar to those required for graduation. Connect then collects all those experiences and skills and puts them into a personalized Co-Curricular Transcript. Reflective modules give students an opportunity to apply the knowledge they have gained in class to activities outside the classroom and in the community. Modules meet once a month for one hour and encourage students to begin thinking about long-term goals. Students are required to take four reflective modules before they graduate and are encouraged to complete all modules by the end of the sophomore year.*
 - Provide professional development for faculty to incorporate marketable skills in their courses, and buy out course time or otherwise compensate faculty for skills identification and for changing curricula. Faculty should teach about competencies and how they relate to workplace and society (e.g., effective communication, civil discourse, critical thinking).
 - Increase the use of business and industry advisory boards to help define needed skills and how they will be applied in the workplace. Ask employers what skills are missing.
 - Ensure that students get college credit for internships, with employers determining skills to be developed and communicating those skills clearly to the program awarding the credit.
 - Institutions should survey employers to rate students’ key skills (both in internships and upon graduation) and communicate any deficiencies, in aggregate, to the departments.

Houston

- Identify a family of marketable skills, attributes, and characteristics that an institution wants to convey to all students. The new core curriculum provides a foundation for this.
- Work with career services offices to identify these skills. They are a ready pipeline to industry, and to other efforts that can help, i.e., National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). Workplace skills like showing up on time, customer service, and basic professionalism can be taught through career services. This is an opportunity for them to engage students earlier than their senior year.

- Engage industry. Institutions need industry input and investment. Industry needs to invest resources in marketable skills, such as internships and co-ops.
- Identify the skills and competencies industry needs through discipline-specific conversations, like the Tuning Project.
- Provide students with accurate data about earnings per major, so their salary expectations are realistic.
- Engage faculty. Ask them what skills are needed to be successful, aside from content knowledge. Help faculty think about their disciplines in broader ways and connect what they teach to real work applications.
 - For example, liberal arts majors are very good at synthesizing knowledge. This will not be an effort to redesign curriculum but to enhance it.
- Intentionally embed skills in the curriculum so students at any credential level can talk to people, read manuals, write reports, and relate to people from other cultures. These same skills will make them better students, too.
- Build a culture – not just of identifying/sharing marketable skills – but also modeling professionalism to students. Our students “live” with us for four years. They watch how we interact with each other and how we interact with them. If we aren’t courteous and professional with each other or with them, we are teaching them that is appropriate workplace behavior.
 - This starts with our hiring practices. Who you choose as personnel matters. Hire people that are a good fit for the goals of your institution.
- Consider the Learning Frameworks course taught at community colleges as a foundational place for sharing marketable skills with students.
- Help students market themselves. You don’t learn to write in a writing course. You get introduced to it and then practice it in all courses; same with speech. You have to continually practice them. Students don’t know what skills they have.

El Paso

- Create a comprehensive community plan that includes business, higher education, and kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12). Identifying and developing marketable skills isn’t just a higher education problem – businesses and students are key stakeholders.
- Use chambers of commerce as a voice in promoting higher education.
 - One participant noted that El Paso, once known as the land of cotton and cattle, now needs to focus on development of assets and opportunities for those assets to be communicated. For example, using the existence of University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) as a marketing factor when promoting El Paso.
- Get business owners into high schools so students can hear and start thinking about what they want to do, early.
- Develop a process that focuses on/honors not just marketable skills learned in the classroom but those learned in life and in co-curricular activities as well.
- Encourage professional development through sabbaticals with “front line” faculty being given the experience of being “front line” employees to learn first-hand what employers and industry really need. And/or employ faculty who are already engaged in the field.

- Create internships that begin at the high school level to expose students to opportunities and enable them learn from social cues, etc., on the job.
 - Internships should be paid and provide academic credit.
 - Offering them in the summer would help prevent “summer melt.”
- Remind higher education and K-12 faculty that social skills, not just academics are important; teach faculty how to focus on developing students’ emotional intelligence.
- Develop a method to get good data on who is employing our graduates; find out from those employers what makes our graduates of value in the workplace.
- Create authentic assessments to ensure students do have the skills we say they do.
- Leverage existing institutional strategies.
 - For example, one participant suggested UTEP should use what is generated by the Quality Enhancement plan to help in addressing issues related to the marketable skills goal.
- Begin the process of increasing awareness of marketable skills with admissions.
- Increase the opportunities for student employment on campus.
 - One participant noted their current rules require departments to identify what skills will be acquired in student employment; those expectations are then communicated to the students.
- Increase communication between academic departments and career preparation.
- Ensure that whatever we do, it is not “optional.” Students don’t do “optional.”
- Help students understand that bi-cultural skills are marketable skills.
- Encourage four-year institutions to learn from community colleges how to implement an effective process for identifying what employers want and need.
- Consider high school career and technical student organizations such as DECA, Business Professionals of America (BPA), Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), and Skills USA; these programs help nurture soft skills and teach leadership and ethics.

Harlingen

- Consider competency-based education.
- Award badges for completion/communication.
- Bring faculty together through efforts such as Rio Grande Valley Collective Impact.
- Define regionally what we mean by marketable skills (rather than by institution).
- Recognize that some skills, like coding, will be needed across industries/careers.
- Use existing advisory committees.
- Consider the importance of industry credentials.
- Consider addressing marketable skills as a system by discipline.
 - In the Texas A&M University system, for example, representatives from each institution identified 15 skills in communication. The meetings were held using electronic systems.
- Incorporate soft skills training into electives and career and technical education.
- Consider the value of soft skills in the workforce.
 - For example, one participant explained that during the process of setting STEM Accelerator goals, workforce partners expressed they wanted soft skills.

- Explore existing leadership programs which develop character but could also incorporate soft skills. See if there are opportunities to learn from their curriculum.
- Use the Society for Human Resource Management (SHERM) as a resource. Modules have already been developed.
- Ensure marketable skills are communicated to parents as well.
- Build relationships with kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) on marketable skills.
 - Point out the skills being developed in K-12 project-based learning or other programs.
- Consider using badges.
 - Younger generations will respond well to badges because it is analogous to gaming.
- Bring back college graduates and ask them: What did we do well? What can we do better? Also bring in employers and ask them the same questions.
- Explore transcript options using a “Pokémon GO”-type application.
- Consider using student information, such as Banner, to document marketable skills.
- Distinguish between skills and attributes.
 - Attributes don’t lend themselves to badges.
 - The definition of attributes depends on institutional culture to develop over time, in repeated experiences.
- Consider certificates for the more technical skills acquired.
- Look at freshman seminar courses statewide and see what is common across all courses that relates to marketable skills.
- Have capstone courses include a focus on marketable skills.
 - Add a one semester credit hour (SCH) leadership course.
- Consider hidden requirements that should be considered marketable skills, such as language requirements.
- Use industry advisory councils more effectively.
 - Internships.
 - Job shadowing.
- Create externship opportunities for teachers where teachers can work in the field and gain first-hand knowledge of the skills that are needed.
- Recommend a three-SCH course in marketable skills.
- Offer professional development for faculty in how to embed marketable skills in their academic or technical courses.
- Require job shadowing before students get financial aid.
- Use project-based learning to develop marketable skills, such as working in teams.
- Help students avoid an entitlement attitude; just getting a certificate does not guarantee a job. Students need to approach the job with an attitude that enables them to work well with the public.
- Embed marketable skills across the curriculum.
- Incorporate marketable skills in endorsements chosen in 8th grade.

- Pay special attention to the population of students who end up getting a bachelor's degree at age 20 – these students haven't had the opportunity to work and develop marketable skills.

Lubbock

- Develop a strategy for dialogue with industry.
- Consider ways to emulate what industry does in our teaching.
- Consider that changes to the curriculum may be necessary.
- Consider the ultimate good that would result from the goal.
- Develop a taxonomy of skills.
- Define the terms.
- Use the Common Core as a starting point.
- Connect marketable skills to high impact practices.

Dallas

- Make sure students are aware, particularly as laws change, that employers may require students to pass a drug test before they are hired.
- Develop students' financial and time management skills.
- Ensure students have good communication skills and are able to make eye contact and use full sentences.
 - Embed communication skills.
 - Include intercultural awareness, emotional intelligence and conflict management.
 - Assess students' abilities in these areas; critique and give feedback.
- Connect students to career services early in their educational experience.
- Help students know the skills they have acquired.
 - Raise awareness about the skills embedded in courses.
- Consider adopting Southern Association of Colleges and Schools learning outcomes.
- Engage with the business community; need to bring the right people together.
 - Incorporate business leaders in curriculum development.
 - Utilize the partnerships.
- Utilize co-op courses and include capstone projects.
- Start communication earlier to prospective students.
 - Increase exposure to possible jobs/careers.
- Connect students to internships.
 - Raise students' awareness of their existence.
 - Reach into high schools to connect students to internships.
- Create cross-curriculum opportunities for students to build marketable skills.
- Ensure students have financial management/literacy skills.
- Work with employers.
 - The culture of work is changing.
 - Help them grow talent.
- Understand that faculty/administration are out of touch with business.
 - Define marketable skills; they are the same as in the core.
 - Leverage existing systems.

- Marketable skills include: communication, logical reasoning, numeracy, and data analysis.
- Ensure TEKS awareness.
- Revisit the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) process for CTE.
- Improve ability to apply marketable skills in course materials.
 - Focus on assessment and rigor.
- Recognize that TSI is compromised.
- Discourage micromanagement from the state.
- Be aware that K-12 learning habits and styles are hard to change.
- Recognize that the job application process is becoming more behavioral (“are you a good fit?”) than technical or skills-based (“can you do the job?”).
- Identify where the expectations of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) are not met.
- Investigate how the **State Board of Education** fits in with Higher Education.

Goal #4: By 2030, undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.

Arlington

- Get students to think about college earlier; they need to understand some of the financial aid terms.
- Help students consider what kind of future salary would be needed to cover debt. What kind of major might be more expedient?
 - We want students to choose their major based on their passion but also to be able to be productive citizens.
- Provide financial literacy and basic budgeting.
- Create more synergy between the process of getting out of high school and going to postsecondary.
- Highlight the difference between what students are awarded and what students want to take in financial aid. Just because we award a student the opportunity to take a loan does not mean the student has to do that.
- Fix FAFSA.
- Establish student debt as a community responsibility – there are a whole lot of people who could be helpful to students and families about debt, and about how they handle debt, and the degree to which they should go into debt.

East Texas

- Help students become more aware of salaries.
 - Students need to be aware of what earning potential (starting) is, greater or equal to expenditures.
 - Students need to understand finances – financial literacy.
 - Students need to understand that loan money is not “monopoly money.”
 - Communicate with prospective students about what things cost.
 - Students’ connection with financial literacy needs to grow. Freshman curriculum is a good place to start it.
 - Financial advice can sound better coming from a peer (student) than an adult.
 - Encourage faculty to use peer sources.
- Address the difference between state and federal laws for financial aid with regard to the number of semester credit hours (SCH) taken per semester as “full time.”
- Work to eliminate excess SCH.
 - Students need some early career exploration, but they also need to understand what “excessive hours” are and that all attempted hours count.
 - Provide career advising/counseling while students are in junior college.
 - Advise students with their transfer targets in mind.
 - Consider an app for students to use once per semester.
- Keep costs down, particularly for low-income students.
 - Provide scholarships.
 - Charge differential tuition by major.
 - Don’t give students all of the money from loans up front – force them to learn to budget.

- Consider a Rural ISD Loan Forgiveness Program.
- Develop a common course numerology so that students will know which courses apply to their major.

San Antonio

- Express to students that loans are a “business risk” and they should be willing to bet on themselves for a lifelong source of income.
- Require a component of financial literacy as a mandatory part of orientation and include parents.
 - Some students who withdraw from school without completing can’t even enlist in the military because of their debt.
 - Require financial literacy during school because of the drop off between the sophomore and junior years.
- Require conversations about debt earlier, not at the student’s entrance.
 - Students need counseling before receiving aid.
 - Knowing what their debt level is will help students to prepare.
 - Require transfer students to disclose their debt. We need to know if they can afford to graduate.
 - Students need to understand they don’t need to receive the maximum amount.
 - Students need to talk to outside advisors, maybe a financial literacy center run by faculty.
 - Timing is important. Interviews and modules are after the decision on the institution and orientation.
 - Maybe there should be standardized, suggested discussion points (on debt and borrowing).
 - House Bill 18¹, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session provided for content advisory committees. Counseling academies are a good place to start for a counseling platform.
- Use competency-based education to lower costs.
- Consider escrow accounts through year six. Students would be rebated and they would know their balance. It would also help with financial literacy.
- Consider requiring students to decide on a major before taking on debt.
 - Differentiate tuition by major and expected income.
- Students could increase course loads to reduce time and debt.
 - Students need to figure out their major. Switching majors leads to more classes.
 - Need better, proactive advising to catch potential mistakes ahead of time. Lower number of hours means lower costs.
 - We need better partnerships between institutions to work on scheduling.
 - Students don’t think ahead regarding transfer degree plans to be sure semester credit hours transfer.

¹ Relating to measures to support public school student academic achievement and high school, college, and career preparation. <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=84R&Bill=HB18>

- Work with employers to offer package deals that estimate what the costs of education and training are versus possible earnings, like financial advisors.
 - Institutions could not charge tuition for internships.
 - We need to increase scholarship opportunities with corporate partnerships.

Houston

- Emphasize that choosing majors should be balanced between passion and reality, making the connection between the person and the skills required for that major.
 - Go to advising to connect marketable skills that have to be applied and those that will be gained to help talk out what could be the potential best fit for a particular student.
- Create a way to help students find their right majors as early as possible so they are not adding to their debt by wasting credit hours and staying longer to make them up once a decision is made.
 - Help students explore college and all the options before going straight into it.
- Focus on educating students about whether there is a market for their degree or not so they aren't chasing a degree that will get them into a lot of debt with little return in salary.
- Implement programs that research why students dropped out; then contact the students to help get them back into pursuing a degree.
 - Catch students off track and advise them.
- Decrease excess course work by frequently counseling and tracking the students' progress throughout their entire college career.
 - Hold teachers, counselors, and advisors accountable for the student to be kept on track.
- Implement a financial literacy program where coaches go out and host financial literacy fairs and talks; station them at financial aid offices to catch the students that are highly in debt to talk about their individual situations.
 - Help the student decide what the correct track is for them, i.e., the debt they have accumulated and if they are on the best track for them.
 - Sit down with the student and go over their personal finances to figure out if they really need a loan.
 - Take time to have those types of difficult conversations with the students about personal funds in order to advise and provide adequate help.
 - Start right when they get to college with counseling, advising, and admissions; if those areas are preaching the same thing to the students, they may listen more. Because once students get to the classroom and develop trust, they are already weeks in and have gotten refund checks.
- Use orientation as a way of addressing financial aid.
 - Make it a family orientation to draw in more parent awareness.
- Make students more aware of scholarships and get them to apply.

- Train teachers, counselors, and advisors to give students the tools they need to be successful.
 - Train counselors to be able to look at transcripts to make sure students are on the right track.
 - Implement financial literacy programs throughout the school as well as in homes.
- Make 12-18 semester credit hours (SCH) of course work cost the same for tuition versus it going up every three hours.
 - Stop tuition at 12 SCH and make excess SCH no extra cost after the original 12 SCH.
- Figure out how to manage the unfunded mandates that are driving up the cost of education.
 - This is a huge problem because they are taking money away from the school so it can't be used to get better professors, etc.
- Manage privatizing housing at the university level.
- Have non-financial aid personnel teach/demonstrate to students how having financial literacy is more about an investment not a sacrifice.
 - Have people who students trust, such as professors, send the message out to the students.
 - Help students realize it's not about instant gratification; it's about investing in their future.
- Create something (a program?) that gets families thinking about how they are going to pay for college early on, or help them consider financial aid or how to manage debt.
- Offer a financial literacy/financial aid class 101.
- Create programs within the universities/schools to help students that are in need (financially) to get by.
 - Use emergency funds within schools to help in-need students.
 - If a student takes advantage of these funds, make them attend a financial aid class or financial literacy class (online) or go to a seminar in order to obtain the money.
- Create a way to spread out the student's refund check over the semester, every two weeks, versus one lump sum at one time.

El Paso

- Base award on filed choice (would require a federal change).
- Increase grant money.
- Increase state funding for public institutions of higher education (IHEs).
- Work with business communities.
- Increase loan forgiveness programs (at state level and by private businesses).
- Examine the distribution of student loan debt (by institution, type, major, etc.).
- Promote financial literacy.
 - At college level so students can be more effectively advised.
 - Terms of loans.

- Loans taken out.
 - Correlation of paying off loans and how well students do in college.
- Expand dual credit.
- Examine student loan debt for for-profit career schools and colleges.
- Evaluate policy implications at regional level.
- Have IHEs pay students for research and other efforts.
- Require students to learn about college costs and how to pay for it beginning in elementary school.
 - Teach the difference between needs versus wants.
- Educate students early so students don't fear borrowing money.
 - Parental influence.
 - Lack of preparedness to succeed in college.
- Increase direct aid.
- Recognize federal financial aid requirements that are barriers.
- Streamline undergraduate education process.
 - Help students to complete more efficiently.
- Create an incentive program for completing more timely.
- Address issues of working students.
- Establish incentives for promoting majors aligned with state needs.
- Prepare students for competitive scholarships/fellowships.
- Create paid internships.
- Utilize dual credit.
- Leverage community efforts.
 - Transport.
 - ATM costs.
 - Access to Wi-Fi.
- Encourage semester of work.
 - Get paid.
 - Part of program.

Harlingen

- Help students understand that financial aid isn't free – it's an investment in their future.
- Expand dual credit but in a focused way (i.e., limit to the core general education courses), and ensure high schools are properly advising students on dual credit.
- Provide more in-depth communication about various certificate and degree programs.
- Provide more guided/structured pathways. Don't allow students to pick and choose their courses.
- Ensure transfer courses apply to the student's degree program.
- Assess students' skills and interests early to help them choose their career early.
- Provide more job/occupational awareness (e.g., have more workforce fairs in school districts).
- Require students to file a degree plan sooner than when they complete 45 semester credit hours.

- Increase information provided to students and parents about House Bill 5ⁱ endorsements and college and career exploration.
- Mandate a financial literacy course in the core curriculum; begin teaching financial literacy in middle school.
- Limit student loans to amounts that students need, not what they qualify for.
- Make it more difficult for students to borrow.
- Replicate what's being done in Tennessee, where the first two years of college are free.
- Put more pressure on universities to access transfer courses from community colleges – need authentic alignment.
- Use meta majors within a core area of study.
- Focus on the core curriculum within dual credit courses.
- Align career and technical education (CTE) courses with workforce needs.
- Provide better advising to ensure students take the right courses. Begin advising early on, not only academic advising but also financial aid advising.
- Broaden job/career exploration. Use learning communities. Start early.
- Get third- and fourth-grade students on college campuses (e.g. summer camps).
- Engage grassroots organizations, including community-based organizations and churches, to help get information out to students and parents about jobs/careers, financial literacy, etc.
- Provide a series of public service announcements (PSAs), led by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, starting with the affordability of college. Then get into PSAs about choosing a college/program and provide resources on careers, etc.
- Partner with school district parental involvement initiatives to reach out to parents about financial literacy and marketable skills, in English and Spanish.
- Use the Texas Workforce Commission's website for career exploration.
- Consider programs like UTRGV's tuition guaranteed program.

Lubbock

- Try better advising, marketing campaigns, and apps. Students get misinformation or not enough information about aid, and there are also many misconceptions about aid.
- Consider work opportunities, including work study, as a way for students to pay for college. There needs to be an appropriate balance between work and school so that students progress at a reasonable rate.
- Help students engage in smart borrowing (making good choices about what types of loans, when to borrow, and how much to borrow).
- Package degrees with discounts for progress (lock in rates/provide discounts based on students reaching goals to encourage progress and getting out with less debt).
- Provide financial literacy courses throughout the pipeline – leverage existing courses to get the information across.
- Reduce textbook costs with open educational resources.
- Leverage technology: Use cost comparisons, calculators, and financial aid planners.

- Consider the complications of changing majors and also possibly adding more flexibility to some very prescriptive majors so students are less likely to get off track but have room to explore.
- Break down the cost by course, etc., related to borrowing.
- Use net price calculators/cost calculators.
- Get back to higher funding levels for Texas Grant and Texas Educational Opportunity Grant.
- Promote open educational resources initiatives. Focus on book prices and keeping textbook costs low.
- Offer flat tuition rate plans – lock in a “package” deal for the degree or certificate with discounts as students reach goals.
- Provide intrusive financial aid advising; fully inform students of the consequences of their future if they take on significant debt.
- Combat misinformation and misconceptions. Some students are convinced they will not have to pay back loans.
- Appoint a loan default manager (at institutions?).
- Consider how to change the manner in which students use up loan aggregate limits.
- Increase promotion of scholarships.
- Create an online fixed price.
- Prioritize on-campus work study.
- Make sure students are informed that they can apply for aid.
- Create cost comparisons.
- Initiate a student planner program (similar to the one in Odessa) where students pick a meta major to reduce semester credit hours to degree.
- Educate students about salary differences.
- Investigate ways degree plans can be more flexible; students change majors.
- Help students understand how working can help or slow them down based on hours, schedule, etc.
- Identify cost per course. Students lose track of the amount of money they borrow.
- Find ways to control for parents signing for students (signing their children’s names as they help fill out paperwork for financial aid, not understanding the implications).
- Institute prior advising/counseling to avoid misinformation.
- Consider how hard it is to get/understand information about federal tax rebate programs like 529 plans.
- Advise on what students will be able to afford.
- Consider computer applications that provide students with more information about their debt/choices.
- Design an app that includes all cumulative debt.
- Create “take what you need” marketing programs so students don’t borrow the max if it’s not needed. “All you can eat buffet” metaphor used.
- Use a first-year seminar class that covers financial literacy.
- Provide benefits and/or discounts for moving forward.

- Make students aware of their loan status after graduation.
- Consider the K-12 efforts that have started to focus on this issue: college and career planning, and personal financial literacy courses.
- Have a dual credit financial literacy course.
- Consider what to do when parents take students' money or students use their money to financially support parents/younger siblings.
- Help students be more prepared. The more prepared students are, the fewer developmental education classes they will need. This will save on college loan debt.
- Increase dual credit to reduce loans (dual credit that applies to degree).
- Create high school/college partnerships consisting of earning college credit in high school, which articulates toward career and technical education programs. For example, South Plains College has maintained a "Tech Prep Model" with \$0 cost to students.
- Talk about institutions reducing costs or ways for students to reduce living expenses when having conversations about affordability.
- Mandate financial literacy sessions (1-2 hours) early in college experience.
- Lower tuition; increase state support.
- Create a set table of what 60 percent of first-year wages are for various fields and tie suggested student loan debt to those specific figures.
- Create/better fund state work-study programs.
- Reduce costs through community service college credits toward certain degrees/certificates.
- Issue state tax credits to businesses offering paid internships/apprenticeships.
- Provide loan forgiveness for teachers working in high need areas.
- Create institutional work study programs that link first-generation students with campus employment and require a financial literacy program to receive employment placement.
- Request the federal government revisit what's being offered and stop giving or allowing more than students' school expenses.
- Require loan recipients to walk through a repayment scenario prior to disbursing funds (show what they need to get by versus what they are being offered).
- Let students vest in their professional positions through statewide loan forgiveness or reduction programs; retain our talent.
- Design mobile app loan amount payments; create compilations of all student loans from all schools.
- Make debt a real number by showing the specific day-by-day, course-by-course cost of a class, tuition, and room and board.
- Incorporate a freshman seminar into the high school dual credit classes.

Dallas

- Require all funded lower-division academic transfer courses to come from the *Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM)* in order to assure applicability instead of only transferability. Gradual work towards this goal could be a three-step process – common course numbering system for all lower-division funded courses, then all core courses from ACGM, then all lower-division courses from the ACGM.

- Incentivize universities to prefer associate degree complete transfer students so that the funding mechanisms encourage students to complete at the community college. This enhances completion and allows the state to fund more of the lower-division coursework at the community college rate, sharing the burden with the local communities.
- Provide better financial aid and financial literacy information to students and parents from colleges and universities.
 - Financial literacy programs throughout the year for students.
 - Financial aid info sheet/pamphlets for students.
 - Financial checklist for students when they apply for student loans.
 - Communication that aid is not necessarily for cost of living.
 - Require exit counseling every year.
 - Teach students about financial consequences of failing courses.
 - Include academic advisors in the conversation.
 - Possibly extend orientation to include this information.
 - Free courses for parents on financial literacy.
 - Better presentation of information on how loans work (interest rates, etc.) such as with infographics.
- Start financial aid information and literacy education in P-12.
 - Higher education institutions should provide guidance to TEA on the Financial Literacy TEKS (K-8).
 - Provide better information to students and parents before even enrolling at an institution of higher education (IHE) (use high school counselors and college advisors to help teach financial aid literacy).
- Create a campus-wide culture of financial literacy (from entry to completion).
 - Explicitly teach students about consequences of current borrowing on future.
 - Host “financial reality fairs.”
 - The whole campus should market how students can know eligibility, how much aid they have left, etc.
- Provide better information on no-debt options for students (work study, scholarships, etc.).
 - Provide information on available scholarships in high school.
- Encourage faculty to incorporate assignments regarding debt/financial literacy into course.
 - Think of innovative ways to use finance students to help educate other students on financial literacy.
 - Make course on financial literacy mandatory.
- Improve financial aid advising.
 - Encourage students to only take out what they need—not the maximum allowed.
 - Require financial aid advising when student changes majors/fails a class to recalculate cost of education.
 - More intrusive case management.
- Require courses on financial literacy (especially for all students or students who take out loans).
- Offer free access, online textbooks.

- Develop payment plans for higher education tuition in Texas.
- Create partnerships with universities to encourage students to get credits from community colleges to make it less expensive.
- Connect cost per semester to field of study.
- Encourage dual credit and advanced placement (AP) to get college credits.
- Reduce excess credit hours through clear pathways and better academic advisement.
- Teach students to relate money to time to future success. Explicitly lay out how current actions affect their future success.
- Partner with financial institutions (e.g., credit unions) to provide information on financial literacy/financial aid.
- Create community college partnerships with universities to facilitate better transfer.
- Consider image of community college to encourage students to start at a two-year school to lower cost.
- Monitor student progress in order to identify when a student goes off track (and potentially adds extra semester credit hours (SCH) to their degree).
 - Track students with high number of course repeats.
- Ensure coherent sequence of courses in dual credit/early college high schools.
- Establish programs to help students get a part-time job in field of interest.
- Require less credits to graduate.
- Change “six-drop” rule to impose financial penalty after fewer than six drops. Impose higher penalty if same course dropped multiple times.
- Set tuition caps.
- Create a centralized database of financial aid information for each Texas institution.
- Provide loan statements similar to credit card statements that show explicitly what is borrowed, and how long would take to pay off.
- Seek larger investments in higher education from state appropriations.
- Lock in tuition rate early.
- Set semester flat rates for as many SCH as a student wants.
- Bring back programs such as B-On-Time Loan (where student can get loan forgiveness with timely completion).
- Provide financial incentives for students completing milestones.
- Create alignment for ACGM courses with universities to facilitate transfer from community college to universities (and lower excess SCH).
- Encourage the federal government to consider maximum loan amount based on SCH.
- Encourage the federal government to be realistic about eligibility requirements for loans.
- Provide more non-loan academic-based aid (especially if don’t have Pell eligibility).
- Create a department for financial literacy at the campus.
- Establish free tuition for community colleges.
- Create more financial aid opportunities other than loans for middle class students.
- Offer scholarship/grants for persistence.
- Don’t allow students to borrow if they are not employed.
- Encourage institutions to provide more non-loan financial aid though incentives from the government.

- Consider the Australia method: Pay nothing but when student graduates, money is taken from student's salary and sent back to the schools.
- Offer more student scholarships from the district/college.
- Partner with companies to provide certain benefits to students (such as free room and board).

ⁱRelating to public school accountability, including assessment, and curriculum requirements; providing a criminal penalty. <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=83R&Bill=HB5>