

# Progress Scaling Texas Pathways: Results from the 2023 Scale of Adoption Assessment

Pillar 2: Helping Students Choose and Enter a Pathway



## Introduction

The Texas Pathways strategy supports Texas community colleges to scale guided pathways practices associated with improving student success. The research-based strategy<sup>1</sup> organizes college efforts to redesign the student experience into four pillars:

**Pillar 1:** Mapping pathways to student end goals

**Pillar 2:** Helping students choose and enter a pathway

**Pillar 3:** Keeping students on a pathway

**Pillar 4:** Ensuring that students are learning

This research brief provides insights into the implementation of Pillar 2 essential practices from the Scale of Adoption Assessment (SOAA) administered to 48 Texas community colleges in Spring 2023. Colleges completed a self-assessment and Texas Success Center researchers followed up with interviews with college teams to calibrate and validate ratings across colleges.

Texas Pathways colleges are implementing Pillar 2 practices with three major components that research suggest are important for student success:<sup>2</sup> early career and college exploration with educational planning; systematic supports for gateway and entry-level courses; and intentional outreach, planning, and support to integrate students into college pathways from multiple entry points like adult basic education programs, high school, and other feeders.

**Early exploration and planning.** Texas Pathways colleges have designed outreach and onboarding

activities to support students and families to understand how career interests align with college pathways. From their first connection with the college, students can assess and explore their career options and learn about how pathways have been developed to support them in reaching their goals. Upon entry to the college, students are connected with advisors, coaches, counselors, and faculty aligned with their meta-major or program of interest and supported to create a full educational plan.

### **Supports for gateway and entry-level courses.**

Early success in program gateway and entry-level courses is critical for students to gain momentum towards their long-term goals. Thus, colleges have implemented innovative approaches to identifying student academic and basic needs to allow faculty and advisors to connect students to available resources. Colleges also designed systematic supports embedded in courses critical to program success and in math, reading-intensive, and writing-intensive entry-level courses to allow more students to experience success early in their program experience.

### **Integration of students from multiple entry points.**

Since Texas community colleges are open-enrollment institutions that serve students from many backgrounds, colleges design comprehensive outreach efforts to communicate how pathways allow all prospective students to reach their goals. In addition to outreach efforts to middle school, high school, and other community partners, most Texas Pathways colleges deliver programs to serve Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) and dual credit students.

<sup>1</sup>Community College Research Center, "Guided Pathways," <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/research/guided-pathways.html>.

<sup>2</sup>Davis Jenkins, Taylor Myers, and Farzana Matin, Whole-College Guided Pathways Reform Practices (September 2023), <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/whole-college-guided-pathways-reform.pdf>.





Over the past few years, colleges have embedded these programs into the broader guided pathways efforts, defining clear pathways from AEL programs and dual credit programs to academic, workforce, or continuing education programs, and integrating these students into college student services offerings.

In this brief, examples are provided to highlight various ways colleges are implementing the practices associated with helping students choose and enter a pathway.

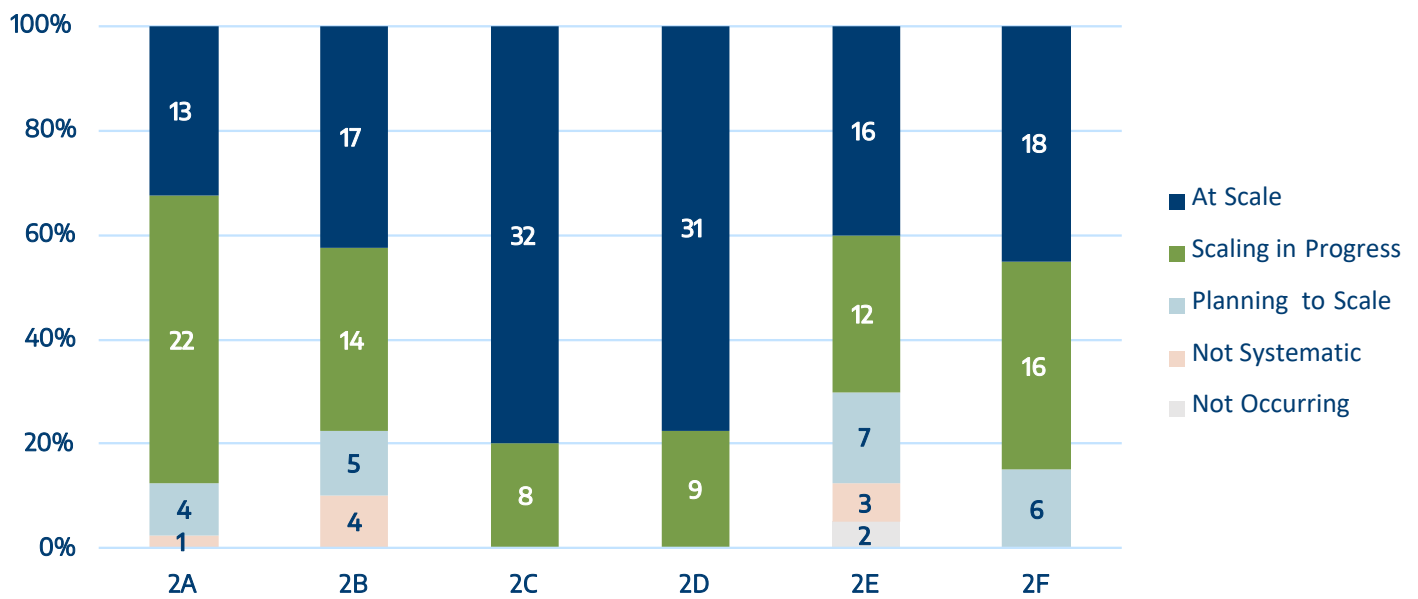
## Pillar 2 Essential Practices

- A.** Every new student is helped to explore career/college options, choose a program of study, and develop a full-program plan as soon as possible.
- B.** Special supports are provided to help academically underprepared students to succeed in the “gateway” courses for the college’s major program areas.
- C.** Contextualized supports are provided to help students placed into developmental math to succeed in the program-relevant first college-level math course by the end of their first year.
- D.** Contextualized supports are provided to help students placed into developmental reading or writing to succeed in the first college-level English course by the end of their first year.
- E.** Intensive support is provided to help students placed into adult basic education to enter and succeed in college-level courses as soon as possible.
- F.** The college works with high schools and other feeders to motivate and prepare students to enter college-level coursework in a program of study when they enroll in college.

Colleges are making significant progress scaling the Pillar 2 essential practices (Figure 1). To be at scale, colleges must have redesigned the practice to reach at least 80% of first-time-in-college (FTIC) students. Scaling in progress requires the redesigned practice to reach at least 50% of FTIC students.

The 2023 results are impressive: more than 75% of the validated colleges have systematized program organization into meta-majors, developed coherent program maps, provided detailed information on college websites, sequenced courses and communicated course sequencing to students, and aligned appropriate math courses with each program of study. Most colleges are moving into improvement cycles to continue to improve Pillar 2 practices by gathering student and faculty feedback.

**Figure 1.** Number of colleges at each level of scale in each Pillar 2 essential practice. N = 40

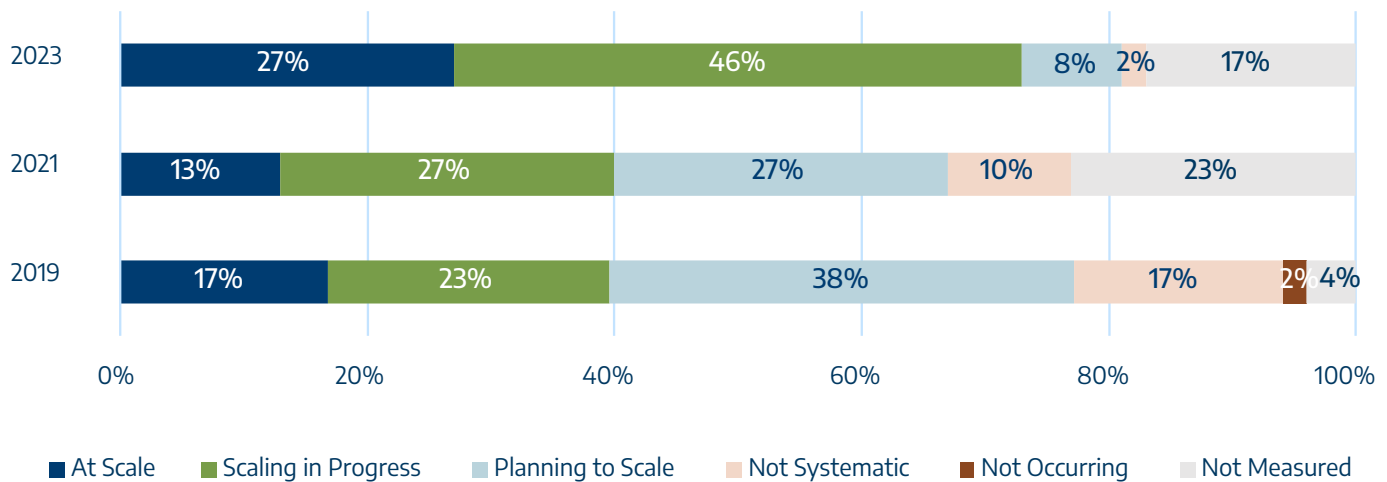


Note. The 2023 Texas Pathways SOAA was administered to 48 member colleges in Spring 2023. Forty colleges returned the SOAA, and 39 colleges participated in validation interviews.

**Practice 2A. Every new student is helped to explore career/college options, choose a program of study, and develop a full-program plan as soon as possible.**

Colleges made significant progress scaling early career exploration and program planning for all students (Figure 2). Onboarding processes including recruitment, application, enrollment, initial advising, orientation, and first-year experiences have been designed around pathways, ensuring students receive frequent opportunities to explore careers and select programs that support them to meet their post-completion goals. Of the 48 Texas Pathways colleges, 73% reported to be scaling or at scale in practice 2A, representing a growth of 33% from 2021.

**Figure 2.** Proportion of colleges at each level of scale in Practice 2A in 2019, 2021, and 2023. N = 48



Note. In 2023, 40 of 48 colleges were measured and validated by the SOAA process. In 2021, 37 of 48 colleges were measured and validated. In 2019, 46 of 48 colleges were measured and validated.

**Early and Comprehensive Student Guidance.** Texas community colleges prioritize early opportunities for career exploration to guide all students to the appropriate meta-major and program choice. Colleges are focusing on assisting new students to explore career and college options during redesigned recruitment, admissions, onboarding, and orientation processes.

- **Amarillo College** implemented “[Smart Start to Finish](#),” a four-part onboarding program that begins with “Success 360” (career exploration for prospective students in the fall), continues with “Springboard” (prospective students coming to campus to learn more about their career communities in the spring), moves to “Badger Beginnings” (new student orientation in the summer), and finishes with a career-focused Learning Framework course (EDUC 1100 class in their first fall of enrollment).
- Many colleges like **Central Texas College, Coastal Bend College, Laredo College, Lee College, Vernon College, and Weatherford College** reorganized student intake processes to help entering students explore meta-majors and choose a program of study during New Student Orientation (NSO). NSO experiences were designed to provide pathways information to students with activities like career, cluster, pathway, and/or program presentations both in-person and, in some cases, virtually.





- Several colleges like **Dallas College, McLennan Community College, and North Central Texas College** have structured onboarding advising processes to require all FTIC students to meet with advisors upon entry to support early career and program decisions.
- Many colleges like **Amarillo College, Angelina College, College of the Mainland, El Paso Community College, Frank Phillips College, Houston Community College, Odessa College, Paris Junior College, and Weatherford College** leveraged their Learning Framework courses (EDUC 1300 and PSYC 1300) or First-Year Experience (FYE) courses to provide structured career exploration to students. These courses often include career assessments, in-person and virtual career experience activities, networking opportunities, and internship opportunities. The curriculum also includes pre-planning college progress through completion, transfer, or entry into the workforce.
- **Texarkana College** addressed the need for additional onboarding advisors by assigning students to a professional advisor and a faculty advisor, each of whom are trained in appreciative advising.

**Dedicated Centers and Staff.** At several colleges, dedicated staff and new centers have been developed to support student exploration during their introduction to the college. This exploration supports the timely selection of a program of study and the development of a full program plan soon after enrollment.

- **Alvin Community College** hired a Director of Recruitment and Enrollment to oversee the Pathway Success Coaches and to streamline admissions processes, including Career Services and recruitment. Pathways Coaches support students to select a program that matches with their end goals.
- **Austin Community College** opened the first physical Career and Transfer Center in 2021/2022, providing support to students in career exploration, career readiness, and career guidance. [The Make It Center](#)

also soft-launched in 2021/2022 to allow exploration of various career options across all programs at the college; it opened to the public in Fall 2023.

- Students at **Dallas College** complete program planning during the financial aid process, where most students are required to select a program of study. Advisors, including success coaches and career services staff, help students with goal setting, renewing and revisiting goals, and updating their program plans. Outreach events and classroom visits also play a role in facilitating program planning.
- **Howard College** introduced Enrollment Navigator positions to support students through the enrollment and matriculation processes. Navigators provide additional supports to traditionally underrepresented students to explore careers and programs.
- Several colleges like **Grayson College** and **Paris Junior College** conduct consistent training for academic advisors, Career Coaches, and Pathways Coaches to emphasize the importance of effective early advising.
- **Wharton County Junior College** created the Title V Academic, Career, & Transfer Center to support all students in meeting their post-completion goals.

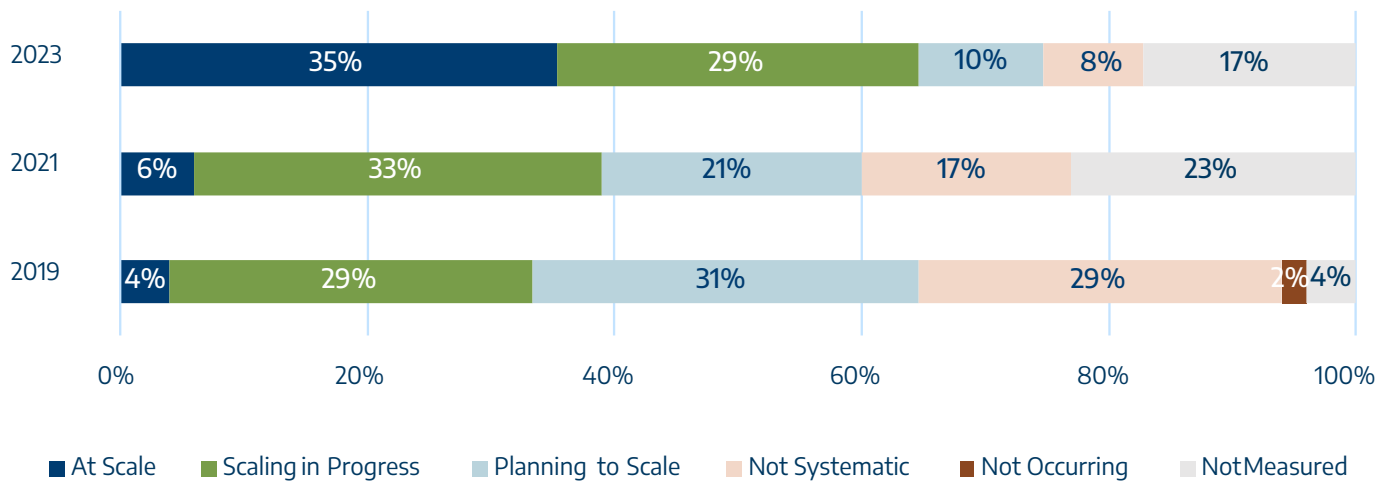
**Integration of Technology.** Colleges have integrated technology to ease program exploration and provide students with enhanced visibility into their educational pathways. This approach breaks down barriers to providing career and program exploration at scale and fosters an environment where all students have the resources and encouragement needed to explore their academic and career interests.

- Several colleges like the **Alamo Colleges, Alvin Community College, Angelina College, Blinn College, College of the Mainland, Del Mar College, Grayson College, Houston Community College, Laredo College, Panola College, Paris Junior College, San Jacinto College, Southwest Texas Junior College, Temple College,** and **Western Texas College** restructured the student intake process to facilitate career and program exploration through the use of tools like [Career Coach](#), [Career Edge](#), [Conex Ed](#), [Focus 2](#), [Choices 360](#), [Vita Navis](#), and [AchieveWorks](#). Advisors actively participate in program planning, ensuring that the technology-driven tools become an integral part of the student guidance process. In some cases, the data on the selected meta-majors and program choices is also analyzed to improve intake processes further.
- Most colleges, including **Central Texas College, Houston Community College, North Central Texas College, South Texas College, Texarkana College, Texas Southmost College,** and **Victoria College** emphasize the importance of students creating a full program plan by the end of their first year, including a customized educational plan. Students can track their progress using different tools like [Degree Works](#), [EAB Navigate](#), My Progress, Learning Educational Plans, Student Planner, and others that align with program maps.
- Colleges have simplified application processes. **Laredo College** and **Lee College** recoded the Apply Texas application to align with pathways and provide actionable data to onboarding specialists. **Midland College** ensured the accessibility of its local application process by simplifying it and introducing it on the [EAB Navigate](#) platform.

## Practice 2B. Special supports are provided to help academically underprepared students to succeed in the “gateway” courses for the college’s major program areas.

Texas community colleges made significant progress scaling specialized supports for academically underprepared students navigating through critical “gateway” courses in major program areas beyond math and English (Figure 3). These courses serve as foundations for advanced studies, making success in them crucial for a student’s academic journey. Colleges are developing interventions such as tutoring, specialized supports, alerts, and personalized counseling to ensure that all students, regardless of their initial academic preparedness, have the support needed to succeed in their chosen fields. Of the 48 Texas Pathways colleges, 64% reported to be scaling or at scale in practice 2B, representing a growth of 25% from 2021.

**Figure 3.** Proportion of colleges at each level of scale in Practice 2B in 2019, 2021, and 2023. N = 48



Note. In 2023, 40 of 48 colleges were measured and validated by the SOAA process. In 2021, 37 of 48 colleges were measured and validated. In 2019, 46 of 48 colleges were measured and validated.

**Student Support Strategies.** Various colleges in Texas are adopting innovative approaches to enhance student supports and success measures. These initiatives span multiple areas, from the implementation of cutting-edge technologies to the development of unique programs and services.

- At **Amarillo College**, Tutoring Centers were rebranded as Success Centers and were brought under a single director to ensure excellence across the centers. The college implemented mandatory tutoring across all programs and implemented Integrated Basic Education Skills Training (I-BEST) into workforce programs for underprepared workforce students.
- At many colleges like **Alamo Colleges, Alvin Community College, Central Texas College, Coastal Bend College, College of the Mainland, Dallas College, Del Mar College, El Paso Community College, Galveston College, Grayson College, Houston Community College, Howard College, Laredo College, Lee College, McLennan Community College, Midland College, North Central Texas College, Ranger College, San Jacinto College, Southwest Texas Junior College, Texas Southmost**



**College**, and **Tyler Junior College**, student support services have expanded to include virtual/online professional tutoring, academic coaching, embedded tutors in classrooms, peer tutors, and Supplemental Instructors. In some cases, colleges are using technology like [Tutor Me](#), [Brainfuse](#), and [tutor.com](#) to provide 24/7 access to tutoring support.



- At **Austin Community College**, embedded support services with tutoring and academic coaching were expanded in primary gateway courses, with about 250 sections each term receiving embedded tutoring and/or coaching. As a result, students with embedded supports showed almost a double-digit course success rate improvement across all racial/ethnic lines. While embedded tutoring or academic coaching is not broadly available in workforce programs, program-specific tutoring is available in many workforce programs thanks to Perkins funding and the college is working to expand embedded tutoring to more workforce programs.
- Many colleges like **Central Texas College**, **Del Mar College**, and **Kilgore College** created academic support structures for Nursing and Allied Health students, specifically for the gateway course Anatomy & Physiology.
- Some colleges like **College of the Mainland** and **El Paso Community College** use social activities to enhance learning activities within programs.

**Holistic Student Supports.** Colleges in Texas are actively cultivating holistic student supports to ensure that students not only succeed academically but also thrive in various aspects of their college experience. These institutions are committed to providing comprehensive support services, fostering a sense of belonging, and addressing diverse student needs.

- **Central Texas College** conducted a Success Barriers study to identify and address personal and academic obstacles faced by students, alongside expanding tutoring resources for both academic and workforce programs to meet identified needs.
- **Victoria College** engages a Retention Taskforce which monitors gateway success to identify students in need of support to connect them to Success Coaches and college supports.
- Colleges like **Dallas College**, **Lamar State College Orange**, **Odessa College**, **Panola College**, and **Vernon College** implemented Early Alert and [Drop-Out Detective](#) systems to allow faculty to identify students experiencing academic and/or personal challenges and connect them to resources at the college.

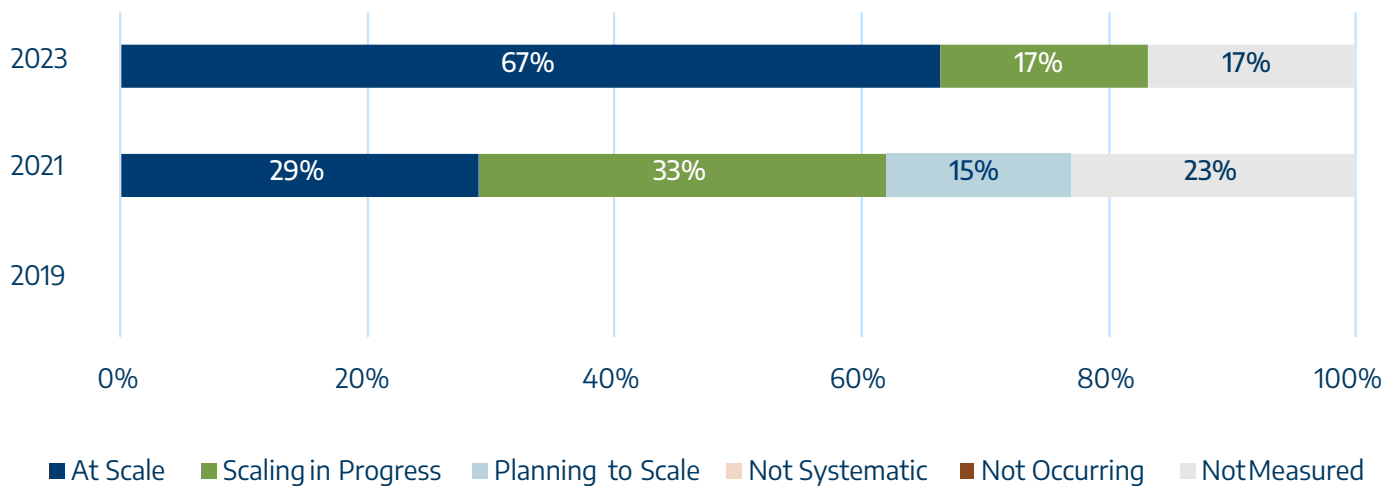
**Practice 2C. Contextualized supports are provided to help students placed into developmental math to succeed in the program-relevant first college-level math course by the end of their first year.**

**Practice 2D. Contextualized supports are provided to help students placed into developmental reading or writing to succeed in the first college-level English course by the end of their first year.**

All Texas community colleges have adopted corequisite support for entry-level math, entry-level reading-intensive courses, and entry-level writing-intensive courses at scale (or nearly at scale) (Figures 4 and 5). Colleges across Texas are actively engaged in tailoring in-semester supports to propel students placed into developmental courses towards success in their program-relevant entry-level course by the end of their first year.

Colleges have designed several models of corequisite support aligned with the four main math pathways: College Algebra for STEM programs, Quantitative Reasoning, Elementary Statistics, and Math for Business and Social Sciences. In some cases, the support course is contextualized to provide just-in-time support or specific math pathway content. In other cases, colleges designed a STEM support course to pair with College Algebra and non-STEM support course to pair with the other math pathway courses. Of the 48 Texas Pathways colleges, 84% reported to be scaling or at scale in practice 2C, representing a growth of 22% from 2021.

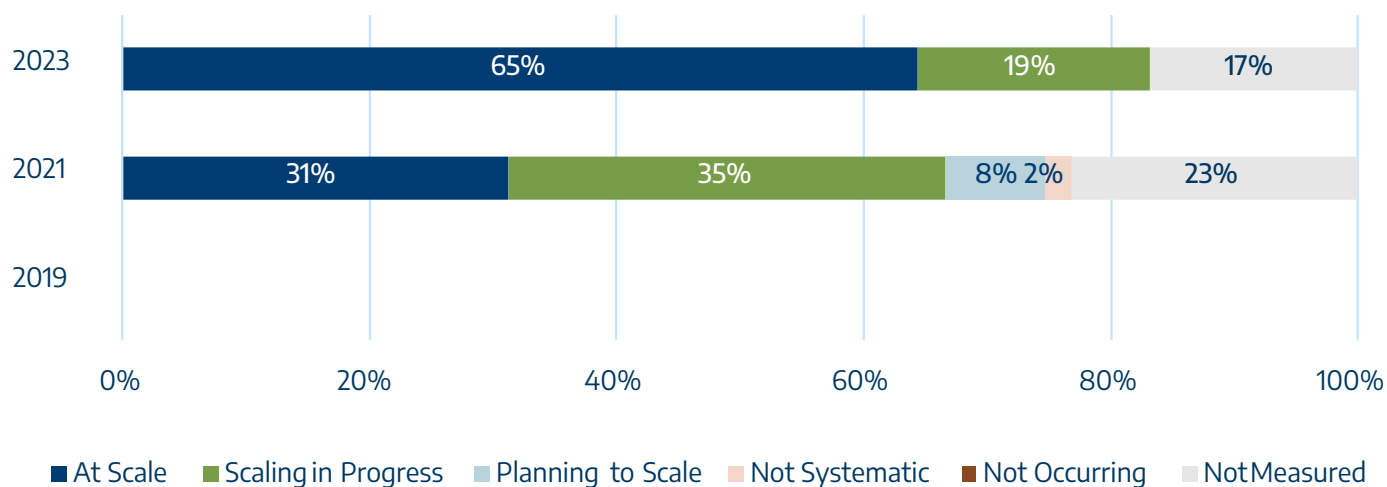
**Figure 4.** Proportion of colleges at each level of scale in Practice 2C in 2021, and 2023. N = 48



Note. In 2023, 40 of 48 colleges were measured and validated by the SOAA process. In 2021, 37 of 48 colleges were measured and validated. In 2019, practice 2C and 2D were not measured as separate items.

Colleges have also designed supports for English Composition I, utilizing just-in-time or paired designs. Some colleges have also started providing corequisite support for other reading- and writing-intensive courses like History, Government, Psychology, and Philosophy. This allows students to meet their college readiness requirements for reading and writing in more than one way. Of the 48 Texas Pathways colleges, 84% reported to be scaling or at scale in practice 2D, representing a growth of 18% from 2021.

Figure 5. Proportion of colleges at each level of scale in Practice 2D in 2021, and 2023. N = 48



Note. In 2023, 40 of 48 colleges were measured and validated by the SOAA process. In 2021, 37 of 48 colleges were measured and validated. In 2019, practice 2C and 2D were not measured as separate items.

Since corequisite support has been in place at colleges for several years, most colleges are now in the continuous improvement phase, looking to refine models to best serve students. Faculty, chairs, deans, and institutional research teams collect student success data and compare it with student demographic and academic data to determine how well models are serving the student population. Some colleges charge math and English department faculty with improving corequisite support courses, while others have formed cross-functional teams to assess and suggest improvements.

Some challenges that are being addressed at colleges include: responding with adequate faculty and sections to heightened demand for corequisite support courses since the pandemic, coordinating support course and entry-level course faculty, ensuring students enroll in the correct corequisite course on their math pathway, evaluating course design and success for online corequisite courses, advising students who are placed into more than one developmental area, and attending to students’ basic and academic support needs.

Many colleges have been creative with additional services for corequisite courses.

- **Alamo Colleges** created a “New Nighthawks” learning community designed as a year-long support system with the end goal of students successfully completing their college-level English course by the end of their first year in college.
- Many colleges like **Amarillo College**, **Alvin Community College**, and **Odessa College** have made tutoring and/or academic coaching mandatory for students placed into developmental courses and support courses.
- Some colleges like **Amarillo College** and **Paris Junior College** have designed 8-week corequisite course options to promote evidence-based structures for student success.



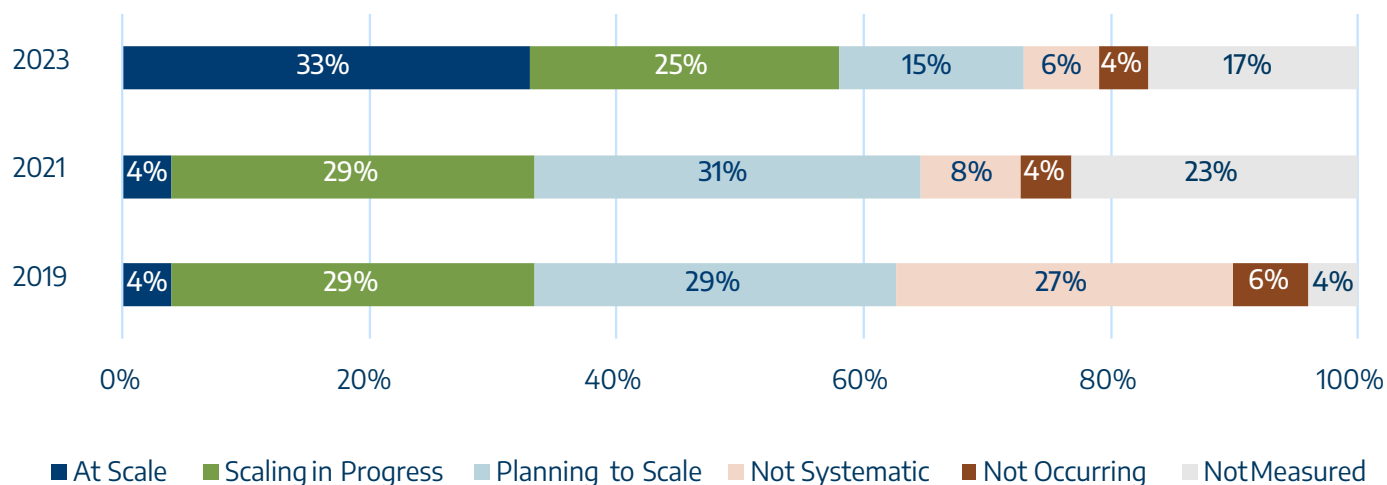
- **Clarendon College** responded to student needs in entry-level corequisite courses by designing and hiring for two new roles: academic and student services specialists; the new hires come with relevant experience to provide students with the supports they need to be successful on their first course attempt.
- **College of the Mainland** restructured institutional policies to spread required corequisite courses over more than one semester for students placed in more than one developmental area.
- **Dallas College** launched the faculty tutoring collaborative in Spring 2023, showcasing a collaborative approach to supporting corequisite students.
- **El Paso Community College** requires mandatory corequisite training for faculty to support instructors to be effective in the corequisite classroom.
- Several colleges like **Angelina College, Austin Community College, Central Texas College, Del Mar College, Kilgore College,** and **Lamar State College Orange** developed an Adult Education support course or a base Non-Course-Based Option (NCBO) for students scoring below the developmental level on the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA-2).
- **Ranger College** developed a way for students to select one-on-one support sessions with math faculty and tutors using Calendly and promotes collaboration between developmental math and college-level math instructors to improve teaching and learning.
- **Victoria College** aligned entry-level student achievement metrics with the college's strategic plan and made student success data available on dashboards so faculty, staff, and leadership can participate in continuing improvement efforts.
- **Vernon College** partnered with Region IX for additional instructor support to meet growing demand for corequisite instructors.



## Practice 2E. Intensive support is provided to help students placed into adult basic education to enter and succeed in college-level courses as soon as possible.

In Texas, Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) programs are coordinated by the Texas Workforce Commission. About 44 community colleges act as fiscal agents or in consortia to provide AEL services to students. These colleges across the state are making a concerted effort to develop pathways from AEL programs into continuing education, workforce, and academic programs at the college (Figure 6). To help AEL students succeed, colleges are providing intensive academic and advising supports to facilitate their smooth transition into and success in college-level courses. Colleges understand the importance of addressing the unique needs of adult learners, offering targeted services, and creating pathways for swift progression. In many cases, the growth of pathways for AEL students was due to champion leaders who brought information and ideas to college leaders. Of the 48 Texas Pathways colleges, 58% reported to be scaling or at scale in Practice 2E, representing a growth of 25% from 2021.

**Figure 6.** Proportion of colleges at each level of scale in Practice 2E in 2019, 2021, and 2023. N = 48



Note. In 2023, 40 of 48 colleges were measured and validated by the SOAA process. In 2021, 37 of 48 colleges were measured and validated. In 2019, 46 of 48 colleges were measured and validated.

Colleges are implementing diverse strategies, programs, and collaborations to overcome challenges and barriers associated with AEL. For example, colleges noted that there was need for more articulated agreements between AEL and college programs, and between colleges and community-based organizations providing AEL services. Rural colleges also noted the difficulty in meeting the high need for high school equivalency services and AEL courses across large service areas. To overcome these challenges, colleges are collaborating with local workforce boards, vocational rehab programs, community-based organizations, and independent school districts to weave funding strands and expand services.

- **Alamo Colleges** have made efforts to increase visibility for AEL pathways and prior learning assessment (PLA) opportunities. The colleges are working on alignment of AEL programs with continuing education.
- **Amarillo College** introduced “Career Ready You,” linking General Educational Development (GED) and English as a Second Language (ESL) courses directly to workforce certificates or associate degree programs.



- **Central Texas College** offers Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs for AEL students with a focus on digital literacy and college training. The college supports AEL and ESL students to attend the Success Academy orientation to understand the available AEL pathways at the college that lead to academic, career, or continuing education programs.
- Many colleges like **Coastal Bend College, College of the Mainland, Dallas College, Del Mar College, Frank Phillips College, Howard College, Paris Junior College,** and **Temple College** developed AEL pathways to support students to transition into programs at the college. This work required support from workforce, academic, continuing education, and leadership stakeholders.
- **Clarendon College** partnered with **Amarillo College** to build and offer their first AEL courses.
- **College of the Mainland** actively reaches out to students and families enrolled in GED programs, providing information and support during open houses to help students enroll as college credit students.
- AEL students at **Dallas College** have contextualized tutoring opportunities as part of their AEL program courses. AEL students at **Amarillo College, Del Mar College,** and **McLennan Community College** have access to supportive services at the college such as the tutoring centers, counseling services, writing centers, math learning centers, Supplemental Instruction leaders, and libraries.
- **Grayson College** involved faculty to align curriculum and support mechanisms in AEL and college courses along the AEL pathways.
- **Midland College** leveraged their Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) to provide academic and success coaching to AEL students.



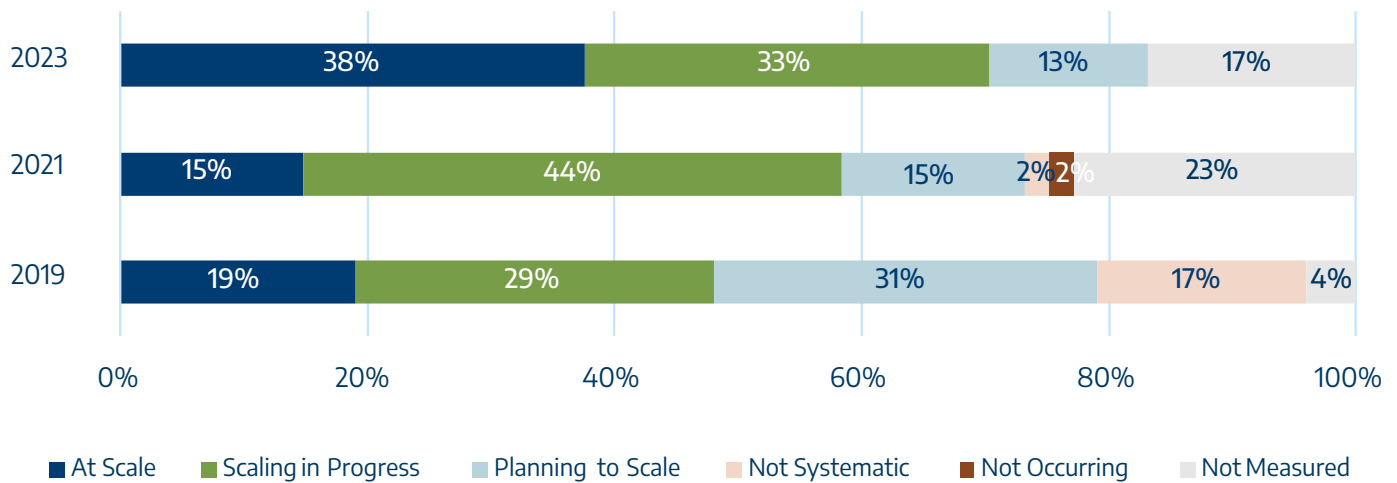


- Many colleges like **Del Mar College**, **Laredo College**, **McLennan Community College**, and **Tarrant County College** utilize Transition Coordinators and/or Career Navigators assist AEL students to place into appropriate coursework and transition through programs on AEL pathways.
- **North Central Texas College** is building initiatives to offer AEL courses for free in their service area and to expand AEL services more widely where possible.
- AEL students at **Odessa College** are concurrently enrolled in a contextualized Learning Framework course where they explore college options.
- **Temple College** designed the Direct your Destiny program to support students in career preparation programs to acquire six college-level credits to become eligible for the federal Ability to Benefit financial aid program and enter into a college program.
- **Tyler Junior College** partners with the Literacy Council of Tyler to support AEL and adult students transitioning to college programs with appropriate supports.
- **Wharton County Junior College** worked to integrate AEL into college processes and operations by revising job descriptions and reorganizing positions, including hiring a Career Advisor.

## Practice 2F. The college works with high schools and other feeders to motivate and prepare students to enter college-level coursework in a program of study when they enroll in college.

Texas community colleges are collaborating with high schools and feeder programs to inspire and prepare students for college-level coursework in various programs of study. Colleges are building effective relationships for collaboration, performing outreach, designing dual credit pathways, and providing comprehensive support to ensure seamless transitions from high school to college. Of the 48 Texas Pathways colleges, 71% reported to be scaling or at scale in practice 2F, representing a growth of 12% from 2021.

**Figure 7.** Proportion of colleges at each level of scale in Practice 2F in 2019, 2021, and 2023. N = 48



Note. In 2023, 40 of 48 colleges were measured and validated by the SOAA process. In 2021, 37 of 48 colleges were measured and validated. In 2019, 46 of 48 colleges were measured and validated.

**Relationship Building and Collaboration.** Colleges are reaching out to their middle school, high school, and community partners to introduce pathways and programs to prospective students and families. In some cases, colleges are leveraging legislative opportunities to offer college preparatory courses and in others, colleges are leveraging partnerships to offer pre-enrollment summer supports. Colleges are also using dual credit, early college high schools, and P-TECHs to offer intentional college programs and supports to high school students. These opportunities require strong relationships and collaboration between cross-sector partners.

- Many colleges like **Alamo Colleges, Alvin Community College, Blinn College, Laredo College, Western Texas College,** and **Wharton County Junior College** partner with high schools to train high school faculty for college preparatory courses and to offer summer bridge programs.
- **Blinn College** is integrating and expanding dual credit partnerships with intentional relationship-building efforts between college staff and high school staff.
- **Kilgore College** and **Temple College** hold annual meetings with high school counselors and leadership to provide updates on college programs and strengthen collaboration efforts.

- **Midland College** collaborates with local districts, focusing on dual credit pathways and career development. The partners have a sophisticated data sharing agreements to evaluate programs.
- **North Central Texas College** and **Western Texas College** are serving diverse schools, both large and small, by strategically collaborating with high schools and developing new P-TECH programs.
- High school counselors attend advising training sessions at **Ranger College**, and college staff visit partnering schools to build relationships.



- **San Jacinto College** has made dual credit opportunities available to students from 15 different high schools, including private and homeschooled students. Additionally, the college partnered with Pasadena ISD and Good Reason Houston to establish the [Harris County Promise Program](#), aiming to promote degree and certificate completion and foster a college-going culture among underrepresented high school students. Eligible students from selected local high schools can receive up to three years of guaranteed tuition and additional assistance after taking the Promise Pledge and becoming Harris County Promise Scholars.
- **Tarrant County College** has various partnerships and programs for college readiness, including dual credit, Early College High School, Texas College Bridge, House Bill 5 partnerships, student recruitment and outreach, "[Tarrant To and Through](#)" partnership, and TRIO Upward Bound.
- **Victoria College** has various initiatives, including TSIA-2 preparation, expanded continuing education classes, and teaching courses in local high schools, all geared towards preparing high school students for college-level work.

**Outreach Efforts.** Colleges continue to reach out to students and families in middle and high school to introduce college programs and promote a college-going culture for students interested in workforce and transfer programs.

- Many colleges like **Alamo Colleges, Angelina College, College of the Mainland, Dallas College, El Paso Community College, Frank Phillips College, South Texas College, and Tyler Junior College** design and distribute high school advising guides to high school counselors and students to aid in career and program exploration. College advising staff such as enrollment coaches, Success Coaches, or academic advisors follow up to discuss workforce and transfer options and resources to help high school students choose their pathway.



- Some colleges have been able to assign advisors to high schools, like **Alamo Colleges, Dallas College, Houston Community College, Kilgore College, Southwest Texas Junior College,** and **Vernon College** to support college and career exploration in high schools and dual credit student success.
- Recruiters from colleges like **Angelina College, Del Mar College, Houston Community College, Laredo College, Midland College, North Central Texas College, Panola College, Tyler Junior College,** and **Vernon College** organize events like college fairs, parents' nights, and campus tours for high schools to encourage more high school students to visit the campus, interact, and explore career and educational opportunities.
- Colleges such as **Austin Community College, Coastal Bend College, Lamar State College Orange, Lee College, McLennan Community College, Odessa College,** and **Panola College** engage in active efforts with middle and high school students, focusing on opportunities for hands-on career and pathway exploration.
- **Midland College** is developing an emerging initiative called "College and Career Connections" for early and effective communication with middle and high school students and families.

**Dual Credit Pathways.** There has been an intentional effort among dual credit programs to design clear pathways for students to college programs to replace piecemeal dual credit course taking. Students select a pathway or program to enter and progress along a pathway while still in high school.

- Most colleges that offer dual credit have designed academic and workforce pathways, including dual credit options for "not-college-ready" students, including **Alamo Colleges, Alvin Community College, Amarillo College, Austin Community College, Clarendon College, Central Texas College, College of the Mainland, Coastal Bend College, Dallas College, Del Mar College, Grayson College, Howard College, Kilgore College, Lamar State College Orange, Lee College, McLennan Community College, North Central Texas College, Panola College, Paris Junior College, South Texas College, Texarkana College, Weatherford College,** and **Western Texas College.**
- **Coastal Bend College, McLennan Community College, Panola College,** and **Texarkana College** integrated the Learning Framework course into the dual credit program to help high school students explore program and career options.
- Colleges like **Lee College, Paris Junior College,** and **Temple College** designed dual credit pathways and outreach efforts with language that mirrors high school endorsement language to help students and families understand how high school planning aligns with postsecondary planning.
- **South Texas College** has completely redesigned the Fast Track program to be a comprehensive All Access program.



**Dual Credit Student Supports.** Colleges are extending academic and basic needs supports to students enrolled in dual credit programs.

- At orientation, **Alamo Colleges** dual credit students learn about their pathway and which courses to choose in their first year and then their first semester. Then, they lock their educational plan based on the [Transfer Advising Guide](#) they have chosen. Career services then meets with students who have questions about career and college options.
- **Amarillo College** focuses on motivating and preparing middle school, high school, and dual credit students to join Amarillo College programs. The college offers robust dual credit classes through the “[Success 360](#)” program. They diligently track student choices, attendance, and program retention, providing dual credit opportunities across diverse pathways.
- Dual credit students at **Dallas College** make full program plans; the college extended its advising and success planning model to dual credit students to ensure they have a clear educational path with systematic supports.
- **Paris Junior College** made orientation mandatory for dual credit students before they register. The college supports students to select a program and provides an interest inventory and career assessment to help undecided students select an appropriate program.
- **Texas Southmost College** implemented a coaching system supported by their customer relationship management (CRM) system to assist high school and dual credit students in transitioning, enrolling, and succeeding in college programs.

### Conclusion

Texas Pathways colleges should be proud of the efforts they have undertaken to redesign the student experience by helping students choose and enter a pathway. The enhanced outreach, onboarding, and first-year experiences shared during the SOAA process demonstrate great progress scaling each Pillar 2 essential practice between 2019 and 2023.

To build on these successes and maintain momentum, colleges should consider:

- Continuing to invest in the development and implementation of career exploration activities and resources for all students, including providing access to career counseling, online career assessments, and experiential learning opportunities as soon as students connect with the college.
- Enhancing onboarding activities to reach all students with career and program exploration, registration and enrollment support, meta-major or program-relevant activities, and connections to college activities and resources.
- Leveraging technology to help all students choose and enter a program with supports such as career assessments, program exploration tools, program planning tools, basic needs assessments, connections to academic and basic needs supports, and college communications.
- Providing AEL, dual credit, and credit students with early access to program-relevant courses with appropriate in-semester academic and basic needs supports.
- Designing a continuous improvement plan for gateway course redesign and support structures, including the evaluation of corequisite supports for entry-level math, reading-intensive, and writing-intensive courses that include disaggregated quantitative student success measures and qualitative measures capturing the student, faculty, and advising voice.
- Formalizing AEL and dual credit pathways to academic, workforce, and continuing education programs, including clear guidelines on credit articulation opportunities.
- Strengthening partnerships with high schools and other feeder institutions, including providing professional development opportunities for high school counselors and teachers, and creating opportunities for collaboration with joint advising and transition programs.
- Consulting with students, families, and the community on the effectiveness of college efforts to connect students with pathways.

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## Correspondence

Kristina Flores, Ph.D.  
Senior Director of Research and Evaluation, Texas Success Center  
kflores@tacc.org



## Texas Success Center

The Texas Success Center supports the Texas Association of Community Colleges members' efforts to improve student success and directs Talent Strong Texas Pathways —a statewide strategy focused on building capacity for community colleges to design and implement structured academic and career pathways at scale, for all students. For more information, visit [tacc.org/tsc](https://tacc.org/tsc).