

60x30TX Progress Report

July 2018

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board



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Agency Mission

The mission of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) is to provide leadership and coordination for the Texas higher education system and to promote access, affordability, quality, success, and cost efficiency through *60x30TX*, resulting in a globally competitive workforce that positions Texas as an international leader.

Agency Vision

The THECB will be recognized as an international leader in developing and implementing innovative higher education policy to accomplish our mission.

Agency Philosophy

The THECB will promote access to and success in quality higher education across the state with the conviction that access and success without quality is mediocrity and that quality without access and success is unacceptable.

The Coordinating Board's core values are:

Accountability: We hold ourselves responsible for our actions and welcome every opportunity to educate stakeholders about our policies, decisions, and aspirations.

Efficiency: We accomplish our work using resources in the most effective manner.

Collaboration: We develop partnerships that result in student success and a highly qualified, globally competent workforce.

Excellence: We strive for excellence in all our endeavors.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services.

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Acronyms Used in This Report

A		FAFSA	Free Application for Federal Student Aid
ACGM	Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual	FLAC	Financial Literacy Advisory Committee
ACS	American Community Survey	FOSC	Field of Study Curricula
AEL	Adult Education and Literacy	FY	Fiscal Year
AIR	American Institutes for Research	H	
ATAC	Apply TX Advisory Committee	HB	House Bill
B		I	
BASE	Basic Academic Skill Education	ICP	Integrated Career Pathways
C		N	
CABM	Certificate, Associate, Bachelor's, Master's	NCBO	Non-course Competency-Based
CAB	Certificate, Associate, Bachelor's	P	
CERT 1	Workforce Certificate Level 1	POS	Program of Study
CCRS	College and Career Readiness Standards	S	
CTE	Career and Technical Education	SCH	Semester Credit Hours
D		T	
DE	Developmental Education	TAB	Texas Affordable Baccalaureate
E		TCC	Texas Core Curriculum
ESC	Education Service Center	TEA	Texas Education Agency
F		TSIA	Texas Success Initiative Assessment
FAD	Financial Aid Database	TWC	Texas Workforce Commission
		W	
		WECM	Workforce Education Course Manual

Executive Summary

Statewide, colleges and universities must work closely with the K-12 school system and with business and industry if 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 are to hold a certificate or degree by 2030, and if the educated population of the state is to grow dramatically in response to the state's needs.

It's no mistake that leaders from higher education, K-12, and business and industry served on the advisory committee responsible for bringing *60x30TX* to life. They foresaw future scenarios for Texas, some of which resulted in the state's economy losing its competitive edge. To avoid that fate, they worked together, modeling the plan they helped to develop. The progress this report shows in Table 1 (on page iii) toward many of the *60x30TX* goals and targets suggests that this work is happening and that K-12, higher education, and business leaders are answering the call.

Progress on the Overarching 60x30 (Educated Population) Goal

The 60x30 goal focuses on growing the college-educated population for an age group that represents the future of the state – those who have recently completed their education and/or are moving up in the workforce. An estimated 42.3 percent of Texas residents, ages 25-34, had at least a certificate from a higher education institution in 2016, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), supplemented by THECB estimates of certificate holders. That was up from 41.0 percent the previous year. This measure includes the fraction of the population holding a certificate or a higher level of education, i.e., associate, bachelor's, master's, professional, or doctoral degrees.

In 2005, the first year that ACS data were available, just 34.1 percent of Texans, ages 25-34, held a certificate or higher award. While the 2016 attainment rate was 8.2 percentage points higher, the attainment rate will need to grow much faster – almost 1.3 points annually – to reach the 2030 target of 60 percent.

Progress on the Completion Goal

Students of all ages at Texas public, independent, and career higher education institutions completed nearly 334,000 certificates and associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees (CABMs) in Fiscal Year (FY) 2017. This was 3.9 percent more than the 321,410 completions in FY 2016. If institutions can increase their CABM awards by 4.0 percent through FY 2020, they will reach that year's benchmark of 376,000 completions. Bachelor's degrees comprised the largest component of CABMs in FY 2017 (about 134,000), while associate completions increased the fastest since FY 2016, by 4.6 percent. Career school awards dropped by almost 300 in FY 2017, following a drop of more than 6,000 CABMs at career schools in FY 2016.

The *60x30TX* plan specifically targets Hispanics, African Americans, males (all racial/ethnic groups), and economically disadvantaged students (Pell Grant recipients) for increased completions. Hispanic students exceeded the estimated number of completions needed to stay on-track for the 2030 target by 300, earning 111,344 CABMs in FY 2017. African American students completed about 2,200, or 5.7 percent more CABMs in FY 2017 than the previous year, after an unusual 0.4 percent drop in FY 2016. Males completed 4.2 percent more CABMs in FY 2017, but their share of statewide completions only increased by 0.1 percentage point, to 42.4 percent. By 2030, *60x30TX* planners expect male students to

complete 275,000 CABMs, half of that year's statewide target of 550,000 CABMs. Economically disadvantaged students saw their CAB awards (which, by definition, exclude master's degrees awarded by any type of institution as well as all awards from career schools) grow by 4,700 in FY 2017. That still left them about 800 short of the estimated progress needed for that year. They will need to increase CABs by almost 7,300 a year to reach the 2020 benchmark.

The plan also targets direct-to-college-going rates of public high school graduates because those who enroll immediately in higher education in the fall are more likely to be college ready and complete a CABM. The rate of public high school graduates enrolling directly in public or independent higher education in fall 2017 increased to 52.3 percent from 51.9 percent the previous year. However, the rate was still below fall 2015's rate of 52.7 percent.

Progress on the Marketable Skills Goal

Higher education institutions have been asked to identify marketable skills – those skills valued by employers – that students should expect to acquire by the time they graduate. The third *60x30TX* goal is that all graduates of Texas public institutions (completing a certificate or any level of degree, i.e., associate through doctoral or professional) will have completed programs with identified marketable skills. Some institutions have made substantial progress toward identifying marketable skills, while others are beginning to develop processes for identification. A target related to this goal is the percent of graduates remaining in Texas and found working and/or enrolled in Texas during the first fiscal year following graduation. The target is 80 percent for every year of *60x30TX*.

The state has been close to this target for the last three years with little change, so we have seen consistent employment outcomes. Of about 281,000 completers (certificate or higher) at Texas public, independent, and career institutions in FY 2014, 78.9 percent were working and/or enrolled in higher education at some time in FY 2015. The percentage dropped to 78.8 percent and remained at 78.8 percent for FY 2016 completers.

Progress on the Student Debt Goal

Students should not have to bear excessive loan debt to boost the state's economy. The fourth and final statewide goal is to keep median undergraduate debt (excluding students with no loan debt) to no higher than 60 percent of first-year wages, for the life of the *60x30TX* plan. For graduates of Texas public institutions, the median debt-to-wages percentage for FY 2013 graduates was 59.5 percent. It rose to 59.8 percent the following year, but dropped to 58.9 percent for FY 2015 graduates.

A target under the student debt goal is to limit the proportion of undergraduate students with debt to no more than half. In FY 2015, that target was met when 49.2 percent of students, who earned undergraduate certificates, associate degrees, or bachelor's degrees from public and independent institutions, had some loan debt. The percent dropped further to 48.2 percent in FY 2016 and to 47.2 percent in FY 2017.

Another way to manage debt is to reduce excess semester credit hours (SCH) attempted by students on their way to graduating from a public institution. In FY 2015, the average excess was 28 SCH for students completing an associate degree and 14 SCH for bachelor's completers; an average excess of 19 SCH overall. The average excess for an associate degree dropped to 27 SCH in FY 2016, but the average excess was unchanged for a bachelor's degree and overall. Then in FY 2017, the averages dropped to 26 SCH for associate

degree completers and 13 SCH for bachelor's degree completers. Overall, excess SCH decreased to 18 excess SCH. The *60x30TX* plan aims to reduce excess SCH attempted to just three by 2030, for both an associate and a bachelor's degree completers combined.

Legislative Recommendations

When the 86th Texas Legislature convenes in January 2019, Texas will be nearly one-third of the way toward the conclusion of *60x30TX*. Given the time it can take for budgetary and policy changes to reach their full impact, the decisions the Legislature makes now regarding higher education will have an outsized influence on whether Texas reaches its educated population, completion, marketable skills, and student debt goals.

In April of 2018, the THECB adopted a set of budgetary and policy recommendations for the Legislature. These recommendations are designed to help improve student outcomes, increase the efficiency of the state's investment in higher education, and otherwise contribute to achieving *60x30TX* goals.

Table 1. Progress toward goals and targets of *60x30TX*.

Goal	Target	2015 Baseline*	2016	2017
60x30	60x30 (Attainment)	40.3%	41.0%	42.3%
Completion	Overall	311,340	321,410	333,920
	Hispanic	96,657	103,889	111,344
	African American	38,964	38,813	41,027
	Male	131,037	135,849	141,564
	Economically Disadvantaged	114,176	119,490	124,178
	TX High School Graduates Enrolling in TX Higher Education	52.7%	51.9%	52.3%
Marketable Skills	Working or Enrolled Within One Year	78.9%	78.8%	78.8%
Student Debt	Student Loan Debt to First-Year-Wage Percentage	59.5%	59.8%	58.9%
	Excess SCH Attempted**	19	19	18
	Percent of Undergraduates Completing with Debt	49.2%	48.2%	47.2%

*Baseline uses 2015 data when possible; otherwise most recent data available are used.

**In January 2018, all years revised for two-year institutions to (i) use 60 semester credit hours as requirement for all associate degrees and (ii) remove graduates who previously earned an associate degree from the analysis.

Introduction

Twelve years remain in the *60x30TX* higher education plan for Texas.¹ The overarching goal of the plan is for 60 percent of young adult Texans, ages 25-34, to have a certificate or degree by 2030. Residents who will be 25 years-old in 2030 – in time to help reach this goal – are now 13. How can the state, K-12, and higher education help to prepare them for college and ultimately prepare them for a successful career?

At the same time, Texans who earn credentials in the final years of *60x30TX*, but who do not fall into the 25-34 age range, will not count toward the first goal, although they will help Texas meet the other three goals of the plan. How can the state work with business and industry leaders not only to maintain but also to recruit new talent to Texas to help reach the 60 percent goal? And how can higher education support those efforts?

These questions are intended to show a critical aspect of the first goal: Statewide, colleges and universities must work closely with the K-12 school system and with business and industry if 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 are to hold a certificate or degree by 2030 and if the educated population of the state is to grow dramatically in response to the state's needs.

The first goal, and the entirety of *60x30TX*, is a call to look beyond the usual partners and pathways.

It's no mistake that leaders from higher education, K-12, and business and industry served on the advisory committee responsible for bringing *60x30TX* to life. They foresaw future scenarios for Texas, some of which resulted in the state's economy losing its competitive edge. To avoid that fate, they worked together, modeling the plan they helped to develop.

Their collaborative spirit wrought goals that require partnerships, teamwork, and alliances among sometimes unlikely partners, teams, and players. This was one of the many geniuses of the Higher Education Strategic Planning Committee of 2015 led by Woody Hunt, a well-known business leader in Texas, and Larry Faulkner, former President at The University of Texas at Austin. They understood along with their accomplished colleagues from all over the state that, for Texas and Texans to continue succeeding in a global economy, all those with a stake in higher education needed to work together through both established relationships and groundbreaking partnerships.

As the goal that assesses the educated population of the state, the overarching goal in *60x30TX* is bold, and yet there is a blueprint for viability through erasing divisions of the past and doing business differently in Texas higher education. The progress this report shows toward many of the *60x30TX* goals and targets suggests that this work is happening and that K-12, higher education, and business leaders are answering the call.

The first goal, and the entirety of *60x30TX*, is indeed a call to look beyond the usual partners and pathways. It's a call to educate and prepare the current and future workforce, one that is both skilled and adaptable. It's a call for a holistic approach to students that will ripple as those students move into careers, families, and communities, or as they return to complete degrees. To meet the goals of *60x30TX* is to look down the road and see students of every

¹ The baseline for *60x30TX* is FY 2015 data when possible, although some measures lag one or two years behind. This is the second *60x30TX* progress report and includes the most recent data available to track the goals and targets of the plan. Most of the data in this year's report comes from FY 2017.

background succeeding in Texas. With that success comes a flourishing economy, an able workforce, and a state of vibrant communities.

As this report shows, Texas is beginning to make progress toward its goals and is seeing early signs of improvement. Statewide, higher education stakeholders, however, must continue to set the stage for success, to help Texas ensure a good future for those who will soon enter the workforce and for the millions that will inherit our successes.

About this Report

This is the third *60x30TX* progress report issued by the THECB. It provides breakouts and explanations of the *60x30TX* metrics and displays goals and targets through 2030. In addition, this report summarizes THECB activities or initiatives that are supporting and helping to achieve the goals and targets listed in *60x30TX*.

An appendix at the back of this report provides the fifth annual assessment of progress on the most recent plans developed by higher education institutions to improve collaborations with Texas high schools whose graduates have low college-going rates. This assessment is required by House Bill (HB) 2550, passed in 2013 by the 83rd Texas Legislature, Regular Session. The assessment also presents measures of student success, including college-going rates and persistence, which could be influenced by HB 2550 activities. The publication of this information may help identify ways to increase high school-to-college enrollment, a target under the completion goal, as well as support several strategies listed in the *60x30TX* plan.

Progress Toward Reaching the Goals of 60x30TX



THE OVERARCHING GOAL: 60x30
At least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.
■ Supports the economic future of the state

The Higher Education Strategic Planning Committee, responsible for helping develop 60x30TX, adapted the goal of 60 percent from a report by the Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University.² The report indicated that approximately 60 percent of new jobs will require higher education credentials and skills as early as 2020. The committee chose to focus on Texans ages 25-34 to show the state's educational achievement for the current and future workforce. What resulted is the overarching goal of 60x30TX.

The focus of this goal is to grow the college-educated population so that, by 2030, 60 percent or more of Texans ages 25-34 will have attained an education level of a certificate or degree (associate through professional) from a higher education institution.

It's important to note that this goal counts people, not credentials. Specifically, it counts Texas residents ages 25-34 who have one or more of these:

- A level I, II, or advanced technical certificate, as defined in the *Guidelines for Instructional Programs in Workforce Education*
- Any degree – associate, bachelor's, master's, professional, or doctoral.

A Texas resident may have multiple certificates or degrees, earned in or out of state, but that resident is only counted once toward this goal.

A Texas resident may have multiple certificates or degrees, earned in or out of state, but that resident is only counted once toward this goal – and only if that resident is between the ages of 25 and 34.

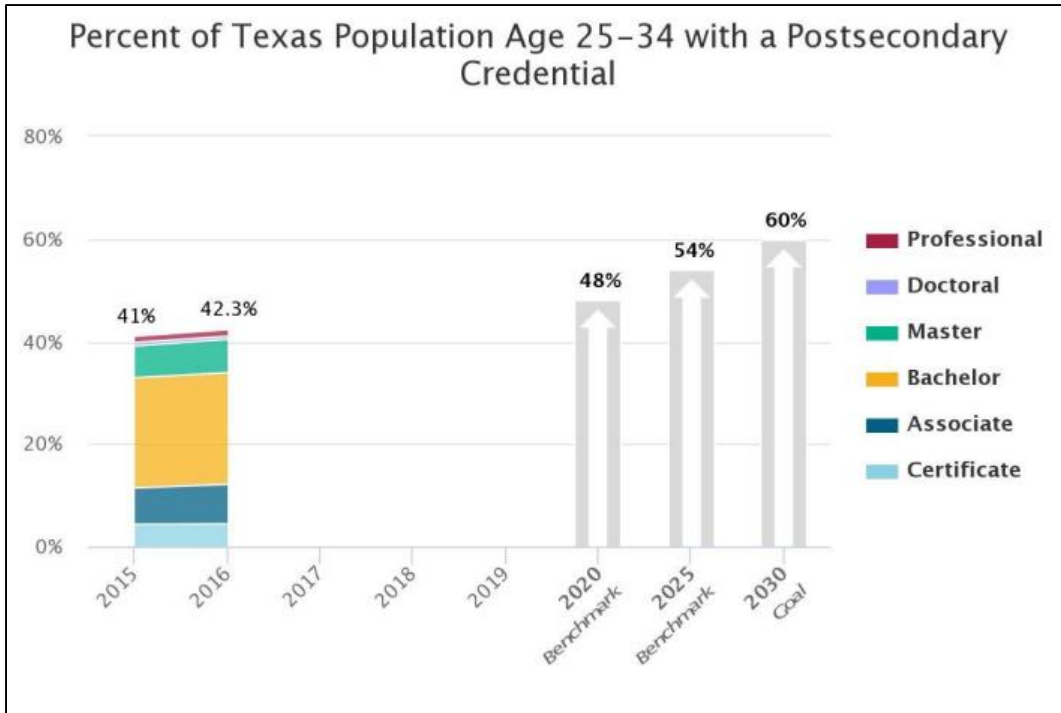
Overall Progress – Overarching Goal

Figure 1 (shown on the next page) displays progress between 2015 and 2016, as well as benchmarks for 2020 and 2025 (48% and 54%, respectively) that could provide a pathway to the goal. In 2016, the percentage increased to 42.3 percent for Texas residents ages 25-34, from 41.0 percent in 2015, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS).³

² See [Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements through 2020](#), 2013, by Anthony Carnevale.

³ When 60x30TX was adopted in 2015, it used 2013 data and 38.3 percent of Texans ages 25-34 were estimated to hold a certificate or degree.

Figure 1. Texas college-educated population



How this Goal is Calculated

The overarching goal is the only measure in the *60x30TX* plan that is based on a sample survey.⁴ Staff at the THECB derived this goal's data for 2014 through 2016 by first using the Census Bureau's ACS estimates of the number of 25- to 34-year-old Texas residents whose highest level of education was an associate, bachelor's, master's, professional, or doctoral degree. For estimating certificate attainment, THECB staff had to calculate the number of residents whose highest credential was a certificate, because the ACS does not collect attainment data just for certificates. Staff first determined the annual ratio of certificate completions to associate degree completions (using data collected annually from higher education institutions by the THECB) for students, ages 25-34, graduating from Texas public, independent, and career institutions. Staff then multiplied this ratio by the annual ACS estimate of 25-34-year-old Texans with an associate degree level of attainment.⁵

⁴ Estimates of attainment have a margin of error, expressed as a confidence interval. Statistical testing is required to compare attainment estimates. For 2016 attainment, the 90 percent confidence interval was 42.3 percent, plus or minus 0.5 percent, or 41.8 to 42.8 percent. That was up 1.3 percentage points from 41.0 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) in 2015, an increase that was statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level, based on a "Z-test." Educational attainment in 2015 was 0.7-point higher than in 2014 (40.3%), but that increase was not statistically significant. For additional detail about confidence intervals and the American Community Survey, see U.S. Census Bureau website: https://factfinder.census.gov/help/en/confidence_interval_american_community_survey.htm.


⁵ This approach assumes the ratio of certificate to associate completions was a good proxy for the ratio of certificate to associate attainment.

Historically, Texas educational attainment (ages 25-34, certificate or higher) significantly increased from 34.1 percent in 2005 (when the ACS was first implemented) to 41.0 percent in 2015, a 10-year rise of about 0.7 percentage points a year. The 1.3-point increase from 2015 to 2016 was nearly double the yearly rate from 2005 to 2015. Attainment will need to continue to increase by almost 1.3 percentage points every year so that Texas can reach the 60 percent overarching goal by 2030. To reach the 2020 benchmark of 47.7 percent (displayed as 48% in Figure 1), attainment will need to increase by 1.35 percentage points annually.

To reach the 2020 benchmark, attainment will need to increase by 1.35 percentage points annually.

About 1.72 million Texans ages 25-34 had a certificate or higher level of college education in 2016 (42.3% of about 4.07 million 25- to 34-year-olds), up from 1.63 million Texans in 2015. Approximately 886,000, or 51.4 percent of those college-educated residents held a bachelor's degree, the largest share of the total and up nearly 34,000, or 4.0 percent from 2015.

While bachelor's holders had the greatest increase in educational attainment in 2016, the fastest growth was in professional degree attainment, which grew 12.5 percent (47,672 to 53,610). Associate degree attainment had the next fastest growth (10.3%), from about 283,000 to 313,000. Doctoral degree attainment was the only category that saw a decrease in 2016, from 26,310 to 25,256 (-4.0%).



THE SECOND GOAL: COMPLETION
 At least 550,000 students in 2030 will complete a certificate, associate, bachelor's, or master's from an institution of higher education in Texas.
 ■ *Requires large increases among targeted groups*

The second goal of *60x30TX* complements the overarching goal because increased certificate and degree completions in Texas will help grow the Texas college-educated resident population. The goal, as shown above, is for at least 550,000 students (of all ages) to complete a certificate, associate, bachelor's or master's (CABM) in FY 2030 from an institution of higher education in Texas (including public, independent, or career institutions).

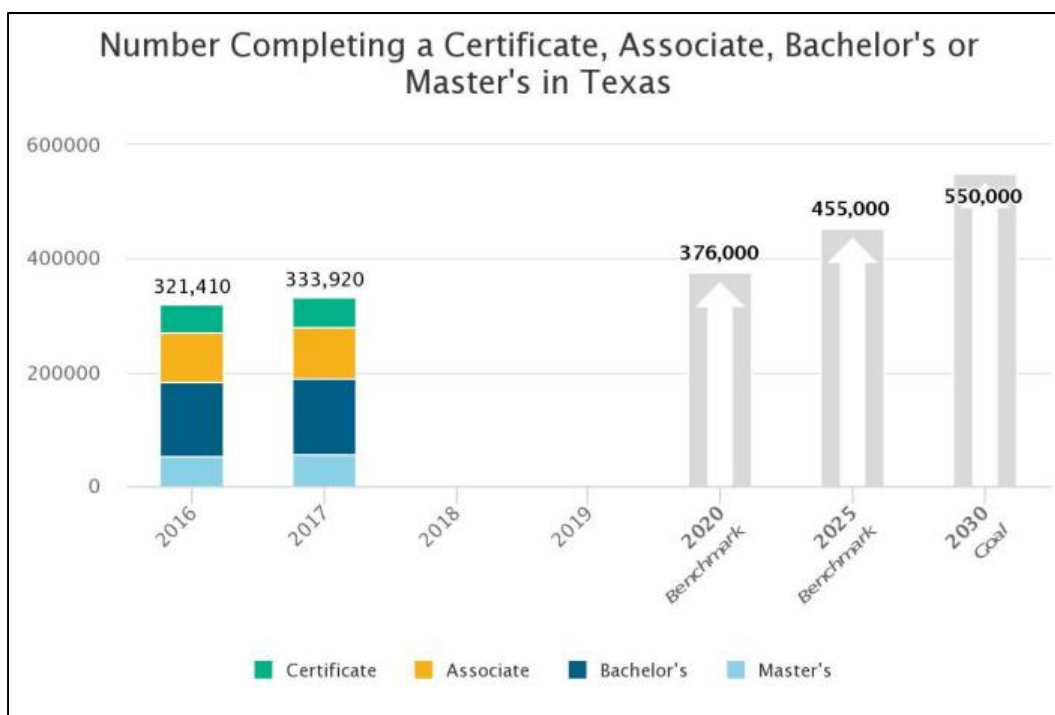
It's important to remember this goal complements the first, in that it is an institutional goal, while the first is a statewide goal with many stakeholders outside higher education institutions. The key differences between this goal and the first are that:

- this goal is not age-specific;
- this goal counts credentials, not people; and
- credentials that are counted must be from a Texas college or university.

Reaching this goal assumes that the annual number of completions will steadily increase from 2016 through 2030. If every annual CABM goal is achieved, students at Texas institutions will have completed at least 6.4 million CABMs in those 15 years. In FY 2017, students at Texas public, independent, and career institutions completed 333,920 CABMs (Figure 2), up by 12,510, or 3.9 percent from 2016, following a 3.2 percent increase between FY 2015 and FY 2016. The state needs to slightly increase the annual growth rate, to 4.0 percent, to reach the 2020 benchmark of 376,000 completions.

It's important to remember this goal complements the first, in that it is an institutional goal, while the first is a statewide goal.

Figure 2. CABMs completed at Texas public, independent, and career institutions



Overall Progress – Completion Goal

Completions of CABMs increased from FY 2015 through FY 2017 at nearly all major types of institutions – public and independent two-year, four-year, and health-related – except career schools. Health-related institutions’ completions increased the fastest (16.2%), from 4,906 to 5,700, while public two-year institutions’ completions grew the most (15,212), from 108,083 to 123,295 (a 14.1% increase). Students at public four-year institutions earned 144,667 CABMs in FY 2017, nearly 12,000, or 8.9 percent more than in FY 2015. Completions by students at independent institutions grew from 29,345 in FY 2015 to 30,468 in FY 2017.

At career schools, awards dropped from 36,217 in FY 2015 to 30,066 the next year and then to 29,790 – a two-year decline of 6,427, or 17.7 percent. The largest and fastest two-year decrease in career school CABMs was for “other” students (not classified as Hispanic, African American, white, or Asian) whose awards dropped about 44 percent, or 2,243 from 5,128 to 2,885. White students had the next biggest two-year decrease in career school CABMs, from 9,858 to 7,836. African Americans had a big loss in career school CABMs from FY 2015 to FY 2016 (7,439 to 5,883, a 1,556, or 20.9% decline), but they experienced a rebound to 6,534 CABMs in FY 2017. Some reasons for the decline in Texas career school completions – which peaked at over 44,000 in FY 2012 – include the closing of schools such as ITT Technical Institute (all campuses) in 2016 and Le Cordon Bleu-Austin in 2017, and an increase in schools reporting completion data to the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) but not to the THECB (a decline in reporting but not necessarily in completions).

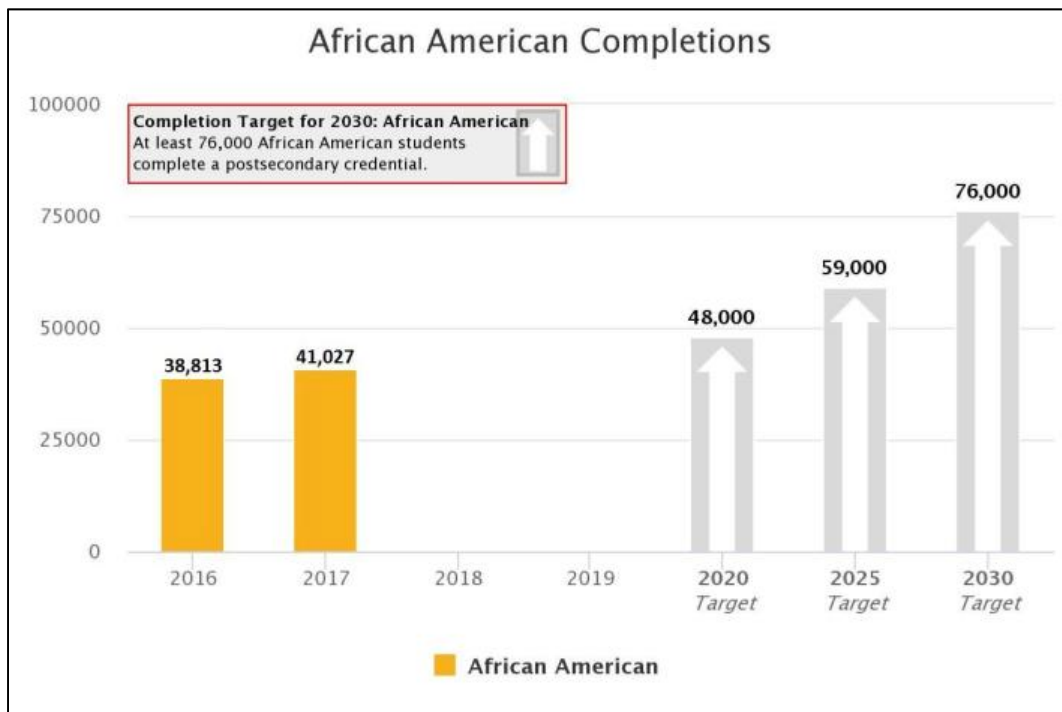
Among the four types of CABMs (across all types of institutions), associate completions increased the fastest, from 87,423 in FY 2016 to 91,434 in FY 2017 – an increase of just over 4.6 percent. Bachelor’s degrees made up the largest component of completions in both years

and had the greatest absolute increase (5,036, or 3.9%), growing from about 129,000 to 134,000. Master's completions rose by approximately 2,300, or 4.3 percent in FY 2017, to 55,651, while students completed nearly 2.3 percent more certificates in 2017, reaching a total of 52,756.

Progress on African American Completions

Figure 3 shows that CABM completions by African American students increased by about 2,200, or 5.7 percent in FY 2017, after declining by 151, or 0.4 percent from FY 2015 to FY 2016. Males' share of African American completions grew in FY 2017, to 36.2 percent, as they completed nearly 1,000, or 6.6 percent more CABMs, versus a 5.2 percent increase in CABMs by African American females. Despite the strong showing in FY 2017, African Americans were still about 1,600 CABMs short of the estimated progresses needed by 2017 of 42,626. The decrease in 2016 appears to be an anomaly; for example, it was the only year between FY 2010 and FY 2017 when African American completions dropped. Also, African American CABMs increased by 52.9 percent from FY 2010 to FY 2017, exceeded only by Hispanics' 81.3 percent increase among the state's major racial/ethnic groups (Asian and white CABMs grew by 51.2 and 15.8%, respectively). An increase of nearly 500 associate degrees in FY 2016 was not enough to offset drops in the three other types of awards that year for African Americans.

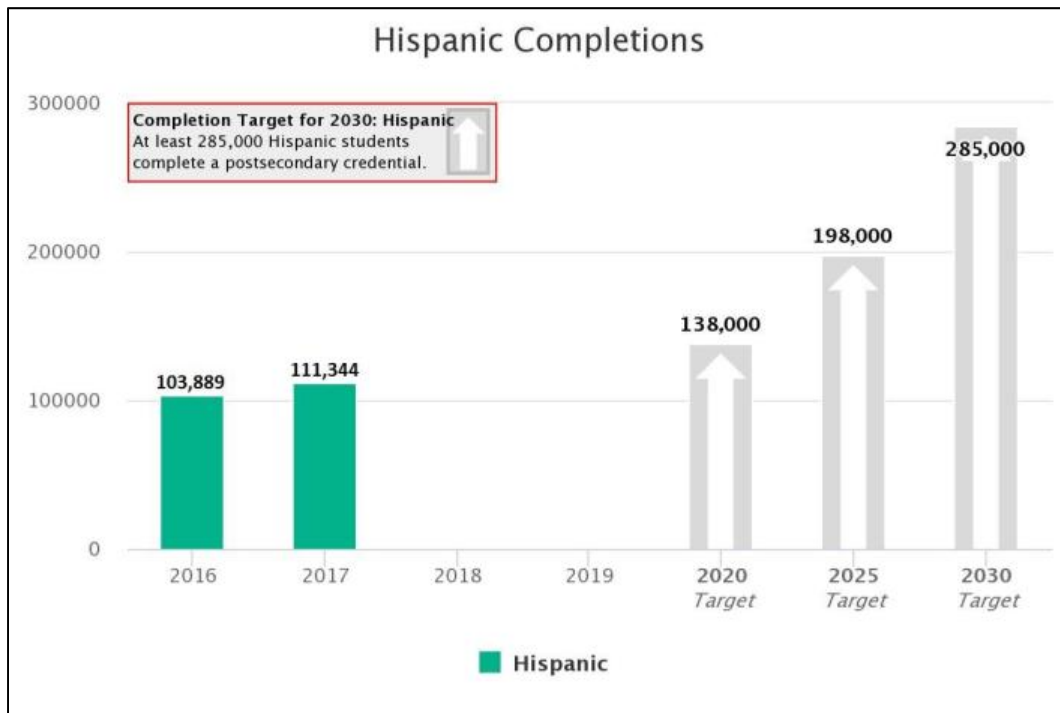
Figure 3. CABMs completed by African Americans at Texas public, independent, and career institutions



Progress on Hispanic Completions

For the third consecutive year, Hispanic students exceeded the estimated number of completions needed to stay on track for the 2030 target, earning 111,344 CABMs in FY 2017 (Figure 4). They completed 96,657 CABMs in the *60x30TX* base year of FY 2015, about 600 over needed progress, and 103,889 the following year, also about 600 over needed progress. Hispanic males completed 44,496 CABMs in FY 2017, 40.0 percent of the total and 15.0 percent more than in FY 2015. However, males' share of the total was unchanged from FY 2015, as females completed 66,843 CABMs in FY 2017, 15.3 percent more than in FY 2015. All four types of awards increased in FY 2017, as master's degrees led the way with an almost 11 percent increase, from 8,680 to 9,621. Hispanic students will reach the 2020 benchmark of 138,000 completions if they can increase CABMs by at least 7.4 percent annually over the next three years – about the same rate of increase they have achieved in the last two years.

Figure 4. CABMs completed by Hispanics at Texas public, independent, and career institutions

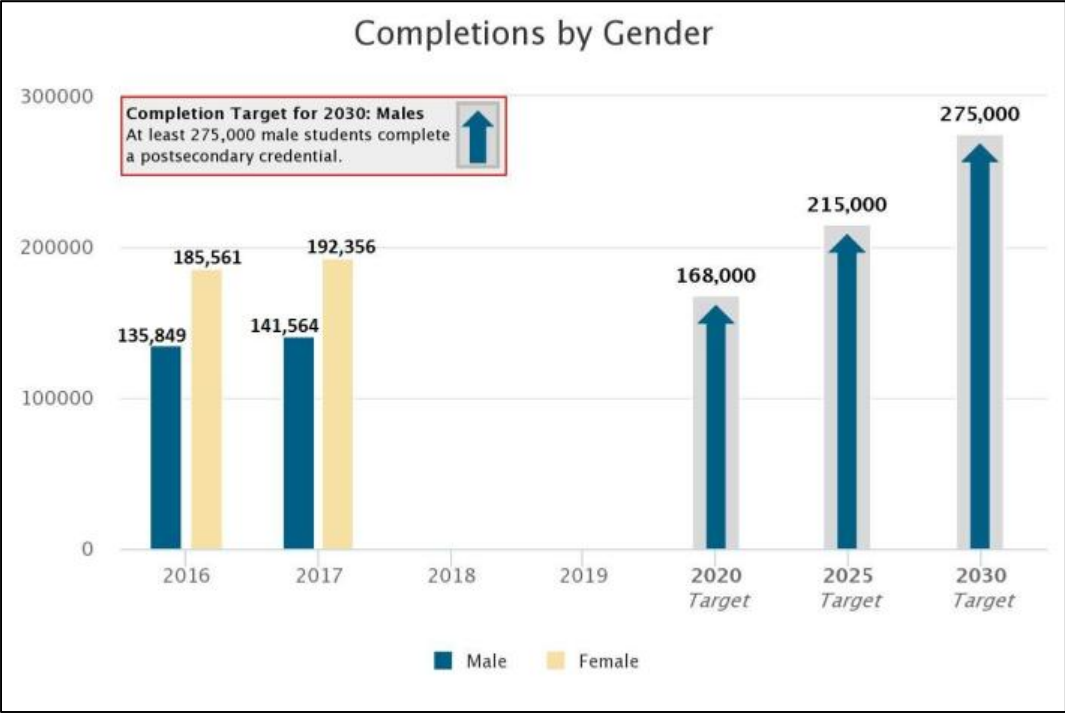


Progress on Male Completions

Male students (all racial/ethnic groups) completed 141,564 CABMs in FY 2017, a 4.2 percent increase from the previous year, but their share of statewide CABMs only increased to 42.4 percent (Figure 5). By 2030, *60x30TX* planners expect male students to complete 275,000 CABMs, half of that year's statewide target of 550,000 awards. Texas males will need to increase their share of CABM completions much faster than they have so far -- to nearly 0.6 percentage points a year from FY 2018 through FY 2030 – to reach the 50 percent target.

Female students earned 192,356 CABMs in FY 2017, nearly 51,000 more than males and an increase of 6,795, or 3.7 percent from the previous year.

Figure 5. CABMs completed by males and females at Texas public, independent, and career institutions

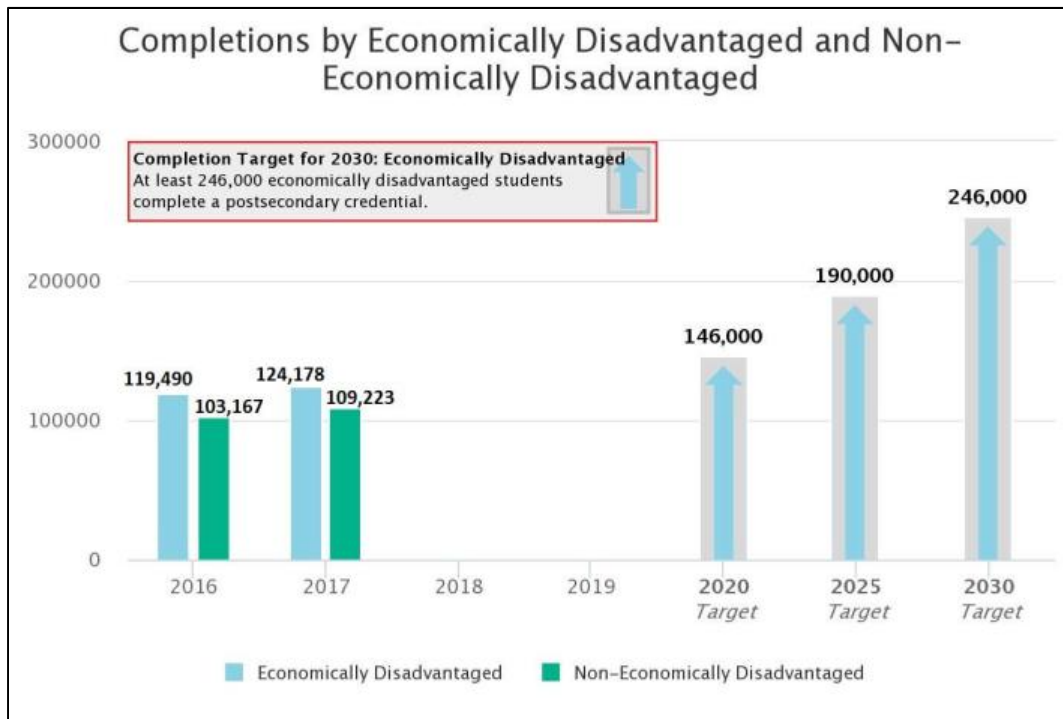


Progress on Economically Disadvantaged Completions

Figure 6 displays completion data for economically disadvantaged students, defined as those who received Pell Grants at any time from 1997 through the most recent fiscal year for which Pell data are available. Completions for these students – certificates, associate degrees, and bachelor’s degrees (CABs) – exclude master’s degrees from any type of institution and all awards from career schools for purposes of the *60x30TX* plan. Economically disadvantaged students got off to a good start for *60x30TX* when their completions in FY 2016 totaled 119,490, 490 more than the estimated progress needed by FY 2016 of 119,000. They also had approximately 16,000 more completions than non-economically disadvantaged students, with 103,167 CABs. One reason for this higher number of completions is that a student is classified as economically disadvantaged if they *ever* receive a Pell Grant, so it becomes increasingly likely that students will be classified as economically disadvantaged as they progress through higher education and approach graduation.

Despite the good start in FY 2016, completions of 124,178 in FY 2017 for economically disadvantaged students were 822 short of the estimated progress needed for that year (125,000), even though these students increased their CABs by nearly 4,700, or 3.9 percent. In the next three years, they will need to increase their completions by almost 7,300 a year to reach the 2020 target of 146,000.

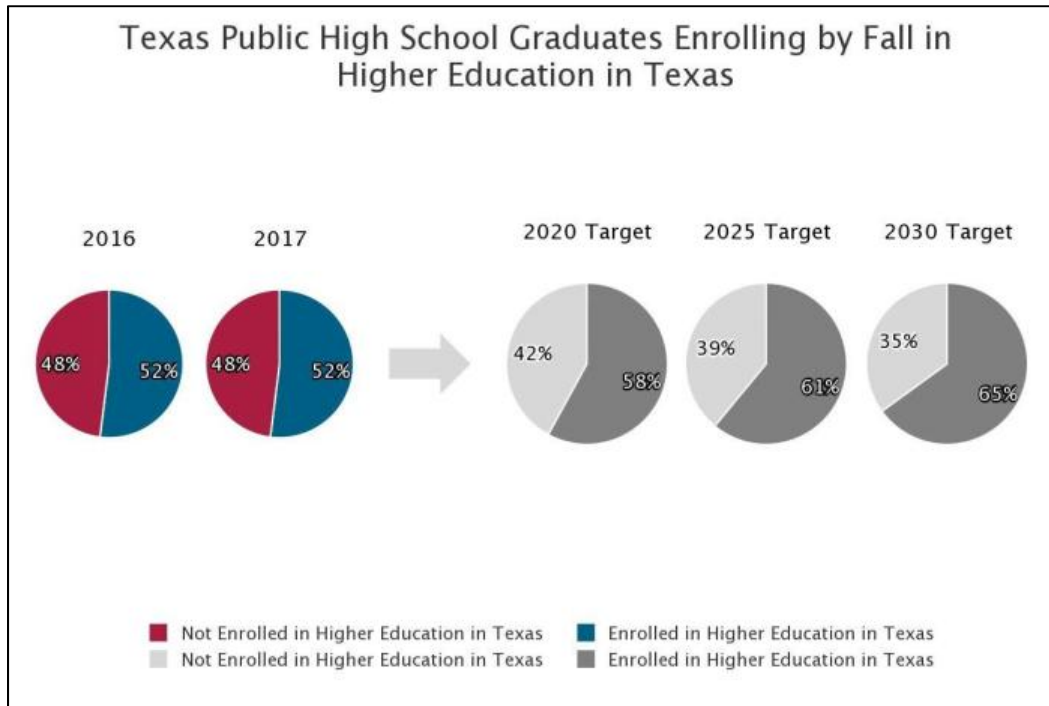
Figure 6. CABs completed by economically disadvantaged students at Texas public and independent institutions



Progress on Direct High School-to-College Enrollment


One way to increase the number of higher education completions is to boost direct high school-to-college rates. Students who enroll in higher education directly from high school have higher rates of college readiness and complete their degree programs more quickly and successfully.

Figure 7. Public high school-to-college rates at Texas public and independent higher education institutions



Of approximately 317,000 students with trackable IDs who graduated from Texas public high schools in FY 2017, 52.3 percent enrolled directly in a Texas public or independent higher education institution in fall 2017 (Figure 7). While that was 0.4 point higher than the college-going rate of 51.9 percent the previous year, it was still below the 52.7 percent rate for FY 2015 high school graduates.

Asian graduates (including Pacific Islanders) of Texas public high schools went directly to public or independent higher education in Texas at a 78.3 percent rate in fall 2017, far exceeding the 54.0 percent rate for whites, 50.3 percent for Hispanics, and 47.5 percent for African Americans. All four of those rates were up from the previous year. Female graduates of all races/ethnicities had a college-going rate of 56.9 percent in fall 2017 (up 0.8% from fall 2016), compared with 47.7 percent for males (down 0.1% from fall 2016).



THE THIRD GOAL: MARKETABLE SKILLS
 All graduates from Texas public institutions of higher education will have completed programs with identified marketable skills.
 ■ *Emphasizes the value of higher education in the workforce*

The marketable skills goal builds on the first two goals: It states that, by 2030, “all graduates of Texas public institutions will have completed programs with identified marketable skills.” Although this goal focuses on public two- and four-year colleges, independent institutions in the state have been encouraged to opt in to this process.

When *60x30TX* was being developed, the Higher Education Strategic Planning Committee saw that, by its nature, higher education increases knowledge and skills and results in greater individual marketability, wealth, and self-reliance. They also saw that students did not always make the connection between classroom experiences, extracurricular activities, and their personal marketability. For this reason, they helped develop the marketable skills goal to make the skills students learn in their programs more explicit.

The Higher Education Strategic Planning Committee helped develop the marketable skills goal to make the skills students learn in their programs more explicit.

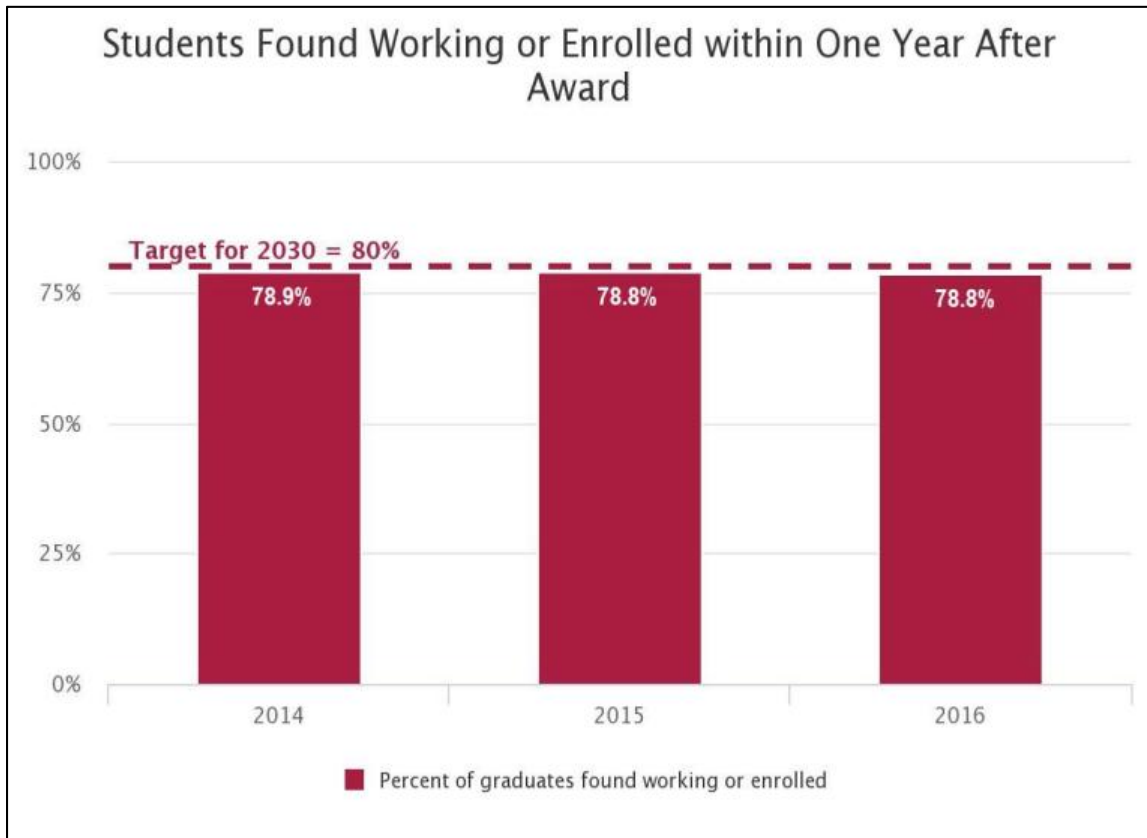
Overall Progress – Marketable Skills Goal


The THECB is measuring two targets for this goal:

- The first is that, by 2020, institutions will have created and implemented a process to identify and regularly update marketable skills for each of their programs, in collaboration with business and other stakeholders. The process of identifying and updating marketable skills, sometimes referred to as transferable skills, was a major topic of the second Marketable Skills Conference hosted by the THECB in Houston this year.
- The second target of this goal specifies that at least 80 percent of students who complete a certificate or degree (associate or higher, through doctoral or professional) from a Texas higher education institution will remain in the state and be working and/or enrolled in higher education within one fiscal year of completion.

The 80-percent target is constant for every year between 2015 and 2030. Of 280,501 students who completed a certificate or degree (any level, as specified above) at a Texas public, independent, or career institution in FY 2014, 78.9 percent were found working and/or enrolled in Texas at some time in FY 2015 (Figure 8). The percentage dropped slightly to 78.8 percent for the next year’s (FY 2015) cohort, but it remained at 78.8 percent in FY 2016.

Figure 8. Students working in Texas or enrolled in a Texas institution of higher education one year after graduating from a Texas public, independent, or career institution





THE FOURTH GOAL: STUDENT DEBT
 Undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.
 ■ *Helps students graduate with manageable debt*

The fourth goal concerns students who borrow money to enroll in higher education and earn an undergraduate certificate or degree, thereby affecting the first three goals of the *60x30TX* plan. The Higher Education Strategic Planning Committee saw that, without a goal of this kind, the state risked rising student debt that might impede students' ability to complete credentials and gain essential skills for the workforce. As a result, this statewide goal only includes students who graduate with student loan debt.

The intent of this goal – which, again, is a state goal and not an institutional goal – is for students who borrow money to graduate with *manageable* debt, as determined in the context of a student's first-year wages.⁶ The goal, for every year of *60x30TX*, is for this statewide median to be no greater than 60 percent, for undergraduates of public institutions who complete their studies with student loan debt.

This statewide goal only includes students who graduate with student loan debt.

How this Goal is Calculated

To estimate the median debt as a percentage of wages for a specific graduation year, THECB staff first computed percentages for each graduate of Texas two-year and four-year public institutions. To be included in the computation, these graduates must have:

- earned a certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree (the few bachelor's degrees earned at two-year institutions were not included);
- had state, federal, or, where data are available, private student loan debt, at the time of graduation; and
- earned wages the first year after graduation. The few bachelor's degrees earned at two-year institutions were not included.

For graduates who met these criteria, staff then computed the statewide median of the graduates' percentages.

Overall Progress – Student Debt Goal

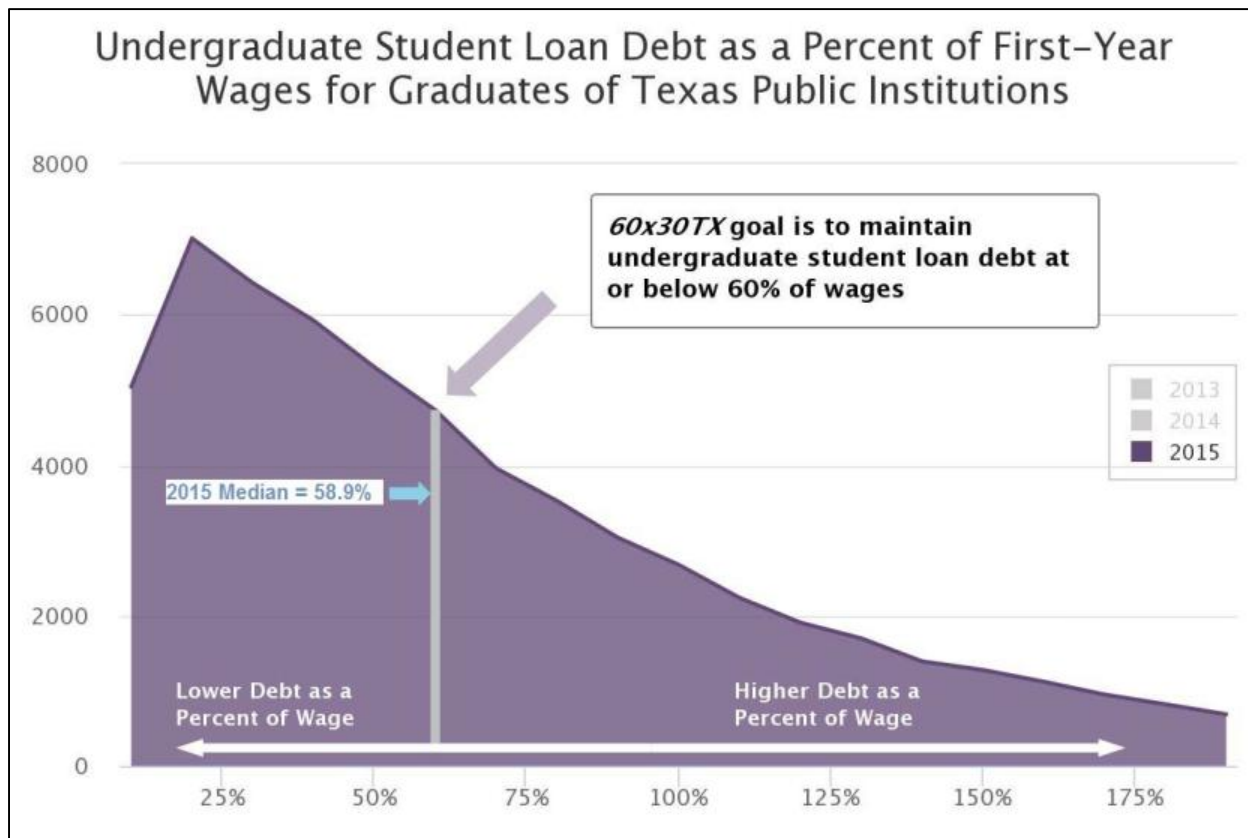
For FY 2013 graduates, the base year for this goal, the median debt/wages percentage was 59.5 percent, slightly below the target ceiling of 60 percent. The percentage inched up to 59.8 percent for FY 2014 graduates but improved (dropped) to 58.9 percent in FY 2015.

Figure 9 (on the next page) illustrates the distribution of loan debt as a percentage of first-year wages for undergraduate students who graduated with loan debt from public institutions in Texas. There are equal numbers of students represented above and below the median debt/wages percentage. The distribution is skewed to the right, meaning many students

⁶ THECB staff calculate student debt as a percentage of first-year wages for each graduate with debt, and then determine the median value of those percentages.

graduated with lower debt percentages, while fewer graduated with the higher debt percentages on the right tail of the distribution. For example, 7,014 graduated with student loan debt greater than 10 percent, and no more than 20 percent of wages (the “peak” of the distribution graph), while just 687 had debt greater than 180 percent, and no more than 190 percent of wages (the right-most “tail” of the distribution graph). There were students with debt-to-wages ratios greater than 190 percent, but those data are not plotted in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Statewide median of students’ loan debt as a percentage of first-year wages

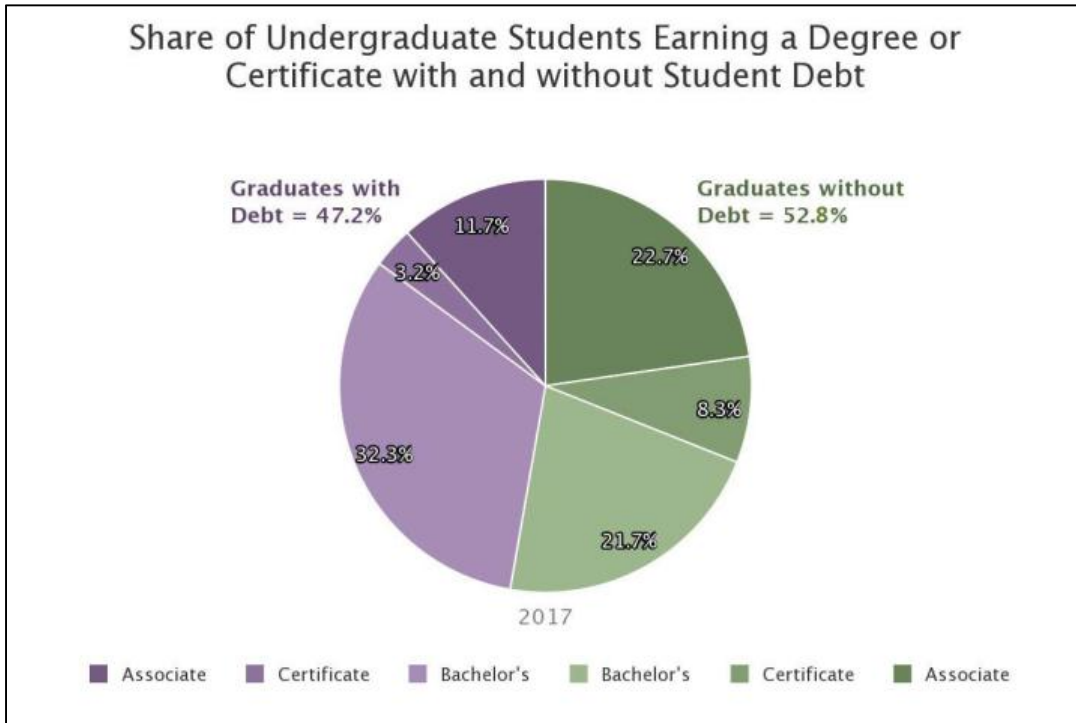


The Higher Education Strategic Planning Committee for *60x30TX* also set two targets related to the student debt goal:

- Limit debt so that no more than half of all students who complete an undergraduate degree or certificate have debt.
- Decrease the excess semester credit hours (SCH) that students attempt in completing an associate or bachelor’s degree.

In FY 2017, 47.2 percent of students who graduated from a Texas public or independent two-year or four-year institution with an undergraduate certificate or degree had some student loan debt (Figure 10, on next page). That was below the share of graduates with debt in FY 2016 (48.2%) and in FY 2015 (49.2%), as well as the 50 percent threshold for the *60x30TX* plan. For this measure, the “undergraduate certificate or degree” includes certificates and associate degrees completed at two-year institutions, and associate and bachelor’s degrees completed at four-year institutions.

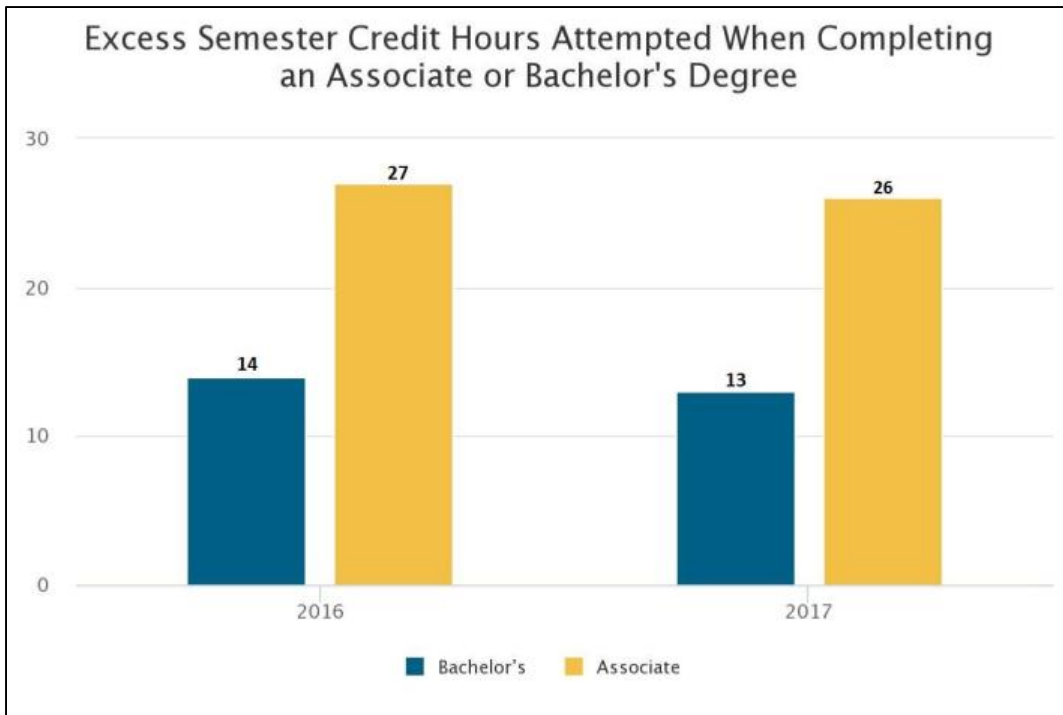
Figure 10. Share of students graduating with and without debt at Texas public institutions



Students attempted an average excess of 14 SCH to complete a bachelor's degree at Texas public universities and health-related institutions in FY 2016 (the same as in FY 2015), while the average excess SCH attempted at public two-year institutions was 27 SCH for completing an associate degree (down from 28 SCH in FY 2015) (Figure 11, on next page). Overall, the average excess was unchanged at 19 SCH in FY 2016. One year later, in FY 2017, the average excess SCH dropped, by one, for bachelor's graduates (to 13 SCH), associate graduates (to 26 SCH), and overall (to 18 SCH).⁷

⁷ The attempted SCH were tracked for up to 10 years prior to the time of graduation.

Figure 11. Progress in reducing excess SCH to lower student costs



The overall excess of 18 SCH was three SCH below 21, the estimated progress needed by FY 2017. The excess SCH benchmark drops sharply to 12 SCH in FY 2020, and then drops every year, but more gradually, until reaching three SCH for FY 2030. That means that bachelor's and associate graduates combined will need to reduce their excess SCH by 15 SCH in 13 years, or a little over one SCH per year, through FY 2030, to reach the final 60x30TX target.

Legislative Recommendations

The THECB has adopted several policy and budget recommendations for the Legislature to consider when it next convenes in January of 2019. These recommendations, if implemented, will build and sustain momentum toward achieving the four *60x30TX* goals.

Policy Recommendations

Among the policy recommendations adopted by the THECB at their April 2018 meeting, four were identified as “Category 1” recommendations, which are major changes to state higher education policies to achieve *60x30TX* goals.

Coordinating new higher education sites. One of the foremost duties of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is to ensure the efficient and effective use of state resources in higher education and to eliminate unnecessary duplication. As institutions of higher education seek to expand their geographical presence into new areas, it is important for the agency to review and approve these new sites to ensure they do not duplicate existing higher education offerings.

Therefore, the board has recommended legislation that would require institutions to obtain THECB review and approval prior to acquiring property to create a new, or expand an existing, off-campus academic, technical, or research site. THECB review would specifically assess academic and research needs, while preventing unnecessary duplication in program offerings, faculties, and physical plants. The criteria for review would be established through negotiated rulemaking, and information submitted by institutions would be excepted from public disclosure. Eliminating unnecessary duplication would save the state money that could be used to better address needs that would contribute to *60x30TX*.

Texas WORKS Internship Program. As identified in the November 2016 Tri-Agency Report to the Office of the Governor, creating more paid internships is critical to the state's future success. Paid internships provide the opportunity to engage students and provide them with the skills they need to succeed and are a way for employers to gain skilled employees who can help businesses grow. Paid internships are especially critical for those students who cannot afford to take on unpaid experiential learning opportunities.

The Texas WORKS (Working Off-campus: Reinforcing Knowledge & Skills) Internship Program will function as a part of the current Texas College Work-Study program, authorizing the THECB to administer a centralized off-campus work-study program. Under Texas WORKS, the THECB would contract directly with off-campus employers, creating a state-wide database of Texas WORKS eligible internships and reimbursing employers for a portion of qualified wages. The THECB would establish, in rule, the percentage of reimbursement employers could receive.

This centralized approach has several benefits. Current requirements that institutions spend 20 percent to 50 percent of their Work-Study allocation off campus would be removed and the need satisfied through Texas WORKS, relieving institutions of the administrative burden of contracting with off-campus entities. Students would have a centralized system for identifying statewide private internship opportunities. Employers with a statewide presence would be able to offer internship opportunities through a single centralized system rather than through multiple arrangements at several institutions.

Improving student transfer. Many students in Texas attend more than one institution of higher education before they earn a degree. However, Texas' higher education landscape is large and diverse which can make transferring among institutions complicated, inefficient, and costly to both students and the state. Baccalaureate graduates who transfer accumulate more excess hours than those who do not transfer, which increases student costs and impacts general revenue. Recent data show bachelor's degree graduates in FY 2017, who transferred, paid an estimated \$45 million in tuition and fees due to excess hours, and the impact to general revenue was an estimated \$15 million.

To help reduce these increased costs to students and the state, the THECB is recommending refocusing the Texas Core Curriculum on fulfilling general education requirements that facilitate transfer. Courses in the Core should be general enough to apply to many majors rather than be discipline specific in subject-matter content. This will make lower-division course work more likely to transfer and apply to majors. And by creating more efficient transfer, this measure will contribute to *60x30TX* goals for completion and student debt.

60x30TX Graduation Bonus. While both the community college and technical college sectors have performance-based funding, formula funding for public universities is still allocated based on student enrollment. If Texas is to achieve its *60x30TX* goals to increase degree completion among our youngest generation of workers and to increase substantially the number of students earning a degree or certificate, the state must adopt funding policies that support institutions for helping students complete their education. The THECB is proposing that the legislature restructure the Instruction & Operations formula to provide funding to universities not only on enrollments, but also on completions, with an extra incentive for degrees awarded to at-risk students.

Funding recommendations

During each Legislative interim, the THECB is statutorily required to consider and make recommendations regarding formula funding for the three sectors of public higher education – community, technical, and state colleges, general academic institutions (i.e., universities), and health-related institutions. This is done through each sector's Formula Advisory Committee, composed of representatives from both the THECB and a cross-section of representative institutions.

The board's recommendations for the FY 2020-21 biennium reflect a need to grow the state's investment in higher education to reflect the additional costs being borne by institutions, as well as the need to secure additional targeted investments to advance the goals of *60x30TX*. The board also continues to stress the need to implement or strengthen performance-based funding models that directly contribute to the state goal for completion.

For the technical, state and community colleges, the board recommends that formula funding be increased over FY 2018-19 funding levels to reflect the additional costs institutions have realized due to inflation and enrollment growth. In addition, the board is recommending funding increases for the two performance-based models already in place for two-year institutions: the community college Student Success Point model and the Texas State Technical College (TSTC) Returned Value Model.

The Student Success Point model at community colleges provides a portion of community college funding (currently about 10%) based on successful student completion of certain milestones, including completing a developmental education course, completing a first

college-level course, transferring to a four-year institution, and earning a certificate or degree. Since first being instituted in 2014, this model has resulted in a 20 percent increase of completions at community colleges, even as enrollments have remained relatively flat. The THECB recommends increasing funding to \$215 per point, to support and further incentivize community colleges for helping students achieve their goals.

The TSTC Returned Value Model is an innovative funding methodology that bases the entirety of these institutions' formula funding on the increase in wages that their students achieve when they enter the workforce. Using wage data from the TWC, the THECB tracks how much former students earn compared to minimum wage, with a portion of the difference representing the "returned value" in additional tax revenues realized by the state. The THECB recommends that TSTCs be funded at 35 percent of the Returned Value Formula, which would return them to the rate that was funded in FY 2016-17.

For public universities, the board recommends again that formula funding be increased to recognize the additional costs of inflation and enrollment growth. The board is also recommending an additional \$160 million be provided to fund the *60x30TX* Graduation Bonus. However, while the board requests that the Legislature provide additional funding for this purpose, this amount of funding should be dedicated to the Graduation Bonus even if the Legislature does not increase overall formula funding.

The *60x30TX* Graduation Bonus will allocate funding to universities based not only on enrollments on the twelfth class day, but also on their number of undergraduate students earning degrees, using a three-year average. Specifically, institutions will receive \$500 for each not "at-risk" graduate, and \$1,000 for each "at-risk" graduate. "At-risk" is defined as being either eligible for a federal Pell grant (i.e. economically disadvantaged) or below the national average on the SAT/ACT (i.e., academically underprepared). The additional funding for "at-risk" graduates recognizes that these students often require substantially more support in terms of advising, tutoring, and student services to complete.

Implementing the *60x30TX* Graduation Bonus is crucial to achieving the state's educated population and degree completion goals. Texas institutions will need to graduate 65 percent more students than currently in 2030 to meet the completion goal. Simply given the demographics of the K-12 pipeline, most of these students will come from disadvantaged populations that are most likely to be at-risk and will need additional support to persist and achieve a degree. The example of community colleges and TSTCs shows that performance-based funding can have a dramatic impact in changing how institutions prioritize completion.

Activities, Conferences, Grants, and Programs in Support of *60x30TX*

Texas has 254 counties, 119 two- and four-year public institutions – many more when independent and career schools are added, and 250 employees who work at the THECB to support higher education stakeholders across the state. Despite the relatively small size of the agency and the large number of stakeholders across the state, the THECB coordinates, supports, and implements many initiatives, all with a laser focus on *60x30TX*.

This section of the report provides information about those activities, listed alphabetically, and the goals and targets they are impacting or will impact.

60x30TX.com

Goal Impacted: All

In 2017, the THECB continued to promote *60x30TX* across the state through 60x30TX.com, which serves as the hub for the plan. This new website, funded by a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation grant, provides resources about *60x30TX*, including data that show progress toward plan targets and goals. For example, 60x30TX.com is home to the agency's new interactive attainment map, which allows users to explore how education levels of 25- to 34-year-old Texans are distributed across the state. Last year, the agency organized several Data Fellows workshops as well, providing education professionals from across the state hands-on training about data and resources relevant to reaching the goals and targets of *60x30TX*. Plus, fellows engaged with diverse colleagues to consider the state's educational challenges and progress.

Advise TX

Goal Impacted: Completion

Advise TX College Advising Corps launched in 2010-11 and works to increase the number of low-income, first-generation college, and underrepresented high school students who enter and complete a postsecondary education. The program model utilizes near-peer advisers by placing well-trained recent college graduates from four Texas partner institutions of higher education as full-time college advisers in high schools with historically low college-going rates. The Advise TX program, administered by College Readiness and Success staff at the THECB, continues to grow in importance for meeting the state's completion goals in *60x30TX*.

Participating schools. Since 2010-11, Advise TX programs have served more than 165 high schools and have consistently served 74 of those high schools since 2011-12.

Advisers. Advisers serve the whole school, with a sole focus on planning for education beyond high school. They help each student identify education options that best fit the career and academic goals of the individual, whether achieving those goals require earning a certificate, an associate degree, or a baccalaureate. Advisers provide guidance on how to research, select, and apply to colleges; help with completion of financial aid, such as Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) applications; provide feedback on college essays; help interpret and compare financial aid award letters; and host meetings with parents and families. Advisers also coordinate college admission representative visits to high schools, coordinate visits to college campuses, make classroom and assembly presentations, and coordinate "Decision Day/College Signing Day" events each spring to celebrate and recognize students' postsecondary plans.

Working partnerships. Advise TX programs are anchored at the following institutions: Texas A&M University, Texas Christian University, Trinity University, and The University of Texas at Austin. Collectively, the institutions have 112 college advisers currently serving 112 high schools across the state. Advisers are supported by both public and private entities including College Advising Corps, the THECB, Corporation for National and Community Service, and the OneStar Foundation.

Measuring impact. Advise TX is evaluated annually by Dr. Eric Bettinger, Associate Professor, at Stanford University. His team of researchers compiles and analyzes student key performance indicator data; administers student and adviser surveys; conducts focus groups and site visits; and analyzes student outcomes, including college enrollment rates. His studies have found that, in comparison to control high schools, students served by a near-peer adviser are 42 percent more likely to apply to a postsecondary institution, and 67 percent more likely to be accepted to a college or university.

Outcomes. Compared to seniors at similar Texas high schools, students with an Advise TX adviser were more likely to complete an Advanced Placement (AP) course, more likely to take the SAT exam, and more likely to submit their FAFSA. Furthermore, students who have met with an Advise TX adviser are more likely to aspire to go to college, participate in college-prep activities, apply to colleges, be accepted to college, and commit to enrolling in college.

Apply Texas

Goals Impacted: Completion, Student Debt

The Apply Texas System (also known as the Texas Common Admission Application System) began in 1997 as an admission application system for freshmen and transfer students attending four-year public institutions. It was later expanded to include two-year public institutions, and over time, a significant number of Texas private institutions have contracted to participate. Apply Texas does not rely on state appropriations but is supported through funds from participating institutions. The Apply Texas budget for FY 2018 totaled \$739,895 – approximately 44¢ per application submitted. The THECB, assisted by a statutorily mandated advisory committee (the Apply Texas Advisory Committee, or ATAC), oversees the administration of the program. Technical assistance is provided through The University of Texas at Austin, under contract with the THECB.

ATAC is comprised of representatives from participating institutions. Since the system's inception, it has developed and added application forms for graduate and international students and has established the Counselor Suite, which authorized high school counselors use to view data regarding their students' progress in submitting applications for college admission and federal financial aid.



Applications for admission totaling 1.7 million were submitted for the 2017-18 application cycle (summer 2017, fall 2017, spring 2018). Applications were submitted to 38 public four-year institutions; 22 independent four-year institutions; and 57 two-year public community, state, and technical college campuses or districts across the state. The majority of admission applications (61.4%) were to four-year institutions; the other 38.6 percent, to

two-year institutions. Undergraduate applications represented 92 percent of all submitted applications.

Supporting 60x30TX. The Apply Texas System offers a free,⁸ easily accessed system for applying for admission to any of the state's public institutions of higher education. Features of the system also enable an applicant to easily complete an application to one institution and adjust it for submission to other institutions, helping students avoid the dead end experienced by those who unsuccessfully apply to only one institution.

The Counselor Suite function of Apply Texas provides high school counselors access to information they can use to measure their students' progress toward completing the admission application and the FAFSA, the gateway to federal and state financial aid.

Texas ranked 23rd in the U.S. in 2013 in the percentage of undergraduate students considered economically disadvantaged.⁹ The 60x30TX plan's goal to hold student debt to its current level will be significantly impacted in the future by the share of students successfully completing the FAFSA and receiving federal, state, and institutional aid. More than 1,500 high school counselors used the Counselor Suite FY 2017 to review their students' progress in applying for admission and financial aid.

Are You Ready? Campaign and RFPs

Goal Impacted: Educated Population, Completion

This campaign supports the 60x30TX call for collaboration and creativity among higher education, K-12 education, and the workforce.

Description. The *Are You Ready?* Campaign is a paradigm shift and is intended to elicit change for Texas institutions of higher education, students, families, and anyone who plays a meaningful role in the college completion of Texas students. The campaign was developed to support 60x30TX by:

- growing the number of college ready students and student ready colleges;
- changing the attitudes and practices of educational institutions to support student success;
- developing strategies and media to reach the diverse population of the state;
- encouraging Texans to participate in higher education opportunities;
- providing information about advising, counseling, and educational support services, and resources;
- increasing public awareness of the THECB's efforts to improve postsecondary access, college and career readiness, student success, and college completion of underprepared students; and
- providing information regarding the benefits of financial literacy and postsecondary education.

Request for Proposals (RFP) Overview. As part of this campaign, a recent RFP was issued to provide funding to chosen grantees for strategy and concept development for the *Are*

⁸ Individual institutions may have admission application processing fees, but the Apply Texas System is offered free of charge to its users.

⁹ 60x30TX. The 2015-2030 higher education strategic plan for Texas, July 2015, p. 17.

You Ready? Campaign, including product development, social media, video development, print materials, branding, and development of a campaign plan.

College Outreach/Texting Programs

Goal Impacted: Completion

Nudges to the finish line. In collaboration with University of Virginia (UVA), this project will investigate whether text messages that provide personalized information to students attending open- and broad-access enrollment institutions will help them to complete their college degrees. A few universities from across the state will work with the research team from UVA to develop and implement a text messaging campaign that is informed by the specific informational, behavioral, and psychological challenges that can pose obstacles to students' success in college.

Early FAFSA submission and informed college search. Also in collaboration with the University of Virginia (UVA), this project will investigate whether text messages that provide information about the changes to the FAFSA and available college search tools will help students to make active and informed choices about their postsecondary educational paths. The primary objectives of the project are to: 1) increase economically disadvantaged students' awareness and understanding of recent federal policy changes around FAFSA submission and their awareness of available college search tools; and 2) increase the number of students who return to complete a certificate, associate, or bachelor's from an institution of higher education in Texas.

College Readiness and Success Models

Goal Impacted: Educated Population, Completion

The purpose of the College Readiness and Success Models' 2017 RFA is to award grant funding to scale and enhance comprehensive strategies and activities to increase college completion of certificate, associate, or bachelor's. This strategy targets data-driven student support interventions and enhanced faculty training to increase student completion and success rates in entry-level, gatekeeper courses. Institutions identified courses with high non-completion rates for intervention. Eligible institutions demonstrate experience with Gateway Course Completion models, requiring them to identify courses that have a high rate of failure or withdrawal and increase student success by integrating research-based practices into these courses, as well as institutional structure, processes, and practices.

Data Fellows Program

Goals Impacted: All

The THECB relaunched the Data Fellows program, which trains stakeholders to understand and leverage data resources to support *60x30TX*. The Data Fellows program is funded by the College for All Texans Foundation through a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

State data played an important role in developing the state's strategic plan and continues to play an important role in the THECB's efforts to disseminate information about the plan, track progress, and inspire action among diverse stakeholders in the state. By training leaders on *60x30TX* data, the THECB is helping individuals understand the plan better and crystalize areas for action.

The Data Fellows program has targeted several key stakeholder groups across its six sessions: K-12 stakeholders (Education Service Center representatives and large school

districts) and higher education stakeholders (two-year and four-year institutional representatives; education doctoral students; and higher education associations, nonprofits, and foundations). Training sessions included information regarding 60x30TX.com where users can access statewide, regional, and institutional-level data for each goal, as well as connect to the Texas Higher Education Accountability System to explore data in greater detail. Other data presented were tailored to the needs of different groups of Data Fellows.

Data Fellows serve as ambassadors to help disseminate information about 60x30TX and available data resources. Each Data Fellow commits to providing at least one presentation for colleagues in their district, institution, or in their professional networks within three months. Two-year and four-year institutional Data Fellows, as well as Education Service Center Data Fellows are playing a special role in supporting the regional 60x30TX target work with intentional geographic coverage around the state. Together, Data Fellows are a powerful network who work with and through the THECB to help support 60x30TX.

Dual Credit Study - Phase II

Goals Impacted: Educated Population, Completion

The knowledge gap about how to effectively design, target, and implement high-quality and cost-effective dual credit programs that benefit students led to a dual credit study. This gap is particularly evident in states like Texas that are expanding opportunities for high school students to take dual credit courses. RAND and the THECB completed the analyses conducted for Phase I in January 2017, disseminated results at a legislative briefing in February 2017, and released the final interim report in July 2017.

In April this year, the American Institutes for Research (AIR) completed collecting data, and is analyzing data for all six components identified for Phase II, which extends investigations conducted in Phase I.

Also in April, AIR and the THECB presented preliminary evidence from the causal impact study and the advising study, two components of Phase II, at the annual conference of the American Education Research Association in New York City, where the research team received feedback on how to improve the analysis and how to properly contextualize results.

AIR will release the final report for public comment at the end of July and will present high-level findings at the July meeting of the board of the THECB. AIR will release the final report, which will incorporate public feedback, in December.

Emergency Aid Network

Goals Impacted: Completion, Student Debt

The THECB's Emergency Aid Network (EA Net) was formed to determine best practices and policies surrounding emergency aid programs at institutions of higher education in Texas. Over the course of the last 15 months, and through six bimonthly meetings to date, the EA Net has hosted many experts in the field of emergency aid to learn the best strategies for implementing, communicating, fundraising, and developing automated technology for sustainable emergency aid programs.

The EA net will host a statewide convening on Sept. 10-11 in Austin. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Timothy Renick, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Success, Vice Provost, and Professor of Religious Studies at Georgia State University and winner of the 2018 Harold W. McGraw Jr. Prize in Education.

The keynote and plenary speakers will be: Dr. Timothy Renick, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Success, Vice Provost, and Professor of Religious Studies at Georgia State University and winner of the 2018 Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Prize in Education; and Dr. James Sullivan, the Rev. Thomas J. McDonagh, C.S.C. Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Notre Dame, and cofounder of the Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities (LEO). Invited attendees will include representatives from all Texas higher education institutions, as well as stakeholders, philanthropists, and nonprofit organizations interested in emergency aid.

Financial Literacy Advisory Committee **Goals Impacted:** Completion, Student Debt

The Financial Literacy Advisory Committee (FLAC) was created in response to the state's higher education strategic plan, *60x30TX* and its student debt goal. A suggested strategy within that goal is to "convene a statewide advisory group to determine ways to better advise students and parents on financial aid options and the impact of those options on students' finances before, during, and after their college careers."

Specifically, the committee focused on promoting a better understanding of how and why to pay for training and education after high school. A better understanding of this increases the likelihood of degree completion, career fulfillment, and manageable debt. When people plan wisely and don't make mistakes with money, many things are accomplished. Their basic needs are met, and they are more likely to avoid financial problems, such as unmanageable debt, bankruptcy, foreclosure, and the stress that comes with worrying about money. They also can participate more in community activities such as enjoying the arts, sporting events, and supporting businesses and charitable causes. Participation in civic life is critical to a democracy.

The FLAC identified the following six areas of understanding that are key to knowing how and why to pay for training and education after high school:

- The benefits of training and education after high school
- The costs of training and education after high school
- The opportunities for training and education after high school
- The funding available for training and education after high school
- The importance of carefully selecting coursework
- The role of student loans

The FLAC also identified four elements of communication that must be addressed effectively to improve understanding of how and why to pay for training and education after high school. These four elements are: 1) audience, 2) readability, 3) design, and 4) one-on-one interventions.

The FLAC recommends three principal actions to help achieve the learning outcomes mentioned above: the establishment of a portable and personalized financial literacy tool, expanded training for individuals who provide financial literacy instruction, and utilizing partnerships across the state to market a brand for how and why to pay for training and education after high school.

When integrated into a branded campaign, these ideas can influence the outcome of the state's higher education strategic plan, *60x30TX*.

Financial Aid Database Improvements **Goals Impacted:** Completion, Student Debt

The agency's Financial Aid Database (FAD) provides unit-record details of student financial aid. All Texas public and private institutions of higher education participating in the state's financial aid programs submit the FAD. It provides a rich source of data supporting multiple activities in the agency, including the creation of the annual *Report on Student Financial Aid in Texas Higher Education*.

In 2016, the Financial Aid Advisory Committee convened a subcommittee focused on financial aid data collection. The subcommittee reviewed the process for submitting data and recommended ways to improve reporting and minimize redundancy. In fall 2017, the agency launched an updated version of FAD. The new FAD includes expanded financial aid details, while eliminating several other financial aid reports.

The updated FAD will allow the agency to analyze the demonstrated financial need of students more effectively. It will also allow for more efficient processing of financial aid. Furthermore, the *Report on Student Financial Aid in Texas Higher Education* will reflect the additional data collection and will provide a more accurate demonstration of the state's financial aid programs in action.

GenTX Decision Month

Goal Impacted: Completion

During GenTX Month in November 2017, students at participating high schools were assisted through the college and financial aid application process (Apply Texas, FAFSA). A total of 600 participating high schools, school districts, community and nonprofit groups, and middle/elementary schools signed up as official participants. More than 110,000 students participated in college application events and financial aid workshops, celebrating Texas seniors who have taken the next step to pursue higher education.

GenTX Decision Day is a statewide initiative to recognize high school seniors for their postsecondary plans and encourage younger students and families to prepare early for postsecondary education. All high schools are invited to participate. GenTX Decision Day serves as a reminder to seniors to complete the college admission process (application, financial aid, housing, and other institutional steps) by asking them to decide which college to attend.

GenTX promotes a college-going culture and helps high school students, especially first-generation students, navigate their way to and through higher education. This initiative is also connected to regional efforts and the Texas Challenge to Reach Higher. GenTX Decision Day this year was held on May 4.

GradTX

Goals Impacted: Educated Population, Completion

GradTX is designed to connect students with a significant number of college credits to Texas institutions of higher education where they can complete their coursework and earn a degree or certificate. The program, launched in fall of 2011, originally targeted 40,000 Texans who had "stopped out" of college without receiving their bachelor's degrees but had attempted 90 or more semester credit hours.

More recent GradTX efforts have focused on 135,313 students who attempted 45 or more semester credit hours at Texas public community college or technical schools and an additional 31,167 students who attempted 90 or more semester credit hours at a public Texas

university from AY 2012-14 without having earned a credential. (See College Outreach/Texting Programs for additional information.)

In the coming months, GradTX will continue to do the following:

- Assist institutions with expanding outreach efforts to students who “stop out” without obtaining a degree or credential
- Increase participation from and improve collaboration with Texas public institutions of higher education
- Develop flexible platforms for communication with identified students
- Assess progress of initiatives including number of degrees earned by “stop outs” and time to completion
- Build collaborative partnerships with business and industry
- Identify and establish best practices

Marketable Skills Implementation Guidelines **Goal Impacted:** Marketable Skills

This year the THECB developed and released guidelines that will help institutions implement the marketable skills goal, which is designed to help students market themselves to employers.

The first target under the marketable skills goal is for institutions to create and implement a process for identifying these skills. Ideally, this process will be identified and implemented by 2020. The guidelines indicate that, once identified, marketable skills should be communicated to students in a way that makes it easy for them to articulate their skills to potential employers.

The implementation guidelines explain that marketable skills include interpersonal, cognitive, and applied skill areas; are valued by employers; and may be primary or complementary to a major. The guidelines also point out that marketable skills are acquired by students through education, including curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities, and that marketable skills are often called transferable skills in the U.S. and employability skills in other countries, such as the United Kingdom. The guidelines specify that marketable skills include both technical and soft skills and that the definition was left purposefully broad to allow institutions the freedom to hone in on those skills valued by their industry partners.

The guidelines for helping institutions reach the targets in the marketable skills goal were shared with institutions in February of this year.

Marketable Skills Conference **Goal Impacted:** Marketable Skills

In April 2018, the THECB hosted the second Marketable Skills Conference at the Hilton University of Houston (UH). The venue was chosen because it is a teaching hotel for the College of Hotel and Restaurant Management at UH. This conference was supported in partnership with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). The goal for this conference was for attendees to use what they learned in training sessions to create and implement a process for identifying marketable skills for their programs.

The conference kicked off with a panel called “How I marketed myself to get a great job.” The panel was composed of recent graduates from The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Navarro College, and University of Houston and was open to the public. Keynote speakers included Dr. Eluned Jones, Director of Student Employability at the University of

Birmingham, United Kingdom, and Dr. Peter Stokes, Managing Director of Huron Consulting and author of *Higher Education and Employability: New Models for Integrating Study and Work*.

The four conference training sessions were designed to provide practical suggestions and possibilities for how institutions could begin developing a process to identify marketable skills in their programs. The last session of the conference was an overview of the student handbook, *Career Readiness*, which was developed as part of a TWC grant to the THECB.

Media

Goals Impacted: All

During 2017, there were 436 media stories about the THECB. Of these media stories, 65 focused solely on the THECB, 371 included mentions of the agency and its data (including mentions of *60x30TX* data), and 112 stories focused on the *60x30TX* plan.

In addition, the 2017 *PR News Guidebook*, a publication read by journalists and communications professionals worldwide, included a case study on the successful launch of the *60x30TX* plan. Social media is also used to garner communication about the plan. The hash tag #60x30TX is used in all plan-related communications via Twitter.

Minority Male Initiative

Goals Impacted: Educated Population, Completion

The Minority Male Initiative (MMI) directly supports the achievement of the state's *60x30TX* higher education completion targets of increasing the number of African American, Hispanic, and male students completing a certificate or degree. focuses on improving the participation, persistence and success of African American and Hispanic male students in higher education. Developed in response to the diminishing number of males of color participating in postsecondary education, this initiative builds upon previous THECB efforts and provides support to participating institutions designed to cultivate academic skills, encourage involvement in academic support services, inspire connections to collaborative learning environments, and foster a sense of community among Hispanic and African American males, primarily through peer or near-peer mentorship. The results of these efforts have been positive, notably in terms of student retention.

In total, the state has awarded over \$1.4 million in grants to 13 institutions serving over 8,500 minority males through THECB-funded initiatives that directly impact the participation, persistence, and success of minority males in higher education. Since FY 2016, five institutional partners have combined to serve more than 1,000 additional minority males through focused institutional efforts. Collectively, our institutional partners have helped to increase:

- the number of African American and Hispanic male students remaining enrolled and in good-academic standing;
- the number of minority males enrolling in 12+ semester credit hours per semester;
- overall grade-point averages for participating minority males;
- pass rates for participating minority males in core gateway courses;
- engagement with campus student support services for participating minority males;
- institutional levels of academic support; and
- the number of students, faculty, and staff serving in mentorship roles.

P-16 Statewide Professional Development Conference

Goal Impacted:
Completion

The THECB's College Readiness and Success division hosted the third annual P-16 Statewide Professional Development Conference in June of this year. The yearly event hosts national and regional speakers to address topics related to transitioning students from secondary to postsecondary education. Over 250 high school counselors, admissions advisors from two-year and four-year institutions, and other educators attended this year.

The intent of the conference is to engage K-12 and higher education in promising practices regarding college readiness, access, and success. The conference sessions include best practices from practitioners across the state, as well as national experts on various topics of interest, including pre-college activities, high school and college academic advising, financial literacy, streamlining P-16 pathways, and success initiatives.

Reach Higher Campaign

Goal Impacted: Completion

The Texas Challenge to Reach Higher is a statewide initiative that focuses on ways to strengthen, align, and expand the college-going pipeline by working closely with local counselors and community stakeholders to improve FAFSA and college completion rates.



The Texas Challenge to Reach Higher collaborative is the state's effort toward meeting the national Reach Higher initiative, which began in 2013. The intention is to

dramatically increase the number of traditionally underserved students prepared for, entering, and succeeding in postsecondary education. To create an incentive for public school districts, the Texas Challenge to Reach Higher initiated a competition among Education Service Center (ESC) regions that encouraged an increase in applicants, Apply Texas college applications, and FAFSA completions by 4 percentage points above the previous year.

During 2016-17, the Texas Challenge to Reach Higher demonstrated significant increases in FAFSA completion among all regions. ESC Region 15 was recognized as the initiative's 2017 champion at the state convening for the initiative, which was held Oct. 24 last year at the University of Houston. ESC Regions 14, 17, and 20 were also recognized for their contributions toward increases in Apply Texas applicants and applications and in FAFSA completions. All recognized ESCs had double-digit increases in Apply Texas and FAFSA completions.

The Texas Reach Higher team is a collaboration among Texas College Access Network/Educate Texas, the THECB, Texas OnCourse, TWC, the Texas Education Agency (TEA), Achieve Texas – Texas Tech University, Texas Association of Community Colleges, and Career & Technology Association of Texas, University of Houston, Austin Chamber of Commerce, Houston ISD, Fort Worth ISD, and Dallas ISD. The THECB partially funded the initiative for the ESC award and contributed toward the state convening and professional development training.

Regional *60x30TX* Targets

Goal Impacted: Educated Population, Completion

One strategy of the THECB to accelerate progress toward *60x30TX* has been to break down selected goals and targets to regional levels. Regional targets have catalyzed collaboration across K-12, higher education, business and industry, and other community stakeholders and provided a clearer understanding about each region's contributions to statewide goals.

The THECB has developed three targets for each region: one for the 60x30 educated population goal, one for the completion goal, and one for the target under the completion goal that aims for 65 percent of public high school graduates to enroll directly in higher education by 2030. While all goals and targets of the strategic plan are critical for the future of Texas, the three mentioned areas are well-suited to regional work. Preliminary regional targets were released in fall 2017, with an opportunity for stakeholder input through May 2018.

Each of the 10 higher education regions was asked to convene institutions and other key stakeholders to identify at least one powerful strategy for each regional target area. Part of this process also includes asking for numeric targets by institution for the completion goal in 2020, 2025, and 2030. Regional strategies and institutional completion targets are due by August 31 this year.

To support regions in this work, the THECB has developed a regional target starter kit (available on the 60x30TX.com website), trained data fellows on relevant regional and institutional data, and dedicated staff to serve as a support person for each region.

Kickoff webinars in each region took place in January and February of this year. Accountability meetings in April provided further technical assistance for public institutions to examine completion data within regional breakout sessions. Advisory groups – comprised of local higher education, K-12 and workforce partners – have been identified in each region. These local leaders are helping to plan and organize key stakeholders to better understand *60x30TX* and the regional targets, assess promising strategies, and help transparently articulate their student success goals.

Star Award Program

Goals Impacted: All

The Texas Higher Education Star Award was established by the THECB in 2001 to recognize exceptional contributions toward achieving one or more of the goals of the former long-range Texas higher education plan. The board of the THECB approved continuing the Star Award program, with revised guidelines to recognize exceptional contributions toward meeting one or more of the goals of *60x30TX*. Finalists are recommended by a THECB staff review panel, and winners are selected by a review committee consisting of board members of the THECB, out-of-state higher education experts, and Texas community leaders. Recipients receive a custom-designed award and public recognition for their efforts in the fall at the annual Texas Higher Education Leadership Conference. A maximum of seven awards are presented annually.

The THECB received 44 nominations and 41 applications for the 2017 Star Award. As part of the 2017 Texas Higher Education Leadership Conference held Nov. 30-Dec. 1, the board recognized eight finalists and presented four awards for the following programs:

- Austin Community College District – Accelerated Programmer Training
- Odessa College – Eight-Week Terms: A Pathway to *60x30TX*
- University of Houston – UH in 4

- University of Houston-Downtown – The Gateway Course Innovation Initiative

Texas Affordable Baccalaureate

Goals Impacted: Educated Population, Completion, Student Debt

The Texas Affordable Baccalaureate (TAB) program is designed to reduce the cost of a four-year degree. The cost of education is especially a barrier to completion in general and timely completion. Using various modes of delivery and modes of instruction, a TAB can reduce the cost of tuition and fees by as much as 50 percent. Five colleges and universities currently participate in the program. The THECB is actively seeking participation from additional colleges and universities.

Texas College and Career Readiness Standards

Goal Impacted: Completion

Section 28.008 of the Texas Education Code, "Advancement of College Readiness in Curriculum," was enacted by the 79th Texas Legislature, Third Special Called Session. The statute charged the TEA and the THECB with establishing discipline-based vertical teams to develop College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) that address what students must know and be able to do to succeed in entry-level college courses offered at Texas public community/technical colleges and universities. The 83rd Texas Legislature amended the statute to require that vertical teams periodically review the CCRS and recommend possible revisions.

In addition to the statutory requirements, the 2016 Tri-Agency Report to the Governor, under Prime Recommendation #2, recommended that the review consider explicitly the interconnection between college and career. In August 2017, the THECB provided funding, through a competitive RFA process, to Texas Tech University (TTU) to coordinate the review and revision of the math and English standards. TTU identified and sought feedback from additional stakeholders and representatives of the business, industry, and workforce sectors. The feedback supported faculty vertical teams in their revisions by ensuring the standards also address workforce concerns.

Texas Higher Education Accountability System Redesign

Goals Impacted: All

In 2017, the THECB launched the state's redesigned Texas Higher Education Accountability System. The redesigned system is aligned with *60x30TX* and enables higher education stakeholders to track and compare efforts toward meeting the plan's goals and targets.

The measures included in the accountability system help emphasize the state's higher education priorities and provide stakeholders the ability to review institutional outcomes. In addition to institutional data, the accountability system provides statewide, sector-specific, districtwide, and systemwide summaries.

During the system redesign, the THECB streamlined existing measures and developed new measures particularly relevant to monitoring *60x30TX* progress. Institutional feedback was sought and incorporated into measures proposed for new system. In July 2017, the board members of the THECB approved the proposed measures for public institutions. Measures for non-Texas and career schools were approved by the board in January 2018.

Following the system's launch, the THECB continued adding functionality to it. Access to data in downloadable formats was expanded and annual reports presenting all accountability

measures for each institution were made available. Additional enhancements will be implemented based on user feedback and stakeholder needs.

Texas Internship Challenge

Goals Impacted: Marketable Skills

The Texas Internship Challenge is a tri-agency partnership among TWC, TEA, and the THECB that challenges employers to offer paid internships and make it easier for students to search and apply for them. The program encourages employers to offer paid or for-credit applied learning opportunities and encourages students to participate in the thousands of internships around the state to gain the marketable skills employers are looking for and to explore career opportunities, network with employers, and earn a salary or school credit.

Texas Public Higher Education Almanac

Goals Impacted: All

The THECB launched its eighth annual *Texas Public Higher Education Almanac* in May this year as part of the agency's core function to promote transparency and accountability among Texas public institutions of higher education. The 2018 almanac provides higher education facts and performance data that allow users to compare Texas public higher education institutions. The data provide a snapshot of Texas' progress in achieving goals of *60x30TX*. The almanac draws from data found in the agency's Texas Higher Education Accountability System – long recognized as a best-practice, national model for higher education performance data.

Transfer Initiatives

Goals Impacted: Educated Population, Completion, Marketable Skills

The transfer and application of courses to majors is an obstacle to timely degree completion and perhaps even completion itself. The THECB has been working on the following initiatives, designed to enhance the transfer and applicability of courses in support of both the overarching and completion goals of *60x30TX*.

Texas Core Curriculum. The Texas Core Curriculum (TCC) was originally conceived as a mechanism for making transfer easier for students moving from one public institution of higher education in Texas to another. As the focus has shifted from ensuring credit will transfer to trying to ensure credit will apply to a major, THECB staff has started working with the Undergraduate Education Advisory Committee to determine how to structure the TCC to make it effective in ensuring students take courses that will apply to degrees, while at the same time ensuring the TCC meets the requirements of constituting a major portion of students' general education.

Fields of Study. Texas Education Code, Section 61.823, directs the THECB to develop field of study curricula (FOSC) for various academic programs. A THECB-approved FOSC is composed of the block of courses that may be transferred to a general academic teaching institution and that must be substituted for that institution's lower-division requirements for the discipline degree program into which a student transfers. The FOSC provide guaranteed pathways for students so that the lower-division courses taken at a community college apply to their major when they transfer to a university. The board of the THECB establishes a separate FOS Advisory Committee for each FOS curriculum, consisting of up to 24 members drawn equally from two-year and four-year public institutions.

THECB staff have identified the top 25 disciplines, based on the number of declared majors and degrees awarded, that warrant revisions to existing FOSCs or development of new FOSC. Board members of the THECB have approved FOSC in Mexican American Studies, Nursing, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Music, Architecture, Civil Engineering, and Chemical Engineering. FOSC in Psychology, Biology, Kinesiology, Business Administration & Management, Criminal Justice, History, Social Work, and Political Science are in progress.

Programs of Study. Texas Education Code, Section 61.8235, directs the THECB to develop programs of study (POS) for various technical programs. POS are similar to FOSC, except they are specific to workforce certificates and associate of applied science degrees. POS curricula are developed with the assistance of advisory committees composed of faculty from secondary and postsecondary institutions and representatives from business and industry.

Two POS advisory committees have been formed: The Architecture and Construction POS Advisory Committee and the Health Science POS Advisory Committee. The Architecture and Construction POS Advisory Committee has reviewed programs developed by the Building Construction Technology and the Design and Documentation POS subcommittees. The advisory committee created two additional subcommittees to develop POS in 1) Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning; and 2) Electricity, Pipefitting, and Plumbing.

The Health Science POS Advisory Committee has reviewed programs developed by the Rehabilitative Services and the Emergency Medical Services POS subcommittees. The Health Science POS Advisory Committee created three new subcommittees to develop programs of study in the following: 1) Dental Hygiene, 2) Radiologic Technology, and 3) Respiratory Therapy.

Programs of Study in Construction Management and General Drafting have been approved by the board of the THECB.

Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM) Learning Outcomes Project. The ACGM is the official list of approved courses for general academic transfer to public universities offered for state funding by public community, state, and technical colleges in Texas. For several years, workshops about student learning outcomes have been conducted to create or review and revise the learning outcomes for courses in the ACGM. By standardizing the learning outcomes for courses, the THECB can better ensure courses will readily transfer and apply to a degree. Courses from the ACGM are used in Fields of Study, ensuring common outcomes across the state in those courses.

WECM 2.0. The WECM 2.0 project refers to revision of the *Workforce Education Course Manual* (WECM) to make it more “applicability friendly.” The WECM is an inventory of CTE courses that two-year institutions may offer for automatic formula funding. In conjunction with the POS, work courses will be reviewed for currency and duplication. Reducing the number of courses to those needed to meet the objectives of business and industry will enhance the applicability of courses to all workforce programs in Texas and provide employers with the assurance that, regardless of the program students complete, they will have the same basic set of marketable skills.

Work-Study Mentorship

Goals Impacted: All

This state-funded program pays financially needy college students to serve as mentors to at-risk students in high school and college. One goal of the Work-Study Mentorship Program is to help create a college-going culture among disadvantaged high school students by

providing mentoring and tutoring services. A second goal is to serve existing college students by providing on-campus mentoring, financial aid, and tutoring services. This program is intended to affect both mentors and mentees. The participating institutions hire/train over 700 mentors and serve more than 165,000 high school and college students.

Conclusion

As this report shows, Texas is showing progress in moving toward the goals of *60x30TX* in this report, but it must continue to innovate and work with partners to make greater strides on completion targets for males and economically disadvantaged students, while maintaining gains in other areas. Working together regionally and forming regional alliances and partnerships will play a part in helping the state improve in all target areas of the completion goal and in accomplishing the other three goals of *60x30TX*.

Many stakeholders are embracing and creating innovative programs designed to meet the goals of *60x30TX*. All the activities and initiatives included in this report, which require partnerships with the THECB, are evidence of this, as are the engaged administrators and faculty who participate in countless advisory committees at the THECB.

Our stakeholders understand the “why” of *60x30TX*, which is perhaps summed up best by words from the plan itself: “The intention of the goals and targets described in this plan is to help students, institutions of higher education, employers, and the state to succeed and flourish using a shared vision of excellence for higher education in Texas.”

Appendix A

Higher Education Assistance for Identified High Schools

House Bill (HB) 2550, Texas Education Code (TEC), Section 58.810, was passed in 2013 by the 83rd Texas Legislature, Regular Session, to encourage public higher education institutions to collaborate with public high schools that have chronically low college-going rates, with the goal of improving those rates and promoting student success. The bill:

- Consolidates two former programs, the Higher Education Enrollment Assistance Program (TEC, Section 61.088) and the Higher Education Assistance Plan (TEC, Section 61.07622).
- Gives special attention to African American males and Hispanics, two groups that have traditionally had lower college enrollment and persistence rates.
- Emphasizes providing access to rigorous, high-quality dual credit courses.
- Directs institutions to report their collaborative efforts to the THECB, which is charged with identifying high schools that have substantially lower than average college-going rates and with summarizing the elements and results of institutional plans in the annual progress report for the state's higher education strategic plan.

This is the fifth annual HB 2550 report and second to be presented in a *60x30TX* progress report. The first three HB 2550 reports were presented in the 2014, 2015, and final progress reports for the agency's previous strategic plan, *Closing the Gaps*.

Elements of Institutional Plans

For the fifth consecutive year, the THECB surveyed public universities and community and technical colleges (CTCs) to find out which collaborative activities were included in their higher education assistance plans. The 2018 online survey was available to institutions from February through early April 2018. It directed the institutions to check off, on a list of possible activities, those that they engaged in during calendar year 2017 with THECB-identified high schools with low college-going rates. The list of activities was unchanged from the previous four years' surveys. However, the number of identified high schools increased slightly from 188 in the 2017 survey to 197 in the 2018 survey. Of those 197 high schools, 162 had been in-scope to the 2017 survey as well, so there were 35 high schools newly in-scope to the 2018 survey, and 26 high schools (188 minus 162) in the 2017 survey but not the 2018 survey.

A total of 86 higher education institutions responded to the 2018 survey, down from 92 in the 2017 survey but higher than the 84 institutions that responded to the 2016 survey. Of the 86 respondents, 71 reported collaborating with high schools during the survey reference period (calendar year 2017), five less than the previous year and three less than in the 2016 survey. The 71 institutions (43 two-year and 28 four-year institutions) reported working with 218 high schools, of which 188 were in the list of identified high schools, an excellent 95 percent coverage rate (188/197) of the identified schools. That was the second highest coverage rate in the five years of the survey; the highest was 98 percent (of 188 identified high schools) in the 2017 survey.

In the 2018 survey, the maximum number of high schools that a higher education institution worked with (identified and non-identified) was 68, a little less than the maximum of 73 the previous year. However, institutions typically collaborate with a much smaller number of high schools. For example, in the 2018 survey, 61 percent of institutions reported collaborating with one to five high schools and 75 percent reported collaborating with one to nine high schools. The 2017 survey yielded similar percentages: 62 percent and 72 percent, respectively.

The 2018 survey results indicated that there tended to be fewer collaborating higher education institutions per high school than the previous year. For example, according to the 2018 survey, 28 percent of identified high schools worked with just one or two higher education institutions; the 2017 survey indicated 24 percent. And the 2018 survey indicated that 69 percent of high schools were collaborating with one to four higher education institutions, up from 59 percent the previous year. Two identified high schools each collaborated with 11 higher education institutions in 2017, the most recorded by the 2018 survey; the maximum number was 12 institutions the previous year (this occurred at just one high school).

Table 2 shows the number of institutions that reported activities geared toward providing information and assistance to high school students, as directed in the HB 2550 survey checklist, in the 2014 through 2018 surveys. Activities are listed in descending order of the reporting percentage for the 2018 survey.

Table 2. Number of higher education institutions reporting activities to provide information and assistance to high school students, 2014-2018 HB 2550 surveys

	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
	No.	% of Total	No.	% of Total	No.	% of Total	No.	% of Total	No.	% of Total
Distribution of admissions and financial aid materials at high school	44	90%	46	87%	68	92%	72	95%	63	89%
College fairs	40	82%	41	77%	67	91%	65	86%	62	87%
Outreach to bring high school students to tour campus	42	86%	41	77%	57	77%	62	82%	59	83%
FAFSA assistance sessions	34	69%	33	62%	55	74%	60	79%	54	76%
Outreach to bring high school students to campus events	39	80%	36	68%	54	73%	57	75%	51	72%
Dual credit partnerships	23	47%	26	49%	49	66%	51	67%	47	66%
Training for high school counselors	29	59%	26	49%	43	58%	46	61%	42	59%
College admission/recruitment/advising staff placed on HS campus	23	47%	20	38%	38	51%	44	58%	36	51%
Bridge programs or other academic college-readiness activities	7	14%	16	30%	30	41%	31	41%	35	49%
Grants/scholarships targeted to students in high school	26	53%	22	42%	35	47%	42	55%	31	44%
High school and college faculty collaborations	14	29%	15	28%	27	36%	32	42%	25	35%
Mentoring/tutoring	12	24%	11	21%	16	22%	25	33%	25	35%
First-year support/success programs	12	24%	14	26%	19	26%	28	37%	18	25%
Test preparation for TSI assessment (excl. pre-assessment activities)	11	22%	11	21%	17	23%	25	33%	17	24%
Content-specific professional development for high school faculty	4	8%	9	17%	18	24%	21	28%	13	18%
Test preparation for SAT/ACT	5	10%	1	2%	5	7%	13	17%	13	18%
Work-study students contact freshmen during higher ed 1st semester	4	8%	4	8%	4	5%	7	9%	4	6%
Other	7	14%	15	28%	22	30%	21	28%	17	24%

Note: Number of institutions reporting at least one activity: 2014 – 49; 2015 – 53; 2016 – 74; 2017 – 76; 2018 – 71.

The most common activities in the 2018 survey were:

- Distribution of admissions and financial aid materials at high schools (reported by 63, or 89 percent of 71 reporting institutions)
- College fairs (87 percent)
- Outreach to bring high school students to tour campus (83 percent)
- FAFSA assistance sessions (76 percent)
- Outreach to bring high school students to campus events (72 percent)

These were also the five leading activities reported in all four previous surveys (2014 through 2017), though not always in the same order. “Distribution of admissions and financial aid materials at high school” has always been the most cited activity, although its frequency dropped six points, from 95 percent to 89 percent. Forty-nine percent of survey respondents reported “bridge programs or other academic college-readiness activities” in 2018, up eight points from 2017, the largest year-to-year increase. Just 14 percent of respondents reported this activity in the 2014 survey; the 35-point increase in this activity over five years was by far the largest in the survey. Twelve activities were reported less frequently in 2018 than in 2017, reversing a trend in 2016 and again in 2017 where all but one activity was reported more frequently than in the previous year. The survey data suggest some reduction in higher education institutions’ efforts in 2017 (as reported on the 2018 survey) to encourage and assist high school students in making the transition to college.

Seventeen, or 24 percent of reporting institutions listed a total of 30 “other” activities in the 2018 survey, including: Trio programs outreach; Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (TACRAO) fairs; Texas Success Initiative (TSI) post-assessment advising; Jindal Young Scholars presentations; high school parent night meetings about dual credit and postsecondary options; and the OnRamps program that provides college-level courses to Texas high school students.

Results of Plans

This section presents several measures of student success that HB 2550 activities could influence. Institutions did not need to report any additional information for the THECB to derive these measures, because institutions already regularly submit relevant data as part of their required Coordinating Board Management (CBM) reporting process. These results provide information on college-going rates and activities at THECB-identified high schools with the lowest college-going rates and compares them with data from all public high schools in Texas. Throughout this section, the THECB compares data from high schools that have the lowest college-going rates (referred to as HB 2550 high schools or high schools with lowest college-going rates) with data from all high schools, on four indicators—college-going rates, persistence in higher education, dual credit enrollment, and FAFSA completion.

Table 3 shows college-going rates for FY 2017 graduates of identified high schools, the rate at which they went directly into public and independent higher education in fall 2017. Of 33,600 graduates with IDs that could be tracked into higher education, 12,676, or 37.7 percent enrolled in Texas higher education in the fall, 14.6 percentage points below the 52.3 percent college-going rate for graduates (with trackable IDs) of all public high schools. Graduates of public high schools in FY 2016 had a slightly lower college-going rate of 51.9 percent, but FY 2015 graduates had a somewhat higher college-going rate of 52.7 percent.

Fiscal Year 2014 graduates had an even higher college-going rate of 54.2 percent. College-going rates for all public high schools increased for all four racial/ethnic categories of females shown in Table 3 between FY 2016 and FY 2017, while the rates decreased for every category of males, except for Hispanics, whose rate rose slightly from 45.1 percent to 45.3 percent.

Table 3. College-going rates for FY 2017 Texas public high school graduates

Ethnicity	Gender	High Schools with Lowest College-Going Rates			All High Schools		
		Number of Graduates	Enrolled Directly in TX Higher Education		Number of Graduates	Enrolled Directly in TX Higher Education	
			Number	Percent		Number	Percent
African American	Female	2,557	1,015	39.7%	20,962	10,967	52.3%
	Male	2,501	821	32.8%	20,133	8,535	42.4%
Hispanic	Female	9,501	3,830	40.3%	76,556	42,227	55.2%
	Male	9,292	2,943	31.7%	74,417	33,745	45.3%
White	Female	4,307	2,032	47.2%	51,443	30,087	58.5%
	Male	4,386	1,537	35.0%	52,204	25,837	49.5%
Other	Female	504	267	53.0%	10,384	7,378	71.1%
	Male	552	231	41.8%	10,567	6,975	66.0%
Total	Both	33,600	12,676	37.7%	316,666	165,751	52.3%

Note: Only students with trackable IDs were included.

“Other” students (Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander, and multiracial) had the highest college-going rates in FY 2017 among all high schools – 71.1 percent for females and 66.0 percent for males. They also had the largest college-going gaps when compared to graduates of identified schools, 18.1 points (71.1 percent minus 53.0 percent) for females and 24.2 points (66.0 percent minus 41.8 percent) for males.

Of FY 2016's 12,154 graduates of identified high schools who went directly to a Texas public or independent college in the fall, 68.6 percent persisted in Texas higher education through the fall 2017 semester (see Table 4). That was slightly better than the 68.3 percent persistence rate for the 12,798 graduates of identified high schools in FY 2015. Overall, at all high schools, 77.6 percent of graduates who enrolled directly in higher education in fall 2016 persisted to the next fall, a little less than the 78.0 percent persistence rate for FY 2015 graduates, but still better than for FY 2014 and FY 2013 high school graduates (77.2 and 76.1 percent persistence, respectively). The persistence gap for HB 2550 high school students compared to all high school students was 9.0 percentage points (77.6 percent minus 68.6 percent) for the FY 2016 cohort, somewhat better than the 9.7-point gap the previous year (78.0 percent minus 68.3 percent).

Table 4. College-going rates and one-year persistence rates (fall 2016 to fall 2017) in Texas higher education for FY 2016 public high school graduates

Ethnicity	Gender	High Schools Identified with Lowest College-Going Rates				All High Schools			
		Number of Graduates	Enrolled Directly in TX Higher Education			Number of Graduates	Enrolled Directly in TX Higher Education		
			Number	Percent of Grads	Percent Persisted		Number	Percent of Grads	Percent Persisted
African American	Female	2,147	849	39.5%	66.4%	20,216	10,415	51.5%	75.4%
	Male	2,377	750	31.6%	56.3%	19,931	8,504	42.7%	65.9%
Hispanic	Female	8,877	3,742	42.2%	71.0%	72,888	39,360	54.0%	78.1%
	Male	8,582	2,788	32.5%	64.5%	71,316	32,180	45.1%	71.2%
White	Female	4,264	2,036	47.7%	74.3%	50,562	29,343	58.0%	83.2%
	Male	4,299	1,506	35.0%	68.6%	52,158	25,900	49.7%	78.1%
Other	Female	498	268	53.8%	75.7%	9,944	6,987	70.3%	88.9%
	Male	494	215	43.5%	71.6%	10,088	6,765	67.1%	86.4%
Total	Both	31,538	12,154	38.5%	68.6%	307,103	159,454	51.9%	77.6%

Note: Only students with trackable IDs were included.

About half of the postsecondary institutions that reported collaborations with identified high schools were partnering to offer dual credit in the 2014 and 2015 surveys of institutions. That activity increased in the 2016 through 2018 surveys, as about two-thirds of the institutions reported dual credit partnerships in every one of those years. A total of 4,187 graduates of identified high schools participated in dual credit during their senior year, 12.5 percent of all 33,600 graduates of these schools (Tables 3 and 5). Fiscal Year 2017 graduates of identified schools who took dual credit during their senior year enrolled directly in higher education at a 70.4 percent rate, about 33 percentage points higher than the 37.7 percent rate for all graduates of identified schools and only 6.5 percentage points below the 76.9 percent college-going rate for dual credit students at all high schools. Despite enrolling in dual credit, students from all four ethnic/gender groups at identified high schools had lower college-going rates than for the same groups at all high schools. African American males had the largest gap, 13.7 percentage points (71.2 percent minus 57.5 percent).

Table 5. College-going rates for FY 2017 public high school graduates who were enrolled in dual credit their senior year

Ethnicity	Gender	High Schools with Lowest College-Going Rates			All High Schools		
		Number of Dual Credit Graduates	Enrolled Directly in Higher Education		Number of Dual Credit Graduates	Enrolled Directly in Higher Education	
			Number	Percent		Number	Percent
African American	Female	175	117	66.9%	2,523	1,892	75.0%
	Male	113	65	57.5%	1,362	970	71.2%
Hispanic	Female	1,155	839	72.6%	13,660	10,967	80.3%
	Male	859	563	65.5%	9,847	7,272	73.8%
White	Female	1,000	743	74.3%	14,072	10,908	77.5%
	Male	716	500	69.8%	10,303	7,551	73.3%
Other	Female	90	65	72.2%	2,012	1,701	84.5%
	Male	79	57	72.2%	1,619	1,323	81.7%
Total	Both	4,187	2,949	70.4%	55,398	42,584	76.9%

Note: Only students with trackable IDs were included.

Table 6 shows FAFSA submission rates for seniors at identified schools, compared to statewide results at all public high schools. With 76 percent of institutions reporting on the 2018 survey that they assist with FAFSA preparation at identified schools, it is clearly a priority of the institutions to inform students about the completion of this critical paperwork. In 2016-17, 47.7 percent of seniors at HB 2550 high schools submitted FAFSA paperwork between October 2016 and June 2017 of their senior year, compared with 53.2 percent of seniors at all Texas public high schools. Both groups of students improved their submission rates by about 6 percentage points, so the difference in rates – 5.5 points in 2016-17 (53.2 percent minus 47.7 percent) – was little changed from 5.3 points the previous year. One likely reason for the increased rate of FAFSA submissions is that the U.S. Department of Education moved the opening date back three months, so that high school seniors (and other groups) could begin submitting FAFSA paperwork on October 1, 2016 instead of January 1, 2017.

Table 6. FAFSA submission by Texas public high school seniors

Senior Year	High Schools with Lowest College-Going Rates			All High Schools		
	Number of Seniors	Submitted FAFSA January-June of Senior Year		Number of Seniors	Submitted FAFSA January-June of Senior Year	
		Number	Percent		Number	Percent
2015-16	32,694	13,602	41.6%	323,478	151,581	46.9%
2016-17	34,395	16,417	47.7%	332,767	177,040	53.2%



This document is available on the [Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board website](#).

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