



**TEXAS**  
The University of Texas at Austin

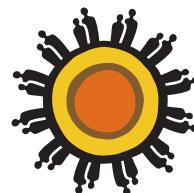


# De la Ciudad a la Frontera

Advancing Latino Male Students in  
Border and Urban Regions in Texas

SÁENZ | SÁNCHEZ | RYU | BURMICKY

POLICY BRIEF SERIES | **ISSUE 1.1**



Project **MALES**  
Mentoring to Achieve Latino Educational Success



## Project MALES

### ABOUT PROJECT MALES

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Project MALES (Mentoring to Achieve Latino Educational Success) is a research and mentoring initiative committed to advancing the educational outcomes of male students of color at the local, state, and national level. It began in 2010 and is headquartered at The University of Texas at Austin under the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE). Project MALES represents a strategic partnership between the two state flagship institutions—The University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M, College Station—collaborating to advance and improve educational outcomes for boys and young men of color. In 2013, the Greater Texas Foundation (GTF), the Trellis Foundation (formerly TG), and the Kresge Foundation awarded Project MALES research grants to launch the Texas Education Consortium for Male Students of Color. Operating under the umbrella of Project MALES, the Consortium is a statewide, cross-sector partnership made up of over 47 institutions. It represents a direct response to the state and national policy mandates that have raised significant questions about the various challenges facing male students of color as they navigate their educational pathways.

### ABOUT THE POLICY BRIEF SERIES

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The Project MALES Policy Brief Series was developed after the dissemination of the institute's inaugural Research Digest which highlighted patterns among men of color worthy of further analysis and exploration (see Sáenz, Ryu, & Burmicky, 2018). Very few state entities have done the research to produce benchmarking data pertaining to men of color and degree completion. Neglecting educational disparities and—more importantly—not having the data required to advocate for change is detrimental to the economic future of Texas and the mission of 60x30TX. As a result, the Policy Brief Series was developed to critically examine longitudinal data across the state to explore topics of degree and certificate completion for men of color. It highlights empirical data strategically aligned with the overarching goals of 60x30TX for educational leaders and policymakers to affect change at the institutional and state policy level.

## Introduction

Latinos<sup>1</sup> are the largest ethnic or racial minority in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018), with the state of Texas at the forefront of national demographic shifts in the K-20 population. Texas had the largest numeric increase of Hispanics from 2016 to 2017 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018) and enrolled 38.4 percent of all Hispanic undergraduates in the United States in 2016 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). To address these demographic realities and meet the challenges and educational needs of this future workforce, the state of Texas adopted the 60x30TX<sup>2</sup> (“60 by 30 Tex”) Higher Education Plan.

60x30TX was adopted by the state higher education authority in 2015 with strong support from educational, business, and political leaders throughout Texas. The plan outlines how the demographic changes affecting Texas will impact the state’s higher education system, particularly with the Hispanic population increasing to 52 percent in 2030. It sets college completion goals within Texas and leading states in four areas: educated population, completion, marketable skills, and student debt.

Of particular importance for Texas and for the United States is the goal that at least 60 percent of Texans (ages 25-34) will have a certificate or degree by 2030, with numeric goals set by racial/ethnic group and gender. The numbers required to meet each of the stated goals are especially large for Hispanics. To ensure completion improves throughout the plan years, Texas set statewide student completion benchmarks of 138,000 Hispanic students by 2020, 198,000 by 2025, and 285,000 by 2030. However, a large gap exists among gender groups of Hispanics in both enrollment and graduation from Texas’ colleges and universities (Sáenz, Ryu, & Burmicky, 2018).

Project MALES (Mentoring to Achieve Latino Educational Success), a research and mentoring initiative headquartered at The University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin), led a research study to examine and benchmark the state of affairs of higher education for men of color in Texas. Working in collaboration with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), Project MALES published a series of research digests<sup>3</sup> that explored eighth grade cohort data to critically assess longitudinal patterns in enrollment and completion for Hispanic and African American males in Texas.

This policy brief aims to more closely review and examine key findings from the research digest on Latino male students. Specifically, this policy brief highlights trends from border and urban regions of Texas. While border and urban regions have distinct characteristics and traits, together these regions serve a significant proportion of all Hispanic male students in the state. By understanding the needs of Hispanic males from border and urban regions, Texas can be better prepared to meet the goals of 60x30TX.

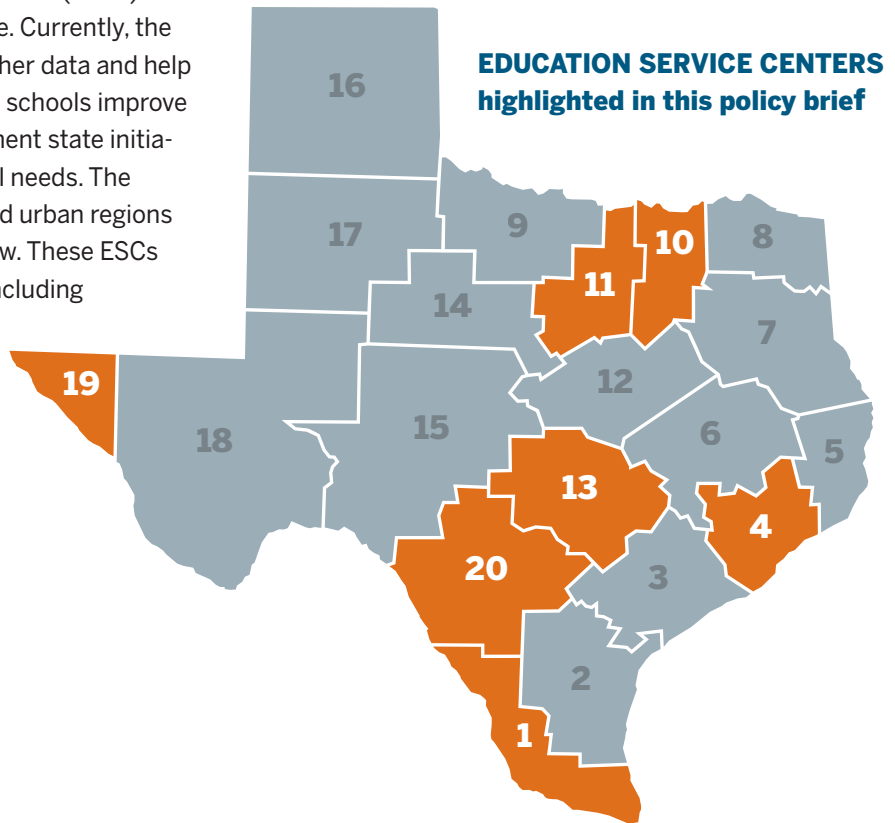
This policy brief begins by highlighting seven Education Service Centers (ESCs) serving border and urban regions in Texas to provide context for understanding the key findings. Next, the brief highlights two key findings. Finally, the brief concludes with recommendations for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to accelerate Hispanic male educational attainment in Texas and the nation.



*Participants take a break during the Texas Male Student Leadership Summit hosted by the Texas Education Consortium for Male Students of Color.*

# Profiles of Education Service Centers

In 1965, the Texas Legislature authorized the State Board of Education to establish Education Service Centers (ESCs) to support local school districts within the state. Currently, the State of Texas has 20 regional ESCs that gather data and help school districts, charter schools, and private schools improve student performance and outcomes, implement state initiatives, and gather resources to target regional needs. The ESCs profiled below represent the border and urban regions identified by Project MALES for further review. These ESCs were selected for a combination of factors including but not limited to geographical location, percentage of Hispanic students served, and educational patterns and outcomes.



## REGION 1: EDINBURG

**7** county areas: **10,515** square miles  
 Serves **37** school districts and **10** charter school systems  
 Hispanic students: **97.4%**  
 Low-income students: **85.5%**

## REGION 4: HOUSTON

**7** county areas: **6,856** square miles  
 Serves **48** public school districts and **34** open-enrollment charter schools  
 Hispanic students: **50.6%**  
 Low-income students: **57.9%**

## REGION 10: RICHARDSON

**8** county areas: **6,548** square miles  
 Serves **147** ISDs, charters and private schools  
 Hispanic students: **43.1%**  
 Low-income students: **55.4%**

## REGION 11: FORT WORTH

**10** county areas: **7,745** square miles  
 Serves **77** public school districts, **66** charter schools, and **114** private schools  
 Hispanic students: **36.2%**  
 Low-income students: **49.2%**

## REGION 13: AUSTIN

**16** county areas: **13,059** square miles  
 Serves **60** school districts, **23** charter schools, **8** institutions of higher education, and **19** private schools  
 Hispanic students: **47.6%**  
 Low-income students: **44.6%**

## REGION 19: EL PASO

**2** county areas: **5,095** square miles  
 Serves **12** school districts and **7** charter school systems  
 Hispanic students: **90.2%**  
 Low-income students: **73.9%**

## REGION 20: SAN ANTONIO

**18** county areas: **16,606** square miles  
 Serves over **40** school districts and over **30** charter and private schools  
 Hispanic students: **68.8%**  
 Low-income students: **58.7%**

# Key Findings

The data for this brief originates from the Eighth Grade Cohort Longitudinal Study conducted by THECB to document educational outcomes for every student who started eighth grade in a Texas public school during the fiscal years 1998 through 2006. The longitudinal study follows each cohort over an 11-year period to determine the percentage of Texas' eighth-grade students who eventually achieve any postsecondary certificate or degree from a Texas college or university, or who may still be enrolled in a Texas two-year or four-year institution. This publicly available data is disaggregated by race and gender as well as by regional ESC. The Project MALES research team acquired the longitudinal cohort data from the THECB's data website to prepare our research study and used descriptive statistics to explore Hispanic male college enrollment<sup>4</sup> and degree completion<sup>5</sup> patterns with a specific focus on urban and border regions. We identified the following three key findings a result of our analysis.

## KEY FINDING 1

**On average, Hispanic males from border regions in Texas (e.g., Edinburg, El Paso) enroll in postsecondary education at higher numbers than males statewide. By contrast, Hispanic males from urban regions in Texas enrollment rates are lower than their statewide counterparts.**

**Figure A: Enrolled in Texas Two-Year and Four-Year Institutions, Hispanic Male Eighth-Graders by ESC Region**  
 FY 2006 Eighth Grade Cohort Tracked through FY 2017

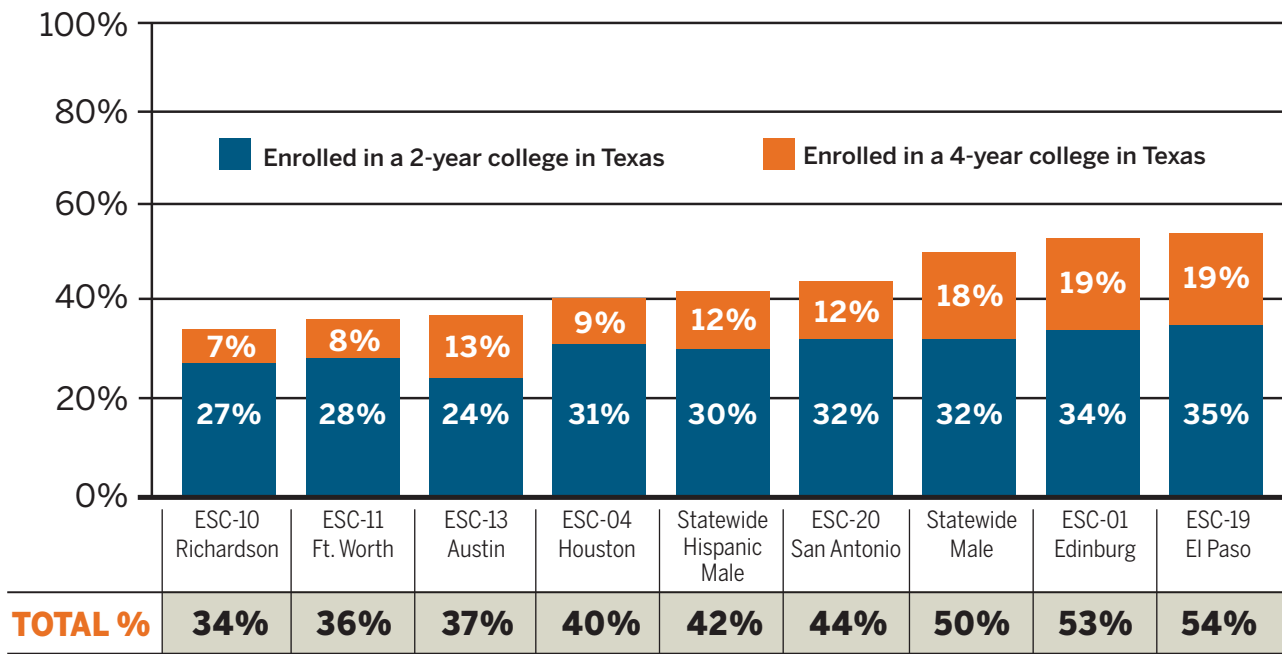


Figure A shows the border ESC regions of El Paso and Edinburg have high enrollment percentages for Hispanic male students at both two-year and four-year institutions. For the ESC regions of El Paso and Edinburg, percentage for Hispanic male enrollment at two-year colleges are 35 % and 34% respectively, 3% and 4% higher than the statewide percentages for all males and Hispanic males at 32% and 30% respectively. A similar enrollment pattern is reflected at four-year institutions. Figure A does not account for Hispanic males who have already earned a certificate/degree in Texas. The statewide male

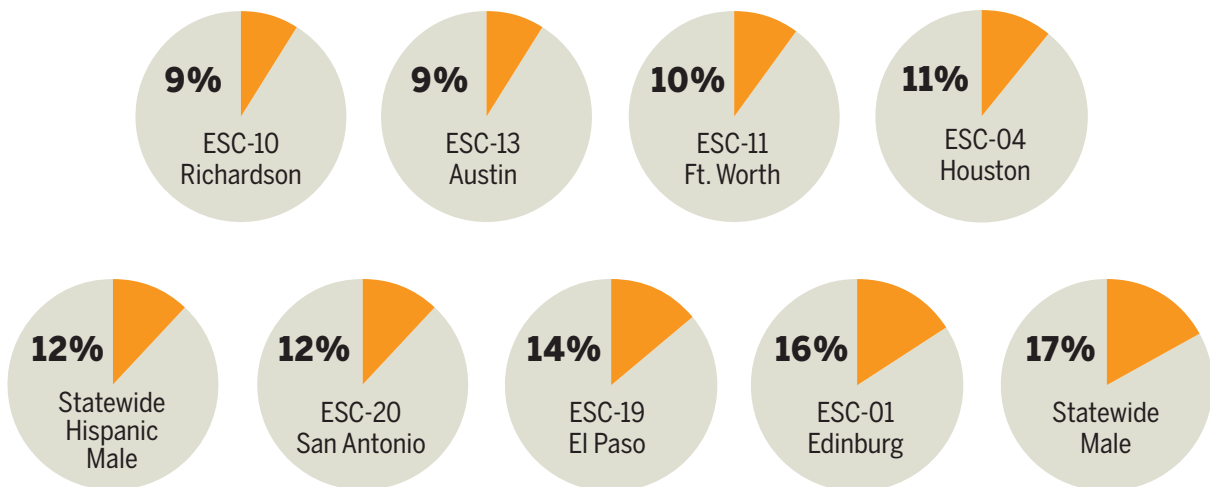
enrollment percentage for four-year institutions is 18%. Both El Paso and Edinburg show 19% for Hispanic male student enrollment, 1 percentage-point higher than the statewide percentage for male student enrollment. Further, the four-year college enrollment rates for Hispanic males in the border regions are significantly higher when compared to 12% for statewide Hispanic male enrollment.

Figure A also presents all urban ESC regions have lower percentages of enrollment at two-year colleges compared to border ESC regions, with the exception of the San Antonio ESC region. In particular, the percentage of two-year college enrollment for Hispanic males in the ESC region of Austin is 13%, 8% lower than the statewide male average of 32%. When compared to the 30% statewide Hispanic male average, three ESC regions of Fort Worth, Richardson, and Austin (28%, 27%, and 24%, respectively) also show lower percentages of Hispanic male enrollment at two-year colleges while the percentages of San Antonio and Houston ESC regions are a little bit higher (32% and 31%, respectively). Even more concerning, urban ESC regions show alarmingly low percentages of Hispanic male enrollment at four-year institutions. 18% of all statewide males had enrolled in any four-year institutions in Texas; however, only 7-9 percent of Hispanic males in the three urban regions of Richardson, Fort Worth, and Houston had enrolled in those institutions. While two urban regions of San Antonio and Austin (12% and 13%, respectively) did better than other urban regions, they are still considerably lower than the statewide average for male students in four-year college enrollment.

**KEY FINDING 2**

**In degree completion rates, Hispanic males from border regions are higher than those from urban regions in Texas.**

*Figure B: Earned Certificate/Degree in Texas, Hispanic Male Eighth-Graders by ESC Region  
FY 2006 Eighth Grade Cohort Tracked through FY 2017*



Similar to enrollment patterns that demonstrated urban and border ESC regional differences, our data showed urban schools lagging behind the state and border regions in degree/certificate completion. For example, as shown in Figure B, the statewide degree/certificate percentage for male students is 17%. Degree/certificate completion rates for ESC urban regions of Richardson, Austin, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio are considerably lower than the 17% completion rates of statewide male students (Richardson & Austin: -8 percentage points, Fort Worth: -7 percentage points, Houston: -6 percentage points,

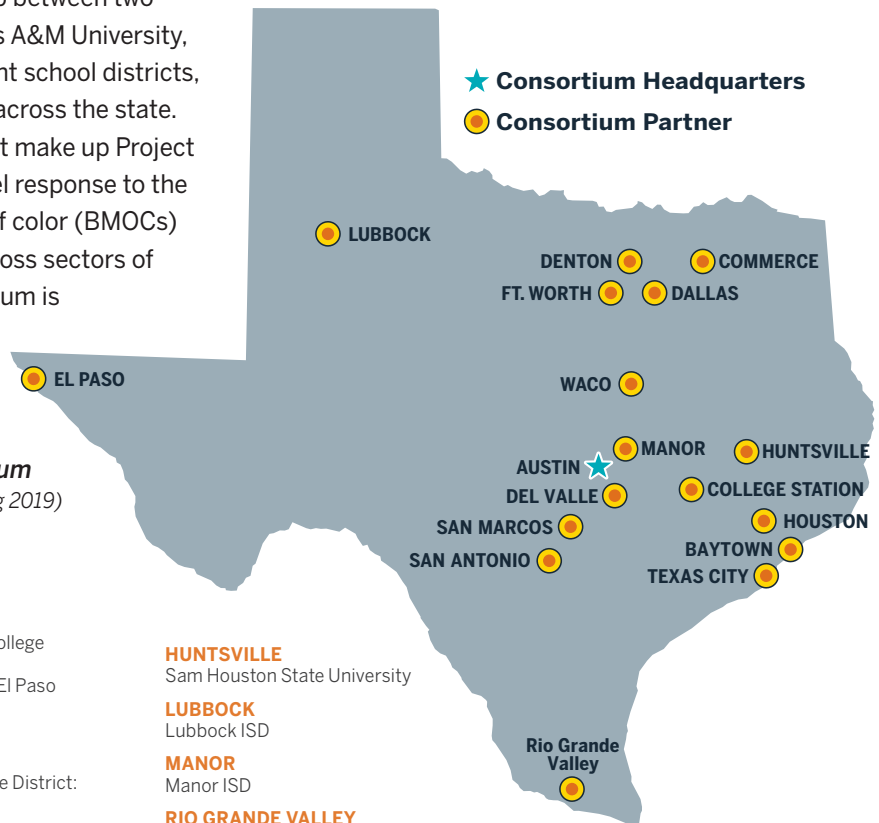


and San Antonio: -5 percentage points). The difference in degree attainment percentage for Hispanic males in urban ESC regions are about two times lower than the statewide male average. The border ESC regions of El Paso and Edinburg continue to do better than urban ESC regions while they are still slightly lower than the statewide male average (14% and 16%, respectively). There is a 1-3-point difference in postsecondary completion rates for Hispanic males in border ESC regions from statewide male average. In addition, the gap between statewide males and statewide Hispanic males in degree completion is even more remarkable: while 17% of male students across Texas earned a degree/certificate in Texas, only 12% of Hispanic male students in Texas did so.

## Texas Education Consortium for Male Students of Color

The Texas Education Consortium for Male Students of Color (Consortium) represents a strategic partnership between two state flagship institutions— UT Austin and Texas A&M University, College Station (TAMU)—along with independent school districts, community colleges, and four-year institutions across the state. The Consortium is one of the four initiatives that make up Project MALES. The Consortium represents a state-level response to the urgent challenges facing boys and young men of color (BMOCs) as they navigate their educational pathways across sectors of education. Ultimately, the vision of our Consortium is to advance equitable educational outcomes for male students of color at the local, state, and national levels.

**Figure C: Map of the Texas Education Consortium for Male Students of Color** (as of Spring 2019)



- AUSTIN**  
University of Texas at Austin  
(Consortium Headquarters)  
Austin Community College  
Austin Independent School District  
Texas CAN Academy
- BAYTOWN**  
Lee College
- COLLEGE STATION**  
Texas A&M University
- COMMERCE**  
Texas A&M University – Commerce
- DALLAS**  
Dallas Independent School District
- DEL VALLE**  
Del Valle ISD
- DENTON**  
University of North Texas

- EL PASO**  
El Paso Community College  
El Paso ISD  
University of Texas at El Paso  
Ysleta ISD
- FORT WORTH**  
Fort Worth ISD  
Tarrant County College District:  
Northeast Campus  
Northwest Campus  
South Campus  
Southeast Campus  
TCC Connect Campus  
Trinity River Campus
- HOUSTON**  
Houston Community College  
Houston ISD  
Prairie View A&M University  
San Jacinto College  
University of Houston – Downtown

- HUNTSVILLE**  
Sam Houston State University
- LUBBOCK**  
Lubbock ISD
- MANOR**  
Manor ISD
- RIO GRANDE VALLEY**  
La Joya ISD  
Texas Southmost College  
University of Texas – Rio Grande Valley
- SAN ANTONIO**  
Alamo Colleges District:  
Northeast Lakeview College  
Northwest Vista College  
Palo Alto College  
San Antonio College  
St. Philip’s College  
University of Texas at San Antonio

- SAN MARCOS**  
Texas State University
- TEXAS CITY**  
College of the Mainland
- WACO**  
Baylor University  
McLennan Community College

# Recommendations, Strategies, and Lessons Learned

From our research, such as our research digests, policy briefs and other studies, and our conversations with Consortium partners, we have learned that **this topic merits further attention and investigation**. Thus, this policy brief articulates the following evidence-based recommendations and strategies:

- 1. Collect and make data available about Latino male students.** Disaggregating data by race, gender, and region can significantly strengthen our understanding of the educational patterns of Latino males across regions of the state. Disaggregating data refers to the breaking down of student data into smaller groupings such as gender, income, and race/ethnicity. This exercise of drilling down data allows for further evaluation on how specific groups of students (e.g., Black and Latino males) are performing while revealing patterns that otherwise would have been ignored. Through the development of our research digests and policy brief series we have sought to address the lack of available benchmarking data to our Consortium partners and educational leaders across the state.
- 2. Cultivate and sustain cross-sector, statewide P-16 educational professional learning communities.** Over the years, we have learned that educational leaders desire to have a space to engage in critical conversations with other administrators about the future of their students. Thus, through our Consortium, we have learned about the value of hosting biannual regional institutes and annual Summits to create a collaborative space that fosters critical conversations between school districts, community colleges, and universities. These spaces are vital to assess and strategize across these three sectors about how to best serve the needs of Latino male students through our collective work.
- 3. Identify key issues facing Latino males by region and assisting in capacity building work.** Given the size and scope of the state of Texas, we have learned that issues facing Latino males are different depending on the region. For example, as highlighted in this policy brief, the realities of Latino males in border regions and urban regions are different. Therefore, in concert with our research team and Consortium partners, we realize that the most effective strategy to serve male students of color is to provide data that enables practitioners to more effectively address challenges through practice and policy implementation.

**60x30TX GOAL**



## COMPLETION

By 2030, at least 550,000 students in that year will complete a certificate, associate's, bachelor's, or master's from an institution of higher education in Texas.

Therefore, by highlighting the aspirational goals of 60x30TX, we know how to move into **tangible strategies** as suggested by our research work in collaboration with Consortium partners in order for institutions to meet goals articulated in the 60x30TX Plan.

As a result, based on this 60x30TX completion goal, the following **tangible strategies** are recommended:

- 1. Cultivate a college-going culture.** Our Consortium partners have taught us about the value of expanding the number of early college high schools and dual enrollment opportunities for students, which many of the border-serving educational institutions have implemented. This strategy has been proven to increase the number of students seeking a postsecondary credential in areas of the state such as border region institutions.



2. **Encourage transfer programs and stronger relationships between two-year institutions and four-year institutions.** Making articulation agreements clear, concise, and easy to access for students and families interested in transferring can be vital to making postsecondary education more accessible. In addition, institutions should be supportive (and sensitive) of academic advisors and career coaches and their efforts to meet with dozens of students who need access to degree planning, student services, and career exploration services.
3. **Reclaim students who have dropped out of high school and college.** Some of our Consortium partners in border regions have engaged with personal touch efforts, such as door-to-door campaigns, to reach out to students who often feel disenfranchised by the educational system. Many of these students have been able to re-enroll in high school and college because of the personal investment that school and college faculty and administrators have shown to their students.

## 60x30TX GOAL

### MARKETABLE SKILLS

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

4. **Develop and/or support Men of Color (MoC) or MoC-focused programs and initiatives.** Research shows that Latino male students lag behind other students in achieving academic success (Sáenz, Ponjuán, & Figueroa, 2016) and need specific, targeted interventions to succeed. Successful institutions have adopted MoC programs that are essential to enhancing the experiences of men of color through first- and second-year experience programs, learning communities, orientation, and other on boarding programs to address the unique needs of this student population.

As a result, based on the 60x30TX marketable skills goal, the following **tangible strategies** are recommended:

1. **Conduct asset mapping to advance the specific needs of the community.** Such efforts include but are not limited to identifying local and state employers and additional opportunities for students to develop more marketable skills. Asset mapping allows for community-based programs and schools to work hand-in-hand to tackle the most pressing issues affecting their communities (e.g., unemployment, low wages, etc.). In addition, asset mapping can be used as a tool to reproduce already existing successful programs that have been developed at the local level.
2. **Establish early alert systems for quick intervention of unemployed graduates.** Institutions should work together with local employers and community-based organizations to ensure that recent college graduates have access to job opportunities within their regions. Institutions and local employers should partner to ensure that students have access to job openings and career training programs.

## 60x30TX GOAL

### STUDENT DEBT

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

3. **Create and/or join a local compact, data-sharing compact.** Accessing local data and developing programs to address such immediate needs are often the best course of action for developing effective policies to advance the specific needs of the community. In addition, institutions should have access to such data and develop certificate and degree programs that meet the market needs of their local communities and labor force.

As a result, based on the 60x30TX student debt goals, the following **tangible strategies** are recommended:

- 1. Implement student financial literacy programs.** Low financial literacy can have detrimental effects on the success of Latino male students (Salinas & Hidrowoh, 2018). Financial literacy includes facilitating students' understanding of critical college-going factors such as cost, price, return of investment, institutions, and various types of need-based and merit-based funding (Salinas & Hidrowoh, 2018).
- 2. Increase transfer pathways and decrease time to degree completion.** Many community colleges have low rates of transfer for Latino students (Bates, Bell, & Siqueiros, 2018). Thus, it is imperative for institutions to develop clear and concise advising plans that outline specific degree completion requirements. In addition, community colleges and four-year colleges should develop and make available clear articulation plans as a deliberate effort to increase transfer pathways for Latino male students.
- 3. Provide balance among appropriations, tuition and fees, and financial aid.** While the demand for higher education is at an all-time high, state appropriations for public higher education have not kept up with enrollment increases (Heller, 2006). Thus, because college tuition and fees are expected to increase over time, institutions should be more explicit about publicizing additional financial aid opportunities for Latino males and their families to engage and explore (Salinas & Hidrowoh, 2018).
- 4. Guarantee need-based aid or full tuition grants for qualifying student.** Today, bottom-income quartile students are considerably less likely to enroll in college than top-income quartile students (Goldrick-Rab, Kelchen, Harris, & Benson, 2016). As a result, making college more affordable to low-income Latino male students can more rapidly attenuate the degree attainment gaps (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2016).



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**ISSUE 1.1**

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*February 2019*

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Through this brief, the terms Hispanic and Latino are used interchangeably.

<sup>2</sup>The 60x30TX higher education strategic plan was launched in 2015 with a clear and bold vision: to be among the highest-achieving states in the country. 60x30TX is a roadmap to help Texas reach that future through higher education. 60x30TX contains four broad goals. For more information about the Digest, please visit <http://www.60x30tx.com/>

<sup>3</sup>The Research Digest, “Following Hispanic Male 8th Graders through College: A Digest of Longitudinal Enrollment and Graduation Patterns in Texas” explores the Texas eighth grade cohort data to look critically at longitudinal enrollment and completion patterns with a special focus on Hispanic males. For more information about the Digest, please visit our Research Institute webpage at:  
[http://diversity.utexas.edu/projectmales/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Research-Digest\\_No-1-Updated-06-01-18.pdf](http://diversity.utexas.edu/projectmales/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Research-Digest_No-1-Updated-06-01-18.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>Throughout this brief, the term “college enrollment” refers only to postsecondary education enrollment in a Texas two-year or four-year institution.

<sup>5</sup>Throughout this brief, the term “degree completion” refers only to earned certificates/degrees from Texas colleges or universities.

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Mentoring to Achieve Latino Educational Success

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This brief was developed with generous support from the Latino Center for Leadership Development (LCLD)–Southern Methodist University (SMU) Tower Center Research Partnership. We are grateful to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for its support in providing the data for the Project MALES Policy Brief Series. We also appreciate the insights shared by members from the Texas Education Consortium for Male Students of Color, with special thanks to Carlos Amaya (El Paso Community College), Dominic Lannutti (El Paso Community College), and Abigail Tarango (Ysleta Independent School District). Lastly, we would like to acknowledge the thousands of boys and young men of color (BYMOC) in the state of Texas, who are navigating the P-20 pipeline as well as the thousands of teachers, administrators, and faculty that dedicate their lives to the educational advancement of these students.

FEBRUARY 2019

