



Long-Range Plan for
PUBLIC EDUCATION
STEERING COMMITTEE

PUBLIC EDUCATION IN TEXAS

An Assessment of State Plans, Reports, and Data

Briefing Materials for the Long-Range Plan for Public Education Steering Committee



AUGUST 2017

Texas Comprehensive Center at AIR

Public Education in Texas: An Assessment of State Plans, Reports, and Data

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TEA Goals In Strategic Plan 2017-2021	TEA Strategic Plan	Long-Range Plan for Technology 2006-2020 and 2016 Report	Tri-Agency Report	60x30TX Higher Education	Public Visioning Institute	2016 Comprehensive Biennial Report (Information and Data)	Texas Academic Performance Indicator Reports (Data)	Enrollment in Texas Public Schools (Data)	Secondary School Completion and Dropouts (Data)	College Admissions Testing Results (Data)	Region One SBOE Long-Range Plan Educator Forums
1. Recruiting, Supporting, and Retaining Teachers and Principals	●	● (Educator Preparation and Development)	● (under Prime Recommendation 2, #3)				● (Staff Information, including Teacher Turnover Rate)				
2. Improving Transparency of District and Campus Academic and Financial Performance	●		● (under Prime Recommendation 2, #2)		● (Principal IV)	● (Chapter 7, District and Campus Performance)					
3. Building a Foundation of Literacy and Numeracy	●		● (under Prime Recommendation 2, #1)			● (Chapter 2, Student Performance)	● (Student Proficiency Levels)				● (Summary: Early Learning Focus)
4. Improving Low-Performing Schools	●				● (Principal IV)	● (Chapter 7, District and Campus Performance)					
5. Connecting High School to Career and College	●		● (under Prime Recommendations 1 and 3)	● (under Overarching Goal, Second Goal)		● (Chapter 16, Foundation High School Program Endorsements)	● (Advanced Course, Dual Credit Course Completion; AP/IB, SAT/ACT)			● (SAT and ACT Participation and Performance Data)	● (Summary: CCR, Workforce, 21st Century Skills)
6. Using Taxpayer Resources Efficiently	●					● (Chapter 12, Agency Funds and Expenditures)					● (Summary: Early Learning Funding Concerns)
From Supplemental Schedule A											
Goal 1: Provide Education System, Leadership, Guidance, and Resources											
Objective 1.1: Public Education Excellence	●					● (Chapter 12, Graduates and Dropouts)	● (Graduation Rates, Dropout Rates, Attendance Rates)				
Objective 1.2: Academic Excellence	●					● (Chapter 2, Student Performance)	● (Student Proficiency, Dual Credit Course Completion, AP/IB, CTE Enrollments)	● (Enrollment by Grade, CTE)			

TEA Goals in Strategic Plan 2017-2021	TEA Strategic Plan	Long-Range Plan for Technology 2006-2020 and 2016 Report	Tri-Agency Report	60x30TX Higher Education	Public Visioning Institute	2016 Comprehensive Biennial Report (Information and Data)	Texas Academic Performance Indicator Reports (Data)	Enrollment in Texas Public Schools (Data)	Secondary School Completion and Dropouts (Data)	College Admissions Testing Results (Data)	Region One SBOE Long-Range Plan Educator Forums
Goal 2: Provide System Oversight and Support											
Objective 2.1: Accountability	●					● (District and Campus Performance)	● (Student Proficiency, SAT/ACT)			● (SAT/ACT)	
Objective 2.2: Effective School Environments	●					● (Students in DAEPs)					
Objective 2.3: Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Support	●						● (Teacher Turnover Rates)				
Note: Information from data reports is a sample of what is included and is not completely crosswalked to all of the Outcome, Output, and Efficiency Measures in the TEA Strategic Plan. Other Goals not in the TEA Strategic Plan (bold is where it appears as a major goal)											
Identify Education and Employment Opportunities for Texas Veterans			● (Prime Recommendation 4)								
60 Percent of the 24-34-Year-Old Texas Population Will Hold a Certificate or Degree by 2030				● (Overarching Goal)							
Higher Education Degree Completion				● (Second Goal)							
Marketable Skills for High School and Higher Education Graduates			● (Prime Recommendation 3)	● (Third Goal)							
Student Loan Debt not Exceeding 60 Percent of First-Year Wages for Graduates of Texas Public Institutions; Affordable Education			● (Prime Recommendation 3, a)	● (Fourth Goal)							

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Digital Learning for Students		● (Teaching and Learning)			● (Principal I)						
New Learning Standards					● (Principal II)						
Assessments for Learning					● (Principal III)						
Organizational Transformation					● (Principal V)						
More Balanced and Reinvigorated State and Local Partnership					● (Principal VI)						
Technology for Leadership, Administration, and Instructional Support		● (Leadership, Administration, and Instructional Support)									
Technology infrastructure		● (Infrastructure)									

Introduction

Public Education in Texas: An Assessment of State Plans, Reports, and Data

To set the stage for the work of the Long-Range Plan for Public Education Steering Committee (LRP Steering Committee), the Texas Comprehensive Center (TXCC) at American Institutes for Research conducted a review of relevant strategic plans and priorities relating to Texas public primary and secondary education. This review included the following reports and data sources:

- *Texas Education Agency Strategic Plan, 2017–2021*
- *Long-Range Plan for Technology, 2006–2020*
- *2016 Progress Report on the Long-Range Plan for Technology*
- *Prosperity Requires Being Bold: Integrating Education and the Workforce for a Bright Texas Future: The Tri-Agency Report to the Office of the Governor from the Texas Education Agency, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and Texas Workforce Commission, November 2016*
- *60x30TX: Texas Higher Education Strategic Plan, 2015–2030*
- *Creating a New Vision for Public Education in Texas: A Work in Progress for Conversation and Further Development*
- *2016 Comprehensive Biennial Report on Texas Public Schools: A Report to the 85th Legislature from the Texas Education Agency, March 2017*
- Texas Academic Performance Indicator Reports (data)
- Enrollment in Texas public schools (data)
- Secondary school completion and dropouts (data)
- College admissions testing results (data)
- November 17, 2015, State Board of Education (SBOE) learning roundtable: Educating the digital generation
- September 12, 2016, SBOE learning roundtable: Educating the children of poverty
- SBOE Long-Range Plan for Public Education: Region One Educator Forums, December 14, 2014, and January 16, 2015

TXCC team members studied each of these reports and data sources, produced summaries of those reports that the team deemed most germane to the work of the LRP Steering Committee, and created a matrix to crosswalk the goals in the *Texas Education Agency Strategic Plan* with the goals in other state plans and reports and with the goals related to state data systems. The premise behind this approach is that existing efforts by other agencies and organizations to establish goals and strategies for Texas public education should be considered when producing the next SBOE Long-Range Plan to maximize efficiency and support broad systemic change. The matrix highlights goals that are common to several reports; therefore, multiple stakeholders likely recognize these goals as critical to Texas's educational success. This analysis, then, can help the steering committee identify ideas shared by



many stakeholders and offer some areas where the committee's report could improve on strategies already underway.

Five reports, in particular, merit special attention, given their statewide scope and association with key agencies and initiatives:

1. *Texas Education Agency Strategic Plan, 2017–2021*. A five-year planning document that contains the agency's goals, objectives, and strategies
2. *Prosperity Requires Being Bold: Integrating Education and the Workforce for a Bright Texas Future*. A tri-agency report requested by the governor as a joint effort by the Commissioners of the TEA, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Texas Workforce Commission to recommend ways to develop strong links between education and industry, with the goal of helping Texas grow in economic prosperity
3. *60x30TX: Texas Higher Education Strategic Plan, 2015–2030*. A report and plan that aim to ensure that 60 percent of the 25- to 34-year-old Texas population will hold a certificate or degree by 2030 in order for the state to remain competitive and prosperous
4. *Creating a New Vision for Public Education in Texas*. A report with 17 goals created by a group of 35 public school superintendents from across the state of Texas who came together to create a new vision for public education in Texas through the Public Education Visioning Institute
5. *Long-Range Plan for Technology 2006–2020*. A report by TEA with four goals related to the use of educational technology for public schools

As identified in the matrix and noted by the review team, several goals were mentioned in two or more of these reports and therefore, these goals may be considered as prospective priorities for consideration by the steering committee:

- **Recruiting, supporting, and retaining teachers and principals.** In general, this goal calls for improving educator preparation and professional learning for practicing educators as well as creating strategies to retain educators in the profession. (Goal found in reports 1, 2, and 5.)
- **Improving transparency of district and campus academic and financial performance.** This is defined in the TEA strategic plan as improving access to school district, open-enrollment charter school, and campus academic and financial performance ratings so that all stakeholders understand the strengths in their schools and school systems and can more effectively chart paths of improvement. (Goal found in reports 1, 2, and 4.)
- **Connecting high school to career and college.** This goal emphasizes the need for strengthening K–12 education to better align with workforce demands and requirements for college entry and completion. (Goal found in reports 1, 2, and 3.)
- **Building a foundation of literacy and numeracy.** This fairly specific goal refers to the importance of ensuring that Texas students achieve competency in reading and mathematics by grade 5. (Goal found in reports 1 and 2.)
- **Improving low-performing schools.** Two reports identify the importance of improving schools with low or lagging levels of student achievement through a variety of strategies. (Goal found in reports 1 and 4.)

- **Ensuring high school and college graduates have marketable skills.** This goal calls on educators and education officials to more closely align K–12 and postsecondary education to workforce needs. (Goal found in reports 2 and 3.)
- **Guaranteeing that college students can receive an affordable education.** One document defines this goal as ensuring that student loan debt does not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions. (Goal found in reports 2 and 3.)
- **Providing digital learning for students.** This goal calls on educators and policymakers to provide digital learning to all students so that they can access and process information in a virtual environment. (Goal found in reports 3 and 4.)

Although steering committee members may consider additional priorities, this list comprises the goals that three state agencies and one consortium of school district superintendents identified to date as priorities. As such, these priorities provide an effective starting point for consideration of key issues impacting public education in Texas.

TXCC suggests that steering committee members use the following process when reviewing this document:

1. Read each of the document summaries to ensure baseline knowledge necessary regarding the existing plans and data sources related to Texas public education.
6. Note any clarifying questions related to the topic or the report.
7. Study the matrix to identify additional goals that may be referenced in a single report or data source.
8. Identify any issues or questions for further exploration by the steering committee.

These steps will ensure that committee members are well prepared to complete their charge of making thoughtful, informed recommendations to the SBOE for inclusion in the next Long-Range Plan for Public Education.

Texas Education Agency Strategic Plan, 2017–2021

Document Summary

Texas Education Agency. (2016, June). *Texas Education Agency Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2017 to 2021*. Austin, TX: Author. Retrieved from http://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/Welcome_and_Overview/TEA_Strategic_Plan/

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) strategic plan is a five-year planning document required every two years that contains the agency’s mission, philosophy, goals, objectives, and strategies.

Vision: Every child in Texas is an independent thinker and graduates prepared for success in college, a career, or in the military, and as an engaged public citizen.

There are six agency goals with specific action items to achieve each goal and how the goal or action items support each statewide objective. The specific action items and statements about how the goal or action items support each statewide objective are very detailed, so they are not repeated here (page numbers where the action items can be found are listed). An example of a specific action item is included for each goal. The statewide objectives include: (1) Accountable to the tax and fee payers of Texas; (2) Efficient such that maximum results are produced with a minimum waste of taxpayer funds, including through the elimination of redundant and non-core functions; (3) Effective in successfully fulfilling core functions, measuring success in achieving performance measures, and implementing plans to continuously improve; (4) Providing excellent customer service; and (5) Transparent such that agency actions can be understood by any Texan.

Goal 1: Recruiting, Supporting, and Retaining Teachers and Principals

The agency will improve educator pre-service and in-service training, and implement systems of continuous educator improvement, because teachers are the greatest asset in our school systems to improve student outcomes.

Specific Action Item Example: By August of 2018, establish and implement a more rigorous teacher preparation and certification process that uses performance metrics and student achievement data to evaluate teacher preparation program effectiveness.

See pp. 4–5 for specific action items and how goal or action items support each statewide objective.

Goal 2: Improving Transparency of District and Campus Academic and Financial Performance

The agency will improve the transparency of school district, open-enrollment charter school and campus academic and financial performance ratings so that all stakeholders understand the strengths in their schools and school systems and can more effectively chart paths of improvement.

Specific Action Item Example: By August 2018, create a comprehensive reporting model for the state’s new A–F academic accountability system that provides a clear label and presentation of performance results for each school district, open-enrollment charter school, and individual campus. The model will

ensure that parents, educators, legislators, and taxpayers have a comprehensive picture of each school's strengths and weaknesses and have actionable, user-friendly, and transparent information to drive improvement at every school system level (state, district and charter, campus, and individual student) in accordance with HB 2804 (84th Texas Legislature).

See pp. 5–6 for specific action items and how goal or action items support each statewide objective.

Goal 3: Building a Foundation of Literacy and Numeracy

The agency will ensure that our youngest students are capable of reading and doing mathematics at grade level by third grade because a strong foundation sets students on a path to academic success and helps prevent expensive taxpayer-funded remediation later in life.

Specific Action Item Example: By August 2021, ensure that kindergarten through fifth-grade teachers in low-performing schools and schools with high percentages of students qualifying for free and reduced-priced lunch have had the opportunity to participate in a teacher literacy achievement or reading-to-learn academy and received access to high-quality content and instructional strategies aligned to the TEKS in accordance with SB 925 and SB 972 (84th Texas Legislature).

See pp. 6–7 for specific action items and how goal or action items support each statewide objective.

Goal 4: Improving Low-Performing Schools

The agency will reduce the number of D or F rated campuses by half within five year of the launch of the state's A–F accountability system because all students should have access to high-performing schools.

Specific Action Item Example: By October of each year, TEA will thoroughly review and provide best practice feedback, templates, training, and thoughtful recommendations to improve the “campus turnaround plans” that struggling school districts and open-enrollment charters schools must submit to TEA. When possible, TEA will provide intense technical support to ensure campus turnaround objectives are implemented.

See pp. 7–8 for specific action items and how goal or action items support each statewide objective.

Goal 5: Connecting High School to Career and College

The agency will improve the career relevance of the high school experience for Texas students to ensure better direct access and success in the workforce in accordance with HB 5 (83rd Texas Legislature) initiatives and to improve performance of students as they transition to a post-secondary institution.

Specific Action Item Example: Provide information to agency stakeholders about current programs that support college enrollment (such as the GEAR UP program) and measure student progress on key indicators, including college and career readiness and attainment of the state's 60x30TX objectives including advanced course examinations such as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate; college admissions testing; endorsements offered; and industry credentialing that inform student progress toward post-secondary success.

See pp. 9–10 for specific action items and how goal or action items support each statewide objective.

Goal 6: Using Taxpayer Resources Efficiently

The agency will use its resources efficiently and effectively and encourage school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to use limited taxpayer funding to improve student outcomes and accomplish legislative objectives.

Specific Action Item Example: TEA will continue to develop and publish clear school finance and federal fund guidance so that school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, legislators, taxpayers, and the public can better understand state and federal formulas, requirements, and procedures.

See pp. 10–11 for specific action items and how goal or action items support each statewide objective.

The remainder of the strategic plan contains the following items:

- **Redundancies and Impediments** (pp. 12–30): Lists Texas services, statutes, rules, or regulations; why the legislative item is resulting in inefficient or ineffective agency operations; the agency recommendation for modification or elimination; and estimated cost savings or other benefits associated with the recommended change.
- **Supplemental Schedule A: Budget Structure—Goals, Objectives and Outcome Measures, Strategies and Output, Efficiency and Explanatory Measures** (pp. 31–38): Includes goals with respective objectives, outcome measures, and strategies.

- **Goal One: Provide Education System Leadership, Guidance, and Resources**

TEA will provide leadership, guidance, and resources to create a public education system that continuously improves student performance and supports public schools as the choice of Texas citizens. The agency will satisfy its customers and stakeholders by promoting supportive school environments and by providing resources, challenging academic standards, high-quality data, and timely and clear reports on results.

Objective 1.1 Public Education Excellence

All students in the Texas public education system will have the resources needed to achieve their full academic potential to fully participate in the educational, civic, social, and economic, opportunities of our state and nation.

Outcome Measures include four-year and five-year high school graduation rates.

Strategies include the Foundation School Program for equalized operations and facilities with associated output measures such as total average daily attendance.

Objective 1.2 Academic Excellence

The TEA will lead the public education system so that all students receive a quality education and are at grade level in reading and math by the end of the third grade and continue reading and developing math skills at appropriate grade level through

graduation, demonstrate exemplary performance in foundation subjects, and acquire the knowledge and skills to be responsible and independent Texans.

Outcome Measures: There are 31 outcome measures for this objective, including percentage of students who meet the passing standard in grades 5 and 8 in math and reading.

Strategies center on statewide educational programs to support schools so that all students succeed, developing instructional support programs for students in at-risk situations and students with disabilities, and school improvement and support programs such as Communities in Schools.

- **Goal Two: Provide System Oversight and Support**

TEA will sustain a system of accountability for student performance that is supported by challenging assessments, high-quality data, highly qualified and effective educators, and high standards for student, campus, district, and agency performance.

Objective 2.1 Accountability

The Texas Education Agency will sustain high levels of accountability in the state public education system through challenging and attainable federal and state performance standards.

Outcome Measures include percentage of students passing tests taken and percentage of districts and campuses receiving various types of performance ratings.

Strategies focus on the assessment and accountability systems.

Objective 2.2 Effective School Environments

The TEA will support school environments that ensure educators and students have the materials they need to receive a quality education.

Outcome Measures include annual drug use and violence incident rates and percentage of district instructional allotment material purchases related to technology.

Strategies focus on technology and instructional materials, health and safety, and child nutrition programs.

Objective 2.3 Educator Recruitment, Retention and Support

TEA will create an accountability system that supports the recruitment, retention, and support of highly qualified educators and high performing employees in school districts, charter schools, and the TEA so that all students in the Texas public education system receive a quality education.

Outcome Measures include turnover rates for teachers and percentage of teachers who are certified.

Strategies pertain to educator quality and leadership, agency operations, State Board for Educator certification, central administration, and certification exam administration.

- **Supplemental Schedule B: List of Measures Definitions** (pp. 39–100): Defines each measure in Schedule A with its purpose, data source, method of calculation, and data limitations.

- **Supplemental Schedule C: Historically Underutilized Business Plan** (pp. 101–102): Includes TEA goals for using historically underutilized businesses for procurement efforts.
- **Supplemental Schedule D: Statewide Capital Plan** as applicable to TEA (p. 103, no detail provided in document).
- **Supplemental Schedule E: Health and Human Services Strategic Plan** as applicable to TEA (p. 104, no detail provided in document).
- **Supplemental Schedule F: Agency Workforce Plan and the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan** (pp. 105–112): Discusses TEA full-time equivalent positions, budget, current workforce profile, and how the TEA strategic plan will align with the Texas Workforce System strategic plan.
- **Supplemental Schedule G: Report on Customer Service** (pp. 113–125): Provides results of the 2016 TEA Customer Satisfaction Survey. Assessment of customer service is legislatively mandated. The survey was administered to a random sample of 17,000 school and district staff throughout all 20 of the Education Service Center regions with a total of 3,527 (20 percent) staff responding. The survey collected information about TEA’s website, service provided by phone and email, information quality, educator certification support, complaints process, and online training resources.
Results from the survey found that 82 percent of TEA customers are satisfied with the customer service TEA provides, 91 percent of respondents state TEA treats them with respect, and 86 percent of respondents report the staff demonstrate a willingness to assist them. Opportunities exist regarding phones being answered quickly by a live person, improving the reasonableness of requests for information from the districts, improving the agency website to help customers find information quickly, making TEA’s correspondence more understandable, and increasing the number of educators using the TEA-provided online training resources.
- **Supplemental Schedule H: Assessment of Advisory Committees** (pp. 126–189): Provides information about the roles of the 21 TEA Advisory Committees, deliverables, recommendations made to TEA, progress toward meeting mission and goals, and other aspects of committee operations.

Long-Range Plan for Technology, 2006–2020

Document Summary

Texas Education Agency. (2006, November). *Long-Range Plan for Technology 2006–2020: A Report to the 80th Legislature from the Texas Education Agency*. Austin, TX: Author. Retrieved from <http://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=2147494561&libID=2147494558>

Texas Education Code, Section 32.001, requires the State Board of Education to develop a long-range plan for technology. The first plan was for 1988–2000, and subsequent plans have since been developed.

The 2006–2020 plan includes **goals in four areas**. Each goal area includes recommendations to the Texas Education Agency, the State Board for Educator Certification, the Regional Education Service Centers, local education agencies, Texas higher education, and parents, communities, and the private sector. The recommendations are numerous and are indicated by page number for further reference if needed.

1. Teaching and Learning

All learners:

- have access to relevant technologies, tools, resources, and services for individualized instruction 24/7;
- use information and communication technologies to collaborate, construct knowledge, and provide solutions to real-world problems;
- use research-based strategies in all subject areas to improve academic achievement; and
- communicate effectively in a variety of formats for diverse audiences.

Recommendations for this goal may be found on pp. 19–22.

2. Educator Preparation and Development

All educators:

- graduate from an educator preparation program that models current technology in instructional and administrative practices PreK–12;
- exit educator preparation programs knowing how to use technology effectively in the teaching and learning process;
- develop new learning environments that utilize technology as a flexible tool where learning is collaborative, interactive, and customized; and
- ensure integration of appropriate technology throughout all of curriculum and instruction.

Recommendations for this goal may be found on pp. 25–27.

3. Leadership, Administration, and Instructional Support

All leaders:

- develop, implement, budget for, and monitor a dynamic technology plan to meet the needs of a changing workforce and economy;
- create innovative, flexible, and responsive environments to maximize teaching and learning and community involvement;
- offer expanded curricular and instructional opportunities to students via online, digital technology, and a variety of distance learning technologies;
- provide opportunities for sustained, relevant, and timely staff development in a variety of formats;
- expect and plan appropriate technology use throughout the teaching and learning process as well as throughout administration; and
- use data effectively and appropriately in decision making.

Recommendations for this goal may be found on pp. 31–33.

4. Infrastructure

An infrastructure system provides:

- access to all e-learning technologies through ubiquitous broadband,
- resources available 24/7 for all users,
- just-in-time technical assistance to support teaching and learning,
- measures to ensure all data are secure and accurate, and
- data standards to support interoperability and accessibility for all users.

Recommendations for this goal may be found on pp. 37–39.

There were several **issues identified by the Educational Technology Advisory Committee** that need to be addressed “in order for Texas to regain its momentum in preparing students to learn and work in the 21st Century.” (p. 42). These issues include but are not limited to:

- A realistic and dependable funding model is needed to expand and sustain student and teacher workstations, ongoing professional development, instructional and technical support, and a robust technology infrastructure.
- Leadership and support in the area of educational technology to districts, through funding for the TEA and the Education Service Centers (ESCs), will enable districts to obtain services through a consistent, efficient, equitable and effective system.
- Districts need strategies to measure the progress of students and teachers in meeting the needed Technology Applications proficiencies that are critical to teaching and learning in the 21st Century.

- The continuation of telecommunications discounts through both the state's Telecommunications Infrastructure discount program and the federal E-Rate program are essential for districts to provide the telecommunications connectivity, bandwidth, and infrastructure that will be needed.
- Software interoperability standards must be established to maximize use of funds for programming and conversion expenses.

2016 Progress Report on the Long-Range Plan for Technology

Document Summary

Texas Education Agency. (2016). *2016 progress report on the Long-Range Plan for Technology, 2006–2020: A report to the 85th Texas Legislature from the Texas Education Agency*. Austin, TX: Author. Retrieved from <http://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=51539612399>

This report contains Texas School Technology and Readiness (STaR) Chart data from 2014–2015 and 2015–2016. These data measure progress toward meeting recommendations included the long-range plan. Since the beginning of the 2016–2017 school year TEA is no longer able to make the updates needed to sustain the STaR Chart system, and STaR Chart data are no longer collected.

The following are the four key areas to be addressed throughout implementation of the long-range plan:

- Teaching and Learning
- Educator Preparation and Development
- Leadership, Administration, and Instructional Support
- Infrastructure for Technology

Each of the four key areas has categories that describe various components. For example, for Teaching and Learning, focus areas include Patterns of Classroom Use, Frequency/Design of Instructional Setting Using Digital Content, Content Area Connections, and so forth. There are four levels of progress for each focus area that respondents may select from: Early Tech (1 point), Developing Tech (2 points), Advanced Tech (3 points), and Target Tech (4 points). Points for each focus area are totaled and compared to a STaR Chart scale, in which Early Tech = 6–8 points, Developing Tech = 9–14 points, Advanced Tech = 15–20 points, and Target Tech = 21–24 points. There are links to the charts, including explanations of focus areas and levels of progress for each of the four key areas, on page 11 of the report.

Page 12 of the report includes the following details of the vision for the Long-Range Plan for Technology, 2006–2020, which has revised components for what learners, educators, leaders, and infrastructure will do to accomplish the vision:

“Learners will

- use digital media content and social networking technologies to collaborate, construct knowledge, and provide solutions to real-world problems.
- use research-based strategies and critical thinking in all subject areas to improve academic achievement.
- use digital media and environments to communicate effectively in a variety of formats for diverse audiences.
- create digital portfolios to document academic growth.
- use personal, Internet-ready devices for learning.

“Leaders will

- inspire and lead development and implementation of a shared vision for the transformation of teaching and learning using technology.
- create, promote, and sustain a dynamic, technology-rich environment that provides a rigorous, relevant, and engaging education for all students.
- promote an environment of professional learning and innovation to enhance student opportunities through the infusion of a variety of technologies and digital resources.
- provide for the effective use of information and technology resources.
- model and facilitate understanding of social, ethical, and legal issues and responsibilities related to a digital environment.

Educators will

- graduate from a preparation program that infuses current technology in instructional and administrative practices.
- use technology effectively in the teaching-learning process as demonstrated by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) Technology Applications Standards and integrate appropriate technology throughout all curriculum and instruction.
- develop new learning environments that use technology as a flexible tool.
- keep up-to-date with emerging trends and technologies and implement new teaching strategies into everyday teaching and learning.

Infrastructure will

- provide equitable access to all digital technologies through ubiquitous broadband resources available 24/7 for all users at school and at home.
- ensure just-in-time technical assistance to support teaching and learning.
- provide for measures to ensure all data is secure and accurate.
- have measures to ensure security of any device connected to the district’s infrastructure.
- implement the most cost-efficient approach to supporting the technology environment.
- ensure uniform data standards to support the Texas Student Data System, interoperability, and accessibility for all users.”

Strategies for Phase III (2016–2020) of the plan were not developed, and it was recommended that, rather than establish separate “technology priorities” for Phase III, revisions to the *Long-Range Plan for Technology, 2016–2020* be merged with future updates to the *Long-Range Plan for Public Education*.

Data for 2014–2015 and 2015–2016, as summarized on page 14 of the report, show that the majority of campuses and districts are currently at or near the following levels of progress:

- Advanced Tech level of progress for Teaching and Learning
- Developing Tech level of progress for Educator Preparation and Development
- Advanced Tech level of progress for Leadership, Administration, and Instructional Support
- Advanced Tech level of progress for Infrastructure and Technology

None of the campuses or districts had yet reached the Target Tech level of progress in any of these areas. The report noted that new Technology Application standards for all beginning teachers, EC–12, were adopted in October 2015.

The following suggestions for next steps that education stakeholders could implement are listed on page 29 of the report:

- “Continue to measure progress in local technology implementation.
- Determine if changes need to be made to local technology plans as the result of new technologies, new approaches for delivering instruction and supporting students, and new partnerships and collaborations for various stakeholders.
- Continue to explore new uses for digital content, open source, and existing and emerging technology.
- Keep students in mind, understanding their needs and enthusiasm for bringing digital learning into schools and classrooms as well as into their homes.”

Tri-Agency Report

Document Summary

Prosperity Requires Being Bold: Integrating Education and the Workforce for a Bright Texas Future. The Tri-Agency Report to the Office of the Governor from the Texas Education Agency, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and Texas Workforce Commission. (2016, November). Retrieved from <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/files/partners/tri-agency-report-office-governor-twc.pdf>

Background: In March 2016, Governor Greg Abbott established the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative and tasked the Commissioners of the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to work together on five charges centered on developing strong links between education and industry, with the goal of helping Texas grow in economic prosperity. The commissioners addressed the governor's charges by developing several comprehensive statewide prime recommendations to help Texas achieve pre-eminence in our global economy. The recommendations hinge on aligning current P-16 education to workforce development and encouraging the state and each region to envision how to build local economies, industries, and jobs of the future.

The commissioners developed *four prime recommendations* to ensure the future economic competitiveness of Texas. As part of this effort, the three agencies must commit to the Texas Competitive Workforce Partnership Compact, requiring mutual establishment of strategic goals, the development of statewide initiatives, and high levels of support and coordination on initiatives such as 60x30TX. The *prime recommendations* are followed by multiple *major initiatives* that are perceived as most impactful to the larger prime recommendation. A second layer of *recommendations* and *initiatives* follow that will help support the prime recommendation and major initiatives. A summary of recommendations and initiatives is provided below with page numbers in the document to refer to for more detail.

Prime Recommendation 1: Identify statewide initiatives for the next generation that will make Texas the clear leader in targeted fields and position the state for economic pre-eminence.

Major Initiatives to Support This Recommendation (pp. 14-15):

1. Advance a statewide vision that establishes Texas as the world leader in research and development and drives the Texas economy to greater heights in the future.
2. Promote statewide and regional industry clusters and objectives that support a variety of businesses and regional job creation.
3. Encourage statewide and regional creativity and innovation to attract venture capital to the state to help foster the development of new business and industries in Texas.
4. Develop and deploy specific strategies, leveraging regional best practices, to increase entrepreneurial activity and increase small business expansion.

Additional Recommendations and Initiatives (pp. 15–16):

- a. Identify and replicate successful public/private partnership (P3s) models and focus on developing more industry-aligned pathways, credentials with marketable skills, and efficient stackable program opportunities.
 - Substantially increase paid internships, apprenticeships, externships, and other meaningful applied workplace opportunities for students in both colleges and high schools.
 - Launch the Transition Foster Youth Initiative to form a partnership among Texas Foster Care Transition Centers, local workforce development boards, community or technical colleges, schools, and industry.
 - Build credentials at each educational level with the aim of reducing coursework duplication and time to obtain subsequent degrees. Create pathways such as apprenticeship programs to Texas' two-year community, technical, and four-year institutions via articulation agreements for college credit.
- b. Determine supply–demand skill challenges in each region of the state—especially in STEM and CTE—and establish partnerships among employers, the public, and higher education to implement solutions that address skills and gaps and improve STEM and CTE education.
 - Require regional workforce entities to identify in-demand skills by enhancing supply and demand tools and capabilities.
 - Ensure students with disabilities acquire specific training and certification opportunities in high-demand occupations.
 - For students not planning on pursuing a postsecondary credential, such as full-time working students, adult learners, and others, emphasize information about Level I certification and increase Level I certification attainment.
 - Initiate regional 60x30TX projections, which highlight state and local efforts to meet the goals.
- c. To accelerate connections between workers seeking jobs and growing businesses seeking employers, WorkInTexas should be replaced with a robust, leading-edge tool that reflects current technology as is customized to the needs of the Texas workforce.

Prime Recommendation 2: Strengthen prekindergarten through high school academic instruction to establish students' foundation skills in math, science, language arts, and social studies so that students graduate high school career or college ready and are prepared for lifetime learning.

Major Initiatives to Support This Recommendation (pp. 16–17):

1. Raise student computational skills to make Texas No. 1 in mathematics in the nation.

2. Hold P–12 school accountable for student performance using measures that include college readiness and closing student achievement gaps. Update and incorporate the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) into the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.
3. Improve the state’s teacher ranks through better recruitment (including alternative certifications), preparation, and in-service training (e.g., Teacher Academies), and highlight the value of the professional in both P–12 schools and in colleges and universities.

Additional Recommendations and Initiatives (p. 17):

- a. Ensure P–12 students have access to rigorous and high-demand dual credit, career and technical education (CTE), and advanced placement (AP) courses. Also work to ensure that courses count toward students’ certificates or degrees. Access is especially important in rural and economically disadvantaged communities.
 - Expand access to dual credit and AP courses for rural and economically disadvantaged students through teacher AP incentive programs and the Texas Virtual School Network to increase the participation of those high school students in dual credit and other college-level courses.
- b. Improve, expand, and replicate innovative STEM and CTE programs in P–12, and expand STEM and CTE course sequences and student pathways, especially in rural areas. Encourage schools, higher education, and industry to collaborate and expand sequenced course offerings in high-demand fields.

Prime Recommendation 3: Build a proactive, ongoing partnership among the TEA, THECB, TWC, and other stakeholders to align the educational goals of Texas with the state’s higher education plan of 60x30TX, which aims for 60 percent of 25–34 year olds to hold either a certificate or degree by 2030, with the goal of growing the state’s workforce, industry, and economy.

Major Initiatives to Support This Recommendation (p. 18):

1. Focus on providing thorough education and career guidance through enhanced opportunities for students in middle school and college.
2. Expand the development of adult learners, high school dropout recovery programs, and achievement models (e.g., adult charter schools), and develop practices to encourage higher education “stop outs” with more than 50 semester credit hours to return and complete a degree or certificate.
3. Launch and fund grants for Texas Industry Cluster Innovative Academies. These academies build on the existing Early College High School model.

Additional Recommendations and Initiatives (pp. 18–20):

- a. Promote innovation in P–16 through mechanisms such as Early College High Schools with a CTE focus (e.g., Industry Innovative Academies), competency-based education, experiential learning, and alternative pathways.



- Develop strategies to ensure that courses, credentials, experiential learning, and military training transfers count towards degrees at community colleges, technical schools, career schools, and postsecondary institutions, and develop regional articulation agreements that include high schools and the military, in addition to community colleges and regional universities.
 - Make higher education more affordable for students by: (1) supporting innovative approaches for more affordable credentials, (2) funding grants for eligible students in higher education, and (3) reducing the time it takes to complete a degree, e.g., through alternate degree pathways such as Texas Affordable Baccalaureate programs.
 - b. Improve the marketable skills of students graduating from high school and college to include those necessary for workforce success, such as teamwork, critical thinking, personal responsibility, and problem-solving. Communicate acquired marketable skills to students, families, and the workforce.
 - Expand marketable skills into the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (state P–12 curriculum) from prekindergarten–12th grade, and expand marketable skills in the Texas Core Curriculum (higher education curriculum) and coursework.
 - Ensure marketable skills are integrated into P–12 curricula so that students can demonstrate and communicate those skills through established mechanisms, e.g., classroom assignments, projects, grades, etc.
 - Align the P–12 accountability system with the 60x30TX accountability system.
 - c. Through a tri-agency collaboration among TEA, TWC, and THECB, develop a comprehensive, complimentary, and aligned suite of technology tools and applications to communicate education and workforce data in an audience-appropriate manner to a variety of stakeholders.
 - Develop a statewide online education and career advising tool for counselors, students, and parents, and other stakeholders, that will help P–16 students make meaningful and achievable postsecondary or career plans.
 - The state should also continue career fair sponsored by local workforce development boards and offered in partnership with local employers.
 - d. Improve academic preparation and academic support for students to enter and complete higher education.
 - Scale up and share practices that support students in their academic preparation for postsecondary education.
 - Expand high-quality education programs for educationally underserved adults, including people with disabilities.
 - Scale up and share practices that support underprepared students to increase persistence and completion and reduce their time to degree.

Prime Recommendation 4: Identify services for Texas veterans and advance strategies to enhance their education and employment opportunities, while developing solutions to ensure a seamless and accelerated transition back into the Texas workforce.

Major Initiatives to Support This Recommendation (pp. 20–21):

1. Ensure a seamless transition of service members into the civilian, education, and employment communities by providing enhanced employment services.
 - Create the Operation Welcome Home program to better meet the needs of transitioning members at military installations in Texas by providing enhanced employment services.
 - Establish the Welcome Home Transition Alliance to promote a partnership with military installations.
 - Enhance Skills Development opportunities for transitioning service members by establishing the Skills for Transition program.
 - Support for military families.

Additional Recommendations and Initiatives (p. 21):

- a. Replicate models on a statewide level that assign mentors to veterans to help them translate military resumes/experience into civilian resumes/experience.
- b. Expand College Credit for Heroes—a partnership between the Texas Workforce Commission and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board—that helps active duty, former, and retired military personnel receive college credits for their service.
- c. Expand Troops to Teachers, and develop Troops to Teaching Assistants.
- d. Encourage veterans to test their college readiness by taking the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) assessment and waiving the fees for the test.

60x30TX—Texas Higher Education Strategic Plan: 2015–2030

Document Summary

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2015). *60x30TX—Texas Higher Education Strategic Plan: 2015–2030*. Austin, TX: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.theccb.state.tx.us/reports/PDF/9306.PDF?CFID=61087706&CFTOKEN=65153374>

The 60x30TX higher education strategic plan contains four broad goals. Each goal contains a set of targets that will move the state toward reaching one or more goals. The plan addresses students' desires for a better life, employers' desires to remain competitive, and the state's need for a robust economy. The plan provides for latitude for two- and four-year institutions and encourages local creativity in pursuing the goals as institutions pursue their own distinct missions. The plan strengthens the excellence and quality in Texas higher education by challenging the state's two- and four-year institutions to prepare students for the jobs of the future while also inspiring students to contribute to a greater Texas society.

Overarching Goal: 60x30TX

Sixty percent of the 25- to 34-year-old Texas population will hold a certificate or degree by 2030 for the state to remain competitive and prosperous.

Interim Benchmarks

Increase the percentage of Texans ages 25–34 with a certificate or degree to at least 48 percent by 2020, 54 percent by 2025, and 60 percent by 2030 (38.3 percent as of 2013). This goal includes immigration of educated 25- to 34-year-olds and includes only Texas graduates who remain in the state. Graduates who leave Texas for further education or employment opportunities are not included in the 60x30 goal (see p. 18).

Strategy

Respond to the needs of the changing population of Texas so that students are supported into and through higher education.

Examples of This Strategy:

- Aggressively **promote college attainment** to students and parents prior to high school.
- Develop and implement **education and curriculum delivery systems**, for example, competency-based programs, to make higher education available to a broader and changing population.
- Provide high-quality education programs for educationally underserved adults.
- Develop practices to encourage **stop-outs** with more than 50 semester credit hours to return and complete a degree or certificate.
- Collaborate with the Texas Workforce Commission to identify **critical fields** and update them periodically.

Second Goal: Completion

By 2030, at least 550,000 students in that year will complete a certificate or an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree, or a master's degree from an institution of higher education in Texas. During the 15 years of this plan, Texas will award 6.4 million certificates or degrees.

This goal measures the number of credentials Texas institutions of higher education produce each year, targets students of all ages in higher education, and identifies the number of credentials needed to reach this goal by ethnicity, gender, and economic disadvantage. The second goal strengthens the 60x30 goal by increasing the number of educated Texans who contribute to the state's workforce.

Interim Benchmarks

Increase the number of students completing a certificate or an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree, or a master's degree from an institution of higher education in Texas to at least 376,000 students in 2020; 450,000 students in 2025; and 550,000 students in 2030. (298,989 students as of 2014).

There are targets to reach the goal for Hispanic, African-American, male, and economically disadvantaged undergraduate students (Pell Grant recipients), as well as a targets for increasing the percentage of all Texas public high school graduates enrolling in an institution of higher education in Texas by the first fall after their high school graduation (see pp. 19–20).

Strategy

Support the completion pipeline by providing access to multiple postsecondary options.

Examples of This Strategy:

- Scale up and share practices that **guide students** to higher education.
- **Collaborate with K–12** in improving college and career readiness.
- Increase the participation of **economically disadvantaged high school students** in dual credit and other college-level courses.
- **Build credentials** at each level with the aim of reducing coursework duplication and time to subsequent degrees.

Strategy

Improve academic preparation and academic support for students to enter and complete higher education.

Examples of This Strategy:

- Scale up and share practices that support students in their **academic preparation** for postsecondary education.
- **Streamline credential pathways** through the P–16 continuum to ensure that secondary education graduation plans, including endorsement coursework, prepare high school graduates for completing a postsecondary credential.

- Scale up and share practices that **support underprepared students** to increase persistence and completion and to reduce their time to degree.

Strategy

Structure programs and support services to be responsive to the changing needs of the student population to help students persist through key transitions into higher education.

Examples of This Strategy:

- Use **innovative approaches for content delivery**, for example, block scheduling, and assessment to improve completion and reduce student cost.
- Employ **High-Impact Practices (HIPs)**. HIPs are evidence-based teaching and learning practices shown to improve learning and persistence for college students from many backgrounds. Various practices demand considerable time and effort, facilitate learning outside of the classroom, require meaningful interactions with faculty and students, encourage collaboration with diverse others, and provide frequent and substantive feedback.
- Increase use of predictive analytics to identify and assist students at risk of not completing.

Third Goal: Marketable Skills

By 2030, all graduates from Texas public institutions of higher education will have completed programs with identified marketable skills. Marketable skills in this plan are defined as: *Those skills valued by employers that can be applied in a variety of work settings, including interpersonal, cognitive, and applied skill areas. These skills can be either primary or complementary to a major and are acquired by students through education, including curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities.*

This goal connects to the 60x30 goal by aligning higher education to workforce needs. This goal connects to the completion goal (the second goal) by providing students with a clearer picture of how courses relate to jobs.

Targets to Reach the Goal

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. These skills will be continuously updated.

The percentage of students who are found working or enrolled (pursuing additional education after completing a credential) within one year after earning a degree or certificate will be maintained at 80 percent in 2020, 2025, and 2030 (77.1 percent as of 2013).

Strategy

Identify marketable skills in every higher education program.

Examples of This Strategy:

- **Convene a statewide group** to explore general characteristics of marketable skills by meta-majors. This group should include representatives from institutions, industry, and other relevant stakeholders.
- **Establish collaborations** between institutions and state, regional, and local employers to define desirable skills, and identify in-demand programs and courses that offer those skills.
- **Leverage existing efforts**, for example, the Liberal Education and America's Promise initiative, to ensure that marketable skills are addressed in every program.

Strategy

Communicate marketable skills to students, families, and the workforce.

Examples of This Strategy:

- Increase the quality and availability of information targeted to students about the transition from **higher education to the workforce**, including information about the transferability and alignment of skills. This information should be available through **academic and career-advising** strategies.
- Ensure marketable skills are integrated into curricula so that students can **demonstrate and communicate** those skills through established mechanisms.

Fourth Goal: Student Debt

By 2030, undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions (60 percent as of 2012).

The intent of the student debt goal is to increase access and persistence, expand students' options for careers after graduation, and advance other life choices. Helping students complete credentials and balance debt load will help the state reach the 60x30 goal and will help two- and four-year colleges in Texas reach the completion goal. The student debt goal also will lead to healthier individual finances among graduates and to a stronger state economy.

Targets to Reach the Goal: Targets include decreasing excess semester hours that students undertake when completing an associate's or a bachelor's degree from 12 hours in 2020 to 3 hours in 2030 (21 hours as of 2014). Targets also include working to limit debt so that no more than half of all students who earn an undergraduate degree or certificate will have debt (50.7 percent of students as of 2014).

Strategy

Finance high education in a manner that provides the most effective balance among appropriations, tuition and fees, and financial aid.

Strategy

Make higher education more affordable for students.

Examples of This Strategy:

- **Fully fund grants** for eligible students.
- **Support innovative approaches** for more affordable credentials.
- Reduce time to degree through **alternative pathways** to completion.

Strategy

Build the financial literacy of Texans to promote a better understanding of how and why to pay for higher education.

Examples of This Strategy:

- Implement personal **financial literacy** programs to support students going to college.
- 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.

Note: The *60x30TX Progress Report* (September 2016) includes information about the plan's progress and updated baseline figures for targets. The progress report is available at <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/reports/PDF/9136.PDF?CFID=61093098&CFTOKEN=84707631>

Creating a New Vision for Public Education in Texas: A Work in Progress for Conversation and Further Development

Document Summary

Texas Association of School Administrators. (2008, May). *Creating a new vision for public education in Texas: A work in progress for conversation and further development*. Austin, TX: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.tasanet.org/cms/lib/TX01923126/Centricity/Domain/111/workinprogress.pdf>

This document was created by a group of 35 public school superintendents from across the state of Texas who came together to create a new vision for public education in Texas. The group met as the Public Visioning Institute from 2006 through 2008.

The group's vision: "We envision schools where all children succeed, feel safe and their curiosity is cultivated. We see schools that foster a sense of belonging a community and that inspire collaboration. We see learning standards that challenge, and intentionally designed experiences that delight students, develop their confidence and competence, and cause every child to value tasks that result in learning. Ultimately, we see schools and related venues that prepare all children for many choices and that give them the tools and attitudes to contribute to our democratic way of life and live successfully in a rapidly changing world."

The group articulated the following 17 goals for making the vision a reality:

- A. "Schools that are kid-friendly and safe, with multiple and varied learning spaces incorporating state-of-the art technology, and possessing the capacity in alliance with the community, to meet the needs of all children and youth.
- B. Schools that are staffed by competent, committed adults who are supported and appreciated, and who understand that their first priority is the children they serve.
- C. Schools that operate in partnership with the state, which provides adequate financial resources in an equitable manner, establishes frameworks for learning standards, supplies technical support, and enables assessment and accountability systems that inform the community and public about the quality of schools and the level of student success.
- D. Schools that foster a sense of community, where local citizens know that the schools belong to them and they are responsible for the quality of education and creating the community conditions in which great schools can flourish.
- E. A school governance structure that provides significant insulation from direct political control and short-term political expediency, a structure in which the legislature is arbiter and source of only major state educational policy matters and does not involve itself in minute decrees and directives or imposing one-size fits all regulations.

- F. Schools that support and invest heavily in the continuous learning and development of all their employees, with a focus on substantive improvement, leading to enhanced student success.
- G. Schools with leaders who serve, support, and ensure that student engagement is and remains the first focus.
- H. Districts that enter and sustain collaborative partnerships with those who prepare teachers, ensuring that beginning teachers have had some field experience to ready them for teaching in engagement-centered schools.
- I. Districts that recruit, induct, and promote teachers who love learning and kids, relish the conditions in which they teach, work collaboratively, and see themselves as designers and leaders, along with their traditional roles as planners, presenters, and performers.
- J. Schools where students advance based on their learning and performance instead of seat time, courses are dominant over classes, and use of time and space is flexible and innovative.
- K. Assessment processes that are designed to inform instruction in timely ways, honor student feedback, are comprehensive and fair, and do not rely on a single standardized test for important decisions.
- L. School board members who are focused on ensuring that the system is responsive to student, staff, and community needs and that the common good of all students prevails.
- M. Accountability systems that are designed to inspire and that are founded on high expectations, a sense of fairness, trust, and complete confidence in the measures employed.
- N. Schools and communities that, with state and federal support, transform the present bureaucratic institutions into organizations that recognize knowledge work as requiring different conditions within which staff and students can excel.
- O. Acceptance of the fact by schools and communities that lack of success of many students today is less a problem of the students than of the systems that define current schools and the communities in which they function.
- P. New learning standards dictating major changes in how schools are organized, the assumptions and beliefs on which their culture and structure are based, meaning the factory model must give way to more flexible ways of achieving the standards.
- Q. Schools that embrace their (school board members, in particular) fundamental role in building the communities needed for great schools.”

The document contains **six principles and supporting premises**. The supporting premises are lengthy, so examples are provided, with page numbers to refer to for more detail.

I. The New Digital Learning Environment

Digitization and miniaturization of information processing power are expanding exponentially and are changing the world, our lives, and our communities at an overwhelming speed. To be viable, schools must adapt to this new environment. We must embrace and seize technology’s potential to capture

the hearts and minds of this, the first digital generation, so that the work designed for them is more engaging and respects their superior talents with digital devices and connections.

Examples of Supporting Premises (see pp. 13–14 for the 9 supporting premises):

- The potential of learning anywhere, anytime, “any path, any pace” must be embraced. Future learning will be a combination of learning at school, virtual learning, learning at home, and in the community.
- Virtual learning should become the norm in every community to meet the needs of students who prefer such an environment.
- The secondary school credit system should be expanded beyond school walls so that any place/any time learning, including virtual learning, are equally valued and supported.

II. The New Learning Standards

The new digital learning environment demands new learning standards for students so that they will have the values and the capabilities to live, learn, and earn in a free society surrounded by a world that is truly global, connected, and increasingly competitive in scope and character.

Examples of Supporting Premises (see pp. 16–17 for the 12 supporting premises):

- Standards should be clear, attainable, and high enough to provide for a system of student performance variance where all can experience success and challenge.
- Learning standards should embrace the development of the whole person to build students’ capacity to shape their own destiny as individuals and as contributing members of society.
- Standards should respect and value students’ “multiple intelligences” and talents and provide opportunities for all students to excel and experience success.

III. Assessments for Learning

Appropriate and varied types of assessments are essential for informing students about their level of success in ways that affirm and stimulate their efforts and for informing their teachers so that more customized learning experiences may be provided in a timely way. Well-conceived and well-designed assessments should also be used to reveal to parents, the school, the district, and society at large the extent to which the desired learning is occurring and what schools are doing to continuously improve.

Examples of Supporting Premises (see pp. 19–21 for the 13 supporting premises):

- Assessments must be framed in a system development approach to meet the information needs of all users of assessment results. The system must be balanced and reflect at least three basic levels of assessment: the classroom level, with particular attention to the impact of the assessment on the learner; the program level, which allows evaluation of program effectiveness; and the institutional level, which appropriately informs policymakers.
- Assessment should be used primarily for obtaining student feedback and informing the student and the teacher about the level of student conceptual understanding or skill development so that the teacher has accurate information to consider for designing additional or different learning experiences.

- Standardized tests should be used primarily to identify hard-to-learn/difficult-to-teach concepts to differentiate learning experiences and focus attention on the more systemic curricular issues involving student performance.

IV. Accountability for Learning

Comprehensive accountability systems are essential to achieving minimal personal and organizational performance only. They are necessary for weeding out the incompetent and reconstituting unproductive schools, but such systems serve to create compliance and mediocrity at best. Excellence and sustained exceptional performance come from a commitment to shared values and a clear vision that encourages collaboration and teamwork. Creating organizations that foster commitment requires superior moral leadership and a responsible use of authority.

Examples of Supporting Premises (see pp. 23–26 for the 19 supporting premises):

- Districts should be allowed to design their own internal systems of assessment for learning and accountability, as long as they meet certain specified state standards.
- Labels for schools and particularly those that use the lowest performing unit as the basis for a punitive label should be avoided. There is a distinction between identifying performance gaps and labeling. Identification of performance gaps enables schools to move forward in designing different instructional strategies or approaches to help students achieve the learning desired.
- A multi-year cycle for periodic district and campus performance reviews should be established, using highly trained visiting teams to analyze a predetermined set of student performance information.

V. Organizational Transformation

The digital revolution and its accompanying social transformations and expectations dictate a transformation of schools from their current bureaucratic form and structure that reflects the nineteenth and early twentieth century factory after which they were modeled, to schools that function as learning organizations. We believe that a learning organization can create the conditions and capacities most conducive for leaders, teachers, and students to perform at high levels and meet the expectations of new learning standards.

Examples of Supporting Premises (see pp. 28–30 for the 13 supporting premises):

- To attempt to incentivize teachers with material rewards for improving test scores is an insult to teachers and infers that improvements in learning can be measured with precision. Such pay schemes should not be mandated by the state but left to the discretion of local districts.
- Leadership development at all levels (teachers, included) must become a primary means of building needed capacities to function in required new roles.
- The district is responsible for creating the conditions in which student commitment and engagement become central and for attracting principals and teachers who can learn to use appropriate frameworks, protocols, processes, assessments, and resources in different ways in a collaborative setting.

VI. A More Balanced and Reinvigorated State/Local Partnership

A more balanced, reinvigorated state/local partnership can generate the public involvement and community support needed to meet the demands of new learning standards essential to the success of the 21st century learner. The present state-dominated partnership is inherently incapable of creating the type of schools that can provide the learning experiences most needed by students in our schools today. New levels of trust and reciprocal arrangements, including a return of significant authority and responsibility to local communities, are the only hope.

Examples of Supporting Premises (see pp. 32–33 for the 7 supporting premises):

- The state’s interest in great schools and communities can best be assured by a partnership that may specify the basic standards for graduation and general accountability measures but does not detail how standards are to be achieved nor the assessments needed to inform and guide instruction.
- The public education finance mechanisms must be adequate, equitable, and provide for local meaningful discretion and flexibility in the allocation of resources to support goals and priorities. Digital learning opportunities will require innovative revenue generation and accounting possibilities not yet invented.
- Regional education service centers are a vital resource and developing their capacities to provide technical assistance in collaborative ways can accelerate the transformation journey of schools and school districts, particularly in development of assessment tools for learning and training for school personnel.

Page 35 of the document contains a list of legislative initiatives required to transform public and secondary education in Texas. Most of these initiatives center on there being fewer prescriptive and bureaucratic requirements from the state and more local control by districts. The role of the state board of education should be clarified and its authority “related to the core business of schools.”

Summary of TEA Data Reports

2016 Comprehensive Biennial Report on Texas Public Schools: A Report to the 85th Legislature from the Texas Education Agency, March 2017

The *2016 Comprehensive Biennial Report on Texas Public Schools* was presented to the 85th Texas Legislature from the Texas Education Agency in March 2017. (Retrieved from http://tea.texas.gov/acctres/comp_annual_biennial_2016.pdf) The report contains 16 chapters, with information about the following topics:

- state progress on academic performance indicators;
- student performance on state assessments;
- performance of students at risk of dropping out of school;
- students in disciplinary alternative education settings;
- secondary school graduates and dropouts;
- grade-level retention of students;
- district and campus performance in meeting state accountability standards;
- status of the curriculum;
- charter schools and waivers;
- school district expenditures and staff hours used for direct instructional activities;
- district reporting requirements;
- TEA funds and expenditures;
- performance of open-enrollment charters in comparison to school districts;
- character education programs;
- student health and physical activity; and
- Foundation High School Program endorsements.

Performance indicators are described on pp. 1–3 of the report.

Texas Academic Performance Indicator Reports (data)

Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPRs) pull together a wide range of information on the performance of students in each school and district every year. Performance is shown for the state and is disaggregated by student groups, including ethnicity, special education, socioeconomic status, and English language learner. The reports also provide information on school and district staff, programs, and demographics. The 2015–16 State Performance Report (retrieved from <http://tea.texas.gov/perfreport/tapr/index.html>) includes:

- student proficiency levels on STAAR
- student proficiency levels on STAAR for bilingual education/English as a Second Language students for the state and disaggregated by bilingual and ESL status;
- participation rates in testing;
- attendance rates;
- dropout rates;
- graduation rates;
- advanced course/dual credit course completion;
- Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate participation and results;
- SAT/ACT results;
- graduates enrolled in Texas institutions of higher education;
- student enrollment, retention rates, class size averages;
- staff information including teachers by ethnicity, gender, highest degree held, years of experience, number of students per teacher, average years experience, average teacher salary by years of experience, and turnover rate;
- student enrollment by program (Bilingual/ESL, Career and Technical Education, Gifted and Talented Education, and Special Education) and teachers by program (including regular education).

Enrollment in Texas Public Schools (data)

Enrollment in Texas Public Schools, 2015–16 provides statewide enrollment data by grade, race/ethnicity, gender, and economically disadvantaged status and for special populations and instructions programs. Enrollment data for the 20 regional Education Service Centers throughout the state are presented as are data for open-enrollment charter schools. National enrollment trends also are reported. Longitudinal data are provided in many of the charts and graphs. (Retrieved from http://tea.texas.gov/acctres/enroll_index.html)

Secondary School Completion and Dropouts (data)

Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2014–15 (August 2016) includes state summaries of the annual dropout rate; longitudinal graduation, completion, and dropout rates; and state attrition rates. Supplements to the report present secondary school completion, graduation, and dropout data at the country, district, and campus levels. Reports are completed annually. (Retrieved from http://tea.texas.gov/acctres/dropcomp_index.html)

College Admissions Testing Results (data)

College Admissions Testing Results for Graduating Seniors in Texas Public Schools, Class of 2015 (April 2017). This report presents SAT and ACT examination participation and performance data for graduating seniors in Texas public schools. Results are presented statewide and are disaggregated by race/ethnicity, economic status, gender, program participation (e.g., gifted and talented, career and technical education, bilingual/ESL), and special populations. There are some longitudinal data provided. (Retrieved from http://tea.texas.gov/acctres/sat_act_texas_class_2015.pdf)

November 17, 2015, State Board of Education Learning Roundtable: Educating the Digital Generation

Document Summary

Learning Roundtable: Educating the Digital Generation—Summary. (November 17, 2015). Sponsored by the State Board of Education. Retrieved from http://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/Leadership/State_Board_of_Education/2015/November/Learning_Roundtable_%e2%80%93_Educating_the_Digital_Generation/

This learning roundtable was convened to examine crucial topics related to the shift toward digital instructional materials, including the cost, the challenges of digital content, the mutability of digital content, and the digital divide. Presenters came from universities and the technology and publishing industries, as well as from school districts (superintendents, curriculum directors, technology directors, and instructional materials administrators). The summary document from the roundtable was commissioned by the Texas Computer Education Association and includes summary remarks of every speaker as well as next steps for the state to take to “fulfill the possibilities represented by the effective and efficient use of technology throughout the education enterprise.”

In 2015, 87 percent of instructional materials ordered in Texas were digital, up from 41 percent in 2014. Topics at the roundtable included the following:

- Cost and effectiveness of digital content
- Challenges of digital content, such as student and family privacy and who has access to what data
- Alignment of content in the classroom with standards
- Possibility of distraction of students by technology
- Digital divide

Panel discussions covered the following topics:

- Science of learning
- Technology infrastructure needs in schools
- School districts’ efforts in using technology to ensure that their students are college and career ready
- Recommendations from the Software and Industry Association—for example, providing an easier approval and adoption process that includes an approach for more modular materials
- Visions for instructional materials from a panel of publishers
- Overview of Open Educational Resource materials
- Learning List independent review service for schools and districts

- What districts are doing with technology and instructional materials and their plans for the future
- Perspectives of instructional materials coordinators during this time of changing instructional materials
- Blended learning
- Resources from the State Educational Technology Directors Association
- Equitable access to technology
- Professional learning opportunities
- Flexible content and business models
- Technical issues in implementing digital content
- Importance of leadership within the school district to provide vision and direction for digital learning

Numerous recommendations and next steps were offered during the panel sessions. For example, the Software and Information Industry Association recommended that barriers to access to technology be reduced, which would include ensuring all teachers and students have sufficient broadband and devices to access the material.

September 12, 2016, State Board of Education Learning Roundtable: Educating the Children of Poverty

Document Summary

Learning Roundtable: Educating the Children of Poverty—Synopsis. (September 12, 2016). Sponsored by the State Board of Education and the Texas [Education Agency](http://tea.texas.gov/sboe/povertyroundtable/). Retrieved from <http://tea.texas.gov/sboe/povertyroundtable/>

The State Board of Education and Texas Commissioner of Education Mike Morath hosted a conference September 12, 2016, called the *Learning Roundtable—Educating the Children of Poverty*. National and state researchers and educators explored ways to transform high-poverty schools into high-performing schools. This issue is of critical importance because 3.1 million (58.4 percent) of the state’s 5.3 million public school students come from economically disadvantaged homes. The commissioner noted that improving the education provided to these students is “the single biggest issue facing Texas today” because it will impact not only these students but the welfare of the whole state.

Presentations focused on the following topics:

- Turning High-Poverty Schools into High-Performing Schools

High-performing schools concentrate their efforts in three areas: (1) fostering a safe, healthy, and supportive learning environment; (2) focusing on learning; and (3) building leadership capacity.

- Achievement and Opportunity in America

Gaps in achievement begin before children arrive at the schoolhouse door, but the education system as it is currently structured exacerbates rather than ameliorates this problem. For example, students at schools with a high minority population are more likely to be taught by novice teachers. Top school performers and gainers demonstrate five characteristics:

- They do not leave anything about teaching and learning to chance. There are high expectations for all students.
- They know how much teachers matter and act on that knowledge.
- They do not think about closing the achievement gap as only “bringing the bottom up.”
- Their educators know that they have enormous power to shape children’s lives.
- Their accountability systems stretch goals for every group of children and put leverage behind change-oriented leaders.

- Learning From Schools That Succeed

There are things that can be learned from schools that foster high achievement even when they have a high level of poverty among their students. Schools that make dramatic improvements are called “unexpected schools,” and they share 25 characteristics, ranging from establishing an atmosphere of respect to being good places to work. They share five processes:

- They focus on what students need to learn;
- They collaborate on how to teach it;
- They assess frequently;
- They study data to find patterns in instruction; and
- They systemically build relationships.

Talented leaders are critical and attract and retain good teachers.

Panel discussions were held on the following topics:

- Effective Partnerships and Practices
- Best Practices in Leading Diverse Schools
- High-Performing Schools Models
- Potential of Pathways (connecting students to college)
- Data-Driven Decisions for Leadership
- How to Successfully Build School/District/Community Teams and Support Diverse Communities (included afterschool programs)
- Neuroscience Research and Solutions for Building Learning Capacity in the Children of Poverty

State Board of Education Long-Range Plan for Public Education: Region One Educator Forums, December 14, 2014, and January 16, 2015

Document Summary

State Board of Education Long-Range Plan for Public Education: Region One Educator Forums

In December 2014 and January 2015, Region One Education Service Center (ESC) facilitated two separate forums for educators and community members at the request of State Board of Education District 2 member Ruben Cortez, Jr. Participants at both forums represented a wide range of stakeholders, including superintendents; curriculum and instruction leaders; career and technology directors; special education directors; district and campus administrators; teachers; students; parents; other educational leaders; community members; and representatives of institutions of higher education, industry, business, and community-based organizations.

Staff of Region One ESC framed the conversations by presenting information about four key topics: *State Board of Education Long-Range Plan for Public Education, 2001–2006*, which established the previous set of priorities for the state

- Report of the Public Education Visioning Institute, *Creating a New Vision for Public Education in Texas*, which set forth 17 goals for improving the system of public education in Texas
- House Bill 3 (81st Texas Legislature, June 2009), which established the new STAAR assessment system, new accountability requirements, and a new accountability system
- House Bill 5 (83rd Texas Legislature, June 2013), which created new graduation requirements and endorsements and expanded the accountability system

Following the presentations, participants were assigned to designated groups and were given a protocol to discuss broad areas, or “focal points,” in education, determine key considerations, and present recommendations to inform the next iteration of the Long-Range Plan. Input from the December 14, 2015, session was then used to inform the selection of topics for small groups during the session on January 16, 2015, which included College and Career Readiness, Workforce Preparation, 21st Century Skills, Educational Achievement, and Early Learning Support. An ESC facilitator assisted each group, ensured adherence to the protocol, and directed participants to address the subtopics shown in the following table.

College and Career Readiness	Workforce Preparation	21st Century Skills
Instruction	Partnerships (education, business, community, etc.)	STEM
Assessment	Pathway Counseling and Advisement	Technology and Innovation
Partnerships	Community Involvement and Expectations	Distance Learning
Educator Preparation	Parental Involvement	Workforce Skills Transformation
Funding		

Educational Achievement	Early Learning Support
Educator Effectiveness	Funding
Instructional Resources	Educator Preparation
Learning Standards	Instructional Resources
Special Population Support	

Each group then presented its recommendations, which Region One ESC staff summarized by topic. (This summary lists only those recommendations that have not been superseded by subsequent policy or programmatic changes.)

College and Career Readiness

- Ensure relevant, real-world, professional application of learning
- Increase alignment of instruction with student career interests and opportunities for application of learning
- Develop improved resources and supports for early learning environments to more effectively prepare students, especially English learners, for public school
- Increase the use of portfolios and project-based learning

Workforce Preparation

- Promote workforce partnerships in education between institutions of higher education, business and industry, and districts and campuses to extend student learning and meet the more rigorous requirements for endorsements under HB 5
- Improve state-level support and resources for pathway counseling and advisement to ensure that every student has the necessary supports to successful transition to post-secondary education and careers
- Increase integration of technology into teaching and learning to create 21st century classrooms and support workforce skills transformation

21st Century Skills

- Integrate science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) awareness into early grades and support related assessment through real-world and project-based learning
- Support technology and innovation in early childhood education to improve readiness for public schooling
- Increase access to technology-based textbooks
- Expand opportunities for rural students to participate in innovative and core courses through distance and blended learning, including establishing a statewide network of certified teachers who can teach students remotely
- Provide state support to integrate 21st century skills with state standards and instructional resources

Educational Achievement

- Provide more systematic standardization to alternative certification programs
- Increase state support for new and revised learning standards, including clearly articulated rationales for the changes, investments to assist with transition and phase in, and scaffolds to ensure teaching for mastery of 21st century skills
- Expand state support for districts to teach students in special programs to assist districts to make research-based decisions on how different learning needs impact the delivery of instruction

Early Learning Support

- Provide professional development for teaching special populations and early childhood education
- Require annual early childhood professional development
- Revise the teacher appraisal system to address early childhood indicators
- Support rigorous, early childhood curriculum
- Incorporate instructional technology into early childhood instructional curriculum
- Provide professional development for school administrators in early childhood program funding
- Provide funding for bilingual programs, early childhood Title I programs, teacher professional development in early childhood (including substitutes, stipends, and support for extended learning), full-day prekindergarten for all students, and transportation for students to attend programs
- Provide equity in funding districtwide through state allocations