60x30TX

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

60x30TX
Progress Report

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September 2016

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Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

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Agency Mission

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

Agency Vision

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

Agency Philosophy

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

The Coordinating Board's core values are:
Accountability: We hold ourselves responsible for our actions and welcome every opportunity to educate stakeholders about our policies, decisions, and aspirations.
Efficiency: We accomplish our work using resources in the most effective manner.
Collaboration: We develop partnerships that result in student success and a highly qualified, globally competent workforce.
Excellence: We strive for excellence in all our endeavors.

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

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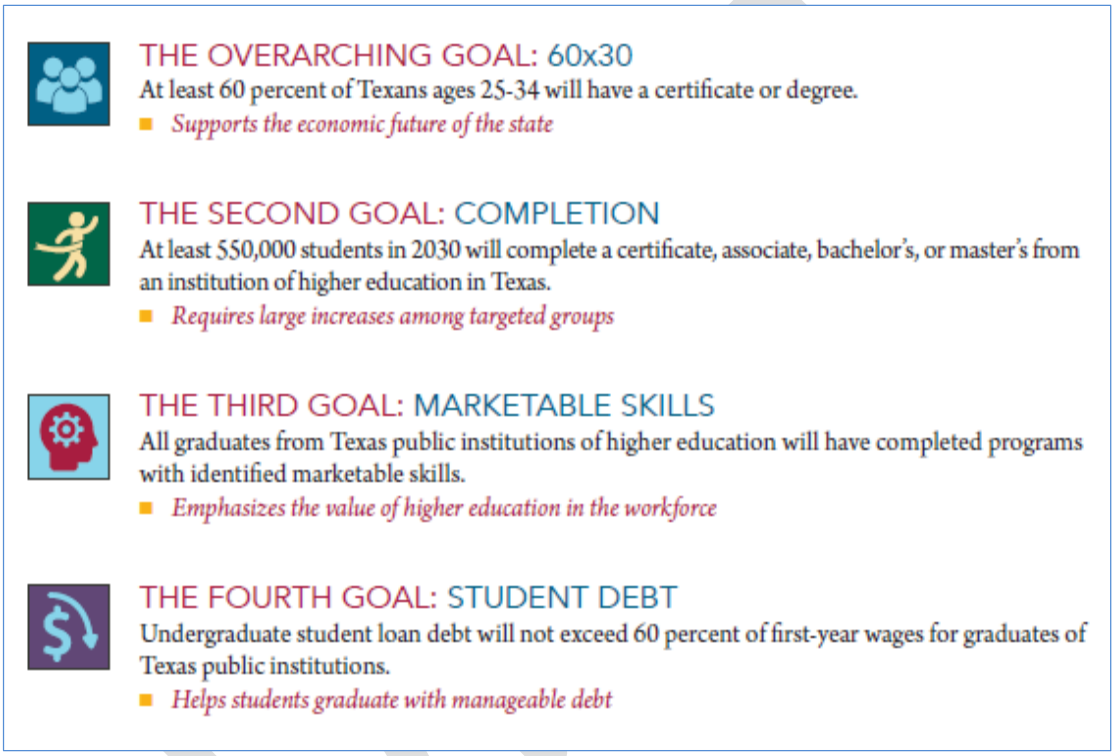
Executive Summary

The *60x30TX* higher education strategic plan was adopted by board members of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB or Coordinating Board) on July 23, 2015, and extends to 2030. The four goals of the plan aim to increase substantially the overall educational attainment among younger adults, achieve more student completions that reflect the state's changing demographics, ensure that students gain marketable skills they can articulate to employers, and hold student debt to its current level for students who graduate with debt from Texas public two- and four-year institutions. Each goal contains a set of targets and strategies that will help the state reach one or more of the goals (see Appendix A for more information about the planning process for *60x30TX*).

Figure 1. The four goals of *60x30TX*.



Most of the data published in the *60x30TX* plan are from 2013 or 2014. Those were the most recent data available at the time the plan was finalized. This document provides updated plan data that was reported to the Coordinating Board and establishes a baseline for moving forward under the plan. Most data presented here are from Coordinating Board sources, except for the overarching 60x30 goal, which relies primarily on data from the U.S. Census. All institutions of higher education in the state – public, private, and for-profit – provide at least some data to the Coordinating Board annually.

Table 1 shows the progress toward the four goals since the plan was adopted in July 2015. Although extensive planning, strategizing, and collaborative efforts have been underway for *60x30TX* in the last year, it is likely that some of the progress toward the new plan's goals is attributable to achievements of the previous strategic plan, *Closing the Gaps by 2015*.

Table 1. Year 1 progress toward meeting the goals of *60x30TX*.

Goal	Target	Published in *60x30TX*	First-Year Baseline* (2015)
60x30	60x30 (Attainment)	38.3%	40.3%
Completion	Overall	298,989	311,126
	Hispanic	89,355	96,650
	African American	37,658	38,785
	Male	122,744	130,956
	Economically Disadvantaged	107,419	114,003
	TX High School Grads Enrolling in TX Higher Educ.	54.2%	52.7%
Marketable Skills	Working and Enrolled Within One Year	77.1%	78.80%
Student Debt	Student Loan Debt to First Year Wage Percentage	60%	60%
	Excess SCHs Attempted	21	20
	Percent Completing with Debt	50.7%	49.2%

*Baseline benchmarks use 2015 data when possible; otherwise most recent data available are used. 2014 ACS data are used for degree attainment, 2014 ACS and THECB data are used to estimate certificate attainment, and THECB data are used for all other baseline benchmarks.

Much of the discussion in this first *60x30TX* Progress Report pertains to strategies and initiatives that have been implemented to promote the plan, as well as legislative policy recommendations that will help to reach the plan's goals. Legislative policy recommendations that will affect *60x30TX* include coordinating the expansion of higher education, overseeing career schools and colleges, improving financial aid, adopting outcomes-based formula funding, and adopting several budget recommendations. Major policy discussions related to *60x30TX* about financial aid, dual credit, and college readiness also have occurred at THECB's board meetings since the plan was adopted.

Several digital initiatives underway, or on the horizon, align with *60x30TX*'s strategies and will help to meet its goals. They include a Grad TX mobile app to encourage stop outs to return to college and finish degrees; a GenTX mobile app that will allow students and parents to set up checklists and reminders about important application deadlines and connect via social media; a new *60x30TX* accountability system; a new 60x30TX.com website sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; and a new one-stop web portal recommended by the Tri-agency Workforce Initiative, a collaboration among the Texas Education Agency (TEA), THECB, and Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), that will provide aligned education and workforce information for parents and students and a special suite of applications for counselors.

In addition to digital tools, the THECB sponsored events and conferences, such as the Marketable Skills Conference, Tab•Lab, a P-16 conference, a block scheduling conference, and seven regional *60x30TX* workshops. The purpose of these events was to discuss strategies for reaching the plan's goals and to encourage innovation and collaboration. THECB staff also made hundreds of *60x30TX* presentations, both in and out of state, and media coverage for these events and the plan has resulted in 62 major news stories and at least 100 mentions in more than 50 separate national, state, and local venues. In addition, the Commissioner or a designee has presented the plan at every board of trustees or regents meeting in Texas over the past year. The THECB also is funding grant programs related to *60x30TX*.

In a short time, *60x30TX* has gleaned much attention and has inspired numerous new initiatives. These efforts are only the beginning for *60x30TX* and achieving a bold Texas future.

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Introduction

The *60x30TX* higher education strategic plan was adopted by board members of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB or Coordinating Board) on July 23, 2015, and extends to 2030. The four goals of the plan aim to increase substantially the number of young adult Texas workers with certificates and degrees, achieve more student completions that reflect the state's changing demographics, ensure that students gain marketable skills they are able to articulate to employers, and limit student debt for Texas public college undergraduates. Each goal contains a set of targets that will help the state reach one or more of the goals (see Appendix A for more information about the planning process for *60x30TX*).

Overview of the Four Goals

The Overarching Goal: 60x30

By 2030, at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.

Reaching the 60x30 goal is essential to the future prosperity of Texas. The state's growing population makes the Texas economy similar in size to that of many countries. In this international context, however, the state has seen a relative decline in educational attainment among 25- to 34-year olds. For that reason, this goal measures the educational attainment of 25- to 34-year-olds to assess how prepared Texas is for the future and an evolving and competitive global economy. Notably, the Texas Higher Education Strategic Planning Committee (TxHESPC) adapted the 60 percent goal from a report by Anthony Carnevale, Director of the Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University. A national expert, he asserts that as early as 2020 "Fewer jobs will be available to people with less than a high school or only a high school diploma."

The 60x30 goal includes associate, bachelor's, master's, professional, and doctoral degrees along with a proxy for determining certificate attainment. Credentials held by Texas residents count toward the goal, whether earned in or out of state.

Completion

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

The completion goal complements the 60x30 goal by counting students of all ages who graduate from Texas two- and four-year institutions of higher education. To reach this goal, all colleges and universities in the state will need to increase certificate and degree completions above the achievements made in recent years. Large increases will be required among the plan's targeted student groups: economically disadvantaged, Hispanic, African American, and male. Increases in the percent of public high school graduates enrolling directly in higher education is also a target. Growth in certificates and degrees awarded by two- and four-year colleges contributes a large and important share toward the 60x30 goal.

Marketable Skills

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

The marketable skills goal emphasizes the value of higher education in the workforce. Students need to be aware of the marketable skills embedded in their academic programs, and institutions must make certain that students graduate with marketable skills. This goal charges two- and four-year public institutions in Texas to document, update, and communicate the skills students acquire in their programs. Private institutions of higher education in Texas may opt to participate in this goal. The marketable skills goal does not diminish one of the missions of higher education, to produce well-rounded and well-informed individuals. Rather, it focuses on helping students gain marketable skills in their coursework that they can articulate to employers after graduation. Although the specifics of how progress toward this goal are still being determined, the goal is measured by determining the number of institutions who have reported marketable skills and have subsequently updated those skills. A target that looks at the number of graduates found working or enrolled within a year of completing their postsecondary credential also provides context related to this goal,

Student Debt

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

The student debt goal aims to help students who graduate with student loan debt complete their programs with manageable debt. This goal is not a goal for individual institutions or individual students. Rather, this goal represents a relationship between the student loan debt of graduates from Texas public institutions and the wages those graduates earn one year after graduation. In Texas, about half of students graduate from public institutions with student loan debt. (Graduates without student loan debt are not included in this goal.) This goal challenges the state as a whole to hold undergraduate student loan debt in Texas to 60 percent of first-year wages after graduation; this was the debt to wage percentage in Texas when the plan was adopted.

Progress Toward Meeting the Goals – Year 1

Most of the data published in the *60x30TX* plan are from 2013 or 2014. Those were the most recent data available at the time the plan was finalized. This report provides updates updated plan data reported to the Coordinating Board and establishes a baseline for moving forward under the plan. Most data presented here are from Coordinating Board sources, except for the overarching 60x30 goal, which relies primarily on data from the U.S. Census. All institutions of higher education in the state – public, private, and for-profit – provide at least some data to the Coordinating Board annually.

Overarching Goal: 60x30

By 2030, at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.

Background Methodology and Calculating Metrics. The total Texas population and the number of residents ages 25-34 holding a degree are based on one-year American Community Survey (ACS) estimates published annually by the U.S. Census Bureau. Residents report their highest level of education in answer to the ACS question, "What is the highest degree or level of school this person has COMPLETED?" The degree options available for selection are associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. The attainment data monitored for this goal also include an estimate for the number of undergraduate certificates held by Texas residents ages 25-34. This estimate is calculated by applying the ratio of undergraduate certificates to associate degrees earned in Texas to national data. For example, if 0.7 undergraduate certificates are earned for every one associate degree at Texas institutions, then the assumption is made that 0.7 undergraduate certificates are attained (as the highest level of education) for every one associate degree in the ACS data, too. This ratio is calculated every year and applied to the ACS data for that given year.

Progress. The first and overarching goal deals with educational attainment, which is a fraction of the Texas population actually holding a degree or undergraduate certificate. These degrees and certificates could have been earned anywhere in the world – at private, public, or for-profit institutions. The data for the 60x30 goal published in the plan are from 2013. The baseline data shown in Table 2 are for 2014, since 2015 ACS data was not available at the time of this report. Thus, Texas has jumped two percentage points in one year. The data used to monitor the 60x30 goal comes from two sources, U.S. Census and Coordinating Board data.

Table 2. Progress toward meeting the overarching 60x30 goal.

Goal	Target	Published in *60x30TX*	First-Year Baseline* (2015)
60x30	60x30 (Attainment)	38.3%	40.3%

*2014 ACS data are used for degree attainment; 2014 ACS and THECB data are used to estimate certificate attainment.

Completion Goal

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

Figure 2. Targets to reach the completion goal.

Targets to Reach the Goal	2020	2025	2030
Increase the number of Hispanic students completing a certificate or degree to at least…	138,000	198,000	285,000
Increase the number of African American students completing a certificate or degree to at least…	48,000	59,000	76,000
Increase the number of male students completing a certificate or degree to at least…	168,000	215,000	275,000
Increase the number of economically disadvantaged undergraduate students (Pell Grant recipients) completing a certificate or degree to at least…	146,000	190,000	246,000
Increase 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 to at least…	58%	61%	65%

Background methodology and calculating metrics. Unlike 60x30, the completion goal counts only those undergraduate certificates and degrees awarded at Texas institutions. Those institutions include public, private, and for-profit institutions. Certain institutions located outside Texas serving residents or conducting services in Texas also are included. Another difference from the 60x30 goal is that the completion goal counts degrees up to a master's, but not professional or doctorate degrees. The Texas Higher Education Strategic Planning Committee, or TxHESPC, chose to limit this goal to undergraduate and master's credentials because market data suggested these are the credentials most in demand by the state's economy. The count of completions published in the plan are from 2014 Coordinating Board data. There have been promising increases in almost all target areas.

Progress. Overall, Texas has seen an increase in completions of 4.1 percent from 2014 to 2015, with 12,137 additional completions over the prior year (see Table 3). There also has been an increase in completions for four of the five targeted groups identified in the plan (see Figure 2). Hispanics have experienced an 8.2 percent increase in the last year (7,295 additional completions); African Americans have seen a 3.0 percent increase (1,127 additional completions); male student completions grew by 8,212, a 6.7 percent increase from 2014; and economically disadvantaged completions were up 6,584, a 6.1 percent increase. Economically disadvantaged students are those receiving Pell at any time from 1997 through the most current fiscal year for which Pell data are available.

The only completion target that did not see positive change from 2014 to 2015 was the percent of high school graduates directly enrolling in higher education. That percentage decreased by 1.5 percentage points in 2015. These data are monitored by linking the Texas Education Data high school graduate file (from TEA) to enrollment data from Texas institutions.

A robust economy, or out-of-state institutions recruiting more students, may have contributed to this drop. More needs to be done to ensure continued improvement in high school-to-college enrollment.

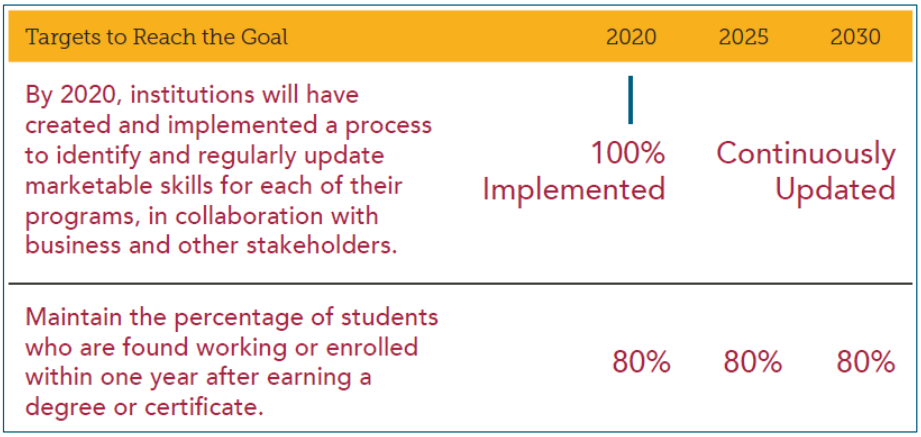
Table 3. Progress toward meeting the completion goal.

Goal	Target	Published in *60x30TX*	First-Year Baseline (2015)
Completion	Overall	298,989	311,126
	Hispanic	89,355	96,650
	African American	37,658	38,785
	Male	122,744	130,956
	Economically Disadvantaged	107,419	114,003
	TX High School Grads Enrolling in TX Higher Educ.	54.2%	52.7%

Marketable Skills Goal

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

Figure 3. Targets to reach the marketable skills goal.



Background methodology and calculating metrics. On the state level, the Coordinating Board has engaged stakeholders to share information across sectors and facilitate meeting the goal and its first target to create and implement a process to identify and regularly update marketable skills by 2020 (See Marketable Skills Conference on page 18 for more information).

Specifics on how the goal and first target will be measured is still being determined. The second target is measured by determining the percent of students who are awarded a

certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree in a given year and who are employed in the state or enrolled in a Texas public or private institution within one year following the award. The information about awards and subsequent enrollment in higher education is based on THECB data, and information about employment is based on Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage data from TWC.

The data used to track Texas graduates is limited to the state. Currently, the Coordinating Board is unable to track graduates to institutions or to job placements outside of Texas. For many institutions, particularly the flagship universities, a low percentage for this target may signal desired outcomes, as many of their graduates place outside of the state. The TxHESPC selected this target because it provides a way to monitor change. If there is notable increase or decrease, it signals that something important may have changed in the state or national economy. That change is not necessarily positive or negative.

Progress. As noted, the Coordinating Board staff continues to work with institutions to determine the best way to monitor institution-level progress toward this goal. The Coordinating Board has tracked the second target for many years. The percentage of students found working or enrolled within one year after completion increased by 1.7 percentage points from 2014 to 2015 (see Table 4). It is important to understand this target serves as a surveillance tool for graduate success after completion.

Table 4. Progress toward meeting the marketable skills goal.

Goal	Target	Published in *60x30TX*	First-Year Baseline (2015)
Marketable Skills	Working and Enrolled Within One Year	77.1%	78.80%

Student Debt Goal

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

Figure 4. Targets to reach the student debt goal.

Targets to Reach the Goal	2020	2025	2030
Decrease the excess semester credit hours (SCHs) that students attempt when completing an associate or a bachelor's degree.	12	6	3
Work to limit debt so that no more than half of all students who earn an undergraduate degree or certificate will have debt.	50%	50%	50%

Background methodology and calculating metrics. The student debt goal is measured by calculating undergraduate student loan debt in relation to first-year wages for graduates from Texas public institutions. The percentage of student loan debt to first-year wages is calculated for every student who completes an undergraduate certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree by taking out state or federal student loans (some private loans *may* also be included). The median – the point at which half of the ratios fall below, and half of the ratios are above – represents the data point tracked for this goal. Student loan debt data is limited to loans reported in the Coordinating Board's financial aid database (FADS) report. First-year wages are based on UI wage data from TWC. To be included in the calculation, individuals must have both student loan debt at the time of their graduation and wages in the first year following completion.

Progress. The student debt goal is a maintenance goal. The TxHESPC reviewed data on this metric and found it has held steady at about 60 percent for the last five or more years. It remains at 60 percent for 2015 (see Table 5).

The targets for the student debt goal are monitored using Coordinating Board data. There was a slight downward shift in the first target, Semester Credit Hours (SCHs) attempted toward a degree; between 2014 and 2015 SCHs attempted decreased by one SCH – a move in the right direction. To determine if hours are in excess, the SCHs attempted are compared to degree plan requirements for students awarded an associate or bachelor's degree from a Texas public institution (in a given year). The average of these excess hours is the metric used to monitor this target. SCHs attempted include college-level SCHs for up to 10 years prior to the time of an award. SCHs attempted do not include dual credit and do not include SCHs attempted for developmental education.

On another positive note, the second target under this goal also showed a slight decrease between 2014 and 2015. The percent of undergraduates completing with student loan debt changed from 50.7 to 49.2. This target is also a maintenance target, designed to keep this percent at approximately the same level or lower than it has been for the last five or more years. A decrease in this metric could be considered positive if fewer students borrow to complete their credential because they are able to secure funds from other sources, such as grants or family contribution. However, it also may signal that students are not borrowing what they could to finish in a timely manner. This percent represents the proportion of graduates with an undergraduate certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree from a Texas public or private institution in a given year that complete with student loan debt. Each graduate's loan debt includes all loans any institution reported in the Coordinating Board's financial aid database (FADS) report.

Table 5. Progress toward meeting the student debt goal.

Goal	Target	Published in *60x30TX*	First-Year Baseline (2015)
Student Debt	Student Loan Debt to First Year Wage Percentage	60%	60%
	Excess SCHs Attempted	21	20
	Percent Completing with Debt	50.7%	49.2%

Recommendations for Legislative Action to Help Meet the Goals of *60x30TX*, including Legislative Appropriations Requests (LAR) and Exceptional Items

In preparation for the 85th Texas Legislative Session, the Coordinating Board has adopted a number of higher education policy and budget recommendations for the Legislature to consider when they convene in January 2017. These recommendations are designed to improve student outcomes, increase the efficiency of the state's investment in higher education, and lay the initial groundwork for achieving our *60x30TX* goals.

Policy Recommendations

In June 2016, the Coordinating Board adopted its recommendations to the 85th Texas Legislature regarding statutory changes that would improve the provision of higher education in the state and contribute to the goals of *60x30TX*. Of the recommendations, four were identified by the Coordinating Board as "Category 1" major changes to state policy.

Coordinating expansion of higher education. One of the foremost duties of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is to ensure the efficient and effective use of state resources in higher education and to eliminate unnecessary duplication. As institutions of higher education seek to expand their geographical presence into new areas, it is important for the agency to review and approve these new sites to ensure that they do not duplicate existing higher education offerings. It is also important to have a common understanding of the various types of off-campus settings, such as Multi-Institution Teaching Centers (MITCs) and branch campuses.

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

Oversight of career schools and colleges. The Coordinating Board is charged with the oversight of certain career colleges. The graduates that these institutions produce will play an important role in meeting the attainment and completion goals of *60x30TX*. While most of these institutions are stable and reputable, students at some of these schools fall victim to sudden closures due to mismanagement, financial weakness, or other difficulties.

The Coordinating Board recommends that statute make the agency's authority explicit, requiring compliance with accrediting bodies, federal financial rules, and state statutes and

rules, as well as clarifying the agency's ability to revoke Certificates of Authorization for cause. The board also will seek authority to establish the agency as the repository for student records of closed career colleges and for the Legislature to provide resources necessary to maintain the repository.

Improving financial aid. The majority (60 percent) of students in the P-12 pipeline are poor. State financial aid programs are a vital component of making higher education accessible for students who are unable to fund the cost of their education through family resources. The TEXAS (Toward Excellence, Access, and Success) Grant program provides important assistance to Texas students at public universities, and the Texas Educational Opportunity Grant (TEOG) provides aid to students at public community colleges and career and technical colleges. If Texas is to achieve the goals of *60x30TX*, these programs must be structured to most effectively facilitate access, improve student outcomes, and ensure resources are allocated effectively.

For the TEXAS Grant Program, the Coordinating Board recommends:

- limiting grant recipients to 135 semester credit hours (down from 150 SCH currently) to encourage timely completion and use savings to serve additional eligible students;
- requiring recipients to complete 30 SCH per year, through any combination of fall, spring, and summer sessions;
- accommodating more middle-income families by limiting grant award amounts to the cost of tuition, fees, and a book stipend, minus Pell; and
- removing institutional "matching" requirements if the student does not meet the priority EFC level.

For the TEOG Program, the Coordinating Board recommends:

- accommodating more middle-income families by limiting grant award amounts to the cost of tuition, fees, and a book stipend, minus Pell;
- expanding the number of semester credit hours (SCH) that a recipient enrolled in a community college baccalaureate program may receive to 135 SCH (currently 75 SCH); and
- clarifying statute to allow institutions the discretion to continue a student's TEOG despite exceeding the number of allowable semester credit hours or years due to a hardship.

Outcomes-based formula funding. Currently, formula funding for public institutions of higher education is determined largely based on student enrollment. . If Texas is to achieve its *60x30TX* goals to increase degree attainment among our youngest generation of workers and to increase substantially the number of students earning a degree or certificate, the state must adopt funding policies that reward institutions for helping students complete their education. The 83rd Texas Legislature adopted new funding methodologies for community colleges and technical colleges that include measures of student outcomes, but universities do not have an outcomes-based state funding source. Details regarding the agency's recommendations are below.

Budget recommendations. Adequately funding higher education, and ensuring that funding is structured to most effectively realize desired outcomes, is vital for achieving all four goals of *60x30TX*.

In April 2016, the Coordinating Board adopted formula funding recommendation for Fiscal Years (FY) 2018-19 for the three sectors of higher education – career and technical colleges, general academic intuitions (GAIs), and health-related institutions. These recommendations were developed through extensive deliberations of the Formula Advisory Committees composed of representatives of their respective sectors.

The board's recommendation for community colleges and technical colleges continues the three-part model for community college formula funding initially implemented by the 83rd Texas Legislature. This model funds core operations, contact hour enrollment, and success in achieving student success points. Success points are measures of student completion of significant milestones toward their higher educational goals – completing developmental education, completing a first college-level class, progress toward an award as evidenced by completion of 15 and 30 SCH, achieving a certificate or degree or transferring to a university.

However, during the 84th Legislature, while core operations funding stayed level and per-contact hour enrollment funding saw a slight increase, student success point funding actually decreased from $185.12 per point in 2013 to $172.58 in 2015. According to the Texas Association of Community Colleges, the reduced level was not adequate to "reward student improvement."

Therefore, the Coordinating Board has recommended a significant increase in Student Success Point funding – to $215 per point for the 2018-19 biennium. This increase will create a strong incentive for these institutions to produce better outcomes with their students, helping achieve the attainment and completion goals of *60x30TX*.

In determining its formula recommendations for GAIs, the Coordinating Board considered three priorities: inflation, growth, and success. For the 2018-19 biennium, the THECB's board recommended a total funding increase of 9 percent to $5.1 billion. Furthermore, the Coordinating Board is recommending the 85th Legislature adopt a graduation bonus for four-year public institutions, placing a strong focus on producing more graduates and on graduating at-risk students. The recommendation includes:

- Funding the graduation bonus at $150 million for the biennium. Institutions would receive $500 per not at-risk graduate and $1,000 per at-risk graduate.
- An "at-risk" student would be defined as any student who is eligible to receive a Pell Grant, or who has an SAT or ACT score is below the national average.
- The board recommends outcomes-based funding be institutionalized and that the Legislature determine whether it be inside or outside the formula.
- The graduation bonus would incentivize universities' internal success in tutoring, mentoring, and developmental education and would carry the additional formula funding benefits of increasing retention and transfer completion.

In addition to formula funding recommendations, the Coordinating Board, through its

Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR) for FY 2018-19, will seek additional funding to support efforts that will contribute to *60x30TX*. These exceptional item requests are:

- *Security upgrades to agency's IT infrastructure* ($440,000). Security upgrades to the agency's IT Infrastructure are required to address information security deficiencies initially identified by the Gartner assessment that concluded in FY14.
- *Toward excellence, access, and success (Texas) grant program* ($78.3 million). Increase TEXAS Grant funding for four-year public universities and health-related institutions by $78.3 million to $791 million, which would maintain the level of 85 percent of TEXAS Grant initially eligible students utilizing a target award of $5,000.
- *Advise TX* ($4 million). Advise TX is a partner program of the College Advising Corps (CAC), an innovative near-peer, college access advising program that aims to increase the number of low-income, first-generation college and underrepresented students who enter and complete higher education. This exceptional item request seeks to provide sufficient funding for an additional 80-100 advisers (totaling up to 210), which would permit these advising services at additional high schools across Texas.
- *Improving transfer with fields of study* ($494,000). Fields of Study (FOS) facilitate the applicability of courses transferred from community colleges to universities by establishing a set of lower-division courses within a discipline that must be applied to a bachelor's degree in that discipline. Existing FOS need to be revised; the voluntary transfer compacts need to be transformed into FOS; and new ones need to be created. The funding would allow the THECB to conduct 28-32 meetings per year for approximately 6-8 academic fields, thereby expediting completion of this important process.
- *Increase oversight of for-profit institutions and development of an electronic student records repository* ($750,000). Create a centralized academic records repository of closed postsecondary educational institutions, formerly authorized by the THECB to operate under a certificate of authorization or certificate of authority, to provide centralized access to student records. This exceptional item request seeks to provide sufficient funding for technology software, staff, and secure storage of academic records.
- *Graduate medical education expansion* ($29.8 million). The exceptional item request will provide support to maintain the 710 residency positions established. The development of the new programs was accomplished using existing staff, and this request does not include administrative funds.
- *Internal audit and compliance monitoring* ($170,000). This request would support one additional internal audit position for a total of four positions, including the director. A 2014 comprehensive internal audit benchmarking study resulted in internal audit receiving one additional audit position out of existing agency resources. The agency manages a student loan portfolio of more than $1 billion and financial assistance programs to institutions of higher education of more than $1.5 billion.

Other Policy Discussions and Activities

Major Policy Discussion on Student Debt

The July 2016 board meeting of the THECB included a discussion on building the financial literacy of Texans to promote a better understanding of how and why to pay for higher education, as part of the agency's ongoing efforts to spark discussion on achieving the goals of *60x30TX*. The intent of the *60x30TX* student debt goal is to address student loan debt in TEXAS before it becomes unmanageable and deters greater numbers of students from seeking a degree. Helping students complete credentials and balance debt load will help the state reach the overarching 60x30 goal and will help two- and four-year colleges in Texas reach the state's completion goal. Achieving the student debt goal also will lead to healthier individual finances among graduates and a stronger state economy.

Three groups directly influence college affordability: students – through the financial decisions made before, during, and after their college careers; colleges – through their efforts toward cost-efficiency and their efforts to ensure students understand the financial decisions they are making; and the state – through adequate funding for higher education. The discussion focused primarily on students, particularly in relation to how students can make an impact on college affordability by maintaining the lowest possible debt levels, by making good decisions about their time and finances during and after college, by maintaining affordable college lifestyles, and by understanding the total cost of borrowing money.

The discussion included insights from founding members of the Texas Association of Collegiate Financial Education Professionals (TACFEP), a student influenced by these efforts, and a representative from a nonprofit organization focused on financial literacy. The discussion explored different aspects of financial literacy, including program elements needed in a financial literacy program for college students to positively impact students' money management behavior while attending college and lessen the amount of loan and credit card debt students take on to complete their degrees; the positive impact of financial literacy programs on a student's decision and ability to complete a degree; roadblocks to financial literacy advising; and assessing financial literacy program effectiveness.

More Clarification and New Programs Rule for Marketable Skills

The marketable skills goal directs all public two- and four-year institutions to establish a process for identifying and disseminating to students the marketable skills they acquire at the institutions. To ensure the goal is reached, the THECB is developing rules that further delineate what is expected of institutions and how to report the marketable skills obtained by students to the THECB. The marketable skills obtained in a program also will become a part of the requested information in new program proposals submitted by institutions.

Major Policy Discussion – Dual Credit and College Readiness

Since 2000, Texas has made measurable progress in improving postsecondary graduation rates, but it must strengthen these efforts to compete successfully with other states

and countries. To meet this important goal of improving postsecondary completion rates, more students must enter higher education with the skills and knowledge necessary for success in entry-level college courses and beyond. Dual credit has become an increasingly popular way for students to be introduced to college and demonstrate their college readiness. In light of this trend, the College Readiness and Success Division and the Academic Quality and Workforce Division provided an overview of the history and current state of college readiness and dual credit at the April 2016 THECB's board meeting. The title of the presentation was "Achieving the Goals of *60x30TX*: College Readiness and Dual Credit." With representatives from Texas public higher education institutions, staff discussed the future and relevance of college readiness and dual credit for the success of the *60x30TX* completion goal.

Implementation Strategies, Marketing, and Related Activities

Digital Activities and Initiatives

Generation TX (GenTX) app. GenTX is a statewide initiative supported by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and focused on creating a college-going culture across the state. Continuing to promote GenTX collaboration between higher education and secondary schools will be an important strategy for getting students into and through higher education and helping to the meet the completion goal of *60x30TX*. Through GenTX Day and other seasonal promotions, Generation TX is clarifying the path to college for Texas students and families by providing information on college readiness, college application, and financial aid in a fresh and engaging manner. In addition to www.GenTX.org, the agency is developing a GenTX iOS app. The app will feature gamification, social media, and sponsorship functionality. Gamification will vary points between middle school and high school checklists, and will include competition between users, social media links, connection to GO Centers, and these features:

- Students/parents will be able set up an account, designate their year of school and their geographical area.
- The system will recommend checklists and schedules that students should know.
- Each user will be able indicate which checklist they want to activate for their profile, and for which specific events/dates they want proactive alerts.
- Multiple checklists will appear and will allow users to indicate what has been completed and to store their progress.
- Proactive reminders will send to the mobile app on trigger dates to be determined (i.e., seven days before SAT, one month before application deadlines, etc.) and will activate the "alert" function in the app's web-based screens for the admin only, who will provide reporting on usage by number of and basic demographics of users, use frequency, aggregate progress reports of checklists (not per user, but overall), etc.
- The app will have social media sharing of specific events or milestones.
- The app will incorporate the GO Center and the updated college planning guide.

Grad TX app. In FY14, an estimated 49,308 community and technical and 12,098 university students, within a year of completion, stopped out without earning a degree. If all stop outs from FY14 had earned their degree, an additional 61,406, or a total of 371,830 degrees would have been awarded in 2015. Encouraging stop outs to complete their degrees is a major strategy of *60x30TX*. The Grad TX mobile app will help users to: 1) find flexible degree/certification programs, 2) explore career options, and 3) get advice about financial aid and other issues that can become obstacles to returning to higher education. Within these three areas of services, a user will be able to do the following:

- Search for degree plans by type of degree, name of school, or by location
- Search degree/certification requirements for careers that interest them
- Access links to a page that describe the degree plans specifically established for returning students

New accountability system website. In early 2017, the THECB will launch a fully redesigned accountability system website. The current accountability system will remain available, with FY 2015 being the final year of data coinciding with the final year of *Closing the Gaps by 2015*. The new accountability system is designed to highlight data showing progress toward the goals and targets of *60x30TX* and identified accountability measures. Statewide data will be presented, along with data by institution, sector, peer group (both in-state and out-of-state), system, and district to allow institutions, policymakers, and other stakeholders to evaluate, compare, and learn from the progress of individual institutions and the groups identified above. It will feature new webpages that enable users to navigate the system and access data quickly and easily. The presentation of data initially will appear in tabular format, while data visualizations, such as bar graphs, line graphs, and pie charts, will be introduced over time.

The intent of the new system is to communicate effectively and efficiently the story of the state's progress in higher education, in alignment with *60x30TX*. With the adoption of *60x30TX* and the evolution of the state's goals to focus on attainment, completion, marketable skills, and student debt, there was a clear need to redesign the accountability system to include targets and measures relevant to the new plan. In addition to being easier to use and more visually appealing, a coordinated effort has been made to ensure the data presented are understood easily by users and relevant for different types of institutions. Meetings were held at the agency with each higher education sector represented in the new accountability system to discuss streamlining the number of measures presented and avoid overwhelming users with data. Feedback from each sector shaped the list of accountability measures presented in the new system. There was agreement among all sectors that clear and easy access to data that answered the following types of questions would best support all stakeholders:

- How is the attainment rate for Texans holding a certificate or degree changing?
- How many certificates and degrees have been awarded by Texas institutions annually over time, and which institutions are contributing the most to award increases?
- Which institutions are making the most progress on improving completion rates?

- What is the rate of students found working or re-enrolled in higher education within a year after receiving a degree or certificate, and are employment and enrollment patterns changing by region?
- Are levels of undergraduate student debt upon graduation going up, going down, or holding steady, and which sectors or institutions are having the most success in relation to the student debt measures?
- Which universities are graduating the most transfer students?

The measures presented in the new accountability system will answer these questions and more. They will be organized by higher education sector, including statewide summaries, and by *60x30TX* goals where the measure is appropriate for the goal. For example, accountability measures tracking award completions and graduation rates will be located on a page dedicated to the completion goal of *60x30TX*. Measures not directly related to a goal will be located on sector-specific pages dedicated to an applicable category, such as Success Points for community colleges.

To address concerns that data previously presented may no longer be available, the agency has committed to upgrading the "interactive" tool within the accountability system, which allows users a self-service option to view and download additional data. The interactive tool is being designed to provide an easy and intuitive option to pull data from an expansive database that will include many of the measures in the current accountability system that will no longer appear in the new one. It also will include other select data known to be of high interest to various groups of stakeholders. Data from the Profile Reports Electronically Produced (PREP) system will be incorporated, and the PREP system will be retired at an appropriate time. Full deployment of the new interactive tool is anticipated to follow within months of launching the new accountability system.

The result of the accountability system redesign will be a new system that is visually appealing, easy to use, provides immediate access to data aligned to the goals of *60x30TX* and other selected accountability measures. It aims to meet the needs of users who wish to quickly understand the overall state, sector, peer group, and institutional progress without getting overwhelmed by too much data. Users with an appetite for deep data analysis will be able to explore and download a vast array of higher education data through the interactive tool.

New 60x30TX.com website. The current website promotes the plan on the homepage, and a search for "60x30TX" through the agency website's directory produces nearly 4,000 results. Events related to *60x30TX* also are prominently displayed on the homepage, as well as tweets – many of which relate to *60x30TX*. This information will transition to the 60x30TX.com website that will launch in January 2017.

Success of the new plan will require the commitment and combined expertise and resources of many stakeholders. Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), the objective of this new data reporting tool is to promote awareness of the new *60x30TX* higher education plan and provide the most relevant data for the public to track the state's progress on the four goals of the plan. The website will accomplish the following:

- Focus exclusively on the new *60x30TX* higher education plan

- Have a design that is visually appealing and responsive
- Provide robust data reporting capabilities with regional and institutional filters
- Pull data from the accountability database
- Provide interactive visualization of longitudinal data, with trend lines
- Take users to the accountability system for deeper data analysis

In addition to the development of this interactive online tool, the grant from BMGF will provide a full-time position to train external users, create and provide presentations for various types of stakeholder groups, perform data requests, and coordinate a Data Fellows program at the THECB. The 60x30TX.org trainer will teach interested stakeholders to perform "deeper dives" for more nuanced analyses of a broader range of metrics using the *60x30TX* accountability system. This ability to follow more regional and institutional data will help stakeholders develop and maintain local efforts to achieve the goals of *60x30TX*.

Tri-agency web portal. The Tri-agency Workforce Initiative among TEA, TWC, and THECB, recommended developing a one-stop web portal of education and workforce data and resources for stakeholders, including students, parents, educators, and policymakers, that will help to advance the overarching 60x30 goal. The proposed recommendation includes plans to develop a statewide online education and career advising tool for counselors, students, parents, and other stakeholders, that will help P-16 students – especially students who are struggling, economically disadvantaged, foster children, or children with disabilities – make meaningful and achievable postsecondary or career plans, and encourage student attainment in high-demand occupations, as well as help students select dual credit courses based on future plans.

The recommendation specifies including the following information: 1) an individualized career pathway generator that helps students select a career and then helps them determine the P-16 courses required to be successful, earn a certificate, or enter college or university; 2) existing and anticipated employment opportunities in local communities and across Texas, which directly align with state and regional objectives; 3) anticipated earnings in different careers; 4) local, regional, and statewide career training and certification programs, requirements, costs, and options; 5) local, regional, and statewide high school-to-career-and-college articulation agreements and efficient stackable degrees; 6) endorsements under the Foundation School Program offered by school districts related to postsecondary and/or career options; and 7) the cost, time, and expense of different career and educational options.

Events and Conferences

In addition to the events and conferences that follow, staff have presented on *60x30TX* at many state and national conferences (see Presentations).

***60x30TX* launch by Governor Abbott.** On Nov. 16, 2015, Gov. Greg Abbott officially announced the *60x30TX* strategic plan for Texas higher education. More than 130 representatives from higher education, local and state governments, the media, and the public attended the event hosted by Collin College in McKinney, Texas. Commissioner Raymund

Paredes and THECB Board Chair Bobby Jenkins joined Gov. Abbott, Collin College President Neal Matkin, and TxHESPC Chair Woody Hunt to discuss the significance of *60x30TX* for the future of Texas.

At the event, Gov. Abbott acknowledged the successes of *Closing the Gaps by 2015*, which provides a strong foundation for *60x30TX*. Gov. Abbott stressed the importance of the plan and how attainment of the four goals will have a positive impact on Texas and Texans. He summed up the significance of *60x30TX* by stating, "The strength of Texas' economy is our workforce, and a skilled and educated workforce gives Texas a competitive advantage. But for Texas to continue growing and to be a leader in the global economy, we need more students graduating with a two- or four-year degree. Texas will be better because of our new focus on *60x30TX* and our brightest years are yet to come."

***60x30TX* regional meetings.** The *60x30TX* regional workshops held around the state from April to October 2016 were intended to provide a forum for local leaders to exchange ideas and create partnerships to help achieve the *60x30TX* goals. The regional workshops were hosted by higher education institutions and sponsored by the Coordinating Board, with support from Lumina Foundation and the College for All Texans Foundation. The objectives of the meetings were to: 1) review the status of regional/local progress toward addressing higher education challenges, which include improving collaboration and alignment between public schools and higher education, as well as improving college readiness; 2) develop an action plan to improve students' completion of a postsecondary certificate or degree; and 3) create a seamless pipeline among public education, higher education, and the workforce.

Meetings were held at The University of Texas at Arlington, Stephen F. Austin State University, Houston Community College-Central Campus, Texas A&M University at San Antonio, The University of Texas at El Paso, and Texas State Technical College-Harlingen. The final regional meeting will be held on Oct. 5 at Texas Tech University.

Block scheduling conference with Texas community colleges. House Bill (HB) 1583, passed by 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, requires public junior colleges to offer five associate degree or certificate programs from the fields of health science, nursing, or career and technology as block-scheduled programs by the fall of 2016, in addition to any programs that may be currently offered in block. Specifically, the block-scheduled program needs to allow students to enroll in a block of courses rather than individual courses, and the college must provide the schedule for the next semester in advance.

Block scheduling allows a full-time student to enroll in a defined block of courses, such as a morning, full day, afternoon, evening, or weekend, and provides course scheduling predictability from semester to semester, so that students can plan work and family schedules around their courses. The ultimate goal of HB 1583 is to help students complete degrees in a timelier manner, with fewer semester credit hours that do not apply to the program of study, and ultimately, with less student debt. These goals are consistent with the goals outlined in *60x30TX*.

On Feb. 8-9, 2016, the THECB, in partnership with Complete College America, held a workshop to help community college leaders across Texas understand HB 1583 and implement block-scheduled programs. With 225 registered attendees representing all 50 community

college districts in the state, the event marked an important step in bringing community colleges together to share ideas and best practices, as well as participate in guided efforts toward understanding the purpose and extent of the legislation. Speakers from several out-of-state institutions presented their own experiences with implementing block scheduling. Rex Peebles, Assistant Commissioner of Academic Quality and Workforce, spoke about the role of block scheduling in helping to meet the completion goal of *60x30TX*. A panel of experts described the challenges and rewards of block scheduling programs and fielded questions from attendees.

Marketable Skills Conference. On April 12-13, 2016, the Coordinating Board hosted the Marketable Skills Conference at the AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center on the campus of The University of Texas at Austin. Institutions were encouraged to send a team, including provosts, deans, career services administrators, student services administrators, chief academic/instructional officers, and faculty senate presidents. Participation was outstanding with more than 350 attendees. Two- and four-year colleges and universities were represented equally at the conference, each making up about half of the registrants. During this conference, higher education institutions shared ideas, policies, and practices on how to achieve the marketable skills goal of *60x30TX*. All of the presentations and related materials are posted online at www.thecb.state.tx.us/msc/meeting_materials. One of the intentions of this conference was to help participants connect the marketable skills goal to existing resources.

P-16 Statewide Professional Development Conference. In partnership with the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) and Austin Community College, this event bridged secondary and postsecondary education and offered access to national and regional speakers and program resources to address topics related to transitioning students from secondary to postsecondary education. The event engaged participants in informative breakout sessions to explore and exchange models of practice and evidence-based strategies focused on specific topics that include:

- Dual enrollment, early college high school, and other pre-college options
- Improving students' financial literacy
- Streamlining P-16 pathways to college success
- High school and college academic advising

TAB•Lab. In February 2016, the Coordinating Board hosted a convening on Texas Affordable Baccalaureate programs, called TAB•Lab, sponsored by AT&T Foundation. With a Next Generation Learning Challenges grant from EDUCAUSE, the Coordinating Board launched the "Texas Affordable Baccalaureate (TAB) Program" in 2014, with baccalaureates at Texas A&M University-Commerce and South Texas College. The program was designed with two critical challenges in mind: 1) the rising cost of tuition for students, and 2) a growing adult population, particularly among Hispanics. The Affordable Baccalaureate was developed in response to Governor Rick Perry's 2011 call for low-cost options for undergraduate degrees.

One of the strategies of the first goal in *60x30TX* is to "Develop and implement education and curriculum delivery systems (e.g., competency-based programs) to make higher

education available to a broader and changing population." TAB•Lab spoke directly to this strategy and was co-convened by the Coordinating Board, Western Governors University Texas, and the Institute for Competency-Based Education at Texas A&M University-Commerce. This effort sought to expand Texas Affordable Baccalaureates, which can include competency-based programs, recognition of prior learning, or alternative credit. The conference was designed to share information with attendees along five tracks: planning and policy, curriculum development, technology, implementation, and innovative partnerships and strategies. Feedback in response to this convening was highly positive.

Texas Association of Business (TAB) conference. Held in Austin in September 2015, the conference, titled "The Future of Higher Education in Texas," focused on the *60x30TX* plan, and the association endorsed the plan. Woody Hunt, chair of the TxHESPC keynoted the conference. Bill Hammond, President of the TAB, also wrote and published several enthusiastic op-ed pieces about *60x30TX* in newspapers across the state.

Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative and Summit. In March 2016, Gov. Abbott established the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative and tasked the Commissioners of the TEA, THECB, and TWC with working together to address five charges centered on developing strong links between education and industry, with the goal of helping Texas grow in economic prosperity.

"Understanding the needs of job creators is paramount to ensuring that Texas remains the top state for business expansion and relocation," he said. "By establishing this initiative, the state of Texas now seeks to ensure that the needs of both its growing workforce, as well as new and existing businesses are met and each are prepared to successfully operate in an ever-changing 21st century economy."

The fifth charge specifically targeted the goals of *60x30TX*:

Commissioners should make recommendations that build the skills of the Texas workforce and advance regional economic expansion, job creation, and the goals of 60x30TX.

Among other things, the charges included recommending ways to:

- Make college more affordable for families
- Help students enter the workforce more quickly with marketable skills
- Identify innovative workforce development models that directly coordinate with industry partners and promote postsecondary success
- Better link students, parents, and educators to the broad array of high-demand jobs in this state by evaluating current agency efforts, as well as state and local web-based education and career awareness systems

To address the governor's charges, the commissioners of the three agencies held regional meetings across Texas in Midland, San Antonio, Houston, Dallas, El Paso, McAllen, Tyler, and Austin from April through June 2016. The commissioners met with regional leaders from education, industry, government, and nonprofit organizations to understand the state's workforce needs in each region. The commissioners also sought input on services for Texas

veterans, evaluating their access to education and employment opportunities to ensure a seamless and accelerated transition into the Texas workforce.

At the Texas Education & Workforce Summit on Sept. 19-20, 2016, the agency leaders presented their recommendations related to the governor's charges for the Tri-Agency Initiative in a report spearheaded by the THECB. Many of the recommendations in the report will aid in the progress of *60x30TX*.

Grant Programs

The THECB administers funds for several grant programs related to, or focused on *60x30TX*, including the recently launched grant programs shown below. Many previous grant programs, such as the minority male program, will shift their focus from reaching the goals of *Closing the Gaps by 2015* to those of *60x30TX*.

The College for All Texans (CFAT) Foundation is an important part of the THECB's grant programming and is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit supporting organization for the THECB that raises funds to supplement state funding to achieve the goals of the state's higher education strategic plan. In November 2015, CFAT adopted the following as their top five objectives:

1. *Awareness.* Ensure that Texans are aware of *60x30TX* and understand the urgency to meet its goals.
2. *Affordable Alternatives.* Ensure that alternative, affordable pathways to degrees are available in a minimum of 10 fields of study.
3. *Research.* Continue policy research to support *60x30TX* goals.
4. *Institutional innovation.* Provide the means for institutions to support low-income students through degree completion; implement comprehensive approaches to ensure that their students gain and know their Marketable Skills; to provide alternative pathways to degrees; and to constrain student debt. Evaluate effectiveness of supported programs.
5. *Knowledge.* Glean and disseminate best practices for improving student completion, attainment of marketable skills, and constraining student debt.

In the year since adopting these objectives, CFAT has raised $2.5 million for research, affordable baccalaureates, and promotion of the *60x30TX* plan; it has a goal of raising $20 million over five years.

Comprehensive College Readiness and Success Models (CRSM). The purpose of the Comprehensive College Readiness and Success Models for *60x30TX* (CRSM) is to award "funding based on students served" grants that support scaling and enhancing comprehensive strategies and activities to accomplish the priorities of the agency for achieving the goals and targets of *60x30TX*. To receive funding, eligible applicants must have experience with one or more of the following instructional models and a plan to scale and enhance the model(s) to benefit more students.

- *Gateway Course Completion models* (for college-ready students)

- *Acceleration models* (for underprepared students pursuing academic programs)
- *Integrated Career Pathways models* (for underprepared students pursuing Career Technical Education (CTE) programs)

The CRSM provides funding for eligible institutions of higher education to become "student ready." Institutions that are "student ready" have faculty and staff ready to educate and serve a diverse population; measure learning outcomes to improve performance; and adapt policies, procedures, practices, and organizational structures to ensure more students succeed.

Texas Affordable Baccalaureate (TAB) expansion project. This donor-funded project proposes to expand the number of TAB programs from the current two to a total of 10 programs, to award degrees in more fields. Over the first five years, the $1.5 million expansion is projected to enroll 21,000 students.

TAB programs support all four of the goals articulated in *60x30TX*. A greater number of completions will increase the percentage of Texans holding degrees by 2030 and increase the number of graduates annually; by engaging business and industry partners in defining competencies, institutions will focus degrees on identified marketable skills; and by lowering cost and time to degree, TAB degrees will decrease educational expenses for students, thereby decreasing their debt load.

The AT&T Foundation is the lead donor on the project, joined by the Meadows Foundation and others.

Minority Male grant program. The THECB has allocated over $28 million in state and federal funding over the last few years for programs providing direct services to disadvantaged students. This program funding has been designated to support economically disadvantaged or underrepresented students. The majority of the funding is targeted toward institutions of higher education with large numbers of African American and Hispanic students, first as a part of the Accelerated Plan for *Closing the Gaps by 2015*, and now as part of *60x30TX*. The THECB strategies include: 1) participation of Hispanic students and African American male students, and 2) success of Hispanic and African American students.

The THECB has identified several programs that have demonstrated a positive impact on the success of underrepresented students and is funding projects to strengthen mentoring, academic support, and other services aimed at underrepresented students in the higher education pipeline.

Media Coverage

A total of 62 major news stories in the past year have focused on *60x30TX* in national, state, and local venues. More than 100 stories have mentioned or briefly discussed the plan in a wide range of media. Content on *60x30TX* has appeared in *Forbes*, *U.S. News*, *Inside Higher Ed*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Education Week*, and *Community College Week*. Every major newspaper outlet in Texas has covered the plan, as well as several web-based news outlets and several broadcast news stations. Community colleges and universities, as well as community organizations, education associations, and business associations, have featured or mentioned the plan on their websites, in briefings, or in newsletters.

In addition to external media outlets, THECB staff produces several newsletters that include or highlight information about *60x30TX*. These include the monthly employee and board newsletters, produced by the Office of External Relations, and the APP Newsletter, produced by the Office of Academic Planning and Policy and sent to chief administrators at Texas two- and four-year institutions. Staff in the Office of External Relations also produce numerous media releases throughout the year and maintain a presence on Twitter and other social media to market the plan. In addition, the 2016 *Texas Public Higher Education Almanac* includes information about the goals of *60x30TX*.

60x30TX Branding

With the introduction of the new strategic plan for higher education, the Coordinating Board introduced a new logo to replace the previous image of a star and mortarboard. Agency materials, including newsletters, reports, PowerPoint presentations, email signatures, social media imagery, and other communication vehicles and venues use the *60x30TX* branded logo to promote the strategic plan.

60x30TX is now the agency's institutional identity so that everything the agency does supports the strategic plan. Those promotional efforts are internal, as well as external, so that all staff "walks the talk" of *60x30TX.*

Presentations

This section highlights only a few of the hundreds of presentations that Commissioner Paredes, Deputy Commissioner Gardner, Deputy Commissioner Battles, and other THECB staff have given over the last year. Engaging state (and sometimes national) leaders with *60x30TX* has required staff from all divisions in the agency to act as ambassadors for the plan. No fewer than 25 staff, or about 10 percent of the agency's full-time staff, from Academic Quality and Workforce, College Readiness and Success, External Relations, Innovation and Policy Development, Strategic Planning and Funding, and Student Financial Aid Programs have given presentations or moderated panels related to *60x30TX*. All staff members are integrating *60x30TX* into the programs, initiatives, and activities they direct or coordinate as part of their ongoing duties at the agency.

In 2015 and 2016, many staff was trained on *60x30TX* and how to present the plan to outside groups. Staff presented on *60x30TX*, or topics related to the plan, at TASFAA (Texas Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (TASFAA), Texas Association of Collegiate Financial Education Professionals (TACFEP), The University of Texas at San Antonio Academic Advising Conference, Texas Association of Institutional Researchers (TAIR), Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (TACRAO), and the Rio Grande Valley LEAD Regional Conference, to name only a few.

Not only did staff present at many national and statewide conferences, symposia, workshops, and meetings, but the Commissioner or his designee presented *60x30TX* at every board of trustees or board of regents meeting held in the state during the past 18 months.

Other Initiatives and Activities

Fields of Study and Programs of Study. Fields of Study (FOS) and Programs of Study (POS) result in statewide articulation agreements that facilitate the transfer of student credits form one institution to another. More importantly, FOS and POS facilitate the applicability of students' credits to a major, thus reducing the loss of credit. Students in FOS/POS have less time and semester credit hours to degree, reducing student and state costs. Student debt will be reduced and student completion will increase through FOS and POS. FOS have been in statute since 1997, but legislation passed in the last session added new emphasis to the revision of current FOS and the creation of new FOS/POS. The creation and revision of FOS/POS is a major contribution to the goals of *60x30TX*.

Financial literacy advisory committee. The Financial Literacy Advisory Committee (FLAC) was created to provide the board of the THECB with advice and recommendations regarding ways to better advise students and parents on financial aid options and the impact of those options on students' financial aid before, during, and after their college careers. The FLAC is composed of up to 24 leaders representing student financial aid, higher education, K-12 education, community-based organizations, and the business and finance sector. The committee will convene on a monthly basis starting in October 2016, in an effort to gather and discuss information on research, best practices, and influential factors in the field of financial literacy in order to identify key aspects that will guide the state's financial literacy efforts. Discussions will specifically relate to promoting a better understanding of how and why to pay for higher education.

Financial literacy pilot project with TG. Senate Bill 680, 83rd Texas Legislature, Regular Session, created the Texas Student Loan Default Prevention and Financial Aid Literacy Pilot Program. As part of the pilot, nine institutions from across the state are engaged with the THECB and TG in activities that include default prevention planning, financial education, and student loan counseling through in-person and online delivery systems, financial coaching, and financial and college articles and tips through monthly notifications (i.e., the Mighty Money Minute). In the second year of the program, TG engaged in multiple efforts to assess the strength of the pilot activities across measurements such as satisfaction, knowledge/ability, planned actions, and changes in behavior. Implementation surveys, structured interviews, focus groups, and feedback from an annual convening of the school participants all helped identify opportunities for growth and improvement.

In year two, more than 4,000 students participated in financial education or loan counseling activities; 86 students have participated in financial coaching (the most recent activity offered to pilot schools), and the Mighty Money Minute has accumulated over 9,000 views. Promising practices that have been identified for further exploration include cross-departmental responsibility sharing; leveraging "mandatory venues"; and connecting default prevention, financial wellness, and student success.

Schools and students provided a wealth of feedback in year two of the pilot that will guide improvements and efforts in year three. The pilot program is designed around principles of iterative change. In each year of the pilot, administrators will apply the lessons learned from pilot school staff, student feedback, and pilot feature success metrics to improve the program. Texas postsecondary students need strong support to make effective, better-informed financial choices about how to go to college and how to avoid student loan default. The pilot will continue to generate insights on how to achieve this goal most effectively, thereby helping to advance the student goal of *60x30TX*.

Texas Council of Chief Academic Officers (TCCAO). TCCAO plans to convene university faculty from similar disciplines to create a common set of marketable skills. These lists will be shared with all universities in the state to tailor as they see fit. TCCAO selected Communication and Journalism as its pilot project.

Texas Council of Chief Student Affairs Officers (TCCSAO). TCCSAO is working to provide its members a common framework and definitions of marketable skills by creating a crosswalk between the Texas Core Curriculum and in-demand skills, as established by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).

Conclusion

In a short time, *60x30TX* has gleaned much attention and inspired many new initiatives to meet the goals of the plan, but this is just the beginning of taking bold action. Many staff hours, meetings, discussions, collaborations, conferences, and policy changes will follow. What is clear from the numerous interactions around the state and elsewhere, is that *60x30TX* has taken hold and is inspiring innovation and collaboration among educators, employers, community-based organizations, and many other stakeholders who will help Texas to lead the way in the future. *60x30TX* continues the legacy of the THECB as stated by Governor John Connally for the agency's inaugural charge in 1966: "… yours is the opportunity to implement an educational policy that will give Texas young men and women a quality of education superior to any in the nation – and we must never be satisfied with less."

Appendix A: The Pre-Adoption Planning Process for *60x30TX*

The development of *60x30TX* was an important step for Texas, one that required consideration from many stakeholders. To develop the same level of buy-in and support that *Closing the Gaps by 2015* achieved, the THECB's board established the Texas Higher Education Strategic Planning Committee. Members brought decades experience and ideas from business organizations, higher education institutions, and K-12 education. The tasks assigned to the TxHESPC included: (1) making recommendations for the goals, targets, and statewide strategies for the next long-term strategic plan; and (2) soliciting input from stakeholders and the general public across the state.

Subsequent to its inaugural meeting on March 3, 2014, the TxHESPC met on a monthly basis, as required by workload and tasks. Special meetings were called, when deemed appropriate by the TxHESPC's presiding officer. Meetings were open to the public and broadcast via the web, unless prevented by technical difficulties. Institutions had input through subcommittees and during comment periods. During the deliberations process, the THECB solicited public input via stakeholder meetings and online tools, such as College Town Hall-Texas. At the THECB's quarterly meeting on July 23, 2015, TxHESPC Chair Woody Hunt and Vice Chair Larry Faulkner presented the proposed plan to the board of the THECB for consideration and adoption. Other members of the TxHESPC were: James R. Anderson, Martin Basaldua, Jerry Bawcom, Laurie Bricker, James Dickerson, Ramon H. Dovalina, Bernie Francis, Robert Furgason, E. D. "Doug" Hodo, Wright Lassiter Jr., Steve Lyle, Donald "Dee" Margo, Jerry Massey, Cathy Obriotti Green, Shirley (Neeley) Richardson, Lionel Sosa, Jerry Turner, and Steve Murdock (Special Advisor for Demographics).

60x30TX
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

This document is available on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board website: http://www.thecb.state.tx.us

For more information contact:

Julie Eklund
Strategic Planning and Funding
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
P.O. Box 12788
Austin, TX 78711
(512) 427-6533
Julie.Eklund@thecb.state.tx.us

Or

Kelly Carper Polden
External Relations
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
P.O. Box 12788
Austin, TX 78711
(512) 427-6119
Kelly.Polden@thecb.state.tx.us