

April 2017

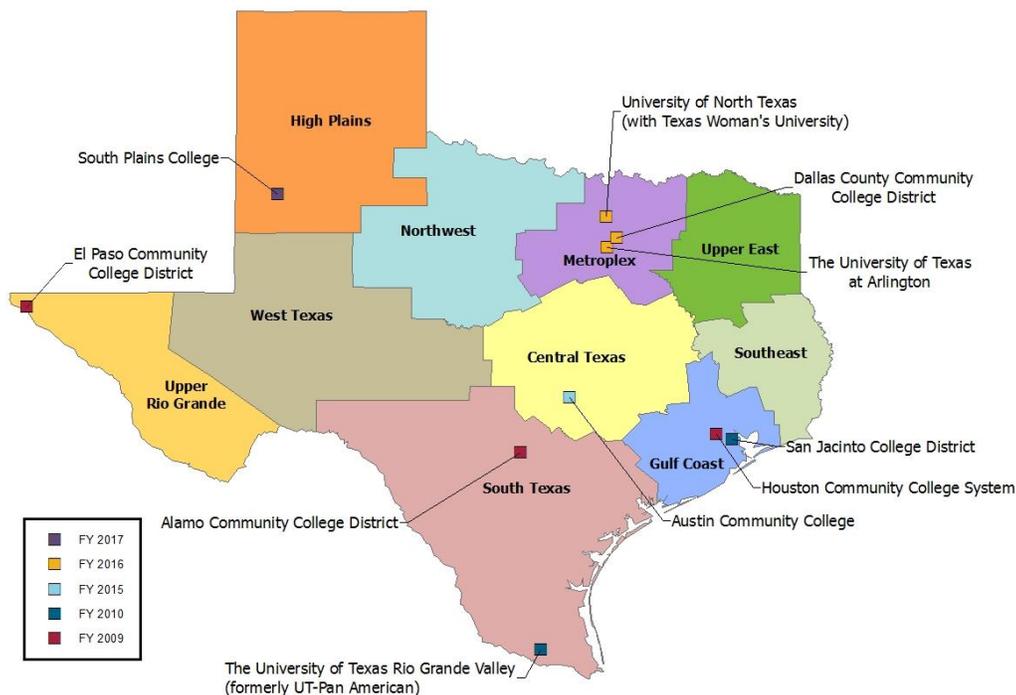
Changes in assessment, P-16 curricula, and the growing economic challenges facing today’s students require creative approaches to improving student achievement. The Texas Regional Alignment Networks (formerly Pathways) strive to boost student success through innovative and collaborative efforts between public school districts and higher education partners within different regions of Texas. In the Texas Regional Alignment Network partnerships, each partner appoints faculty to collaborate in subject-area teams. Team efforts focus on using aggregate student data to help identify curricular and other areas for improving alignment between colleges and high schools. Teams also develop educational and other support interventions to ease student transitions from high school to and through college.

Current Projects

Currently, there are 10 Texas Regional Alignment Networks. These networks are led by Alamo Community College District, Austin Community College, Dallas County Community College District, El Paso Community College District, Houston Community College System, San Jacinto College District, South Plains College, University of North Texas (with Texas Woman’s University), The University of Texas at Arlington, and The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. These networks have received startup funds and/or additional funding assistance when funds have been available.

Higher Education Institutions Leading Texas Regional Alignment Networks

By Fiscal Year Established



Note: Austin Community College, Houston Community College System, San Jacinto College District, and The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (formerly UT-Pan American) established Regional Networks prior to receiving grant awards from the THECB.

The current Texas Regional Alignment Networks have been effective in many ways, including the following:

- Facilitating the transition to the new Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's (THECB) Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA)
- Helping to improve curricular alignment and other student transition issues within their networks
- Designing and offering professional development for faculty
- Sharing successful approaches to improve higher education outcomes with high school and college faculty, counselors, advisors, administrators, students, and many others interested in student success

Generally, Texas Regional Alignment Networks include these elements:

- Several participating public school districts and one or more two-year colleges with, optionally, a four-year university
- Network led by a higher education institution with commitment from senior leadership at the institution to provide sustaining funds and other resources, as needed, to support a coordinator and recruit school districts and other institutions into the partnership
- Two or more teams meeting on a regular basis and organized by subject area or critical function (e.g., high school and college counselors/advisors), with one team member per district or institution
- A representative, or point of contact, at each partnering institution or school district within the Regional Alignment Network who is responsible for
 - managing communications about the Texas Regional Alignment Network within their school district or institution and with other Texas Regional Alignment Network partners,
 - coordinating the vertical alignment work at their school district or institution, and
 - facilitating the recruitment of team members.
- One or two designated area coordinator(s), employed by the lead institution, who devote a substantial portion of time to the project and whose responsibilities include
 - working closely with THECB staff and representatives of partnering institutions and school districts,
 - collaborating with area Texas Regional Alignment Network teams in meetings and other activities,
 - reporting area Texas Regional Alignment Network activities in monthly phone conferences with the THECB, and
 - participating in a summer meeting held in Austin.

Texas Regional Alignment Network Planning and Expansion

The 84th Texas Legislature provided funds to the THECB for expanding the Texas Regional Alignment Networks to new areas of the state, increasing the project from five networks to the current 10. A substantial portion of the funds were used for grants ranging from \$30,000 to \$45,000. These grants were awarded to four public institutions in fiscal year 2016 (Austin Community College, Dallas County Community College District, University of North Texas in collaboration with Texas Woman's University, and The University of Texas at Arlington) and to one public institution in fiscal year 2017 (South Plains College).