The Texas Student Success Council was created in 2012 to develop policies that create smooth, streamlined pathways from K-12 to a credit or credential of workforce value. The Council is comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders representing K-12, higher education, philanthropy, and the workforce, coming together with the joint mission of ensuring every Texas student has what they need to succeed in school, the workforce, and life.

To achieve this goal, members channel their energy and expertise into developing policy recommendations that promote K-12 and higher education linkages, improve portability of credits and credentials, and foster greater alignment between education and the workforce.

Below, we offer recommendations that we as a Council believe will contribute to the state’s economic recovery from COVID-19, to the success of our students, and to the development of systems intended to address ongoing inequities in education and the workforce.

**Priority Recommendations for the Texas Legislature in 2021**

1. **Invest in technology and infrastructure with funding from the Economic Stabilization Fund to make necessary improvements for the planning, personnel, and infrastructure required to implement an equitable statewide broadband strategy that gives every Texas student access to internet connectivity.**

2. **Support work-based learning, youth apprenticeships, competency-based education, credit for prior learning, and other related initiatives that save Texas students and families time and money, provide students with meaningful workforce experience, and create connected pathways to marketable skills, degrees, and industry-recognized credentials.**

3. **Require sharing of aligned K-12, higher education, and workforce data compiled collectively by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to provide better public information that can be used to improve education access and success for the most vulnerable Texas students and families.**

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[1] Only 23% of Texas 8th graders go on to complete a postsecondary credential.¹

[2] Yet over 95% of the 11.6 million jobs created nationally since the recession require higher education.²
INNOVATION

Establish an environment in Texas that is conducive to competency-based education (CBE), prior learning assessment (PLA), and other innovative course completion strategies.

Support institutions offering competency-based education by exempting accredited programs from formula funding penalties developed for seat-based programs. These penalties include the three-repeat, six-drop and excess credits rules.

Create an interim study exploring how to encourage institutions of higher education to accept credit for prior learning. Include guidance on best practices for assessing, incorporating, and reporting credits counted toward a degree plan.

Require the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to develop new rules specific to CBE, PLA, and other innovative course completion programs. Additionally, the agency should provide tools and resources intended to guide programs implementing the new rules.

Support continued rigor and access in dual credit, Early College High Schools, and P-TECH, with a focus on increasing the number of students earning college credit, degrees, workforce certificates, and credentials while in Texas high schools.

COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS AND SUCCESS

Improve coordination of grantmaking between the TEA, THECB, and TWC to ensure access to and funding for work-based learning initiatives, technical assistance, and regional intermediary development.

Create an online portal for all Tri-Agency grants in a centralized, accessible location where organizations can learn about and apply for grant opportunities.

Consider braiding and combining funding into a single grant for each initiative, with a specified owner for each initiative within the tri-agency.

Allocate funding, including state funding through the Related Instruction of Registered Apprenticeship programs, to support technical assistance and the creation of resources for intermediary organizations related to developing cross-sector partnerships.

Administer funding to intermediary organizations to act as fiscal agents who coordinate and administer high-quality work-based learning programs with an emphasis on first-generation, low-income, and/or students of color.

Improve system alignment between K-12 and higher education by aligning the College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR) Outcomes Bonus as outlined in HB 3 (2019) with high school graduation endorsements to encourage more efficient pathways to degree completion and credentials of workforce value.
Perform a Tri-Agency (TEA, THECB, TWC) audit of current data collection and reporting requirements to identify and address gaps in existing data collection methods.

Provide actionable, accessible, and transparent data that schools and institutions can utilize in efforts to meet 60x30TX goals. Further recommendations include:

- Create and publish a Tri-Agency data dashboard to track student outcomes and progress measures to be included in an annual Tri-Agency Progress Report and 60X30TX Report.
- Develop and adopt common rules, definitions, and aligned metrics for high-quality work-based learning and associated terms across the Tri-Agencies to help guide program implementation, messaging, and advising for students about relevant associated coursework.
- Develop a Tri-Agency list of K-12, post-secondary, and work-based indicators that correlate with postsecondary and workforce success.
- Improve data sharing within the Tri-Agency to support the efficient transfer of credits for students. Provide institutions of higher education with disaggregated transfer data (including student outcomes) to map pathways and help students understand their opportunities and choices for degrees and credentials.

Require that the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board provide K-12 and postsecondary institutions with resources that deliver guidance on how to interpret the data and shift practices to promote 60x30 success.

If we are to ensure continued economic opportunity for all Texans, we must better align our school districts with their community college and university partners.
For more information on the Texas Student success Council, please visit edtx.org/tssc.

To view our sources, please visit edtx.org/documentsources.

These Council recommendations were developed collaboratively and finalized by a majority vote from voting members. Ex officio Council members representing state and local agencies provided expertise and insight during the development of these recommendations, but did not vote or advocate in keeping with the legal allowances of their organizations.