



## Texas Workforce Investment Council

# Policy News Highlights

Issue 17, Quarter 1, April 2012

**T**exas Workforce Investment Council – *Policy News Highlights* is a quarterly review of selected reports relevant to the policy and research functions of the Texas Workforce Investment Council (Council). Federal and state agency websites, in addition to numerous public policy and educational databases are scanned monthly for relevant and emerging issues. Reports are catalogued and stored electronically in the Council’s Information Repository (IR).

The IR is divided into 11 topic areas that correspond to priority issues supporting the Council’s current strategic plan. They are: adult education; apprenticeship; career and college readiness; career and technical education; clusters and sector strategies; competitiveness; data; disabilities; dropout prevention; green initiatives; and training.

*Policy News Highlights* is organized as an annotated bibliography with short summaries of recent articles placed in the IR and grouped according to their topic area. Not every topic area is addressed each quarter.

### Adult Education

***Building Bridges to Success: An Update on the Action Plan to Transition Adult Basic Education Students Into Postsecondary Education and Training***, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, January 2012

This report outlines the legislatively mandated efforts of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), Texas Education Agency (TEA), and Texas Workforce Commission to align adult education to workforce training and/or postsecondary transition of adult learners. The report also provides an update on the status of the six recommendations offered in an earlier version of the report. <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/download.cfm?downloadfile=3AD26B68-FE95-4F70-3447D3FFDF2285DF&typename=dmFile&fieldname=filename>

***Scaling the Community College Summits: Challenges, Solutions, and Commitments***, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, January 2012

This report is a summary of the proceedings of the Regional Community College Summits convened recently at four community colleges across the country. Combining Adult Education classes with enrollment in college courses is highlighted as a promising practice for increasing adult learners’ successful transition to postsecondary programs.

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/cclo/regional-summit-proceedings.pdf>

***Unlocking the Gate: What We Know About Improving Developmental Education***, MDRC, June 2011

This is a literature review of research studies of developmental education programs, particularly at community colleges. The review categorizes best practices according to the educational method, such as tutoring or accelerated instruction, and offers recommendations for further research.

<http://www.mdrc.org/publications/601/overview.html> ★

## Career and College Readiness

### **Dual Credit Report**, THECB, March 2012

This report fulfills a legislative mandate to analyze the state of dual credit courses in Texas in order to determine the most efficient and effective methods of delivery. The report includes recommendations for future related initiatives involving THECB and TEA.

[http://gallery.mailchimp.com/86b3e8c369c84f23152a390dc/files/THECB\\_Report\\_Dual\\_Credit.pdf](http://gallery.mailchimp.com/86b3e8c369c84f23152a390dc/files/THECB_Report_Dual_Credit.pdf)

### **A New Measure of Educational Success in Texas: Tracking the Success of 8th Graders into and through College**, National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, February 2012

The Houston endowment commissioned this study which used data provided by THECB to determine how many students complete college. The report concludes that only about 20 percent of Texas eighth graders receive a certificate or degree within six years of their high school graduation. The report also provides a demographic breakdown of the cohort data, as well as comparison data for Florida and a national sample.

<http://www.houstonendowment.org/Assets/PublicWebsite/Documents/News/measureofsuccess.pdf>

### **Promoting College and Career Readiness: Bridge Programs for Low-Skill Adults**, U.S.

Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, January 2012

This brief describes recent approaches to bridge programs. It explores promising practices that integrate instruction and strengthen student support and transition services to improve postsecondary transition and completion rates. It focuses on programs bridging adult education and community college occupational programs.

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/cclo/brief-1-bridge-programs.pdf>

### **A Stronger Nation Through Higher Education**, Lumina Foundation, March 2012

This report provides data on college degree attainment rates at the national, state and county levels, as well as the most populous metropolitan areas. For Texas the rate is about 34% and the national average is 38%.

[http://www.luminafoundation.org/states\\_landing/a\\_stronger\\_nation\\_through\\_education/](http://www.luminafoundation.org/states_landing/a_stronger_nation_through_education/)

### **Why Access Matters: The Community College Student Body**, American Association of Community Colleges, February 2012

This policy brief reviews the types of students who are served by community colleges. This report was written in response to concerns that a focus on completion may lead to changes that would limit enrollments. The author provides some recommendations for ensuring open access to community colleges.

<http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Publications/Briefs/Pages/pb02062012.aspx> ★

## Career and Technical Education

### **Building a Technically Skilled Workforce: Partnerships between Community Colleges and Industries Are the Key**, Center for American Progress, January 2012

This policy paper reviews the important role community colleges play in training middle-skill workers and proposes a grant program to increase capacity and improve collaboration with businesses.

[http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2012/01/dww\\_sp\\_scitechworkforce.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2012/01/dww_sp_scitechworkforce.html)

***A Public Education Primer: Basic (and Sometimes Surprising) Facts about the U.S. Educational System***, Center on Education Policy, January 2012

This edition updates the first version of the primer published in 2006. This report provides recent data about students, teachers, school districts, schools, and other aspects of elementary and secondary education. Data include facts and figures on the distribution of students, student demographics, educational entities and their responsibilities, funding, student achievement, teachers, and other school services.

[http://www.cep-dc.org/cfcontent\\_file.cfm?Attachment=KoberUsher%5FReport%5FPrimer2012%5F1%2E19%2E12%2Epdf](http://www.cep-dc.org/cfcontent_file.cfm?Attachment=KoberUsher%5FReport%5FPrimer2012%5F1%2E19%2E12%2Epdf)

***Reflections on a Half-Century of School Reform: Why Have We Fallen Short and Where Do We Go From Here?***, Center on Education Policy, January 2012

This brief policy paper reviews the three major school reform efforts of the last 50 years and offers suggestions for improving the education system using different approaches.

[http://www.cep-dc.org/cfcontent\\_file.cfm?Attachment=Jennings%5FPaper%5FReflections%5F1%2E27%2E12%2Epdf](http://www.cep-dc.org/cfcontent_file.cfm?Attachment=Jennings%5FPaper%5FReflections%5F1%2E27%2E12%2Epdf) ★

## Clusters and Sector Strategies

***Tech-based Economic Development and the States: Legislative Action in 2011***, State Science and Technology Institute, January 2012

This report is a summary of legislative activity across the nation involving technology-related economic development initiatives. For Texas, the report highlights recent legislation creating the Texas Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Challenge Scholarship Program, as well as another bill aimed at improving higher education completion.

<http://www.ssti.org/Publications/tbedandstates2011.pdf> ★

## Competitiveness

***The Competitiveness and Innovative Capacity of the United States***, U.S. Department of Commerce, January 2012

This paper explores the role the federal government plays in fostering competitiveness and innovation, particularly in the areas of research, education, and infrastructure.

<http://www.commerce.gov/americacompetes>

***The Labor Productivity Puzzle***, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, February 2012

This paper examines the use of labor productivity as a measure of the economy's performance and reviews the development of new business cycle theories. The paper analyzes recent economic cycles and concludes that policy agendas arising from new untested theories should be disregarded.

[http://www.minneapolisfed.org/publications\\_papers/pub\\_display.cfm?id=4823](http://www.minneapolisfed.org/publications_papers/pub_display.cfm?id=4823)

***Top Ten Policies for the Innovative State***, Southern Growth Policies Board, October 2011

This short paper provides a brief list of ten recommendations for encouraging innovation by state governments. These recommendations are supported by examples from various states and generally fall into five categories: funding, research, regulations and taxes, workforce development, and legislative leadership.

<http://www.southerngrowth.com/communityresources/downloads/InnovativeState.pdf> ★

## Data

**2012-13 Economic Forecast: Emerging Opportunities, New Challenges**, Angelou Economics, February 2012.

This is the annual presentation by economist Angelos Angelou providing data on recent economic trends in Texas and forecasting the future performance of the Austin economy in a variety of categories, such as job growth. The presentation also includes a report from Wells Fargo economists who predict a slow economic expansion across the United States, with Texas continuing to outperform the national economy.

<http://angeloueconomics.com/2012economicforecastpresentation.pdf>

**Beginning Subbaccalaureate Students' Labor Market Experiences: Six Years Later in 2009**, National Center for Education Statistics (U.S. Department of Education), January 2012

This report is a set of data tables presenting statistics related to completion and employment rates of a national cohort of first-time postsecondary students. The tables provide employment data for graduates and non-graduates, broken down by demographic characteristics.

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/2012273.pdf>

**Overview of Features: College and Career Tables Library**, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), March 2012

A brief overview guide to the College and Career Tables Library database which contains data tables from NCES publications related to postsecondary education. The database has been developed to improve the ability to search for data contained in NCES publications.

[http://nces.ed.gov/datalab/tableslibrary/pdfs/TablesLibrary\\_Overview.pdf](http://nces.ed.gov/datalab/tableslibrary/pdfs/TablesLibrary_Overview.pdf)

**The Road Ahead: A Look at Trends in the Educational Attainment of Community College Students**, American Association of Community Colleges, October 2011

This policy brief highlights the increase in the number of degrees awarded by community colleges over the past two decades. The primary conclusion of the report is that community college graduation rates for all demographic groups are increasing and thus the investments made in community college education are benefiting society.

<http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Publications/Briefs/Pages/pb09292011.aspx>

**STEM: Good Jobs Now and for the Future**, U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, July 2011

This is an issue brief that provides data reflecting the high employment rate and wages of technology-related workers and degree holders. Over the past 10 years, growth in STEM jobs was three times higher than growth in non-STEM jobs, and thus STEM workers will play a key role in the continued growth of the U.S. economy.

<http://www.esa.doc.gov/Reports/stem-good-jobs-now-and-future>

**Texas: Demographic Characteristics and Trends**, Office of the State Demographer, October 2011

This is a presentation to the Midsize Agency Coordinating Council, highlighting demographic data for each Texas county. Population growth is compared with other states as well as the national average and also broken down by age and race across the state.

[http://txsdc.utsa.edu/Resources/Presentations/OSD/2011/2011\\_10\\_13\\_Midsize\\_Agency\\_Coordinating\\_Council.pptx](http://txsdc.utsa.edu/Resources/Presentations/OSD/2011/2011_10_13_Midsize_Agency_Coordinating_Council.pptx)

**Texas and Lubbock: Demographic Characteristics and Trends**, Office of the State Demographer, December 2011

This is a presentation to the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce, highlighting recent data on demographic trends, including projections of the labor force by educational attainment. Population growth is compared with other states as well as the national average and also broken down by age and race across the state and highlighted for the Lubbock area.

[http://txsdc.utsa.edu/Resources/Presentations/OSD/2011/2011\\_12\\_13\\_Lubbock\\_Chamber\\_of\\_Commerce.pptx](http://txsdc.utsa.edu/Resources/Presentations/OSD/2011/2011_12_13_Lubbock_Chamber_of_Commerce.pptx)

**Women in STEM: A Gender Gap to Innovation**, U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, August 2011

This report examines the demographic data of employees in technology-related careers. The report's main finding is that women are underrepresented in STEM jobs and among STEM degree holders despite making up nearly half of the U.S. workforce and half of the college-educated workforce.

<http://www.esa.doc.gov/Reports/women-stem-gender-gap-innovation>

**Worse Than the Great Depression: What the Experts Are Missing About American Manufacturing Decline**, The Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, March 2012

The report provides data related to job loss in the manufacturing sector and concludes the decline is not the result of productivity gains but of loss of output. The report urges a re-evaluation of the policies that have led to this situation.

<http://www.itif.org/publications/worse-great-depression-what-experts-are-missing-about-american-manufacturing-decline> ★

## Disabilities

**A Roadmap to a 21st Century Disability Policy**, Center for Studying Disability Policy, January 2012

This issue brief looks at some of the problems associated with federal disability services policy and offers proposals to address the work disincentives and fragmentation in delivery infrastructure. The paper encourages gradual changes starting with a demonstration period of pilot projects to gather the information for further structural and financial reform.

[http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/PDFs/disability/roadmap\\_ib.pdf](http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/PDFs/disability/roadmap_ib.pdf)

**Skills to Pay the Bills**, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), February 2012

This is a curriculum developed by ODEP to teach workforce readiness skills (sometimes referred to as "soft skills") to youth, including youth with disabilities. Designed as an introduction to workplace interpersonal and professional skills, the curriculum is targeted for youth ages 14 to 21 in both in-school and out-of-school environments and includes sessions on communication, attitude, teamwork, networking, problem solving and professionalism.

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/> ★

## Training

**Employment Research in Brief: An Annotated Bibliography of ETA-Sponsored Studies**, Mathematica Policy Research, November 2011

This report is an annotated bibliography of publications issued by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration between 1995 and 2011. Each entry contains a hyperlink to the publication as well as a summary of the topic, data sources and analytic methods, and findings.

[http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/FullText\\_Documents/ETAOP\\_2012\\_01.pdf](http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/FullText_Documents/ETAOP_2012_01.pdf)

***What It's Worth: Field of Training and Economic Status in 2009***, U.S. Department of Commerce Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau, February 2012

This report explores the relationship between educational attainment, field of training, and eventual occupation and earnings. The report also provides demographic data related to educational attainment.

<http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/p70-129.pdf>

***Workforce investment Act: Innovative Collaborations between Workforce Boards and Employers Helped Meet Local Needs***, U.S. Government Accountability Office, January 2012

The report examines various local initiatives around the country viewed as promising practices in which local workforce boards collaborated effectively with employers and other partners to achieve positive results. The report recommends that the U.S. Department of Labor disseminate information about workforce boards that have effectively leveraged WIA funds with other funding sources.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-12-97> ★

The Texas Workforce Investment Council promotes the development of a well-educated, highly skilled workforce for Texas and advocates a workforce system that provides quality workforce education and training opportunities.

For more information, visit:

<http://governor.state.tx.us/twic/>