



# Texas Workforce Investment Council

## *Policy News Highlights*

Issue 5, Quarter 1, March 2009

**Texas 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 (TWIC). 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 TWIC’s Information Repository (IR). Topic areas include: economic development; higher education; K-12 education; literacy and adult basic education (ABE); and skills, training and employment.

*Policy News Highlights* is organized into three sections, beginning with selected articles that focus on workforce trends and issues that have received heightened attention over the previous months. The second section contains abbreviated summaries of recent articles of interest to the Council, and the final section consists of a comprehensive list of all articles and their sources, added to the IR this last quarter.

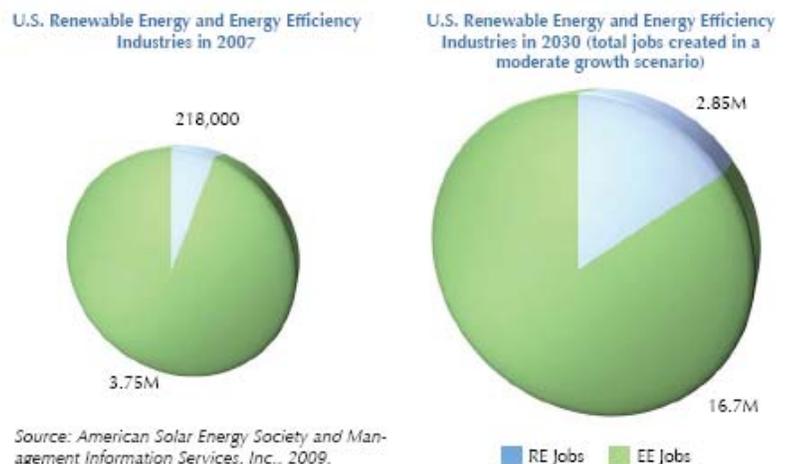
### **This Quarter’s Selected Articles - Green Jobs**

During the first quarter of 2009, “green jobs” and the “green jobs economy” have been at the fore of many political, economic, academic, and workforce discussions. The terms are everywhere: green jobs are referenced daily in the television and newspaper media, as well as on the Internet. The United States (U.S.) Congress passed the Green Jobs Act in 2007, and this year, the new administration’s American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) infuses the largest package of monetary stimulus into the energy efficiency and renewable energy sectors ever. This issue of *Policy News Highlights* will focus on two green jobs articles, with emphasis on a short but comprehensive brief containing relevant definitions of terms and policy concepts. The brief, entitled **Preparing the Workforce for a “Green Jobs” Economy**, is published by the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development and was released in February, 2009. The second article gives examples of how one state in particular has approached the rise of green jobs. **2008 Washington State Green Economy Jobs** and was published by the Washington State Employment Security Department this past January.

**Preparing the Workforce for a “Green Jobs” Economy**, explains that while the term green jobs is open to many interpretations, it usually refers to jobs that protect wildlife or ecosystems, reduce pollution or waste, or most significantly, that reduce energy usage and lower carbon emissions. According to the authors of this paper, most American green jobs are in the energy efficiency and renewable energy sectors. Energy efficiency mainly consists of retrofitting buildings to be more energy efficient, but it also includes the development and manufacture of energy-saving products. The renewable and sustainable energies sector is comprised of the installation and maintenance of energy generation systems. Renewable resources are those that naturally replenish themselves such as wind, solar, geothermal, and hydropower. Sustainable energy sources are nuclear power, coal with carbon sequestration (where harmful carbon emissions are sequestered and stored) and highly efficient natural gas cogeneration units that yield low or no carbon emissions.

Most green jobs will not be new jobs, but rather will be existing traditional jobs that require a “layer” of green expertise. For example, a sheet metal worker will need to hone his welding skills to be able to fabricate a wind turbine. In energy efficiency, weatherization and retrofitting will constitute the greatest demand. For residential retrofitting most jobs

Figure 1. Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Industries: Green Jobs Now — and Projected into the Future



will need workers with middle-skill competencies, such as electricians, heating and air conditioning specialists, carpenters, construction equipment operators, roofers, insulation workers, construction managers and building inspectors and auditors. Commercial and industrial retrofitting is expected to require a range of higher education and training for jobs such as weatherization experts, electrical and mechanical engineers, measurement and verification technicians and energy management analysts.

Renewable energy occupations will require varied education and training depending upon the type of renewable energy and these jobs will range from entry-level construction work to advanced engineering. For example, wind energy jobs will require environmental engineers, sheet metal, steel and ironworkers, along with millwrights and machinists, industrial truck drivers, industrial production managers, construction equipment operators and maintenance technicians. The most important aspect for workforce policymakers to keep in mind is that even though green jobs will be distributed across all levels of the economy, most will be middle-skill jobs requiring an apprenticeship, professional certificate or one to two years of postsecondary education. In 2007, statistics showed that there were about 3,745,000 direct jobs in energy efficiency with revenues over a trillion dollars while there were just 218,000 direct industry jobs in renewable energy, generating revenues of about \$42.6 billion. The large difference in the number of jobs in energy efficiency versus renewable energy can be accounted for by the simple but significant fact that energy efficiency is the “cheapest alternative fuel.” It is cheaper to retrofit and conserve than it is to generate and process other fuels, so the general economic and behavioral trend across the globe is weighted more heavily toward this option.

Green job growth is driven by a combination of advancing technology, global economic conditions, and domestic energy policy. To illustrate, improved technology has made the harnessing of wind energy more readily feasible than ever before. This “alternative” fuel has become more attractive, especially given the effect that the volatile price of foreign oil had on the U.S. economy last year. In addition, this situation has directed political policy toward reducing American dependence on foreign fuel sources, which in turn has driven growth even more in the wind power industry.

The authors of this paper believe that workforce policy and education should focus on developing what they call a “coordinated flexible workforce development infrastructure.” Doing this would involve formalizing communication networks and other linkages, such as alignment agreements between key stakeholders. In turn, this would position states and localities to be competitive for federal and foundation monies. State agencies and other workforce entities should consider using federal and state public policy as a roadmap, build partnerships with employers and labor unions, and develop green jobs collaborative or networks. To better take advantage of green job opportunities, education and training efforts should focus upon establishing industry-wide credentials, designing career pathways for workers, and enhancing—while not duplicating—joint employer and labor training. Tracking the real-time hiring needs of employers and building a green jobs talent network that can facilitate coordination between economic development and education stakeholders will go a long way toward satisfying employer workforce needs.

The second paper, **2008 Washington State Green Economy Jobs**, exemplifies many of the principles laid out in the broader policy brief discussed above. In 2008, the Washington State Legislature passed a bill aimed at reducing the state’s greenhouse gas emissions by establishing a plan and conducting a green jobs study. The study is largely based on a survey of private sector employers and aimed at obtaining a more accurate picture of the exact number and nature of green jobs in the Washington economy. Data from the study serves to mark a baseline measure from which policymakers can work to track industry and job growth in the state’s green economy.

Like the first paper, this paper states there is no uniform standard or definition for the term “green job.” Generally, employers’ answers indicate that Washington’s green jobs economy is based upon the creation and use of products and services promoting environmental protection and energy security. And, as the first brief broadly states, this paper shows that Washington industries and businesses fall into the two categories of energy efficiency and renewable energy, and their orientation is toward the prevention and reduction of pollution or mitigating the effects of pollution.

In Washington State, there are four core areas among private-sector employers that account for about 48,000 jobs:

- Energy efficiency holds more than half of the state’s green jobs, with most of them being in construction-related industries and occupations, followed by professional and technical occupations such as engineering and architecture.

- Prevention and reduction of pollution is the state’s second largest core green jobs area, with roughly one-third of Washington’s green jobs mostly in agriculture, followed by construction, waste management, and remediation services.

- Pollution clean-up is the third largest core green area, having about 9.5 percent of the state’s green jobs. Approximately two-thirds of employment is comprised of professional and technical services, followed by waste management and remediation services.

- Renewable energy accounts for approximately four percent of Washington’s green jobs and they are in construction, followed by professional and technical services. The other half of green jobs employment in renewable energy is in the agricultural sector, followed by electrical equipment manufacturing.

**2008 Washington State Green Economy Jobs** says that 86 percent of green employment spans six industry classes, with most appearing in the construction and agricultural sectors. Employers identified numerous occupational titles, but none were brand new. The survey and secondary studies both show that in the top 25 green occupations employment growth rates are projected to be uneven. For example, the growth rate in the largest current green job employer sector—construction in energy efficiency—will be modest, while growth in the architecture and engineering related occupations is expected to exceed statewide growth rates for other jobs. Even though growth rates in construction management, skilled trades and agriculture may slow, the number of job openings will be substantial because of the large existing employment base. Of particular interest for workforce professionals was that nearly 50 percent of employers participating in the survey reported that they have industry certifications in at least one of the green core areas. Construction reported having 54 percent of industry certifications, with two-thirds of these firms identifying energy efficiency as the primary certification.

With one article offering a broad discussion on the topic of green jobs, and the other describing how one state in particular is working to define them, these two papers are a good introduction into the current dialogue on green jobs.

Below are electronic links to the full reports:

**Preparing the Workforce for a “Green Jobs” Economy**, the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, February, 2009.

[http://www.heldrich.rutgers.edu/uploadedFiles/Publications/Heldrich%20Center\\_Green%20Jobs%20Brief.pdf](http://www.heldrich.rutgers.edu/uploadedFiles/Publications/Heldrich%20Center_Green%20Jobs%20Brief.pdf)

**2008 Washington State Green Economy Jobs**, Washington State Employment Security Department, January 2009

[http://www.workforceexplorer.com/admin/uploadedPublications/9463\\_Green\\_Jobs\\_Report\\_2008\\_WEXVersion.pdf](http://www.workforceexplorer.com/admin/uploadedPublications/9463_Green_Jobs_Report_2008_WEXVersion.pdf)



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## Of Interest - Abbreviated Summaries

### Economic Development

#### *Advancing Innovation in North Carolina – An Innovation Framework for Competing and Prospering in the Interconnected Global Community*, North Carolina Board of Science & Technology, December 2008

While North Carolina has successfully transitioned from an agricultural and manufacturing economy to a knowledge-based innovation economy, the writers of this paper are concerned about maintaining this trend. North Carolina is a leader in basic- and early-stage applied research that has yielded breakthrough innovations, with most of which have occurred in its research universities and non-profit research institutions. The state's innovation assets are concentrated geographically in large metropolitan areas. The authors recommend that North Carolina create a framework of strategic and collaborative relationships with private sector entities to identify impediments to growth and create solutions for overcoming them. Other recommendations are that the state needs to increase investment in industrial research and development, reduce dependency on its few geographic clusters for innovation, work harder to transform innovative ideas into products and services, reduce the large regional variances in innovation, and continue to educate and train its human capital.

[http://www.ncscitech.com/PDF/reports/Advancing\\_Innovation\\_in\\_NC\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](http://www.ncscitech.com/PDF/reports/Advancing_Innovation_in_NC_Full_Report.pdf)

#### *The Atlantic Century – Benchmarking EU and U.S. Innovation and Competitiveness*, Information Technology & Innovation Foundation (ITIF), February 2009

Formerly countries competed with one another by lowering costs, but today's global economy reflects competition on the basis of innovation and knowledge. This report assesses the innovation-based global competitiveness of 40 countries and looks at a broad range of factors to develop a "holistic" understanding of how countries are performing. Sixteen indicators are used spanning six categories: human capital; innovation capacity; entrepreneurship; IT infrastructure; economic policy; and economic performance. While several recent studies have claimed that the U.S. is the global leader for innovation and economic competitiveness, ITIF finds that it ranks sixth. Singapore is the leader, while the European Union (EU) ranks 15th. The authors of this paper are most impressed by the fact that all other 39 countries have "made faster progress toward the new innovation-based economy in recent years than the United States," and suggest that the U.S. and the EU each consider itself to be a big state able to proactively implement continental or national economic development strategies.

<http://www.itif.org/files/2009-atlantic-century.pdf>

#### *Comparative Indicators of Education in the United States and Other G-8 Countries: 2009*, National Center for Educational Statistics, March 2009

This substantial report looks at the performance of the U.S. education system as compared with other education systems in the Group of Eight (G-8) countries, including: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom. The report is divided into five major sections—population and school enrollment; academic performance; context for learning; expenditure for education; and education returns in terms of educational attainment and income. A sampling of highlights are that in 2008, thirty-four percent of the American school age population between the ages of 5 and 29 were enrolled in education, while in the other G-8 countries this ranged from as low as 25 to 33 percent. Specifically, the number of 3- and 4-year-old children enrolled in education was higher in G-8 countries than in the U.S. All or almost all 3- and 4-year-old children were enrolled in France and Italy, roughly 80 percent were enrolled in the United Kingdom and Japan, but only 48 percent were enrolled in the United States. Compulsory education in the U.S. ends at 17, in Germany at 18, at 16 in Canada, France and the United Kingdom, and at 15 in Italy, Japan and the Russian Federation.

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009039.pdf>

#### *South Carolina Centers of Economic Excellence (CoEE) Comprehensive Programs Evaluation 2003-2008*, the Washington Advisory Group, December 2008

South Carolina passed legislation in 2003 establishing a program of Centers of Economic Excellence to strengthen the state's research universities and stimulate the growth of high paying jobs. In a comparison between Columbia, South

Carolina, with Austin, Texas and Raleigh, North Carolina, Columbia had the highest per capita income in 1970, but the lowest by 2000. Per capita income had risen 53 percent in Raleigh and 41 percent in Austin, but only 3.3 percent in Columbia. The difference was explained by the fact that universities in South Carolina were not supported and encouraged to become major research players. The 2003 legislation was aimed at remedying this problem, and this report shows that it has had a positive impact on the economic growth of the area: more than 2000 new jobs have been created; state investment has been leveraged at a 3:1 ratio by non-state matching funds and research awards; and significant economic contributions in advanced manufacturing, energy and environment, and health have occurred.

[http://www.sccoee.org/documents/WAGReportFINALDRAFT\\_000.pdf](http://www.sccoee.org/documents/WAGReportFINALDRAFT_000.pdf)

***Targeting Industries, Training Workers and Improving Opportunities, Public/Private Ventures, November 2008***

This final report of the Sectoral Employment Initiative begun in 1998 shows encouraging results in the sectoral approach to workforce development for low-income and less educated workers. The sectoral approach targets a specific industry and works with employers, trade associations, educational institutions and workforce organizations to design solutions for both workers and businesses. This report shows a collective result of a notable decrease in poverty. Specifically, the percentage of participants living below the poverty line was nearly halved, and individuals participating in skills-training found work in the targeted sectors, earned better wages and were able to access jobs with health-care benefits and paid sick leave.

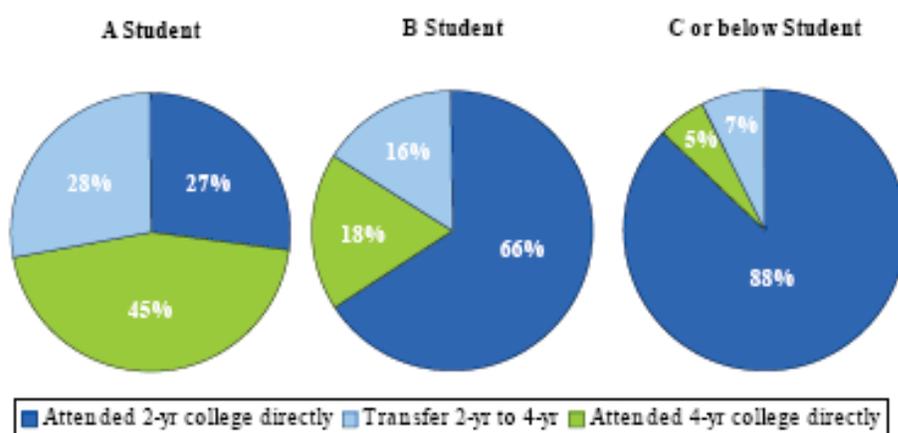
[http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/263\\_publication.pdf](http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/263_publication.pdf)

## Higher Education

***Pathways to Boosting the Earnings of Low-Income Students by Increasing Their Educational Attainment, Hudson Institute, January 2009***

According to the Hudson Institute, low-income families are underrepresented at every significant juncture in the education pipeline. In turn, this hampers their ability to receive postsecondary education and have the opportunity to break free of the cycle of poverty frequently passed from one generation to the next. This paper looks at educational pathways leading to highly paid careers that may increase social mobility. Data for the study is drawn from a 1996 cohort of 9th-grade Florida public school students following their high school, postsecondary and workforce experiences. Some of the findings documented are that higher levels in postsecondary education result in higher earnings but that credentials from two-year colleges also result in high-paying careers, especially for low-performing students. Low-performing students are not likely to stay in college beyond a year, and those that do have the greatest likelihood of obtaining a credential if they concentrate in health-related or professional fields at two-year colleges.

**Figure 7: Distribution of type of college attended, by high school GPA**



<http://www.hudson.org/files/publications/Gates%2001-07.pdf>

***A Stronger Nation Through Higher Education—How and Why Americans Must meet a “Big Goal” for College Attainment, Lumina Foundation for Education, February 2009***

This study draws on findings that the higher education attainment rate for adults in the U.S. has remained static for nearly four decades at 39 percent while in some other countries over 50 percent of young adults have college degrees. To remain competitive economically and to ensure its citizens maintain access to good health care, save for retirement and send their own children to college, the Lumina Foundation proposes a “big goal” of increasing “the percentage of Americans with high-quality degrees and credentials from 39 percent to 60 percent by the year 2025.” The study states that in order to achieve this goal, the U.S. must strengthen community colleges’ student success rates, and align their programs with the needs of the workforce. The Lumina Foundation points out that this goal is not as insurmountable as it would appear since significant numbers of Americans do have some college credit to build upon. The paper also contains information for each state about its working population, degree attainment rates, and information about degree holders by county.

[http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/A\\_stronger\\_nation\\_through\\_higher\\_education.pdf](http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/A_stronger_nation_through_higher_education.pdf)

***A Typology of Community College-Based Partnership Activities, Community College Research Center for the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, January 2009***

This paper focuses on ways community colleges can make access to postsecondary credentials more efficient and affordable. It discusses various types of collaborations that community colleges can develop in order to effectuate fiscal and regulatory change, based on community colleges’ historic partnering with other organizations to deliver services. Three trends are impacting community colleges now: decreased operating budgets, increased enrollment, and changing industry demands. The various partnerships described in this article are goal and outcome driven and divided into four partnership activity types:

- Circular alignment and articulation, which seeks to align curricula, competencies and course credits;
- Academic and social support, which provides guidance to students for educational and career success
- Professional development, which enhances staff and teacher preparation
- Resource-sharing, which generates new income streams and reduces costs

The paper contains many examples and one cited for Texas in the area of articulation agreements touts the state’s Advanced Technical Credit program where high school students can earn college credit for technical courses. The program is overseen by a statewide task force and was developed in response to inconsistent and little-known articulation agreements between high schools and community colleges.

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/cclo/cc-partnerships.pdf>

## **K-12 Education**

***Accelerating the Agenda: Actions to Improve America’s High Schools, National Governors Association for Best Practices, 2008***

The original Action Agenda for Improving America’s High Schools was published in 2005. This study explores how governors, state legislatures, boards of education and business leaders are responding to the challenge facing American high schools. In 2007 over 800,000 high school students enrolled in a college course and nearly 700,000 took Advanced Placement courses. This paper checks states’ progress since the first Action Agenda was released and reemphasizes what states must do in the way of high school redesign, expanding career and technical education, sponsoring dual enrollment and otherwise elevating standards for college- and career-ready graduates.

<http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0901IMPROVEHIGHSCHOOLS.PDF>

States can redesign high schools if they:

- Expand the supply of high-quality high schools;
- Identify struggling students and provide targeted supports; and
- Reengage out-of-school youth.

***Best Practices in Dropout Prevention, ICF International and National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, December 2008***

A requirement of H.B. 2237 of the 80th Texas Legislature, the study *Best Practices in Dropout Prevention* focuses on programs in Texas schools that have positive and consistent effects on preventing dropout. The study gives an overview of the topic nationally as well as statewide, and identified the following strategies as the most effective dropout programs: School-community collaboration; safe learning environments; family engagement; mentoring/tutoring; alternative schooling; active learning; and career and technology education. In Texas, three programs in particular, hold the most potential for dropout prevention: Career Academies; Communities In Schools; and Project GRAD. Career Academies are alternative schools that operate within a larger school and combine regular academic coursework with career-oriented curricula. They give students internship opportunities with local businesses and allow them to focus on a single career track. Communities In Schools uses a case management model to help students achieve better attendance rates, decrease behavior problems, and improve academic achievement in order to graduate. Project GRAD provides scholarships and works with high schools and feeder schools on classroom management, student performance, and parental involvement with an eye toward graduation and college acceptance rates.

[http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/comm/leg\\_reports/bdpdp\\_finalreport\\_20081219\\_toTEA.pdf](http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/comm/leg_reports/bdpdp_finalreport_20081219_toTEA.pdf)

***Chasing the High School Graduation Rate: Getting the Data We Need and Using it Right, Educational Testing Service, (ETS), January 2009***

This policy brief gives an overview of the need for more and better information on high school graduation rates in the U.S., so that policy makers and educators can continue to improve the American public educational system. Given that the current snapshot of high school graduation rates is unclear due to variances in the way different states collect data, this paper suggests investing in improvements in national Census Bureau surveys aimed at discerning what percentage of the U.S. population, for different populations and subgroups, have high school diplomas. The methods used by the National Educational Center for Education Statistics to collect data should also be built upon. More research is needed with regard to the use of sanctions-based accountability systems. Strengths and weaknesses of the longitudinal tracking approach to collecting high school graduation rate data is also discussed.

<http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/PICCHASING.pdf>

***Closing the Gap: 2009, Achieve, Inc., February 2009***

This is an annual 50-state progress report on how high school alignment policies are working with the demands of colleges and careers. Achieve, Inc. is a bi-partisan non-profit organization founded by U.S. governors and corporate leaders whose main function is to assist states raise academic and graduation requirements. This year's report shows that nearly half of all states have English and math high school standards aligned with college and career-ready expectations. Up from last year, now two more states have graduation requirements that students must complete a career and college-ready curriculum for their high school diploma, bringing the number of such states up to 20. Progress continues to be made in the areas of assessments, P-20 data systems and accountability in the goal to achieve a fully-implemented college- and career-ready agenda throughout the U.S.

<http://www.achieve.org/files/50-state-2009.pdf>

***Enrollment in Texas Public Schools 2007-2008, Texas Education Agency – Division of Accountability Research, January, 2009***

Over the ten year period between 1997 and 2007, Texas public school enrollment increased by 771,005 students, or approximately 12.8 percent, increasing by a rate of 1.9 percent a year. The number of students enrolled in career and technical programs increased 92 percent during this decade. All ethnic groups experienced a growth in enrollment over this period of time except for white, which declined by 7.3 percent. Hispanic enrollment in Texas had the greatest increase, about 49 percent. Civic leaders, financial planners, administrators and policymakers use public school enrollment data because trends in enrollment tend to reflect changes in society at large. The growth in the southwestern states, and for Texas in particular, can be seen in this statistic: between 1995 and 2005, enrollment in the U.S. increased 9.5%, while in Texas, it increased 20.7 percent.

[http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/research/pdfs/enrollment\\_2007-08.pdf](http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/research/pdfs/enrollment_2007-08.pdf)

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***Lessons from the Lone Star State—Designing a Sustainable Financial Model to Expand Early College High School in Texas, Jobs for the Future and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, February 2009***

Texas leads the country in creating early college high schools. There are now 29 early colleges in place and several more are scheduled to go online in the fall of 2009. This model brings secondary and postsecondary education together with intensive support directed at increasing the college-readiness and success of underachieving students. Multiple funding streams, public-private partnerships and regional economies of scale are some of the tools that Texas policymakers have used to create opportunities for young people to earn one to two years of college transferrable college credit—tuition free—along with their high school diploma.

<http://www.jff.org/Documents/ECHStexasmodel.pdf>

***The Next Frontier – World-Class Math and Science Education for Texas, the Academy of Medicine, Engineering and Science of Texas (TAMEST), December 2008***

Released in mid-December of 2008, this report identifies challenges and opportunities in Texas' science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) K-12 education and makes specific recommendations. For example, in Texas less than 58% of high school students are taught by teachers who majored in their subject field as compared to the national average of 81%. *The Next Frontier* suggests a “three R’s” approach to recruiting, rewarding and retaining STEM teachers with better pay and a better support system that would provide coaching, mentoring and weekend workshops. Other recommendations include incorporating a variety of ways to keep students engaged in STEM learning, such as Advanced Placement classes and programs that offer hands-on experiments, activities and fieldtrips or internships. Matching STEM concepts to higher education and industry needs, and creating a statewide STEM advisory committee to be charged with improving the state’s system.

[http://www.tamest.org/edu\\_full\\_report.pdf](http://www.tamest.org/edu_full_report.pdf)

***Texas, Portrait of a Population—State Highlights 2009, Editorial Projects in Education, January 2009***

This report is part of a larger study conducted entitled *Quality Counts 2009* by the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, a nonprofit organization based in Maryland whose mission is to raise awareness of educational issues for both professionals and the public at large. With a focus on English-language learners this year, *Texas, Portrait of a Population* assesses the state’s performance in six categories: “Chance for Success;” transitions and alignment; school finance; K-12 achievement; standards, assessments and accountability; and the teaching profession. Texas received an overall grade of C+, and grades of B and B+ for the categories of transitions and alignment, and standards and accountability, respectively. It was allotted C grades for chance for success, K-12 achievement, and teaching profession. Its lowest mark, D+, was in school finance where Texas’ spending was scored at 52.9, while the U.S. average was 67.

[http://alt.coxnewsweb.com/shared-blogs/austin/education/upload/2009/01/austin\\_english\\_languagelearnin/Texas%20SHR%2C%20QC%202009.pdf](http://alt.coxnewsweb.com/shared-blogs/austin/education/upload/2009/01/austin_english_languagelearnin/Texas%20SHR%2C%20QC%202009.pdf)

## **Literacy and Adult Basic Education**

***Better Together: Realigning Pre-College Skills Development Programs to Achieve Greater Academic Success for Adult Learners, Jobs for the Future, November 2008***

States are challenged with high numbers of low-skilled workers whose abilities do not match the needs of the high-skilled businesses located within their boundaries that are trying to recruit and retain workers. This paper discusses how alignment of adult education and developmental education can address this challenge. By aligning these programs but not merging them, each can focus in its strong areas and better serve adult learners: adult education programs can concentrate on adult learners already in community college who have low skills or skill deficiencies, while developmental education can focus on adults who have higher skill levels, but with skill deficiencies in one area. Kentucky, North Carolina and Oregon all have programs where this type of alignment has been successfully achieved.

<http://www.jff.org/Documents/BTBetterTogether.pdf>

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***Bridges to Opportunity for Underprepared Adults – a State Policy Guide for Community College Leaders*, Ford Foundation Community College Central, 2008**

This study arises from a multi-year project called the Community College Bridges to Opportunity Initiative, funded by the Ford Foundation. The guide is aimed at state policymakers and business and labor leaders who are focusing on improving economic competitiveness in their states, and will be especially useful to states with shortages of skilled workers in line to replace the retiring Baby Boomer population. For states with large low-skilled immigrant populations and states facing a lack of middle-skill workers, the paper's emphasis on addressing barriers faced by underprepared adults is critical. *Bridges* draws from experiences of six states and presents "toolkits" that local leaders may use to develop and implement policies in order to increase positive outcomes for underprepared adults.

[http://www.fordfound.org/pdfs/impact/Bridges\\_to\\_Opportunity\\_for\\_Underprepared\\_Adults.pdf](http://www.fordfound.org/pdfs/impact/Bridges_to_Opportunity_for_Underprepared_Adults.pdf)

***National Assessment of Adult Literacy Indirect County and State Estimates of the Percentage of Adults at the Lowest Literacy Level for 1992 and 2003 Research and Development Report*, National Center on Education Statistics, January 2009**

The two surveys that form the basis of this study (2003 National Assessment of adult Literacy and 1992 national Adult Literacy Survey) were designed to provide direct estimates of adults' ability to perform the types of literary tasks they would typically encounter throughout an ordinary day. This report goes into the statistical methodology employed to yield indirect estimates of the percentage of adults rated at the lowest literacy level. "The report examines the percentage of adults (age 16 and older) lacking Basic prose literacy skills (BPLS). This ranges from being unable to read and understand any written information in English to being able to locate easily identifiable information in short, commonplace prose text, but nothing more advanced. The indirect estimate of the percent of Texans lacking BPLS was 19% in 2003, compared to 18% in 1992. Comparing Texas to other large states, our 2003 rate was slightly lower than the rate for California (23%), Florida (20%), and New York (22%)."

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009482.pdf>

## **Skills, Training, and Employment**

***A Foot in the Door: Using Alternative Staffing Organizations to Open Up Opportunities for Disadvantaged Workers*, Public/Private Ventures, January 2009**

Alternative Staffing Organizations, or ASOs, are an innovation that some community-based and nonprofit organizations are using to help disadvantaged workers gain a toe-hold in the labor market. ASOs are similar to traditional job-placement staffing agencies in that they charge employers fees and act as the employer of record. However, they differ in that they target the disadvantaged worker and frequently offer other supports, such as job readiness services, transportation and emergency cash assistance. Part of the attention placed on ASOs is due to a gradual but consistent change in economic and social trends toward more temporary and contractual workers as an entry point into the labor market. ASOs that were analyzed for this publication demonstrated flexibility in being able to respond to supply and demand changes in the work force with regard to disadvantaged workers.

[http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/266\\_publication.pdf](http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/266_publication.pdf)

***The Future of Middle-Skill Jobs*, Center on Children and Families – Brookings Institute, February 2009**

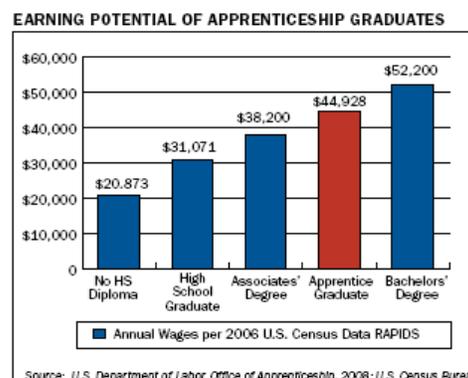
Harry Holzer and Robert Lerman have updated their research on the future demand for middle-skill jobs, a term usually defined as those jobs that require more education than a high school diploma but less than a four-year college degree. They conclude that the demand for middle-skill jobs will remain strong relative to supply. Consequently, this policy brief emphasizes the importance of U.S. education and training policy aimed at the middle sector of the American economy. For high schools, the writers suggest expanding career and technical education through Tech Prep and Career Pathway models. For adults, supplemental education or training is necessary to upgrade skills. Apprenticeship is seen as an especially attractive way to upgrade skills of both young and experienced workers, and the paper suggests expanding the budget for the Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship, allowing Pell grants to extend to the classroom instruction in registered apprenticeship and using funds from the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.

[http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2009/02\\_middle\\_skill\\_jobs\\_holzer/02\\_middle\\_skill\\_jobs\\_holzer.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2009/02_middle_skill_jobs_holzer/02_middle_skill_jobs_holzer.pdf)

***The Future of the National Registered Apprenticeship System: A Workforce Strategy for Main Street America, Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship, November 2008***

The Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship (ACA) consists of 34 members who represent employers, unions and the public to provide advice and recommendations to the Secretary of Labor regarding the National Registered Apprenticeship System. With a high return per dollar investment, Registered Apprenticeship allows employers and individuals to realize their goals immediately: workers “earn and learn” while employers benefit from training a workforce to fit their needs. This ACA paper contains comparisons of apprenticeship systems in six foreign countries and proffers funding proposals for the National Apprenticeship Program along with financial incentives for sponsors.

Source: [Texas Workforce Investment Council Information Repository](#)



***The Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative Evaluation Final Report, U.S. Department of Labor, Coffey Consulting, and Mathematica Policy Institute, January 2009***

The Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative (PRI) was a demonstration program launched in 2005 between DOL Employment and Training Administration, the U.S. Department of Justice, and other federal partners designed to reduce the recidivism and reincarceration of inmates returning to their communities. The initiative was designed to help returning prisoners in urban communities find work through job training, housing referrals, mentoring and other services. Drawing on the expertise within faith-based and community organizations, this paper concludes that during their first two years of operation, sites were successful at putting employment-centered programs for ex-offenders into motion. Specifically, since most inmates were not able to access skills training before release, these sites helped them find work immediately by identifying job openings and helping with interviews. One of the greatest challenges facing this initiative was addressing participants’ housing needs and substance abuse problems. The study found that mentoring programs were especially helpful to former inmates in their efforts to re-enter society.

<http://www.dol.gov/cfbci/20090113.pdf>

***Registered Apprenticeship: Findings from Site Visits to Five States, United States Department of Labor Employment and Training Division, January 2009***

This report was commissioned by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) in an effort to improve its understanding of issues and trends in registered apprenticeship today. The study is based on site visits to five different states, including Texas, where researchers questioned program sponsors, apprentices, state apprenticeship agency staff, One-Stop Center staff and community college administrators. Generally, registered apprenticeship receives strong support from the sponsors and apprentices interviewed for the study. According to the authors of the paper, current sponsors identified relatively few drawbacks, but did cite difficulty securing high-quality instruction. Apprentices strongly endorse the opportunity this pathway provides them to acquire professional skills while earning an income, although some cited concerns about program length and initial pay scales.

[http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/FullText\\_Documents/Registered%20Apprenticeship%20-%20Findings%20from%20Site%20Visits%20to%20Five%20States%20Report%20-%20Final%20Report.pdf](http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/FullText_Documents/Registered%20Apprenticeship%20-%20Findings%20from%20Site%20Visits%20to%20Five%20States%20Report%20-%20Final%20Report.pdf)

***Trends in the Structure of Labor Market and Unemployment, U.S. Department of Labor and IMPAQ International, September, 2008***

Just released, this article offers a very timely review of both the internal and external pulls on the U.S. labor force within the context of the global economy and the impact of this on the country's Unemployment Insurance (UI) System. The authors identify three competing priorities of the UI System, which was established by the Social Security Act of 1935: provide income to eligible claimants; control program costs; and minimize any adverse incentives on the part of claimants' job search behavior. Some of the suggestions for policy changes include increasing protection for long episodes of unemployment while reducing protections for short periods of unemployment and providing partial protection for workers who are at risk of losing health insurance.

[http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/FullText\\_Documents/Trends%20in%20the%20Structure%20of%20the%20Labor%20Market%20and%20Unemployment%20-%20Implications%20for%20U.S.%20Unemployment%20Insurance.pdf](http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/FullText_Documents/Trends%20in%20the%20Structure%20of%20the%20Labor%20Market%20and%20Unemployment%20-%20Implications%20for%20U.S.%20Unemployment%20Insurance.pdf)

***Texas Works, Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, December 2008***

Texas Works focuses on the phenomenon plaguing Texas as well as the rest of the U.S., namely the problem that the demand for skilled workers is exceeding the supply. The report highlights findings such as that the number of jobs requiring postsecondary training and paying high wages outpaces the number of individuals who can fill these jobs. Similarly, various career pathways leading to high school graduation and postsecondary training will reduce the gap in available workers, and demographic predictions for Texas indicate that a less educated workforce will counterbalance the benefits of a growing and young population.

<http://www.window.state.tx.us/specialrpt/workforce/PDF/WorkForceFullReport.pdf>



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*Advancing Innovation in North Carolina – An Innovation Framework for Competing and Prospering in the Interconnected Global Community*, North Carolina Board of Science & Technology

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*America's Loss is the World's Gain: America's New Immigrant Entrepreneurs, Part 4*, Kauffman Institute

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*The Atlantic Century – Benchmarking EU and U.S. Innovation and Competitiveness*, Information Technology & Innovation Foundation

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*Best Practices in Dropout Prevention*, ICF International and National Dropout Prevention Center/Network

[http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/comm/leg\\_reports/bpdp\\_finalreport\\_20081219\\_toTEA.pdf](http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/comm/leg_reports/bpdp_finalreport_20081219_toTEA.pdf)

*Better Together: Realigning Pre-College Skills Development Programs to Achieve Greater Academic Success for Adult Learners, Jobs for the Future*

<http://www.jff.org/Documents/BTBetterTogether.pdf>

*Bridges to Opportunity for Underprepared Adults – a State Policy Guide for Community College Leaders*, Ford Foundation Community College Central

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*Chasing the High School Graduation Rate: Getting the Data We Need and Using it Right*, Educational Testing Service

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*Closing the Gap: 2009*, Achieve, Inc.

<http://www.achieve.org/files/50-state-2009.pdf>

*Comparative Indicators of Education in the United States and Other G-8 Countries: 2009*, National Center for Educational Statistics

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*Digest of Education Statistics: 2008*, National Center for Education Statistics, (NCES—U.S. Department of Education)

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009020.pdf>

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*Distance Education at Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions: 2006-2007*, National Center for Education Statistics

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*A Foot in the Door: Using Alternative Staffing Organizations to Open Up Opportunities for Disadvantaged Workers*, Public/Private Ventures

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*The Future of the National Registered Apprenticeship System: A Workforce Strategy for Main Street America*, Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship

Source: Texas Workforce Investment Council Information Repository

*Going Green: the Vital Role of Community Colleges in Building a Sustainable Future and Green Workforce*, National Council of Workforce Education and Academy for Educational Development

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*A Stronger Nation Through Higher Education- How and Why Americans Must meet a “Big Goal” for College Attainment*, Lumina Foundation for Education

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*Texas, Portrait of a Population—State Highlights 2009*, Editorial Projects in Education

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*Welfare-to-Work Program Benefits and Costs—a Synthesis of Research*, MDRC

<http://www.mdrc.org/publications/511/full.pdf>

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Editor’s note—more information about how Texas implements a shared work plan is available at:

<http://www.twc.state.tx.us/ui/bnfts/sharedwork.html>