



SITAC Quarterly Report

System Integration Technical Advisory Committee
Texas Workforce Investment Council
Quarter Ending December 2011

System Integration Technical Advisory Committee

The System Integration Technical Advisory Committee (SITAC) is constituted as a technical advisory committee to the Texas Workforce Investment Council (Council). Chaired by a member of the Council's Executive Committee, SITAC includes executive-level representatives from the Council's partner agencies, as well as from the Texas Association of Workforce Boards. SITAC's key responsibility is the implementation of the workforce system strategic plan.

Next Meeting

Thursday, June 14, 2012 – 1:00 p.m.
Teacher Retirement System, Austin

The current plan, *Advancing Texas: Strategic Plan for the Texas Workforce System (FY2010-FY2015)* (*Advancing Texas*) was approved by Governor Rick Perry on October 23, 2009. It outlines 14 long term objectives (LTOs), grouped by the three key performance areas that address the critical business issues identified during a yearlong collaborative planning process.

SITAC members meet quarterly, providing status reports on action plans for which their organization is solely or jointly responsible. The committee is authorized to create and deploy cross-agency teams in order to devise and execute collaborative solutions to issues associated with the system strategic plan's LTOs.

In Progress

2012 Update to *Advancing Texas*

In March 2012, the Council will consider the *2012 Update* to the workforce system strategic plan, the first update for *Advancing Texas*. Approved by the Governor in 2009, the plan covers a six-year period. It outlines the vision for the state's workforce system and contains the action plans (APs) that guide plan execution.

Texas Government Code also requires an annual status update to the Governor and legislature. This requirement is met by the Council's annual evaluation report and periodic plan updates.

The iterative nature of the planning and status reporting processes provide for progress evaluations and recommendations for further action. The APs are reviewed and modified periodically to indicate accomplishments and milestones achieved as well as other changes such as the addition of dependencies or tracking measures.

For the *2012 Update*, all APs and agency projects associated with **LTO P5**-Employer Needs/Satisfaction and **LTO P6**-Use of Employment Data for Program Improvement will be reviewed with the applicable system partner(s). Partner agency reports to SITAC, as well as

Message from the Chair

In December 2011, agencies reported recent achievements related to workplace literacy skills pilot programs, dual credit transfer, and a future Request for Applications for career technical education demonstration projects. In addition, the Texas Workforce Commission presented on work related to assessing workforce supply and demand.

With our third year of *Advancing Texas*' implementation underway, system partners continue to make significant progress toward achieving the plan's long term objectives. This is evidenced not only through our meeting reports and discussion, but by the detailed reporting that supports the Council's annual evaluation report to the Governor and Legislature.

Council staff are working closely with partners to complete the first update to *Advancing Texas*. The Council will review proposed changes in March 2012, in anticipation of action and submission to the Governor for approval.

On behalf of the Council members attending and our fellow members, my thanks to system partners for their continued good work! I look forward to hearing your reports when we reconvene in June.

Paul Mayer

formal reporting for the *Evaluation 2011* report, will also provide much of the information needed for the update. Proposed changes or modifications to *Advancing Texas* include:

- ★ accomplishment of, clarification to, or addition of major tasks and milestones;
- ★ changes to timelines;
- ★ changes to accountable participants; and
- ★ establishment of performance targets.

After consideration for approval by the Council at its March 2012 meeting, the *2012 Update* will be forwarded to the Governor for signature. The update will then be the foundation of system partner actions and will also continue to guide implementation of *Advancing Texas*.

Implementation Update: December 2011

Reports for four *Advancing Texas*' APs were presented at the December 15, 2011 SITAC meeting. Summaries are provided for each, grouped by the plan's key performance areas (KPA).

KPA: Customer Outcomes

To meet the demands of Texas' employers, everyone must be part of the critical pool of potential employees. *Advancing Texas* specifies four target populations, including *those with low literacy skills*, who can be assisted through targeted literacy programs to gain or maintain employment.

LTO C4 requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to develop new and enhance existing methods, programs and processes for programs targeted at the over age 17 adult education population to address workplace

ABE / Low Literacy Level Employment [C4] – By 2013, design and implement targeted Adult Basic Education programs to enhance employment outcomes for populations requiring workplace literacy skills.

Owner: SITAC
Participants: TEA, TWC

literacy acquisition. Workforce literacy skills are the basic and soft skills considered necessary to perform in entry-level occupations or the skills needed to adapt to technological advances in the workplace.

A workgroup with local workforce board, adult education provider, partner agency representatives and Council staff designed a model of program outreach and delivery. It fits within existing adult education funding, program offerings and initiatives, and can be offered concurrently with adult education levels 4 through 6.

Last year, TWC completed an assessment that identified three local boards – Alamo, Capital Area and Gulf Coast – which have strong relationships with adult education providers as pilot program candidates. TEA committed \$400,000 in Adult Education State Leadership funds for the pilots.

A nationally recognized career awareness curriculum, previously offered by some Texas sites with highly successful results, has been selected. The pilots include a career exploration awareness component that focuses on workplace literacy skills designed to facilitate a smooth transition from adult education to workforce training.

Pilots have been negotiated with multiple adult education providers in the three regions. The providers received technical assistance as well as the guidelines and timelines for launching the pilot initiatives.

Regional workforce literacy resource teams have been formed and are meeting quarterly to assist with pilot implementation. In addition, tracking mechanisms are being developed that will also assist with linkages between adult education and workforce partners.

KPA: Systems, Operations, Competencies and Integration

Career technical education (CTE) programs provide valuable skills training, and often lessen the risk of students dropping out. Texas needs enhanced and more effective integration of academic and CTE options at both the secondary and postsecondary levels in order to increase graduation rates and assist with the transition to further education or the workforce. Two LTOs focus on this critical issue.

LTO S1 addresses integrated planning initiatives that require partner coordination to ensure alignment, with work in progress by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and TWC. Readily available supply-demand reports will provide data needed for education and training providers to plan and better align their programs to industry needs.

TWC's online Strategic Workforce Assessment Project (SWAP) provides statewide occupational data as well as data for pre-defined occupational subsets such as local workforce development area target occupations, AchieveTexas career clusters and STEM occupations. New features, reports, data items and analytical tools are in continuous development, dependent on user expectations and available funding.

Utilizing SWAP, TWC has made progress toward creating a supply and demand database. Last year, the agencies reported that ongoing data collection mechanisms had been identified for:

- ★ *Supply* – THECB will provide annual enrollment and graduation data at the 4-/6-digit CIP code level. Program-level data will be used initially, with course-level data expected to be available in 2013.
- ★ *Demand* – TWC provided employment and job opening projections, with 2018 projections now available.

The AP's plan of work has been modified to utilize an electronic report format rather than a hard copy report format. In August 2011, TWC completed a draft *SWAP User's Guide* for use in introducing customers to SWAP's analysis tools. TWC plans to create an interactive format that will better guide users in developing reports while allowing for continued evolution of online tools.

Assess Workforce Supply / Demand [S1] – Produce each biennium, commencing in 2010, a report that documents an assessment of the number and type of postsecondary education and training credentials (certificate, level two certificate, associate, bachelor's and advanced degrees) required to match the demand for a skilled and educated workforce. The assessment will include the number of forecast net job openings by occupation at each level of postsecondary education and training and the number of credentials needed to match that forecast.

Owner: SITAC

Participants: THECB, TWC

TWC is also developing multiple user scenarios that pose hypothetical education or workforce planning issues and demonstrate how SWAP can be used to provide the appropriate data and analysis to address the issue. Tentative plans are to pilot test the interactive guide with selected community and technical colleges in early 2012. As of December 2011, the website's functionality was in the process of being modified, with additional enhancements expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2012.

Whether made available through an online application or a formatted report, to meet the AP intent and serve as a resource for supply-demand information it is essential that the data include middle skills jobs that require on-the-job training, as well as certificates and associate degrees.



LTO S3 addresses the need for improved program and initiative alignment, with the goal of providing seamless education and career pathways. Streamlining processes, and in some cases shortening time to program completion, should help increase student enrollment and completion of courses, credentials and degrees.

A key strategy is dual credit, which THECB defines as a process by which a high school junior or senior enrolls in a college course and receives simultaneous academic credit from both the college and the high school. Dual credit courses are often taught at secondary schools for high school students only; however, high school students can also take courses at a college campus and earn both high school and college credits.

Both academic and technical courses may be provided for dual credit. Administrative challenges are numerous as programs vary at the local level in terms of funding mechanisms, cost sharing agreements, training locations, transportation availability and faculty.

TEA and THECB are working together on all aspects of the infrastructure for transferring academic and technical dual credit courses from high schools to community colleges and four-year institutions. Two related reports were completed in 2011:

- ★ *Research Study of Texas Dual Credit Programs and Courses* was published in March. TEA, in collaboration with THECB, contracted with American Institutes for Research and Gibson Consulting Group, Inc. to conduct the study.
- ★ *Dual Credit Report*, was published by THECB in December. The report fulfills the requirements of Rider 33, House Bill 1 (82nd Legislature).

TEA also plans to fund a research study to assess utilizing dual credit as a substitute for end of course (EOC) exams. EOC assessments have not been implemented but will be phased in beginning with 2011-12 ninth grade students, adding successive grades annually through 2014-15.

In addition, the agencies are improving data systems for tracking and evaluating student outcomes. Beginning fall 2011, THECB data systems will allow the tracking of students from dual credit into college level courses with associated course grades included. This will provide significantly greater opportunities to evaluate the preparedness level of students who take courses as dual credit in high school versus as a traditional college course. In addition, THECB will be able to evaluate success rates for each group in subsequent college courses. Data analysis will be limited to the number of cohorts included in the system, beginning with the FY 2012 cohort.

Dual Credit Transfer [S3] – By 2013, education and training partners will have the infrastructure necessary (policies, procedures, data processes, rules, and capabilities) to facilitate the effective and efficient transfer of academic and technical dual credit courses from high schools to community colleges and four-year institutions.
Owners / Participants: THECB, TEA

THECB is also working with two- and four-year institutions to develop explicit learning outcomes that will be consistent across key lower division academic courses taught at institutions statewide. By September 2011, faculty teams had developed learning outcomes for approximately 19 percent of course sections at community colleges and 25 percent of the enrollments. This process is expected to continue for several years in order to complete the process for the most frequently offered and taken courses. Less frequently used courses or unique need courses will not be completed at a state level.

Such efforts are critical, as evidenced by data showing that public high school graduates who participated in dual credit while in high school enroll in higher education at a slightly higher rate than the total population of high school graduates. Dual credit enrollment has risen annually since record keeping began in 1999, climbing from 11,921 in 1999 to 91,303 in 2009, before dipping slightly to 90,364 in 2010. In 2010, dual credit accounted for 6.7 percent of total fall enrollments, up from 1.4 percent in 1999.



Career technical education (CTE) programs provide valuable skills training, and often assist with the transition to further education or the workforce. **LTO S4** focuses on improving the perception of CTE as a desirable career option. Increasing the perceived value of CTE programs may increase graduation rates and lessen the risk of students dropping out.

The Council is responsible for this AP, with the Executive Committee providing oversight. The intent is to increase awareness and educate high school counselors by creating a secondary school culture where all students and parents understand the wide range of available education and career choices. This is increasingly important as many high skill, high wage jobs critical to Texas' economy require some postsecondary education, but less than a four-year degree.

CTE Demo – Improve Knowledge / Value Perception [S4] – By 2013, design and implement a demonstration program targeted to improve perception of career options that career technical education (CTE) programs enable.
Owner / Participant: Council

In November 2010, a task group was convened to design an outreach and awareness model that incorporates promising CTE practices. The group used the findings from the Council's 2010 report, *Research Findings: Raising Awareness of Career Technical Education in Texas Schools*, to assist in developing the model for a pilot project and a Request for Applications (RFA).

The structure of the model is sequential and cohort-based. The best practices target students and their parents with specific activities for each of three years (grades 9-11). The RFA will be finalized and released when funds become available. It is anticipated that four awards will be made with final selection based on school size and community type (rural/urban). Successful, replicable demonstrations have the potential to increase awareness and educate students, parents, and counselors about the wide range of career and educational choices available through CTE.

<i>SITAC Members</i>	
<i>Chair</i>	Paul Mayer, Executive Committee Member, Texas Workforce Investment Council
<i>Economic Development and Tourism Division</i>	Keith Graf, Director, Aerospace and Aviation
<i>Texas Association of Workforce Boards</i>	David K. Setzer, Executive Director, Workforce Solutions North Central Texas
<i>Texas Department of Criminal Justice</i>	Debbie Roberts, Superintendent, Windham School District
<i>Texas Education Agency</i>	Vangie Stice-Israel, State Director for Career Technical Education
<i>Texas Health and Human Services Commission</i>	Jim Hanophy, Assistant Commissioner, Division for Rehabilitative Services
<i>Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board</i>	Dr. MacGregor Stephenson, Assistant Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Research
<i>Texas Veterans Commission</i>	Shawn Deabay, Director, Veterans Employment Services
<i>Texas Workforce Commission</i>	Luis Macias, Texas Back to Work Coordinator