



SITAC Quarterly Report

*System Integration Technical Advisory Committee
Texas Workforce Investment Council
Quarter Ending June 2015*

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 fosters collaboration among 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, September 10, 2015 – 1:00 p.m.
Texas Workforce Investment Council
1100 San Jacinto, Room 1.109

Message from the Chair

Wrapping up *Advancing Texas*

This is our final SITAC report for the *Advancing Texas* strategic plan period. SITAC has been instrumental in bringing together leaders from the Council's partner agencies and the local workforce board association. Since its formation in late 2003 under the previous workforce system strategic plan—*Destination 2010*—the group has worked collaboratively to address critical workforce issues that face our state.

Working within their own organizations and in collaboration with other system partners, current and past SITAC members have worked to strengthen system alignment and have played a major role in the accomplishments realized over the last six years under *Advancing Texas*. Progress has been made in many areas, including:

- ★ career and technical education;
- ★ dual credit offerings;
- ★ adult education programs for those with low literacy or English language skills;
- ★ employer use of and satisfaction with system products and services; and
- ★ the use of employment data for program improvement.

As a Council member, I've had the privilege of serving as SITAC chair since early 2014. In that time, SITAC members have been very involved in the development of the new workforce system strategic plan for Texas. There remains much work to be done on issues such as addressing the growing demand for middle-skill workers and industry certifications, as well as devising approaches and solutions to system challenges that affect workforce system stakeholders.

As the *Advancing Texas* plan period comes to an end, I extend the Council's thanks to the members of SITAC and our system partners for their diligent work over the past several years.

Mark Dunn

Advancing Texas and implementation updates available at:
http://gov.texas.gov/twic/workforce_system/

System Strategic Plan Development

The Council is required by statute to include long-range strategies developed by the Council and its partner agencies to facilitate the efficient and integrated delivery of workforce programs and services in the state workforce system strategic plan (Texas Government Code, Section 2308.104). In September 2014, the Council formally launched the development process for the next system strategic plan. SITAC has been an active planning participant, with multiple opportunities to provide information and feedback in support of the system strategic plan development process.

As required by Texas Government Code, the new system strategic plan will include goals, objectives, timelines for actions, performance measures, and the agency responsible for implementing each strategy. Over the new plan's implementation period, system partners will continue to work individually and collectively to ensure that services and products meet the needs of employers and individuals. Four major goal areas and related system objectives have been developed, providing a framework for system partner strategies that are designed to further improve the Texas workforce system. The goal areas include: focus on employers, engage in partnerships, align system elements, and improve and integrate programs.

Prior to the Council's June 2015 meeting, staff worked closely with agency representatives to refine proposed actions and timelines, and to establish associated performance measures. Following consideration by the Executive Committee and the full Council in June, the draft plan will be posted on the Council's website for public review and comment. The new plan will be considered for approval by the Council in September 2015, and subsequently submitted to Governor Greg Abbott for his consideration.

The new plan is more system-focused and includes several common objectives to be implemented by multiple system partners. It focuses on the vision of the current and future system, and the issues that must be addressed to strengthen that system, as articulated by the Council, its agency partners, and employers.

State Legislative Updates

The 84th regular session of the Texas legislature ended on June 1, 2015. The last day the Governor could sign or veto bills passed during the session was June 21, 2015. Legislation of note related to the state workforce system and system partners includes the following:

- ★ ***Vocational Rehabilitation Program Transfer*** – The Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) sunset bill, Senate Bill (SB) 208, continues the agency for 12 years, through September 1, 2027. Subject to federal approval, if required, the bill mandates transferring services to help people with disabilities from the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) to the TWC. By March 1, 2016, the agencies are to submit a transition plan to the legislative oversight committee and the Governor, to be finalized after consideration of the committee's comments and recommendations. The bill further requires integration of DARS' two separate vocational rehabilitation programs—those serving adults with disabilities or the blind or visually impaired—to eliminate administrative duplication and better serve customers. The TWC is to create a designated state unit for vocational rehabilitation services to comply with federal regulations, and to integrate the two programs no later than October 1, 2017. [signed June 19, 2015; effective September 1, 2015 with transfer of vocational rehabilitation effective September 1, 2016]
- ★ ***Juvenile Justice Regionalization*** – In part, SB 1630 requires the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) to develop and adopt a regionalization plan for keeping adjudicated youth within their home regions. The TJJD must identify available post-adjudication facility capacity and the resources needed to implement the plan. The agency is also required to establish a new division to administer the regionalization plan and to monitor program quality and accountability. [signed June 18, 2015; effective September 1, 2015]
- ★ ***Economic Development and Tourism*** – SB 632 requires abolishment of the Texas Emerging Technology Fund and creation of the Governor's University Research Initiative to award matching grants to eligible institutions to recruit nationally recognized researchers and Nobel Laureates to Texas institutions of higher education. The bill also abolishes Regional Centers of Innovation and Commercialization. [signed June 3, 2015; effective September 1, 2015]
- ★ ***Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) Grant Program*** – SB 1351 transfers the JET grant program from the comptroller to the TWC. The TWC is required to administer the program and award grants for the development

of new career and technical education (CTE) courses or programs at public junior colleges and public technical institutes. [signed June 16, 2015; effective immediately]

House Bill (HB) 3062 also transfers the program and allows an independent school district to become an eligible recipient of JET grant funds if the district has entered into a partnership with a public junior college or public technical institute for the purpose of promoting CTE or offering dual credit to the district's students. The provisions of the bill would apply beginning with grants awarded for the 2016–2017 academic year. [signed June 10, 2015; effectively immediately]

- ★ ***Apprenticeship Funding*** – The TWC requested and received (HB 1) an additional \$3 million for the 2016–2017 biennium for the apprenticeship training program. The program helps industries and workers stay competitive in a global economy by combining structured on-the-job training with related classroom instruction in preparation for high-demand, highly skilled occupations. In partnership with employers, the TWC grants funds to local educational institutions to support the costs of related classroom instruction in registered apprenticeship training programs. The additional appropriations will be used to increase the contact hour rate—the rate at which TWC supplements the educational institution for each hour the apprentice is in related classroom instruction—for the current level of apprentices and to provide increased funding to expand the number of apprentices trained. [signed June 20, 2015; effective September 1, 2015]
- ★ ***Programs of Study*** – HB 2628 requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to periodically review each field of study curriculum to ensure alignment with student interest, and with academic and industry needs. It also sets out the process under which the THECB will collaborate with partner agencies, institutions of higher education, CTE experts, and college and career readiness experts to develop programs of study curricula. Programs of study provide understandable and viable education and career training pathways for students and facilitate transfer options. Programs of study may result in higher completion and graduation rates, and an increasing number of individuals with licenses or credentials needed in today's job market. [signed June 3, 2015; effective September 1, 2015]
- ★ ***High School Diplomas and Course Credit*** – SB 1024 requires school districts to grant credits for students who successfully complete Windham School District (Windham) academic, career and technology, or other course requirements for high school graduation that meet the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills curriculum standards. Students may graduate from Windham with a high school diploma if they successfully complete the curriculum requirements established by the State Board of Education and complete the required end-of-course assessment instruments or completed the curriculum requirements as modified by an individualized education program. The bill also allows Windham to issue a certificate of coursework completion for students who successfully complete the curriculum requirements for a high school diploma, but who were unable to successfully complete the required assessments. [signed May 19, 2015; effective immediately]
- ★ ***Alternative Graduation Options*** – In part, SB 149 provides for alternative graduation options for students in grades 11 or 12 who fail to perform satisfactorily on not more than two of the required end-of-course assessments. School districts are required to establish an individual graduation committee for such students. The bill prescribes the criteria that the committee must consider in determining whether the student is qualified to graduate. The student may graduate and receive a high school diploma on the basis of the committee's decision only if the student successfully completes all additional requirements recommended by the committee and the committee's vote is unanimous. [signed May 11, 2015; effectively immediately]
- ★ ***Student Academic Achievement and High School, College, and Career Preparation*** – Key changes required by HB 18 include: [signed June 19, 2015; effective immediately]
 - prohibits limiting the number of dual credit courses or credit semester credit hours that a high school student can enroll in while in high school, or each semester or academic year;
 - requires school districts to provide instruction to students in grades 7 and 8 on how to prepare for high school, college, and a career; and
 - requires that dual credit courses be taught by qualified instructors approved or selected by the public junior college.

In addition, HB 505 prohibits any limitation of the number of dual credit courses, dual credit hours, or grade levels in which a high school student can enroll each semester or academic year. It also repeals statute

prohibiting high school students from enrolling in more than three courses in a junior college if the junior college does not have a service area that includes the student's high school. [signed May 23, 2015; effective immediately]

- ★ ***Certification for Military Personnel to Teach CTE Classes*** – Under HB 2014, current or former members of the United States armed services are considered to meet the requirements for trades and industries education certification for a trade if they obtained experience in that trade through military service. [signed June 17, 2015; effective immediately]
- ★ ***Transfer Associate Degree Program*** – SB 1189 requires each public junior college to establish a multidisciplinary studies associate degree program, to be offered beginning with the 2016 fall semester. Under the degree program, students will be required to successfully complete the junior college's core curriculum and, after completion of the core curriculum, the courses selected by the student in their degree plan. The degree plan is to account for all the remaining credit hours required for the completion of the degree program, emphasizing transition to a particular four-year college or university of the student's choice, and preparation for the student's intended field of study or major at that school. [signed June 19, 2015; effective immediately]
- ★ ***Veterans*** – New legislation related to veterans programs and services includes:
 - SB 389 requires state agencies to include military occupational specialty codes on notices of state agency employment openings if the duties of the available position correlate with the occupational specialty. [signed May 23, 2015; effective September 1, 2015]
 - SB 805, the Military Veterans Full Employment Act, specifies which individuals are eligible for veteran's employment preference and which state agencies must offer the preference. It also provides private employers with the right to offer a veteran's employment preference. [signed May 28; 2015; effective September 1, 2015]
 - SB 807 waives license application and examination fees for a military service member or veteran whose military service, training, or education meets the requirements for the license. The fees are also to be waived for a service member, veteran, or military spouse who holds a current license issued by another jurisdiction that has licensing requirements that are equivalent to those in Texas. [signed June 4, 2015; effective September 1, 2015]
 - HB 867 establishes the Texas Women Veterans Program, with the mission of ensuring that women veterans have equitable access to federal and state veterans' benefits and services. [signed June 4, 2015; effective immediately]

Advancing Texas: Implementation Update

Fiscal year (FY) 2015 is the final year of the six-year plan period for *Advancing Texas: Strategic Plan for the Texas Workforce System (FY2010-FY2015) (Advancing Texas)*. The plan was first approved by the Governor on October 23, 2009, and updated in 2012.

Partner agencies and organizations continue to focus on major tasks and deliverables identified as key to meeting the plan's 14 long term objectives. They will continue reporting to the Council this year, with action plan updates, if applicable, due later this summer and annual performance data due in late September.

The *Evaluation 2015* report will be considered by the Council at its December 2015 meeting, and subsequently provided to the Governor and legislature. As the summative report for *Advancing Texas*, the report will include 12-year performance trend data as well as final versions of all action plans.

SITAC Members

<i>Chair</i> – Mark Dunn, Executive Committee Member, Texas Workforce Investment Council
<i>Economic Development and Tourism Division</i> – Keith Graf, Director, Office of Aerospace, Aviation, and Defense
<i>Texas Association of Workforce Boards</i> – David K. Setzer, Executive Director, Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas
<i>Texas Department of Criminal Justice/Windham School District</i> – Dr. Clint Carpenter, Superintendent
<i>Texas Education Agency</i> – Diane Salazar, State Director for Career and Technical Education
<i>Texas Health and Human Services Commission</i> – Appointment pending
<i>Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board</i> – Dr. Garry Tomerlin, Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Workforce
<i>Texas Juvenile Justice Department</i> – Amy Lopez, Senior Director of Education Services
<i>Texas Veterans Commission</i> – Stan Kurtz, Operations Manager, Veterans Employment Services
<i>Texas Workforce Commission</i> – Reagan Miller, Director, Workforce Development Division