



SITAC Quarterly Report

System Integration Technical Advisory Committee
Texas Workforce Investment Council
Quarter Ending March 2013

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 6, 2013 – 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 first approved by Governor Rick Perry on October 23, 2009. It outlines 14 long term objectives, grouped by the three key performance areas, that address the critical business issues identified during a yearlong collaborative planning process. The first update to the plan, incorporating

input from all partner agencies, was approved by the Council on March 9, 2012, and by the Governor on May 24, 2012.

SITAC members typically 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 objectives.

Implementation Update: March 2013

Reports for three of *Advancing Texas'* action plans were presented at the March 2013 SITAC meeting. Summaries are provided below.

Local Board Plan Alignment

As the system's frontline partners, local workforce boards must understand and meet the needs of their local communities by providing relevant workforce programs and services. One plan objective addresses the statutory requirement that local board plans align with the system strategic plan, *Advancing Texas*.

The Council is charged in federal and state law with recommending to the Governor approval of local board plans or plan modifications as required under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and other applicable statutes. WIA requires that each board develop and submit to the Governor a comprehensive local plan consistent with the WIA State Plan, and that the Council, as the designated State Workforce Investment Board, assist the Governor in review of the board plans.

Texas Government Code specifies that local plans must include a strategic component that sets broad goals and objectives for local workforce programs, and that outcomes must be consistent with statewide goals, objectives, and performance standards. *Advancing Texas* established these statewide goals and objectives.

Message from the Chair

In March, we welcomed our new members from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Windham School District, as well as several Council members.

With the fourth year of *Advancing Texas'* implementation under way, progress continues to be made by our system partners. This issue of the quarterly report includes updates for career technical education and English language learner initiatives. In addition, it provides information about the upcoming review of local workforce board plans.

Partners are actively participating in the current legislative session, and will be reporting on outcomes in future committee meetings. Throughout this busy time, collaborative projects continue as we all strive to improve the state's workforce system and opportunities for current and future workers.

On behalf of the Council, my thanks to all partners for their creativity, enthusiasm, and hard work!

Paul Mayer

Advancing Texas and implementation updates available at:
http://governor.state.tx.us/twic/workforce_system/

Last year, the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) convened a workgroup with local board representatives to seek input during development of local board planning guidelines. The guidelines outline the requirements that local boards must follow in developing their strategic plans. The guidelines include an appendix that specifies the Council's request for information and data, which boards include in their plans to demonstrate alignment with *Advancing Texas*.

Local Board Plan Alignment [P4] – Local boards will align with and support the workforce system strategic plan through their planning processes and related initiatives. This will be documented in board plans and plan modifications, which are submitted to the Council for approval.

Owner/Participant: Local boards

Given the intent to reauthorize WIA and the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) revisions to state planning guidance, DOL extended all WIA Title I state plans in 2011 and in 2012. In early 2012, DOL issued guidance requiring states to submit a new five-year state plan for WIA Title I and the Wagner-Peyser Act.

TWC developed a new plan for program years (PY) 2012-2016. In September 2012, the plan was endorsed by the Council and approved by the Governor for submission to the U.S. Secretary of Labor. TWC then extended the local plans through March 2013 to allow boards time to develop new five-year plans. DOL approved the state plan on December 11, 2012. TWC further extended the local plans through June 2013, enabling boards to utilize the most recent labor market information data to determine target occupations and industries, and to provide time for public comment.

TWC issued PY 2013-2018 planning requirements for local boards, including instructions for documenting alignment with *Advancing Texas* in December 2012. Boards are to document strategies designed to meet the needs of three populations, and to facilitate their entry into the workforce: (1) veterans, (2) the blind or disabled, and (3) those with low literacy or English language skills. Plans also should describe an innovative strategy that includes collaboration with two or more system partners.

Local plans are due to TWC by April 1, and will be jointly reviewed by agency and Council staff. Satisfactory plans will be presented at a TWC docket for Commissioner approval and transmitted to the Council for endorsement at its June meeting. Upon endorsement, the Council will recommend the plans to the Governor for final approval.

At the March meeting, workforce board representative David Setzer provided examples of plan strategies as outlined below:

Collaboration in Action – Walgreens

"Walgreens Distribution Center has made a conscious effort to build an inclusive and skilled workforce ... resulted in reduced turnover and increased employee loyalty ... made them an intricate part of the business community."

David Setzer, Executive Director – Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas (November 20, 2012)

In November 2012, the Walgreens Distribution Center, located in Waxahachie, was honored as Employer of the Year at the 16th Annual Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas Excellence Awards. The award honors an employer that is actively involved with Texas Workforce Solutions and has made a positive impact on employers, workers, and the community. Texas Workforce Solutions is the local and statewide network comprised of TWC, the 28 local boards, and their contracted service providers and community partners. The network gives customers access to workforce services at local offices across the state. The center was also recognized as an exemplary finalist for Texas Workforce Solutions Employer of the Year at TWC's 2012 annual state conference.



Successful ventures with Walgreens provide examples of collaboration by workforce system partners. In partnership with the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), the distribution center implemented training programs, installed devices to accommodate the hearing-impaired, and created a culture of inclusion. Utilizing job coaches, interpreters, and specialized equipment such as UbiDuo's, Walgreens created a model program that has been replicated throughout the state and country. Walgreens hired 115 individuals, 10 percent of its workforce, primarily from the deaf and hard-of-hearing population. They also reduced the employee turnover rate from 48 percent to 27.6 percent and have one of the country's highest Occupational Safety and Health Administration rankings.

The distribution center played a key role in getting Texans back to work through its support of TWC's Texas Back to Work Initiative that ended in September 2012. The goal of building a qualified workforce led to a partnership with the North Central Texas local board and Navarro College. Funded by the board's DOL grant, the project enabled employees to upgrade their skills and complete Certified Logistics Associate or Certified Logistics Technician training.

Population-specific strategy examples include:

- ★ *Veterans* – Local boards worked with TWC to host a statewide job fair in November 2012. In partnership with the Texas Veterans Commission, the Texas Medical Center, and over 1,400 employers, fairs were held at 27 sites across the state. In the Dallas-Fort Worth region, the North Central Texas, Tarrant County, and Dallas boards joined forces to host a regional job fair at the Rangers Ballpark in Arlington.
- ★ *Blind or Disabled* – Texoma staff work with organizations such as DARS and the Commission for the Blind to ensure the disabled population is served. DARS has offices in Texoma's workforce centers, and the centers are equipped with adaptive tools. Other partners include adult education providers, secondary and postsecondary educational institutions, local employer groups, substance abuse recovery programs, the United Way, and youth clubs.
- ★ *Low Literacy or English Language Skills* – The North Texas board is served by the Wichita Adult Literacy Council. The Literacy Council is housed in the same building as the workforce center, thus facilitating cross referral of clients. The board's executive director is a member of the Literacy Council, and also serves as a volunteer trainer, tutor, and coordination liaison.

North Texas is also a partner in a North Texas Area United Way grant to provide adult education classes in the same building. This is the third year that a grant has funded adult education classes in the building and provided for a Council employee to conduct literacy classes within the center.



Career Technical Education – Increase Student Completion

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 of *Advancing Texas'* objectives focus on this critical issue, including one that addresses college and career readiness. The intent is to recognize that both academic and rigorous CTE courses must support students through a range of choices including two- and four-year degrees, apprenticeship and the military.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) continues to make progress on the action plan's tasks, including the design, development, and adoption of CTE courses to meet recommended or advanced high school program graduation requirements. Over 190 new CTE courses have been developed and



professional development resources for teachers across the state and to build professional learning communities where educators can collaborate and participate in online learning opportunities.

CTE Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), incorporating the College and Career Readiness Standards, were adopted by the SBOE and became effective as of August 2010. School districts implemented the new courses in 2010–2011 and have completed two instructional years. The SBOE has scheduled the next CTE TEKS revision cycle to begin in 2013.

TEA is working with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to design, develop, and coordinate policies and processes related to dual credit courses and credit transfer. A study conducted for the two agencies assessed the correlation between high school enrollment in dual-credit courses and enrollment, persistence, and completion of postsecondary education. (Jobs for the Future, November 2012)

The agency continues to develop and deploy early college high schools (ECHS). These innovative high schools are located on or in close proximity to a college campus to allow students in historically underrepresented college-going populations the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and an associate's degree or up to 60 college credits over four years. Nine new ECHSs were designated in fiscal year (FY) 2012 and as of August 2012, there were 62 in Texas, including five Texas Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (T-STEM) academies.

Career Technical Education – Increase Student Completion [S2] – By 2013, Texas will decrease high school dropout rates by implementing rigorous Career and Technical Education (CTE) as a part of the recommended or advanced high school graduation program.
Owner/Participant: TEA

adopted by the State Board of Education (SBOE). These are organized around the 16 national career clusters, and include 17 courses that meet graduation requirements for fourth-year science and fourth-year math, as well as options for English, fine arts, and speech.

Required professional development for CTE teachers has been under way since 2010. In fall 2012, courses became available through Project Share, an Internet portal designed to provide

Finally, criteria are being developed for the Campus Distinction Designations for the 21st Century Workforce Development program as required by House Bill 3 (81st Legislature). TEA staff previously compiled a list of stakeholders, and drafted a literature review, a list of possible measurement criteria/indicators, and a list of possible award methodologies. Committee meetings are under way, with the intent of publishing standards and award criteria in summer or fall 2013. However, the Sunset Advisory Commission recommended a statutory change that would eliminate the distinction designations and committees charged with their development. (Sunset Advisory Commission, February 2013)



English Language Learner (ELL) Employment

To meet the changing demands of Texas' employers, everyone must be part of the critical pool of potential employees. *Advancing Texas* specifies several target populations that can benefit from employment and training services, including English language learners. This rapidly growing population requires additional skills for workforce-related success.

English Language Learner (ELL) Employment

[C3] – By 2013, design and implement integrated Adult Basic Education and workforce skills training programs to enhance employment outcomes for the English language learner population.

Owner: SITAC

Participants: TEA, THECB, TWC

The action plan for one objective requires TEA and TWC to develop new and enhance existing methods, programs, and processes for programs targeted at the over 17 ELL population that address both language and occupation skill acquisition. The ELL population is made up of individuals who have a high school diploma or degree in their native country, but for whom English is not their first language.

THECB is supporting the effort under Riders 45 and 56, Senate Bill 1 (81st Legislature). THECB was added as a participant on this action plan in conjunction with the *2012 Update to Advancing Texas*. A Request for Applications was issued and later revised and reissued to allow the projects to be more flexible while still focusing on intended outcomes for the integrated basic education and skills training programs.

Pilot implementation began in fall 2011 at Alamo Community College District, Amarillo Community College, El Centro College, Hill College, South Texas College, Tyler Junior College and Wharton County Junior College. A previously funded program at El Paso Community College is also being monitored as a pilot.

Performance reporting for the projects began last year, with data published in the Council's *Evaluation 2012* report. Results from the workforce and higher education data match are expected in mid-March 2013. Other preliminary data (through December 2012) include:

- ★ Of the 946 students served in 2012, 259 (27 percent) were ELLs.
- ★ Of the 259 ELLs served, 150 have received a workforce training certificate.
- ★ Certificates received included local, industry-recognized certificates (81 percent), state certificates (six percent), national certificates (seven percent), and Level 1 certificates (six percent). Level 1 certificate programs consist of at least 15, but no more than 42, semester credit hours and are designed to be completed in one year or less.

Pilot evaluation, conducted by Texas State University, began in October 2011 and will continue through August 2013.

SITAC Members

Chair

Paul Mayer, Executive Committee Member, Texas Workforce Investment Council

Economic Development and Tourism Division

Keith Graf, Director, Aerospace and Aviation

Texas Association of Workforce Boards

David K. Setzer, Executive Director, Workforce Solutions North Central Texas

Texas Department of Criminal Justice

Veronica Casanova, Interim Superintendent, Windham School District

Texas Education Agency

Vangie Stice-Israel, State Director for Career Technical Education

Texas Health and Human Services Commission

Jim Hanophy, Assistant Commissioner, Division for Rehabilitative Services

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Dr. Garry Tomerlin, Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Community and Technical Colleges

Texas Juvenile Justice Department

Amy Lopez, Senior Director of Education Services

Texas Veterans Commission

Stan Kurtz, Operations Manager, Veterans Employment Services

Texas Workforce Commission

Luis Macias, Chief of Staff