



Texas Workforce Investment Council

Policy News Highlights

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Policy News Highlights is a quarterly review of selected reports relevant to the policy and research functions of the Texas Workforce Investment Council (Council). Federal and state agency websites, in addition to numerous public policy and educational databases, are scanned monthly for relevant and emerging issues. Reports are catalogued and stored electronically in the Council's Information Repository.

The repository is divided into topic areas that correspond to priority issues supporting the Council's current strategic plan. Topics include: adult education, apprenticeship, career and college readiness, career and technical education, clusters and sector strategies, competitiveness, data, disabilities, supply-demand, and training. Not every topic area is addressed each quarter.

Policy News Highlights is organized as an annotated bibliography with short summaries of recent articles and reports grouped according to their topic area.

Apprenticeship

The Benefits and Costs of Apprenticeship: A Business Perspective, U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration in partnership with Case Western Reserve University, November 2016

The skilled trades that support the nation's construction industry still represent the core of American apprenticeships. However, many other industries, like healthcare and information technology, are adopting apprenticeships to create a skilled workforce for jobs they cannot otherwise fill easily. Apprenticeships in these new occupations and industries are also opening doors for women and minorities. Companies most often turn to apprenticeships to find labor that meets their minimum standards. This report contains findings from 13 case studies of businesses and intermediaries that have experience and success in implementing registered apprenticeships. Three types of metrics were used to measure benefits to the apprenticeship model: production, workforce, and soft skills. The companies were unanimous in support of apprenticeships, reporting improvements in overall performance and competitive advantage over other firms. Although few companies calculate internal return on investment for apprenticeship programs, the report provides a roadmap to help employers measure the costs and benefits of apprenticeships.

<http://www.esa.gov/sites/default/files/the-benefits-and-costs-of-apprenticeships-a-business-perspective.pdf>

Career and College Readiness

Accelerating Opportunity for Veterans: A Governor's Blueprint for Pathways to Veterans' Civilian Licensing and Certification, National Governor's Association, November 2016

This paper is intended to serve as a blueprint for governors to inform efforts to accelerate veterans' licensing and certification. It stems from a joint project with the U.S. Department of Labor, through which six states—

Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Nevada, Virginia, and Wisconsin—identified the most efficient processes for accelerating veterans’ employment opportunities. Each site selected up to three high-demand occupations to focus on licensing and credentialing strategies for pre-selected military occupational specialties with close linkages to the civilian workforce. For example, in Illinois, three high-growth, high-demand occupations were chosen to focus on police patrol officers, emergency medical technicians and paramedics, and licensed practical nurses.

www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/2016/1611AcceleratingOpportunity.pdf/

Connected to Careers: Expanding Employer Leadership in Career Development, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, August 2016

The modern workforce requires career advisors to have a more specialized and robust understanding of current labor market data and how occupational trends influence career pathways for youth. The report presents a framework that positions employers as customers of career development activities to help schools translate workforce needs into actionable steps for the education community. It outlines key activities for an employer account manager, as opposed to a school counselor, including represent the business community within schools; serve as a subject matter expert on career pathways; vet and match students with employers; validate skills acquired during work-based learning experiences; and organize high-quality and diverse talent sourcing networks. States and regions can explore how to scale efforts through employer networks or business associations. Although this report focuses on K-12 providers, the concept could be expanded to postsecondary providers or leveraged by community-based organizations targeting out-of-school youth.

https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/sites/default/files/USCCF_Connected%20to%20Careers_FINAL_0.pdf

Reverse Transfer: The path less traveled, Education Commission of the States, May 2015

Through reverse transfer policies and programs, students can combine credits from two- and four-year institutions to earn an associate’s degree while also working toward a bachelor’s degree. Typically, students are required to reach a certain number of combined credits between the two-year and four-year institutions while meeting all requirements for the associate’s degree. Once the student reaches the designated credits and requirements, an associate’s degree from the student’s two-year institution of origin is retroactively awarded. At the time of publication, seven states—including Texas—had legislation creating reverse transfer. The Reverse Transfer Project, managed by the National Student Clearinghouse, is piloting a program to address issues with data transfer processes and limitations. In phase II, the clearinghouse plans to roll out a nationwide data mart to enable enrollment records to be cross-checked against students’ academic records to ensure greater data accuracy.

www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/18/77/11877.pdf/

Career and Technical Education

Credentials of Value: State Strategies for Identifying and Endorsing Industry-Recognized Credentials, Advance CTE, October 2016

With two-thirds of all new jobs projected to require some postsecondary education and training by 2020, states play a larger role in identifying and endorsing credentials of value. Many credentials are stackable, meaning the credentials can build as skills and competencies are mastered through various stages of an individual’s education and training, ultimately leading toward an advanced credential or degree. Stackable credentials allow states to support career pathways that are aligned to workforce competencies that span across career and technical education and workforce systems. By building a list of industry-endorsed credentials, states can also ensure that there is transparency in the certification and assessment of student competencies, and that students are encouraged to pursue occupations in high-demand fields. Job seekers and employers alike stand to benefit from such a system. The paper presents promising practices from

Florida, Kansas, and Louisiana—describing how each state tackles the challenge in a different way and highlighting a few common strategies.

<https://careertech.org/resource/credentials-of-value/>

Connecting Credentials: From National Dialogue to Collective Action – Building Learning-based Credentialing Systems, Connecting Credentials (Lumina Foundation and Corporation for a Skilled Workforce), September 2016

In today's knowledge-based economy, people need more than a high school diploma to land a job that leads to advancement. Postsecondary credentials help connect people to jobs, help employers find the skilled workers they need, and link education and training programs to each other, often through structured pathways. The cost and quality of programs that result in credentials vary enormously. Tools to accelerate completion and enhance learning—such as stackable credentials, credit for prior learning, competency-based programs, and work-based learning—are not universally available. This is due, in part, to the inadequate ways of measuring learning and outdated transfer and articulation policies and processes. This seven-point plan identifies specific actions to be undertaken by system stakeholders and ways those actions can be accomplished. It also provides examples of critical work already underway in each of the seven areas.

Accessible at connectingcredentials.org, the plan will be updated regularly.

<http://connectingcredentials.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Action-Plan.pdf>

Competitiveness

The State of American Jobs, Pew Research Center, October 2016

This new survey found that the vast majority of U.S. workers say that new skills and training may be the key to their future job success. Overall, the survey findings and employment data show how Americans are striving to adapt to new labor force realities. The report highlighted the following key themes: the nature of jobs is changing with an increased need for social, analytical, and technical skills; there is a growing need for continuous training and skills development; earnings increase only modestly and benefits are less plentiful; workers have a perception of decreased job security; workers are responsible for job readiness; and many college graduates do not think colleges do a great job preparing students for the workplace. Of note, in 2015, 25 percent of U.S. workers had a job-related certification or license (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data).

http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2016/10/ST_2016.10.06_Future-of-Work_FINAL4.pdf

State Technology and Science Index 2016: Sustaining America's Innovation Economy, Milken Institute, October 2016

The index endeavors to benchmark states on science and technology capabilities and broader commercialization ecosystems that contribute to company growth, high-value-added job creation, and overall economic growth. The Milken Institute views the index as a measure of a state's innovation pipeline. It is not intended to measure immediate economic impact, but rather to demonstrate that the return on science and technology assets will accrue in future years. Individuals who recognize and have the knowledge and skills to develop entrepreneurial opportunity are among the strongest assets a geographical area can have in today's innovation-based economy. The index's 107 individual indicators are sorted into five categories: research and development inputs, risk capital and entrepreneurial infrastructure, human capital investment, technology and science workforce, and technology concentration and dynamism. Overall, Texas ranked number 19 in the technology and science index in 2016, compared to number 20 in 2014.

<http://assets1b.milkeninstitute.org/assets/Publication/ResearchReport/PDF/State-Technology-and-Science-Index-2016.pdf>

The Global Competitiveness Report 2016–2017, World Economic Forum, September 2016

The 2016–2017 report assesses the competitiveness landscape of 138 economies, providing insight into the drivers of productivity and prosperity. This year's edition indicates that declining openness to trade and investment is threatening growth and prosperity. It also reports that monetary stimulus measures are not enough to sustain growth and must be accompanied by competitiveness reforms. A final key finding points to the fact that updated business practices and investment in innovation are now as important as infrastructure, skills, and efficient markets. Switzerland, Singapore, and the United States remain the three most competitive economies in the world.

http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GCR2016-2017/05FullReport/TheGlobalCompetitivenessReport2016-2017_FINAL.pdf

Data

Programs and Services for High School English Learners in Public School Districts: 2015–16, National Center for Education Statistics, September 2016

This report presents data from the first nationally representative survey on programs and services for high school English learners that include instructional approaches, newcomer programs, online or computer-based programs, and other targeted services such as tutoring. An estimated 774,500 high school-level English learner students were enrolled in public schools in 2015–2016. About 62 percent of public school districts report enrolling English learners at the high school level. The report provides findings on the use of native language for content instruction, instructional support, materials, and services. Data are presented about the information that districts provide to English learners ages 18 to 21 seeking to newly enroll, and about the factors districts consider when providing information about these programs and services.

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016150.pdf/>

The Talent Attraction Scorecard: Ranking Counties on How They Attract and Develop Skilled Labor, Emsi, August 2016

Economic development focuses not only on business attraction, but also on a finite resource—skilled labor. The report looks at how well counties are attracting and developing skilled workers. It is based on an index that uses five metrics: net migration, overall job growth, skilled job growth, regional competitiveness, annual openings per capita. The metrics are used to rank how effectively every county has attracted new residents, grown skilled and overall workforces, and secured a greater share of skilled workers than other regions. A complementary ranking considers the attraction of young talent based on growth in college enrollment and millennial population per capita. Finally, cost-of-living adjusted earnings are used to help explain why talent is or is not moving to these counties.

www.economicmodeling.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Talent-Attraction-Scorecard.pdf/

Miscellaneous

Gig Work, Online Selling and Home Sharing, Pew Research Center, November 2016

Advances in technology have greatly expanded the opportunities and simplified the ways in which people can work and make money. This report is part of an ongoing series examining the new digital economy and the future of work more broadly. It notes two major social trends: the emergence of online platforms that facilitate direct transactions between consumers and providers and the growing prevalence of part-time and contingent employment. There is no universally accepted definition for the range of activities that fall under the gig economy or for who should be counted as a gig worker. Pew Research Center conducted a nationally representative survey that explored three ways that people might utilize online platforms to work or

otherwise earn money: technology-enabled gig work, home sharing, or online selling. Findings indicate that 24 percent of Americans report earning money from the digital platform economy in the past year.

http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2016/11/17161707/PI_2016.11.17_Gig-Workers_FINAL.pdf

Independent Work: Choice, Necessity, and the Gig Economy, McKinsey Global Institute, October 2016

Although independent work has a long history, it has never been clearly defined or consistently measured in official labor market statistics. This report looks at the spectrum of ways in which individuals can earn income outside of the traditional employment model, focusing on the characteristics of the work itself rather than the legal arrangements surrounding it. The definition of independent work provided in the report focuses on three key features: high degree of autonomy; payment by task, assignment, or sales; and short-term relationship between worker and customer. Three main categories of independent workers are considered: those who provide labor services, sell goods, and rent out assets. All three categories involve investment of time and effort, and are not mutually exclusive. The report estimates that there are 54-68 million independent earners in the U.S. However, government data significantly undercount those who engage in independent work to supplement income, such as traditional jobholders who do independent work on the side, or retirees or students who do not fully rely on these earnings.

www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/employment-and-growth/independent-work-choice-necessity-and-the-gig-economy/

Workers and the Online Gig Economy, The Hamilton Project, December 2015

The online gig economy has increased policy interest in contingent work arrangements, which broadly include independent contractors as well as part-time, temporary, seasonal, or subcontracted workers. In some respects, these on-demand “jobs” benefit both workers and the economy and help to support job growth and household incomes in the post-Great Recession labor market recovery. They often feature flexible hours, low or no training costs, and generally few barriers to worker entry. These features have enabled gig-economy workers to generate new income or to supplement their primary incomes, while customers have benefited from the convenience and availability of services. However, other aspects of the gig economy have raised some concerns. For example, these jobs generally confer few employer-provided benefits and workplace protections. This paper describes the broader economic context of contingent employer-employee relationships in regard to the emerging on-demand gig economy. It also highlights regulatory and measurement gaps.

www.hamiltonproject.org/assets/files/workers_and_the_online_gig_economy.pdf/

Training

Promising Practices in Work-Based Learning for Youth, National Skills Coalition and National Youth Employment Coalition, October 2016

Disconnected and at-risk youth have more difficulty finding employment, earn less throughout their career, are more likely to be incarcerated, and are more likely to be young parents than their peers who are in school or working. Notably, recent changes to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act require local workforce areas to spend at least 20 percent of their youth formula funds on developing work experience and expanding internships, apprenticeships, and other employer-based models. This paper finds that well-designed work-based learning opportunities can provide occupational and work readiness training as well as income support for disconnected and at-risk youth. It examines four different work-based learning strategies, illustrates key elements of success, identifies challenges, and makes policy recommendations to address those challenges.

www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resources/publications/file/10-4-NSC-YouthWorkBasedLearning_v4.pdf/

State Strategies to Scale Quality Work-Based Learning, National Governors Association, October 2016

According to this report, industries across all states are struggling with a growing mismatch between the needs of industry and the skills of workers. This skills mismatch has resulted in a significant negative impact on the economic competitiveness of states. The paper highlights the experiences of the six states participating in a National Governors Association Center policy academy focused on scaling work-based learning programs in high-demand, middle-skills science, technology, engineering, and math careers. Research has shown that high-quality work-based learning is an effective strategy for equipping the workforce with industry-relevant skills and strengthening the competitiveness of the state. Steps can be taken to elevate the vision for high-quality work-based learning, implement state-led pilots, build an infrastructure to scale and sustain efforts, and provide incentives to host and support work-based learning opportunities. Scaling high-quality work-based learning can ensure that such opportunities are available statewide, benefit employers across industries and participants from varied backgrounds, and further state goals for a skilled workforce.

www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/2016/1610StateStrategiesWorkBasedLearning.pdf/

Making Work-Based Learning Work, Jobs for the Future, July 2016

This paper guides the design and implementation of effective models of work-based learning that expand access for people who do not currently benefit from these opportunities. The recent growth in work-based learning opportunities has been driven in part by employers' recognition of the role it can play in addressing a skills gap and in developing a more diverse talent pipeline. Work-based learning has reemerged as many Americans struggle to find opportunities to enter and advance in careers. Youth are facing high rates of unemployment, which limits their early exposure to work and hampers college and career decisions. Millions of workers need retraining, transferable skills, fresh work experiences, and industry-recognized credentials to update skills and advance to better careers. To address these issues, the report introduces seven principles for effective work-based learning: (1) support entry and advancement in a career track; (2) provide meaningful job tasks that build career skills and knowledge; (3) offer compensation; (4) identify target skills and how gains will be validated; (5) reward skill development; (6) support college entry, persistence, and completion; and (7) provide comprehensive student supports.

www.jff.org/sites/default/files/publications/materials/WBL%20Principles%20Paper%20062416.pdf/