



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 (IR).

The IR is divided into 10 topic areas that correspond to priority issues supporting the Council's current strategic plan. They are: 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 grouped according to their topic area.

Adult Education

Expanding Competency-Based Education for All Learners, Jobs for the Future, February 2016

Competency-based education is becoming a useful tool among educators, employers, and students. Designed to meet students' needs on their individual path to a postsecondary credential, competency-based education allows students to advance at their own pace, based on their ability to master skills and competencies, rather than on time spent in class. Competency-based education practices may lead to quicker attainment of credentials, job placement, and career success. This brief highlights specific competency-based education practices for underprepared adult learners. Underprepared adult learners typically are adults age 25 years or older, characterized as low-income and low-skilled, and academically test into remedial education in at least one area. Primary components of a competency-based education model recommended to support the success of underprepared adult learners include intake, placement, and orientation; curricula and competency development; instructional delivery and pacing; student experience and supports; career connections; and credentials.

www.jff.org/sites/default/files/publications/materials/Postsecondary-CBE-020316.pdf

Supporting Parents Who Work and Go to School, Urban Institute, January 2016

Promising practices that improve the completion rates of students attending community colleges and four-year schools currently have the focus of policymakers. This paper examines the challenges and implications of low-income and working students in order to inform policymakers. The study finds that the majority of low-income, working students are female and older than 25 years of age. Most have completed some college; however, a quarter have attained a high school diploma or less. A large portion

of these students have more than one child and work full-time. The majority are enrolled in college programs, attend full-time, and work full-time. Key challenges that low-income working students face include managing complex schedules with limited child care and varying work shifts, and a lack of social benefits that support completion.

www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/2000575-Supporting-Parents-Who-Work-and-Go-to-School-A-Portrait-of-Low-Income-Students-Who-Are-Employed.pdf

Engaging Disconnected Young People in Education and Work, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, October 2015

According to this report, 6.7 million young people between the ages of 16 to 24 are not attending school or working. Referred to as disconnected youth, 1.6 million of these young adults lack either a high school diploma or equivalent. This report provides an overview of Project Rise, a program that served 18-to 24-year-olds who lacked a high school diploma or equivalent and had been out of work for at least six months. The program involved cohorts of 25 to 30 participants. For 12 months, the participants engaged in a sequence of activities that integrated case management support with preparation for a high school equivalency certificate, and a part-time internship supporting transition into the workforce. Findings demonstrate that participants were more attached to the education component than to the work-focused internship component and that more than 91 percent of participants attended some high school equivalency preparation. While instability in participants' lives produced challenges, 25 percent of participants earned a high school equivalency credential within 12 months of enrolling in the program.

www.mdrc.org/publication/engaging-disconnected-young-people-education-and-work/file-full

Apprenticeship

How States Are Expanding Apprenticeship, Center for American Progress, February 2016

Recently, the U.S. Department of Labor announced \$175 million in American Apprenticeship Grants to 46 applicants for the expansion and hiring of new apprentices across a range of industries. The goal of the initiative is to double and diversify the number of apprentices by 2019. Additionally, the initiative requires engagement from employers, labor unions, and public sector representatives to work collaboratively with community colleges, training providers, members of workforce investment systems, and state apprenticeship agencies to expand and develop new apprenticeship programs. Apprenticeship training is a sequence of classroom instruction and on-the-job training where workers learn academic aspects of an occupation. Apprentices are full-time, paid employees who earn while they learn. The average wage for an apprentice who has completed a program is \$50,000. In this report, strategies on expanding apprenticeship programs include: 1) develop a talent pipeline through pre-apprentice and youth apprentice programs; 2) organize partnerships to develop high-quality, effective programs that address workforce needs; 3) institute a comprehensive plan to combine apprenticeship as part of a state's workforce strategy; and 4) direct state funds to develop new and expanding existing programs.

www.luminafoundation.org/files/resources/how-states-are-expanding-apprenticeship.pdf

Recasting American Apprenticeship: A Summary of the Barriers to Apprenticeship Expansion Research Project, The Aspen Institute Skills for America's Future, November 2015

Recommendations that address barriers when expanding an apprenticeship program are provided in this report to support grantee organizations in the U.S. Department of Labor's \$175 million American Apprenticeship Grants program. The program will create opportunities for more than 34,000 new apprentices over the next five years. Apprenticeship programs operate within traditional industries, such

as construction trades, but have expanded into new fields such as, information technology, advanced manufacturing, and healthcare. This type of postsecondary training produces highly skilled workers with experience in employer-specific processes and culture. Recommendations for expanding an apprenticeship program include exposing businesses to the value of apprenticeship, using the program as an opportunity to re-train incumbent workers, and considering ways to support apprentices with stipends during classroom instruction. Businesses should also utilize the pre-apprenticeship program to enlarge their pipeline of worker talent. The authors present the apprenticeship program as the premier education and training option to attract a diverse group of workers, including underrepresented populations.

www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/docs/pubs/RecastingApprenticeshipV2.pdf

Career and College Readiness

Seizing the Moment: Community Colleges Collaborating with K-12 to Improve Student Success, American Association of Community Colleges, Association of Community College Trustees, and Higher Ed for Higher Standards, February 2016

To close the preparation gap, the community college sector has an opportunity to collaborate with K-12 education to increase student success by improving college readiness. High schools are utilizing new standards to help students who are ready for college-level course work. This report recommends that community colleges should partner with K-12 and develop additional college readiness supports; revise institutional placement practices; and provide first-year students with co-requisite opportunities.

Collaboration between system leaders and policymakers will help identify, revise, and provide college readiness measures. Actions focus on three areas of policy and practice directly affecting the success of students prior to leaving high school. These include precollege interventions, revised placement policies for incoming students, and redesigned first-year experiences to support retention.

www.aacc.nche.edu/newsevents/pressreleases/Documents/HEfHS-CommunityCollege-Paper-Final-web.pdf

Co-requisite Remediation: Spanning the Completion Divide: Breakthrough Results Fulfilling the Promise of College Access for Underprepared Students, Complete College America, January 2016

More than one million students begin college in remediation or prerequisite classes. This summary introduces co-requisite remediation in which students enroll into college-level courses and receive any required remediation support to complement their regular classes. Several states are highlighted throughout the summary that have demonstrated successful models for transforming traditional remediation models. For example, Tennessee established co-requisite remediation models and found that student success rates in remediation classes have increased dramatically in two years, and West Virginia adopted a co-requisite reform model and found that success rates have climbed sharply.

www.luminafoundation.org/files/resources/corequisite-remediation.pdf

What We Know About Transition Courses, Community College Research Center, January 2016

Close to two-thirds of students entering community colleges and forty percent of students entering four-year institutions are enrolled in remedial education. Transition courses that address deficiencies in student learning in high school are aimed toward seniors whose eleventh grade assessment results indicate that they are not college-ready. In most cases, students successfully completing the transition courses are college ready and no longer in need of remedial education. This report provides guidance on the design and implementation of transition courses to ensure that all students who graduate from high school are ready for college. The report suggests that the eleventh grade state tests should provide

evidence of students' progress toward college readiness. The K-12 and higher education sectors should share responsibility and promote and collaborate together in the design and implementation of the transition courses. Program improvements should be based on evidence of program effectiveness. ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/what-we-know-about-transition-courses.pdf

Using Dual Enrollment to Improve the Educational Outcomes of High School Students, National ACT, December 2015

Dual enrollment allows high school students the opportunity to earn college credit by taking college courses at their high school, at a postsecondary institution, or online. The National ACT research illustrates that high school graduates entering college with dual enrollment credits are more likely to succeed in college than students who enter college without such credits. The report poses the following recommendations targeted at increasing the participation in dual enrollment programs: 1) develop funding processes to encourage participation in dual enrollment programs; 2) provide incentives for high school teachers to teach dual enrollment programs; 3) ensure students are prepared to meet the challenge of dual enrollment coursework; and 4) ensure access to dual enrollment programs is available in places where a postsecondary institution is not conveniently located. www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/UsingDualEnrollment_2015.pdf

Career and Technical Education

Preparing a Globally Competent Workforce through High-Quality Career and Technical Education, Association for Career and Technical Education, Longview Foundation, Association for Career and Technical Education, January 2016

As communities grow more diverse, this paper examines the role of career technical education instruction in preparing students for the global workforce and integrating curriculum to develop global competencies in career technical education. Our globe has become interconnected due to rapid economic, technological, and social changes. The education system is facing a new imperative—preparing students for a global work environment. Success will increasingly require the ability to compete, connect, and cooperate on an international scale, and students can learn these global competencies through career technical education. Globally-minded career technical education programs provide the rigorous and authentic setting necessary to prepare students for the competitive world economy, while offering engaging, motivating, and relevant education. www.careertech.org/sites/default/files/GlobalCompetencyCTE-FINAL.pdf

Clusters and Sector Strategies

Optimizing Talent: The Promise and the Perils of Adopting Sectoral Strategies for Young Workers, The Aspen Institute, February 2016

The unemployment rate for young adults, age 16 to 24, with less than a high school diploma, is 35.5 percent. Young adults have multiple options to access postsecondary education and training; however, other support is needed to help them gain skills that will lead them to self-sufficiency.

This report examines the effectiveness of sector strategies from New York City's Young Adult Sectoral Employment Project JobsFirst program. It also provides best practices from several sector-based employment programs developed for young adults. The report shares a best practice method by which policymakers can expand and deepen access for young adults to sectoral employment initiatives by

improving job stability and advancement pathways. Also listed as best practices are collaboration of community-based organizations with financial incentives that support current and future partnerships, and developing sectoral strategies that move beyond job placements.

www.aspenwsi.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Optimizing_Talent.pdf

Greenprint: A Plan to Prepare Community College Students for Careers in the Clean Economy, Jobs for the Future, December 2015

The clean economy industry emphasizes manufacturing, natural resource conservation, environmental management, recycling, and renewable energy. This report illustrates programs that are being implemented in community colleges to provide graduates with skills for working in clean economy middle-skill jobs. These jobs require a high school credential with additional on-the-job training, postsecondary credentials, or a two-year degree. Policy and system changes are proposed in order to expand the clean economy industry. These proposed policies include strengthening the training for middle-skill careers and preparing for growth in clean economy careers and business; closing the achievement gap and increasing educational achievement; and addressing climate change and incorporating federal, state, and local efforts.

www.jff.org/sites/default/files/publications/materials/Greenprint-121515.pdf

Closing Skill Gaps, The Council of State Governments, October 2015

This paper examines strategies to close skill gaps in order to meet employer needs. Recently, policymakers have been hearing that employers are unable to find skilled workers for their middle-skill job openings. Middle-skill jobs account for the largest slice of the labor market, and yet most states don't have enough workers with these skills. These middle-skill positions require some postsecondary education but not a bachelor's degree. There is great opportunity to move state workforce development systems forward using proven policies to close skill gaps. Several states have aligned middle-skill programs with employer needs through proven strategies, such as sector partnerships, career pathways, job-drive investments, and cross-agency data and measurement. Sector partnerships bring together multiple employers and stakeholders to align training with the skills needed through career pathways that align and integrate education and job training with counseling and other support services. Job-driven investment uses labor market information to guide direct training toward jobs that are in demand. Cross-agency data and measurement provide information on alignment of workforce and education from a workforce system perspective.

<http://knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/system/files/Wilson%202015.pdf>

Competitiveness

What Works for Disconnected Young People a Scan of the Evidence, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, February 2016

This paper reviews policies and programs designed to help disconnected young adults, ages 16 to 24. A scan of policies, programs, websites, and interviews of experts in the field was completed in order to learn about the programs designed for disconnected young adults. Findings of the review show that policies affecting young adults range greatly across public schools, adult basic and secondary education, foster care, and mental health systems. Some programs share mutual characteristics including education, training, support services, and follow-up services. Challenges that must be addressed among the programs include keeping the young adults engaged, addressing barriers, transportation issues, child care, and staff turnover.

www.mdrc.org/publication/what-works-disconnected-young-people/file-full

Connecting Young Adults to Employment: Results from a National Survey of Service Providers,

Workforce Strategies Initiative at the Aspen Institute, January 2016

The unemployment rate for young adults was 12.2 percent in July 2015, close to double the national unemployment rate of 5.3 percent. This report presents results from a survey completed by organizations that provide a comprehensive range of employment services to young adults ages 18-29. Job search and placement services, job-skills and prerequisites training, occupational training and higher education services, and support services are highlighted. The providers worked with industries with adequate paid entry-level job openings and demand for young adults, such as construction, transportation or warehousing, manufacturing, healthcare, retail, and restaurant and food service.

www.aspenwsi.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/YAemploy.pdf

Work: Thriving in a Turbulent, Technological and Transformed Global Economy, Council on Competitiveness, January 2016

Reviewing trends that affect the U.S. labor market and the opportunities and challenges presented for U.S. workers, this report provides a roadmap to align education and training, supply employers with the talent needed to compete in a global pool of skilled workers, and help workers be productive and prosperous. The workforce has experienced significant change, such as demand for higher skills, labor market polarization, the digital revolution and rapid technological change. Additionally, a premium on workers who possess high skills and the knowledge to perform the complex non-routine tasks that drive service and product innovation is attracting competition from educated and skilled workers from emerging economies for knowledge-intensive jobs. A national skills agenda is needed to develop a diversely skilled and adaptable workforce that will build foundations for success in a high-skill and technology-driven global economy.

www.compete.org/storage/WORK_Full_Report.pdf

Supply Demand

Six Million Missing Jobs: The Lingering Pain of the Great Recession, Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, December 2015

Six years into the economic recovery after the recession, jobs are steadily growing. While employers have been adding 234,000 jobs per month on average per quarter since 2014, the impact on the labor market is still felt. The economy is still missing 6.4 million jobs that would have been created during that recession period had the economy been healthy. Approximately 8 million jobs were lost between 2007 and 2010. The jobs recovery began in 2010 and created 10.6 million jobs, giving us 2.6 million more jobs in the economy than there were before the recession. If the recession had never transpired and job creation continued at the same rate, the economy would have created 9 million jobs, providing 155.3 million jobs by the end of 2015. The report states that wages remain stagnant. A large number of workers remain unemployed or underemployed, and the unemployment rate does not take into account the discouraged workers who have stopped seeking a job but still want to work. If the economy is to close the jobs gap by 2020, it is estimated that employers will need to add 205,000 jobs a month over the next four years. By doing so, all the missing jobs will be recovered by 2020, if the economy keeps adding jobs at the current pace.

www.luminafoundation.org/files/resources/six-million-missing-jobs.pdf