



SITAC Quarterly Report

*System Integration Technical Advisory Committee
Texas Workforce Investment Council
March 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 eight partner agencies, as well as representation from the Texas Association of Workforce Boards. SITAC's key responsibility is the implementation of the workforce system strategic plan.

Next Meeting

Thursday, June 2, 2011 – 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) that address the critical business issues identified during a yearlong collaborative planning process.

SITAC members meet quarterly, providing status reports on action plans (APs) 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.

Implementation Update: December 2010

Reports for five *Advancing Texas*' APs were presented at the December 2 SITAC meeting. Summaries are provided for each AP, grouped by the plan's key performance areas (KPA).

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 the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC).

TWC has made progress toward creating a supply and demand database. Most work has been accomplished on the demand side, largely through the agency's Strategic Workforce Assessment Project (SWAP). Readily available supply-demand reports will provide data needed for education and training providers to plan and better align their programs to industry needs.

While noting that work on the supply side continues to be more difficult, TWC is working with THECB to address that challenge.

Message from the Chair

In December 2010, agencies responsible for several APs provided status reports and all members presented updates for the 2011 Legislative session. In addition, members received brief updates on the Council's *Evaluation 2010* report and the 2011 meeting schedule.

I was pleased to welcome four of my fellow Council members to our December meeting. Their presence provides an opportunity to interact with partner representatives and underscores the Council's commitment to learning more about implementation progress and challenges.

As we move forward with the second year of *Advancing Texas*' implementation, we plan to schedule in-depth presentations on partner projects that directly relate to or complement action plan (AP) reports. This effort will begin in March 2011 with the Texas Veterans Commission's Business Outreach initiative which supports the objective of **AP C2 – Veteran Employment**.

Paul Mayer

Rather than publishing an annual report, the agencies proposed utilizing the online SWAP system and developing a user guide and desk reference to facilitate understanding by community college faculty and other potential users. Another recommended action was to schedule site demonstrations for SITAC and for a group of community and technical college representatives.

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. As next steps, the partner agencies will:

- ★ determine if enhancements to SWAP are feasible;
- ★ follow up on the middle skills issue;
- ★ develop a prototype report to demonstrate to potential users the utility of an online analysis and gap identification system report; and
- ★ obtain feedback on the prototype from selected community colleges and local boards.

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Linked to the same issue, **LTO S2** focuses on college and career readiness. The intent is to increase the availability of both academic and rigorous career technical education (CTE) courses to support all students through a range of choices including two- and four-year degrees, apprenticeship and the military.

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

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) continues to make progress on the AP tasks, including the design, development and coordination with THECB on dual credit transfer policies and processes. Studies are underway related to dual credit costs and effectiveness and to assess utilizing dual credit as a substitute for end of course exams.

The partner agencies acknowledge that one challenge is varying requirements between academic and CTE courses.

They are working to ensure that CTE course outcomes are comparable to those required for academic courses.

THECB is also working to facilitate better understanding of CTE and is increasing communication with students, parents and counselors as one way to improve student persistence and completion rates.

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As one way to improve educational outcomes, system partners are working to improve secondary and postsecondary transitions. **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 provides high school juniors and seniors the option of enrolling in a college course and receiving simultaneous academic credit from both the college and the high school. Since their last report, TEA and THECB have made progress on several tasks, including:

- ★ Perkins Leadership Grant funds are being used to promote better understanding of dual credit transfer options by counselors, parents and students.
- ★ A cost effectiveness study is underway, with a report expected in February 2011.

- ★ A research study to assess utilizing dual credit as a substitute for end of course exams is being finalized and is expected to serve as a resource for the Legislature.
- ★ Data systems for tracking and evaluating student outcomes are being enhanced, with initial data expected in summer 2011.
- ★ THECB has begun efforts to incorporate dual credit courses into the *Academic Course Guide Manual*. Vertical teams will be formed to begin work on high-demand courses, primarily those in STEM fields. The goal is to build outcome requirements for 8-10 courses during the first year.
- ★ TEA continues to develop and deploy Early College High School programs and the partners may develop statewide dual credit courses to be made available through the Virtual School Network.

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

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 full population of high school graduates. With major worker and skill shortages projected across the state, continued expansion of dual credit and related initiatives should help meet the education and training needs of future workers.

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.

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

LTO C4 requires TEA and 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 literacy acquisition. A workgroup has been formed that includes local workforce board and provider representatives as well as partner

agency and Council staff. The group is charged with designing and developing a model of program outreach and delivery that fits within existing adult education funding, program offerings and initiatives, and that can be offered concurrently with adult education levels 4 through 6.

TWC completed an assessment that identified local boards with strong relationships with adult education providers. The Alamo, Capital Area and Gulf Coast boards have been selected as pilot program candidates.

TEA has committed \$400,000 in Adult Education State Leadership funds for the pilots. The partner agencies will negotiate pilot terms with local providers and boards, and were on track to complete this task by February 2011. Requirements will include data tracking through both TEA and TWC systems, as well as looking at ways to bring participants back to pursue completion of GED requirements.

KPA: Programs, Products and Services

Data must be available to benchmark Texas against other states and countries in the most significant and strategic educational, workforce and market outcomes. Since 2005, the Council has published the *Texas Index (Index)* annually and continues to do so under **LTO P3**. The report is distributed to the Council, the Governor, policy makers, and system partners and stakeholders.

Published last fall, the *Texas Index 2010* was the sixth annual release of the *Index*, providing data for 42 indicators across four categories, or domains: Training and Education, Research and Development, Market Composition and Characteristics, and Participant Access and Contribution. The *Index*, its domains and indicators within those domains, demonstrate a value proposition that contains four critical, interrelated elements: intellectual capital, human capital, financial capital, and the progression to an improved standard of living for Texans.

The *Texas Index 2010* includes longitudinal data for Texas benchmarked against other large states and internationally. Where data were available, each indicator page included:

- ★ indicator definition and calculation;
- ★ large states' trend analysis comparative graph (top 4 or 5);
- ★ 50-state ranking and analysis;
- ★ description of the international comparative table (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development top three, BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India or China) top two and U.S. average); and
- ★ summary of the indicator's importance.

Annual Data Set (*Texas Index*) [P3] –
Annually, the Council will produce a data set whereby system stakeholders can ascertain Texas' position relative to key indicators of competitiveness.
Owner / Participant: Council

The report also contains a report card that provides a snapshot of how Texas is performing across the four domains, thus identifying achievement as well as areas for improvement. High school degree attainment by the population age 25 and up continues to be of concern, with Texas having the lowest rate in the nation. The ongoing effects of the recession are expected to be seen again in data released in 2011.

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

Debbie Roberts, 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. MacGregor Stephenson, Assistant Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Research

Texas Veterans Commission

Bill Wilson, Director, Veterans Employment Services

Texas Workforce Commission

Gene Crump, Deputy Executive Director

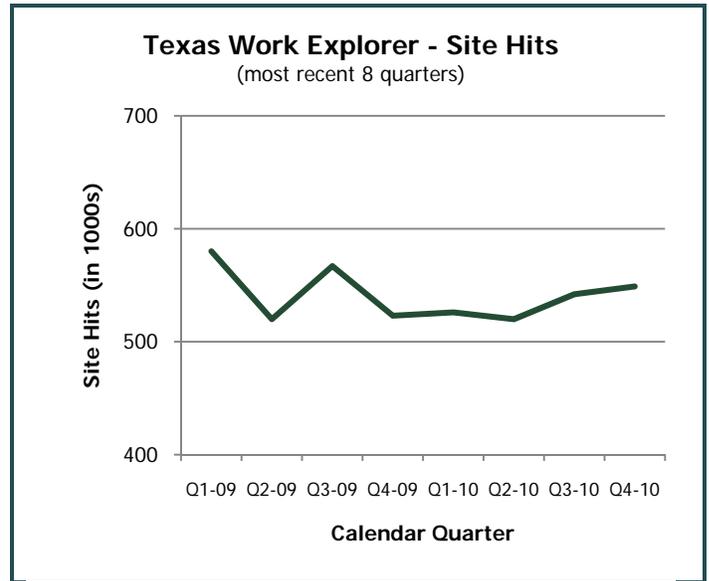
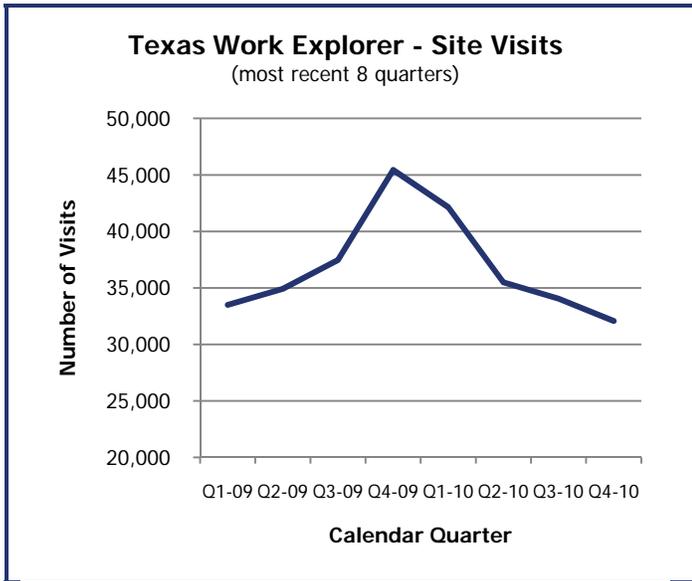
Texas Youth Commission

Dr. Clint Carpenter, Superintendent of Education

Texas Work Explorer Portal

Available at www.texasworkexplorer.com, the Texas Work Explorer Portal is on Texas.gov, Texas' official website. Since the portal's implementation, Texas.gov was launched and system partners significantly enhanced and expanded their primary and wholly-supported websites. The portal's purpose is now met through other online options; therefore, as a cost-saving measure, the portal project will be discontinued in April 2011.

Current *WebTrends* 'visit' and 'hit' data is presented below:



Visit – A series of actions that begins when a visitor views the first page from the server and ends when the visitor leaves the site or remains idle beyond the idle-time limit (30 minutes).
- WebTrends®

Hit – Each file requested by a visitor registers a hit. There can be several hits on each page. While the volume of hits reflects the amount of server traffic, it is not an accurate reflection of the number of pages viewed.
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