



SITAC Quarterly Report

System Integration Technical Advisory Committee
Texas Workforce Investment Council
Quarter Ending September 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

March 13, 2014 – 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: September 2013

At the September 2013 SITAC meeting, reports were presented for five of *Advancing Texas'* action plans and for the Council's demographic report series. Summaries are provided below.

Dual Credit Transfer

Career technical education (CTE) provides valuable skills training and often lessens 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. Streamlining processes, and in some cases shortening time to program completion, should help increase enrollment and completion of courses, credentials, and degrees. One plan objective focuses on the processes for transferring dual credit from high schools to postsecondary institutions.

Several of *Advancing Texas'* action plans, including this one, were affected by passage of House Bill (HB) 5 (83rd Legislature) which requires changes to public school accountability, including assessment and graduation requirements. The bill allows the education commissioner to join a multi-state consortium for developing CTE courses in high-demand career areas and also allows school districts to develop CTE courses or career training programs. It also requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA), in collaboration with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), to evaluate the changes to the curriculum requirements required by the bill.

Message from the Chair

In September, members provided updates on outcomes of the 2013 legislative session and early plans for implementing new mandates. We also heard reports on the Council's demographic report series and the upcoming eighth release of the *Texas Index*.

Partner and staff work is under way on the Council's annual evaluation of the state's workforce system. This issue of the quarterly report includes updates for initiatives related to dual credit transfer, English language learner and veteran employment, and agency projects that focus on employer needs and satisfaction.

On behalf of the Council, thank you to all partners for their commitment and collaboration!

Paul Mayer

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

TEA continues to work with public high schools to meet the Texas Education Code §28.009 mandate to offer all students at least 12 hours of college credit. School districts have local authority over which methods to use, with options including dual credit, advanced placement, international baccalaureate, and advanced technical credit courses, as well as locally articulated courses. HB 5 (83rd Legislature) also provides for a performance acknowledgement for outstanding performance in a dual credit course and other areas.

THECB defines dual credit as a process by which a high school junior or senior enrolls in a course and receives simultaneous academic credit from both the college and the high school. Dual credit courses are often taught at secondary schools for high school students only; however, high school students can also take courses at a college campus and earn both high school and college credits. Work on this objective focuses on the processes for transferring dual credit from high schools to postsecondary institutions. Dual credit enrollment has risen significantly since record keeping began in 1999, dipping slightly in 2010 before rising to highs of 94,550 in 2011 and 99,452 in 2012 (6.4 percent and 6.8 percent, respectively, of total fall enrollments).

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

TEA and THECB continue to work together on all aspects of the infrastructure for transferring academic and technical dual credit courses from high schools to community and technical colleges and four-year institutions. Related research and publications include:

- ★ *Research Study of Texas Dual Credit Programs and Courses* was published in March 2011. TEA, in collaboration with THECB, contracted with American Institutes for Research and Gibson Consulting Group, Inc. to conduct the study.
- ★ *Dual Credit Report* was published by THECB in March 2012. This report fulfills the requirements of Rider 33, HB 1 (82nd Legislature).
- ★ *Study of Early Assessment and Early Intervention Models*, prepared by Jobs for the Future, was published in November 2012. It fulfills the requirements of HB 3468 (82nd Legislature) which required TEA, in consultation with THECB, to conduct a study of best practices for and existing programs offering early assessments of high school students to determine college readiness, identify any deficiencies in college readiness, and provide intervention to address any deficiencies before high school graduation.

Key actions include:

- ★ TEA planned to fund a research study to assess utilizing dual credit as a substitute for end-of-course (EOC) exams. These were being phased in beginning with 2011–12 ninth grade students, adding successive grades annually through 2014–15. With the phased implementation of EOC exams, this study was most appropriately conducted on a schedule that coincided with implementation of EOC exams for grades 11 and 12, scheduled to begin in 2013. However, action taken during the 83rd Legislative Session reduced the number of EOC exams required for graduation from 15 to five, resulting in the likelihood that most students will take all but one EOC exam prior to grade 11. TEA is currently assessing the impact of legislative changes.
- ★ The agencies are also improving data systems for tracking and evaluating student outcomes. Beginning fall 2011, THECB data systems allowed the tracking of students from dual credit into college level courses with associated course grades included. This provides greater opportunities to evaluate the preparedness level of students who take courses as dual credit versus as a traditional college course in addition to the success that each group has in successive college courses. Data analysis will be limited to the number of cohorts included in the system, beginning with the fiscal year (FY) 2012 cohort.

TEA implemented the Texas Student Data System as an alternative system. Early adopters began using the new system in the 2013–14 school year. The system will be rolled out to the remaining Local Educational Agencies in Texas in three phases, ending in 2016–17.

- ★ THECB is working with community college and university faculty to develop explicit learning outcomes that will be consistent across academic courses taught statewide. This process has been completed for over 6.42 million of the almost 10.4 million semester credit hours (SCH) from the FY 2012 academic year. This represents 62 percent of the total SCH taken by students in academic disciplines.
- ★ TEA continues to deploy early college high schools (ECHS). There are currently 65, including six Texas Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math academies. The agency has implemented an annual application process for schools seeking initial or renewed ECHS designation.

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Veteran Employment

Veterans have a wide range of abilities and with training, referral, and placement services can return to the civilian workforce. They are one of four populations targeted by *Advancing Texas* for enhanced employment outcomes. The Texas Veterans Commission

(TVC) is leading the work on one action plan that is designed to ensure that state and leveraged federal services provide veterans with the programs, products, and services necessary to accommodate their needs and to enable them to enter the workforce successfully.

TVC offers employment services to Texas veterans and helps employers find qualified veteran job applicants. Veterans Employment Services staff are located statewide in workforce centers supported through Texas Workforce Solutions, the partnership of the TWC and the 28 local workforce boards. Currently, representatives are located at local board offices in over 75 cities. They offer one-on-one assistance to veterans, focusing on recently separated veterans, and also establish and facilitate contact with employers. TVC continues to work with veteran-specific hiring events, such as with JPMorgan Chase and the 100,000 Jobs Mission. Prior to this April event, TVC staff provided a series of workshops for veterans transitioning to the civilian workforce and later followed up with employers and veterans.

Veteran Employment [C2] – By 2013, the veteran population will achieve additional employment outcomes.

Owner / Participant: TVC

In 2009, TVC launched a new statewide initiative by hiring a dedicated Business Outreach Coordinator to work more closely with employers, TWC, and local workforce boards to leverage more training and placement services for veterans. TVC expanded this successful initiative, and Veterans Business Representatives (VBRs) are now strategically located in central Texas, the Dallas/Ft. Worth area, San Antonio, and Houston. At no cost, VBRs assist employers by providing personalized services – assessing employers' needs in order to match the skills, abilities, and experiences of veteran job candidates.

Senate Bill (SB) 1796 (82nd Legislature) established the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services (TCCVS) to coordinate activities of state agencies that assist veterans, coordinate outreach efforts, and facilitate relationships among state, federal, and local agencies to identify and address issues affecting veterans. Chaired by TVC, the group drafted a strategic plan that outlines specific issues related to service provision for Texas' veterans. TCCVS' initial report to the Legislature, submitted October 1, 2012, included recommendations in six areas including employment and higher education. SB 1892 (83rd Legislature) expanded the group's membership and simplified workgroup structure to allow more flexibility.

The Veteran Entrepreneur Program was formally created by SB 1476 (83rd Legislature). Based on a pilot project launched in April 2012, the program fosters and promotes veteran business ownership and entrepreneurship throughout Texas. During the pilot period, over 1,000 veterans received information on how to start or grow a business and 10 veteran-owned businesses were launched.

Since June, TVC and TWC have partnered on the State of Texas Soldier Employment Initiative, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). The pilot project is designed to help returning U.S. Army veterans find employment prior to separating from the service, particularly in growth industries such as the medical, energy, and technology fields. Texas was one of four states chosen for the project due to the high population of Army veterans and its history of collaboration with DOL and the Army to improve veterans' access to employment. Initiative representatives, all veterans themselves, are located in four workforce areas that provide services to communities near Fort Hood in Killeen, Fort Bliss in El Paso, Camp Mabry in Austin, and Ellington Air Field in Houston.



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 that is the focus of the action plan consists of individuals who have a high school diploma or degree in their native country, but for whom English is not their first language.

THECB supported the effort under Riders 45 and 56, SB 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 yet still focus on intended outcomes for integrated basic education and skills training.

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 was also monitored as a pilot. Performance reporting for the projects began last year, with data published in the Council's annual evaluation report.

Seven colleges involved in the pilot effort plan to continue their programs and to collect data on students enrolling in late spring and summer 2013 and completing in three, six, nine, or 12 months. These colleges are using THECB grant funds or their own institutional funds to continue with data collection.

The pilots were funded under THECB's Accelerate Texas initiative and are required to develop a sustainability plan and institutionalize successful elements of the program model. The eight colleges with pilot programs include three of the five colleges with lead roles for 2014–15: Alamo, Amarillo, and South Texas. Alamo plans to scale its program model through the Valley Academic Skills Training Consortium and will provide technical assistance to the four consortium colleges: Coastal Bend College, Laredo Community College, Southwest Texas Junior College, and Victoria College. The focus is on high-demand jobs in the Eagle Ford Shale Region.

An evaluation of the pilot programs is being conducted by Texas State University, with the final report expected this fall.



Competitiveness Data

Data are required to ensure that system initiatives will be developed and executed to strategically position Texas in the global marketplace. Data must be available to benchmark Texas against other states and countries in the most significant and strategic education, workforce, and market outcomes. One objective in *Advancing Texas* calls for continuation of the Council's efforts to produce a data set that allows system stakeholders to ascertain Texas' position relative to key indicators of competitiveness.

Since 2005, the Council has compiled data and published the *Texas Index*. The *Texas Index 2013*, the eighth release of this research report, is scheduled for publication in December. The report will provide trend data for 38 indicators across four domains or categories: Training and Education; Research and Development; Market Composition and Characteristics; and Participant Access and Contribution. Data in the four domains are based on the value proposition that skilled and educated people create innovations that result in commercialized products and services. These products are sold in the marketplace, generating economic activity that builds wealth for the state, and subsequently increases the standard of living for Texans.

Data Set (*Texas Index*) [P3] – 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 will include a 10-year data trend line from 2003–2012 for most indicators. This is the second edition with a full decade of trend data. In a few cases, 10 consecutive years of data are not available for a variety of reasons, e.g., non-assessment year for testing; methodology change; or preferred source has fewer, more recent years of data available.

Based on preliminary data verification and analysis, the *Index* shows little continued effects of the recession. Texas has fared better than most other large states in the area of market composition, with a higher labor force participation rate and lower unemployment rate than California, New York, and Florida. In addition, Texas leads the other large states in gross state product per capita and exports per capita.

The research and development indicators describe the state of the Texas economy in innovation areas such as patent counts, venture capital investment, and expenditures for research projects. Preliminary analysis shows improvement in all these areas.

The state is doing comparatively well, and continues to build assets for the future. The unemployment rate remains more than one percent lower than the U.S. rate and continues to improve. Texas proficiently attracts business and creates jobs, exports more total value of goods than any other state, and ranks third nationally for business establishment start-ups. The state has also performed well in indicators that directly reflect the prosperity of Texans, such as per capita income, median household income, and home ownership rate.

Data also reveal that training and education indicators are improving. Math and science test results from the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress show that Texas eighth grade students' scores were higher than the other large states. The state is enrolling and graduating a higher percentage of students with bachelor's degrees in science and engineering, as well as a higher number of science and engineering graduate students. Texas is producing a greater number of associate's degrees as a percentage of the 18–24 year old population, while bachelor's degrees for the group are relatively unchanged.



Employer Satisfaction and Use of Employment Data

Data gaps regarding employers' needs and customer satisfaction hinder the ability to assess whether existing programs and services adequately meet customer requirements. During the previous strategic plan period, several partner agencies increased their efforts to become more familiar with employers' perception of agency services, and to gather information about projected hiring and training needs.

Two action plans in *Advancing Texas* incorporated five and three agency projects, respectively, that were continued from the previous system strategic plan. Two agency projects associated with one plan objective, implemented by THECB and Texas Youth Commission, were completed and closed in conjunction with approval of the *2012 Update to Advancing Texas*. Performance reporting for the three active projects began last year, with data published in the Council's annual evaluation report.

Updates for active projects were presented by two agencies at the September meeting:

- ★ *TVC* – In late 2009, TVC launched a statewide initiative focused on placing veterans into employment by hiring a dedicated Business Outreach Coordinator. The successful effort was expanded, with four business representatives now strategically located across the state. The coordinators work to establish partnerships with regional employers and to market TVC employment services. TVC has developed a tracking matrix, and strategic plans have been developed for each region based on employer needs and available skill sets. The agency is currently evaluating a data system designed to track newly registered employers, support survey efforts, and track hiring trends.

The agency uses a web-based survey to evaluate employer satisfaction, following up by telephone as needed. In addition, staff review data from monthly performance reports provided by TWC and conduct annual trend analyses in order to evaluate service delivery models and make adjustments where appropriate. This year, the trend analysis was used to assess 2014 staffing needs and to update the Jobs for Veterans State Grant modification that was submitted to DOL's Veterans' Employment and Training Service for approval. Data are also used in preparing for large career fairs such as the JPMorgan Chase 100,000 Hiring Mission.

Use of Employment Data for Program Improvement [P6] – Partner agencies will use the employment data/outcomes of their programs to understand and improve those programs.

Owner: SITAC
Participants: HHSC-DARS, TVC, TDCJ-Windham

Data review and analysis also facilitate communication of best practices to state, regional, and local staff, and to other stakeholders. This year, field staff was also surveyed. Based on data analysis, a disabled veterans outreach program focus group was convened and several changes were implemented to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

- ★ *Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) – Windham School District (Windham)* – In 2011, Windham administered an electronic survey but encountered low response rates and data issues. For example, contact information derived from unemployment insurance wage data was used and many employer contacts were unfamiliar with the program and/or unaware employees were ex-offenders, resulting in incomplete responses.

Since 2012, Windham has conducted the survey using several methods, including: distributing in conjunction with TDCJ's Parole Division in Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio metro areas; distributing at job fairs, workforce centers, and to various stakeholders; and through direct employer contacts. Annual surveys will continue, with data reviewed to determine employer satisfaction and in program planning and management initiatives.

Employer Needs / Satisfaction [P5] – Partner agencies will gather data from employer customers at appropriate intervals to determine employer needs and satisfaction.

Owner: SITAC
Participants: HHSC-DARS, TVC, TDCJ-Windham

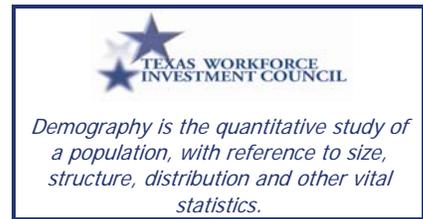
Windham continues to gather information on targeted and high-demand occupations, as well as emerging trends and non-traditional careers identified by the 28 local workforce boards and industry stakeholders. This year, the CTE department, along with instructors in the construction industry, met with stakeholders to discuss career opportunities for ex-offenders and toured job sites to keep abreast of new industry trends. Plans are being made to include instructors from other areas next year.

Data collected from the local boards and industry representatives are used to evaluate training programs for alignment with current employer demand. Based on the review, program modifications may be made. For example, to address the current demand in the auto industry, the auto and diesel mechanics programs were expanded and the emphasis of some small engine programs was redirected to include motorcycle/ATV repair. Windham also plans to offer electrical trades for female offenders and to consider other non-traditional programs.

Employer survey data are also used to assess satisfaction with the job knowledge and skills of program participants. Data from the survey is used to determine validity of current training and expand programs that are currently in demand and best suited for ex-offenders.

Demographic Studies and Tools

The Council is required by statute to include in the state workforce system strategic plan long-range strategies developed by the Council and its partner agencies to facilitate the efficient and integrated delivery of workforce programs and services (Texas Government Code Section 2308.104). The current system strategic plan, *Advancing Texas*, identifies a number of populations in Texas that warrant additional focus and planning efforts to ensure that they have access to relevant and effective workforce programs and services.



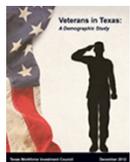
The Council published a series of demographic reports that highlight characteristics of specific populations, including:



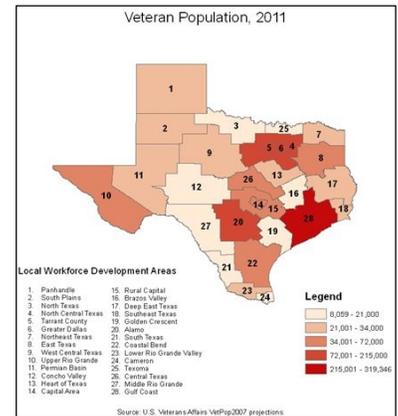
★ *Identifying the Current and Future Population in Need of Adult Education* (March 2012) – The first companion paper to *A Primer on Adult Education in Texas* (January 2010), this report contains updated data and more defined methodologies that detail the current and future population eligible for adult education services in Texas. The Council worked with the Office of the State Demographer to conduct further analyses of the current population in need of adult education services, a more detailed estimate of the future need for services based on projections for the Texas population, and the geographic dispersion of need in Texas by local workforce development areas.



★ *Mature Workers in Texas: A Demographic Study* (September 2012) – This report provides information about mature labor force participants in Texas, specifically those 55 years and older. National data are used to detail the possible effect that the Baby Boom generation will have on the workforce as more individuals in this large cohort approach the traditional age of retirement. A general overview of Texas population trends is provided, with a specific focus on issues related to aging. A third section offers a detailed demographic analysis of the mature labor force in Texas using data from 2010.



★ *Veterans in Texas: A Demographic Study* (December 2012) – Following consultations with the Texas Veterans Commission, the Council prepared this report to detail the demographic characteristics of the veteran population in Texas. It includes national data to provide a general overview of the veteran population in the U.S. and to discuss recent national labor force trends for veterans. A description of Texas' veteran population is provided, with a focus on disabilities and the characteristics of veteran labor force participants.



★ *People with Disabilities: A Texas Profile* (April 2013) – Following consultations with the Committee on People with Disabilities and the Health and Human Services Commission's Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), the Council prepared this report that details the demographic characteristics of individuals with disabilities in Texas. National data are used to provide an overview of individuals with disabilities in the U.S. and to discuss recent national labor force trends. Texas' population of individuals with disabilities is described generally and with a focus on the characteristics of labor force participants.

The Council's website contains a section (<http://governor.state.tx.us/twic/demographics/>) to support the reports, with maps showing the number of each of the above populations by local workforce development area. There are detailed demographic analyses that may be used in program planning efforts by local workforce boards, state agencies, community and technical colleges, policy analysts, and other workforce system stakeholders.

SITAC Members	
<i>Chair</i>	Paul Mayer, Executive Committee Member, Texas Workforce Investment Council
<i>Economic Development and Tourism Division</i>	Keith Graf, Director, Aerospace and Aviation
<i>Texas Association of Workforce Boards</i>	David K. Setzer, Executive Director, Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas
<i>Texas Department of Criminal Justice</i>	Appointment Pending
<i>Texas Education Agency</i>	Vangie Stice-Israel, State Director for Career 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, Community and Technical Colleges
<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>	Luis Macias, Chief of Staff