



## **Comments Regarding the Texas Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative on Workforce Development Goals**

Submitted March 2, 2022, by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., IDRA Deputy Director of Policy

*Comments developed in coordination with Texans Care for Children regarding the State Strategic Plan to Improve and Expand Bilingual Education and Texas PACE recommendations.*

### **Priority 1: Pathways**

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Add a goal that aligns with targets developed under the Strategic Plan to Improve and Expand Bilingual Education (required by SB 560, 87R) to increase the number of certified bilingual educators in Texas.

#### **Goal 1 Comments**

Disaggregation - This goal must be measured through disaggregated metrics accounting for race, ethnicity, gender, and regions as required by state law.

#### Proposed Revisions

Goal 1 – 60 percent of Texans across all racial, ethnic, gender, and regional demographics ages 25-34 and 35-64 will have a degree, certificate, or other post-secondary credential of value by 2030.

#### Alternate Revisions

Goal 1 – 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a degree, certificate, or other post-secondary credential of value by 2030.

(Sub-goal) For all racial, ethnic, gender, and regional demographics aged 25-34, at least 55% percent of Texans within each group will have a degree, certificate, or other post-secondary credential of value by 2030.

#### **Goal 2 Comments**

Disaggregation - This goal must also be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, and region. We also request sub-targets for disaggregated student populations to close achievement gaps.

#### Proposed Revisions

Goal 2 - 550,000 Texas students across all racial, ethnic, gender, and regional demographics will complete postsecondary credentials of value each year while closing achievement gaps necessary to meet the target.

Goal Alignment - A supplementary effort would be to tie how progress in Goal 2 drives progress in Goal 1. Transparent data measuring the educational progress of local Texans is valuable to employers.

#### **Goal 3 Comments**

Data Improvements - The Tri-Agency must rely on up-to-date statewide and regional labor market data and trends while assessing emerging workforce needs. The full breadth of workforce development opportunities available in Texas must also be included.

CIP-SOC/NAICS Crosswalk - The Tri-Agency can link the state's higher education programs with standardized industry and occupational designations. Formally linking standardized codes through a data crosswalk would provide stakeholders with information on career pathways in the state's education-to-workforce pipeline.

#### Proposed Revisions

Goal 3 – Develop a plan by January 2023 to identify, monitor, and address emerging regional and statewide workforce needs identified through up-to-date labor market data and trends for high- and middle-skilled jobs in high-demand and/or high-growth industries, including expanded opportunities for pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, internships, and other work-based programs.

(Sub-goal) This data will include:

Workforce supply and demand trends at the state and regional level;

Data crosswalks establishing a connection between Texas CIP codes and NAICS and SOC codes; and

Specific analysis on teacher shortage areas, including in early childhood education, bilingual education, science and math.

#### Goal 4 Comments

Revise Goal 4 to read: Increase mid-career reskilling and upskills opportunities through public institutions of higher education and other education settings by establishing statewide articulation frameworks which allow for stronger pathways between the Workforce Education Course Manual and the Academic Course Guide Manual.

#### Priority 2: Student Supports

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Add goal to align with SB 560 (87R) to increase the number of dual language immersion program models used in public schools, increase the number of bilingual and multilingual high school graduates, and enhance family engagement through family liaisons, adult education programs, and other outreach efforts.

##### Goal 1 Proposed Revisions

Goal 1 – Establish a common definition of kindergarten readiness measured by a valid, reliable assessment by fall 2023.

(Sub-goal) 75 percent of all Texas pre-kindergartners in publicly-funded pre-kindergarten programs for each student racial, ethnic, gender, and regional demographic will be kindergarten ready by 2030.

(Sub-goal) Establish a goal by January 2024 to increase the percentage of eligible three- and four-year-olds in Texas who attend high-quality, public pre-kindergarten programs across all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and regional groups.

## Goal 2 Comments

3rd and 8th Grade Proficiency Targets - Specific proficiency targets and deadlines for each metric must be set. In priority order, we propose either setting targets increasing proficiency by 25 percentage points relative to 2019 levels, or establishing targets ensuring that the state will meet its credential attainment goals under Building a Talent Strong Texas.

Closing Achievement Gaps - A 50 percent reduction target for closing achievement gaps should be set, with two options to close either the gaps of economically disadvantaged students, or gaps of racial, ethnic, and gender demographics. These options are reflected in the proposed revisions.

4th-grade Reading Outcomes - 4th grade reading outcomes should be added as an achievement benchmark to provide necessary intervention opportunities.

College, Career, and Military Readiness Tiers - We propose that the CCMR benchmark be separated into components where metrics that are more aligned with the state's workforce needs will rank higher. The secondary tier would include educational drivers that are tied to improved CCMR outcomes. We suggest metrics with targets and deadlines for this tiered system.

### Proposed 3rd, 4th, and 8th Grade Revisions

Goal 2 – For each student racial, ethnic, gender, and regional demographic, increase percentages of students meeting the following achievement benchmarks by 25 percentage points relative to 2019 proficiency levels, while also closing achievement gaps between

[Option 1: all students' aggregate proficiency levels and each student racial, ethnic, gender, and regional demographic by 50 percent by 2030]

[Option 2: economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students by 50 percent by 2030]:

- a. 3rd-grade reading and math outcomes;
- b. 4th-grade reading outcomes; and
- c. 8th-grade reading and math outcomes.

### Proposed CCMR Revisions

Increase percentages of students demonstrating college, career, and military readiness for each student racial, ethnic, gender, and regional demographic by 25 percentage points in each of the following metrics while closing achievement gaps by 50 percent by 2030:

Top Tier:

Percentage of associate degrees that are credentials of value awarded in Texas public high schools.

Percentage of career-aligned industry-based certifications that are credentials of value awarded in Texas public high schools.

Percentage of level I and level II certificates that are credentials of value awarded in Texas public high schools.

Percentage of Texas public high school students who meet any of the CCMR outcomes bonus thresholds.

Secondary Tier:

Percentage of Texas eighth graders enrolled in Algebra I or above.

Percentage of Texas high school students enrolled in an AP or IB course.

Percentage of Texas high school students enrolled in a dual credit course.

Percentage of Texas public high school students enrolled in P-TECH or early college high school models.

Percentage of Texas students completing a coherent sequence of CTE courses in a high-wage, high-demand field.

### **Priority 3: Infrastructure**

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Add a goal that aligns with targets developed under the Bilingual Strategic Plan (required by SB 560, 87R) to adopt a uniform process for identifying emergent bilingual students in prekindergarten through 12th grade and monitor the bilingual learning of students prekindergarten through 12th grade.

#### **Goal 1 Comments**

UI Data Enhancement - Texas Labor Code 204.0025 authorizes TWC to work with employers to enhance reporting of data elements reported through routine Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage filings. The Tri-Agency should consider collecting the following data elements through UI filings: occupation titles and 6-digit SOC codes; employee age; employee hours and months worked; employment start and end dates; physical work location; and remote, part- or full-time, gig, and seasonal work designations.

Data Accessibility - The state's progress on achieving workforce development goals should be reported through public and user-friendly data dashboards like those authorized by Texas Gov't Code 2308A.008. Reporting data elements such as disaggregated student outcomes allows for collaboration on meeting the state's goals. Education and workforce practitioners should also have access to relevant state data to measure their own performance in meeting workforce development goals.

#### **Proposed Revisions**

Goal 1 – Identify gaps in agencies' data collection and develop a plan to address any such gaps, including recommendations of statutory changes needed to do so, by January 2023.

(Sub-goal) The plan will specifically address:

Data element and infrastructure improvements to the state's UI wage data; and

Improved data accessibility through public data dashboards outlining the state's progress in meeting workforce development goals.

Improved data accessibility for education and workforce practitioners, including independent school districts, higher education institutions, and local workforce development boards.

#### **Goal 3 Comments**

Braided Funding - Establishing Tri-Agency infrastructure allowing for braided funding can help expand program capacity to meet the state's workforce needs. This infrastructure empowers the Tri-Agency to synchronize budget decisions, leverage funding sources, and maximize investments into effective career education and job training programs and support services.

Regional and Local Integration - The Tri-Agency should ensure that integration will also serve regional and local constituencies. This can ensure that the state's tools and processes are compliant with HB 3767's requirement that the goals provide for locally determined priorities and collaborative planning and coordination with local and regional entities.

#### Proposed Revisions

Goal 3 – Establish integrated project management tools and processes, including tools and processes enabling the Tri-Agency to jointly invest in effective career education and training programs and support initiatives through braided funding, to be used for Tri-Agency shared initiatives by January 2023.

(Sub-goal) Develop a plan to align state workforce development goals with workforce development regions and streamline the initiatives of regional and local entities, including education service centers, higher education regional councils, and workforce development boards, through the Tri-Agency's integrated project management tools and processes by January 2023.