

60x30TX Progress Report

July 2019

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Agency Mission

The mission of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB or Coordinating Board) is to provide leadership and coordination for Texas higher education and to promote access, affordability, quality, success, and cost efficiency through *60x30TX*, resulting in a globally competitive workforce that positions Texas as an international leader.

Agency Vision

The THECB will be recognized as an international leader in developing and implementing innovative higher education policy to accomplish our mission.

Agency Philosophy

The THECB will promote access to and success in quality higher education across the state with the conviction that access and success without quality is mediocrity and that quality without access and success is unacceptable.

The THECB's core values are:

Accountability: We hold ourselves responsible for our actions and welcome every opportunity to educate stakeholders about our policies, decisions, and aspirations.

Efficiency: We accomplish our work using resources in the most effective manner.

Collaboration: We develop partnerships that result in student success and a highly qualified, globally competent workforce.

Excellence: We strive for excellence in all our endeavors.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services.

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Executive Summary

The *60x30TX* higher education plan for Texas began in 2015 with four goals to be achieved by 2030:

1. **60x30 Educated Population:** At least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.
2. **Completion:** At least 550,000 students in 2030 will complete a certificate, associate, bachelor's or master's from an institution of higher education in Texas.
3. **Marketable Skills:** All graduates from Texas public institutions of higher education will have completed programs with identified marketable skills.
4. **Student Debt:** Undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.

Each year, the THECB provides an update on how the state is progressing toward the goals and targets of the plan. The report helps inform the state about areas that may need additional attention and intervention. This year's report focuses primarily on the data available in the 2018 academic year. Now that the plan has been in place for four years, it is easier to see trends in the progress toward these goals. While progress on many goals has been substantial, accelerated progress is needed on others to meet the state's ambitious goals by 2030.

The *60x30TX* goals have focused statewide attention on specific areas where improvement is needed. In turn, improvement happens when practitioners and policymakers carefully analyze how and where the highlighted problems originate, how resources can be reallocated to address the issues, and what diagnostic feedback is needed to assess and guide progress toward the goal. To the extent that conversations about the goals lead to changes in practices in K-12 schools and higher education institutions and to the extent that policymakers provide the right kinds of resource and policy support, the goals in the *60x30TX* plan are more likely to be realized.

Priority Strategies

The THECB helps support achievement of the *60x30TX* goals by analyzing policy and resources and providing assistance to institutions and organizations that work directly with students. Four priority strategies are highlighted in this year's report:

1. Improve academic preparation for students to enter and complete higher education.
2. Promote college enrollment and completion to students and parents before high school graduation.
3. Support completion by improving the ability of students to transfer credits.
4. Mobilize education and workforce stakeholders to achieve the goals of *60x30TX*.

Progress in implementing these strategies depends on the work of individuals in higher education institutions, K-12 schools and districts, and business and community leaders. These groups must continue to work closely together if the educated population of the state is to grow dramatically to respond to the state's needs.

Progress on the Goals

Although this report provides annual progress markers toward the goals and targets of *60x30TX*, every year will not show consistent results. For example, some results may accelerate as efforts grow to affect more groups of students; others may be sensitive to the economy and job availability. However, if the numbers deviate substantially from past trends or expected growth, it is important to understand why. The state has greater potential for success if it is known who is affected, how they are affected, where the state needs to pay additional attention, and how might the state achieve desired outcomes. This report seeks to provide insights that add clarity on variations over time and about how, why, and for whom changes are occurring.

60x30 Educated Population Goal

In the most recent year of data available for the 60X30 educated population goal—an estimated 43.5 percent of the young adult population had a degree or certificate from a Texas or out-of-state higher education institution, up from 40.3 percent at the start of the plan and 42.3 percent last year. If, on average, improvement continues at this rate of almost 1.3 percentage points per year, Texas will reach the target by 2030. Also notable is that the improvement rates in the two most recent years exceeded the average improvement of 0.8 percent per year in the previous decade.

Continuation of these recent rates of improvement is not guaranteed. Maintaining the current rate will require additional improvements in higher education completions in Texas and continued support for economic development that attracts educated young adults to the state. One effort that holds promise for maintaining progress toward this goal is the networking of K-12, higher education, and employer stakeholders to set regional and institutional targets and to develop plans to reach these targets.

Completion Goal

The rate of overall progress on the completion goal slowed in 2018 after a year of good progress in 2017. In the 2018 academic year, students completed 341,307 certificates and degrees, an annual improvement rate of 2.2 percent compared with 3.9 percent the previous year. Completion growth also slowed among the four underrepresented student groups in the plan: Hispanic, African American, male, and economically disadvantaged students (Table 1a and Appendix C, Table C5).

The plan also targets direct-to-college-going rates of public high school graduates. The target aims to increase the percentage to 65 because those who enroll immediately in higher education in the fall have higher rates of degree completion than students who delay entry and tend to face greater time conflicts from work and family commitments. Although the absolute number of Texas high school graduates and the number of those graduates transitioning immediately into higher education have both risen, the percentage of those graduates making the transition has not. This percentage was lower in 2018 than in the initial plan year of 2015 (Table 1). Higher education and K-12 stakeholders will need to step up efforts to accelerate progress to meet the target by 2030.

Improvement on the completion goal and associated targets for all populations is likely to be needed to reach the 60x30 educated population goal. This will require continued focus on

those enrollees who are most at-risk not to complete, including students who are economically disadvantaged or underprepared academically. Efforts to improve students' academic preparation include expanded partnerships between K-12 and higher education, such as those in the Texas Regional Alignment Network and Advise TX, and support for academically underprepared students after they enter college, such as co-requisite developmental education. In addition, students who have left college without graduating need encouragement to return and complete their degrees. All of these efforts are likely to be vital contributors to meeting this goal.

Marketable Skills Goal

The marketable skills goal includes two targets. The first is that by 2020, public institutions of higher education will have created and implemented a process to identify and regularly update marketable skills for each of their programs. The second, staying the same throughout the life of the plan, is that 80 percent of Texas higher education graduates be found working and/or pursuing additional education during the first academic year following graduation.

Additional work by institutions is needed to meet the first target. Although 41 percent of Texas higher education institutions reported in a spring 2018 survey that they had created and implemented a process of identifying marketable skills for their programs, another 42 percent either did not respond or indicated that they had not started the process. The remaining 17 percent have started the process but not yet completed the work. Thus, many institutions will need to prioritize this work for the target to be met by 2020. To support these efforts, the THECB will offer professional development and a marketable skills conference in the coming academic year.

Regarding the second target, the 78.5 percent of Texas students who received degrees in 2016-17 and were found working or enrolled for additional education within one year of degree completion was almost unchanged from the previous three years and closely tracked the 80 percent target (Table 1a). Given the consistency of these data over the plan years and the current economic climate, there is no cause for concern.

Student Debt Goal

The state has met the student debt goal of 60 percent debt-to-first-year-wage percentage in each year of the plan so far (Table 1b). The state also met the target that no more than half of students earning a certificate, associate, or bachelor's degree graduate with debt. In 2018, less than half of students, 45.8 percent, had debt at the time of graduation, down from 47.2 percent in 2017 (Table 1b).

The state also made strong progress toward the additional target that excess semester credit hours (SCH) attempted by students decline to an average of 3 SCH by 2030. Between 2015 and 2018, the average number of those hours declined from 28 to 24 SCH for students earning associate degrees and from 14 to 12 SCH for bachelor's degree recipients, amounting to a decline from 19 to 16 SCH averaged across both types of degree (Table 1b). Progress accelerated in 2018 as the efforts to reduce unnecessary SCH have had time to take effect. Ongoing work to develop Fields of Study curricula holds promise for improving the efficiency of transfer pathways and continuing to reduce excess hours in the future.

Table 1a. Progress toward goals and targets of 60x30TX

Goal	Target	2015*	2016*	2017*	2018*	Improvement in Most Recent Year (2017-18)	Average Annual Improvement Rate (2015-18)	Annual Improvement Needed**	2030 Goal/Target
60x30	60x30 (Educated Population)	40.3%	41.0%	42.3%	43.5%	1.2 pct pt	1.1 pct pt	1.3 pct pt	60%
Completion	Overall	311,340	321,410	333,920	341,307	2.2%	3.1%	3.9%	550,000
	Hispanic	96,657	103,889	111,344	115,735	3.9%	6.2%	7.5%	285,000
	African American	38,964	38,813	41,027	41,594	1.4%	2.2%	4.5%	76,000
	Male	131,037	135,849	141,564	143,981	1.7%	3.2%	5.2%	275,000
	Economically Disadvantaged	114,176	119,490	124,178	124,471	0.2%	2.9%	5.3%	246,000
	TX High School Grads Enrolling in TX Higher Education	52.7%	51.9%	52.3%	51.6%	-0.7 pct pt	-0.4 pct pt	0.7 pct pt	65%
Marketable Skills	Institutions Implementing Marketable Skills Plans	n/a	n/a	n/a	41.0%	--	--	--	100% (2020 target)
	Working or Enrolled Within One Year**	78.9%	78.8%	78.8%	78.5%	-0.3 pct pt	-0.1 pct pt	--	80%

* Or most recent year of data available in that year

** Annual improvement needed from when the plan was written, 2014 to 2030.

Source: Data from THECB, Texas Workforce Commission, and American Communities Survey

Table 1b. Progress toward goals and targets of 60x30TX (cont.)

Goal	Target	2015*	2016*	2017*	2018*	Improvement in Most Recent Year (2017-18)	Average Annual Improvement Rate (2015-18)	Annual Improvement Needed**	2030 Goal/Target
Student Debt	Student Loan Debt to First Year Wage Percentage***	60%	60%	59%	59%	-0.1 pct pt	-0.3 pct pt	--	60%
	Percent of Undergraduates Completing with Debt***	49.2%	48.2%	47.2%	45.8%	-1.4 pct pt	-1.1 pct pt	--	50%
	Excess SCH Attempted***	19	19	18	16	-2.0	-1.0	-1.1	3

* Or most recent year of data available in that year

** Annual improvement needed from when the plan was written, 2014 to 2030.

*** Declines in student debt and excess semester credit hours represent improvement.

Source: Data from THECB, Texas Workforce Commission, and American Communities Survey

Introduction

The *60x30TX* higher education plan for Texas began in 2015 with four goals to be achieved by 2030:

1. **60x30 Educated Population:** At least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.
2. **Completion:** At least 550,000 students in 2030 will complete a certificate or an associate, bachelor's, or master's degree from an institution of higher education in Texas.
3. **Marketable Skills:** All graduates from Texas public institutions of higher education will have completed programs with identified marketable skills.
4. **Student Debt:** Undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.

Each year, the THECB provides an update on how the state is progressing toward the goals and targets of the plan. The report helps inform the state about areas that may need additional attention and intervention. Now that the plan has been in place for four years, much can be learned from studying the trends in progress toward these goals. For example, recent increases in the state's percentage of young adults with degrees, if sustained between now and 2030, would bring Texas close to the 60x30 educated population goal. The percentage of students graduating with debt has been declining for all types of undergraduate degrees. The average number of excess semester credit hours has been reduced for both associate and bachelor's degree students, with excess hours falling more rapidly as more students have been affected by institutional efforts to minimize excess hours.

While progress on many goals has been substantial, accelerated progress is needed in many cases to meet the state's ambitious goals by 2030. For example, while the overall number of completions has been growing, the growth rate in completions slowed in 2018, and the overall 2015-18 growth rate fell short of that needed to reach the 2030 goal. And although the number of Texas high school graduates and the number of those graduates transitioning into higher education have both risen, the percentage of those graduates making the transition has not. Fewer than half of public institutions have established processes to identify marketable skills.

An additional outcome that is more difficult to measure—but that we believe is strongly positive—has been the plan's impact on discussions and planning among educators and policymakers. The language and goals of *60x30TX* have been widely used by legislators and other policymakers in discussions of what is important for the state's future. Institutional leadership teams and regional stakeholders have set their own local goals aligned with the plan.

The *60x30TX* goals have focused statewide attention on specific areas where improvement is needed. In turn, improvement happens when practitioners and policymakers carefully analyze how and where the highlighted problems originate, how resources can be reallocated to address the issues, and what diagnostic feedback is needed to assess and guide progress toward the goal. To the extent that conversations about the goals lead to changes in practices in K-12 schools and higher education institutions and to the extent that policymakers provide sufficient resource and policy support, the goals in the *60x30TX* plan are more likely to be realized.

An important role for the THECB is to analyze trends in progress on the *60x30TX* goals and diagnose the obstacles and supporting factors for that progress. If the numbers deviate substantially from past trends or the targeted goals, it is important to understand why.

This progress report provides breakouts and explanations of the *60x30TX* metrics and displays goals and targets through 2030. In addition, this report summarizes four key strategies and related initiatives supported by the THECB that show promise in helping achieve the goals and targets under the plan.

The report is supplemented by five appendices. Appendix A provides the text of the legislation authorizing the *60x30TX* plan and reports. Appendix B summarizes the methodology used to calculate progress on the goals. Appendix C provides additional detail on progress toward the 60x30 educated population and completion goals. Appendix D summarizes activities by higher education institutions, under the Higher Education Assistance Plans outlined in Texas Education Code (TEC), Section 51.810 (Appendix E), to improve students' college-going rates in Texas high schools compared with previously low direct-enrollment rates. These activities can support the completion and educated population goals, as well as the completion targets, which aim to improve college-going rates for populations underrepresented in Texas higher education.

Progress Toward Reaching the Goals of 60x30TX



60x30: EDUCATED POPULATION GOAL

At least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.

■ *Supports the economic future of the state*

The focus of the 60x30 educated population goal is to increase the college-educated share of young Texans so that by 2030, 60 percent or more of Texas residents ages 25-34 will have attained a certificate or degree (associate through professional) from a higher education institution. This goal was influenced by a report from the Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University that indicated approximately 60 percent of new jobs will require higher education credentials and skills as early as 2020.¹

Reaching the goal of 60 percent will require significant effort from Texas institutions of higher education, the THECB, K-12 educators, and business to grow the pipeline of students ready to succeed and to ensure there are high-skill jobs for Texas graduates around the state. A strong economy also will attract college graduates from other states to move to Texas and contribute to the educated workforce.

Overall Progress toward the 60x30 Educated Population Goal

It's important to note that this goal counts people, not credentials. Specifically, it counts Texas residents ages 25-34 who have one or more of these credentials:

- A level I, II, or advanced technical certificate, as defined in the *Guidelines for Instructional Programs in Workforce Education*²
- Any degree – associate, bachelor's, master's, professional, or doctoral.

A Texas resident may have multiple certificates or degrees, earned in or out of state, but that resident is only counted once toward this goal.

A Texas resident may have multiple certificates or degrees, earned in or out of state, but that resident is only counted once toward this goal – and only if that resident is in the targeted age group. The tables and charts in this section are based on an individual's highest level of attainment—for example, a person with associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees would report the master's as the highest degree.

Education attainment data for the population of Texas is available from the American Community Survey (ACS), which is an annual survey of people living in the United States administered by the U.S. Census Bureau. While this progress report primarily uses data from 2018, the most recent data available from the ACS on the 60x30 educated population goal is 2017.

The annual rate of improvement in educational attainment among young Texas adults was higher in 2015-17 than in the previous decade. According to the ACS, 43.5 percent of Texans 25-34 years old had a postsecondary degree or certificate in 2017 (Figure 1). This

¹ See [Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements through 2020](#), 2013, by Anthony Carnevale.

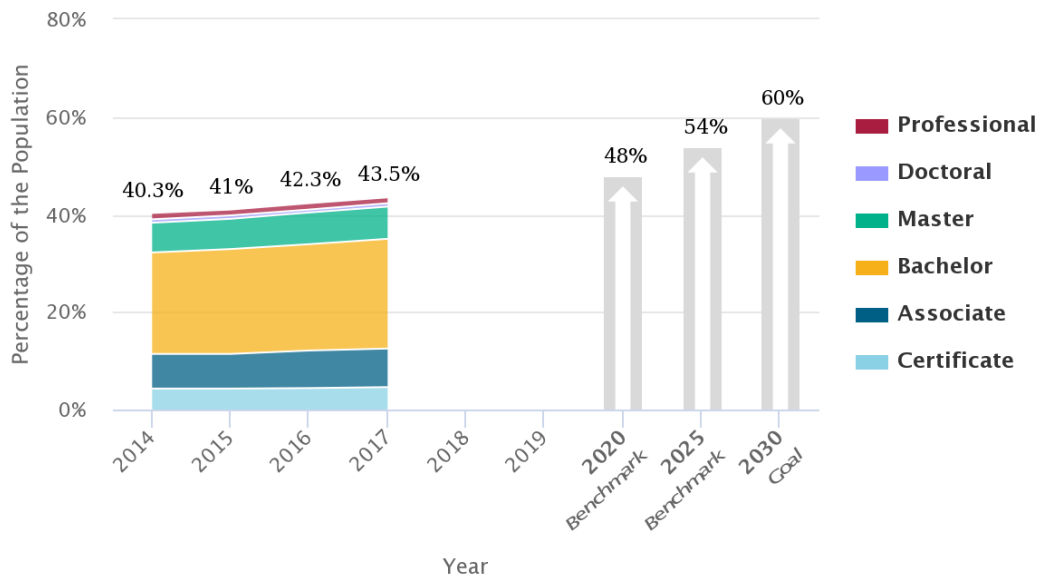
² See [Guidelines for Instructional Programs in Workforce Education](#), 2015, by THECB.

represented an increase of 1.2 percentage points from 2016 and a cumulative increase of 2.5 percentage points from 2015. This 2015-17 improvement rate of almost 1.3 percentage points per year exceeds the 0.8 percent annual rate prevailing in the previous decade.

Bachelor’s and associate degrees have accounted for most of the recent increase in Texas’ educated population. Bachelor’s degrees accounted for both the largest group of degree-holders in 2014 through 2017 and the largest portion of the 2014-17 increase in the share of 25-34-year-olds with a postsecondary credential. Associate degrees accounted for the second-largest group of degree-holders and the second-largest portion of the 2014-17 increases (Appendix C, Table C1).

Figure 1. Texas college-educated population

Percent of Texas Population Age 25–34 with a Postsecondary Credential



Source: Data from www.60x30TX.com

If recent rates of progress continued through 2030, Texas would reach the 60 percent goal. However, continuation of these rapid rates of improvement is not guaranteed. Continued progress will require strengthening academic preparation, support, and advising in K-12 and higher education to improve higher education completions in Texas. One effort that holds promise for maintaining progress toward this goal is bringing K-12, higher education, and employer stakeholders together to set regional and institutional targets and to develop plans to reach these targets. A second promising effort is an expanded effort to bring students who have left college without graduating back to complete their degrees. Regional *60x30TX* targets are described in more detail in the strategy section of the report.

Importing talent into the state is also critical for Texas to reach its 60x30 educated population goal. Robust increases in the educated young adult population provide evidence for the thriving economy that is attracting young workers. It is not possible, using available data sources, to know exactly how much the migration of individuals from out of state into the state’s rapidly growing, technologically dynamic metropolitan areas has contributed to the considerable growth of the young adult population with degrees. However, the gains Texas

experienced from net domestic migration³ among 25-34-year-old degree holders (excluding certificates) over the last four years are evident from the available estimates. Approximately 15,000 to 26,000 more degree holders were gained than lost in the state in any given year since 2014 (Appendix C, Table C2).

³ Estimates of net international migration of degree-holders are not included because individuals who have left the U.S. in the current year are not included in the American Community Survey.



THE SECOND GOAL: COMPLETION

At least 550,000 students in 2030 will complete a certificate, associate, bachelor's, or master's from an institution of higher education in Texas.

■ *Requires large increases among targeted groups*

The second goal is for students of all ages to complete at least 550,000 certificates or associate, bachelor's or master's degrees (CABMs) in FY 2030 from an institution of higher education in Texas, including public, independent, or career institutions (Figure 2). The completion goal complements the 60x30 educated population goal because increased certificate and degree completions in Texas will help grow the Texas college-educated resident population.

While the two goals are related, the key differences between the completion goal and the 60x30 educated population goal are that:

- the completion goal counts degrees earned by students of any age, not just those ages 25-34;
- the completion goal counts certificates and degrees up through master's, while the first goal also includes professional and doctoral degrees;⁴
- the completion goal counts credentials from a Texas college or university, while degrees under the first goal may be earned anywhere inside or outside of Texas; and
- the completion goal counts each certificate or degree a student earns in the year it is earned, whereas the 60x30 goal counts whether each person has earned at least one degree in any year.

It's important to remember the completion goal complements the first, in that it emphasizes the role of institutions in reaching the 60x30 educated population goal.

In addition to the goal of 550,000 CABMs for all students, completion targets were set for four underrepresented student populations (Figure 3): African American (76,000), Hispanic (285,000), economically disadvantaged (246,000), and male students (275,000). Another target addresses enrollment in higher education by high school graduates: by 2030, at least 65 percent of high school graduates will enroll in higher education in the fall after they graduate from high school (Figure 4).

Overall Progress toward the Completion Goal

In academic year (AY) 2018, students at Texas public, independent, and career institutions completed 341,307 CABMs, up from 311,340 in 2015 (Figure 2). This annual rate of increase of 3.1 percent from 2015 to 2018 is lower than the required average rate of increase of 3.9 percent from 2015 to 2030 to reach the goal of 550,000 CABMs in 2030.⁵

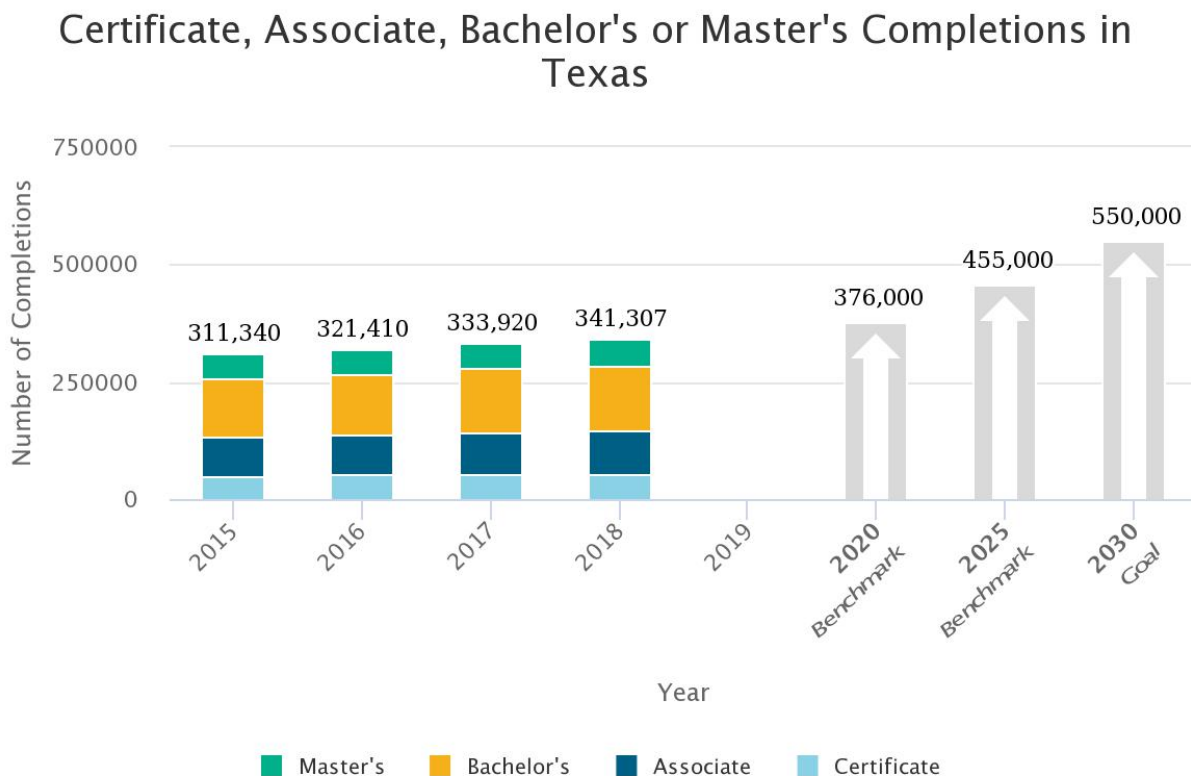
⁴ The fact that doctorates are included in the first goal probably does not affect the number of students counted under that goal because a person with a doctorate also would have earned at least one prior degree.

⁵ Because improvement between 2015 and 2018 was slower than the required annual average of 3.9%, average annual improvement during the remaining years from 2018 to 2030 must equal at least 4.1% to make up the lost ground.

Moreover, the increase in completions slowed in 2018 relative to the previous year. In 2018 completions increased by 7,387, or 2.2 percent, compared with an increase of 12,510, or 3.9 percent, in 2017 (Figure 2). The slowdown was greatest in the number of students earning certificates and associate degrees; in contrast, bachelor's completions increased, but not enough to offset the slowdown in other types of degrees (Appendix C, Tables C3 and C4).

Progress must accelerate for all students, especially those from underrepresented groups, in the remaining years from 2018 to 2030 for Texas institutions to reach the 2030 completion goal. To reach the 2020 target of 376,000 completions, completions would need to increase by more than 17,000 CABMs, or about 5 percent a year, each of the next two years.

Figure 2. CABMs completed at Texas public, independent, and career institutions



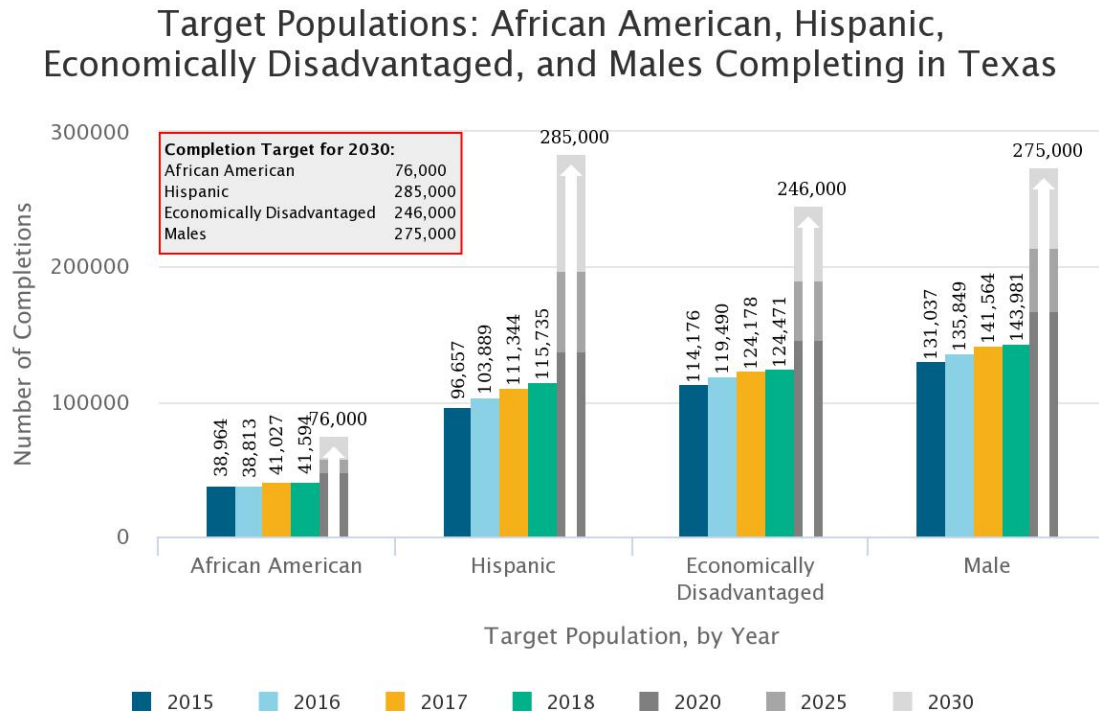
Source: Data from www.60x30TX.com

Progress by Underrepresented Groups

Completions in AY 2018 also slowed for underrepresented groups, including African American and Hispanic students and male students from all ethnic groups (Figure 3). The slowdown was most pronounced for economically disadvantaged students. Figure 3 shows the progress of completions by students in underrepresented groups toward each group's completion target in 2030. For example, the total number of certificates, associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees earned by African American students increased from 38,964 in 2015 to 41,594 in 2018, showing progress towards the goal of 76,000 completions in 2030. Similarly,

completions by Hispanic students rose from 96,657 in 2015 to 115,735 in 2018, moving toward the 2030 goal of 285,000 completions.

Figure 3. CABM Completions by Students in Underrepresented Groups



Source: Data from www.60x30TX.com

There was almost no change in the number of economically disadvantaged students completing degrees between 2017 and 2018. This is apparent in Figure 3, which shows a 2017-18 increase in economically disadvantaged completers of only 293 students (from 124,178 to 124,471), representing a rate of increase of only 0.2 percent (Appendix C, Table C5).

Looking more closely at the slowing completions among economically disadvantaged students, a decrease in associate degrees was the largest single contributor to low 2018 growth in completions among this group of students. The number of students completing associate degrees increased by 3.4 percent in 2017 but declined by 1 percent in 2018. This decrease is the first observed in more than 10 years of tracking economically disadvantaged associate degree completions. A strong Texas economy may be contributing to the declines in community college enrollments by economically disadvantaged students and declines in the percentage of students identified as economically disadvantaged. Further research on this important issue is planned.

Accelerated progress is needed for each of the underrepresented groups for whom the *60x30TX* plan set completion targets. For African American students, completion rates have fluctuated from no growth in 2016 to a robust 5.7 percent increase in 2017 to minimal (1.4 percent) growth in 2018 (Appendix C, Table C5). African American student completions have

been particularly sensitive to changes in the career school sector, which have declined in recent years, while improvements have been seen among African American completions in the public higher education sector. If the pace does not pick up again, the 2020 benchmark of 48,000 completions will not be achieved.

Likewise, the annual increases for Hispanic students, which were on track in 2016 and 2017, dropped considerably in 2018. There was also a substantial decrease in growth for male students to less than 2 percent in the most recent year. An analysis of the education pipeline revealed lower outcomes for males in higher education beginning in K-12, with lower rates of high school graduation, and continuing with lower rates of college enrollment and completion. For example, in 2018, female completions outpaced male completions by more than 53,000 degrees and certificates.

Although the slowing in completion growth overall and for the underrepresented student populations may be a one-year anomaly, close attention should be paid to the completion goal and its affiliated targets and initiatives moving forward.

Changes in the Texas Population

To reach 60 percent of the young adult population with a credential by 2030, completion goals and targets were, by necessity, developed to include significant growth beyond what would be expected based on population increases alone. Population projections were incorporated into planning decisions related to the completion metrics. Because changes to projections that reflect changing demographic trends could affect the completion goal, targets, and related planning strategies, one important activity for the upcoming year will be analysis of new population projections published by the Texas Demographic Center in December 2018. A preliminary look at these findings provides some insight into why the completion targets for Hispanics may be particularly affected by the new projections.

Because of traditionally lower completion rates and steep population growth projections, targets for Hispanic completion rates aimed for a very large increase in credentials awarded. Although reaching parity in completions for Hispanic students is critical and substantial growth in the Hispanic population is projected, in the newly released demographic center projections, this population is not growing as fast as once predicted. Several factors may be contributing to that change. The 2010 to 2015 migration rates were lower than those observed in 2000 to 2010 for all groups, with a higher proportion of migrants coming from other states than was observed in the previous decade. These migrants were, proportionally, more likely to be non-Hispanic Whites. In addition, international migrants are now increasingly coming from Asia and the numbers and proportions of immigrants coming from Latin America have declined compared to last decade. The birth rate of American-born Hispanics is slowing and rapidly approaching the rate of other large population groups. Finally, the non-Hispanic white population is projected to grow a bit faster than previously projected as a function of slightly higher in-migration compared to last decade.

A better understanding of these demographic shifts and their potential impacts will help inform review of the completion goal and targets and fine tune the strategies needed to serve the large, growing, and often underserved populations in Texas.

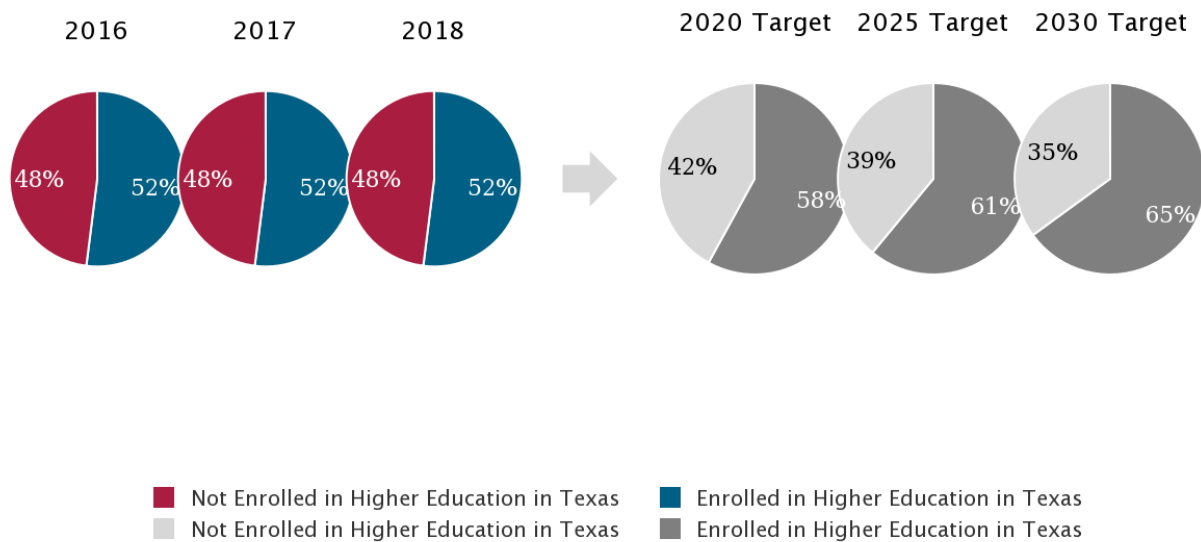
Progress on Direct High School-to-College Enrollment

One approach for increasing completions is to increase the percentage of Texas high school graduates who enroll in a Texas college or university immediately after high school. This is based on the premise that more students are needed in higher education to reach completion goals and that students who leave high school and do not enroll in college the following school year are less likely to enroll later and complete certificates or degrees. While higher education institutions do and should continue to support students of all ages, students who enroll in college directly are likely to face fewer conflicts from work and family commitments than do students who delay entry.

Accordingly, the THECB set targets of 58 percent, 61 percent, and 65 percent for 2020, 2025, and 2030, respectively, for the share of high school graduates who enroll in a Texas higher education institution the fall semester following graduation (Figure 4). In 2015, the rate of direct enrollment was 52.7 percent. By 2018, the rate had fallen to 51.6 percent. An average rate of progress of 1.1 percentage point per year from 2018 to 2030 would be needed to meet the target of 65 percent in 2030 (Appendix C, Table C6 footnote).

Figure 4. Students enrolling in higher education immediately after high school

Texas Public High School Graduates Enrolling by Fall in Higher Education in Texas



Source: Data from www.60x30TX.com

Of all the goals and targets in the *60x30TX* plan, the direct high school-to-college enrollment rate stands out. There has been no progress on this indicator since 2015. Higher education and K-12 stakeholders will need to step up efforts to accelerate progress to meet the target by 2030. Low unemployment rates and growing numbers of high school graduates

entering the workforce in lieu of college are two factors that may be related to the lack of progress on this indicator.

Although the rate of direct enrollment has slightly decreased, the actual number of graduates enrolling has increased every year since the inception of the plan, from 156,777 in 2015 to 170,015 in 2018, or an increase of over 13,000 students (Appendix C, Table C6). Increasing high school graduation rates, a positive development for the state, means more students are poised to pursue workforce certificates or degrees that will help them earn a livable income. Making sure these students are aware of, and have access to, a wide range of postsecondary educational opportunities will be critical for the state's future.



THE THIRD GOAL: MARKETABLE SKILLS

All graduates from Texas public institutions of higher education will have completed programs with identified marketable skills.

- *Emphasizes the value of higher education in the workforce*

The marketable skills goal supports the first two goals. On average, individuals with increased degree attainment earn higher compensation in the marketplace, indicating that higher education credentials are a signal of students' knowledge and skills. But students are not always able to articulate how their educational experiences and extracurricular activities contribute to their value in the workplace. For this reason, the *60x30TX* plan includes the marketable skills goal to make more explicit the skills students learn in their programs. Although this goal focuses on public two- and four-year public colleges, independent institutions in the state have also participated in the process.

The THECB is measuring two targets for this goal:

- The first target is that, by 2020, institutions will have created and implemented a process to identify and regularly update marketable skills for each of their programs, in collaboration with business and other stakeholders.
- The second target specifies that at least 80 percent of students who complete a certificate or degree (associate or higher) from a Texas higher education institution will remain in the state and be working and/or enrolled in higher education within one fiscal year of completion. This is a maintenance target—the goal is to stay close to 80 percent throughout the life of the plan.⁶

The *60x30TX* plan includes the marketable skills goal to make more explicit the skills students learn in their programs.

Overall Progress toward Marketable Skills Goal

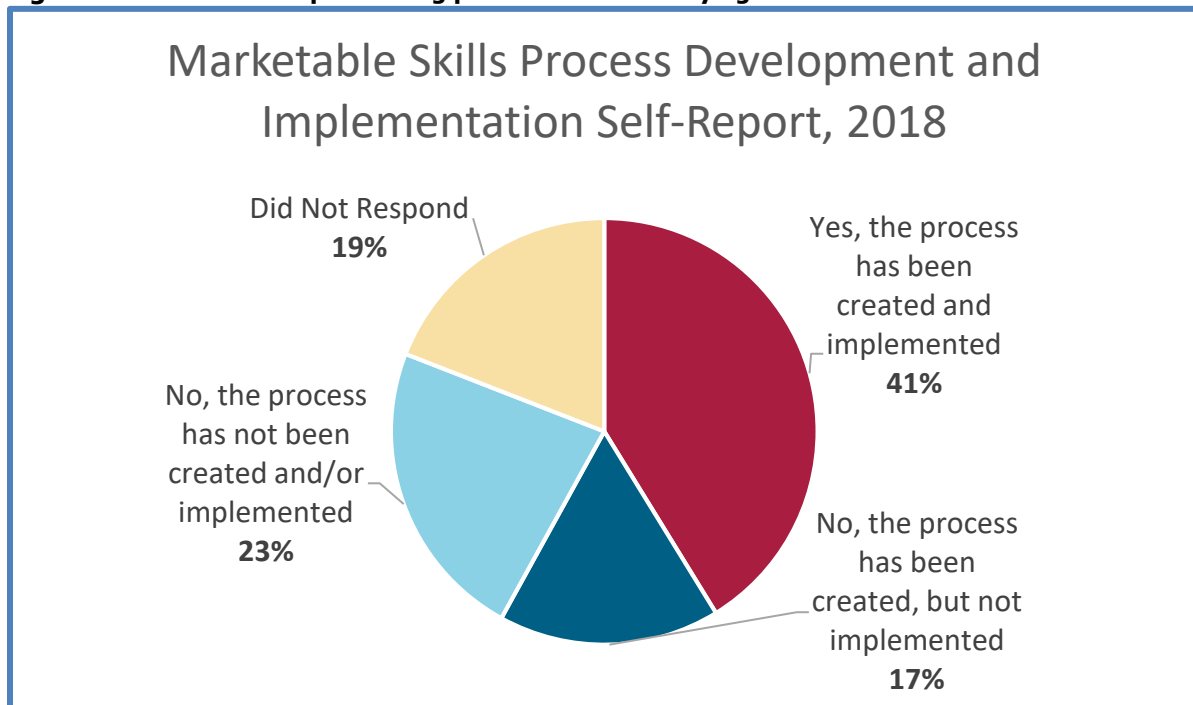
More rapid progress is needed if the first target is to be reached by 2020. A survey of Texas public higher education institutions indicated that as of spring 2018, 41 percent of institutions had accomplished the target, creating and implementing a process of identifying

⁶ Helping policymakers and practitioners understand reasons why numbers deviate from a target is an important role for the THECB.

marketable skills for their programs, and another 17 percent had started the process but not yet carried it out (Figure 5). The remaining 42 percent did not provide evidence they made progress on this target.

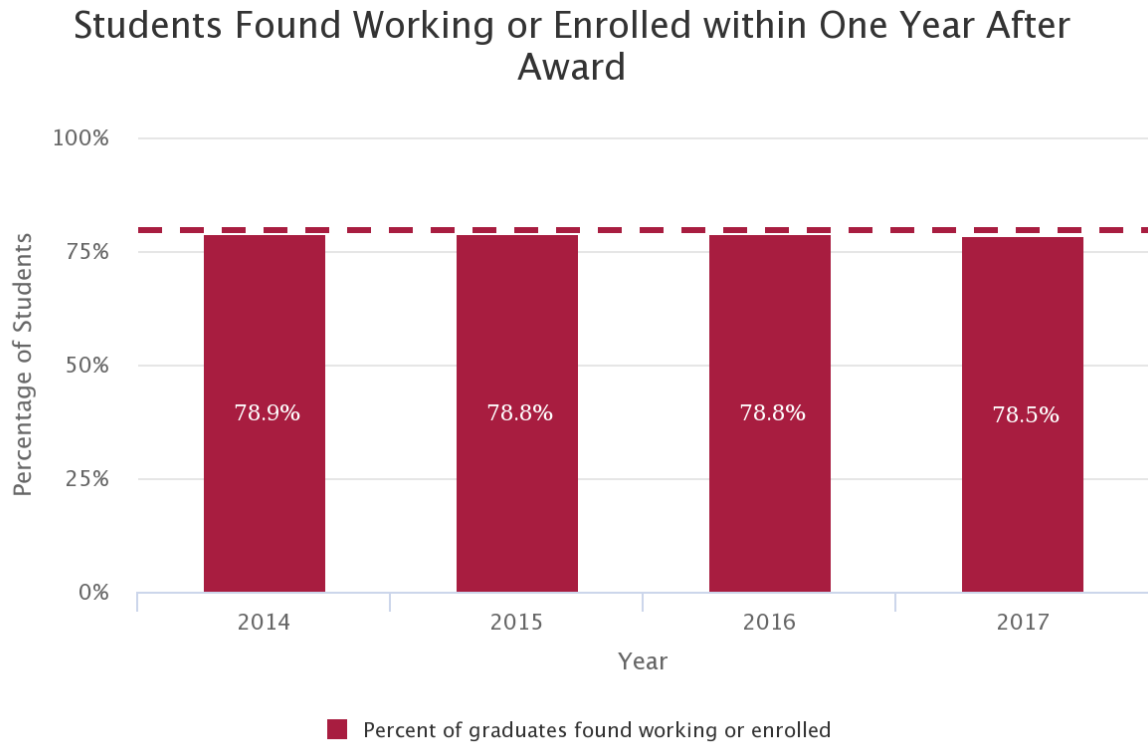
Many institutions will need to prioritize this work for the target to be met by 2020. To support these efforts, the THECB will offer professional development and a marketable skills conference in the coming academic year.

Figure 5. Institutions implementing processes for identifying marketable skills



In 2017, Texas students remained close to the second target: 78.5 percent of Texas students who received degrees in the 2016-17 academic year were found working or enrolled in fall 2017. This percentage was almost unchanged from the previous three years (Figure 6). These results closely tracked the 80 percent target. Given the consistency of these data over the plan years and the current economic climate, there is no cause for concern at this time.

Figure 6. Students working in Texas or enrolled in a Texas institution of higher education within one year after graduating from a Texas public, independent, or career institution



Source: Data from www.60x30TX.com



THE FOURTH GOAL: STUDENT DEBT

Undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.

- *Helps students graduate with manageable debt*

The intent of the fourth goal is for undergraduate students to graduate with manageable debt—no greater than 60 percent of the median student’s wages in the first year after graduation. This goal applies to students who earn a certificate, associate, or bachelor’s degree, who graduate with debt, and who have wage earnings in the year after graduation.

This is a maintenance goal, in that it remains unchanged between the baseline year of 2013 and the goal year of 2030. Students must be able to borrow sufficient funds to be able to complete their degrees, but not more than their future earnings can reasonably support. Given rising institutional costs and the tendency to pass many of these costs on to students, holding debt levels flat relative to first-year wages could be seen as a major accomplishment.

This statewide goal only includes undergraduate students who graduate with student loan debt.

In addition to this goal, the *60x30TX* plan includes two related targets:

- Limit debt so that no more than half of all students who complete an undergraduate degree or certificate have debt. This is a maintenance goal, based on the expectation that many students, especially a growing number of economically disadvantaged students (Goal 2), will continue to need to borrow to complete their degrees.
- Decrease the excess semester credit hours (SCH) that students attempt in completing an associate or bachelor’s degree to no more than 3 excess SCH by 2030, averaging across all students receiving those degrees, which would be a large reduction of current levels of excess SCH (Figure 8 and Table 4).

Overall Progress toward the Student Debt Goal

Graduates in 2016 had a median student debt-to-first-year-wage percentage of 59 percent, coming in under the target of 60 percent. There has been little change in this percentage since the goal was established (Table 2).

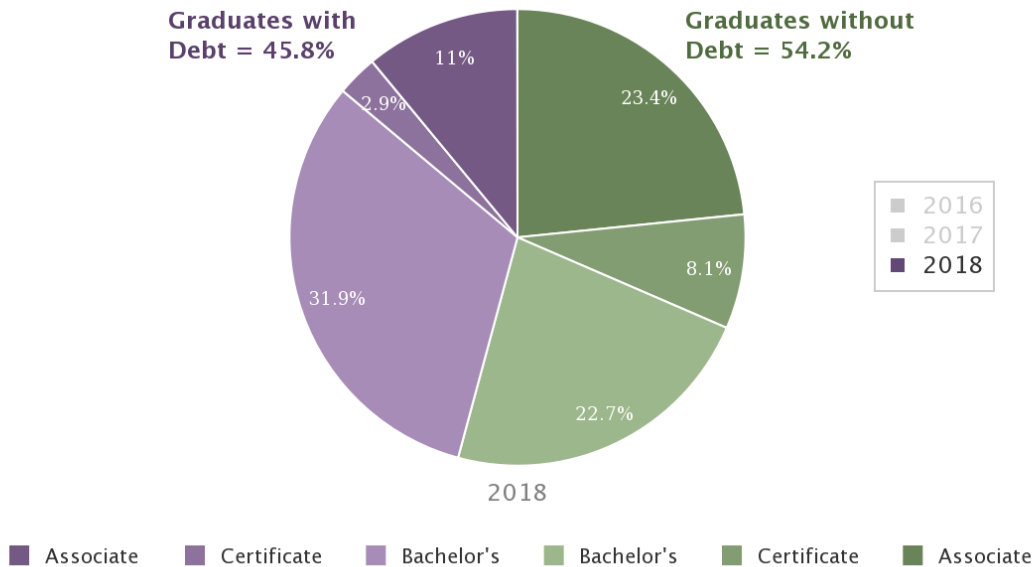
Table 2. Median student debt as a percentage of first-year wages

Baseline Year	Post-Baseline Years			Goal
2013	2014	2015	2016	2030
60%	60%	59%	59%	60%

Regarding the first target, in 2018, 54.2 percent of students earning a degree or certificate graduated without debt, leaving 45.8 percent graduating with debt (Figure 7), a decline from 49.2 percent graduating with debt in 2015 (Table 3). This decrease may be related to institutional aid practices, changes in state aid policies, or the strong Texas economy, in which there are more job opportunities and average family incomes are higher than for earlier graduates, many of whom entered higher education in the recession and post-recession years of 2008 to 2011. Economically disadvantaged students enrolling in higher education are often the most sensitive to changes in the economy and likely to rely on aid or debt to finance their education.

Figure 7. Share of undergraduate students graduating with and without debt at Texas public institutions

Share of Undergraduate Students Earning a Degree or Certificate with and without Student Debt



Source: Data from www.60x30TX.com

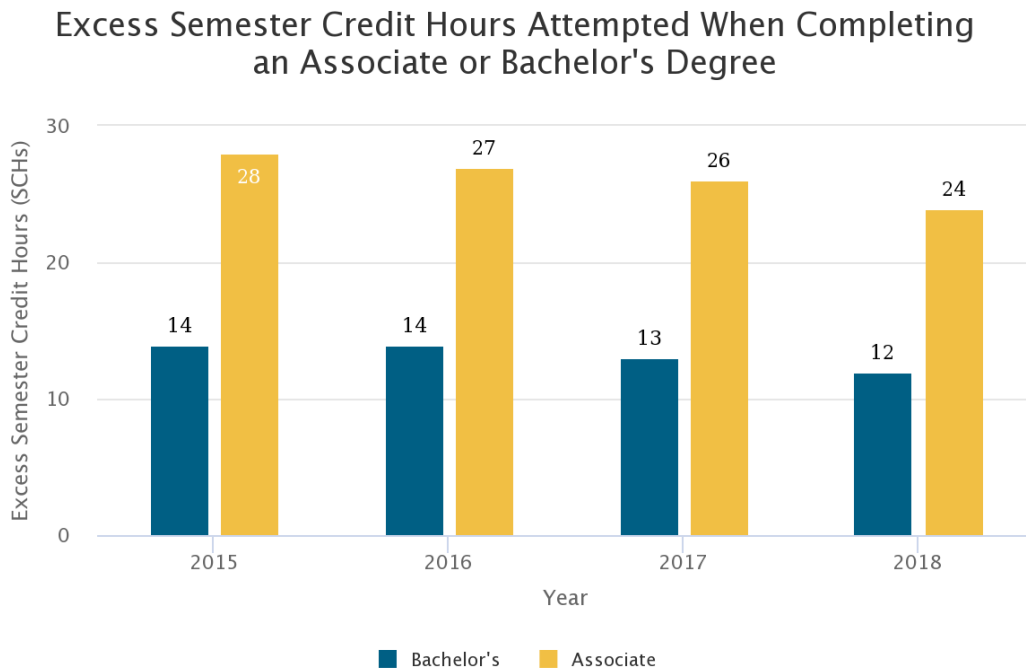
Of all undergraduate completers, students earning bachelor's degrees were the most likely to incur debt, not surprising given differences in the amount of time usually required to complete the degree. Between 2015 and 2018, the percentage of students graduating with debt declined for each type of degree (Table 3). The decline was largest among associate degree graduates (-4.3 percentage points).

Table 3. Percent of Students Graduating with Debt, by Year and Type of Degree

Type of degree	2015	2016	2017	2018	2015-2018 change
Certificate	28.7%	27.4%	27.5%	26.4%	-2.3%
Associate	36.4%	35.5%	34.1%	32.0%	-4.3%
Bachelor's	61.4%	60.7%	59.8%	58.4%	-2.9%
Total	49.2%	48.2%	47.2%	45.8%	-3.4%

Regarding the second target, from 2015 to 2018, the average number of excess SCH declined from 28 to 24 SCH for students earning associate degrees and from 14 to 12 SCH for bachelor's degree recipients (Figure 10). Averaging across both types of degree, the average number of excess credit hours declined from 19 to 16 SCH, with accelerated progress in 2018 when the average decreased by 2 SCH (Table 4). Institutions have been placing increased emphasis on this target since the creation of the *60x30TX* plan in 2015, which has likely had a greater effect on students who entered higher education more recently. Strategies to reduce excess semester credit hours include guided pathways and advising aimed to help students to make strategic course-taking decisions.

Figure 8. Average Excess Semester Credit Hours by Degree Type



Source: Data from www.60x30TX.com

Table 4. Average Excess Semester Credit Hours

Degree type	2015	2016	2017	2018
Associate	28	27	26	24
Bachelor's	14	14	13	12
Associate and Bachelor's	19	19	18	16

Programs and Activities in Support of *60x30TX*

Why has the percentage of young educated Texans increased? Why have completion increases slowed? These questions do not have simple answers because the outcomes are affected by many influences, such as the actions and behaviors of educators, policymakers, and students, as well as changes in population and economic activity. The THECB's role in supporting achievement of the *60x30TX* goals is to inform state policy and resource decisions and to provide assistance to institutions and intermediaries that work directly with students. The *60x30TX* plan identifies strategies related to each goal. Four priority strategies are highlighted in this report, where the THECB has provided key knowledge, resources, or policy support to the field this year.

1. Improve academic preparation for students to enter and complete higher education.
2. Promote college enrollment and completion to students and parents before high school graduation.
3. Support completion by improving the ability of students to transfer credits.
4. Mobilize education and workforce stakeholders to achieve the goals of *60x30TX*.

In this section of the report, we describe each of these strategies and provide information on programs and activities related to each strategy that we believe are likely to have the most impact.

Priority Strategies for 2018-19

1. Improve academic preparation for students to enter and complete higher education

The plan calls on Texas institutions of higher education to support students earlier in their educational careers to help them succeed in higher education. Ideally, students graduate from high school ready to successfully complete college-level coursework. However, many students enter higher education ill-equipped with the requisite reading, writing, and mathematics skills.⁷ Two efforts have been under way to help students start on the right foot—expansion of co-requisite remediation and the Texas Regional Alignment Network (TXRAN).

Expansion of Co-requisite Remediation

Nearly 58 percent of students who enter public community and technical colleges and 16 percent of students who enter public universities are underprepared for freshman college-level coursework. The traditional approach was to require these students to enroll in non-credit developmental education (remediation) courses in the subject(s) in which they are identified as

⁷ This includes both students enrolling directly after high school and returning students who have been out of school for a while. Older returning students who knew their subjects well in the past and whose memories simply need to be refreshed present a minor problem relative to students who never mastered a subject in the first place.

underprepared and to pass these courses before enrolling in credit-bearing courses in the same subject. In the past, many of these students have not progressed out of these courses and have dropped out. Those who do not drop out have graduated at significantly lower rates than those who entered higher education college ready (38 percent vs. 59 percent).

An alternative approach for these students is co-requisite models, which enable students to enroll right away in both a credit-bearing course and an extra support and intervention course in the subject in which they are underprepared. These models have been used successfully in several states, increasing student success in the credit-bearing course by up to 50 percentage points. Texas institutions have also experienced success employing these models. Responding to this evidence, in May 2017, the 85th Texas Legislature approved HB 2223, signed by Governor Abbott, requiring the scaling up of co-requisite models to serve 25 percent of students in developmental education in fall 2018, 50 percent in fall 2019, and 75 percent in fall 2020.

Since the passage of HB 2223, the THECB has provided professional development and technical assistance to support institutions as they develop and implement co-requisite models. The THECB awarded 18 community colleges and universities \$2.74M to support local development and implementation of corequisite models. Early results of the THECB analysis of co-requisite models indicate that most institutions met the 25 percent implementation threshold and that many scaled up far beyond the minimum target for fall 2018. The THECB expects to release student outcome data in Summer 2019.

Texas Regional Alignment Networks

The Texas Regional Alignment Networks (TX RAN) include 10 local networks of higher education and K-12 stakeholders, each led by a local public institution of higher education. The goal of each network is to facilitate smoother student transitions from K-12 to college and through college to degree or credential attainment.

Some networks have focused on developing vertically aligned curriculum in key subject areas between K-12 and higher education. They offer training to high school and college faculty in delivering quality and consistent instruction to high school students in dual credit and college preparatory courses. TX RAN institutions have also focused on creating guided academic pathways to two- and four-year degrees.

The THECB's role has been to support the work of these networks through research, data support, and coordination of meetings among network participants. A legislative appropriation in 2015 allowed for expansion from the original five networks to the current 10 programs. Small grants are provided when available to aid in administrative costs.

2. Promote college enrollment and completion to students and parents before high school graduation

Several THECB programs support efforts to help K-12 students understand the value of higher education and take the steps necessary to enroll in college. Two of these programs, Advise TX and GenTX, have been around for many years, reaching tens of thousands of students each year. Two complementary efforts are in development: an upgrade of the College

for All Texans website, and the launch of the *Are You Ready?* outreach campaign. Each of these efforts is described in more detail below.

Advise TX

Launched in 2010-11, the Advise TX program places recent college graduates from four participating Texas higher education institutions as full-time college advisers in 112 high schools with historically low college-going rates to help students identify the education options that best fit their career and academic goals.

Advisers serve a school's entire student population, with a sole focus on planning for education beyond high school. They provide guidance on how to research, select, and apply to colleges; help with completion of financial aid applications; feedback on college essays; help interpreting and comparing financial aid award letters; and meetings with parents and families. In 2017-18, advisers served more than 40,000 Texas students, facilitated more than 188,000 one-on-one meetings, assisted students with 130,000 college applications, and saved students \$1.7 million in application fees. An independent study found that the program had a positive effect on college enrollment by low-income students.⁸

Generation Texas

Generation Texas (GenTX) is a public awareness campaign to promote a college-going and completion culture in Texas. The GenTX campaign hosts two annual statewide activities, GenTX Month in November and GenTX Decision Day in May, and hosts a website, GenTX.org, containing information on planning, applying, and paying for college.

GenTX Month focuses on assisting students in participating high schools through the college and financial aid application process. Students are encouraged to complete at least one college application and apply for financial aid. On GenTX Decision Day in May, seniors are reminded to complete the college admission process for the college they decided to attend. Social media events and a checklist on financial literacy were added to the GenTX activities this year to assist students with money management as they head to college. The GenTX website contains content aimed at middle and high school students and includes materials to help educators and community organizations organize GenTX events in their communities.

Since its launch by the THECB in 2009, GenTX has expanded to include more than 500 high schools, middle/elementary schools, school districts, and community and nonprofit participants in the 2018-19 school year. These participants reported that more than 170,000 students took part in GenTX events, workshops, and celebrations in their schools and communities.

Other outreach activities

Two additional THECB efforts complement the activities of AdviseTX and GenTX. The College for All Texans website provides information to help students and families plan, apply, and pay for college in Texas. The site is designed to reach potential college-goers from multiple age groups, including military service members and adult learners. The website has been widely

⁸ College Advising Corps, "Evaluation Report on Advise TX: A Report on the Effectiveness of Advise TX (per Rider 53, III-58)", October 2018, <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/reports/PDF/11573.PDF?CFID=98432382&CFTOKEN=62721220>

used, with almost 2 million page visits in 2017. Based on feedback we have gathered, THECB staff are working on improvements to the content and user experience provided by this site, with the goal of enhancing its impact in increasing college enrollment. The site is anticipated for release date by the end of calendar year 2019.

The second effort is the *Are You Ready?* outreach and public awareness campaign, which calls on students, parents, college counselors, and institutions of higher education to share the responsibility for student success. The message of the campaign is students must be prepared for college, and colleges must also be ready to serve today's students. Part of this campaign consists of the development of a series of eight videos to be released in summer 2019 alongside a social media campaign.

3. Support the completion pipeline by improving transfer of credits

The completion goal helps ensure that more Texans, and the state as a whole, reap the personal and economic benefits of completing degrees and certificates. Inherent in increasing completions is the need to strengthen pathways between two- and four-year institutions and to align lower-division coursework across institutions and degrees. This enables students to start coursework at one institution and seamlessly transfer credits to other institutions, ideally reducing course duplication and student debt. Difficulty in transferring credits that apply to a students' major across institutions has been a barrier to students completing their degrees. To overcome this barrier, educators in two- and four-year institutions have worked together to provide information to students on what lower-division courses will best prepare students for a given major. Legislators in the 86th session recently passed SB 25 which aims to further improve transfer efficiency and enhance the state's understand of ongoing challenges of applying transfer courses to majors. One way the THECB contributes to this complex work of transfer is through the development of Fields of Study curricula.

Fields of Study

Fields of Study are part of a larger set of THECB strategies to streamline students' pathways toward a degree by easing transfer across public institutions, thereby increasing degree completion and reducing excess semester credit hours and student debt. A Field of Study (FOS) is a selection of lower-division courses that are guaranteed by state law to transfer and apply to a major. Each FOS is designed by faculty committees convened by the THECB to include the necessary coursework for success in the major, no matter to which public institutions of higher education in Texas students transfer.

Usually an FOS is somewhere between four and eight introductory-level classes, selected to provide students with a solid introduction to a field and prepare them for success in upper-division courses. When a student earns credits for all or even some FOS courses and then transfers to another Texas public institution of higher education, the FOS courses are guaranteed to transfer and be applied to the appropriate major.

The THECB has approved 32 FOS's so far, and more are forthcoming. A list of current Fields of Study, along with an FAQ and Implementation Guide, is available here: www.thecb.state.tx.us/fos. The THECB is working closely with institutions to improve their reporting of completed FOS's and aims to significantly increase the number of FOS's completed and reported to THECB over the next two years.

4. Mobilize education and workforce stakeholders to achieve the goals of 60x30TX

The success of the 60x30TX higher education plan will depend heavily on the ability to align efforts across K-12, higher education and the workplace. This alignment must be developed locally. For example, business leaders in a region can provide information on demand for labor in different occupations and with different skill sets. Educators and students can use this information to prepare students better for employment. In turn, students must be able to articulate which in-demand skills they have acquired. In addition, educators in higher education institutions can work with their K-12 counterparts so students will be motivated and prepared to succeed in college and the workforce. All of this requires regular communication across the three sectors. Two initiatives that highlight the THECB's efforts in this area include Regional 60x30TX targets and supports for identifying marketable skills.

Regional 60x30TX targets

Over the last two years, the THECB has been working with higher education, K-12, and business/industry leaders in the state's ten higher education regions to roll out regional 60x30TX targets and has asked those stakeholders to identify at least one high-impact, large-scale strategy to support achievement of the targets. As part of this process, the THECB has brought together these stakeholders in numerous regional meetings to review data, consider local strengths and challenges, and build consensus around the most powerful approaches to improve education outcomes tied to 60x30TX. This process has also included identifying institution-level completion targets to support achievement of the regional targets.

In August 2018, stakeholders in all regions submitted their identified strategies in three areas of the state strategic plan: the 60x30 educated population goal, completion goal, and high school-to-higher education enrollment target. The most common strategies in each of these areas include:

60x30 Educated Population Goal

- Deepen business/industry and higher education connections
- Develop initiatives to support adult and/or students who left college without graduating (stop-outs) to return and succeed in college
- Implement a large-scale public information campaign to communicate the value of earning a higher education credential

Completion Goal

- Ease transfer among institutions through regional collaboration
- Scale guided pathways, which include intensive advising, early commitment to a major or meta-major, and efficient degree plans, with the goal of achieving timely graduation
- Use data to increase degree completion, through data sharing across institutions or using data internally to auto-award credentials

High School-to-Higher Education Direct Enrollment Target

- Improve the process of advising and enrolling students in dual credit, AP, IB, or other college prep courses
- Track and increase rates of FAFSA and ApplyTX completion
- Link guided pathways at the higher education level more seamlessly to K-12

- Improve data sharing *and engagement* with all/most districts in a region to better understand the flow of high school graduates into higher education and the workplace

In addition, in August 2018, educators in all public and independent institutions submitted their completion targets to THECB. The sum of these institutional completion targets came close to reaching the regional targets set by the THECB. For example, the sum of the 2020 institutional completion targets was 368,316, a difference of just 2 percent from the state completion benchmark of 376,000 for that year. The sum of the institutional targets was within 7 percent of the statewide target for 2025 and 12 percent of the statewide 2030 target (Table 5).

Table 5. Comparison of Sum of Institutional Targets with the Statewide Target

Target Year	Sum of Institutional Completion Targets	Statewide Target	Institutional Targets as Percentage of the Statewide Target
2020	368,316	376,000	98%
2025	424,052	455,000	93%
2030	482,698	550,000	88%

The THECB provides resources to support regions and institutions as they move from the initial planning phase to implementation, including the [regional target starter kit](#) with updated data, institutional targets, and guidance for implementation, and mini-grants to support regional communication efforts. Regional action plans will be due to the THECB in August 2019.

Marketable skills supports (higher education and workforce)

Employers are looking for job candidates with a range of skills -- not just "hard" or technical skills. They need staff who can communicate, synthesize, and improve information, skills that many liberal arts and humanities students accrue in their programs. Students who can articulate the broad range of marketable skills they have obtained, not just the more technical skills, are better positioned to get a better job and can feel confident their college degree was worth the cost and time. For this reason, the Higher Education Strategic Planning Committee developed the marketable skills goal to make more explicit the skills students learn in their programs.

To date, the THECB has engaged in several activities to advance this goal. The THECB hosted two conferences encouraging campus leaders to share their current practices and providing training on how to implement the marketable skills goal. In 2018, the THECB produced *Career Readiness*, a career planning tool for entering college students, and a toolkit for employers to align a new or existing internship program with *60x30TX*. The toolkit was published in partnership with the Texas Workforce Commission. In addition, the 2019 Leadership Conference, which provides statutorily required training for new regents, will feature the marketable skills goal as the theme. Finally, staff are in the early planning phase for a third marketable skills conference in 2020.

Conclusion

Now that the *60x30TX* plan has been in place for four years, clearer trends are emerging in the progress toward the plan's goals. Texas has made substantial progress on the 60x30 educated population and student debt goals, but additional work is needed to accelerate the growth in the number of students from underrepresented populations completing degrees. The high school-to-college enrollment target, in particular, needs attention with new or improved efforts to support this critical student transition into higher education. The work on identifying marketable skills has shown a promising start; however, institutions seek additional technical assistance and guidance to reach the target. This work requires participation from all institutions to make clearer how the education they offer benefits students in the workplace.

The progress described in this report reflects the work of individuals in higher education institutions, K-12 schools and districts, and business and community leaders. These groups must continue to work closely together. If their work leads to evidence-supported, resource- and policy-backed improvement in practices by educators and employers, the *60x30TX* goals are more likely to be realized, providing a brighter future for the people of our state.

Appendix A: Statutory Authority for the 60x30TX Report

Texas Education Code Sec. 61.051. COORDINATION OF INSTITUTIONS OF PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION. (a) The board represents the highest authority in the state in matters of public higher education and is charged with the duty to take an active part in promoting quality education throughout the state by:

(1) providing a statewide perspective to ensure the efficient and effective use of higher education resources and to eliminate unnecessary duplication;

(2) developing and evaluating progress toward a long-range master plan for higher education and providing analysis and recommendations to link state spending for higher education with the goals of the long-range master plan;

(3) collecting and making accessible data on higher education in the state and aggregating and analyzing that data to support policy recommendations;

(4) making recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of transitions, including between high school and postsecondary education, between institutions of higher education for transfer purposes, and between postsecondary education and the workforce; and

(5) administering programs and trusteed funds for financial aid and other grants as necessary to achieve the state's long-range goals and as directed by the legislature.

(a-1) The board shall develop a long-range master plan for higher education in this state. The plan shall:

(1) establish long-term, measurable goals and provide strategies for implementing those goals;

(2) assess the higher education needs of each region of the state;

(3) provide for regular evaluation and revision of the plan, as the board considers necessary, to ensure the relevance of goals and strategies; and

(4) take into account the resources of private or independent institutions of higher education.

(a-2) The board shall establish methods for obtaining input from stakeholders and the general public when developing or revising the long-range master plan developed under Subsection (a-1).

(a-3) Not later than December 1 of each even-numbered year, the board shall prepare and deliver a report to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the standing committees of the senate and house of representatives with primary jurisdiction over higher education. In the report, the board shall assess the state's progress in meeting the goals established in the long-range master plan developed under Subsection (a-1) and recommend legislative action, including statutory or funding changes, to assist the state in meeting those goals. The report must include updates on implementation strategies provided for in the long-range master plan under Subsection (a-1).

Appendix B: Methods Used in the 60x30TX Report

This section describes the methods used to calculate the statistics for the four goals in the 60x30TX plan.

60x30 Educated Population Goal

At least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.

The 60x30 educated population goal is the only measure in the 60x30TX plan that is based on a sample survey.⁹ Staff at the THECB derived this goal's data for 2014 through 2017 using the Census Bureau's ACS estimates of the number of 25- to 34-year-old Texas residents whose highest level of self-reported education was an associate, bachelor's, master's, professional, or doctoral degree. Because the ACS does not ask about certificate attainment, THECB staff estimated the percentage of 25-34-year-olds with a certificate using the ratio of the number of 25-34-year-olds earning certificates in 2017 to the number earning associate degrees in that year from Texas public, independent, and career institutions. This ratio was multiplied by the annual ACS estimate of 25-34-year-old Texans with an associate degree to estimate the number of those Texans with a certificate.¹⁰

Completion Goal

At least 550,000 students in 2030 will complete a certificate, associate, bachelor's, or master's from an institution of higher education in Texas.

Despite the wording, this goal counts the number of degrees, not the number of students, in all cases except for that of economically disadvantaged students. Progress toward the completion goal is calculated for a given year by adding up the total number of certificates, associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees awarded that year in Texas public, independent, and career higher education institutions. The same calculation is done to track the progress of underrepresented student populations separately by gender and for each race/ethnic group.

For economically disadvantaged students, the calculation is slightly different. "Economically disadvantaged" students are defined as those who received a Pell Grant at any time in the previous 15 years. When counting completions for those students, each student receiving a certificate or degree is counted once, so that the total count is the total number of economically disadvantaged students receiving certificates or degrees, not the total number of certificates or degrees as with the other groups. In addition, master's degrees are not included, as master's students typically are not eligible for Pell Grants.

⁹ Estimates of attainment have a margin of error, expressed as a confidence interval. Statistical testing is required to compare attainment estimates. For 2017 attainment, the 90 percent confidence interval was 43.5 percent plus or minus 0.6 percent, or 42.9 to 44.1 percent. That was up 1.2 percentage points from 42.3 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$). The three-year increase of 3.2 percent from 2014 to 2017 was also statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level. For additional detail about confidence intervals and the American Community Survey, see U.S. Census Bureau website: https://factfinder.census.gov/help/en/confidence_interval_american_community_survey.htm.

¹⁰ This approach assumes the ratio of certificate to associate completions in the most recent year is a good proxy for the ratio of certificate to associate attainment. THECB approximations have been checked against estimations used by national sources and have been very close, within .1-.5 percentage points.

For the target on direct enrollment by high school graduates in higher education, a student-level file of Texas public school graduates is matched to fall enrollment data in Texas public and private two-year and four-year institutions in the following fall. Students without IDs that can be matched are excluded from the calculation. The percentage of the remaining public school graduates found enrolled in Texas higher education is the statistic that is reported.¹¹

Marketable Skills Goal

All graduates from Texas public institutions of higher education will have completed programs with identified marketable skills.

This goal contains two targets. The first is that by 2020, institutions will have created and implemented a process to identify and regularly update marketable skills for each of their programs. The second target specifies that at least 80 percent of students who complete a certificate or degree (associate or higher) from a Texas higher education institution will remain in the state and be working and/or enrolled in higher education within one fiscal year of completion.

Data on the first target was obtained from an electronic survey submitted through the THECB accountability system portal by representatives from two- and four-year Texas public higher education institutions. The overall response rate to this survey was 81 percent (Figure 7).

To measure success on the second target, records for students who received a degree or certificate from a Texas public, independent, or career institution in a given academic year are matched with enrollment data from the fall semester following that academic year and with employment data for the fourth quarter (October through December) following the academic year. The source of the employment data is the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), which collects those data as part of its role overseeing the state's unemployment insurance system. Absent from these data are self-employed individuals in Texas and individuals moving out of state after graduation, along with Texas residents who are neither working nor in school.

Student Debt Goal

Undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.

The estimate of median debt as a percentage of wages included graduates of Texas two-year and four-year public institutions who:

- earned a certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree (the few bachelor's degrees earned at two-year institutions were not included);
- had state, federal, or, where data are available, private student loan debt at the time of graduation; and

¹¹ This statistic does not count students who enroll out of state, as the THECB does not consistently have access to the National Student Clearinghouse data that would make it possible to track those graduates. In addition, data are not available on graduates of Texas private schools or home-schooled students. Students enrolling in private career institutions also are not counted.

- earned wages the first year after graduation that were reported to the Texas Workforce Commission. This generally includes earnings of full- and part-time employees but not of self-employed individuals.

For graduates who met these criteria, THECB staff calculated each graduate's debt as a percentage of the individual's total first-year wages and computed the statewide median of these graduates' percentages. Total wages for 2016 graduates from fall 2016 through summer 2017 were available from the Texas Workforce Commission in fall 2018, making this the most recent group of graduates for whom data on this indicator were available at the time of this report.

The student debt goal also has two additional targets: (1) that no more than half of all students who complete an undergraduate degree or certificate have debt, and (2) that the average number of excess semester credit hours (SCH) that students attempt in completing an associate or bachelor's degree decline to no more than 3 SCH by 2030, averaging across all students receiving those degrees.

The calculation for the first target included students who earned certificates and associate degrees at two-year institutions and those who completed associate and bachelor's degrees at four-year institutions in FY 2018.¹² For this measure, graduates of both public and private higher education institutions in Texas were included. For these individuals, the state's financial aid database was used to sum up the total debt incurred by each student during the previous 15 years.

The measurement of excess semester credit hours for the second target included credit hours attempted over the previous 10 years by students earning an associate degree from a Texas public two-year institution or a bachelor's degree from a Texas public four-year institution in the 2017-18 academic year. Hours attempted in dual credit courses in high school or developmental education classes were not counted in a student's number of attempted hours. A student's excess credit hours was defined as the number of attempted hours minus the number of hours required for the student's degree program.¹³

¹² FY 2018 includes the period from September 2017 through August 2018.

¹³ For purposes of this calculation, the number of required hours for all associate degree programs was set equal to 60, while institutions submitted the required number of hours for each bachelor's degree program.

Appendix C: Additional Detail on Progress Toward the Educated Population and Completion Goals

This section contains additional detail on the state’s progress toward the 60x30 educated population goal and the completion goal over the last three years.

60x30 Educated Population Goal

Progress by Degree Type

Bachelor’s and associate degrees have accounted for most of the recent increase in Texas’ educated population. Bachelor’s degrees accounted for both the largest group of degree holders in 2014 through 2017 and the largest portion of the 2014-17 increase in the share of 25-34-year-olds with a postsecondary credential. Associate degrees accounted for the second-largest group of degree holders and the second-largest portion of the 2014-17 increases in 25-34-year-olds with a postsecondary credential (Table C1).

Table C1. Estimated Number of Texas 25-34-Year-Olds with a Postsecondary Credential

Degree Type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2014-17 change
Certificate	168,000	172,000	179,000	190,000	21,000
Associate	279,000	283,000	313,000	327,000	48,000
Bachelor's	809,000	852,000	886,000	927,000	117,000
Master's	239,000	247,000	265,000	270,000	31,000
Doctoral	26,000	26,000	25,000	30,000	4,000
Professional	51,000	48,000	54,000	50,000	-1,000
Total with degrees or certificates	1,571,000	1,628,000	1,721,000	1,792,000	221,000
Total population ages 25-34	3,898,000	3,971,000	4,069,000	4,117,000	219,000
Percent of population ages 25-34	40.3%	41.0%	42.3%	43.5%	3.2%

Numbers are rounded to the nearest 1,000.

In terms of numbers, about 1.8 million out of a total population of 4.1 million young adults had a certificate or higher level of postsecondary education in 2017, up from 1.6 million out of a total population of 3.9 million in 2014 (Table C1).

Effects of Migration

Approximately 15,000 to 26,000 more degree holders were gained than lost in the state in any given year since 2014 due to net domestic migration (Table C2)¹⁴.

¹⁴ This measure is calculated by subtracting the estimated number of U.S. degree holders outside of Texas who reported residing in Texas in the prior year from the estimated number of degree holders in Texas in 2017 who reported residing in another U.S. state in the prior year. Net domestic migration of certificate holders cannot be estimated using the American Community Survey data since the survey does not ask about certificates.

Table C2. Estimates of Net Migration of Degree Holders (Associates and Above)*

	2014	2015	2016	2017
domestic in-migration**	75,000	75,000	71,000	82,000
domestic out-migration	49,000	52,000	56,000	63,000
net domestic migration	26,000	23,000	15,000	19,000
international in-migration**	29,000	33,000	33,000	28,000
international out-migration	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
net international migration	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

* Estimates are derived from the American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata samples. Numbers are rounded to the nearest thousand; the margins of error for the estimates included in Table C2 range from 6 to 14 percent (for example, domestic in-migration in 2017 ranges from approximately 76,000 to 88,000 or $\pm 7.5\%$ at a 90 percent confidence level).

** Domestic in-migration represents 25-34-year-old degree holders moving to Texas from other states, while international in-migration consists of degree holders moving in from other countries. Estimates of net international migration of degree holders are not included because individuals who have left the U.S. in the current year are not included in the American Community Survey.

Completion Goal

Progress by Degree Type

The increase between 2015 and 2018 in the total number of CABM degrees awarded is primarily due to increases in the number of bachelor's and associate degrees (Table C3). Bachelor's degrees comprised more than 140,000 of the completions in 2018, and the number of bachelor's degrees completed annually increased by almost 13,000 since the start of the plan. Associate degrees increased by nearly 12,000 over the same period to reach more than 93,000 in 2018.

Table C3. Completions by Type of Degree

Degree Type	Number of Degrees				2015-18 Increase
	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Certificate	50,641	51,565	52,756	51,682	1,041
Associate	81,151	87,423	91,434	93,118	11,967
Bachelor's	127,177	129,043	134,079	140,004	12,827
Master's	52,371	53,379	55,651	56,503	4,132
all CABM completions	311,340	321,410	333,920	341,307	29,967

Reduced growth in CABM completions in the most recent year is evident when growth is expressed in terms of percentage increases over the previous year (Table C4). Growth in associate degrees, the most rapidly growing category in 2016 and 2017, slowed considerably, to 1.8 percent growth, from 2017 to 2018:

At the extremes, bachelor's degrees increased in the most recent year by 4.4 percent, substantially larger growth than in earlier years, while certificates decreased by 2 percent.

Table C4. Percent Increase in the Number of Completions by Degree Type

Degree Type	Annual Percent Change in Number of Degrees			2015-18 Annual Average Increase
	2016	2017	2018	
Certificate	1.8%	2.3%	-2.0%	0.7%
Associate	7.7%	4.6%	1.8%	4.7%
Bachelor's	1.5%	3.9%	4.4%	3.3%
Master's	1.9%	4.3%	1.5%	2.6%
all CABM completions	3.2%	3.9%	2.2%	3.1%

Progress by Underrepresented Groups

Table C5 converts the yearly numbers in Figure 5 into annual rates of increase for each student group. These statistics show that accelerated progress is needed for each of the underrepresented groups for whom the *60x30TX* plan set completion targets. For African American students, the 2015-18 average annual rate of progress of 2.2 percent was below the 4.5 percent benchmark required by the plan. Likewise, the annual average increases of 6.2 percent for Hispanic students, 3.2 percent for male students, and 2.9 percent for economically disadvantaged students fell short of the respective targets of 7.5 percent, 5.2 percent, and 5.3 percent for those student groups.

Table C5 also shows the slowdown between 2017 and 2018 in completion increases for the four identified underrepresented groups. There was almost no change in the number of economically disadvantaged students completing degrees between 2017 and 2018.

Table C5. Comparison of annual percent change in CABM completions awarded with the target increase for students in underrepresented groups*

student population	2016	2017	2018	2015-18 Annual Average	Target 2015-30 Average
African American	-0.4%	5.7%	1.4%	2.2%	4.5%
Hispanic	7.5%	7.2%	3.9%	6.2%	7.5%
Male	3.7%	4.2%	1.7%	3.2%	5.2%
Economically disadvantaged	4.7%	3.9%	0.2%	2.9%	5.3%

* Because improvement between 2015 and 2018 for each group was slower than the group's target rate, average annual improvement during the remaining years from 2018 to 2030 must exceed the target to make up for lost ground. Specifically, for each group to reach their targets, annual increases in completions between 2018 and 2030 must average 5.2 percent for African American students, 7.8% for Hispanic students, and 5.5% for male students. Similarly, the number of economically disadvantaged students receiving degrees must increase by 5.8% per year on average.

Progress on Direct High School-to-College Enrollment

Although the number of high school graduates and the number of those students entering Texas higher education institutions have increased, the percentage of graduates entering Texas higher education has not (Table C6). Increasing this percentage, and supporting

the additional students through to graduation, would make an important contribution to reaching the completion goal.

Table C6. Students enrolling in higher education immediately after high school

Student population	2015	2016	2017	2018	2015-18 Change *
Public high school graduates directly enrolling in Texas higher education	156,777	159,453	165,751	170,015	13,238
Public high school graduates**	297,493	307,103	316,666	329,512	32,019
Percent of high school graduates enrolling in Texas higher education	52.7%	51.9%	52.3%	51.6%	-1.1 pct pt

* The 2015-18 change of -1.1 percentage points (an average of just under -0.4 percentage points per year) can be compared with the 2015-30 target change of 0.7 percentage points per year, calculated from the baseline year of 2014 when the plan was established. Given the lack of progress since 2014, the required change from a baseline year of 2018 would be an average of 1.1 percentage points per year to reach the 2030 target of 65 percent.

** All statistics in this table exclude high school graduates who could not be tracked based on their student IDs – 18,831 students in 2018.

Appendix D: Higher Education Assistance for Identified High Schools

Texas Education Code (TEC), Section 51.810 directs institutions “in closest geographic proximity” to collaborate with high schools that are substantially below the state average in number of graduates who enroll in higher education to provide information and assistance to students. The purpose of the statute is to:

- Increase college-going rates at these high schools, with special emphasis on African American male and Hispanic enrollment in higher education
- Improve access to high-quality dual credit opportunities

The statute requires institutions to report their collaborative efforts to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), which is charged with identifying high schools that have substantially lower than average college-going rates and with summarizing the elements and results of institutional plans in the annual progress report for the state’s higher education strategic plan.

Increasing the percentage of Texas public high school students enrolling directly in an institution of higher education in Texas is a key target of the *60x30TX* strategic plan for higher education in Texas. Collaboration with these low-enrolling high schools is important for reaching this target.

Elements of Institutional Plans

The THECB surveyed 102 public universities and community and technical colleges from February through early April 2019 to find out which collaborative activities were included in their Higher Education Assistance Plans (HEAPs). Ninety-eight percent of the institutions ($n = 100$) responded.¹⁵ Among the institutions that responded, 84 percent (4-year = 33; 2-year = 51) collaborated with one or more low college-enrolling HEAP high schools in calendar year 2018.

Among the 197 high schools identified as low college-enrolling, 98 percent ($n = 194$) were reported by at least one institution as being served under a HEAP in calendar year 2018. Among the three high schools that were not served, two were in rural locations, one of which was identified in a different institution of higher education region than the nearest institution. The median number of institutions collaborating with the same low college-enrolling high school was five. Twelve percent ($n = 32$) of listed high schools were reported as receiving assistance by 10 or more institutions, with 17 reported as the highest number of institutions serving a high school.

Institutions were asked to indicate from a list the activities in which they engaged with the THECB-identified low college-enrolling high schools. Figure D1 shows the activities engaged in by at least half of responding institutions, in rank order by the number of institutions reporting the activity. Figure D2 shows the activities reported by less than half of respondents. Overall, most institutions engaged in higher volume, lower touch activities geared toward recruitment and providing information on the application and the financial aid processes, based on the activities listed in Figure D1. Fifty-eight institutions provided dual credit partnerships with at least one low college-enrolling high school. Fewer institutions served students in activities promoting college readiness or preparation for meeting the Texas Success Initiative (TSI),

¹⁵ Eastfield College and Odessa College did not respond.

based on activities reported in Figure D2, including content-specific professional development to high school faculty, student mentoring, test preparation, and implementing bridge or college preparatory course programs. Further, approximately one in five (19% of 84 HEAP-supporting institutions) provided activities specifically supporting African American and Hispanic male students, of which six institutions had named programs.

Figure D1. Activities with at least half (50%) of HEAP-supporting institutions participating, 2018

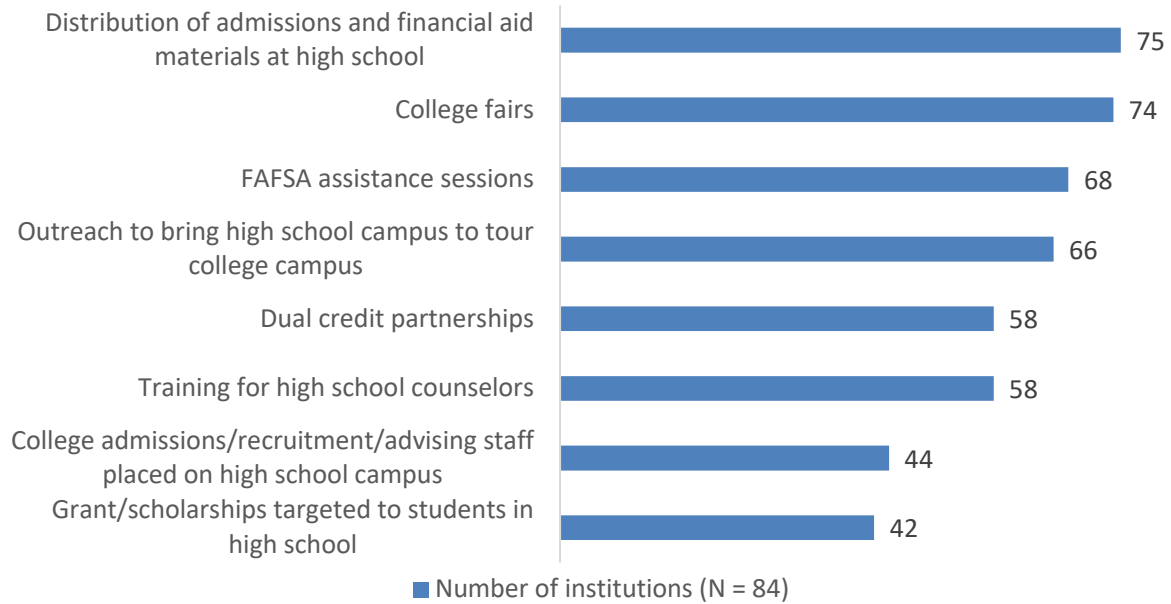
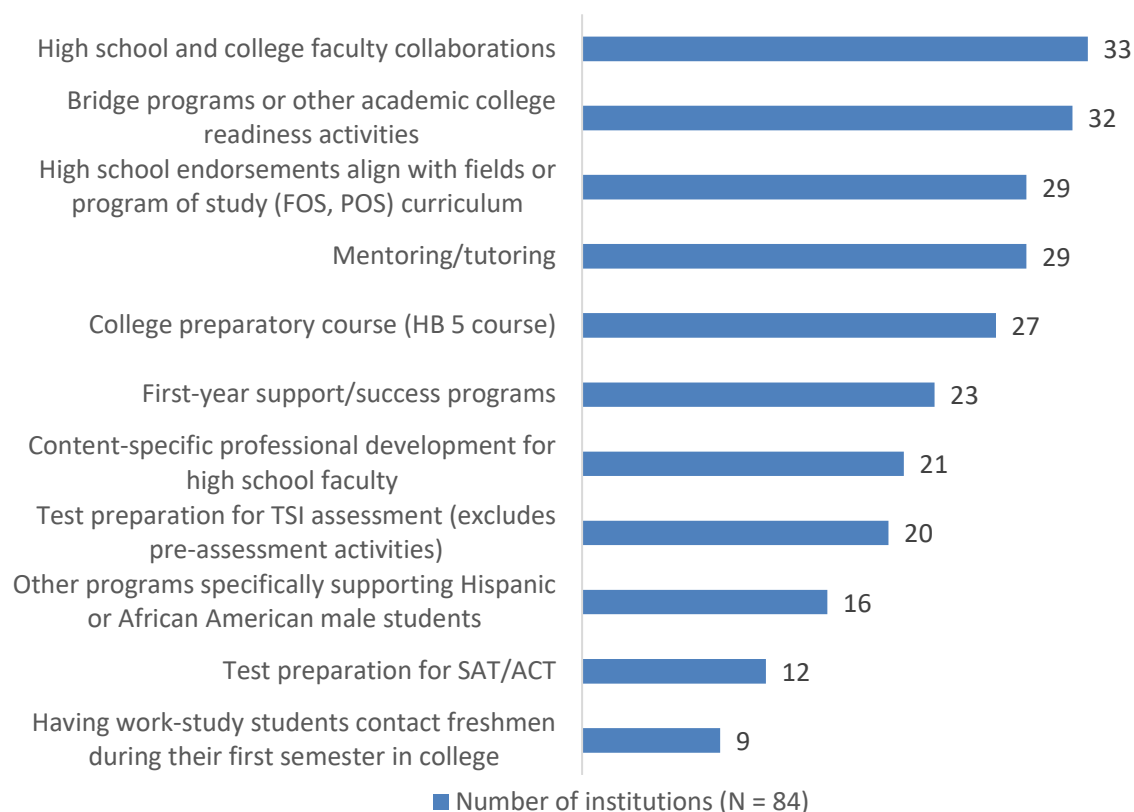


Figure D2. Activities with less than half (50%) of HEAP-supporting institutions participating, 2018



Other activities mentioned by institutions but not listed in the survey were:

- Free TSI Assessment
- Reduced dual credit tuition
- Application workshops
- Scholarship workshops
- Parent dual credit information nights

Some of these activities may be considered in the future for inclusion in the survey.

Student Outcomes for Identified HEAP Schools

Student direct college enrollments rates, dual credit enrollments, and Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) rates for 2018 high school graduates were tracked using administrative data from the THECB, the Texas Education Agency, and U.S. Department of Education.

Overall, the low college-enrollment high schools identified by the THECB for HEAPs for calendar year 2018 had a direct enrollment rate 15 percentage points lower than the state direct college enrollment rate of 51.6 percent (Table D1). The widest gaps in enrollment rates were between females and males of all race/ethnicity groups and between Other (which includes Asian, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander, and multiracial) and Hispanic students. Hispanic males graduating from HEAP high schools had the lowest direct enrollment rates, with only 29 percent enrolling in college.

Table D1. College-going rates for 2018 Texas public high school graduates

Ethnicity	Gender	HEAP High School Graduates	HEAP High School Graduates Enrolled in College	Percentage of HEAP High School Graduates Enrolled in College	All Public High School Graduates	All Public High School Graduates Enrolled in College	Percentage of Public High School Graduates Enrolled in College
African American	Female	2,591	1,038	40.1%	21,495	11,271	52.4%
	Male	2,434	743	30.5%	20,899	8,682	41.5%
Hispanic	Female	9,172	3,710	40.4%	81,235	44,349	54.6%
	Male	9,067	2,659	29.3%	78,401	34,316	43.8%
White	Female	529	252	47.6%	51,458	29,886	58.1%
	Male	478	188	39.3%	53,179	25,837	48.6%
Other*	Female	4,340	2,049	47.2%	11,414	8,105	71.0%
	Male	4,340	1,411	32.5%	11,412	7,566	66.3%
Total	All	32,951	12,050	36.6%	329,493	170,012	51.6%

*Other includes Asian, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander, and multiracial.

Note. Only high school graduates with a valid, trackable identification number are reported.

Of the 197 schools identified, 98 percent (n = 193) had students enrolled in dual credit in their senior year. Approximately 12 percent of graduates in THECB-identified HEAP schools enrolled in dual credit their senior year compared with approximately 17 percent of public high school graduates statewide. The percentage of dual credit students directly enrolling into college after high school graduation is significantly higher than the direct enrollment rates of all graduates. At HEAP high schools, the direct college enrollment rate overall was 36.6 percent, and the rate among students who took dual credit in their senior year was 71.8 percent. For all high school graduates, the rates were 51.6 percent and 76.3 percent, respectively. The gap between college going rates for dual credit students at HEAP high schools and all high schools is relatively small (4.3 percentage points; Table D2). The widest gap between HEAP high schools and all public high schools in dual credit student direct college enrollment rates were among Hispanic students, with the largest gap among Hispanic females, which was 8.2 percentage points lower among HEAP dual credit graduates.

Table D2. Dual Credit Seniors College-going rates, 2018

Ethnicity	Gender	HEAP High School Graduates	HEAP High School Graduates Enrolled in College	Percentage of HEAP High School Graduates Enrolled in College	All Public High School Graduates	All Public High School Graduates Enrolled in College	Percentage of All Public High School Graduates Enrolled in College
Dual Credit Status		Enrolled in Dual Credit in Senior Year			Enrolled in Dual Credit in Senior Year		
African American	Female	187	138	73.8%	2,733	2,092	76.5%
	Male	111	76	68.5%	1,416	978	69.1%
Hispanic	Female	1,079	767	71.1%	14,018	11,103	79.2%
	Male	774	529	68.3%	9,927	7,212	72.7%
White	Female	69	57	82.6%	2,378	2,039	85.7%
	Male	54	43	79.6%	1,737	1,457	83.9%
Other*	Female	928	714	76.9%	14,080	10,853	77.1%
	Male	631	427	67.7%	10,357	7,501	72.4%
Total	All	3,833	2,751	71.8%	56,646	43,235	76.3%

Table D3 shows the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) submission rates for seniors at identified schools, compared with statewide results at all public high schools. In 2017-18, 43.5 percent of seniors at HEAP high schools submitted FAFSA paperwork between October 2017 and June 2018 of their senior year, compared with 49.5 percent of seniors at all Texas public high schools. While FAFSA submission rates for both groups of seniors slipped from the previous year, rates were still higher than they were before 2016-17, when the FAFSA submission period for seniors set by the U.S. Department of Education began three months later, in January, rather than three months earlier, in October. While it remained a priority of HEAP-supporting institutions to inform students about the importance of completing the FAFSA for financial aid consideration, a somewhat lower 68 percent of these institutions reported assisting students with FAFSA preparation on the 2019 survey than the 76 percent in 2018. However, the one-year dip in FAFSA submission rates also is consistent with the decrease in college-going rates for both HEAP high school seniors and seniors statewide over the same period.

Table D3. FAFSA submissions by Texas public high school seniors

Senior Year	HEAP High Schools Seniors	HEAP High School Seniors Completing a FAFSA October-June	Percentage of HEAP High School Seniors Completing a FAFSA October-June	All Public High School Seniors	All Public High School Seniors Completing a FAFSA October-June	Percentage of Public High School Seniors Completing a FAFSA October-June
2016-17	34,395	16,417	47.7%	332,767	177,040	53.2%
2017-18	33,309	14,503	43.5%	345,014	170,942	49.5%

Appendix E: Higher Education Assistance for Identified High Schools Statutory Provisions

(a) In this section:

(1) "Coordinating board" means the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

(2) "Institution of higher education" and "private or independent institution of higher education" have the meanings assigned by [Section 61.003](#).

(b) The institution of higher education in closest geographic proximity to a public high school in this state identified by the coordinating board for purposes of this section as substantially below the state average in the number of graduates who enroll in higher education institutions shall enter into an agreement with that high school to develop a plan to increase the number of students from that high school enrolling in higher education institutions. Under the plan, the institution shall:

(1) collaborate with the high school to:

(A) provide to prospective students information related to enrollment in an institution of higher education or a private or independent institution of higher education, including admissions, testing, and financial aid information;

(B) assist those prospective students in completing applications and testing related to enrollment in those institutions, including admissions and financial aid applications, and fulfilling testing requirements; and

(C) target efforts to increase the number of Hispanic students and African American male students enrolled in higher education institutions; and

(2) actively engage with local school districts to provide access to rigorous, high-quality dual credit opportunities for qualified high school students as needed.

(c) An institution of higher education must include a plan developed by the institution under this section and the results of that plan in its annual report to the coordinating board under [Section 51.4032](#).

(d) The coordinating board shall include in its annual "Closing the Gaps" higher education plan progress report a summary of the results of the plans developed and administered under this section.

(e) The coordinating board may adopt rules to implement this section.



This document is available on the [Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board website](#).

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