Data Management and Research

60x30TX
Texas Higher Education
Coordinating Board

60x30TX **Progress Report**

July 2021

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Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Agency Mission

The mission of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) 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.

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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% 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% of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.

Each year, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) provides an update on how the state is progressing toward the goals and targets of the plan.

This year's report focuses primarily on the data available in the 2020 academic year. While progress has been substantial on the educated population and student debt goals, improvement in the completion measure needs to accelerate to put the state on track to reach the state's completion goals by 2030.

Texans who have lost jobs or had their educations interrupted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic will require opportunities to re-skill or up-skill due to changes in the economy; Texas higher education must be ready to meet these needs. Providing advising, financial support, and a full range of flexible educational options for Texans to earn credentials that will be of value now and in the future will be critical for the state and its residents as we move toward 2030 and beyond.

The following is a summary of progress on each goal:

Educated Population. In 2019, the most recent year of data available, the percentage of Texas 25- to 34-year-olds with a certificate or degree increased by 1.7 percentage points, from 43.6% to 45.3% (Table 1). This compares with an average annual increase of 0.7 percentage points in 2017 and 2018.

Completion. In Academic Year 2020, students at Texas public, independent, and career institutions completed 348,394 certificates and associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees (sometimes referred to as CABMs in this report), up from 347,669 in 2019 (Table 1). This amounted to an increase of 725 completions, or 0.2%, compared with an increase of 2.2% in 2018 and 1.9% in 2019 (Table 1 and Appendix C, Table C4). Although it is encouraging that completions continue to increase, the slowing pace of the increase merits attention.

Among the underrepresented groups targeted in the plan, male students had fewer completions in 2020 than in 2019, with a decrease of 2.5% (Table 1 and Appendix C, Table C5). The highest percentage increase was for Hispanic students (2.9%), followed by economically disadvantaged students (0.8%) and African American students (0.5%). All of these groups had

average annual improvement rates from 2015-20 that are not on track for reaching their 2030 growth targets.

Marketable Skills. The percentage of Texas students who received degrees in 2018-19 and were found working or enrolled for additional education within one year of degree completion, 79.0%, was almost unchanged from the previous three years and closely tracked the 80% target under this goal (Table 1).

Student Debt. The state has met the student debt goal of no more than 60% debt-to-first-year-wage in each year of the plan so far (Table 1).[1] The state also met the target that no more than half of students earning undergraduate awards—a certificate or an associate or bachelor's degree—graduate with debt. In 2020, less than half of students, 44.1%, had debt at the time of graduation, down from 44.6% in 2019 (Table 1).

The state also made strong progress toward the additional target to reduce excess semester credit hours (SCHs) attempted by students as they work toward a credential. Ensuring that students take the courses that contribute toward progress to their desired credential can help reduce student debt and the time spent in college. The plan target is to reduce excess SCHs to an average of 3 SCHs by 2030. Between 2017 and 2020, the average number of excess credit hours declined from 26 to 22 SCHs for students earning associate degrees and from 14 to 10 SCHs for bachelor's degree recipients, amounting to a decline from 19 to 14 excess SCHs averaged across both types of degrees (Tables 1 and 4 and Figure 7).

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[1] Student debt statistics represent student debt excluding debt incurred by students' parents. Before last year, reports included parent-incurred debt in the total. Therefore, statistics on student debt in this year's report cannot be directly compared with those prior reports.

Table 1. Progress Toward Goals and Targets of *60x30TX*

Goal	Target	2017*	2018*	2019*	Most Recent Year 2020*	Improvement in Most Recent Year (2019-20)	2030 Goal/Target
60x30	60x30 (Educated Population) (2016-19)	42.3%	43.5%	43.6%	45.3%	1.7 pct pt	60%
Completion	Overall	333,920	341,307	347,669	348,394	0.2%	550,000
	Hispanic	111,344	115,735	121,589	125,151	2.9%	285,000
	African American	41,027	41,594	41,077	41,265	0.5%	76,000
	Male	141,564	143,981	147,198	143,471	-2.5%	275,000
	Economically Disadvantaged	124,178	124,471	127,986	128,983	0.8%	246,000
	TX High School Grads Enrolling in TX Higher Education	52.3%	51.6%	51.2%	44.9%	-6.3 pct pt	65%
Marketable Skills	Institutions Implementing Marketable Skills Plans	n/a	41.0%	n/a	n/a	- -	100% (2020 target)
	Working or Enrolled Within One Year (2016-19)	78.8%	78.5%	78.9%	79.0%	0.1 pct pt	80%
Student Debt	Student Loan Debt-to-First-Year-Wage Percentage** (2015-18)	55%	55%	53%	51%	-1.9 pct pt	60%
	Percentage of Undergraduates Completing with Debt**	47.3%	45.9%	44.6%	44.1%	-0.5 pct pt	50%
	Excess SCHs Attempted**	19	17	15	14	-0.9	3

Source: Data from THECB, Texas Workforce Commission, and American Communities Survey
*or most recent year of data available in that year
**Declines in student debt and excess semester credit hours represent improvement. All student debt statistics in this year's report exclude debt incurred by students' parents.

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% 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% of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.

Each year, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) provides an update on how the state is progressing toward the goals and targets of the plan. The *60x30TX* goals have focused statewide attention on specific areas where improvement is needed. Improvement happens when practitioners and policymakers carefully analyze how and where problems originate, how resources can be reallocated to address issues, and what diagnostic feedback is needed to assess and guide progress toward goals. To the extent that conversations about the *60x30TX* 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 to 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. 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.

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% or more of Texas residents ages 25-34 will have attained a certificate or degree (associate through professional) from a higher education institution.

Overall Progress Toward the 60x30 Educated Population Goal

It is important to note that this goal counts people, not credentials. Specifically, it counts Texas residents, ages 25-34, who have one or more of the following 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 – 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.

> 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.

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 2020, the most recent data available from the ACS on the 60x30 educated population goal is from 2019.

According to the ACS, 45.3% of Texans 25-34 years old had a postsecondary degree or certificate in 2019 (Figure 1). This represented a cumulative increase of 4.3 percentage points from 2015, an annual improvement rate of just under 1.1 percentage points. This compares with a 0.8 percentage point annual rate in the decade from 2005-15. The 2015-19 average annual rate of progress, if sustained, would enable the state to reach an attainment rate of close to 57% in 2030, falling just short of the 60% goal.

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 2015 through 2019 and the largest portion of the 2015-19 increase in the share of 25- to 34-year-olds with a postsecondary credential. Associate degrees accounted for the

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

second-largest group of degree holders and the second-largest portion of the 2015-19 increase (Appendix C, Table C1).

Figure 1. Texas College-Educated Population

Percentage of Texas Population Age 25-34 with a Postsecondary Credential
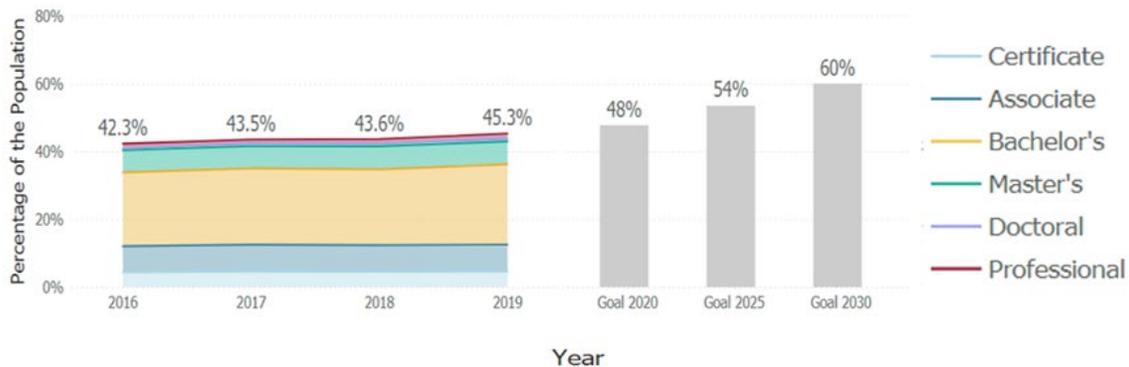
Source: 2019 American Community Survey

One effort that holds promise for increasing progress toward this goal is the ongoing effort to bring K-12, higher education, and employer stakeholders together to develop plans to reach regional targets. A second promising effort is an expanded push to bring students who have left college without graduating back to complete their degrees.

Importing talent into the state will continue to be critical for Texas to reach its 60x30 educated population goal. It is not possible, using available data, to know exactly how much the migration of individuals from out of state into the state contributed to the growth of the young adult population with degrees in 2015-19. However, the gains Texas experienced from net domestic migration[3] among 25- to 34-year-old degree holders (excluding certificates) over the last four years are evident from the available estimates. Approximately 15,000 to 23,000 more degree holders were gained than lost in the state in any given year since 2015 (Appendix C, Table C2).

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[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 is for students of all ages to complete at least 550,000 certificates or associate, bachelor's, or master's degrees (CABMs) in Fiscal Year (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:

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

- 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 the master's degree, 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.

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% 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 2020, students at Texas public, independent, and career institutions completed 348,394 CABMs, up from 347,669 in 2019 (Figure 2). This amounted to an increase of 725 completions, or 0.2%, compared with an increase of 2.2% in 2018 and 1.9% in 2019 (Figure 2 and Appendix C, Table C4). Averaging across 2018-20, the average rate of increase in completions was 1.4%, lower than what is needed to stay on track to reach the 2030 completion goal.[5]

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[4] The inclusion of persons with doctoral degrees in the educated population goal (Goal 1) should not affect the number of individuals counted toward Goal 1 because a person with a doctoral degree also would have earned at least one prior degree.

[5] Because increases in completions through 2020 have been lower than the needed annual average rate of increase of 3.9%, average annual completion increases during the remaining years of *60x30TX* (i.e., from 2021 to 2030) will need to equal at least 4.7% to stay on track toward meeting the state's completion goal.

Figure 2. CABMs Completed at Texas Public, Independent, and Career Institutions

Certificate, Associate, Bachelor's or Master's Completions in Texas
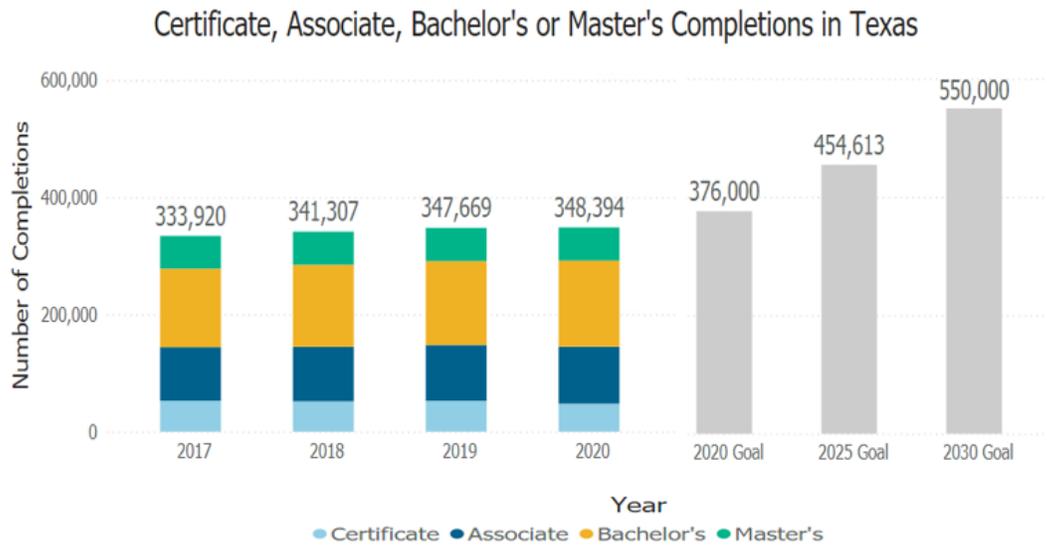
Source: THECB CBM009

Progress by Underrepresented Groups

Among underrepresented groups, male students had fewer completions in 2020 than in 2019 (Figure 3 and Appendix C, Table C5). This decline was mostly driven by fewer certificates earned by male students in community colleges. The rate of increase in completions was greater in 2020 than in 2019 for African American students (whose completions declined in 2019), but lower for Hispanic students and economically disadvantaged students. All of those groups had average annual improvement in completion rates in 2017-20 that were below their 2015-30 growth targets (Figure 3 and Appendix C, Table C5).

Figure 3. Certificates, Associate, Bachelor's, and Master's Completions by Students in Underrepresented Groups

Target Populations: African American, Hispanic, Economically Disadvantaged, and Males Completing in Texas

Completion Target for 2030:
African American   76,000
Hispanic   285,000
Economically Disadvantaged 246,000
Males   275,000

● 2017 ● 2018 ● 2019 ● 2020 ● 2025 ● 2030

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 students who graduate from 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 after high school graduation are likely to face fewer conflicts from work and family commitments than students who delay entry.

Accordingly, the THECB set targets of 58%, 61%, and 65% 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%. By 2019, the rate had fallen to 51.2% and declined sharply to 44.9% in 2020.

Figure 4. Students Enrolling in Higher Education Immediately After High School

Texas Public High School Graduates Enrolling by Fall in Higher Education in Texas
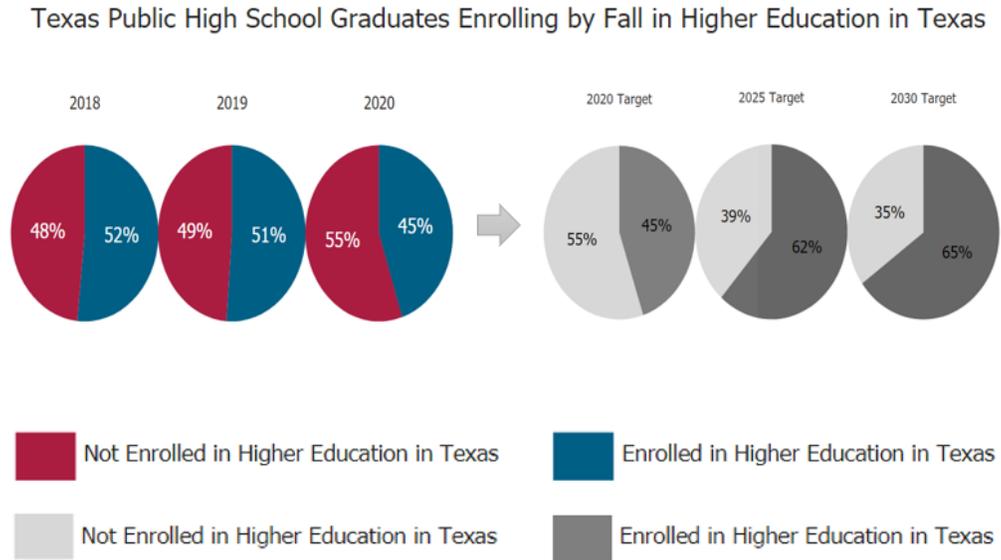
Sources: THECB CBM001 and TEA High School Graduates

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 an indicator 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 has hosted conferences to support institutions' efforts related to the marketable skill goal.

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

One target connected to this goal specifies that at least 80% 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% throughout the life of the plan.

Overall Progress Toward the Marketable Skills Goal

In 2019, Texas students remained close to the target: 79.0% of Texas students who received degrees in the 2018-19 academic year were found working or enrolled in fall 2019. This percentage was almost unchanged from the previous three years (Figure 5). These results closely tracked the 80% target.

Figure 5. 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

Students Found Working or Enrolled within One Year After Award

- Percentage of graduates found working or enrolled
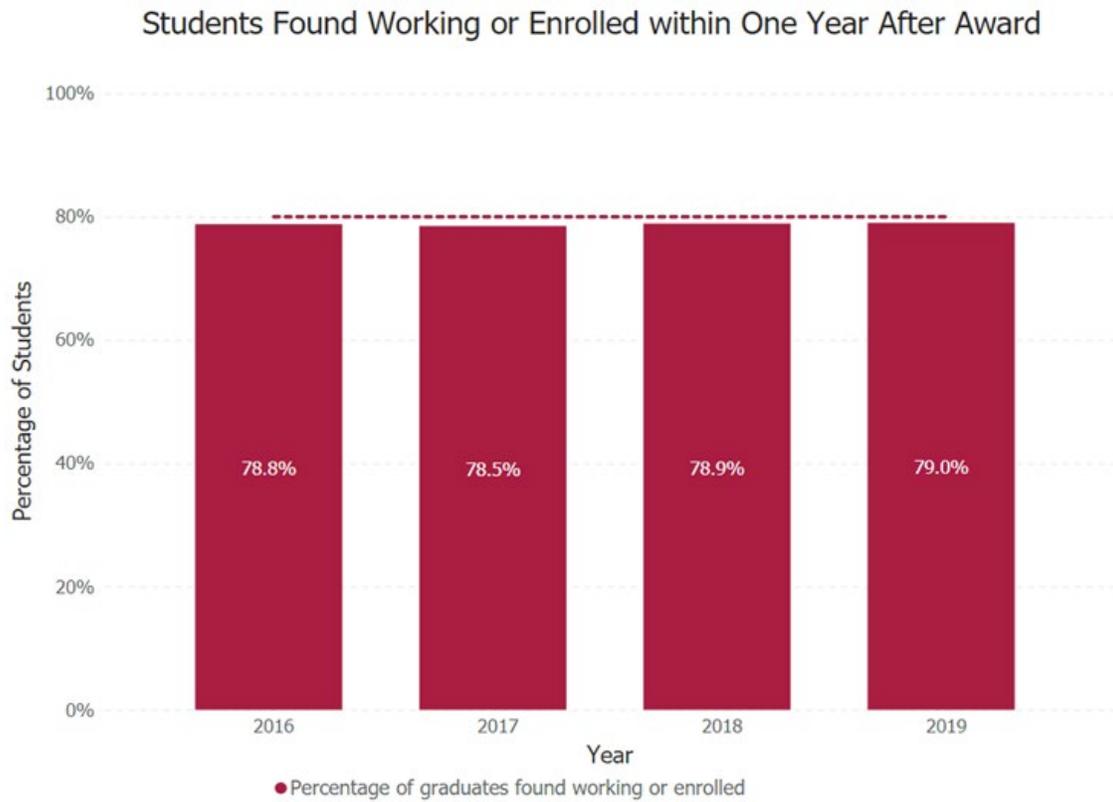
Sources: THECB CBM009 and Texas Workforce Commission Unemployment Insurance Data

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 student loan debt — no greater than 60% of the median student's wages in the first year after graduation. This goal applies to students who earn a certificate or an 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 the goal itself 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 student loan 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 student loan 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. Monitoring this target will ensure that attention is paid to any shifts in borrowing that may impact the debt goal.

- Decrease the excess semester credit hours (SCHs) that students attempt in completing an associate or bachelor's degree to no more than 3 excess SCHs by 2030, averaging across all students receiving those degrees, which would be a large reduction of current levels of excess SCHs (Figure 7 and Table 4).

Student debt statistics in this year's and last year's reports represent student debt excluding debt incurred by students' parents. Previous years' reports included parent-incurred debt in the total. Therefore, statistics on student debt in the two most recent reports cannot be directly compared with those in earlier reports because all debt percentages have been recalculated using the new definition.

Overall Progress Toward the Student Debt Goal

Graduates with debt in 2018 had a median student debt-to-first-year-wage percentage of 51%, under the target of 60%. This represents a decrease from 56% in 2013 (Table 2).[6]

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[6] Graduates in 2018 are tracked into the workforce through 2019 for this goal; 2020 wage data are not available in time to publish a more recent cohort.

Table 2. Median Student Debt as a Percentage of First-Year Wages

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
56%	56%	55%	55%	53%	51%

Source: THECB CBM009, Financial Aid Database System (FADS), Texas Workforce Commission Unemployment Insurance Data

In 2020, 55.9% of students earning a degree or certificate graduated without debt, leaving 44.1% graduating with debt (Figure 6), a decline from 48.1% graduating with debt in 2016 (Table 3). This decrease may be related to institutional aid practices, changes in state aid policies, or higher family incomes for some students. Economically disadvantaged students enrolling in higher education are often the most likely to rely on aid or debt to finance their education and, therefore, are likely to be more strongly affected by changes in both policy and practice.

Figure 6. 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

Graduates with Debt = 44.1%

Graduates without Debt = 55.9%

3.6%

26.7%

29.7%

18.4%

12.3%

9.3%

2020
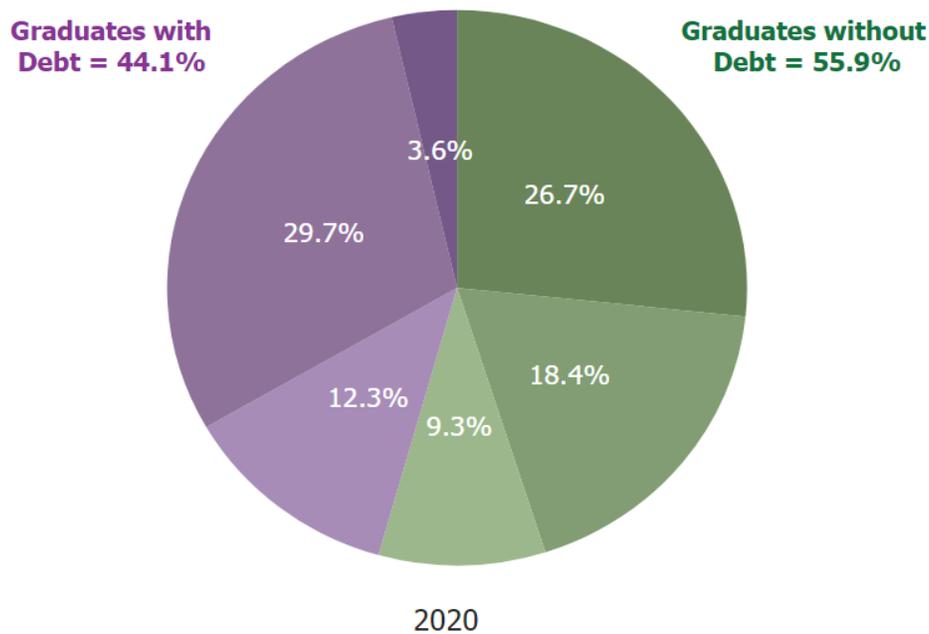
● Associate ● Bachelor's ● Certificate ● Associate ● Bachelor's ● Certificate

Sources: THECB CBM009 and Financial Aid Database System (FADS)

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 2016 and 2019, the percentage of students graduating with

student loan debt declined for each type of degree ([Table 3](#)). The decline was largest among associate degree graduates (-5.1 percentage points).

Table 3. Percentage of Students Graduating with Debt, by Year and Type of Credential

Type of Degree	2017	2018	2019	2020	2017-20 change
Certificate	27.5%	26.5%	25.2%	24.4%	-3.1%
Associate	34.1%	32.0%	30.1%	29.7%	-4.4%
Bachelor's	59.9%	58.5%	57.7%	56.4%	-3.5%
Total	47.3%	45.9%	44.6%	44.1%	-3.2%

Sources: THECB CBM009 and Financial Aid Database System (FADS)

With regard to the average number of excess semester credit hours, from 2017 to 2020 the average number of excess SCHs declined from 26 to 22 SCHs for students earning associate degrees and from 14 to 10 SCHs for bachelor's degree recipients (Figure 7 and Table 4). Averaging across both types of degrees, the average number of excess credit hours declined from 19 to 14 SCHs (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 make strategic course-taking decisions.

Figure 7. Average Excess Semester Credit Hours by Degree Type
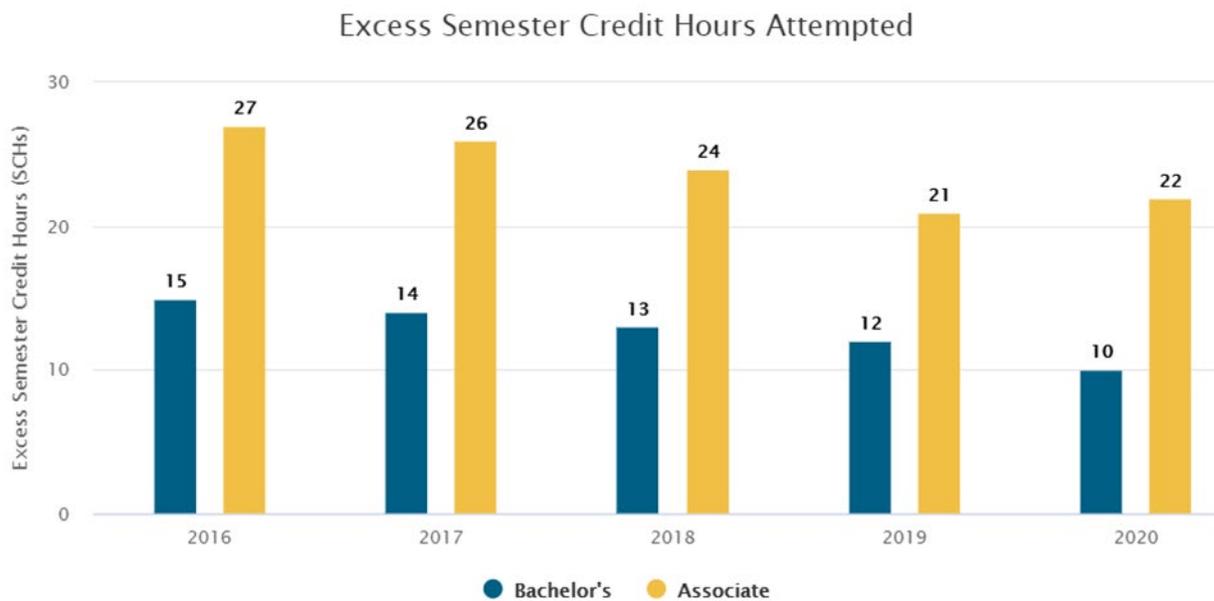
Sources: THECB CBM001 and CBM009

Table 4. Average Excess Semester Credit Hours

Degree Type	2017	2018	2019	2020
Associate	26	24	21	22
Bachelor's	14	13	12	10
Associate and Bachelor's	19	17	15	14

Source: CBM001 and CBM009

Improvements in graduation rates at Texas public two- and four-year higher education institutions also signal that students and institutions are working together to decrease excess credit hours and time to degree. Table 5 shows improvements in graduation rates over time, with an 8.1 percentage point increase in four-year bachelor's graduation rates and a 7.1 percentage point increase in three-year associate graduation rates between 2016 and 2020. Institutions are seeing the benefits of their efforts to create a culture in which timely graduation is encouraged and valued. This can contribute to lower student debt and more time for a student to reap the benefits of working once they complete their degree.

Table 5. Comparison of Graduation Rates: Cohorts Graduating from 2015-19

		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Bachelor's	Four-Year	33.9%	36.8%	38.6%	40.1%	42.0%
	Five-Year	53.6%	54.7%	57.1%	58.6%	60.1%
	Six-Year	59.3%	60.9%	61.6%	63.6%	64.9%
Associate	Three-Year	18.6%	21.7%	23.3%	24.9%	25.7%
	Four-Year	24.6%	27.2%	30.5%	32.1%	33.6%
	Six-Year	32.2%	33.5%	36.9%	39.1%	42.2%

Source: Data from THECB Accountability Interactive Reports

Conclusion

In the six years that the *60x30TX* plan has been in place, Texas has made substantial progress on the student debt goals and targets, and the state has shown improvement in the educated population (attainment) and completion measures as well. Nonetheless, the rate of improvement in the completion measure needs to accelerate to put the state on track to reach that goal by 2030.

As the state emerges from the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, and as we move toward 2030 and beyond, providing advising, financial support, and a full range of flexible educational options for Texans to earn credentials that will be of value now and into the future will be critical for the state and its residents. For their part, the state's policymakers must continue to provide the resources needed for these enhanced levels of student support.

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% 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.[7] Staff at the THECB derived the data for this goal for 2014 through 2019 using the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (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- to 34-year-olds with a certificate using the ratio of the number of 25- to 34-year-olds earning certificates in a given year to the number earning associate degrees in the same year from Texas public, independent, and career institutions. This ratio was multiplied by the annual ACS estimate of 25- to 34-year-old Texans with an associate degree to estimate the number of those Texans with a certificate.[8]

Completion Goal

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.

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 and 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

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[7] Estimates of attainment have a margin of error, expressed as a confidence interval. Statistical testing is required to compare attainment estimates. For 2019 attainment, the 90% confidence interval was 45.3% plus or minus 0.7%, or 44.6% to 46.0%. The corresponding confidence interval for the previous year was plus or minus 0.5%. The increase between the two years was 1.7 percentage points, statistically significant at the 90% confidence level. The three-year increase of 1.8% from 2017 to 2019 was also statistically significant at the 90% confidence level. For additional detail about confidence intervals and the American Community Survey, see U.S. Census Bureau website: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/about.html.

[8] 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.

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.

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.[9]

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 for institutions to create and implement a process to identify and regularly update marketable skills for each of their programs. The second target specifies that at least 80% 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.

Progress data on the first target is not summarized in this year's report.

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, 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% 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

- 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.

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[9] This statistic does not count students who enroll out of state, as the THECB has not consistently had 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.

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 2018 graduates from fall 2018 through summer 2019 were available from the Texas Workforce Commission in fall 2020, making this the most recent group of graduates for whom data on this indicator were available at the time of this report.

Debt incurred by a student's parents is not included. Earlier years' statistics where parent debt was included have been recalculated to make them comparable.

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 (SCHs) that students attempt in completing an associate or bachelor's degree declines to no more than 3 SCHs 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 2020.[10] 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 2018-19 academic year. Credit hours attempted in dual credit courses in high school or developmental education classes were not counted in a student's number of attempted credit 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.[11]

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[10] FY 2020 includes the period from September 2019 through August 2020.
[11] 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 Goals

This section contains additional detail on the state's progress toward the 60x30 educated population, completion, and student debt goals.

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 2016 through 2019 and the largest portion of the 2016-19 increase in the share of 25- to 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 2016-19 increases in 25- to 34-year-olds with a postsecondary credential (Table C1).

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

Credential Type	2016	2017	2018	2019	2016-19 change
Certificate	179,000	190,000	188,000	195,000	16,000
Associate	313,000	327,000	329,000	338,000	25,000
Bachelor's	886,000	927,000	933,000	1,002,000	116,000
Master's	265,000	270,000	284,000	285,000	20,000
Doctoral	25,000	30,000	32,000	34,000	9,000
Professional	54,000	50,000	55,000	65,000	12,000
Total with Degrees or Certificates	1,721,000	1,792,000	1,821,000	1,920,000	199,000
Total Population Ages 25-34	4,069,000	4,117,000	4,172,000	4,237,000	382,000
Percentage of Population Ages 25-34	42.3%	43.5%	43.6%	45.3%	3.0%

Source: 60x30 Progress spreadsheet (May 17, 2021); numbers rounded to the nearest 1,000

In terms of numbers, about 1.9 million out of a total population of 4.2 million young adults had a certificate or higher level of postsecondary education in 2019, up from 1.7 million out of a total population of 4.1 million in 2016 (Table C1).

Effects of Migration

Approximately 15,000 to 23,000 more degree holders were gained than lost in the state in any given year since 2015 due to net domestic migration (Table C2).[12] Given the margin of error in these numbers, there was no clear trend in net domestic migration over the period. Net international migration could not be estimated because there was no information on international out-migration.

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[12] This measure is calculated by subtracting the estimated number of U.S. degree holders outside of Texas who reported living in Texas in the prior year from the estimated number of degree holders in Texas who reported living 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)*

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Domestic In-Migration**	75,000	71,000	82,000	87,000	86,000
Domestic Out-Migration	52,000	56,000	63,000	64,000	69,000
Net Domestic Migration	**23,000**	**15,000**	**19,000**	**23,000**	**17,000**
International In-Migration**	33,000	33,000	28,000	26,000	25,000
International Out-Migration	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Net International Migration	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata, 2014-2019

* 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 12% (for example, domestic in-migration in 2019 ranges from approximately 79,000 to 94,000 or + 8.4% at a 90% confidence level).

** Domestic in-migration represents 25- to 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 2017 and 2020 in the total number of CABMs awarded is primarily due to increases in the number of bachelor's and associate degrees (Table C3). Bachelor's degrees comprised more than 147,000 of the completions in 2020, and the number of bachelor's degrees completed increased by around 13,000 between 2017 and 2020. Associate degrees increased by nearly 6,000 over the same period to reach more than 97,000 in 2019. Meanwhile, the number of certificates awarded declined in 2020.

Table C3. Completions by Type of Credential

Credential Type	Number of Degrees				2017-20 Increase
	2017	2018	2019	2020	
Certificate	52,756	51,682	52,580	47,647	-5,109
Associate	91,434	93,118	95,240	97,378	5,944
Bachelor's	134,079	140,004	143,355	147,008	12,929
Master's	55,651	56,503	56,494	56,361	710
All CABM Completions	333,920	341,307	347,669	348,394	14,474

Source: 60x30 Progress spreadsheet (May 17, 2021)

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). 2020 growth in bachelor's degrees exceeded that in 2019 but was less than the average for the entire 2018-20 period. Growth in the other credential categories declined and was actually negative for certificates and master's degrees.

Table C4. Percentage Increase in the Number of Completions by Credential Type

Credential Type	Annual Percentage Change in Number of Degrees			2018-20 Annual Average
	2018	2019	2020	
Certificate	-2.0%	1.7%	-9.4%	-3.3%
Associate	1.8%	2.3%	2.2%	2.1%
Bachelor's	4.4%	2.4%	2.5%	3.1%
Master's	1.5%	0.0%	-0.2%	0.4%
All CABM completions	2.2%	1.9%	0.2%	1.4%

Source: Calculated from data in 60x30 Progress spreadsheet (May 17, 2021)

Progress by Underrepresented Groups

Table C5 converts the yearly numbers in Figure 3 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 completion targets were set in the *60x30TX* plan. For African American students, the 2017-20 average annual rate of progress of 0.2% was below the 4.5% benchmark specified in the plan. Likewise, the annual average increases of 4.0% for Hispanic students, 0.4% for male students, and 1.3% for economically disadvantaged students fell short of the respective targets of 7.5%, 5.2%, and 5.3% for those student groups.

Table C5 also shows that the number of completions for male students declined in 2020.

Table C5. Comparison of Annual Percentage Change in CABM Completions Awarded with the Target Increase for Students in Underrepresented Groups*

Student Population	2018	2019	2020	2018-20 Annual Average	Target 2015-30 Average
African American	1.4%	-1.2%	0.5%	0.2%	4.5%
Hispanic	3.9%	5.1%	2.9%	4.0%	7.5%
Male	1.7%	2.2%	-2.5%	0.4%	5.2%
Economically Disadvantaged	0.2%	2.8%	0.8%	1.3%	5.3%

Source: Calculated from data in 60x30 Progress spreadsheet (May 17, 2021)
*Because improvement between 2017 and 2020 for each group was slower than the group's target rate, average annual improvement during the remaining years from 2020 to 2030 must exceed the target to stay on track toward meeting the state's completion targets. Specifically, for each group to reach their targets, annual increases in completions between 2020 and 2030 would need to average 6.3% for African American students, 8.6% for Hispanic students, and 6.7% for male students. Similarly, the number of economically disadvantaged students receiving degrees must increase by 6.7% per year on average.

Progress on Direct High School-to-College Enrollment

After a gradual decline in prior years, the percentage of trackable high school graduates enrolling in Texas higher education institutions the following fall declined by 7.4 percentage points in the fall of 2020 (Table C6). This large decline was mainly accounted for by a decrease in the number of high school graduates entering Texas higher education in the fall of 2020. In turn, that decrease can be accounted for by declining enrollments in community college, most likely influenced by the effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

Table C6. Students Enrolling in Higher Education Immediately After High School

Student Population	2017	2018	2019	2020	2017-20 Change
Public High School Graduates Directly Enrolling in Texas Higher Education	165,751	170,015	172,545	149,076	-16,675
Public High School Graduates*	316,666	329,512	336,830	332,034	15,368
Percentage of High School Graduates Directly Enrolling in Texas Higher Education	52.3%	51.6%	51.2%	44.9%	-7.4 pct pt

Source: 60x30 Progress spreadsheet (May 17, 2021)
*All statistics in this table exclude high school graduates who could not be tracked based on their student IDs – 28,186 students in fall 2020. This was an increase over the 18,785 students who could not be tracked in fall 2019. Counting untrackable students, the number of public high school graduates increased between 2019 and 2020.

Student Debt Goal

Debt-to-First-Year-Wage Ratio: Percentiles

Although the median debt as a percentage of the student's first-year wage for students graduating with student loan debt has remained below the target of 60% for the combined population of university and community and technical college graduates, some students have much higher debt burdens. For example, a university graduate at the 90th percentile had a debt burden nearly twice that of the graduate's first-year wage. This could result from low wages, high debt, or a combination of both. In general, university graduates' median debt-to-wage ratios have been above 60% (Table C7).

Table C7. Student Debt as a Percentage of First-Year Wages*

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Statewide					
10th Percentile	13%	13%	12%	12%	12%
25th Percentile	27%	27%	27%	25%	25%
Median	56%	55%	55%	53%	51%
75th Percentile	103%	102%	102%	99%	94%
90th Percentile	181%	180%	180%	174%	165%
Community and Technical Colleges					
10th Percentile	9%	9%	9%	9%	9%
25th Percentile	18%	18%	18%	18%	18%
Median	38%	38%	39%	38%	37%
75th Percentile	75%	77%	79%	77%	73%
90th Percentile	144%	148%	153%	143%	139%
Universities					
10th Percentile	17%	16%	16%	15%	15%
25th Percentile	35%	34%	34%	32%	31%
Median	65%	64%	63%	61%	58%
75th Percentile	114%	113%	112%	109%	103%
90th Percentile	196%	194%	194%	188%	177%

Source: THECB CBM009, FADS, Texas Workforce Commission Unemployment Insurance Data
*Student debt excludes debt incurred by students' parents.

This document is available on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board website: http://highered.texas.gov.

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