



INTERIM REPORT  
*to the 86<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature*



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
HIGHER EDUCATION

*November 2018*

---

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
INTERIM REPORT 2018**

**A REPORT TO THE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
86TH TEXAS LEGISLATURE**

**J.M. LOZANO  
CHAIRMAN**

**COMMITTEE CLERKS  
GRADY DALHBERG AND THEODOROS PLOWMAN**

---



Committee On  
Higher Education

November 27, 2018

J.M. Lozano  
Chairman


P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, Texas 78768-2910

The Honorable Joe Straus  
Speaker, Texas House of Representatives  
Members of the Texas House of Representatives  
Texas State Capitol, Rm. 2W.13  
Austin, Texas 78701

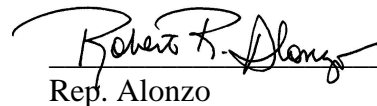
Dear Mr. Speaker and Fellow Members:

The Committee on Higher Education of the Eighty-fifth Legislature hereby submits its interim report including recommendations and drafted legislation for consideration by the Eighty-sixth Legislature.

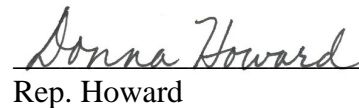
Respectfully submitted,

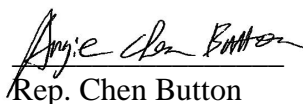
  
J.M. Lozano

  
Vice-Chair Raney

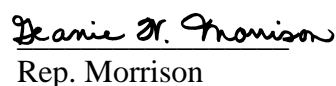
  
Rep. Alonzo

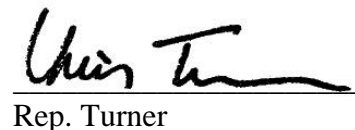
  
Rep. Clardy

  
Rep. Howard

  
Rep. Chen Button

  
Rep. Alvarado

  
Rep. Morrison

  
Rep. Turner

Vice-Chairman John Raney

Members: Rep. Robert R. Alonzo, Rep. Travis Clardy, Rep. Donna Howard, Rep. Angie Chen Button, Rep. Carol Alvarado, Rep. Geanie Morrison, Rep. Chris Turner.

---

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION ..... 5  
INTERIM CHARGE 1 ..... 7  
INTERIM CHARGE 2 ..... 10  
INTERIM CHARGE 3 ..... 12  
INTERIM CHARGE 4 ..... 17  
INTERIM CHARGE 5 ..... 20

---

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Honorable Joe Straus, Speaker of the House of Representatives, appointed nine members of the 85th Legislature to serve on the House Committee on Higher Education. The following members were appointed to the committee: Chairman J.M. Lozano, Vice-Chairman John Raney, Rep. Robert R. Alonzo, Rep. Travis Clardy, Rep. Donna Howard, Rep. Angie Chen Button, Rep. Carol Alvarado, Rep. Geanie Morrison, Rep. Chris Turner.

Pursuant to House Rule 3, Section 16 (85th Legislature), the Committee has jurisdiction over all matters pertaining to:

- (1) education beyond high school;
- (2) the colleges and universities of the State of Texas; and
- (3) the following state agencies: the Texas Engineering Experiment Station, the Texas Engineering Extension Service, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation, the State Medical Education Board, the Prepaid Higher Education Tuition Board, and the Texas Transportation Institute. During the interim, Speaker Joe Straus issued five interim charges to the committee to study and report back with facts, findings, and recommendations. The House Committee on Higher Education has completed its hearings and investigations, and has adopted the following report.

Working closely with affiliated institutions of higher education, school districts, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and several other expert witnesses, the House Committee on Higher Education has completed its hearings and investigations, and has adopted the following report.

---

## **HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION INTERIM STUDY CHARGES**

1. Determine, to the extent possible, the scope of financial losses to 2- and 4-year institutions, including facilities, that resulted from Hurricane Harvey. Recommend possible state actions to mitigate any negative impact on institutions and ensure governance structures and parameters allow for effective responses. Review the educational opportunities offered to students displaced by Harvey throughout the state. Recommend any changes that could improve the process and what additional services might be needed for these displaced students.
2. Determine the impact of any federal action pertaining to Title IX and the potential effects on current state laws and rules pertaining to sexual misconduct policies at institutions of higher education.
3. Examine the rapid growth of dual credit course offerings across the state, and evaluate whether dual credit is effectively reducing time-to-degree and improving affordability for students and the state. Evaluate institutions' policies and processes for ensuring rigor and quality, and the adequacy of student advising regarding the potential applicability of dual credit courses to future academic program requirements. Review the current state funding methodology and costs of, and the share of state funding attributable to, dual credit programs.
4. Examine efforts of 2- and 4-year institutions to implement innovative and non-traditional models of education delivery to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body and the demands of a rapidly changing workforce. Identify any obstacles to institutional innovation. Make recommendations to scale innovative educational models to better serve students and employers.
5. Review current data available to the public about Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) and make recommendations to ensure the data is transparent, user-friendly, and actionable. Review the current EPP accountability system and recommend any new indicators or changes, including evaluating the ability of programs to meet the workforce needs of school districts by preparing teachers for high-needs areas. Determine ways to measure the effectiveness of teachers prepared by individual programs. For traditional EPP programs, make recommendations on how to more fully involve boards of regents in an effort to elevate the importance of teacher preparation within our state institutions. Examine current joint partnerships between EPPs and public schools to meet regional workforce needs, and make recommendations on how to scale these partnerships. (Joint charge with the House Committee on Public Education S/C on Teacher Quality).

---

## **INTERIM CHARGE 1**

On the 19th of September 2018, the committee heard testimony to determine, to the extent possible, the scope of financial losses to 2- and 4-year institutions, including facilities, that resulted from Hurricane Harvey. Recommend possible state actions to mitigate any negative impact on institutions and ensure governance structures and parameters allow for effective responses. Review the educational opportunities offered to students displaced by Harvey throughout the state. Recommend any changes that could improve the process and what additional services might be needed for these displaced students.

### **Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board**

Dr. Raymund Paredes gave testimony examining the overall impact of Hurricane Harvey on Higher Education institutions in Texas. Dozens of Texas public and private institutions of higher education were impacted within the disaster area. Additionally nearly 500,000 students resided in the disaster area or attended institutions impacted by the hurricane around 1/3 of all higher education enrollments. Overall costs thus far have been reported to be over \$77 million. The institutions that suffered the highest levels of Hurricane damage costs were Lone Star College, University of Houston, University of Houston- Downtown and University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. There are major expenses expected to be incurred by the University of Texas at Austin, with damage to several sites across Texas.

Dr. Paredes gave further testimony on what support the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board provided to institutions and students across Texas. Firstly, there was flexibility provided on census date reporting and length-of-semester requirements. The other key action area was in student aid and tuition refunds, the Coordinating Board allowed institutions to disburse student financial aid to students in a timely fashion. Policies were enacted that encouraged all institutions to adopt generous tuition refund policies for students forced to withdraw due to Hurricane Harvey. Finally, a three-month forbearance to any student loan receivers in the impacted area was enacted.

There were two key recommendations that the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board highlighted. Firstly, that there should be an increase in the availability of flexible workforce programs. Developing workforce programs that aid both the post-Harvey workforce needs and future readiness are vital to improve hurricane response capabilities. Short term this provides an effective and skilled workforce for clean-up and in the long term, will support the attainment of high-skill high-wage jobs.

In terms of mitigating the issue of financial disruption and increased student dropout rates the Coordinating Board recommend an expansion of emergency aid programs. These programs would provide one-time grants, loans and scholarships for students impacted by a disaster. The Coordinating Board has already begun work with the Texas Emergency Aid Network and institutions to share best practices and strategies into how successfully collaborate with community partners to support emergency aid recipients.

### **Lone Star College**

Dr. Steve Head delivered testimony for Lone Star College which is one of the largest community colleges in the country with 89,200 students in the most recent enrollment. Dr. Head explained the huge damage and costs Hurricane Harvey had caused on the campus, with \$37 million in facility damage alone. Three of the key sites were impacted by flooding. As of the date of the committee hearing, the college had yet to be contacted by FEMA about accessing recovery

---

funds, but has been forced to put in an appropriations request with the Legislative Budget Board to cover an anticipated \$15 million shortfall.

Concerning the state's response Dr. Head acknowledged The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board vital role in the weeks following Hurricane Harvey. Lone Star College were able to give their affected students \$1.6 million due to this flexibility.

Lone Star College ran into issues with the lack of coordination between FEMA and the Texas Department of Emergency Management, there was conflicting information about which department was responsible for which need.

There were two key recommendations put forward by Lone Star College. Firstly, Dr. Head recommended creating step-by-step processes and procedures to manage disaster recovery and resolve conflicting information and state and national levels. Secondly, there needs to be a higher education focuses response that understand how institutions are impacted and respond to disasters.

### **San Jacinto College**

Dr. Brenda Hellyer of San Jacinto College gave testimony on the impact of Hurricane Harvey on campuses across Houston. San Jacinto had more minimal damage at \$4.1 million to facilities and insurance coverage has responded well but accessing FEMA funds has been problematic.

Enrollment was clearly impacted by the disaster. By the 2018 spring semester many students still had not re-enrolled in the colleges. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board again were helpful in allowing flexibility in start times and funding.

The college system provided small short term funding for emergency needs as well as providing shelter for displaced people within the community. Many students were impacted and aided by special funding in emergency situations.

There were two key recommendations provided within the testimony. Concerning baseline funding Dr. Hellyer asserted that loss of tuition and funding for the baseline contact hours can be damaging and that disaster impacts could be taken into account when deciding contact hour funding. The systems for accessing funds for disasters response and recovery are still unclear and going forward these frameworks require an overhaul for the next major disaster. Streamlining the bureaucracy and information requests for emergency funding should also be a priority.

### **Texas A&M Corpus Christi**

Dr. Kelly Quintanilla gave testimony of behalf of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, giving an insight into how the costal campus reacted to Hurricane Harvey. The storm caused damage to the campus with the largest FEMA claim for a replacement roof for the University Center. There were several key lessons learned during and after the disaster.

The successful implementation of a call center was an effective tool for aiding students and staff impacted by the event. It involved representatives from across campus and operated for 520 hours providing specialized support.

Providing support also proved to be an important aspect of the university's response to the hurricane. With organized training for faculty and staff on recognizing and providing support for those students struggling with stress or trauma. There was increased resources provided for counseling throughout the semester.

Communication remained imperative so that students and staff could prepare for shutdown and understand how the crisis was developing, social media proved a vital tool in conveying these messages.



---

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's support was important with the flexibility provided by not having to make up the lost week later in the semester. Reinstatement of emergency funds for students should also continue to be a priority. Furthermore, there was a recommendation to share best practice across Texas to ensure better Hurricane preparedness, academic continuity planning and construction decisions.

### **Committee Recommendations**

- 1) Continuation of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's flexible approach to semester start dates, financial obligations and financial aid. Allowing institutions of higher education a degree of flexibility in times of crisis has enabled an optimal disaster recovery process.
- 2) Put in place a clear framework and guidelines of which agency is responsible for disaster support, attempt to avoid repetition of services and over-burdensome bureaucratic processes. Restructuring the administration of information requests for emergency funding should also be a priority.
- 3) Establish a resource designed for higher education institutions affected by disasters. This resources should be developed with input from higher education institutions and state and federal agencies, with this central node of information, best practices and understanding response.

---

## INTERIM CHARGE 2

On the 19th of September 2018, the committee heard testimony on Interim Charge #2: Determine the impact of any federal action pertaining to Title IX and the potential effects on current state laws and rules pertaining to sexual misconduct policies at institutions of higher education.

### **Husch Blackwell, LLP**

The committee heard testimony from Derek Teeter, an attorney representing Husch Blackwell, LLP, who was able to provide a valuable insight on the changes in federal actions and discourse in relation to Title IX.

Since September 2017, there has been a marked change in the federal actions regarding the enrollment of Title IX. The Department of Education is posed to issue rules that would enforce more enduring and formal regulations. Their changes come in four key areas.

Firstly, the current administration has attempted to give schools greater flexibility in creating and implementing policies for investigating and actioning reports of sexual misconduct. The strict 60 day timeframe for completing investigations is no longer applied. Additionally institutions can use a clear and convincing standard of evidence, assuming that the same standard is applied to all forms of protected status groups and respondents.

Second, current federal guidance places a much greater emphasis on due process for respondents, with key directives that respondents must receive detailed written notice of charges before their interview and allowed an opportunity to comment on this report before a decision is made.

Third, the Department of Education no longer requires institutions to investigate off-campus sexual misconduct that happens in a private residence, unless there is evidence of an enabling and hostile environment on campus. However, schools can still optionally investigate off-campus reports.

Fourth, the federal government has relaxed regulatory oversight of Title IX compliance by reducing staging at the Office for Civil Rights and promulgating procedures that allow for the more timely dismissal of regulatory Title IX complaints in certain contexts.

Overall these changes are unlikely to have a direct impact on the changes passed by the legislature in 2017, concerning electronic reports, public awareness campaigns, support services and amnesty for the reporter. Essentially these requirements of Texas law do not conflict with the federal changes in posture and action.

### **Escamilla & Poneck, LLP**

Wesley E. Johnson, of Escamilla & Poneck, LLP built on the previous remarks pertaining to sexual misconduct policies at institutions of higher education. There were several key points that linked closely with Mr. Teeter's testimony.

The current state laws offer considerable flexibility that should permit the withdrawal of the dear colleague letters as well as any new proposed federal regulations. State law currently allows institutions of higher education to make their own decisions regarding timelines for investigations, standards of evidence, and methods by which institutions offer due process to its students. This flexibility will allow room for any federal mandates that may be instituted.

Furthermore state law currently requires that each institution adopt policy that includes definitions of prohibited behavior, sanctions for violations and protocols for reporting and responding. These general requirements provide sufficient assurance for the state of Texas that

---

our institutions of higher education will have policies that address sexual assault. Nevertheless, it is quite possible that institutions who are following state law will have to revise their policies to conform to new regulations that address due process that might otherwise render their previously adopted policy language in noncompliance with federal regulation. The type of examples that Mr. Teeter provided include a right to prior notice of charges and a right to cross examine accuser. By continuing to monitor the federal government's actions with respect to Title IX without enacting new state legislation at this time, the legislature can allow our institutions of higher education an opportunity to review and revise their policy language.

In accordance with Mr. Teeter's third point related to the federal government's expectations regarding a university's obligation to address off-campus sexual assaults in private settings, it is anticipated that investigations will become permissive rather than mandatory unless a hostile environment on campus is evidenced. This is one area in which state law could be revised to continue to encourage mitigation efforts by our institutions of higher education. Current Texas Education Code 51.9363(f) mandates that all protocols for responses to sexual assaults include specific language related to access to counselors as well as the opportunity for students involved in an incident of sexual assault to drop an academic course.

There were two recommendations that were put forward during the testimony:

Firstly, revise Texas Education Code 51.9363(f) to state that protocols must generally include mitigation efforts. Subsection (f)(2) is not specific to sexual assaults that occur on or off campus and subsection (f)(1) is not specific to whether both the alleged perpetrator or alleged victim matriculate at the institution (thereby conferring jurisdiction). By revising Texas Education Code 51.9363(f) to state that protocols must generally include mitigation efforts, the legislature might better acknowledge the ways that the effects of sexual assault can be mitigated not just through access to counselors or class changes.

Secondly, expand Texas Education Code 51.9363(e) to require the mandated public awareness campaigns to also include information related to proactive approaches that the specific campus has taken to prevent sexual assaults (and not just respond to them) such as bystander intervention. This will not likely result in significant changes for our state's institutions, but in the wake of anticipated relaxed federal enforcement requirements and more rigorous due process requirements will focus on prevention and send a clear message that Texas cares about its students.

### **Committee Recommendations**

- 1) The legislature should consider working with institutions of higher education to create legislation and policies that could expand mitigation of sexual assault. Continuing on action that has seen the increased access to counseling for victims and further flexibility for dropping classes, more can be done to include mitigation strategies in Texas Education Code.

---

### **INTERIM CHARGE 3**

On the 19th of September 2018, the committee heard testimony on Interim Charge #3: Examine the rapid growth of dual credit course offerings across the state, and evaluate whether dual credit is effectively reducing time-to-degree and improving affordability for students and the state. Evaluate institutions' policies and processes for ensuring rigor and quality, and the adequacy of student advising regarding the potential applicability of dual credit courses to future academic program requirements. Review the current state funding methodology and costs of, and the share of state funding attributable to, dual credit programs.

#### **Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board**

The Coordinating Board partnered with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct a study on dual credit education in Texas. Dr. Paredes gave testimony describing the findings from that study. Overall the research showed the positive impacts for Texas, however there were still issues remaining with the performance and opportunities provided to underprivileged students.

The Coordinating board defines dual credit as a system under which an eligible high school student enrolls in a college course and receives credit for the course from both the college and high school. Decisions regarding who pays tuition, fees and other costs for dual credit are made at the local level, and it varies from district to district. Public institutions of higher education are allowed to waive all, part, or none of the mandatory tuition and fees for dual credit courses.

There are several key trends highlighted by the Coordinating Board, notably the growing participation in dual credit courses. Students enrolled in Dual Credit courses represented 10% of higher education enrollment in 2017, with more economically disadvantaged students enrolling in dual credit. The data also suggests that students enrolled in dual credit also have higher four and six year graduation rates.

The number of Early College High Schools is also on the rise, but the majority of dual credit is offered through traditional high schools. Early College High Schools, with their expanded academic and social support services and strong focus on degree attainment, have been found to have positive effects on student outcomes. Based on such evidence, the Coordinating Board strongly supports Early College High Schools. Texas added 41 newly designated Early College High Schools in the 2017-18 school year. 16 were added in the previous school year for a total of 198 schools. This flourishing sector has been supported by grants from the Coordination Board, Texas Education Agency and Texas Workforce Commission, a total of 18 grants have been awarded since 2016.

Dr. Paredes also put forward several recommendations based on the research from the AIR study. The following legislative recommendations intend to strengthen student success in both dual credit and further education.

The first recommendation focuses on college readiness and asserts that high school students must be able to demonstrate college readiness as prescribed by the Texas Success Initiative which includes pathways such as the SAT, ACT and the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA).

Secondly, these aforementioned pathways such as the SAT, ACT or TSIA should be free of

---

charge at an appropriate point for high school students. An expansion of the current requirement for students to file a degree plan at 30 semester credit hours to include students enrolled in academic dual credit.

Finally, institutions should seek to support and expand access to Early College High Schools with the stricter and support mechanics that are already outlined by the Texas Education Agency.

### **Del Mar College**

Dr. Escamilla provided testimony that highlighted Del Mar College's experience with dual credit. Del Mar College has implemented specialist policies that help aid the success of their dual credit students. Positively 85% of Del Mar College dual credit students pass their dual credit courses with 70% earning an "A" or "B" in the course. One of the reasons for this success rate is the prioritization of the dual credit students through face-to-face, one-on-one advising. Dual Credit Coordinators are the primary liaisons between the College and area high schools. The Coordinators and Liberal Arts Advisors meet with students on-site to advise them on which courses to take toward their degree, financial aid opportunities, and scholarships on a limited basis. With a strong well managed degree plan students can graduate in a timely fashion.

The outcomes of this specialist program are tremendously beneficial. Firstly a notable increase in affordability is a clear benefit of the dual-credit programs offered. Del Mar College charges Dual Credit students—both in district and out-of-district students—\$33.33 per credit hour, or less than \$100 for a three-hour course. In some courses, such as biology or welding, there may be additional lab or supplies fees. In considering the financial benefit of Dual Credit, that \$100 cost for a three-hour course compares to \$1,200 or more for the same course at a state university. Dual Credit students can complete workforce certifications or associate's degrees in critical areas such as process technology, instrumentation and welding within one year of high school. At present English, history, math, and government—core courses for most associate's and bachelor's degrees—represent the majority of Dual Credit courses taught by Del Mar College. With Del Mar's emphasis on superior advising and college-credentialed faculty, Del Mar College's Dual Credit students passed more than 85% of the courses attempted.

### **Texas Association of Manufacturers**

Mike Meroney of the Texas Association of Manufacturers (TAM) summarized the views of many businesses across Texas on dual credit. TAM represents over 500 companies including many of largest employers in the state. The manufacturing industry continues to struggle to find an available, skilled and educated workforce.

The employers TAM represent strongly support certain policies that encourage the robust growth of dual credit and in particular support the development of CTE. There are recommendations made by TAM that may better align the needs of Texas' manufactures with the workforce graduating Texas' public and higher education institutions. An increase in data-sharing for workforce opportunities with junior high and high school students, parents, advisors and teachers could provide more clarity of the opportunities within Texas. The potential for more high school students to earn associate's degrees and industry-validated certifications is something that TAM would support.

---

Finally, a dual credit system must be robust for both academic and CTE courses for it to enable Texas' workforce to perform best. Students must demonstrate college readiness for academic dual credit courses, but this is often not the case with CTE dual credit courses where students can take level 1 CTE DC courses without demonstrating college readiness. Employers support more applied and experimental learning through CTE courses, CTE dual credit courses and problem-based learning curriculum taught in high school. That kind of teaching bring much-needed relevance to the classroom and yields: a lower high school dropout rate, more student interest in school and learning at all levels, a significant closing of the skills gap and ultimately an ever lower unemployment rate.

Many students thrive in these types of "hands on" learning environments, and employers benefit because they learn teamwork, critical thinking, and working under deadlines. Through CTE and CTE dual credit courses, schools are offering students a chance to be productive, doing something they enjoy and earn a good living. TMA continues to stress the importance of these programs.

### **American Institutes for Research**

Dr. Trey Miller from the American Institutes for Research presented to the House Higher Education Committee the findings from AIR's study of dual credit in Texas. The overall conclusion drawn by the American Institutes for Research was that dual credit benefits Texas and its students. There are three central pieces of evidence to support this.

First, the benefits of dual credit far exceed the cost. For every dollar spent on delivering dual credit, five dollars is produced in return. The monetary value placed on this return is derived from higher incomes, improved health and increase tax revenue among other benefits from increased education attainment and reduced time to degree.

Second, dual credit increases college access and completion, and decreases time-to-degree. Past studies have documented that partaking in dual credit is associated with many academic benefits, like higher college enrollment and completion. But until this study, no one had determined whether those improvements are a direct result of dual credit in and of themselves. This is the first evidence that shows that participating in dual credit makes a positive difference in improving college access and completion.

Third, dual credit and college-credit only courses appear to be equivalent in terms of academic content, the rigor of student assignments and grading standards. A systematic examination of course syllabi, student assignments, graded student, and survey responses submitted by instructors of English Composition and College Algebra course uncovered few differences between dual credit and college-credit-only versions of those two courses. This suggest that concerns that dual credit courses are not as rigorous as college credit course may be unsubstantiated.

### **University of Texas at El Paso**

Ivette Savina of the University of Texas at El Paso provided testimony to the committee on UTEP's approaches to dual credit. UTEP has seen a tremendous growth in dual credit in the El Paso region, with 210% growth over the past 10 years of dual credit and early college high

---

school students enrolled. Utilizing a broad array of partnerships and collaborations. There is a robust and effective collaboration with the local El Paso Community College, which provides extensive support to dual credit students. Early college high schools are also active working partners enabling UTEP to deliver enhanced educational experiences. There are 12 schools in the Early College High School Network in the El Paso region that provide cost-effective and rewarding educations to students.

Dual credit in the area has shown in several metrics a powerful image of student success. Dual credit students are 2.3x more likely to graduate from college in 4 years or less than non-dual credit students and they are 60% more likely to graduate in 6 years or less than non-dual credit students. In attainment dual credit students earn a higher GPA 3.26 v 3.08 for non dual credit students.

### **PSJA ISD**

Linda Uribe representing Pharr- San Juan- Alamo Independent School District gave testimony to highlight the experiences of the school district with early college high school. Overall there were several key outcomes. All of PSJA ISD high schools are designated Early College, which makes them innovative high schools that allow students to attend college and high school simultaneously. Each student has the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and a 2-year Associate Degree or 60 college credit hours towards a four-year Bachelor's Degree at no cost to the student or the parents. Early College High Schools offer rigorous instruction and provide academic, social and emotional support services to help students succeed.

Early College High Schools allow students to earn college credit while they are still in high school. As part of an Early College HS, students take college classes, get textbooks and transportation to and from our higher education partner South Texas College at no charge. By taking advantage of these opportunities, students can complete a college credential before graduating from high school, allowing them to complete a four-year degree sooner. These students are more likely to continue to master or doctorate level programs.

This is all aided by a college readiness program that monitors and supports students with making degree plans, gaining TSI credits and continued monitoring of progress. In the senior year there are extra-curricular resources provided such as financial aid support, Apply Texas information and general readiness events.

Overall there are several key outcomes. There is evidence of higher graduation rates, higher attainment and lower dropout rates. There is also a positive impact for students who enter high school performing below grade level and this impact is especially powerful for minority students, low-income youth and first generation college goers.

### **Committee Recommendations**

- 1) The Texas legislature should seek to support policy solutions that could encourage the growth of high quality, proven college readiness support programs. Providing advisors and a support framework that could help prepare dual-credit students for college and beyond is vital to improve attainment, graduation rates and workforce quality. This could come in several forms, from advice about financial aid and the holistic college experience, to help completing concrete degree plans.

- 
- 2) The committee should continue to explore the rigor of dual-credit programs, with a regular review into the content and outcome of these programs. Following on from American Institutes for Research's study the committee would welcome more evidence in particular from faculty about the consistency of dual credit programs. By maintaining high standards Texas can continue to produce excellent graduates, ready to enter a high-skill workforce.



---

## **INTERIM CHARGE 4**

On June 7, 2018, the committee heard testimony from a panel of witnesses concerning Interim Charge #4, which directed the committee to Examine efforts of 2- and 4-year institutions to implement innovative and non-traditional models of education delivery to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body and the demands of a rapidly changing workforce. Identify any obstacles to institutional innovation. Make recommendations to scale innovative educational models to better serve students and employers.

### **From the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board**

Testimony was given by Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Commissioner, Dr. Raymund Paredes, who provided the committee with a substantive overview of how innovative and non-traditional delivery models are impacting higher education in Texas, especially vital is the 60x30TX plan. Comparative analyses indicate that attainment levels (i.e., associate degrees and higher) in Texas have remained relatively steady, ranking 8th in the world for Texans aged 55-64 and 27th in the world for those in the younger 25-34 age-bracket. Commissioner Paredes was keen to point out that, given the global economy, for Texas to remain “steady” amounts to the practical equivalent of “falling behind.” Notably, the explicit danger is a failure to meet 60x30TX plan goals, while the implicit danger is one of general decline nationally and globally. Utilization of innovative models of educational delivery can serve to overcome inertia, as it were, ultimately helping to propel higher education in Texas onto a track of making gains rather than merely maintaining (i.e., falling behind).

Examples of innovative delivery models include: online and hybrid learning, competency-based education, short semesters, flipped classrooms, and co-requisite model developmental education. Concerned parties have expressed the need to eliminate obstacles to innovation, and Commissioner Paredes asserted the Coordinating Board’s commitment to collaboration with institutions of higher education, such that new approaches to educational delivery have been and will continue to be fostered. Commissioner Paredes pointed to successes with 8-week terms at Odessa College, development of the Texas Success Initiative Assessment, and outcomes-based funding as only a few among others. During the 85th legislature, House Bill 2223 (authored by Rep. Giddings) passed through the committee unanimously and ultimately became law, requiring institutions to implement co-requisite developmental education. The innovative model under House Bill 2223 permits students to begin regular coursework in conjunction with remedial coursework, thus, students can earn credit hours while simultaneously receiving the developmental education they need – time and tuition dollars are thereby saved.

Commissioner Paredes pointed out that the Coordinating Board actively recognizes achievement in innovative programming, particularly through its “Star Awards” program, which helps to promote case-specific examples of innovative programming. Institutions across Texas are thereby prompted and informed regarding successful models that may be implemented, or at a minimum, inspired to find creative solutions for their own campuses. On the whole, the commissioner encouraged incentivizing and expanding proven programs, as well as making adjustments to reporting structures and funding formulas to better account for innovative programming. The commissioner also asserted the importance of innovative programming as a means to increase affordability while also reducing student debt.

### **From Blinn College District**

The Chancellor of Blinn College District, Dr. Mary Hensley, also testified before the committee, specifically regarding innovative programming offered by Blinn in partnership with Texas A&M

---

University. The two institutions have collaborated to offer the TEAM Program since 2001, thus, the program has a track-record of sorts with demonstrable success. In particular, TEAM is a co-enrollment partnership whereby students enjoy benefits from enrollment at both institutions. Simply stated, TEAM students enjoy the “big school” college experience alongside the “small school” advantages of classroom environment and less financial burden. If students meet academic goals, then they qualify for transitioning into a degree-granting major, essentially bridging the 2-year to 4-year coursework space. In 2013, the Coordinating Board acknowledged TEAM with a “Recognition of Excellence,” and the following year, TEAM received the Coordinating Board’s Star Award. Another collaborative effort between Blinn (RELLIS and Brenham campuses) and A&M is the Engineering Academy, an innovative program which also functions as a co-enrollment, and like TEAM, allows A&M to offer admission to an increased number of qualified freshmen. If students meet academic goals, then they become eligible for transitioning completely into the Texas A&M College of Engineering, and this after having benefited from what both institutions have to offer (i.e., financial and cultural benefits). Notably, data from the Texas A&M College of Engineering indicates that the retention rate is approximately equal for students who earn enrollment through the Engineering Academy compared to those who are admitted straight out of high school.

#### **From the University of Texas at Austin**

Harrison Keller works with the University of Texas at Austin and is the Deputy to the President for Strategy and Policy. Mr. Keller provided detailed testimony concerning approaches, challenges, and barriers to the successful implementation of innovative programming. Mr. Keller gave similar testimony to that of Commissioner Paredes particularly with respect to achieving 60x30TX goals and how innovative models can be instrumental in this effort. Mr. Keller made the key point that today’s students consume higher education much earlier than in previous generations (even beginning as early as 9th grade), but on average, today’s college students are actually likely to be older, to attend part-time, and to have obligations outside of school. So, while many students effectively transfer at least some credits earned during high school into 4-year programs, many of these students will not be the traditional “straight out of high school” students but will instead be individuals who have already joined the workforce.

Mr. Keller surveyed a handful of innovative programs currently being utilized across Texas, making special mention of the OnRamps program. OnRamps is a unique dual-enrollment initiative developed by the efforts of legislators, colleges, universities, and school districts. OnRamps has the capability of serving students “beyond the campus,” with its mission being to increase the number and diversity of participating high school students, aligning them with the expectations of universities to which they might apply. Participation can be quantified in terms of total course enrollments, and in 2017, over 30,000 course enrollments are anticipated. One of the major takeaways from the utilization of OnRamps and other innovative programs is that cross-institutional partnerships and network-based approaches are crucial to optimizing delivery to students.

Challenges and barriers to innovative programming made for a significant portion of Mr. Keller’s testimony. A chief focus of his testimony concerned responsiveness, or said another way, the speed with which institutions can or should be allowed to innovate. Indeed, Mr. Keller emphasized a need for “accelerating the pace of innovation” and even proffered the colloquialism: “space and grace to innovate.” Generally speaking, he advocated for increased flexibility not only in academic programming but also in awarding state financial aid (with an

---

awareness of potential problems with more restrictive federal aid programs). Equally, funding mechanisms can be evaluated in order to determine how policy can be tailored to support institutions that demonstrate student success (i.e., completion). Such support could include protection from financial penalties related to enrollment, calendar, and space-based funding formulas. Mr. Keller advised that an opportunity exists for the Texas Legislature to inform the national discussion regarding innovative programming on account of the current lack of movement on reauthorizing the Higher Education Act (likely not to occur until early 2019).

### **Committee Recommendations**

- 1) Undoubtedly, the committee generally supports the concept of innovative programming and acknowledges the multiple desirable outcomes descending from thoughtful implementation of such. The committee sees no reason for delay in considering legislation aimed at generating more innovative programming in Texas higher education. At the same time, a measured approach is required, and due caution ought to be observed. Regardless of genuine desire and adequate funding, authentic innovation simply cannot be forced but must occur organically.
  
- 2) With respect to implementing innovative models in imitation of the perceived and/or proven successes of programs at the various institutions, the committee would urge institutions and legislators to think creatively but also prudently – for there is no one-size-fits-all approach in innovative programming. Certainly, the various institutions are aware of their relative strengths and weaknesses, and legislators seeking to spur innovative programming at institutions within their districts must remain cognizant of the unique and particularized needs of those institutions by working closely with the appropriate personnel. Indeed, geographic and demographic considerations (among others) can, in some cases, completely rule out certain types of innovative programming. Even so, the committee strongly encourages the exploration of innovative models and hopes for a fruitful discussion of thoughtful bills in the 86<sup>th</sup> Regular Legislative Session in 2019.

---

## **INTERIM CHARGE 5**

On June 7, 2018 the House Committee on Higher Education and the House Committee on Public Education subcommittee on Teacher Quality heard testimony from several panels of witnesses concerning Interim Charge #5, which directed the committee to: Review current data available to the public about Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) and make recommendations to ensure the data is transparent, user-friendly, and actionable. Review the current EPP accountability system and recommend any new indicators or changes, including evaluating the ability of programs to meet the workforce needs of school districts by preparing teachers for high-needs areas. Determine ways to measure the effectiveness of teachers prepared by individual programs. For traditional EPP programs, make recommendations on how to more fully involve boards of regents in an effort to elevate the importance of teacher preparation within our state institutions. Examine current joint partnerships between EPPs and public schools to meet regional workforce needs, and make recommendations on how to scale these partnerships.

As a primary matter, it must be acknowledged that the current situation with respect to EPPs is complex. Testimony was provided from multiple viewpoints, and while the testimony was naturally varied, nevertheless several points of common ground emerged. As such this testimony is uniquely presented under several key themes. Testimony was heard concerning three broad areas: data & accountability; efficiency & effectiveness; and partnerships. All parties were and continue to be interested in improving EPPs, whether traditional or alternative in nature. It is important to note that the increase in alternative certifications compared to traditional certifications is symptomatic of teacher shortages and poor retention rates – this stands neither to critique traditional pathways, nor to applaud alternative ones, but rather it points to the current challenge of improving EPPs across the board. The committee’s role is to now identify particular concerns with a mind toward recommendations on how to proceed in light of such.

### **Cultural Considerations**

Though cultural factors are difficult to quantify in terms of data and/or dollars, one overarching concern which the committee would like to address is the cultural perspective of the teaching profession. Often, teachers are offered general praise and are paid tribute in terms of vague praise, but this is not enough. The difficulties with retention stand as a powerful witness against a healthy cultural respect for the teaching profession. Current data indicates that approximately 30% of each class of teachers leaves the profession by their fifth year, with some areas demonstrating closer to a 50% retention rate for successive years. These retention trends do not indicate that the teaching profession is being sufficiently supported and honored in Texas. Of course, certain programs can boast notably higher retention rates for their graduates. In any case, data shows that one of the chief reasons that teachers leave the profession is based on their own sense of unpreparedness to teach, particularly in light of the variety of students who populate Texas classrooms. This sense of unpreparedness can rightly be characterized as a lack of satisfaction or fulfillment because these teachers sense that they are unable to fully serve their students. It simply will not do to shrug off the loss of these professionals as so many isolated instances of subjective dissatisfaction – the problem is systemic and cultural. Certainly, an increase in remuneration would be helpful, but we cannot pretend that a mere pay increase or better benefits package would solve the retention problem. A solution which includes increased pay and improved benefits must also include an increase in EPP quality, specifically concerning the preparation of teachers to engage disadvantaged students. The question of improving the cultural climate such that the general public holds teachers in higher regard is multifaceted,

---

multigenerational, and can only begin by, as a primary matter, improving the preparation of teachers in Texas and providing them with the necessary resources upon entering the profession.

### **Regulatory Requirements**

Testimony from multiple witnesses confirmed that the preparedness of teachers is correlated not only to student outcomes, but also to retention rates in the teaching field. Regulatory requirements regarding EPPs and how they administer their program curricula need to be clarified and improved. In particular, the 18 credit hour ceiling on education courses for prospective teachers has created a scenario in which the curriculum practically strangles itself. A major in education is no longer permitted, and so, prospective teachers are required to major in a particular academic discipline (e.g., history, mathematics). Yet, by law, these students may take no more than 18 credit hours of education courses, which includes student teaching hours. To continue to require EPPs to deliver the requisite curriculum content under this framework, while at the same time expecting that such framework will yield better qualified teachers, is not acceptable and ought to be addressed with legislation in the 86<sup>th</sup> Regular Session.

### **Data & Effectiveness**

It was also brought to the committee's attention that a means of measuring the effectiveness of EPPs currently does not exist in Texas. No general assessment is available, nor is a breakdown available according to licensure program area. Data collection is obviously important, but said data must be disaggregated and longitudinal in nature. In order to assess teacher preparedness, Texas needs reliable and convincing methods for assessing student outcomes, i.e., measurable impact made by the teachers upon their students. However, such methods must be careful to avoid overly subjective value-added or growth measures of student achievement, particularly in cases where false inferences might be drawn on account of the lack of sufficient control factors in some statistical models or insufficient sample sizes. Evaluation results must be defensible not only on statistical but also methodological grounds. In all cases, teacher effectiveness must be evaluated based on multiple measures and not a single metric. Specifically, better ways of measuring effectiveness of new or novice teachers (those with three years or less of teaching experience) need to be developed. Connection of the following policy areas with teacher evaluations should be considered: tenure, professional development and improvement plans, compensation, dismissal, licensure renewal, and advancement. The committee stresses the need for developing an accountability framework, which includes enforcement functions, for all EPPs. Data must be applied, incorporated into a set of meaningful criteria, and then put to use. Programs which do not meet performance criteria must be held accountable through meaningful enforcement measures which prompt swift changes and adjustments.

### **High-Needs Students**

Teacher shortages and retention in the area of bilingual education and special education need particular attention. Significantly, two growing subgroups of Texas students are those learning English as a second language (ESL) and those requiring special education programming. Assessment of the current state of services to ESL and special education students should be conducted in order to determine the scope of this situation. Regardless of scope, a number of Texas students who are in need of special education or ESL instruction are not receiving such from an actual special education or ESL program – this is due to the difficulty in effectively identifying such students, a reality which is further complicated by a lack of adequate training in

---

pertinent areas. Quite simply, the majority of teachers are not trained to identify these students. Texas Woman’s University offers a “triple crown” program which seeks to prepare teachers to meet the needs of all students and offers teacher-candidates the potential to graduate with certifications in core, ESL, and special education areas. The committee encourages similar programming to be pursued by other institutions and recommends the exploration for ways of incentivizing such programming. In addition to multiple certification programs, a separate and focused bilingual/ESL certification program geared specifically toward special education should also be developed. Indeed, given the current demographic trends in Texas, it is not out of the question to at least determine the ramifications which would accompany required *all* teachers to receive at least a modicum of ESL strategies training.

### **Partnerships**

The committee heard a substantial amount of testimony on partnerships between EPPs and public schools, especially geared towards serving regional workforce needs. It must also be emphasized that partnerships have the ability to especially serve high-needs students, such as those with disabilities and those affected by poverty. The current climate for the various kinds of partnerships is healthy, and numerous institutions and programs are reaping the benefits of fruitful engagement. The committee was especially encouraged by the partnerships which provide practical applications and/or residency-type training for potential teachers. Partnerships have the capability to organically tailor their programming to meet local needs, that is, the needs of the region being served and the potential teachers who will be serving the region. More partnerships are encouraged, with the understanding that all partnership efforts must be relevant and appropriate to the regions served by the partnership(s). One size does not fit all, especially in a state like Texas. Partnerships for the sake of partnerships will not properly serve students and their teachers. Existing partnerships should continue to address region-specific needs, and all future partnerships must also be aimed at addressing pertinent local needs. Naturally, partnership goals will vary with geography and demography. “Grow your own” partnerships are key for increasing teacher production at universities and to serving regional needs. The scaling of partnerships must be certain to include all regional stakeholder interests – not only the higher education institutions and school districts, but also other parties, public or private, who can demonstrate a vested interest in the goals of the partnership. The committee would encourage the exploration of ideas for incentivizing partnerships.

### **Committee Recommendations**

- 1) The Texas Legislature should attempt to increase reciprocity teacher licensing across state jurisdictions. Teachers who have been certified in other states and who can demonstrate proficiency on certain indicators similar to T-TESS should be fast-tracked into a workforce with critical gaps.
- 2) The committee would recommend an increase in the data and indicators of post-EPP success. Such measures could include but are not restricted to teacher retention, K–12 student surveys and first year teacher student performance. This data should be transparent for the benefit of potential educators. To address the states teacher recruitment and retention problems the Texas Education Agency might seek to maintain a public data dashboard of public preparation programs.

- 
- 3) It is vital to encourage partnerships developing between EPPs and public schools, the Texas legislature should explore innovative ways to incentivize these vital frameworks, which would help address regional deficiencies.