



# Linking Education and Workforce: Spurring Economic Growth Across Texas



**TRI-AGENCY WORKFORCE INITIATIVE**  
2020 Commissioners' Report Executive Summary

## Introduction

Governor Greg Abbott established the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative in March 2016, when he tasked the Commissioners of the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to work together on five initial charges centered on developing strong links between education and industry, with the goal of helping Texas grow in economic prosperity.

In 2019, the 86th Texas Legislature passed transformative school finance legislation, House Bill 3, that calls for sweeping reforms in education and will shape the future of the Texas workforce. To fully implement the vision of House Bill 3, Governor Abbott has charged the three agencies with streamlining implementation of the legislation and identifying solutions for long-term workforce needs across the state.

The governor laid out charges under these seven categories:

- > Readiness
- > Completion
- > Transitions
- > Upskilling
- > Educator Pipeline
- > Partnerships
- > Infrastructure

## Mission

To build a strong Texas workforce and ensure that Texans are prepared for jobs in the industries that power the state's economy today and tomorrow.

## Vision

Texans of all ages should have access to high-quality education and workforce training that empowers them to achieve their full potential.

## History of the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative

> **July 2015**  
60x30TX plan was adopted

> **March 2016**  
Governor Abbott established the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative

> **March–June 2016**  
Commissioners conducted 7 regional meetings

> **November 2016**  
First Tri-Agency report was published with recommendations

> **June 2019**  
House Bill 3 was signed into law, transforming school finance in Texas

> **February 2020**  
Governor Abbott issued new charges to be addressed by the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative

> **February 2020**  
Tri-Agency progress report was published

> **March 2020**  
COVID-19 pandemic began to affect Texas; regional Tri-Agency events were canceled

> **April–June 2020**  
Multiple virtual meetings were held to inform the development of the second Tri-Agency report

> **November 2020**  
Second Tri-Agency report was published with recommendations

# Key Priorities and Strategies

## to Advance Economic Growth and Prosperity

**Priority 1: Support efficient and flexible pathways to earning high-value credentials linked to high-wage, in-demand jobs.**

### Strategy 1.1

Identify students' most efficient paths to attaining high-value credentials by:

- Aligning training programs and associated credentials with in-demand, high-wage industries;
- Mapping clear pathways to high-value credentials for all Texans, including veterans, incumbent and dislocated workers, and youth involved with the justice system;
- Improving alignment across secondary and post-secondary CTE pathways; and
- Creating clear on- and off-ramps for pathways through expanded credit and credential portability.

### Strategy 1.2

Strengthen and streamline collaboration among key education and workforce system stakeholders who are developing pathways at the regional level by:

- Integrating state strategies and supports for regional collaboration; and
- Leveraging existing structures to better connect regional education and workforce systems.

### Strategy 1.3

Expand opportunities for work-based learning experiences by:

- Accelerating the development of high-quality work-based learning experiences that provide participants with meaningful opportunities; and
- Supporting engagement by industry partners.

**Priority 2: Ensure students receive the supports necessary to succeed at all stages of their educations and in their transitions to the workforce.**

### Strategy 2.1

Ensure students and families have the support, tools, and resources needed to achieve education and career success by:

- Supporting early childhood education, foundational literacy pedagogy, and high school and postsecondary readiness in middle school; and
- Designing effective family engagement strategies.

### Strategy 2.2

Expand access to effective college and career advising by:

- Streamlining and modernizing advising offerings and services for students to support informed decision-making about postsecondary education and careers; and
- Offering professional development to educators and guidance counselors on advising services.

### Strategy 2.3

Reduce financial barriers in education by:

- Addressing gaps such as broadband internet and early child care;
- Refining the Texas financial aid system; and
- Providing financial supports to Texans who pursue careers in teaching.

**Priority 3: Create a robust infrastructure for agency collaboration around common goals, data, and processes to ensure improved student outcomes.**

**Strategy 3.1**

Align statewide education and workforce systems with statewide priorities and goals by:

- Updating and aligning goals and priorities across the agencies;
- Ensuring finance systems support these goals and priorities; and
- Braiding funding to better leverage resources.

**Strategy 3.2**

Make educational and workforce data accessible and useful to the public, stakeholders, and decision-makers by:

- Developing a modern data infrastructure; and
- Integrating data systems and research and development efforts.

**Strategy 3.3**

Ensure coordination and collaboration across all three agencies' operations by:

- Adopting and working toward shared outcomes;
- Developing shared processes, including planning and monitoring processes, and infrastructure; and
- Creating clear communication channels.

