

## TEXAS' COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY COMMITMENT

### Why Is Texas' Commitment To College and Career Readiness So Critical?

#### A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA IS NO LONGER ENOUGH FOR SUCCESS

*Today, nearly every good job requires some postsecondary education and/or training – such as an associate's or bachelor's degree, certificate, license, or completion of an apprenticeship or significant on-the-job training.*

In 1950, 60% of jobs were classified as unskilled, attainable by young people with high school diplomas or less. Today, less than 20% jobs are considered to be unskilled.<sup>i</sup>

*One result:* The demand for middle- and high-skilled workers is outpacing the state's supply of workers educated and experienced at that level.

- **80% of Texas' jobs are middle- or high-skill** (jobs that require some postsecondary education or training).
- Yet only 33% of Texas' adults have some postsecondary degree (associate's or higher).<sup>ii</sup>

#### TOO MANY STUDENTS GRADUATE UNPREPARED FOR REAL WORLD CHALLENGES

*Currently, far too many students drop out or graduate from high school without the knowledge and skills required for success, closing doors and limiting their post-high school options.*

Texas' graduation rate – both the state-reported and the independently-reported – demonstrates how the education system is not working for all students.

Graduation Rate (class of 2008)	State Reported <sup>iii</sup>	Independently Reported <sup>iv</sup>
	79%	67%

As of 2009, Texas had 159 “dropout factories” or high schools that graduate 60 percent or less of their students.<sup>v</sup>

Far too many students enter two- and four-year postsecondary institutions unprepared for college-level coursework.

#### Texas' Remediation Data

38% of Texas' students at two-year colleges and 24% of Texas' students at four-year colleges require remediation.<sup>vi</sup>

Employers of graduates entering into the workforce directly after high school note gaps in their knowledge and skills:

- 41% of employers are dissatisfied with graduates' abilities.
- Only 18% believe that new graduates, with no further education beyond high school, have the skills necessary for advancement.<sup>vii</sup>

#### THE COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY AGENDA

*The best way to prepare students for life after high school is to ensure they graduate with a strong foundation in the core academic areas that will leave all doors open in the future.*

Over the past five years, states have driven the college- and career-ready agenda – a policy agenda that seeks to ensure all students graduate high school, and graduate ready for their next steps.

The momentum created by the states has been bolstered by the federal government's Race to the Top competition, which has further incentivized the adoption of common, college- and career-ready standards and assessments.

Support is very strong among voters for college- and career-ready policies, across demographic and party lines:

- *89% of voters agree that “to really get ahead in life a person needs at least some education beyond high school, whether that means university, community college, technical or vocational school.”*
- *83% of voters believe all students should “be pushed to take rigorous and broad academic requirements in high school to make sure they have as many options as possible upon graduation.”<sup>viii</sup>*

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### What Texas Has Accomplished To Date<sup>ix</sup>

- In 2009 Texas revised their academic standards in math, English, science and social studies to ensure their alignment the state's College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS).
- In 2003, Texas first adopted the Recommended High School Program – a college- and career-ready curriculum – as the default graduation requirements for all students.

**Texas is one of only 21 states (including DC) with requirements at this level**

- Texas' current high school assessment – the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) – has a college-ready cut score used by postsecondary institutions for placement. Among the new end-of-course assessments that are replacing the TAKS will be exams in Algebra II and English III that will have college-ready cut scores as well.

**Texas is one of only 14 states with high school tests used by higher education for placement decisions letting students know if they are ready for college-level coursework while still in high school and giving them time to address any readiness gaps**

- Texas' longitudinal data system satisfies nine of the ten essential Data Quality Campaign elements, providing a foundation for strong and sound student-level data collection.

**Texas is one of 22 states with a P-20 longitudinal data system that regularly matches student-level K-12 and postsecondary data**

- Texas collects and uses a range of indicators in a variety of ways to get a more complete picture of how their students are faring in K-12 and beyond.

College- and Career-Ready Indicator	Publicly Reported	State Set Goal	Incentive to Improve	Accountability Formula
CCR Diploma	YES	YES	YES	YES
CCR Testing	YES	YES	YES	
Postsecondary Remediation	YES	YES	YES	
Exceeding CCR	YES	YES	YES	

### How Texas Can Further Advance the College- and Career-Ready Agenda

- ✓ ...Continue to make progress on the state's data collection efforts, particularly around making student data available to relevant stakeholders including teachers, parents and students.
- ✓ ...Sustain funding for professional development and instructional resources to support teachers and classroom learning.
- ✓ ...Continue to make progress on the state's K-12 accountability system to determine how it can better reward measures of college and career readiness.
- ✓ ...Focus on the best interventions to support the state's dropout prevention efforts.

<sup>i</sup> Carnevale, Anthony P. and Donna Desrochers (2003). *Standards for What? The Economic Roots of K-12 Reform*, Education Testing Services.

<http://www.learn2earn.org/For-Educators/Standards-for-What.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> Skills to Compete <http://www.skills2compete.org>; National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, analysis of 2009 American Community Survey. [www.higheredinfo.org](http://www.higheredinfo.org)

<sup>iii</sup> Texas Education Agency, Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools, 2007-08

[www.tea.state.tx.us/acctres/dropcomp\\_index.html](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/acctres/dropcomp_index.html)

<sup>iv</sup> Education Week Diplomas Count 2011,

[www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2011/06/09/index.html](http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2011/06/09/index.html)

<sup>v</sup> America's Promise Alliance (2011). Building a Grad Nation: March 2011

Update. [www.americaspromise.org/Our-Work/Grad-Nation/Building-a-Grad-Nation.aspx](http://www.americaspromise.org/Our-Work/Grad-Nation/Building-a-Grad-Nation.aspx)

<sup>vi</sup> Texas Public Policy Foundation (Sept 2007). *The Cost of Remedial Education*. [www.texaspolicy.com/pdf/2007-09-PP25-remediation-bt.pdf](http://www.texaspolicy.com/pdf/2007-09-PP25-remediation-bt.pdf)

<sup>vii</sup> Peter D. Hart Research Associates/Public Opinion Strategies, *Rising to the Challenge: Are High School Graduates Prepared for College and Work?* prepared for Achieve, Inc., 2005.

<sup>viii</sup> Achieve (2010). *Achieving the Possible: What Americans Think About the College- and Career-Ready Agenda*. [www.achieve.org/AchievingthePossible](http://www.achieve.org/AchievingthePossible)

<sup>ix</sup> Achieve (2011). *Closing the Expectations Gap 2011: 50-State Progress Report on the Alignment of High School Policies with the Demands of College and Careers*. [www.achieve.org/ClosingtheExpectationsGap2011](http://www.achieve.org/ClosingtheExpectationsGap2011)