

PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE & CAREER



IN TEXAS, LESS THAN 22 PERCENT OF 8TH GRADERS GO ON TO COMPLETE A POST-SECONDARY CREDENTIAL WITHIN SIX YEARS OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION, LEAVING THE TEXAS WORKFORCE IN DEMAND FOR HIGH-SKILLED LABOR.¹ EFFECTIVE STATE RESOURCES AND COORDINATION WILL ENHANCE COUNSELING PROGRAMS, AND ALIGN THE K-12, HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE SYSTEMS AT THE STATE AND REGIONAL LEVEL.

TEGAC has been interested in the area of pathways to college and career since its inception. Over the last several years, TEGAC has commissioned two pieces of research on this topic. In 2014, TEGAC commissioned the Ray Marshall Center at the University of Texas at Austin to evaluate counselor capacity in middle and high school statewide. Two years later, TEGAC commissioned the George H.W. Bush School for Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University to document and evaluate how Texas school districts across the state are implementing legislation passed in 2013 that created new high school “endorsements.”

What we have found in our research in this field is that misalignment between students’ experiences in secondary and post-secondary education continues to exist. We also found that Texas middle and high schools do not have nearly enough counselors to keep up with the demands of students’ academic and social/emotional needs. With the creation of endorsements, an opportunity was created to provide meaningful on-ramps for students to post-secondary programs and ultimately, careers. Although institutions are making improvements, much more remains to be done to support systems’ alignment that will ensure there are true on-ramps to opportunities beyond high school. Many questions remain about the extent to which this type of alignment is occurring in the field.

TEGAC partnered with the Texas Student Success Council and the University of Texas at Austin in 2018 - 2019 to better understand to what degree school districts and institutions of higher education are coordinating counseling and advising efforts, as well as aligning endorsements to programmatic postsecondary offerings, including dual credit courses. Specifically, TEGAC and the Texas Student Success Council partnered with Texas OnCourse at The University of Texas at Austin to support qualitative research examining student experiences navigating transfer. This research provides new insights into the challenges undergraduate students confront when transferring course credits among programs and institutions. The research informs the development of an innovative student-facing online tool to make student pathways more accessible and transparent across institutions and identify policy opportunities for improving student transfer in Texas.

Learn more about our 2018 research findings and 2019 policy recommendations on the second page.

TEXAS EDUCATION GRANTMAKERS ADVOCACY CONSORTIUM

Connect with us and learn more at @TEGACTX and www.tegac.org

Legislative Advertising by Jennifer Esterline, TEGAC, 1303 San Antonio Street, Suite 830, Austin, TX 78701

PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE & CAREER

2018 RESEARCH FINDINGS

- Students have preconceived and incomplete ideas about success and careers.
- Students hear, over and over, that they need to graduate as quickly as possible.
- Students are not prepared with a mental framework for college.
- A growing population of students face barriers to post-secondary success outside of academic preparedness.

2019 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Invest in additional school counselors and ensure that counselors can spend their time counseling, rather than on administrative duties.
- Create a tri-agency "Work-Based Learning Task Force" that is responsible for making recommendations to encourage and remove barriers to work-based learning to the commissioners of TWC, TEA, and THECB.
- For the top 25 programs into which students are transferring, require universities to identify applicable lower-division course requirements to encourage smoother credit transfer.
- Require institutions of higher education to develop recommended course sequences for each of their degree programs and to make those recommended course sequences readily accessible.
- All public institutions of higher education should participate in automated reverse transfer through the National Student Clearinghouse.
- Support institutions in the development of online tools and resources designed to make transparent pathways for students completing post-secondary degrees and certificates.
- High schools and IHEs should align endorsements, and dual credit courses within those endorsements, to postsecondary pathways by requiring ISDs and IHE with which they partner to provide dual credit to:
 1. Encourage high school counselors and college advisors to collaboratively create common practices and terminology related to dual credit and college readiness;
 2. Map endorsements offered, and dual credit courses within those endorsements, to degree programs aligned to relevant fields at the partnering IHE;
 3. Identify or develop tools based on the program maps to assist counselors, students and families in endorsement and dual credit course selection.

REFERENCES

¹ Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board THECB - 2018 Higher Education Almanac. <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/reports/PDF/10900.PDF>



Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium

Contact: Jennifer Esterline, 512-796-4530 or jesterline@cftexas.org, tegac.org, @TEGACTX