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***CLOSING THE GAPS STRATEGIES FOR  
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND  
COMMUNITY COLLEGES PARTNERSHIPS***

**Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC)  
TACC P-16 Committee Members  
Spring, 2010**

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## CONTENTS

The Numbers	<b>1</b>
Summary: TACC Position Statements	<b>2, 3</b>
Summary: Legislative and THECB/TEA Recommendations	<b>4, 5</b>
Summary: Community Colleges Quality Indicators	<b>6, 7</b>
Summary: Community Colleges Dual Credit Quality Indicators	<b>8, 9</b>
Summary: Community Colleges Best Economic Value to Texas	<b>10, 11</b>
ISD Dual Credit Funding	<b>12</b>
Community Colleges: Primary Resource for Success in <i>Closing the Gaps</i>	<b>13</b>
Community Colleges and Four-Year Colleges and Universities	<b>13, 14</b>
Community Colleges and ISDs	<b>15</b>
Community Colleges and Developmental Education	<b>15, 16</b>
Community Colleges and Distance Learning	<b>17</b>
Community Colleges are Highly Interested in Working with the Legislature, THECB, and TEA	<b>18</b>
Glossary of Terms	<b>19 - 24</b>

## THE NUMBERS

Statistics indicate Community and Technical Colleges teach 96% of dual credit courses:

- A recent study by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) indicates that 7.6% of contact hours in two-year and technical colleges were high school enrollments, compared to 0.5% at four-year institutions.
- Texas figures were somewhat lower (6.4% and 0.2%, respectively), and indicate that we can do more as a State to facilitate Early College Start opportunities.
- THECB data for 2009-10:

<b>DUAL CREDIT ENROLLMENTS (INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS ENROLLED)</b>								
	Fall 2002	Fall 2003	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009
Type of Institution	Dual Credit	Dual Credit	Dual Credit	Dual Credit	Dual Credit	Dual Credit	Dual Credit	Dual Credit
All	28,454	31,757	38,082	42,167	57,554	64,910	79,074	91,303
Public Univ	627	589	415	1,160	1,559	2,617	3,215	3,759
Public CTC	27,827	31,168	37,667	41,007	55,995	62,293	75,859	87,544

<b>FALL 2009 DUAL CREDIT</b>			
<b>Unduplicated Headcount 91,303</b>			
<b>Public 4-Year</b>		<b>Public 2-Year</b>	
3,759	4.1%	87,544	95.9%
White	20.48%	White	48.78%
Black	2.47%	Black	6.46%
Hispanic	70.07%	Hispanic	37.24%
Asian/PI	2.34%	Asian/PI	3.05%
Other	4.62%	Other	4.45%

**Sources:**

- *Fact Book Bulletin*, SREB, March 2010
- *Texas Education News*, Vol. 27, Issue 8, February 22, 2010

## **SUMMARY: TACC POSITION STATEMENTS REGARDING ISD PARTNERSHIPS**

The Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC) is committed to strong partnerships with Independent School Districts (ISD) as a primary Texas *Closing the Gaps* strategy to increase high school graduates, to increase transition of high school students into higher ed and the future workforce, and to do so at the greatest economic value to Texans. Community and Technical Colleges currently provide 96% of high school dual credit in Texas, and for excellent reasons.

This position paper suggests where Texas is doing well and where it can do better in serving the families of ISD high school students, and how Texas can increase the numbers of high school students graduating high school with an “Early College Start” that transitions them toward transfer, degree completion, and into the future workforce of Texas. The fifty public community colleges in Texas have identified and adopted best practices regarding relationships with independent school districts, community colleges, and four-year institutions - the only segment of higher education to have done so. These principles are reflected throughout this position paper.

### **Summary of Position Statements**

- 1. Community Colleges are the preferred higher education partners for ISDs**
  - All ISDs assigned to a community college Service Area/statewide saturation
  - Lower cost to Texas for community colleges to deliver ISD partnership programs
- 2. Community Colleges have the widest array of options which enhance ISD opportunities for students and families, and which enhance *Closing the Gaps***
  - Long history of outreach, summer/youth/bridge and Early College Start programs
  - Traditional in-class, distance learning, days/evenings/weekends
  - Faculty/curriculum meet all SACS accreditation standards
- 3. Community Colleges are the strongest resources for addressing HB1**
  - Complex mission elements align with societal demographic changes
- 4. Community Colleges are quality institutions**
  - ONLY segment of higher education to have adopted dual credit quality standards
  - ONLY segment of higher education to have statewide practices survey data
  - Studies indicate Early College Start programs stronger strategy than AP
  - Transfer students have comparable GPAs and graduate with BA slightly sooner than native students of four-year institutions

- 5. Involvement in Early College Start by four-year institutions must be guided by open collaboration with community colleges and based on the strengths of each institution**
  
- 6. TACC does not support private, third-party delivery of Early College Start opportunities without full involvement and control of instructional design, materials, methodologies, faculty credentials review, hiring, and evaluation**

## **SUMMARY: LEGISLATIVE AND THECB/TEA RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Action Requested:**

Create a Statewide list of approved dual credit courses, exempt from TEKS requirements and End of Course Exams, and require that dual credit courses be within the transferrable General Education and Core Curriculum areas as noted in the ACGM and WECM.

#### **Rationale:**

College-level means college level, not an adapted high school standards course. There is great disparity across the State in terms of how ISDs determine TEKS are met in dual credit courses, and the current process actually impedes more courses being offered as dual credit.

### **2. Action Requested:**

Adopt TACC best practices for dual credit instruction and codify in statute (Texas Administrative code, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter D, Dual Credit Partnerships Between Secondary Schools and Texas Public Colleges).

#### **Rationale:**

Community colleges have adopted high-quality standards to guide the implementation of partnership programs with ISDs, and especially related to quality dual credit instruction. These standards should be required of both two-year and four-year institutions.

### **3. Action Requested:**

Amend HERC (Higher Education Regional Council) guidelines to require participation of four-year institutions in all ISD partnership initiatives

#### **Rationale:**

Two- and four-year institutions should work collaboratively to meet the regional needs of area ISDs. Communication and planning should be transparent. The HERCs provide an existing vehicle for this to occur, but it must be mandatory, not optional, participation on the part of all public institutions.

### **4. Action Requested:**

Create a funding source that recognizes distance learning opportunities offered by community colleges.

**Rationale:**

Dual Credit Distance Learning should be promoted as a great opportunity for students who are geographically isolated, or who represent smaller numbers of students than would be served through an in-class dual credit experience. It should be encouraged that the initial college experience of high school juniors and seniors be as typical of the college experience (in-class teaching, exposure to and use of college support services) as possible.

Distance Learning also should capitalize on the existing State resources as a means of efficient use of limited State support, these include Virtual College of Texas (VCT) and Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN).

TACC is opposed to third party, private/public ventures that have not been fully vetted fully with the State's higher education leaders, ISDs, and the general public.

**5. Action Requested:**

Amend accountability standards to ensure level playing field between Early College Start (ECS) and Advanced Placement (AP), and require ISDs to report to parents the success rate of AP students in receiving transcribed college credit compared to Dual Credit measures (Texas Education Agency, under the Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 2, Chapter 97, Subchapter AA, Rule Section 97.1001, Accountability Rating System).

**Rationale:**

Dual Credit is a stronger *Closing the Gaps* strategy than Advanced Placement (AP) because more students take Dual Credit, they receive transcribed credit immediately upon completion and there is no testing fee, and studies show that the majority of AP students do not receive college credit for their effort.

**6. Action Requested:**

H2480 essentially says that ISDs can "shop for the best bargain" in dual credit – essentially meaning if an ISD can get dual credit free from another community college or other provider, it simply has to say they are "not satisfied" with their area community college.

**Rationale:**

Smaller, rural community colleges typically are unable to waive or reduce tuition for dual credit instruction. If Texas seeks to secure free dual credit instruction for all high schools students in the State, it should declare this as a policy goal, and it should work with TACC and its member institutions to create a fair way to achieve the goal.



## **SUMMARY: COMMUNITY COLLEGES QUALITY INDICATORS**

Community colleges are quality institutions. TACC calls for any studies or discussions of “quality and rigor” of dual credit - or any other program, service, or instructional methodology - to be applied equally to all segments of higher education.

The most often expressed challenges for community colleges include (1) the “Open Door” admissions philosophy and its appropriate emphasis on access and affordability, (2) the huge differences in student college/career readiness as a result of the Open Door and societal demographic changes, (3) a legitimate criticism that Developmental Education is not retaining enough students and getting them successfully into degree/certificate programs, and (4) the need for larger numbers of students to graduate with a degree or certificate. These challenges should not, however, cast doubt about the high quality of community college degree programs and support services as a whole, the success of our transfer students, the quality of our external partnerships, nor the well-deserved reputation of our workforce programs. Community colleges are well-poised to address Developmental Education challenges and to continue to increase success for all students.

- **The Associate Degree is the Fastest Growing Workplace Credential in America**  
According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the fastest growing workplace credential is the two-year Associate Degree, offered by community colleges. Moreover, the majority of new jobs created in the U.S., and in Texas according to Texas Works, will require some college but less than a four-year degree.

Texas community college workforce education programs are of high quality, and it is Texas community colleges which provide the fastest responses to the changing needs of business and industry.

- **Graduation Rates – 4.9% increase since 2000**  
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) data indicate increases in community college degrees/certificates awarded; however, a large number of community college students intend to transfer (not get a degree), others pursue specific career courses of interest or related to their jobs, and others already are credentialed. All students are not pursuing degrees as one typically finds in selective admissions universities. The mission elements of community colleges are broader than the four-year universities and require additional broader effectiveness measures.

- **Transfer Success – 75% increase since 2000**

Community colleges are the largest provider of transfer students to four-year institutions; as community colleges grow, four-year institutions grow.

Community college transfer students' GPA, according to THECB data, are comparable to native four-year college and university students.

- **Bachelor Degree Completion**

Community college transfer students, according to THECB data, graduate within six years with a BA slightly sooner than native four-year students.

- **Nearly half of all Texas Community Colleges are members of the national Achieving the Dream initiative.**

THECB analysis shows that Texas is making greater strides in closing achievement gaps than other states participating in Achieving the Dream. That means Texas community colleges are doing good work that should be supported and enhanced.

- **Community Colleges are the only segment of public higher education to have adopted quality standards:**

- *Position Statement and Suggest Best Practices: Community College/ISD Partnerships (October 2009)*

- *Position Statement and Suggested Best Practices: Community Colleges/Four-Year Colleges and Universities*

- *Developing Position Statement and Suggested Best Practices: P-16 Councils*

- **Community Colleges are the only segment of public higher education to have conducted a statewide survey of dual credit practices (April 2010)**

- **TACC and UT, A&M, and Texas State systems, are also collaboratively developing best practices guidelines for distance learning dual credit.**

- **Developmental Education Is Improving**

- Developmental education challenges are national in nature, and complex. Community colleges are active in the Texas Developmental Education Initiative.

## **SUMMARY: DUAL CREDIT QUALITY INDICATORS**

### **Quality Standards:**

Community colleges are the ONLY segment of higher education to have adopted quality standards for all fifty community colleges in a document entitled, *Community College/Independent School District Partnerships Position Statement and Suggested Best Practices*. Among the standards:

- Faculty must meet SACS credential guidelines
- Faculty hiring and evaluation processes must be the same as for all other college faculty
- Course content must be determined by the faculty of the college, and be the same as for all other sections of the same course
- Course syllabi must be the same as for all other sections of the same course taught by the college
- Texts and supplemental materials must be the same as for all other sections of the same course taught by the college
- Student performance and grading criteria must be the same as for all other students taking sections of the same course
- Memorandums of Understanding must exist between the community college and the ISD and be reviewed regularly
- The ISD must receive student performance feedback data
- Parents and students must receive comprehensive information regarding Early College Start programs (including dual credit)

### **Survey Data:**

Community colleges are the ONLY segment of higher education to have surveyed its members regarding dual credit practices across the State of Texas. Highlights:

- Community Colleges Standards Highlights
  - Only segment of higher ed to have adopted quality standards for dual credit
  - Only segment of higher ed to have statewide survey on practices across the State
  - 98% have Memorandums of Understanding with the ISDS
  - 94% participate in joint planning between the ISD and community college
- Academic Standards Highlights
  - 100% of the community colleges require the same teaching credentials of dual credit instructors as all other college courses
  - 94% of the community colleges require the same course syllabus for dual credit and non-dual credit sections of the same course

- Nearly 96% of the community colleges require student evaluations of the dual credit faculty, 81% conduct classroom observations, and 52% indicate additional other evaluative strategies (evaluation of instructional materials, meetings with supervisor, etc.)
- 92% enforce the same textbook requirements as offer college courses
- Support Services Highlights
  - 98% of the community colleges reported that dual enrollment students have access to the same services offered other college students
  - 70% of the community colleges provide services to parents of dual credit students
- Student Performance Highlights:
  - First Time In College (FTIC) cohorts indicate higher persistence (Fall to Spring and Fall to Fall) for former dual credit students
  - FTIC first semester GPA is higher for former dual credit students than for other college students
  - Course completion with C or better is 22% higher for dual enrollment students
  - 88% of dual credit students passed with a C or better, compared to 66% of other students

## SUMMARY: COMMUNITY COLLEGES BEST ECONOMIC VALUE TO TEXAS

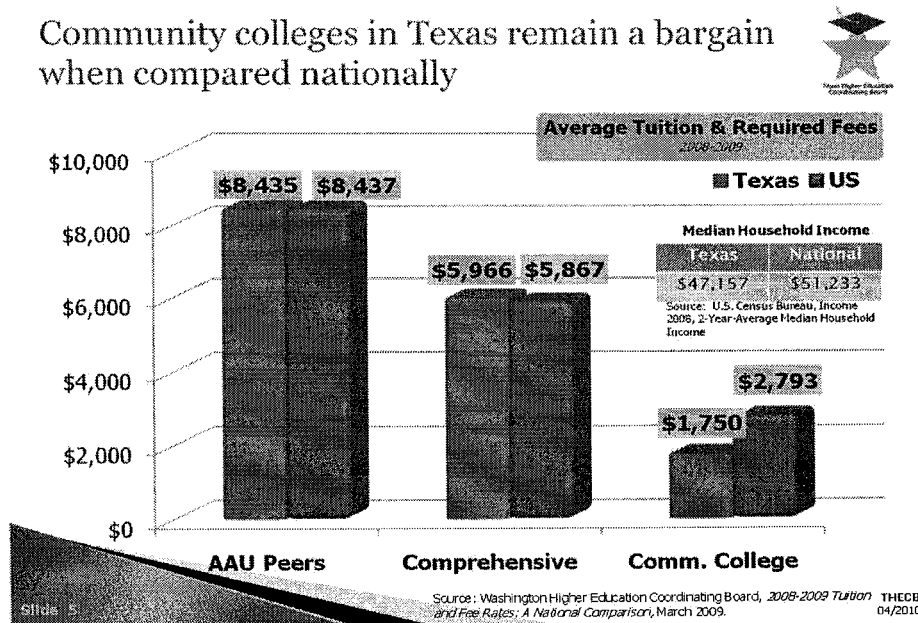
**It costs the State less to support dual credit through Community Colleges.**

- State reimbursement (formula funding) is less for two-year institutions; therefore, larger numbers of students can more economically be served by community colleges.
- It is less expensive – cheaper – for Texas to support community colleges in doing more of what they already do better than any other institution ( i.e., provide quality Early College Start opportunities to high school students).
- In an economic slump, Texas needs to do more to support successful models rather than creating competition among two- and four-year institutions in areas where the community college is obviously the State’s soundest and most cost-effective model for delivery.

English Composition:

- 3 credit hours/48 hours of instruction
- Class size 20
- Generates 60 credit hours/960 contact hours
- Community college state reimbursement for course: \$2,640 (\$2.75 per contact hour)
- Four-year institution state reimbursement for course: \$3,540 (\$59 per credit hour)
- State reimbursement does not cover full cost of course (instructor, operating budget/indirect costs)

Community colleges in Texas remain a bargain when compared nationally

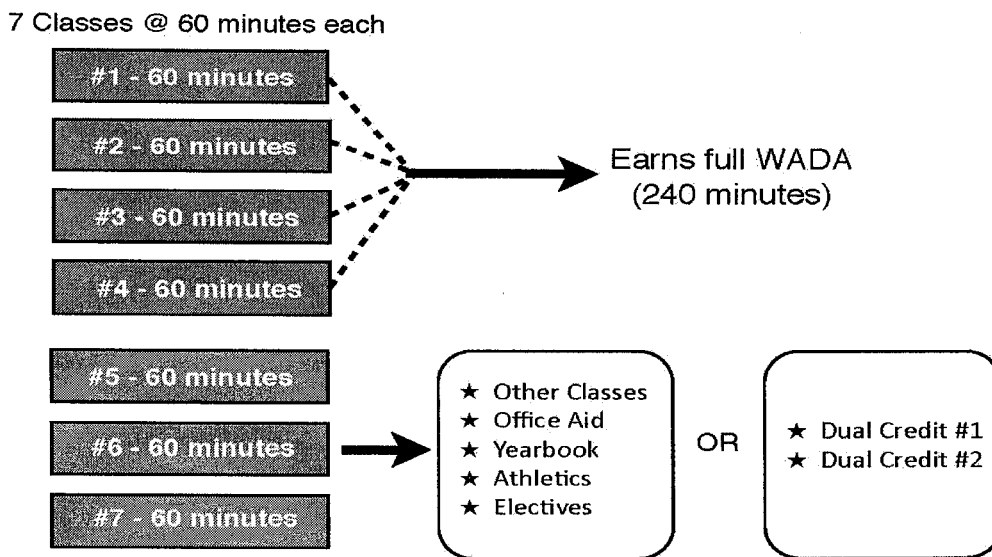


**Dual Credit Represents One of Texas' Strongest *Closing the Gaps* Strategies:**

- Increases high school completion and the numbers of students who transition to higher education;
- Reduces time to degree;
- Reduces State cost because community colleges are the least expensive provider, and it is cheaper for the State to pay contact hour reimbursements earlier in a student's matriculation (rather than later).

## **ISD Dual Credit Funding**

- Dual Credit, through Texas community colleges, is the state’s strongest and most cost effective strategy for *Closing the Gaps* in high school to college transition.
- Research shows that students who complete at least one college course in high school are twice as likely to graduate from high school and transition into higher education.
- Public schools funding of dual credit is not in conflict with Weighted Average Daily Attendance, WADA.
- Public schools are funded through WADA.
  - To receive full WADA, public schools must have at least 240 minutes of instruction per day.
  - If a public school teaches a student less than 240 minutes, the school should claim half WADA.
- Public high schools traditionally offer seven (7) class periods per day (each class period 60 minutes) for a total of 420 minutes. (Note: some Texas high schools offer eight (8) 50 or 55 minute classes. This illustration will use 7 class periods @60 minutes per class.)



- If a student is in 4 high school classes in a seven period day, the ISD (Independent School District) receives full WADA regardless of any other activity.

## **COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND ISD PARTNERSHIPS**

### **Community Colleges: Primary Resource for Success in *Closing the Gaps***

The State of Texas calls for increased progress in achieving the goals of the Texas *Closing the Gaps* initiative, and community colleges represent the strongest resource for that purpose:

- Currently, the 50 community colleges of Texas enroll over half of all public higher education students, and this is estimated by THECB to be 70% by 2015;
- More than 78% of all higher education minority students are enrolled in community colleges;
- The fastest growing populations are also those who primarily enroll in community colleges because of the lower cost, more convenient locations, greater focus on student success support services, and the greater diversity of students, faculty and staff found in community colleges;
- Community colleges represent the best bargain in use of limited State resources for higher education - simply put, it costs the State less to support community college *Closing the Gaps* initiatives than it does for four-year colleges and universities;
- Finally, community colleges are the greatest resource for building a larger, more prosperous middle class.

### **Community Colleges and Four-Year Colleges and Universities**

TACC believes that the primary role of partnerships with ISDs more appropriately aligns with the community college mission, and historically that is reflected in the high number of dual credit enrollments (which need to grow quickly, but also economically).

TACC believes that the majority of four-year colleges and universities do not see ISD dual credit as a core mission element, though it believes there are appropriate reasons for four-year institutions to offer some dual credit instruction when the local community college is unable to provide it, when courses are not available through the community college, or when a distance learning capability is not available by the community college.

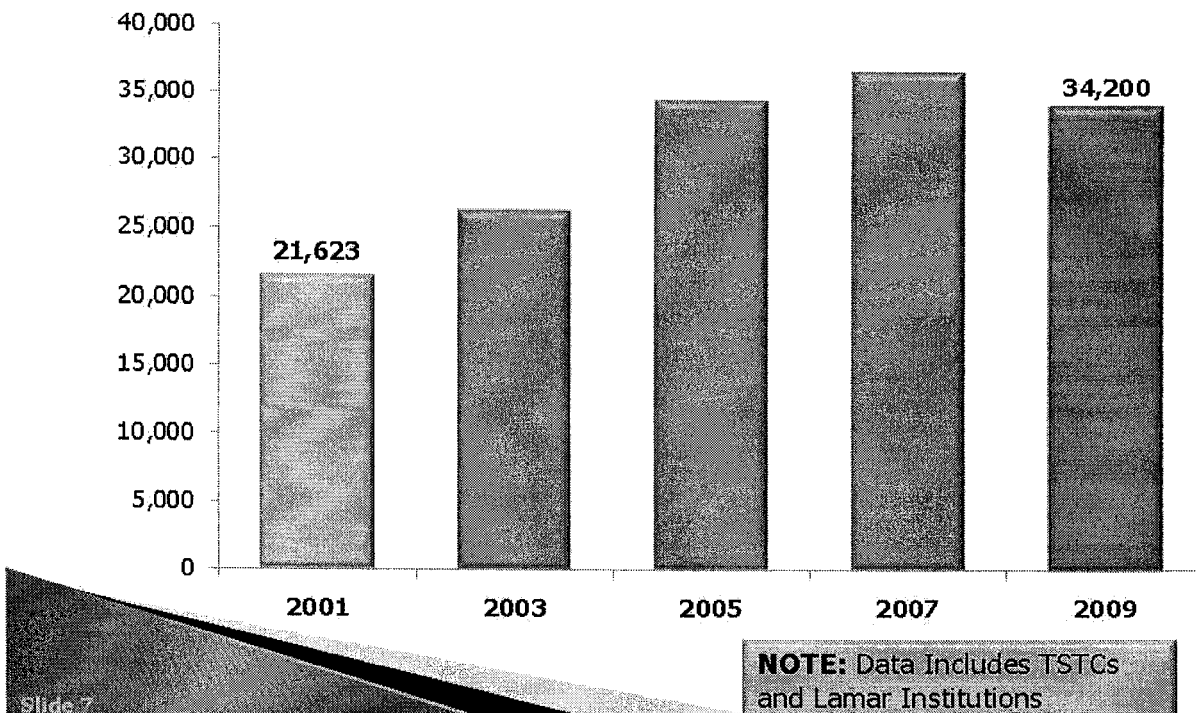


TACC believes that it is essential that two- and four-year institutions do what they do best, and that the institutions are held accountable for communicating and collaborating on all ISD partnerships. This is to ensure the best value in use of limited State dollars for contact hour reimbursement, to minimize confusion among ISDs, and to align the strengths of two- and four-year institutions within their regions and to best address *Closing the Gaps* challenges.

TACC further encourages legislators and business leaders to challenge stereotypes that community college dual credit instruction must be inherently different and of lesser quality than what the four-year institution could provide. There is no data to support such stereotypes of undergraduate freshman/sophomore level instruction – in fact several data sources indicate the opposite.

TACC believes State strategies for *Closing the Gaps* would be better served by focusing on transfer and financial aid strategies, requiring articulation of all like degree programs between two- and four-year institutions, and enhanced major course redesign collaborative activities.

Transfers from 2-year institutions to 4-year institutions have **increased 58%** since 2001



## **Community Colleges and Independent School Districts**

Community colleges, historically, have had the strongest and most varied partnerships with ISDs. These become even MORE important as Texas seeks greater success in *Closing the Gaps*:

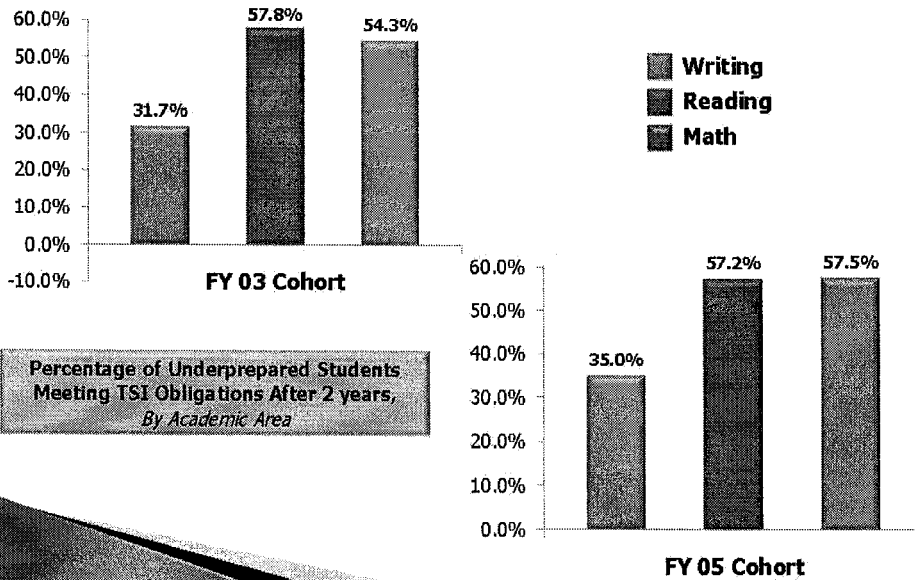
- Community colleges are the State’s best investment in Early College Start initiatives, as State reimbursements to community colleges are significantly LESS than for four-year colleges and universities. Larger numbers of students can be served, at a lower cost, by community colleges providing the majority of Early College Start opportunities;
- Community colleges offer the largest menu of choices for Texas families, including:
  1. **Early College Start opportunities:**
    - Dual Credit
    - Co-Enrollment
    - Tech-Prep Programs in High-Demand, Well Paid Career Fields
  2. **Extensive College and Career Outreach Services**
  3. **Summer Youth and Bridge Programs**
  4. **Vertical Course Alignment**

These are intended to promote greater levels of success in *Closing the Gaps*, and community colleges are the best State investment in creating a “college-going culture” among all P-12 students.

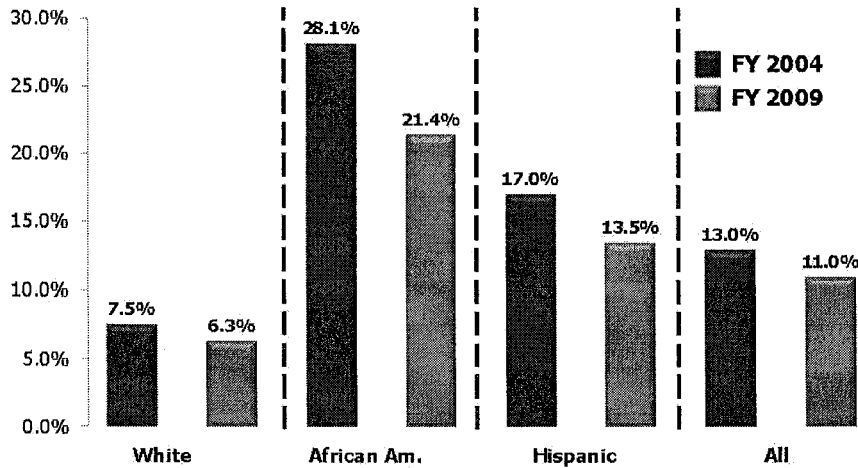
## **Texas Community Colleges Are Leaders in Enhancing Developmental Education Success:**

- Nearly half of all community colleges are Achieving the Dream institutions;
- The State’s Developmental Education Initiative is co-chaired by the THECB and the TACC P-16 Committee Chair;
- Community colleges are best equipped to teach at-risk students, and do so at a lower cost to the State than four-year colleges and universities;
- Emerging research shows many promising practices to enhance the success levels of developmental and adult basic education students. These will require an investment at the State level, and community colleges support incentive funding to allow greater replication of successful practices.

There have been incremental improvements in Dev. Ed. students meeting TSI standards after 2 years



Community College students failing to meet TSI readiness standards in all academic areas has declined



First-Time-In-College, Degree Seeking Students, Direct from HS Not Ready in All Three Areas By Ethnicity, FY 2004 & FY 2009

## **Community Colleges and Distance Learning**

Distance Learning is a wonderful technology, and can address significant barriers such as geographic isolation or limited course availability for many students. It also poses challenges in that often it is not the best way for a student to begin a college level experience, especially high school juniors and seniors. Research has typically shown higher attrition in distance learning (though the gap is narrowing).

TACC believes distance learning is not the preferred option for the majority of high school dual credit students. When appropriate, TACC believes the appropriate delivery of distance learning is through the 50-member Virtual College of Texas, or TxVSN (absent third party private vendors).

### Virtual College of Texas (VCT)

- Statewide Saturation – all 50 community college districts.
- Designed to increase access to higher education and improve student success by sharing eLearning resources among Texas two-year colleges.
- Uses a host-provider model. The host (local) college pays a fee to the provider college, enrolls students, provides student services, and awards course credit; the provider (remote) college provides a faculty member who directs instruction and awards the final course grade.

### Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN)

- Designed to share online courses within the public school system, focused on grades 9-12.
- Dual credit delivery is a secondary effort.
- Texas Education Agency reviews college courses to ensure they meet state curriculum standards.
- May require additional faculty professional development requirements.
- TEA pays \$400 per student to the provider district and \$80 to the district in which the student is enrolled for completion of an online course.

### Stateu.com

- Partnership between Lamar University in Beaumont and UT Arlington to provide distance learning dual credit options for public school students.
- Offers free, online dual credit courses to high school students.
- Provides library services only, and not other student services such as assessment, tutoring, labs, counseling, advising, and career services.
- Markets heavily to school districts across the state; provides freshman and sophomore courses, duplicating efforts already in place by two-year colleges in their respective service areas.
- The stateu.com domain is owned by Higher Education Holdings, a Randy Best corporation.

## **Community Colleges are Highly Interested in Working with the Legislature, THECB, and TEA**

TACC appreciates the effort of publicly-elected legislators to create the best system of public education in the country. Texas has much to be proud of, but also could benefit from greater alignment of public policy strategies to truly “ramp up success” for greater numbers of students. TACC’s fifty community college districts are eager to:

- Explore and implement sound education policy that makes sense for public P-16 partners, and which recognizes the unique strengths of all partners;
- Align public policy and operational practices between TEA and THECB to strengthen *Closing the Gaps* strategies;
- Ensure the best use of limited State dollars.

TACC believes the next legislative session offers a good opportunity to focus on no-cost and low-cost alignment strategies to assist in enhancing *Closing the Gaps* strategies.

TACC appreciates the dedication and work of legislators and public policy advocates for their work on behalf of the State of Texas and thanks you for consideration of the positions and recommendations included in this report.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Academic Course Guide Manual, Lower-Division (ACGM):** The official list of approved courses for general academic transfer that may be offered for state funding by Texas public community and technical colleges.

*Additional ACGM information available:*

<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/aar/undergraduateed/workforceed/acgm.htm>

**Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) -** The Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) pulls together a wide range of information on the performance of students in each school and district in Texas every year. This information is put into the annual AEIS reports, which are available each year in the fall. The performance indicators are:

- Results of Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS\*); by grade, by subject, and by all grades tested;
- Participation in the statewide assessment programs (TAKS/TAKS(Accommodated)/TAKS-M/TAKS-Alt);
- Exit-level TAKS Cumulative Passing Rates;
- Progress of Prior Year TAKS Failers;
- Results of Student Success Initiative;
- Attendance Rates;
- Annual Dropout Rates (grades 7-8, grades 7-12, and grades 9-12);
- Completion Rates (4-year longitudinal);
- College Readiness Indicators;
  - Completion of Advanced / Dual Enrollment Courses;
  - Completion of the Recommended High School Program or Distinguished Achievement Program;
  - Participation and Performance on Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) Examinations;
  - College-Ready Graduates;
  - Texas Success Initiative (TSI) – Higher Education Readiness Component; and
  - Participation and Performance on the College Admissions Tests (SAT and ACT).

Performance on each of these indicators is shown disaggregated by ethnicity, sex, special education, low income status, limited English proficient status (since 2002-03), and beginning in 2003-04, at risk status (district only). The reports also provide extensive information on school and district staff, finances, programs and student demographics.

The accountability rating is visible as well on every AEIS report—however, please note: the AEIS report is not the “accountability report.” For complete accountability information, please see the accountability data sheets available at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/account/>. The AEIS reports also include, when applicable, the list of Gold Performance Acknowledgements (GPAs) earned in the current year as well as a note describing Performance-Based Monitoring (PBM) Special Education Monitoring Results Status if pertinent to the specific district or campus.

*Additional information on AEIS available at:*

<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/aeis/about.aeis.html>

**Advanced Placement (AP):** Provided by the College Board since 1955, the Advanced Placement program offers college-level courses at high schools across the United States, develops and maintains guidelines for various AP courses, supports high school teachers who teach AP courses, and provides achievement exams for students to demonstrate college-level competency. These activities are supported by AP exam fees, paid by students and/or school districts. The 2009 AP exam fee was \$86.

*Additional Advanced Placement program information available at:*

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/about.html>

**Co-Enrollment:** College courses successfully completed by high school students that may be placed on the transcript as college credit, but will not satisfy high school graduation requirements.

**College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS):** The 79th Texas Legislature, Third Called Special Session, passed House Bill 1, the “Advancement of College Readiness in Curriculum.” Section 28.008 of the Texas Education Code seeks to increase the number of students who are college and career ready when they graduate high school. The legislation required the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to establish Vertical Teams (VTs) to develop College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) in the areas of English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. These standards specify what students must know and be able to do to succeed in entry-level courses at post-secondary institutions in Texas.

*Additional CCRS information available at:*

<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=EADF962E-0E3E-DA80-BAAD2496062F3CD8>

**College Level Examination Program (CLEP):** A nationally recognized program that allows students to demonstrate by examination that they have acquired college-level mastery of course content in 33 different subject areas.

*Additional CLEP information available at:*

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/clep/about.html?affiliateId=rdr&bannerId=clep>

**Dual Credit:** College courses successfully completed by high school students that may be used to satisfy high school graduation requirements.

*Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Rules regarding Dual Credit available at:*

[http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac\\_view=5&ti=19&pt=1&ch=4&sch=D&rl=Y](http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=5&ti=19&pt=1&ch=4&sch=D&rl=Y)

**Early College Start (ECS):** An umbrella term encompassing different ways that high school students can earn free or low-cost college credits, to include dual credit, co-enrollment, and tech prep.

*Additional Early College Start Program information available at*

<http://www.austincc.edu/ecs/>

**Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC):** A 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded by Dr. David Conley whose mission “is to improve educational policy and practices in ways that lead to more productive education results for all students and particularly for students historically underserved by public schools” ([www.epiconline.org](http://www.epiconline.org)). On its website, EPIC describes itself as conducting “a range of policy-related research studies in support of this goal. A key distinguishing feature of EPIC is its pioneering use of state-of-the-art, criterion-based, standards-referenced course and document analysis techniques and methods. Currently, EPIC's focus is on “creating a climate of change that supports dramatically improved college readiness for more U.S high school students.” The THECB has a contract with EPIC lasting through 2010 to implement and develop the Texas’ College and Career Readiness Initiative, including College and Career Readiness Standards designed to align high school exit standards with college entrance standards.

*Additional EPIC information available at:* [www.epiconline.org](http://www.epiconline.org)



**Epic Learning System:** An organization delivering online courses to high school students, in partnership with Florida Virtual School and the Virtual School Network (not the same as the Texas Virtual School Network).

*Additional Epic Learning System information available at:*

<http://www.virtualschoolnetwork.com/default.asp>

**Gold Performance Acknowledgment Standards:** The Gold Performance Acknowledgment (GPA) system acknowledges school districts and campuses for high performance on indicators other than those used to determine accountability ratings. These indicators are in statute (*Texas Education Code*) or determined by the Commissioner of Education. Acknowledgment is given for high performance on:

- Advanced Course/Dual Enrollment Completion
- Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate Results
- Attendance Rate
- College-Ready Graduates
- Commended Performance: Reading/English Language Arts
- Commended Performance: Mathematics
- Commended Performance: Writing
- Commended Performance: Science
- Commended Performance: Social Studies
- Comparable Improvement: Reading/English Language Arts
- Comparable Improvement: Mathematics
- Recommended High School Program/Distinguished Achievement Program
- SAT/ACT Results (College Admissions Tests)
- Texas Success Initiative – Higher Education Readiness Component: English Language Arts
- Texas Success Initiative – Higher Education Readiness Component: Mathematics

*Additional Gold Performance Acknowledgement Standards information available at:*

<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=EADF962E-0E3E-DA80-BAAD2496062F3CD8>

**Momentum Points:** According to the THECB, Momentum Points will be a method of moving towards an outcomes-based funding formula that supports student success and identifies measurements that recognize progression of students towards success. Points may be based on milestones students achieve, such as the following:

- Became college ready (met TSI standards in all three areas)
- Completed the first college-level math course
- Completed the first 15 hours

- Completed the first 30 hours
- Earned a degree or certificate
- Transferred after completing 30 hours

The total number of points for all Texas institutions of higher education will be divided into the funding available to derive a dollar-per-point amount. The number of points for each institution, multiplied by the dollar-per-point, provides the amount of Momentum Point funding for each institution.

*Additional Momentum Points information available at:*

<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/download.cfm?downloadfile=218CCAAF-F45B-BB31-B77E9AF2142F4C53&typename=dmFile&fieldname=filename>

**P-16 College Readiness and Success Strategic Plan Update:** A report mandated by HB1 to update the College Readiness and Success Strategic Action Plan, which is to be filed no later than December 1 of every even-numbered year.

*The December, 2008 Update is available at:*

<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/Reports/PDF/1678.PDF?CFID=1483470&CFTOKEN=91976372>

**Reference Course Profiles:** A part of the Texas College Readiness Project (TCRP) in which Texas college courses are identified to exemplify the content and rigor of entry-level college courses. First, an alignment analysis is conducted to compare the College Readiness Standards to existing course instructional priorities and practices in entry-level courses at all institutions of higher education in Texas. The results identify the college courses most aligned with the College Readiness Standards. Additional course materials, including syllabi, assignments, and student work samples are collected to identify the elements of entry-level college “reference” courses.

*Additional Reference Course Profiles information available at:*

[www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=E5D79D1C-CA78-F8DE-A435C2F9BBF EA568](http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=E5D79D1C-CA78-F8DE-A435C2F9BBF EA568)

**Stateu.com:** A partnership between Lamar University in Beaumont and the University of Texas at Arlington to provide online courses and degrees, including courses for which public high school and charter school students may earn dual credits.

*Additional Stateu.com information available at:* <http://www.stateu.com/>

**Tech Prep:** A career development system that incorporates academic and career-related courses articulated between the high school and college or university. High school Tech Prep courses may be earned as “credit-in-escrow” and placed on the transcript for college credit after completing one college credit course.

*Additional Capital Area College Tech Prep Consortium information is available at:*  
<http://www.austincc.edu/Catpc/>

**Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN):** *The Texas Virtual School Network provides online courses to supplement the instructional programs of public school districts and open enrollment charter schools, and serves as a clearinghouse for online course and faculty approval.*

*Additional regarding the TxVSN information available at:*  
<http://www.txvsn.org/default.aspx>

**The Texas Network for Teaching Excellence in Career and Technical Education (THE Network)** A Perkins-funded project to provide high-quality training and development in the form of free, online professional development resources across a wide range of topics for career and technical educators, administrators, and counselors.

*Additional THE Network information available at:* <http://www.txpod.org/>

**Virtual College of Texas:** A collaborative of Texas community and technical colleges in which students may register at their local colleges to take credit and non-credit distance learning courses from other colleges throughout Texas.

*Additional Virtual College of Texas information at:* <http://www.vct.org/>

**Virtual School Network:** An organization delivering online courses to high school students, in partnership with Florida Virtual School and Epic Learning System (not the same as the Texas Virtual School Network).

*Additional Virtual School Network Information available at:*  
<http://www.virtualschoolnetwork.com>

**Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM):** A web-based inventory of current workforce education courses available for use by public, two-year colleges.

*Additional WECM information available at:* <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/aar/undergraduateed/workforceed/wecm/>