

**State P-16 Council Meeting  
Wednesday, November 10, 2010  
Minutes**

The twenty-ninth meeting of the State P-16 Council, authorized by statute, was held at the Travis State Office Building, Room 1-104, on Wednesday, November 10, 2010.

Statutory members present: Robert Scott (chair), Commissioner, Texas Education Agency (TEA); Raymund Paredes (co-chair), Commissioner, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB); and Larry Temple, Executive Director, Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). Non statutory members present: Gregory Williams, President, Odessa College; Melody Johnson, Superintendent, Fort Worth ISD; and Phyllis Snodgrass, Vice President of Chamber Relations, Texas Association of Business.

Staff designees present: Kim Wedel, Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) represented council member Terrell Murphy.

**AGENDA ITEMS ONE AND TWO**

**Call to Order and Opening Remarks**

Council chair Robert Scott called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. In opening remarks, he announced that Council member Phyllis Snodgrass had recently acquired a new position as vice president for the Texas Association of Business. Ms. Snodgrass stated that she now represents chambers of commerce across the state and would be facilitating efforts to get chambers and business communities more involved in education. She expressed her enthusiasm for continuing to serve on the Council in her new capacity. Mr. Scott congratulated Ms. Snodgrass and acknowledged the importance of receiving a business perspective on education issues. Ms. Snodgrass agreed and expressed her interest in bringing Mr. Scott to the association's state conference in 2011.

It was also announced that Council member Murphy would soon be retiring from the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services.

**AGENDA ITEM THREE**

**Adoption of Minutes**

Commissioner Scott laid out minutes from the May 27, 2010 and August 11, 2010 quarterly Council meetings and asked for a motion to adopt. A motion was made and seconded to adopt the May 27<sup>th</sup> minutes. The minutes were unanimously adopted. A motion was then made and seconded to adopt the August 11<sup>th</sup> minutes. The minutes were unanimously adopted.

**AGENDA ITEM FOUR**

**Agency and Council Member Updates: P-16 Legislative Priorities**

No member updates were provided.

**AGENDA ITEM FIVE**

**P-16 College Readiness and Success Strategic Action Plan Report Highlights and Council Approval**

Jan Lindsey (TEA), Patricia Hicks (TEA) and Judy Loreda (THECB) were called by the chair to provide highlights on a report drafted by joint TEA and THECB staff on progress made in implementing the P-16 College Readiness and Success Strategic Action Plan (plan). The plan focuses on coordination between public education, higher education, and the workforce to improve college and career readiness and success for all Texas students. A legislative update is required by December 1<sup>st</sup> of each even-numbered year.

The following activities under the plan's eight objectives were highlighted:

- **Objective 1: Define standards and expectations for college readiness**
  - SBOE’s incorporation of Texas College and Career Readiness Standards into the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills
  - Creation of ProjectShare, an online professional development tool that blends online and face-to-face training
  - Curriculum alignment projects between postsecondary education and public education
- **Objective 2: Align exit-level assessments of public education with expectations of higher education and the skilled workforce**
  - Collaboration between TEA and THECB on implementation of end-of-course assessments
- **Objective 3: Infuse prekindergarten, elementary, middle and high school curricula with appropriate rigor**
  - Implementation of the School Readiness Certification System and Pre-Kindergarten Early Start Grant Program
  - Implementation of the Algebra Readiness Grant Program
  - Continuation of the Texas Science, Technology and Math Initiative and Early College High School Initiative (ECHS), and Dropout Recovery Program
- **Objective 4: Establish sound accountability measures for college readiness and for persistence and timely graduation in higher education**
  - Use of the College Ready Graduate Indicator in the public education accountability system
- **Objective 5: Create a college-going culture in every public school in Texas**
  - Continuation of programs focused on creating a college-going culture, including GEAR UP and ECHS
  - Implementation of the College Readiness Initiative for Middle School Students to prepare middle school students for success on Algebra I and English I end-of-course exams in high schools
- **Objective 6: Prepare education professionals in public and higher education in meeting college readiness and skilled workforce expectations and standards**
  - Coordination between TEA’s Curriculum and Educator Standards Divisions to revise teacher certification exams for new teachers and to inform programs on how to prepare pre-service teachers to teach critical college readiness skills
  - Implementation of THECB’s Faculty Collaboratives to address the infusion of college and career standards in teacher preparation programs
- **Objective 7: Coordinate college readiness and success plan objectives with strategies included in the *Closing the Gaps Plan***
  - THECB’s Accelerated Action Plan for closing higher education gaps by 2015
- **Objective 8: Provide greater access to student academic preparation programs in all public schools**
  - Innovative uses of funding resources such as High School Allotment and participation in the Texas Virtual School Network to allow middle and high school students to have greater access to advanced academics

The report described future directions of the plan, including implementation of end-of-course exams, a new Texas Student Data System, continued research and improvements in dual credit offerings, and continuation of successful college readiness initiatives.

Mr. Scott applauded efforts described in the report, but noted that the work would continue to evolve due to anticipated changes such as the launch of a new Texas Student Data System. At the conclusion of remarks made by Mr. Scott and other council members, a motion was made and seconded to adopt the report. The report was unanimously adopted for submission to the Governor’s Office and the Texas Legislature.

## **AGENDA ITEM SIX**

### **Program Highlights on District-wide Initiatives Focused on Increasing College and Career**

#### **Readiness**

Mr. Scott recognized Edward Blaha, Superintendent of Schools, Hidalgo ISD and Marilu Navarro, Principal of Hidalgo Early College High School, to describe efforts focused on college attainment for all students in the district.

Mr. Blaha and Ms. Navarro provided an overview of Hidalgo ISD's district-wide Early College High School (HECHS) program, Career Pathways Program, parental academies, summer educator internships, early childhood education, dual language program, and 21<sup>st</sup> Century program. HECHS was established, in Spring 2005 with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The HECHS model provides counseling services based on selected career pathways and a three-tiered learning model that allows students to graduate with 60 hours of college credit. HECHS has become a successful early college high school model with the help of education partners including, but not limited to, the University of Texas – Pan American, ESC Region One, Texas High School Project, Communities Foundation of Texas and Jobs for the Future. Mr. Blaha summarized the district's goals to: 1) connect every student to postsecondary education prior to graduation from high school; 2) strengthen partnerships; improve student performance through high quality instruction; and 3) ensure economic prosperity.

Mr. Temple suggested that HECHS counselors utilize TWC's *Reality Check* web resources in examining career pathways. Dr. Paredes applauded college readiness efforts in Hidalgo ISD, but questioned emphasis placed on career paths. Mr. Blaha noted that the intent of the program is not to lock students into career paths too early, but to encourage exploration. Mr. Scott concurred with concerns expressed by Dr. Paredes and stressed the importance of allowing flexibility. Dr. Paredes also stressed the need for hard data that shows the rigor of the coursework being taken for college credit and the ability to transfer those credits to universities. In response to Dr. Paredes' comments, Council member Melody Johnson expressed a desire for school districts to receive standardization from universities. Council Member Gregory Williams said that he has seen strong evidence that students exposed to college courses in high school exhibit higher levels of success at the community college level. He also noted the financial benefit of students taking advantage of college courses prior to graduating high school.

## **AGENDA ITEM SEVEN**

### **Update on ConnectEDU Online College Preparation Pilot Program**

Mr. Scott called for Jane Swift, ConnectEDU's Sr. Vice President for Government Strategy and Solutions, to provide an update on implementation of the Online College Preparation Pilot Program and provide a live demonstration of the online tool. Ms. Swift summarized the online tool as follows:

- **Comprehensive web portal** to assist students, parents and counselors through successful college and career transitions:
  - **Driven by student data** (Web portal integrates with Student Information Systems)
  - **Unifies Texas-specific content** from multiple state online resources, including *AchieveTexas*, *CollegeforAllTexans.com* and *OwnYourOwnFuture.com*
- **Drives critical task completion** across the college and career planning spectrum
- **College Access Population** (as defined by TEA selection criteria, including "At Risk" student population, TAKS scores and HB 400 classification)
  - **40 high schools across all 20 ESC regions** (nearly 35,000 students)
- **Training:** In-person "Getting Started" trainings conducted at eight regional Education Service Centers (August -September 2010):
- **Data Loading:** 39 of 40 high schools have loaded data for 33,000 student accounts
- **Success Plans:** Commitment to implement grade-specific, time-dependent planning activities

Mr. Scott asked whether ConnectEDU's system would have the capacity to communicate with other systems containing student portfolios. He also asked whether the system would be able to pre-populate student data from existing systems, including the Texas Student Data System that is currently being

developed. Ms. Swift said that the system will be able to communicate with other systems and pre-populate student data necessary to apply for financial aid and college admissions.

Council member Johnson asked what might be expected beyond the 40 schools currently participating in the pilot. Mr. Scott responded that continuation would be a function of legislative appropriations; therefore, results stemming from the pilot would have to be evaluated.

## **AGENDA ITEM EIGHT**

### **Update On College Access Challenge Grant**

Dr. Paredes assumed presiding chair responsibilities and called Chris Alvarado, from THECB, forward to provide an update on the College Access Challenge Grant (CACG). Mr. Alvarado described CACG as a federally-funded formula grant based on the number of low-income individuals in a certain student population co-hort. The initial two-year award made in 2008 was \$6 million a year. Use of funds included:

- **College Readiness Awareness Campaign**
  - Milkshake Media selected as vendor
  - Grassroots “movement”- Generation Texas
- **Counselor Professional Development**
  - Modules developed by Texas Counseling Association (TCA)
  - All 20 Education Service Centers (ESCs) conducted training across the state
- **College Connection & 2+2+2 Programs**
  - Replication and expansion of Austin Community College (ACC )model of pre-college and transfer services
- **Community Partnerships**
  - Community-based outreach (parent workshops, FAFSA workshops, satellite GO Centers, or research-based efforts)
- **Need-based Grants**
  - \$1,500 grants to Pell-eligible students for fall 2010

Results from the 2008 grant included:

- Total students served: 194,825
- Total community college students receiving transfer assistance: 6,721
- Total counselors trained: 1,884
- Total grants awarded: 965

A second grant in the amount \$11.8 million was awarded in 2010. Use of funds include:

- **Continuation of Generation Texas (Gen TX) awareness campaign: \$2,000,000**
- **Texas College Advising Corps: \$1,500,000** (to be discussed during next presentation)
- **Comprehensive Student Services: \$1,220,000**
  - Partnership with Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) to allow for expansion of existing pilot project that prepares economically disadvantaged Hispanic and African American student to be successful at the college level. Expands project from 11 to 15 campuses in FY2011
  - Institutions of higher education with high Hispanic and African American enrollments will compete for grants to support “early alert” systems tied to interventions (such as tutoring) to boost student success
- **Web Portal Enhancement: \$820,000**
  - Expansion of online content to include training in the “soft skills” needed for college and to address the needs of additional “non-traditional” sectors
  - Web-based financial literacy training
  - Development of several applications to be used on portable devices such as the iPhone/iPad and Google Android device

- **Adult Degree Completion: \$500,000**
  - Development of an online transfer mapping system to assist and facilitate re-entry for returning students to complete a degree or certificate.
  - Selection of six to eight institutions to participate in implementation of online transfer mapping system during a first-year pilot
- **Financial Aid: \$4,000,000**
  - Grant awards to students who have completed at least 60 hours towards a degree.
  - One-half of the total awards will go to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) students.
  - Approximately, 2000 grants in the amount of \$2,000
- **Online College Access Training: \$500,000**
  - In partnership with TEA, a college access component for counselors will be added to Project Share
- **External Evaluation of CACG Program: \$250,000**
- **Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) : \$20,000**
  - Texas’ participation in a cooperative effort among Western states to share best practices and receive technical assistance and guidance related to college access and success
- **College Access and Success Stakeholder Advisory Council (CASSAC)**
  - Quarterly meetings to ensure that those implementing each component of the plan are exploiting all opportunities to complement, enhance and align programs.

## **AGENDA ITEM NINE**

### **Introduction of College Advising Corps Program**

Dr. Paredes recognized Connie Freeman from The University of Texas at Austin’s Institute of Public School Initiatives (IPSI), Cynthia McCarty and Allison Najero from Jefferson High School in San Antonio, to describe the new Texas College Advising Corps Program. Through a nationwide consortium of colleges and universities, the Advising Corps aims to increase the number of low-income, first-generation, and under-represented students entering and completing higher education. In partnership with IPSI and the National College Advising Corps, recent college graduates in Texas will be recruited, trained, and placed as full-time “near peer” advisers in high schools with low college-going rates. The target goal of the program is 120 high schools. National cross-site evaluation is part of the model. Ms. Freeman provided the following information about the program:

#### **Model**

- Improves college advising by leveraging higher education’s graduates and resources
- Talented recent graduates become college advisers for 1 or 2 years
- Advisors are employed, trained and supervised by universities
- Works full-time in high schools and community colleges
- Available to every community that wants them and to every student who needs them
- Advocates for students in the preparation and selection process
- Accountable to universities and the schools
- Increases the number of disadvantaged students entering higher education
- Increases the number of disadvantaged students transferring and completing higher education

#### **Key University Activities**

- Recruitment
- Selection
- Training
- Placements
- Bus Tour

- Campus and community outreach and PR
- Fundraising
- Management
- Evaluation

#### **Data Collection/Evaluation**

- Comprehensive evaluation conducted by Dr. Eric Bettinger of Stanford University in collaboration with the THECB and TCAC
- Mixed methods evaluation
  - Tracking college enrollment through National Student Clearinghouse
  - Random school selection with controls
  - Site visits
  - Surveys
- Connect EDU – Tracks adviser activities

#### **Cost Benefit**

Based on research conducted by the non-profit consulting group Bridgespan, the Advising Corps is a highly cost-effective model: \$45 (Nationally)/\$15-\$26 (Texas)

There were 15 Texas advisers in 2010. Results of the first six weeks of operation in Texas, included:

- ~5700 seniors enrolled in 15 schools
- Direct service on college applications to ~70% of these seniors
- Across the schools *ApplyTexas* applications increased by 57% from the same time in 2009

After Ms. Freeman’s overview, Ms. Najero and Ms. McCarty provided college advisor and high school counselor perspectives on the benefits of the program.

#### **AGENDA ITEM TEN**

##### **Update on Regional P-16 Council Initiatives Funded by THECB**

Dr. Paredes recognized Chris Alvarado from THECB to provide an overview of Regional P-16 Council Initiatives. Mr. Alvarado reported that Regional P-16 Councils:

- Serve as change agents that create a college-going culture and well-educated communities in Texas
- Advance regional efforts to target, design and implement systemic actions to establish college-going habits and traditions, particularly to increase college participation and completion rates; improve parental outreach; and increase awareness of College and Career Readiness Standards
- Engage systems, institutions, civic and business leaders and build region-wide ownership.

A total of 19 Regional P-16 Councils received recognized status under previous grant funding. Additional funding awarded in FY 2011 will assist new P-16 councils in achieving recognized status and aid the Coordinating Board in attaining its *Closing the Gaps by 2015* goals in participation and success.

Mr. Alvarado provided the following additional information regarding Regional P-16 Council initiatives:

#### **2011 grantees are required to have**

- Organizational Plan
- Structure
- Assessment of Regional Education Needs
- Specific P-16 Initiatives Agenda
- Data Collection

**Additional Recognized P-16 Council funding awarded to**

- The University of Texas at El Paso - \$25,000
- Citizens for Educational Excellence (Corpus Christi) - \$25,000
- University of North Texas-Dallas - \$24,999.44
- Texas State Technical College Marshall - \$25,000
- University of Houston-Downtown - \$24,600
- University of Texas at Tyler - \$25,000

**Regional P-16 College and Career Readiness Marketing Projects**

The purpose of the marketing projects is to provide support for capacity building activities of recognized P-16 Regional Councils that will assist them in inventorying regional stakeholders and resources, and in developing a regionally appropriate plan to maximize the impact of the Coordinating Board's Generation TX efforts in their respective regions.

**Ongoing Professional Development**

- Bring P-16 Regional Council teams of local secondary, post-secondary, and community and business partners together to assist in *Closing the Gaps by 2015*.
- Share P-16 initiatives and P-16 Councils' best practices
- Professional Development Institutes held at the Doubletree Hotel North in Austin
  - October 6, 2010
  - *February 2, 2011*
  - *June 15, 2011*

**AGENDA ITEM ELEVEN****Adjournment**

Prior to adjourning, Dr. Paredes announced that presiding chairmanship of the Council will transfer back to him in 2011. He expected to contact individual council members about plans for the coming year. Council members also wished Council member Terrell Murphy well in his pending retirement.

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.