

**State P-16 Council Meeting
Wednesday, September 30, 2009
Minutes**

The twenty-fourth meeting of the State P-16 Council, authorized by statute, was held at the Stephen F. Austin Building, Room 1-170, on September 30, 2009. 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). Phyllis Snodgrass, President, San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce was also present.

Statutory Members Absent: Terrell Murphy, Commissioner, Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services. Melody Johnson, Superintendent, Fort Worth ISD and Gregory Williams, President, Odessa College were also absent.

AGENDA ITEM ONE

Call to Order

Robert Scott called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM TWO

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Mr. Scott and Dr. Raymund Paredes welcomed attendees and provided opening remarks regarding their interest in having Council members jointly address the need for improving the quality of teacher education, ensuring that the rigor of dual credit and career and technical education courses is high and consistent, and effectively evaluating programs and policies between partner agencies.

AGENDA ITEM THREE

Adoption of Minutes

Mr. Scott laid out the minutes from the June 17, 2009 Council meeting and asked for a motion to adopt. A motion was made and seconded. The minutes were unanimously adopted.

AGENDA ITEM FOUR

Agency and Council Member Updates

Larry Temple reported that, from a Stimulus funding perspective, the TWC was able to close out its Summer Youth Program with approximately 24,000 youth obtaining employment across the state. Mr. Temple also reported that a meeting of workforce development boards and community college partners was held in Austin prior to the P-16 Council meeting to kick off this biennium's Skills Development Program. The program provides incumbent worker training to keep Texas employers competitive globally and to provide training as incentives for companies that are looking to expand or relocate to Texas. The program's funding has risen from \$50 million to \$90 million.

Mr. Scott reported on a recent *Education Week* article that highlighted Texas as a leader in terms of aligning its standards to college readiness and having all of the components of a college readiness curriculum in place. He noted that the work the state has done on college readiness standards is going to be very fruitful and shared the news that the state has already seen positive trends in terms of students graduating college-ready and showing increases in the percentage of students who are scoring better on AP exams. African American students posted an increase of 17.3% and Hispanic students posted a 16% increase in scoring 3 or better on AP exams last year.

Mr. Scott also reported that Texas was labeled as "at-risk" for spending its Stimulus dollars. He stated that although he was unable to find anything to validate that label during audit visits with the General

Accounting Office (GAO), it was determined that Texas would receive extra technical assistance due to the sheer size of the state. Mr. Scott said he feels very strongly that accounting and monitoring policies and procedures at the agency will ensure that Texas spends Stimulus money very effectively.

AGENDA ITEM FIVE

Presentation on THECB College Readiness Marketing Campaign

At the request of the THECB, the chair announced that the presentation on the College Readiness Marketing Campaign would be made at a future Council meeting.

AGENDA ITEM SIX

Update on American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) State Education Initiatives

Jerel Booker, Associate Commissioner for Educator Quality and Standards at TEA, provided an update on work relating to the Commissioner of Education's Task Force on Stimulus and Stabilization. He reiterated comments made by Mr. Scott regarding issues resulting from the GOA audit and noted that other agencies, including THECB, were grappling with similar issues.

Mr. Booker reported that Texas received ARRA education-focused funds for Title I, IDEA and State Fiscal Stabilization Funds. The **Stimulus** portion of ARRA funds received totaled \$2.2 billion. The funding break-out is as follows:

- Title I Part A (\$944 million)
- School Improvement Grants (\$285 million)
- Title II Part B – Educational Technology (\$59 million)
- Title VII McKinley-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (\$3 million)
- IDEA Part B – Grants to the States (\$945 million)
- Part B - Preschool Grants (\$24 million)

The **Stabilization** portion of ARRA funds received totaled \$3.6 billion. The funding break-out is as follows:

- \$3.2 million appropriated through Article 12 of the Appropriations Act for K-12
- \$723 million through Article 12 was designated as Government Services Funds. THECB was the primary recipient (\$361 million for textbooks/\$362 million to be split between higher education institutions/\$1 - \$2 million for an Early College High School in Houston)

TEA has received approximately 1100 applications for Title I funds and, to date, the agency has issued 50% of the Notice of Grant Awards (NOGAs). Approximately 615 applications were received for IDEA grants and 90% of the NOGAs have been issued. Funds were made available for Stabilization activities beginning September 1, 2009. Approximately 900 applications have been received from local education agencies (LEAs) and approximately 100 NOGAs have been issued, with more to follow. Mr. Booker stated that there are numerous activities that LEAs can do with this money and they are encouraged to address P-20 coordination for the different reforms under the ARRA. In addition, the commissioner of education has implemented a process called *Texas Steps Up*. It provides incentives for districts to receive additional benefits for spending funds.

Dr. Paredes reiterated comments made by Mr. Booker and noted that the state would do everything it could to get the money out of the door as quickly as possible, pending clarity of federal guidelines and procedures relating to spending, monitoring and reporting. Mr. Scott mentioned the possibility of extra Stimulus funding being made available for community colleges, pre-K and school facilities construction, but it is dependent on action taken on a student financial aid bill that is currently pending in Congress. He

asked Council members to start thinking of ways they might coordinate plans in the future if this money becomes available.

AGENDA ITEM SEVEN

Presentation on P-16 Regional Collaborative to Support Districts in the Use of ARRA Funds

Susan Dawson, President and Executive Director, E³ Alliance, presented information on a regional collaborative that she described as a “case study” for Mr. Booker’s presentation. The premise behind the Central Texas Education Stimulus Collaborative (Collaborative) is to use Stimulus money in a manner that will have a greater impact on student achievement while achieving scale based on collaboration and innovation. The Collaborative has taken advantage of three concurrent opportunities: 1) availability of federal Stimulus funds; 2) a proven collaboration platform through E3 Alliance’s *Blueprint for Educational Change*; and 3) private foundation funds to extend Stimulus resources for evidence-based programs.

Since May, the Collaborative has accomplished the following:

- Memoranda of Understandings (MOUs) signed with nine Central Texas traditional school districts and two charter schools, six foundation partners and E3 Alliance
- Secured \$115,000 from private foundations to pay for technical assistance; hired contractor
- Completion of baseline needs assessment for all districts
- Development of Stimulus “global picture”
- Working with state and districts on Race to the Top and Texas Steps Up requirements
- Development of common metrics
- Assessment of multiple grant opportunities

Ms. Dawson highlighted the Target Tech in Texas (T3) Grant as one example of the grant opportunities that the Collaborative has supported districts in pursuing. The \$1million grant, awarded in September 2009 to five Central Texas districts and two charter schools, focuses on the application of technology in classrooms to transition ELL students into middle school successfully. Ms. Dawson provided the following suggestions for what other regional councils and the state can do to build scale and use innovation.

Regions can:

- Build collaborative infrastructures through P-16 councils or similar entities;
- Support common regional metrics; and
- Position themselves for upcoming opportunities such as the Teacher Incentive Funds and Investing in Innovation (I3) grants that be released soon.

State and federal governments can structure all investments to incent collaboration and scale, by:

- Increasing grant award caps for LEA collaboratives;
- Awarding priority points for collaboratives, including additional points for those that include charters and districts and that can provide common regional metrics; and
- Ensuring flexibility in eligibility criteria so lower-performing districts are not precluded from partnering with higher-performing districts.

Dr. Paredes asked Ms. Dawson how much collaboration and conversation is taking place in the state between regional and local P-16 councils, and how effective is the State P-16 Council in promoting the identification of successful local P-16 councils and encouraging them to share their successes with other councils around the state. Ms. Dawson said that, while things are improving, it is very inconsistent across the state because of geographical differences and the various maturity levels of councils. Ms. Dawson added that the quarterly meetings hosted by THECB have contributed to improvements in the sharing of

best practices and development of common metrics. Dr. Paredes asked for suggestions on how to promote more cooperation among the P-16 councils. Ms. Dawson agreed to think about it, but cautioned the State not to become too prescriptive in what a local or regional council should look like or be focused on, given the diverse needs of different parts of the state.

Mr. Scott commented that philanthropic involvement will be critical while going through the *Race to the Top* application. He said it will be important to know that the strategies the state adopts to address the assurances we are giving to the Federal government are strategies that the philanthropic community can agree with and invest in. He also said before the application is finalized, he would like to convene many state and national benefactors and partners to make sure that our ideas are consistent.

AGENDA ITEM EIGHT

Update on Educator Quality Initiatives

Susan Barnes, Senior Director Educator Quality, THECB, announced that over the summer THECB had looked at new ways of approving degrees to remove some of the bureaucratic requirements. This includes educator preparation programs. As a result, they will be developing a system for program and degree review. Toward that end, THECB and TEA staff recently met to discuss new data gathering. Updates on the following programs were then provided:

- There are 14 **MST Academies** currently operating. Additional funding has been approved and RFP to be announced in 2010. Future focus will be placed on certifying pre-service teachers. Public IHEs will be actively recruited in parts of the state that have not been a part of the program in the past.
- The **CCRI Faculty Collaboratives** are an active community of faculty organized around the four college and college readiness content standards. Goals of the collaborative include the dissemination of general and content area college and career readiness standards (CCRS) information through symposia and workshops; sharing of new research and focused resources on the implementation of CCRS in specific content areas; professional development: opportunities for the faculty community; and provision of leadership opportunities in CCRS via a virtual community. Each of four IHEs lead a collaborative, their work and communication in the following subject areas: Mathematics (Texas State, EPIC Center); English/Language Arts (University of Texas at Austin, Meadows Center); Science (Texas A&M Corpus Christi); and Social Studies (University of Texas at Arlington). In 2009, Faculty Collaborative Symposia provided information and facilitated opportunities for collaborative discussions of the implications of the content and cross-curricular standards for faculty who teach in the teacher preparation programs as well as faculty in the various content areas. Evaluation data has begun to be collected. Similar symposia are planned for community college faculty.
- The **Educator Preparation Demonstration Sites** project is based on a conceptual model for the future establishment of networks of cooperating P-16 education organizations that will support enhanced teacher preparation programs at IHEs. The demonstration site network will serve as an ongoing mechanism to bridge educator preparation theory and practice in a manner that allows the thoughtful demonstration of teaching in action, particularly to answer the need for current and future teachers to be prepared to deliver the content and teach the thinking skills embodied in the CCRS. It is envisioned that in time, multiple demonstration sites be established across the state for a more powerful impact. The program will involve higher education faculty as well as public education administrators and teachers for the benefit of pre-service and in-service teacher education, as well as high school students. The Education Research Center at Texas A&M has been awarded a grant to facilitate this work.

- The **Teacher Quality Grants Program** is a federally funded effort providing grants to higher education institutions to promote improved instruction in mathematics and science for Texas school children by providing professional development for their teachers. It involves a competitive review process with the most highly ranked and recommended projects being selected for funding. The RFP focuses in the areas of greatest need for teacher professional development in the State of Texas. The application process for the 2009-2011 grant period is closed. *Information* on the application process for the 2011-2013 grant period will be available in Fall 2010.

Following Dr. Barnes' presentation, a discussion was held on teacher quality and educator preparation programs. Comments were made on the various teacher training programs, including traditional teacher education programs at universities, alternative certification programs, and online programs. During the discussion, Dr. Barnes addressed how some programs have been able to balance pedagogy versus content. Dr. Paredes expressed concern regarding the balance between subject matter mastery and classroom skills. Mr. Scott suggested that the Council have a more in depth discussion about the different types of educator preparation programs being offered. He stated that this would give them an opportunity, from a leadership perspective, to identify strengths and weaknesses in programs that may encourage movement toward making improvements.

AGENDA ITEM NINE

Update on College and Career Readiness Regional Meetings and Initiatives

Kristen Kramer, Senior Program Director for College and Career Readiness at THECB, and Joseph Kulhanek, Director, College and Career Readiness Standards Program at TEA provided an update on a series of College and Career Readiness Regional Round-Ups that are being hosted by THECB in partnership with TEA across the state. The purpose of the Round-Ups is to: 1) review the college and career readiness accountability measures that are newly mandated in House Bill 3 (81st Legislature); 2) offer guidance for developing secondary/postsecondary partnerships; and 3) discuss vertical alignment methodologies.

Dr. Kramer said that a joint letter of invitation from Mr. Scott and Dr. Paredes has been instrumental in attracting large numbers of participants to the Round-ups. Participants have represented regional P-16 councils, K-12, and higher education, and workforce. So far, there appears to be a great interest in data and increased evidence of vertical alignments taking place at the local level. Dr. Kulhanek reported that the statewide initiative has been a very positive endeavor and has encouraged collaboration and information sharing. Common questions being asked around the state have related to: 1) the need for collaboration between the different councils; 2) professional development; and 3) dual credit. It is the intent of Round-up coordinators to compile all questions received around the state and prepare an online FAQ.

Mr. Scott suggested that the TEA and THECB look at the most efficient way to review or perform a curriculum audit of dual credit courses to address some of the concerns about the rigor of those courses. Dr. Paredes asked about the participation of folks in the business sector/workforce development community. Dr. Kramer said that it has been limited, but some representation has been evident through the regional P-16 councils. Dr. Paredes remarked that this was perhaps the missing link in collaboration efforts and called on Mr. Temple to assist in encouraging participation from the business/workforce sector.

AGENDA ITEM TEN

Presentation on 2009 Recognized P-16 Regional Councils and Update on Funded BY 2010 P-16 Councils and Efforts

Ms. Priscilla Martinez, Director, P-16 Councils at THECB, provided an update on THECB's process for recognizing and funding P-16 regional councils around the state. During 2009, THECB received 27 recognition applications. The applications were reviewed by internal evaluators and 19 councils met the established requirements. Four main areas were assessed: 1) Organizational Structure; 2) Funding/Support; 3) Quality and Appropriateness of Strategic Plan; and 4) Effective and Timely Implementation of Strategic Plan.

For fiscal year 2010, the agency received 25 grant proposals. Upon reviews by internal and external evaluators, 17 councils, including two new councils, were awarded funds (\$30,000-\$50,000). The focus this year is to continue using data to drive initiatives that address Hispanic college participation and completion rates; parental outreach; and awareness of Texas College and Career Readiness Standards.

Ms. Martinez also reviewed the communication structure for the P-16 council network. Mr. Scott then restated comments made earlier about the inconsistencies in the development and maturity of some of the regional P-16 councils and asked if there was anything that could be done, with respect to some of the Stimulus funding, to help facilitate the development and effectiveness of these councils. Ms. Martinez answered that more funding was needed since THECB was only able to fund 17 of the 37 organized councils. She noted that although some of the councils are not funded by THECB, they have still participated in the quarterly P-16 Council Institutes hosted by THECB. This participation involves travel-related costs.

AGENDA ITEM ELEVEN

Update on Adult Basic Education/Postsecondary Alignment Activities

Barbara Knaggs, Associate Commissioner, State Initiatives at TEA and Tamara Clunis, Director, Developmental and Adult Education at THECB, provided an update on Adult Basic Education (ABE) activities.

Ms. Knaggs told Council members that the responsibility for overseeing ABE initiatives at TEA had recently shifted to the State Initiatives Department. TEA staff had begun coordinating efforts with THECB and TWC colleagues to make sure they are complementing each other's work and not duplicating efforts. Ms. Knaggs commented that work is still in its planning phase and discussions are currently being held on changing the funding formula for allocation of federal and state dollars. This will require changing State Board of Education rules, which is a lengthy process. They are also working on plans to spend the additional funds received after the legislative session. In addition to updates on funding formula changes and plans for spending additional funds, Ms. Knaggs said that they would be speaking to Council members at a future meeting about revising the tri-agency plan to better reflect activities based on the actual amount of funding received from the legislature. Dr. Paredes asked staff to keep the original focus (addressing basic literacy skills required to acquire a living wage) in mind while revising the tri-agency plan.

Dr. Clunis, provided an update on work being performed by THECB under Rider 45 (81st Legislature) on ABE alignment activities and performance outcomes. They have been working in collaboration with their TEA and TWC in building capacity of ABE providers to transition their students. A research project was funded at Texas State University to help provide some understanding on what is already working in respect to alignment activities and what should be done. As part of the project, THECB hosted a summit of all of ABE providers through TEA in May. A report will be released in October that captures research findings and informs current activities for the biennium. One major finding that has surfaced is the lack of capacity of current ABE providers in working with higher education. There is a lack of knowledge

regarding *Closing the Gaps* and the *Texas Success Initiative* and lack of understanding on how the two work together. As a result, THECB and agency partners have been working with the ABE providers to help them implement strategies to reach out to higher education institutions and strengthen partnerships. Other activities have focused on helping providers get better data to help determine whether their interventions are working. TEA will be sending data requests to THECB that give more specific student-level outcomes to assist providers in following up with their students. Dr. Clunis stressed that one of the core issues of the alignment activities is to reduce or eliminate the need for developmental education, to the extent possible. Moving forward, partner agencies will be working together to formalize their action plan.

Mr. Scott asked whether the ABE community should be brought into some of the State P-16 Council meetings. Dr. Clunis said it could help inform the work of the Council. Phyllis Snodgrass said that it has been helpful to have ABE representatives involved in local P-16 work in the San Marcos area. She stressed the importance of having everyone in the same room when discussing P-16 education issues.

AGENDA ITEM TWELVE

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.