



## STATE PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

The Texas Association of Workforce Board (TAWB) represents the 28 local workforce development boards in Texas and the more than 700 business and community leaders from communities across Texas who serve on those boards. TAWB’s goal is to ensure a highly skilled, well-trained talent supply for Texas employers and an employer-driven workforce system. The hands-on business and workforce development expertise of its board representative members uniquely positions TAWB and its member representatives to advise on education, training and workforce development policies for the state’s incumbent and emerging workforce and to assist in building a true employer-driven workforce development system.

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### *Priorities for the 85<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature*

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#### Education

- **Aligning of Education and Workforce Development** programs at all levels in order to meet the talent needs of Texas employers and increase the number of students who graduate from high school career or college ready, including:
  - aligning courses and curriculum with employer needs; and
  - aligning high school exit standards with university and college entrance standards to promote efficiency and eliminate and/or reduce the need for remedial education.
- Increasing **Dual Course Study Programs** and **Certificate Programs** at both high school and middle school levels so that students graduate from high school with an associates’ degree, or substantial credits toward one; and development of **Statewide Articulation Agreements** as a means of ensuring that students taking dual credit courses receive full credit for those classes when transferring among state education institutions.
- Making **Quality Full-Day Early Childhood Education** available to as many youth as possible – at the very least to all youth who would qualify for free or reduced price student lunch.
- Increasing the number of **elementary school students attaining Basic Skills** before their exit to middle/intermediate schools, including the abilities to read English on grade level by the conclusion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade and to perform basic math functions.
- Increasing Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (**STEM**) **curriculum in elementary and middle schools** across the state and ensuring that **proficient teachers** are delivering the curriculum.
- Expanding **Teacher Quality** initiatives at every level of the education continuum, but particularly in Early Childhood Education and K-12, including initiatives to expedite the certification of **industry professionals** to provide instruction in public schools.

- Increasing the availability of **Career & Technology Education (CTE)** programs in public community and technical colleges and independent school districts, and the promotion of the opportunities that can result from CTE, including:
  - clarifying existing, or if necessary, expanding, Texas community college **Continuing Education** eligibility requirements to permit funding for High School students enrolled in **CTE** courses.
- Increasing **Career Education and Exploration** opportunities at the elementary and middle school levels and providing sufficient funding for public schools to hire and provide current professional development information to **career development advisors**, to better assist students with career and high school track planning.
- Implementing initiatives that will facilitate achieving the goals of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s **“60x30 Texas Higher Education Plan”** for at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 to have a certificate or degree by the year 2030.
- Implementing initiatives to achieve the goals of **“Toward Triumph: Advancing Education and Workforce Goals for Texas”** tri-agency report to the Office of the Governor from the Texas Education Agency, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Texas Workforce Commission.
- Deleting the artificial limit of 8.5% for **Special Education** students in TEA school accountability standards that result in schools discouraging or not providing special education services to students needing those services.

## Workforce Training

- Increasing the number of **Apprenticeships** and **Internships** for high school and post-secondary students and incentivizing and/or removing barriers for businesses, including providing **employer tax credits for employers providing internships** for high school and community

college students that are aligned to the demand occupations in the local region.

- Increasing state funding for **Adult Basic Education** beyond the minimum amount required for Texas to receive federal funding for the programs, and expansion of **Accelerate Texas**, a joint initiative of the Texas Workforce Commission and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board that helps reduce barriers associated with gaining a high school diploma equivalent.
- Providing greater access to **Training and Employment Opportunities for Ex-offenders**, including eliminating unnecessary barriers to obtaining occupational licenses required by the State.
- Initiatives that will increase the employability of and employment of **People With Disabilities**, including apprenticeships and internships.
- Funding of requests by the Texas Workforce Commission for the **Jobs and Education for Texans (JET)** program, **Skills for Adults to Accelerate** to Jobs grants, and the **Career and Technical Education Workforce Specialists** program.

## Economic Development

- Continuation and adequate funding of state **Economic Development Programs**, including the **Skills Development Fund, Texas Enterprise Fund, Governor’s University Research Initiative, and State Economic Development Sales Tax.**
- Adoption of policies that are not perceived by employers to impede Texas’ ability to attract corporate investment, recruit a talented workforce, or foster a vibrant tourism and hospitality industry, including policies that are not perceived as hostile to LGBT people.