

# Update on the Progress of the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium



*A report from the  
Texas High Performance Schools Consortium  
submitted to  
The Honorable Greg Abbott, Governor of Texas  
The Honorable Dan Patrick, Lieutenant Governor of Texas  
The Honorable Joe Straus, Speaker of the House of Representatives  
The Honorable Mike Morath, Commissioner of Education  
Members of the 85th Texas Legislature  
Members of the Texas State Board of Education*

**December 2016**

In accordance with HB 18 (2015), the school districts and open-enrollment charter schools participating in the Consortium shall submit reports concerning the performance and progress of the Consortium to the governor, the Legislature, the State Board of Education, and the commissioner of education not later than December 1 of each even-numbered year.

## Acknowledgements

This report is submitted by the co-chairs of the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium, Greg Smith, Superintendent, Clear Creek ISD, and Kim Alexander, Superintendent, Roscoe Collegiate ISD, on behalf of the Consortium members.

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## Consortium Facilitator

At the request of the Texas Education Agency, the work of the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium is being facilitated by the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA), 406 East 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Austin, TX 78701-2617, 512-477-6361, [www.tasanet.org](http://www.tasanet.org)

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## Background

### Establishment and Expansion of the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium

The Texas High Performance Schools Consortium was established in 2011 when the 82nd Texas Legislature enacted Senate Bill 1557, adding §7.0561 to the Texas Education Code. After an extensive application process, Commissioner of Education Michael Williams selected 23 Texas school districts in September 2012 to comprise the Consortium.

The 84th Texas Legislature's House Bill 18 increased the number of districts and charter schools permitted to participate in the Consortium to 30. (As of this reporting, the commissioner of education had not yet initiated the process by which additional districts and charter schools may apply to join the Consortium.) HB 18 also increased the number of students who may participate in the Consortium to no more than 10 percent of the total Texas public school population (SB 1557 limited it to 5 percent). HB 18 also amended the statutory purpose of the Consortium.

According to HB 18, the Consortium is charged with informing the governor, Texas Legislature, State Board of Education, and commissioner of education on methods for transforming Texas public schools by improving student learning through the development of innovative, next-generation learning standards and assessment and accountability systems, *including standards and systems relating to career and college readiness.*

### Consortium Goal and Principles

The goal of the Consortium is to transform education so that all Texas students are future-ready. Students should be given the power to create and innovate, and teachers should be given the opportunity to use feedback and assessments to design learning that is relevant and rigorous.

Parents, members of the local business community, and individuals from higher education agree that they are looking for students who are critical thinkers, innovators, problem solvers, collaborators, and good communicators. The Consortium works toward this goal with a focus on the following principles:

- **Digital Learning:** engaging students in digital learning on a regular basis, including, but not limited to, the use of electronic textbooks and instructional materials, and courses offered through the Texas Virtual School Network

- **High-Priority Learning Standards:** using curriculum standards derived from high-priority learning standards as opposed to curriculum that is a “mile wide and an inch deep”
- **Multiple Assessments:** authentic assessment of students using various methods of determining student progress that is capable of informing students, parents, educators, and schools concerning the extent to which learning is occurring, rather than overreliance on high-stakes testing
- **Local Responsibility:** accountability systems that rely on local responsibility, enabling communities and parents to be involved in the important decisions regarding the education of their children and allowing them to determine the success of their schools

### Consortium Makeup

The commissioner was statutorily required to select a variety of districts to represent the diversity of Texas public schools in terms of district type, size, and student demographics. (See Appendix B for detailed information on the commissioner's rule and selection process.)

The diversity of districts, campuses, and students participating in the Consortium increases the likelihood that proposals and recommendations developed by the Consortium will address the varied circumstances, diversity, and issues facing all Texas schools, and consequently will result in solutions that are relevant and transferable among the many different districts across the state.

### Consortium Districts

<b>Anderson-Shiro CISD</b>	<b>Lancaster ISD</b>
<b>Clear Creek ISD</b>	<b>Lake Travis ISD</b>
<b>College Station ISD</b>	<b>Lewisville ISD</b>
<b>Coppell ISD</b>	<b>McAllen ISD</b>
<b>Duncanville ISD</b>	<b>McKinney ISD</b>
<b>Eanes ISD</b>	<b>Northwest ISD</b>
<b>Glen Rose ISD</b>	<b>Prosper ISD</b>
<b>Guthrie CSD</b>	<b>Richardson ISD</b>
<b>Harlingen CISD</b>	<b>Roscoe Collegiate ISD</b>
<b>Highland Park ISD (10)</b>	<b>Round Rock ISD</b>
<b>Klein ISD</b>	<b>White Oak ISD</b>

Of the 23 school districts originally selected to participate in the Consortium, one district (Irving ISD) has recently withdrawn from the Consortium.

## Creation of the Consortium Associates

Although more than \$40 billion is spent annually from local and state funds, there is no systematic, thoughtful research and development effort to create the next generation PK-12 public education system for Texas public schools. This provided a compelling purpose for the Consortium. To keep Texas at the forefront, there must be space for experimentation and piloting for the future.

As a means to carry out the research and data collection necessary to inform stakeholders, the Consortium established a process to invite other Texas school districts engaged in school transformation initiatives to participate in the research efforts and help the Consortium move this important work forward.

On November 18, 2013, the Consortium invited other Texas school districts to join in the transformation work as Consortium Associates and partner with the Consortium members in its statewide efforts.

Districts that joined as Consortium Associates were expected to share a commitment to the principles and premises outlined in *Creating a New Vision for Public Education in Texas* (Texas Association of School Administrators, 2008) and engage as a contributing partner with Consortium members and other districts in the ongoing transformation work.

The application to become one of the Consortium Associates sought the district's agreement with and commitment to the Consortium's goal and principles, evidenced by:

- Securing Board of Trustees support for participation, confirmed by a resolution or board meeting minutes
- Engaging meaningfully as a contributing and learning member of the group, sharing the work taking place in their district
- Participating in one or more Consortium working groups (learning standards, multiple assessments, digital integration, community-based accountability)
- Joining TASA's School Transformation Network
- Committing staff time and resources to support the district's participation in the work
- Commitment to creating a community-based accountability system in accord with the vision principles

To date, 84 districts from 18 Texas Education Service Center regions have joined the work of the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium as Consortium Associates.

## Consortium Associate Districts

<b>Alamo Heights ISD</b>	<b>Hudson ISD</b>
<b>Alvin ISD</b>	<b>Huffman ISD</b>
<b>Amarillo ISD</b>	<b>Humble ISD</b>
<b>Austin ISD</b>	<b>Huntsville ISD</b>
<b>Bastrop ISD</b>	<b>Hutto ISD</b>
<b>Beeville ISD</b>	<b>Jayton-Girard ISD</b>
<b>Big Sandy ISD</b>	<b>Karnes City ISD</b>
<b>Bloomington ISD</b>	<b>La Villa ISD</b>
<b>Blue Ridge ISD</b>	<b>Latexo ISD</b>
<b>Bryan ISD</b>	<b>Leander ISD</b>
<b>Bullard ISD</b>	<b>Little Elm ISD</b>
<b>Callisburg ISD</b>	<b>Llvingston ISD</b>
<b>Channing ISD</b>	<b>London ISD</b>
<b>Chapel Hill ISD (ESC 7)</b>	<b>Lufkin ISD</b>
<b>Chapel Hill ISD (ESC 8)</b>	<b>Lytle ISD</b>
<b>Commerce ISD</b>	<b>Mesquite ISD</b>
<b>Corsicana ISD</b>	<b>Miami ISD</b>
<b>DeKalb ISD</b>	<b>Midway ISD</b>
<b>Denton ISD</b>	<b>Millsap ISD</b>
<b>Devine ISD</b>	<b>Mission CISD</b>
<b>Diboll ISD</b>	<b>Montgomery ISD</b>
<b>Dripping Springs ISD</b>	<b>Nacogdoches ISD</b>
<b>El Paso ISD</b>	<b>Navasota ISD</b>
<b>Falls City ISD</b>	<b>New Braunfels ISD</b>
<b>Fort Elliott CISD</b>	<b>New Caney ISD</b>
<b>Friendswood ISD</b>	<b>New Diana ISD</b>
<b>Frisco ISD</b>	<b>O'Donnell ISD</b>
<b>Georgetown ISD</b>	<b>Pine Tree ISD</b>
<b>Godley ISD</b>	<b>Royse City ISD</b>
<b>Goliad ISD</b>	<b>San Angelo ISD</b>
<b>Goodrich ISD</b>	<b>San Marcos CISD</b>
<b>Graford ISD</b>	<b>Santa Fe ISD</b>
<b>Graham ISD</b>	<b>Splendora ISD</b>
<b>Grand Prairie ISD</b>	<b>Stephenville ISD</b>
<b>Granger ISD</b>	<b>Sunnyvale ISD</b>
<b>Greenville ISD</b>	<b>Trinity ISD</b>
<b>Groesbeck ISD</b>	<b>Vidor ISD</b>
<b>Harleton ISD</b>	<b>Waxahachie ISD</b>
<b>Harmony ISD</b>	<b>West ISD</b>
<b>Hays CISD</b>	<b>Willis ISD</b>
<b>Hereford ISD</b>	<b>Wilson ISD</b>
<b>Hillsboro ISD</b>	<b>Woodville ISD</b>

## Timeline of Consortium Activities to Date

**April 2012** – The process and guidelines for applying for membership in the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium (THPSC) were developed and published.

**May 2012** – Commissioner Rule implementing SB 1557 was published.

**September 2012** – Districts selected to participate in the Consortium were announced by the commissioner.

**October 2012** – Consortium work began with superintendents and district teams working through the fall semester to determine strategy for conducting the work of the Consortium as specified in SB 1557 and to develop the first report required by the legislation.

**December 2012** – The first Consortium report was delivered prior to the convening of the 83rd Legislature.

**November 2013** – The Consortium invited other Texas districts to join in the Consortium work as Associates.

**March and September 2014** – The Consortium/Consortium Associates held meetings/work sessions.

**December 2014** – The second Consortium report was delivered prior to the convening of the 84th Legislature.

**June 2015** – The 84th Texas Legislature's HB 18 went into effect, allowing the commissioner of education to select up to 30 districts to participate in the Consortium (former maximum was 20). As of this reporting, the commissioner had not yet initiated the process by which additional districts and charter schools may apply to join the Consortium. HB 2804, also passed in 2015, created the Texas Commission on Next-Generation Assessments and Accountability. The bill required that an educator in a Consortium-participating school district be included on the Commission and that the Commission consider the Consortium's recommendations when it prepared its report.

**February 2016** – Drs. Karen Rue and Dawson Orr presented the Consortium's recommendations to the Texas Commission on Next-Generation Assessments and Accountability.

**December 2016** – This, the third, Consortium report was prepared for delivery prior to the 85th legislative session.

## Positive Results of Previous Consortium Reports to the Legislature

SB 1557 required the commissioner of education to submit reports detailing the progress and performance of the Consortium to the governor and Texas Legislature in December 2012 and December 2014. HB 18 added the State Board of Education (SBOE) as a recipient of the Consortium's reports, and required that they be submitted directly from the Consortium to the SBOE, governor, Legislature, and commissioner in December of each even-numbered year.

### December 2012 Recommendations and 2013 Legislative Action

In the Consortium's December 2012 report, the Consortium noted the need for providing meaningful flexibility in graduation plans by establishing multiple pathways to allow for specializations in areas such as career and technical education, humanities, business and industry, and STEM, as well as optional courses (as defined by the local school board) in visual and performing arts, languages other than English, and technology applications.

The Consortium acknowledges and affirms the flexibility provided by the 2013 Texas Legislature's HB 5, which made substantial changes to the state's curriculum and graduation requirements, assessments, and accountability system. HB 5 reduced the number of end-of-course exams required for graduation from 15 to five, created more flexible graduation plans, and placed a new focus on community, workforce, and higher education demands through meaningful course offerings. This, coupled with endorsement pathways for students and an emphasis on community engagement, is providing for a more balanced and meaningful student experience.

Yet, while HB 5 has provided a step in the right direction for Texas public schools, there is still much to be done to achieve authentic, meaningful learning experiences for students, develop high-priority learning standards, and design next-generation assessment and accountability systems.

### December 2014 Recommendations and 2015 Legislative Action

The Consortium appreciates the 2015 Texas Legislature's efforts to pass legislation that aligned with several rec-

ommendations from the Consortium’s December 2014 report, including the need for the state to move away from the over-reliance on high-stakes standardized tests.

HB 1164 created a pilot program in which participating districts have flexibility from current law relating to writing assessment, and HB 2804 shifted some of the weight given to standardized tests in the public school accountability system to other indicators of student achievement. It also created the Texas Commission on Next-Generation Assessments and Accountability to “develop and make recommendations for new systems of student assessment and public school accountability.”

### Recommendations to the Texas Commission on Next-Generation Assessments and Accountability

Kim Alexander, superintendent of Roscoe Collegiate ISD, represented the Consortium on the commission, which met seven times between January and June 2016. During a panel discussion in February 2016, then-Consortium Steering Committee Co-chairs Karen Rue and Dawson Orr (formerly the superintendents of Northwest and Highland Park ISDs, respectively) provided multiple recommendations, including the following for the short term:

- 1) Limit state testing to the readiness standards.
- 2) Establish true learning standards-based state assessments.
- 3) Limit state testing and its inclusion in the accountability system to the requirements of federal law.
- 4) Begin modeling stratified random sampling from past tests and future tests.
- 5) Expand the opportunities for innovation into alternative, district-based assessment and accountability subsystems.

While recommendations in the Commission’s final report (<https://goo.gl/VXPwG2>) represent relatively small steps toward true next-generation assessment and accountability, the report does recommend limiting state testing to the readiness standards and makes some other recommendations that the Consortium supports.

In addition, among the “considerations for further study” included in the report is a study of alternative, district-based assessment and accountability systems. The report recommends that the study “identify school districts, including members of the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium and Texas charters, that have adopted community-based assessment and account-

ability systems that promote family and community engagement and reflect their communities.”

### Development of a Next-Generation Accountability System

The Consortium continues to research, explore, and develop an assessment and accountability framework that is not over-reliant on high-stakes testing and is malleable enough to meet the needs of urban, suburban, and rural communities. This work is being done because the Consortium realizes that accountability is important, but the current state public school accountability system — like the A-F school/district rating system that is scheduled to be implemented in 2017-18 — is based primarily on standardized test scores and therefore not designed to provide meaningful feedback for improvement.

Next-generation, community-based accountability will empower school districts to design their own internal systems of assessment and accountability that, while meeting general state standards, can allow districts to innovate and customize curriculum and instruction to meet the unique needs and interests of their communities.

More information on community-based accountability is included on pages 15-19 of this report, and examples of school districts that have implemented such systems can be found online at <https://goo.gl/CmMwZ>.

### The Future of Public Education in Texas

The Consortium believes that the future of Texas schools should include an educational system that is built around:

- Dynamic, rigorous curriculum standards in each content area
- A variety of assessment alternatives that are not limited to paper and pencil tests
- The use of technology that is integrated into the learning for students
- Learning that is relevant and responsive to student interests
- Involvement of local communities in determining the accountability features important to that community
- A variety of pathways to graduation

## Principles That Guide the Consortium From Vision to Action

The major work of the Consortium revolves around four core principles that include the integration of digital tools and resources into student learning, the development of high-priority learning standards, the use of multiple assessments to determine student progress, and an accountability system that relies upon community and parental involvement regarding the education of their children. The following sections provide detailed information on each of these principles.



### Digital Integration

Schools must embrace and seize technology’s potential to capture the hearts and minds of students so that their learning experiences are more engaging and respect their talents. Instruction must be designed through a variety of digital pathways that can be accessed anytime, anywhere, and at any pace, seamlessly integrating digital devices, global connections, and flexible student-centered learning environments.

Digital integration includes access to the right device for learning, the use of digital portfolios, as well as the integration of virtual learning models (such as flipped classrooms, blended learning, and online courses) and digital resources (electronic textbooks, iTunesU, and online collaborative tools).

Research has consistently shown that one of the most important factors contributing to a student’s success is the quality of teaching he or she receives. Fully leveraging the opportunities of digital learning and technology in the classroom will require a shift in the role and skills of teachers. Among other roles, teachers will need to:

- **Facilitate Learning:** The teacher’s role shifts from instructional “owner”—the lecturer who owns the content—to instructional “designer”—the designer/leader who creates and guides learning experiences.
- **Provide Technical Expertise:** Teachers will need to be comfortable with navigating technology and digital resources to support the learning of students.
- **Leverage Technology to Personalize Learning:** The facilitation of learning includes the use of technology to guide students and customize activities to meet individual student needs.
- **Use Technology to Transform Assessment and Foster Data-driven Instruction:** Technology and digital learning allow teachers to collect and interpret various points of student assessment data. Teachers must be trained in how to use these data effectively to inform instruction and increase student learning.

### Advancing Professional Development and Teacher Training

With the expansion of digital learning and technology in the classroom, the training and professional development of teachers must transition to fully realize the potential of these resources to foster student learning. This encompasses the use of technology to guide instruction and the use of technology to measure, evaluate, and understand student learning through data-driven instructional methods.

To make the transition from the traditional role of disseminating content knowledge to that of instructional design in guiding students’ discovery and application of information, teachers require a significant investment in time and learning. Teachers have cited professional development as an important component of preparing them to use technology effectively in instruction.

Preparing teachers to take full advantage of technology for learning will require new professional learning content centered on several key ideas and skills, including:

- Designing relevant, rigorous learning tasks that leverage the power of technologies and the internet
- Developing facilitation and collaboration strategies
- Creating classroom systems and routines that support collaborative and independent learning



- Establishing guidelines for ethical and appropriate use of digital media and content
- Using various technologies and the internet in instructional planning and decision-making
- Using digital technologies in evaluation of learning (assessment, data-driven decision making, portfolios)

To support the development of these skills and build teachers' comfort with technology will require a strong commitment to professional development. But the reality of creating and implementing professional development to move toward the goal of all students becoming technologically literate and all teachers leveraging the power of technology in their classrooms will require an approach that goes beyond policy requirements and the establishment of standards. Effectively scaling up professional development for teachers on the use of technology to guide instruction will require broad access, ongoing support, and accountability.

### TASA on iTunes U®

To further the digital integration facet of the Consortium's work, the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) first engaged Consortium districts and others in fall 2012 to curate a collection of digital resources to aid districts in their efforts to increase digital learning opportunities for students.

The result, TASA on iTunes U, is now a library of 62 digital resource collections, organized by course, that make it easier for teachers to incorporate digital learning opportunities into their lessons. The content—created by teachers for teachers—aims to foster creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking skills in an engaging, digitally rich learning environment. Teachers may access the collections for free.

Since the Consortium's last report, TASA engaged content curation teams of 130 teachers and content specialists in fall 2014 to identify and develop collections of TEKS-aligned digital resources in elementary core content areas at both the early (grades K-2) and intermediate (grades 3-5) elementary levels, as well as new middle school and high school courses in core academic and Career and Technology Education (CTE) areas. The teams also updated the original high school core subject courses to provide a more engaging experience for educators.

In fall 2015, TASA announced the addition of new Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry digital resource collections, aligned with the new TEKS for math (revised in 2012).

TASA on iTunes U can be accessed by searching for *Texas Association of School Administrators* in the iTunes U catalog or by visiting [www.itunes.com/tasa](http://www.itunes.com/tasa).

### Vision in Practice Blog

In January 2016, with the support of TASA and the Consortium, the Vision in Practice blog was created — by Texas educators for Texas educators — to provide insight into classrooms, campuses, and districts that are transforming teaching and learning to meet the needs of students in the 21st century.

Spearheading the project is Coppell ISD Director of Mathematics Mary Kemper. She, along with Mansfield ISD language arts teacher Chrissy Boydston and principal Catherine McGuinness, manage the blog. Guest contributors include teachers and instructional technology coordinators from school districts across Texas.

Posts provide examples from real Texas classrooms and schools where teaching and learning is being transformed to better prepare students for the future. All content posted in Vision in Practice support the principles that guide the work of the Consortium. Read the blog: <https://visioninpracticeblog.wordpress.com>

### Recommendations for Policymakers

In November 2015, the State Board of Education brought together experts for a day-long summit at the Texas Capitol to explore the pros and cons of a rapidly changing classroom environment that includes more digital products and technology each year and its impact on Texas students.

Dr. Karen Rue, then the co-chair of the Consortium and the superintendent of Northwest ISD, and Randy Moczygemba, superintendent of New Braunfels ISD, a Consortium Associate district, provided recommendations. Find a summary, videos, and presentations from the Learning Roundtable – Educating the Digital Generation on the TEA website: <https://goo.gl/4qxQvm>.

The Consortium recommends that policymakers provide both direction and support for increasing teacher effectiveness in the digital environment by:

- Supporting professional development programs that recognize and leverage the power and impact of technology and the digital environment on teaching and learning.

- Funding and supporting equitable access to state-of-the-art technology for all public school teachers and the children to meet the demands of the digital economy.
- Prioritizing investments in classroom technology and teacher training, particularly in high-need schools and districts. The governor’s Classroom Connectivity Initiative, designed to increase access to affordable, high-speed broadband for K–12 public schools in Texas, is a major step in the right direction. As of September 2016, the state’s nonprofit partner in the initiative, EducationSuper-Highway, had engaged 19 Education Service Centers and launched broadband upgrade projects with 30 school districts.

The Consortium also calls attention to the Senate Committee on Education’s November 2016 report to the Texas Legislature, as it includes recommendations related to the committee’s interim charge to evaluate digital learning opportunities in classrooms and examine existing barriers to schools’ ability to provide a digital learning environment. In its report, the committee recommends that the Legislature:

- 1) Establish a matching fund in order to leverage the maximum amount of federal E-rate funds available to Texas schools for fiber connectivity.
- 2) Require TEA to update the State Long-Range Plan for Technology and explore ways to incent districts to adopt or maintain technology plans.
- 3) Enact rules for the collection, maintenance, and use of students’ personal information to ensure student data privacy.
- 4) Further study cost savings associated with the use of Open Education Resources (OER).
- 5) Continue to identify and eliminate barriers to fostering 21st century learning in Texas classrooms.

## High-Priority Learning Standards

The Consortium has designed a process for determining high-priority learning standards that emphasizes depth over breadth and where the local community is accountable for empowering students to learn, live, and earn in a global and digital environment. Profound learning occurs when students have multiple opportunities to engage in meaningful experiences, integrating critical competencies and content knowledge for college and career readiness.

The sheer number of standards in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) creates a significant impediment to profound learning. Therefore, the development of high-priority learning standards is essential. These standards should be:

- Reflective of current research around college and career readiness
- Reflective of national and international standards
- Inclusive of the essential core knowledge and processes of each discipline
- Clear and rigorous
- Manageable in number
- Related within and across grade levels

The TEKS review process comes at a critical period in public education in Texas. In today’s world of global competition for college acceptance and entry-level jobs in their chosen careers, our students require in-depth knowledge and skills to be fully prepared to compete and succeed.

National and international student achievement comparisons (TIMSS, PISA, NAEP, SAT, ACT, etc.) tell us that our students—while showing progress in some areas—are not at the level of achievement that ensures they are fully prepared to succeed in the world they will encounter. To succeed, our students must have a solid foundation in core academic subject mastery, but this alone is insufficient. Students must also develop the cognitive and social skills that enable them to deal with the complex problems of a rapidly changing world.

High-priority learning standards provide a clear, coherent description of the content, depth of knowledge, and skills students are expected to master to be prepared for success in college and careers. Critical questions in the development or refinement of college/career-ready learning standards at any policy level—national, state, local—include:

- What specific knowledge should students know as a result of mastering the learning standards? (Content)
- What level of cognitive demand, or academic rigor, is appropriate to the content and grade level of the learner? (Thinking)
- With what transferable skills will students leave high school upon graduation, and at each grade level leading up to graduation? (Skills)

## Proposed Design Principles for High-Priority Learning Standards

- Prioritize and focus on what matters most.
- Content, thinking, and skills all matter when it comes to standards design.
- Align standards with best evidence on college and career readiness.
- Recognize that standards design influences assessment design, assessment design influences instruction, and instructional decisions determine the level and type of learning opportunities provided to students.

## Proposed Strategy

As a strategy for moving forward with the development of high-priority learning standards, the Consortium districts recommend consideration of short- and long-term strategies.

### Short-term solutions:

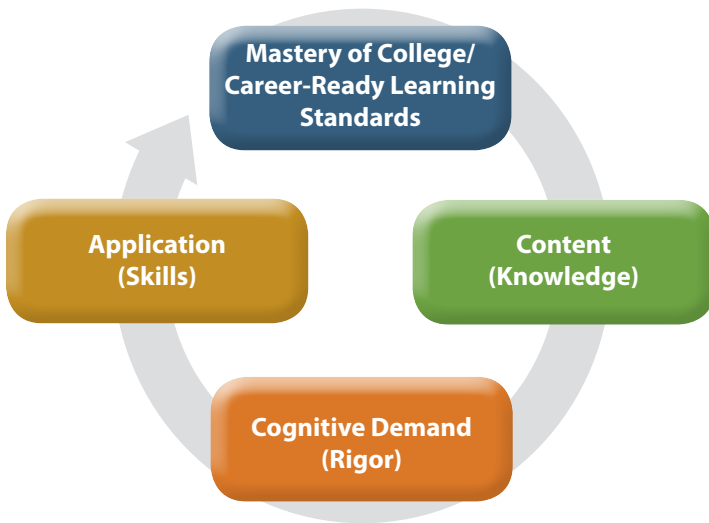
- Test readiness standards only\*
- Include more test items per standard

### Long-term solutions:

- Develop/prioritize/coalesce high-quality, fewer, deeper learning standards\*\*
- Establish assessment expectations that rely less on multiple-choice items and more on rigorous, performance tasks
- Reduce the number of tested grade levels and/or standards
- Allow for stratified random sampling of students to accommodate the complexity and cost of administering and scoring performance tasks

\* Cannot be applied as a long-term strategy due to the progressive, interconnected nature of learning standards from PK-12.

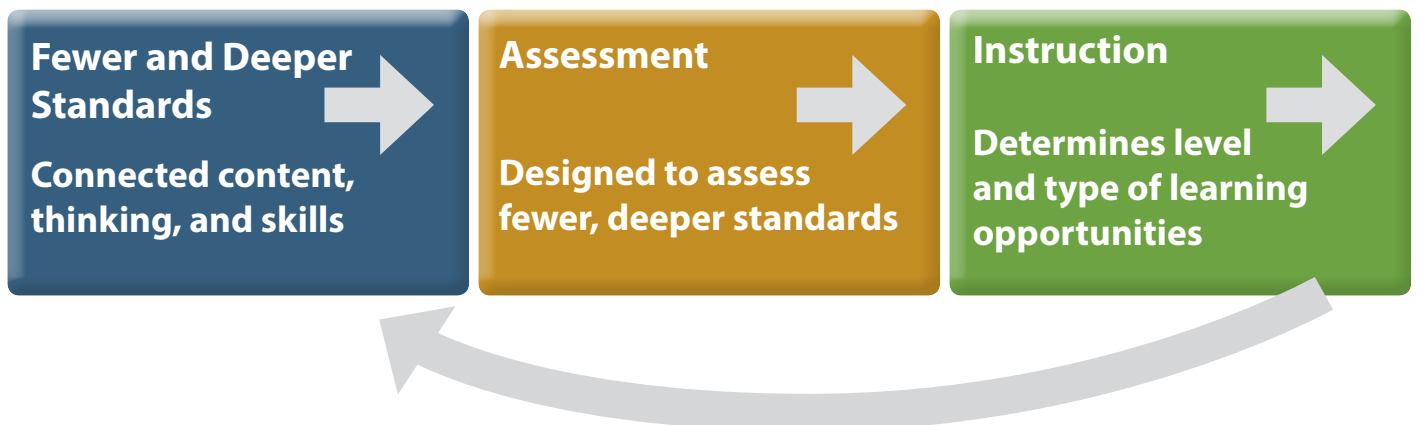
\*\* Learning standards designed in accord with future-ready learning, college/career readiness, and expectations of the global workplace.



High-priority learning standards provide a strong foundation for students to apply and master the skills they need, and as they apply their skills, students have more opportunities to build deep understanding of the content of the learning standards.

So, learning standards matter. As the State Board of Education directs, and the TEA engages in, the process of review and revision of the state curriculum standards, this core concept—the interrelationship of content, thinking, and skills—is fundamental to the stated goal of ensuring that “the standards are appropriate in scope and rigor, streamlined, clear, relevant, assessable where appropriate, and aligned across subjects and grade levels.” (TEA, RFQ #701-14-025, 2014)

To prepare students for college, the workforce, and success in life, high-priority learning standards should be specified at the “profound” level in recognition that content, thinking, and skills go together “hand in hand” so that students are able to apply their learning to new situations, to synthesize, solve problems, and create knowledge. The Texas High Performance Schools Consortium proposes the following theory of action as a strategy for reviewing and revising the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.



## Implications for the future of accountability:

- High-priority learning standards and new assessment designs could build the foundation for a new vision of accountability in Texas that aligns with the research on future-ready learning in today's context and reflects a more balanced local and state partnership.\*\*\*

\*\*\* As described in the TASA vision document, *Creating a New Vision for Public Education in Texas*.

## Benefits

To succeed in today's workplace, young people need more than basic reading and math skills. Students need advanced content knowledge, technology skills, thinking skills, and the ability to apply their knowledge and skills to solve problems. High-priority learning standards provide a clear and coherent description of the content, depth of knowledge, and skills students are expected to master to be prepared for success in college and careers.

Designing, implementing and supporting high-priority learning standards as the next step in our state's leadership for standards-based instruction would:

- Further the state's goals for college and career readiness
- Provide a forum for student, parent, and community input in CCR (college and career readiness)
- Bring needed focus to instruction and assessment
- Promote in-depth teaching for the deeper learning needed for success
- Design next steps in instruction
- Give detailed, descriptive feedback to students
- Have students self-assess or set goals likely to help them learn more

Students learn most effectively when they are provided with complex, authentic opportunities to explain, interpret, apply, shift perspective, empathize, and self-assess. The development of high-priority learning standards as described herein would provide the clarity and direction that teachers, principals, and district leaders need to provide this type of instruction for the students in Texas public schools.

## Collaboration With State Board of Education on Streamlining of TEKS

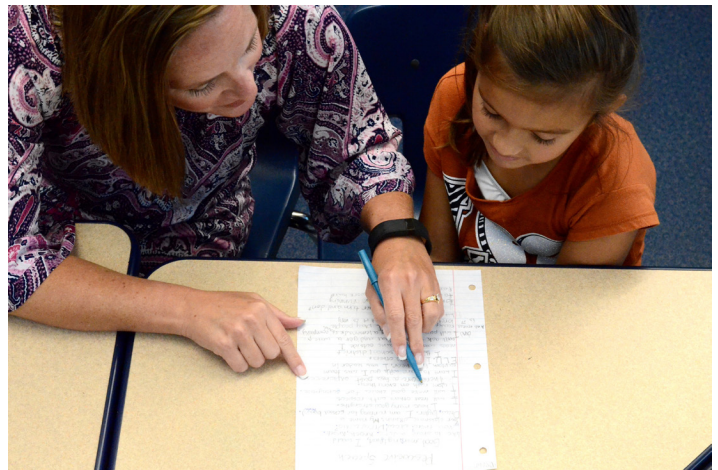
Since 2014, Consortium members have established and continue to build relationships with members of the

State Board of Education, TEA staff, legislators, and others who have a stake in the TEKS revision process.

The SBOE adopted an official 22-step TEKS review process in 2014 and a 19-step streamline review process in 2016. Consortium members have been most closely involved with the ongoing English/Language Arts (ELAR) TEKS revision process that began in 2014 and will continue through 2017.

Members have recommended curriculum experts to serve on the ELAR TEKS work group committees, encouraged those with ELAR expertise to participate in online surveys/forums as requested by SBOE Chair Donna Bahorich, provided testimony at board meetings, conducted research, shared findings on ELAR standards in other states, and collaborated with various ELAR and SLAR subject-area professional organizations.

During the past few years, Consortium members have also worked with legislators and their staffs to provide testimony at Texas Senate and House Public Education Committee hearings about the the importance of having high-priority learning standards that can reasonably be taught within a school year and that can be taught in depth.



## Multiple Assessments

The best way to determine what students have learned is to examine the body of work they create. The digital environment supports the collection and maintenance of robust evidence that documents students' academic performance.

Writing samples, project-based learning demonstrations, teacher-developed tests, lab journals, science projects, essays, reading response logs, research papers, rubric assessments, and other student work products provide better evidence on a wider range of student knowledge, skills, and progress than do standardized tests.

These types of assessments will be necessary to adequately gauge student mastery of high-priority learning standards, as described in the standards section of this report, that will require students to apply their learning to new situations, to synthesize, solve problems, and create knowledge.

Standardized tests should be used primarily to identify hard-to-learn/difficult-to-teach concepts to differentiate learning experiences and focus attention on the more systemic curricular issues involving student performance.

Unfortunately, due to the design of our accountability system and the state's over-reliance on a single-test as the sole measure of learning, the current assessment structure lends itself to teaching to high-stakes standardized tests resulting in a narrowing of the curriculum to tested standards and subject areas and instruction that is co-opted by test preparation.

This does not foster the kinds of thinking habits and skills needed for our students to be future-ready. Therefore, it is critical that we change the way we use standardized tests.

The Consortium advocates for a system that incorporates multiple assessments *for learning* and *of learning*, that incorporates existing valid and reliable measures, and develops new measures and collections of evidence of student learning, including digital portfolios. These assessments must be capable of informing students, parents, teachers and school districts, on an ongoing basis, concerning the extent to which learning is occurring.

## Proposed Strategy

As a strategy for moving forward with the use of multiple assessments to gauge profound learning, the Consortium districts recommend consideration of short- and long-term strategies.

### Short-term solutions:

- Test readiness standards only\*
- Include more test items per standard

### Long-term solutions:

- Develop/prioritize/coalesce high-quality, fewer, deeper learning standards\*\*
- Establish assessment expectations that rely less on multiple-choice items and more on rigorous, performance tasks
- Reduce the number of tested grade levels and/or standards

- Allow for stratified random sampling of students to accommodate the complexity and cost of administering and scoring performance tasks
- Strengthen training for teachers and staff in best practices associated with building collections of evidence of student learning. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of rubrics, progress portfolios, display portfolios, journals, observation records, and other such methods of learning.
- Work with the Texas Education Agency to establish definitions and standards for collections of evidence of student learning.
- Establish how student work, local assessments, and diagnostic tests are used to identify students in need of additional support.
- Work with the Texas Education Agency and the State Board of Education to develop high-priority learning standards and determine (by grade, subject) which collections of evidence of learning are to be maintained.

### Implications for the future of accountability:

- High-priority learning standards and new assessment designs could build the foundation for a new vision of accountability in Texas that aligns with the research on future-ready learning in today's context and reflects a more balanced local and state partnership.\*\*\*
- High-quality formative assessments are necessary at the classroom and campus level and are our missing component for a balanced assessment system. Policymakers should ensure resources are available and should provide support for high-quality training in formative assessment.

\* Cannot be applied as a long-term strategy due to the progressive, interconnected nature of learning standards from PK-12.

\*\* Learning standards designed in accord with future-ready learning, college/career readiness, and expectations of the global workplace.

\*\*\* As described in the TASA vision document, *Creating a New Vision for Public Education in Texas*.

### Examples of Consortium Efforts Related to the Use of Multiple Assessments

Multiple measures of accountability beyond the current state required standardized testing program include the following initiatives:

- Early College implementation with all students completing an associate degree prior to graduation from high school—true college readiness.

- Students completing an industry recognized certification in one of the broad STEM fields prior to graduation from high school—true workforce readiness.
- Students conducting student-led collaborative research presentations to be incorporated into evidence-based electronic portfolios.
- Students in grades 3–12 conducting 4-H based research projects, culminating with a yearlong, relevant career path, capstone research project in grade 12, leading to additional scholarship opportunities for students.
- Examining grading practices, designing learning that intrigues and engages students, and observing students who had freedom to learn Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in a way that is personally meaningful to the student.
- Revising grading practices and procedures to create assessments with appropriate grading that informs students, parents, and teachers about the student’s learning.



## College and Career Readiness

HB 18, passed in 2015, amended the statutory purpose of the Consortium, adding “standards and systems relating to career and college readiness” to its existing charge of improving student learning in the state by developing innovative high-priority learning standards and assessment and accountability systems.

The addition aligns with the work of the Consortium and with the vision that drives it. *Creating a New Vision for Public Education in Texas*, the document that inspired the Consortium’s creation, states:

“Ultimately, we see schools and related venues that prepare all children for many choices and that give them the tools and attitudes to contribute to our democratic way of life and live successfully in a rapidly changing world. ... In this context we see: Learning standards that reflect development of the total range of student capabilities and that enable students to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to successfully contribute to our democratic ideals and to compete in today’s digitally connected world. ... High learning standards with reasonable variation to challenge every child and motivate him or her to success. ... Students who are prepared for life, for pursuing further education, for taking the first steps on their career paths, and recognizing all options open to them.”

An educational system guided by the principles that drive the Consortium will prepare students for post-secondary education, the workforce, and productive citizenship. High-priority learning standards provide a clear and coherent description of the content, depth of knowledge, and skills students are expected to master to be prepared for success in college and careers.

## Foundation High School Program

HB 5, passed by the 2013 Texas Legislature, restructured the state’s graduation requirements, moving from a “4x4” graduation plan to a 22-credit Foundation High School Program that allows students to earn endorsements in specific areas of study by completing four additional credits.

The endorsements include STEM; business and industry; public service; arts and humanities; and multidisciplinary studies. The program works for students who plan to attend a four-year university as well as for students who opt for trade or technical training after graduation.

## Dual Credit Programs

Dual credit is a process through which a student may earn high school credit for successfully completing a college course that provides advanced academic instruction beyond, or in greater depth than, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for a corresponding high school course. The “dual credit” earned is college credit and high school credit for one course.

Partnerships between Texas secondary schools and Texas colleges and universities have enabled high school students to earn college credits before graduating from high school, making their transition to the collegiate campus smoother and their likelihood of graduating from college greater.

TASA and the Texas Association of Community Colleges, in support of the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium, have established a joint task force to support successful implementation of policy and legislation, including expanded opportunities for students to take dual credit courses to ensure student success. Task force initiatives address the need to maximize access to dual credit courses, ensure consistency of instruction through professional development, and develop multiple measures of determining student readiness for dual credit courses.

### Early College High Schools

Early College High Schools (ECHS) are innovative high schools that allow students least likely to attend college an opportunity to earn a high school diploma and up to 60 college credit hours.

ECHS students are provided dual credit at no cost to students, offered rigorous instruction and accelerated courses; provided academic and social support services to help them succeed with increased college readiness.

Five Consortium districts and 11 Consortium Associate districts now have at least one ECHS.

### Career and Technical Education Programs

Career and Technical Education (CTE) is an educational strategy for providing students with the academic, technical, and employability skills and knowledge to pursue postsecondary training or higher education and enter a career field prepared for ongoing learning.

These programs provide students with opportunities to acquire the competencies required in today's workplace—such as critical thinking, collaboration, problem solving, innovation, teamwork, and communication—and to learn about different careers by experiencing work and workplaces.

On average, Consortium districts have more students enrolled in career and technical education programs than the statewide average.



## Community-Based Accountability

A Community-Based Accountability System (CBAS) is an essential component of the transformed PK-12 educational system needed for Texas children and families. Such a system restores balance to the local community schools and the state educational partnership by empowering students, parents, and educators to build a learning community that honors and supports the work of students, teachers, and parents.

Such a system recognizes the state's responsibility and role in promoting an educated citizenry capable of self-governance and economic sufficiency as expressed through the state's goal of college and career readiness. It recognizes the need for local communities, through their locally governed school districts, to have meaningful discretion in how those goals are achieved.

The CBAS empowers local school districts to design their own internal systems of assessment and accountability that, while meeting general state standards, allow districts to innovate and customize curriculum and instruction to meet the unique needs and interest of their communities.

### Proposed System of Accountability

The foundation of CBAS is a four-part system consisting of:

- student and classroom-centered evidence of learning
- strategic use of standardized testing
- performance reviews and validation of learning by highly trained visiting teams
- rigorous descriptive reporting to parents and communities

It requires a transformation of the state’s highly prescriptive and restrictive approach to curricular standards, high-stakes standardized testing, and ranking. It requires state policymakers to establish meaningful goals related to post-secondary educational attainment and workforce preparation.

This framework builds on an earlier model (Coalition for Authentic Reform in Education, 2007) that proposed a comprehensive decentralized alternative to a bureaucratically structured state and federal standardized assessment and accountability system. This framework also directly incorporates the recommendations for assessment and accountability from the Public Education Visioning Institute that are found in *Creating a New Vision for Public Education in Texas* (2008).

## 1. Student and classroom-centered evidence of learning

### Supporting premises:

*Assessments used by teachers are the most critical for improving instruction and student learning, and to be effective must reflect certain characteristics, be interpreted properly in context, and reported clearly. Conducting good assessments is a part of the art and science of teaching that results from teacher experiences and formal professional development opportunities.*

*Assessments should be used primarily for obtaining student feedback and informing the student and teacher about the level of student conceptual understanding or skill development so that the teacher has accurate information to consider for designing additional or different learning experiences.*

*Assessments should be continuous and comprehensive, using multiple tools, rubrics, and processes, and should incorporate teacher judgments about student work and performance, as well as the judgment of others, when needed.*

The best way to determine what students have learned is to examine the body of work they create. Digital instructional management systems and portfolios support the collection and maintenance of robust evidence that documents students’ performance on the high-priority learning standards established by the state.

Writing samples, project-based learning demonstrations, teacher-developed tests, lab journals, science projects, essays, reading response logs, research papers, rubric assessments, and other student work products provide better evidence on a wider range of student knowledge, skills, and progress than do standardized tests.

The state’s current writing assessments examine students’ first-draft samples in an artificial, formulaic context graded by a contracted, minimally trained, hourly worker. Deeper and more meaningful measures of a child’s writing skills are reflected by a portfolio that includes varied examples of writing, progressions from drafts to final products, responses to feedback from teachers and peers, and other measures of authentic learning. By going beyond the first draft, teachers can thoroughly measure a student’s mastery of meaningful learning standards.

Congruently, a project-based learning portfolio allows each student to demonstrate his or her own incorporation of critical thinking, effective presentation skills, and deep content knowledge on a topic of consequence.

## 2. Strategic use of standardized testing

### Supporting premises:

*Assessments should not be limited to, nor even rely substantially on standardized tests that are primarily multiple-choice, paper/pencil or similar online instruments that can be machine-scored.*

*Sampling techniques (the full range of examinations, evaluation of student work products, and performances, as well as teacher tests and standardized tests) should be used in lieu of testing every child every year.*

*Standardized tests to which high stakes are attached can become substitutes for the learning standards themselves and result in “teaching to the test,” rather than teaching for attainment of the standard.*

A standardized test administered once each year with results received at or near the end of a school year offers limited feedback for instruction. By design, it does not track student progress throughout the weeks and months of a school year. That is the job of the classroom teacher, who is responsible for developing the formative assessments that guide and measure learning progress and the summative assessments that reflect mastery of high-priority learning standards.

By allowing local districts to collect and maintain student portfolios and use locally developed assessments, the state can more effectively and economically use standardized testing for its intended purpose: to provide a snapshot based on a single test. Correctly used, that standardized testing snapshot provides a broad measure of how a student population is progressing as a whole, rather than assuming



to accurately measure the progress of each individual student.

The state should pursue changes in federal policy that would allow it to use stratified random sampling in grades prior to high school, limit the scope of standardized testing in those grades to high-priority learning standards in reading, math, and science, and limit testing of grade-level populations to gateway transition years. For example, the state could choose to coincide with the U.S. Department of Education, which tests grades 4 and 8 using the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

The state has taken important steps to restoring balance to high school end-of-course standardized testing. Further improvement will be realized by accelerating options for substitution of ACT, SAT, and Advanced Placement assessments for state tests, and by redesigning state tests to focus on high-priority learning standards.

The need for the state to limit its testing to high-priority learning standards is important because the present design of state standardized STAAR tests does not provide meaningful or timely feedback for instruction.

The state curriculum is categorized into learning standards that are either “readiness” or “supporting.” The state testing blueprints call for 60 to 70 percent of items to address the readiness standards, which are considered the grade-level curricular standards of greatest importance. That leaves 30 to 40 percent of state tests to address supporting standards, being those standards that contribute to understanding, but may have been emphasized in the previous year’s instruction or may become a readiness standard in a future year.

The efficacy of the tests is sabotaged by the desire to test too many standards. For example, the reading portion of the state’s English I end-of-course exam tests 31 standards with 38 multiple-choice items and two short-answer written responses. Thus, some supporting standards are tested by one multiple-choice item. Teachers are appropriately reluctant to draw any conclusions about a student’s learning from one question.

Let’s use the example of the following supporting standard for English I: “Explain the role of irony, sarcasm, and paradox in literary works.” In the English I end-of-course exam, this standard may receive zero, one or two questions designed to measure stu-

dents’ abilities to explain the author’s use of one or more of the rhetorical devices. Without being able to see the test, it is impossible for an English teacher to surmise which of the three rhetorical devices the student understands. And since, according to the state’s blueprint, zero to three questions are included, it is possible that standard isn’t covered at all. Under the best of circumstances, the teacher would not know if the standard was even tested until after the school year was over.

In order to be of instructional use to a student or teacher, test results must be known in a timely manner. This allows teachers to adjust instruction to ensure that the student masters the material. For example, if a test reveals that a student is struggling with a certain algebraic concept, the sooner that deficiency is known and corrected, the better. State standardized test results received after a student has completed a course do not provide individualized, diagnostic feedback to teachers or students.

Given the inherent limitations of state standardized tests, the state’s legitimate interest in assuring college and career readiness is better met by using existing, validated measures of college readiness. Such measures also satisfy the need to monitor the academic progress of all students, including those who are economically and educationally disadvantaged.

One example, among several, of such college readiness is the ACT Aspire and ACT sequence, which guides progression toward college readiness from elementary grades to exit level. Exams such as these draw on national surveys of high schools and universities to identify the learning standards that are crucial to college success.

In addition, College Board Advanced Placement courses and corresponding exams offer students the opportunity to demonstrate college level competencies and receive college credit. Demonstrated competency should be valued over readiness. With fewer days of standardized testing, schools would have greater flexibility to use customized assessments. In those cases when standardized testing makes sense, the state could cut the lag time in order to provide valuable feedback to teachers and students.

One approach could include, if resources are available to all, computer adaptive testing. Its very design presents students with items of different levels of difficulty, adapting in real time to student responses. Adaptive testing provides an individualized assess-

ment that more accurately measures student academic readiness, performance, and progress over time.

### 3. Performance reviews and validation of learning by highly trained visiting teams

#### Supporting premise:

*A multi-year cycle for periodic district and campus performance reviews should be established, using highly trained visiting teams to analyze a predetermined set of student performance information.*

A third foundation of school-based assessment and accountability is the use of external review and validation of student learning. A state-centric approach would study and adapt successful practices such as the model of highly trained professional visiting teams or the use of external scoring validation used by the International Baccalaureate Programme.

In addition, the state could draw on its own extensive experience with performance-based monitoring. Such teams would examine the evidence maintained by schools that demonstrate academic performance and progress, and examine important components of school operations not addressed in the current accountability system.

External review teams would examine the quality of services provided to diverse student populations served within the schools. The state would use its extensive annual collection of data that informs the current monitoring system to provide its visiting review teams insight into areas where close examination is needed.

A community-centric approach would allow local districts and campuses to establish, within a state defined framework, a system of inter-district peer visitation and review on a multi-year cycle. Developed in collaboration with the P-16 Council already supported by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, peer review would include K-12 educators, higher education professors, parents, and community stakeholders.

In addition to the formative and summative programmatic feedback derived from either or both types of external review teams, the state, as previously described, could administer standardized tests through stratified random sampling for the purpose of verifying academic performance on both the high-priority readiness standards and the supporting standards, with the caveat that the tests have been

redesigned to be instructionally sensitive; that is, they include enough items to adequately inform if a standard has been met.

A third level of quality assurance would model the highly successful introduction by the state of the reading Student Success Initiative. Prior to the introduction of the state requirement that all third-graders pass a state reading test for promotion to the fourth grade, the state provided high quality training for all primary teachers responsible for reading.

A similar approach would be for the state to assure through both pre-service and in-service training that all teachers have access to evidence-based practices in both formative and summative assessments.

### 4. Comprehensive, descriptive reporting to parents and communities

#### Supporting premises:

*Accountability systems should be carefully designed on a theoretical base that honors what teachers and students actually do, that empowers and builds integrity, trust, and commitment to the values that define the school.*

*As single measures, standardized norm-referenced tests, criterion-referenced state tests, aptitude tests, end-of-course tests, other oral and written examinations, student performances/projects/portfolios, regular teacher assessments, and grades each give a piece of the picture; and used in combination, can provide a more holistic view. However, if a high-stakes standardized test is given a preponderance of weight, it will become the assessment that really counts, others notwithstanding.*

*Accountability systems are guided by the fact that to attach any matter highly valued by students, teachers, school leaders, or schools/districts to any single measure such as a standardized test, corrupts the test and the integrity of what it measures, as well as the accountability it was intended to provide.*

The fourth pillar of a community-based accountability system envisions a revitalized and transformed system of learning in which school accountability is communicated to students, parents, and community.

To the extent that the state articulates clearer goals for future levels of desired educational attainment and workforce development, districts would have a clearer context for establishing community-based goals. The present state accountability system of reporting drives districts to respond to comparative indices devoid of context or meaning. Districts would

articulate the broad inspirational goals held for students, whether traditionally stated or expressed as learner/graduate profiles, the results and outcomes held for students that flow from their goals, and establish performance indicators to help determine progress towards and attainment of desired results.

CBAS reporting would draw from the collections of classroom evidence, strategic and customized testing, and the results of external reviews and validation of student learning. Districts would show evidence of community involvement and engagement in the setting of goals, results, and performance indicators.

These indicators could include general measures of academic performance, academic progress on high-priority learning standards, progress toward post-secondary readiness, participation in advanced curriculum, graduation rates, enrollment and retention in post-secondary education, and measures that describe unique community goals, such as workforce preparations, creativity and innovation, citizenship preparation, student and parent engagement, climate measures, parent satisfaction, and service learning.

While the emphasis of CBAS is on descriptive reporting of progress toward community-established milestones, the reporting would include comparisons to statewide averages and to comparable communities.

In conclusion, the purpose of establishing a community-based accountability system would be to engage the community in the education of its youth by establishing rigorous standards that meet the unique needs of that community. This locally designed accountability system would be more rigorous than the standards currently determined by the state and would eliminate an overreliance on standardized testing.

Within a state-designed framework of accreditation, including accountability reporting standards and key common performance indicators, local districts would be accountable to their communities for student learning. In the end, this would result in better public schools, reinvigorate the voices of local communities in the education of their youth, and promote an ethos of customization for students that will better prepare them for responsible citizenship.

## District Exemplars Reflecting Consortium Principles

Consortium and Consortium Associate districts are committed to seamlessly integrating digital devices, global connections, and flexible, student-centered environments. They are focused on high-priority learning standards and on decreasing the emphasis on state-mandated standardized tests by relying on multiple assessments. These districts are leading the state in preparing college- and career-ready students, and many of them are seeking out the involvement of their local communities and parents in developing community-based accountability systems.

Following is a sampling of programs and initiatives that these districts have implemented to create student-centered schools that prepare future-ready graduates. (These exemplars are viewable online at <http://www.tasanet.org/transformation>)

### Amarillo ISD

Amarillo ISD pre-K through fifth-grade teachers meet each Tuesday after school in a campus computer lab for “Techno Tuesday.” Led by the district’s digital learning leader, the hour-long weekly gathering is designed to help teachers become more tech savvy as the school district places a renewed focus on using digital resources. Article: <https://goo.gl/dYxrCl>

Amarillo ISD’s *Profile of a Graduate* is a collaboration between district leadership and the community to address the challenges of graduates and employers in the 21st century. In a series of brainstorming sessions, more than 60 community leaders representing at least 18 local industries and career fields came together, along with the district’s executive directors, high school principals, school board members, and students. Their challenge was to identify the skills and characteristics necessary to build the dynamic workforce the community needs. Website: <https://goo.gl/AdhtGj>

More Amarillo ISD students than ever are enrolling in post-secondary education. In 2014-15, Caprock High School took an innovative approach to getting students excited about college by working with each senior student until 100 percent of the Class of 2015 had applied to a post-secondary education program. In 2015-16, Caprock and other Amarillo ISD campuses expanded their reach to not only get students applying to post-secondary education programs, but actually registering them for classes and making sure they’ve applied for financial aid. Article: <https://goo.gl/lv3guR>

Also, more than 300 Amarillo ISD students — a number that has doubled in the last five years — earned professional certifications, along with their high school diplomas, in 2015-16. All district high schools offer certification opportunities that align with the state’s career and technical education (CTE) endorsement requirements for high school graduates. These include software certifications in fields like architecture, engineering, and graphic design, metalworking and welding certifications, and ServSafe — the restaurant industry standard for food safety and handling. Certifications in allied health careers enable students to work as EMTs, certified nursing or medical assistants, or certified EKG technicians, right out of high school. Article: <https://goo.gl/hcs3YT>

### Anderson-Shiro CISD

Anderson-Shiro CISD’s teachers are encouraged to utilize platforms such as Google Apps for Education to create “Google Classrooms” for their students. Teachers provide meaningful content while students learn real-world applications in a hands-on environment. Video: <https://vimeo.com/193445900>

### Beeville ISD

In 2016-17, Beeville ISD became the first Texas school district to make computer science a requirement for students at all grade levels. Article: <https://goo.gl/oj6NCU>

### Clear Creek ISD

Clear Creek ISD has implemented standards-based grading in pre-K, Kindergarten, and first grade. This system allows students to know exactly what is expected in each content area and provides parents with a more detailed outline of learning expectations and student progress. Video: <https://vimeo.com/187237099>

Clear Springs High School biology teacher Garrett Krueger’s biology lessons lead students through a process of discovery through which they take more ownership of their learning. Video: <https://vimeo.com/155018625>

Computer tech classes at Clear Falls High School prepare students for careers in computer maintenance and repair with hands-on learning. Video: <https://vimeo.com/139712567>

The district’s auto tech program, which includes an internship component, helps prepare students for careers as auto technicians by providing real-world experience. Video: <https://vimeo.com/138632402>

Since polling its community and finding agreement among educators, parents, business and civic leaders, and school board members that the pathway to realize the district's mission is not beholden solely on improved results on standardized tests, CCISD has been leading the way in advocating for and on behalf of communities across Texas to create their own local accountability systems. The CCISD community told district leaders that student success, in their community, is measured by what happens every day, in every school; the amount of human and financial resources invested in providing students varied opportunities; and the level of public trust and community involvement. The district's annual report provides a clear view of individual achievement and strengths as well as areas needing improvement. See the latest report: <https://goo.gl/xMpbXM>

## College Station ISD

How is student success measured in College Station ISD? Not solely with STAAR scores. The district's community-based accountability system is based on its ability to: recruit, develop, and retain qualified and dedicated staff; provide a challenging, relevant, engaging, and aligned curriculum; provide an array of services, programs, and opportunities to meet the needs of students; create classroom and campus cultures that involve families; and commit to responsible use of taxpayer dollars. Since 2013-14, College Station ISD has published a community-based accountability report for the district as a whole as well as for individual campuses. Download the 2016 district-wide report: <https://goo.gl/3M19rc>

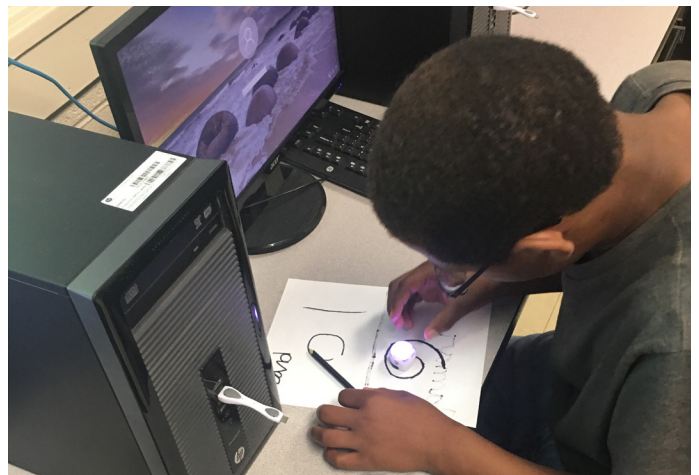
Through a partnership with education technology expert Alan November, College Station ISD teachers and administrators are working to reinvent their classrooms and school structures to use technology in ways that will challenge students and better prepare them for the future. Video: <https://goo.gl/I5ODxh>

College Station ISD has developed an online learning support portal called Success 24/7. It allows for all of the content for a course to be put in one place so students who missed a class or simply need to hear a lesson again can access it easily. Video: <https://goo.gl/RHc7HQ>

## DeKalb ISD

In 2012, DeKalb ISD decided to make changes so that it would better equip students for their futures. A committee of administrators, parents, students, and community members conducted a needs assessment that birthed a new vision for DeKalb ISD — a vision that ALL students would have the skills necessary to be successful in the 21st century. Video: <https://vimeo.com/192192725>

In DeKalb ISD digital integration is occurring at all grade levels. The focus is not simply on bringing in technology, but rather on using it to take student learning to a higher level. Video: <https://vimeo.com/192194396>



Prior to the start of the 2016-17 school year, DeKalb ISD hosted the North East Texas Leading and Learning Conference to bring educators together to explore best practices for engaging students and increasing productivity, and to focus on leading and learning through the use of technology. Video: <https://vimeo.com/192189347>  
Website: <http://edtechsavvy.wixsite.com/netx>

## Eanes ISD

Flexible learning environments across the school district encourage student interaction, collaboration, and choice but still allow for independent study. Hear from Eanes ISD students and teachers about the benefits of modern spaces for 21st century learning. Video: [https://youtu.be/O\\_x4OLsfReQ](https://youtu.be/O_x4OLsfReQ)

The Westlake Business Incubator course is designed to get students excited about becoming true entrepreneurs by giving them the opportunity to create and fully develop their own product or service. Real-world entrepreneurs and business experts serve as coaches and mentors guiding student teams through the process of ideation, market research, and business plan development. Video: [https://youtu.be/8\\_ShAEx85C4](https://youtu.be/8_ShAEx85C4)

## Friendswood ISD

In 2015, Friendswood ISD opened a new, high-tech library at Cline Elementary that features a green screen room for students to create videos, a 3D printer, a space for students to present wirelessly with iPads, and microscopes connected to a monitor, allowing students to explore and investigate as slides come to life. Article: <https://goo.gl/X3ID1Z>

## Harlingen CISD

In September 2015, *Newsweek* ranked Early College High School in Harlingen CISD as one of the top high schools in the nation in its “Beating the Odds 2015” list, coming in at number 84 on the list of 500 public high schools across the U.S. for their outstanding efforts in preparing students for college while also overcoming the obstacle posed by students at an economic disadvantage. Learn more: <https://goo.gl/FSjZ1Q>

## Hillsboro ISD

Hillsboro ISD’s BRIDGE (Bringing Internet and Devices for a Global Education) is a 1:1 program that provides Hillsboro High School students with devices for 24/7 learning. It also provides mi-fis that students who do not have internet access at home may check out. Students must complete a digital citizenship course before they can receive a device. Personalized monthly BRIDGE training is provided for teachers at Hillsboro High School, and monthly BRIDGE Walks by administrators assess the impact of the devices on student learning as well as provide ideas for areas of upcoming BRIDGE teacher training. Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJOQP23FA0M>

## Hudson ISD

Five years ago Hudson ISD Superintendent Mary Ann Whiteker, the 2016 Texas Superintendent of the Year, made big changes in her district, calling for a reduction on the emphasis on standardized testing in favor of multiple, diagnostic assessments. She reported to the State Board of Education in January 2016 about how the changes have benefited the students in her district. Video: <https://goo.gl/mCehYz>

## Huntsville ISD

In 2016-17, Huntsville ISD began rolling out the Huntsville Engaged Learning Model (HELM) for teachers who applied to be part of the program. This new model of learning has been an adjustment for some students who were used to some classes being more about memorizing facts and less about higher-level thinking. One seventh grader at Mance Park Middle School shared with the district her experience and insights about 21st century learning, the STAAR, and her future. Video: <https://vimeo.com/193951430>

Huntsville ISD’s transportation and technology departments are on the leading edge of meeting a challenge faced by large, semi-rural school districts: How can districts use technology to assist students, some of whom spend a lot of time each day on a school bus, in making

the most of their commute time? And, how can districts harness that same technology for student safety and security? Huntsville ISD collaborated with an IT company to answer those questions and deliver those services. Video: <https://vimeo.com/194064305>

In fall 2016, Huntsville ISD engaged 1,000-plus members of the community in a series of events designed to lead to the development of a strategic plan and community-based accountability system. District leaders recently provided a video update to the community on the progress they are making together toward identifying the community’s beliefs, values, and priorities related to the education of their children. Video: <https://vimeo.com/193960397>

## Lake Travis ISD

Hudson Bend Middle School Texas history teacher Dana Schrader walks her students through the 1969 Apollo 11 moon landing courtesy of the Google Expeditions Pioneer Program. The program provides students with the ability to visit locations around the world through Google Cardboard virtual reality headsets. Website: <https://goo.gl/NmUbXd>



ChickTech: High School is a yearlong program that introduces high school girls to different aspects of careers in technology. It is designed to inspire them to pursue careers in the technology and computer science fields. Thirteen Lake Travis High School girls attended the kickoff of the Austin Chapter of ChickTech inaugural program in November 2016 at Google. Website: <https://goo.gl/3Z70ay>

## Lewisville ISD

In partnership with the community, Lewisville ISD created a technology plan to serve as the foundation for digital integration. The process laid the groundwork for a long-term plan that will help the districts prepare

future-ready students in a way that the community supports. Video: <https://vimeo.com/194580409>

Lewisville ISD has also created flexible learning environments to engage today's learners. The environments help teachers build trust with students and encourage collaboration. Video: <https://vimeo.com/194584369>

Starfish Café provides opportunities for students with disabilities to gain the much needed employability skills necessary to allow them to compete with their non-disabled peers for competitive paid employment in the community. The supportive environment of Starfish Café creates a safe place for students with a wide variety of ability levels to work on developing their soft skills, such as appropriate workplace behaviors, communication skills and technical skills. The vision of LISD is that "All of our students enjoy thriving, productive lives in a future they create." The core belief behind LISD's Strategic Design directly supports the foundational programming of Starfish Café. Video: <https://vimeo.com/194582043>

## Lytle ISD

At Lytle Primary, innovative learning experiences provide students opportunities for collaboration and critical thinking every day. Student creativity is nurtured through STEM challenges and Makerspaces. Students solve problems together in gardens. They ask questions and find answers. The goal is to have students committed and equipped to become competent lifelong learners. Video: <https://vimeo.com/194067070>

As 5- and 6-year-old students at Lytle Primary know, technology is everywhere all the time. They have learned they can use technology to create and to communicate. They demonstrate how they use technology to share their learning and their creations. Video: <https://vimeo.com/194577383>

To design lessons focused on high-priority learning standards, Lytle ISD provides teachers with a second conference period called Design Time. This time is a facilitated collaboration time during which teachers discuss how standards can be taught to a "profound level" by examining student work, teaching strategies, and assessment opportunities in an effort to design more engaging learning opportunities "where students are not just consumers of knowledge, but creators of knowledge." Video: <https://vimeo.com/194068132>

## Mesquite ISD

Each of the high schools in the district will soon have a prototype classroom that uses flexible furniture and

technology to encourage students to interact and work together, with the teacher as the learning facilitator. Article with link to video: <https://goo.gl/41NV8u>

## Midway ISD

Midway ISD in Region 12 has joined the "makerspace" movement, turning school libraries into workshops where children can get hands-on, tinker, and prototype their ideas in cardboard, plastic, or pixels. Article: <https://goo.gl/DOPXn0>

## New Braunfels ISD

Since 2012, New Braunfels ISD's TEC21 initiative has been "Transforming Every Classroom in the 21st Century" by providing constant access to personal devices for all students regardless of income. TEC21 was designed to engage students in the collaboration, creativity, communication, and critical thinking necessary for a post-K-12 education and the workforce. Video: <https://vimeo.com/193609434> Website: <http://tec21.org/>

## Northwest ISD

During the 2012-13 school year, a committee of Northwest ISD students, parents, community members, staff, and administrators identified community values and proposed measures of success in the school district. They included student achievement in areas including SAT/ACT scores, internships, college scholarships, dual-credit courses, volunteer and community outreach, community partnerships, and more. The NISD Board of Trustees unanimously approved the Community-Based Accountability Measures of Success in June 2013. Visit the NISD Community Dashboard, a website that provides student, staff, and district operational data in one location: <https://goo.gl/nS0tJu>

## Prosper ISD

Prosper ISD is giving a team of high school students the opportunity to try their hand at comedy with a student-run TV show launched in September as part of the school's scholastic broadcast program. "The Mid Morning After 10, But Still Just Before Lunch Show" has even caught the attention of talk-show host Stephen Colbert, who invited the student team and its adviser Brian Kennedy to New York to visit his set and learn more about how his show is produced. Article with video: <https://goo.gl/dCmDTf>

## Roscoe Collegiate ISD

Roscoe Collegiate High School was designated a 2016-17 ECHS Demonstration Site. The early college

program has experienced consistent growth since its inception in 2009–10. Completion rates for the associate degree have also grown steadily, beginning with one student in the first year of the program and increasing to 90 percent of the Class of 2015. The current expectation is to sustain 90 percent or greater of each class to complete the blended model associate degree through Roscoe Collegiate and Western Texas College. The Roscoe P-20 model also includes a STEM Academy designed to supply critical agricultural STEM workforce shortage areas. Slide presentation: <https://goo.gl/t2zGnY> Video: <https://vimeo.com/193424540> The district is also planning a veterinary education (Edu-Vet) facility so that students can earn certificates and apprenticeships. Prospectus: <https://goo.gl/sVgsr8>

## Round Rock ISD

Round Rock ISD’s career and technical education program is based on the belief that the curricula of the 21st century should combine rigorous academics with relevant career education. Programs of Study (POS) have been developed for each of the 16 federally defined Career Clusters of the States’ Career Clusters initiative. A Career Cluster is a grouping of occupations and broad industries based on commonalities. The POS represent a recommended sequence of coursework based on a student’s interest or career goal. CTE website: <https://goo.gl/PpXdC6> Video featuring culinary arts program: <https://youtu.be/Mn4PIDWcxRA>

Students at Herrington Elementary School use simple robots called Ozobots to learn coding. Ozobots use a simple color language that allows students to draw mazes, paths and intersections. Video: <https://youtu.be/CUZ7QSI2Gfg>

## Royse City ISD

Royse City ISD’s Chrome Squad program was among just 12 innovative programs selected to be featured in *Texas School Business* magazine’s 10th Annual Bragging Rights issue. The Chrome Squad is a team of student interns who provide tech support and training to teachers and students who use Google Chromebook laptops and other devices. The program began in tandem with the high school’s 1:1 technology initiative, in which all students received Chromebook laptops to help them stay connected inside and outside the classroom. When Royse City ISD leaders first explored the idea of training student interns to help run their 1:1 initiative, they found only one school in the country with a similar program. Now, due to the success of the Chrome Squad and the C4L initiative, leaders from other districts are visiting

Royse City High School to see the program in action. Article: <https://goo.gl/aulgUF>

## San Angelo ISD

San Angelo ISD started a tech badge program that provides differentiated professional development for district educators. The program promotes the use of effective technology resources in the classroom and provides a way for teachers and students to learn, teach, create, collaborate, and share with others on their campus. Staff earn “professional” badges when they demonstrate how they have used a specific digital resource in their daily work. They earn “integration” badges when they demonstrate how they have integrated a digital resource into student learning. When teachers display their badges, they become a resource for others on their campus. Video: <https://youtu.be/YNrOk0hjF1M> Website: <https://goo.gl/oPyT45>

## Sunnyvale ISD

Sunnyvale ISD recently opened a next-generation learning space at its middle school. The design provides more open space and flexibility for student collaboration. It will help equip students with the skills needed to tackle a future in the 21st century. Video: <https://youtu.be/sG9nn3eclDw>



Sunnyvale ISD’s SISD Writes program was among just 12 innovative programs selected to be featured in *Texas School Business* magazine’s 10th Annual Bragging Rights issue. It is a platform for students to grow as writers through meaningful, interactive feedback from their teachers. Each year, students are issued a set of folders in Google Drive for different types of writing. Throughout the school year, students add writing samples from all core content areas, including ELA, math, science,



social studies, and pieces of real-world, relevant writing. Core teachers then provide feedback based upon the respective rubric. This past fall, Sunnyvale ISD joined six other districts in a TEA pilot program to test a new state writing assessment tool that utilizes the strengths of the SISD Writes program. The pilot is part of House Bill 1164, which went into effect in 2015. In lieu of the traditional STAAR writing test, Sunnyvale ISD fourth and seventh graders will be assessed through the TEA pilot. Freshmen and sophomores will still take the STAAR/end-of-course exam, but their teachers will continue to evaluate their writing through the SISD Writes program. Article: <https://goo.gl/qEUnXj>

Since 2015, Sunnyvale ISD has presented parents and other members of its community with an annual report that provides information related to student performance that extends beyond standardized test scores. The district has designed its own rating system that evaluates the district's performance at a higher standard than that required by the state and by including items of importance to the community: future-readiness; 21st-century skills/workforce development; instructional practices; fine arts; extra- and co-curricular/wellness; community and parent involvement; special populations; Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) data; and STAAR data. Download the 2016 community report: <https://goo.gl/GqjfcQ>

## Willis ISD

Students at Brabham Middle School in Willis ISD use Lego Robotics to learn how to build and program a robot. Students get hands-on opportunities to practice programming and explore future career options through weekly challenges. The program incorporates both math and science skills. Video: <https://vimeo.com/192031598>

Curriculum coaches helped elementary teachers in Willis ISD implement Kim Sutton strategies into their math lessons to engage students, increase learning speed, and make learning math facts fun. Video: <https://vimeo.com/192032384>

Teachers in Willis ISD have implemented a daily math review element as a warm-up to start math class each day. The review is a quick independent practice for students with teacher guidance. Once complete, the students talk with friends and reflect on the learning. Teachers have seen an increase in student use of higher-level questioning and responses. Video: <https://vimeo.com/192032278>

## State Board of Education's Long-Range Plan for Education

The State Board of Education has statutory responsibility to develop and update a long-range plan for public education. Specifically, Section 7.102(c)(1), Texas Education Code, provides that “The board shall develop and update a long-range plan for public education.” Additionally, the SBOE has been given the responsibility to develop a Long-Range Plan for Technology. Section 32.001, Texas Education Code, provides that

“The State Board of Education shall develop a long-range plan for:

1. acquiring and using technology in the public school system;
2. fostering professional development related to the use of technology for educators and others associated with child development;
3. fostering computer literacy among public school students so that by the year 2000 each high school graduate in this state has computer-related skills that meet standards adopted by the board; and
4. identifying and, through regional education service centers, distributing information on emerging technology for use in the public schools.”

The Texas High Performance Schools Consortium recognizes that its statutory authority creates a unique opportunity for collaboration with the State Board of Education in developing a common vision for public education that supports the interests and expectations of the state so that all Texas students are future-ready. The statute directs the Consortium to focus attention on “methods for transforming public schools in this state by improving student learning through the development of innovative, next-generation learning standards and assessment and accountability systems, including stan-

dards and systems relating to career and college readiness.” (Section 7.0561(b), Texas Education Code).

These efforts are further supported by the requirement that the “State Board of Education and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, in conjunction with other appropriate agencies, shall ensure that long-range plans and educational programs established by each board provide a comprehensive education for the students of this state under the jurisdiction of that board, extending from early childhood education through post-graduate study,” through the P-16 Council.

In September 2014, the State Board of Education, with input from the Consortium, approved the appointment of an Ad Hoc Committee to review and determine the viability and utility of developing a long-range plan for public education. In its initial meetings, the committee outlined a process that will focus on three purposes:

- Internally (create and define the SBOE’s vision regarding its role in fulfilling the stated mission)
- Externally (bring together stakeholders in order to identify the core values that will guide Texas public education into the future)
- Globally (identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges going forward)

In response to the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee, in September 2016, the Board approved a work plan to be followed in creating the Long-Range Plan. An 18-member steering committee, including five Board members; one representative from each of the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Texas Workforce Commission; and 10 stakeholders to be nominated by State Board of Education members.

## Legislative Recommendations

Since its inception, the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium has focused on identifying methods to transform learning opportunities for all students in response to its statutory responsibility, as stated in Senate Bill 1557 (82<sup>nd</sup> Legislature), to “inform the governor, legislature, and commissioner concerning methods for transforming public schools in the state by improving student learning through the development of innovative, next-generation learning standards and assessment and accountability systems,” (Section 7.0561(b), Education Code).

These efforts, as detailed in this report, complement the ongoing legislative initiatives related to the state assessment and accountability system that began with HB 5, as well as the State Board of Education’s current focus on updating the long-range plan for public education and streamlining the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

The Consortium recommends consideration of legislation consistent with the principles stated in Senate Bill 1557 (82<sup>nd</sup> Texas Legislature):

- (1) Engagement of students in digital learning, including engagement through the use of electronic textbooks and instructional materials and courses offered through the state virtual school network
- (2) Emphasis on learning standards that focus on high-priority standards
- (3) Use of multiple assessments of learning capable of being used to inform students, parents, districts, and charter schools on an ongoing basis concerning the extent to which learning is occurring
- (4) Reliance on local control that enables communities and parents to be involved in the important decisions regarding the education of their children

These legislative recommendations include the following:

## Digital Integration

Support and encourage professional development programs that recognize and leverage the power and impact of technology and the digital environment on teaching and learning.

Support equitable access to state of the art technology for all public school teachers and children to meet the demands of the digital economy.

## High-Priority Learning Standards

Support the State Board of Education as it continues to follow its adopted processes to revise and streamline the TEKS in all subject areas through information sharing and collaborative efforts with board members (e.g., by recommending curriculum experts with knowledge of high-priority learning standards to serve on review committees or to provide public testimony).

## Multiple Assessments

Continue to move away from the over-reliance on high-stakes standardized tests, incorporating multiple assessments for learning and of learning and provide for the development and implementation of new measures and collections of evidence of student learning, including digital portfolios.

Limit the grades 3–8 student assessment program to include only those assessments necessary to meet the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act. Eliminate the high-stakes requirement specific to Texas students only in grades 5 and 8 who must pass the STAAR math and reading tests in order to advance to the next grade level.

## Community-based Accountability

Repeal the A-F letter-grade school/district rating system established by HB 2804 in 2015. Replace it with an assessment and accountability framework that is not over-reliant on high-stakes testing, that is well balanced and instructionally sensitive, with a defensible state testing program that emphasizes high-priority learning standards, has value for students, parents, and teachers, measures what each community holds important in promoting college and career readiness, and supports improved instruction and a process for local input.

# Appendix A: Legislation and Rules Relating to the Consortium

## Senate Bill 1557

AN ACT relating to the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 7, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 7.0561 to read as follows:

Sec. 7.0561. TEXAS HIGH PERFORMANCE SCHOOLS CONSORTIUM. (a) In this section, “consortium” means the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium established under this section.

(b) The Texas High Performance Schools Consortium is established to inform the governor, legislature, and commissioner concerning methods for transforming public schools in this state by improving student learning through the development of innovative, next-generation learning standards and assessment and accountability systems.

(c) From among school districts and eligible open-enrollment charter schools that apply using the form and in the time and manner established by commissioner rule, the commissioner may select not more than 20 participants for the consortium. The districts selected by the commissioner must represent a range of district types, sizes, and diverse student populations, as determined by the commissioner in accordance with commissioner rule. To be eligible to participate in the consortium, an open-enrollment charter school must have been awarded an exemplary distinction designation under Subchapter G, Chapter 39, during the preceding school year.

(d) The number of students enrolled in consortium participants may not be greater than a number equal to five percent of the total number of students enrolled in public schools in this state according to the most recent agency data.

(e) The application process under Subsection (c) must require school districts and open-enrollment charter schools applying to participate in the consortium to submit a detailed plan designed to both support improved instruction of and learning by students and provide evidence of the accurate assessment of the quality of learning on campuses. The plan submitted by a school district may designate the entire district or one or more district campuses as proposed consortium participants. The plan submitted by a district or open-enrollment charter school must include:

(1) a clear description of each assessed curricular goal included in the learning standards adopted in accordance with Subsection (f)(2);

(2) a plan for acquiring resources to support teachers in improving student learning;

(3) a description of any waiver of an applicable prohibition, requirement, or restriction the district or charter school would want to apply for; and

(4) any other provisions required by the commissioner.

(f) In consultation with interested school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, and other appropriate interested persons, the commissioner shall adopt rules applicable to the consortium, according to the following principles for a next generation of higher performing public schools:

(1) engagement of students in digital learning, including engagement through the use of electronic textbooks and instructional materials adopted under Subchapters B and B-1, Chapter 31, and courses offered through the state virtual school network under Subchapter 30A;

(2) emphasis on learning standards that focus on high-priority standards identified in coordination with districts and charter schools participating in the consortium;

(3) use of multiple assessments of learning capable of being used to inform students, parents, districts, and charter schools on an ongoing basis concerning the extent to which learning is occurring and the actions consortium participants are taking to improve learning; and

(4) reliance on local control that enables communities and parents to be involved in the important decisions regarding the education of their children.

(g) The commissioner shall convene consortium leaders periodically to discuss methods to transform learning opportunities for all students, build cross-district and cross-school support systems and training, and share best practices tools and processes.

(h) The commissioner or a school district or open-enrollment charter school participating in the consortium may, for purposes of this section, accept gifts, grants, or donations from any source, including a private entity or governmental entity.

(i) To cover the costs of administering the consortium, the commissioner may charge a fee to a school district or open-enrollment charter school participating in the consortium.

(j) With the assistance of the school districts and open-enrollment charter schools participating in the

consortium, the commissioner shall submit reports concerning the performance and progress of the consortium to the governor and the legislature not later than December 1, 2012, and not later than December 1, 2014. The report submitted not later than December 1, 2012, must include any recommendation by the commissioner concerning legislative authorization for the commissioner to waive a prohibition, requirement, or restriction that applies to a consortium participant. That report must also include a plan for an effective and efficient accountability system for consortium participants that balances academic excellence and local values to inspire learning and, at the state level, contingent on any necessary waiver of federal law, may incorporate use of a stratified random sampling of students or other objective methodology to hold consortium participants accountable while attempting to reduce the number of state assessment instruments that are required to be administered to students. The commissioner shall seek a federal waiver, to any extent necessary, to prepare for implementation of the plan if enacted by the legislature. This subsection expires January 1, 2018.

SECTION 2. (a) Not later than January 1, 2012, the commissioner of education shall adopt rules as required under Section 7.0561, Education Code, as added by this Act.

(b) Not later than March 1, 2012, the commissioner of education shall make available to school districts and open-enrollment charter schools the application forms required under Section 7.0561, Education Code, as added by this Act. The commissioner of education shall require school districts and open-enrollment charter schools that intend to apply to participate in the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium to submit applications not later than June 1, 2012.

(c) Not later than July 1, 2012, the commissioner of education shall formally select participants for the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium established under Section 7.0561, Education Code, as added by this Act. The consortium must begin operating not later than the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year.

SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2011.

[S.B. No. 1557 passed the Senate on May 3, 2011, by the following vote: Yeas 29, Nays 2]

[S.B. No. 1557 passed the House on May 23, 2011, by the following vote: Yeas 142, Nays 0, one present not voting]

## Commissioner's Rule and Selection Process

### Commissioner's Rule

The Commissioner's rule that identified the process, eligibility, criteria and methodology for selecting Consortium participants became effective May 6, 2012. Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 102, Subchapter II §102.1201 set forth the procedures for eligible school districts and charter schools to apply for and participate in the Consortium in compliance with TEC §7.0561.

### Eligibility

In order to be eligible to apply for participation in the Consortium, the Commissioner's rule required that school districts and open-enrollment charter schools meet the following criteria:

1. A school district or its participating campus(es) must have received either national, statewide, or regional public acknowledgement, from an organization relying on expertise in the field of education, for district-wide or campus-wide excellence in academic performance or innovative practices in one of the areas described by the Consortium principles;
2. A school district and open-enrollment charter school must be in compliance with the TEA audit requirements determined under §109.41. A school district and its participating campus(es) must not have been awarded the lowest performance rating as its most recent state academic accountability rating (i.e. it must have been rated either *Academically Acceptable*, *Recognized*, or *Exemplary* in the 2011-2012 state accountability system); and
3. An open-enrollment charter school must have been awarded an exemplary rating as its most recent state academic accountability rating as required by statute.

## Application Review Criteria

The Texas Education Agency used the following criteria to evaluate and rate districts applying to be a part of the Consortium:

- Strength of applicant's experience
- Quality of the proposed plan
- Quality of project management
- Adequacy of resources committed to the project

In addition to the quality of the application, TEA, used the most recent PEIMS enrollment data, considered the extent to which the applicant's participation would contribute to the Consortium's ability to be representative of the following categories:

- **District Type:** The Consortium should include at least one of each of the following types of districts: Urban, Suburban, Non-metropolitan, and Rural.
- **District Size:** the Consortium should include at least one of each of the following sizes of districts: Large district ( $\geq 10,000$  student population); Mid-size district (1,000 to 9,999 student population); and Small district ( $\leq 999$  student population).
- **Student Demographics:** the Consortium should include an aggregate student population that mirrors the state student population in terms of:
  - Ethnicity and race;
  - Economically disadvantaged;
  - English language learners;
  - Students receiving special education services; and,
  - Gifted and talented students

## Selection Process

On April 27, 2012, the commissioner made available the Request for Proposal, including application guidelines and forms, to all school districts and eligible open-enrollment charter schools. By the date the applications were due, June 29, 2012, TEA had received 33 applications from school districts located across eight regions. Upon receipt of the applications, TEA commenced the Consortium application review process using a rubric developed to determine eligibility by measuring the merits of each proposal broken down into specific criteria. Each of the rubric criteria were weighted based on priorities stipulated within the application guidelines. A minimum of three agency staff with expertise in digital learning, learning standards, assessments, and curriculum reviewed each application.

Final scores were averaged and applications placed in rank order. An analysis of the ranking revealed that, for applications ranked 19<sup>th</sup> through 23<sup>rd</sup>, the separation in numerical scores was less than one point between each application and the next-ranked application. After reviewing the ranked applications to determine whether the top-scoring districts represented the diversity of the state's public schools given the pool of applicants, the decision was made to select the top 23 applicants for admission into the Consortium. On September 19, 2012, the Commissioner of Education invited these 23 applicant districts to join the Consortium.

## House Bill 18, Section 1

AN ACT relating to measures to support public school student academic achievement and high school, college, and career preparation.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Sections 7.0561(b), (c), (d), and (j), Education Code, are amended to read as follows:

(b) The Texas High Performance Schools Consortium is established to inform the governor, legislature, State Board of Education, and commissioner concerning methods for transforming public schools in this state by improving student learning through the development of innovative, next-generation learning standards and assessment and accountability systems, including standards and systems relating to career and college readiness.

(c) From among school districts and eligible open-enrollment charter schools that apply using the form and in the time and manner established by commissioner rule, the commissioner may select not more than 30 participants for the consortium. The districts selected by the commissioner must represent a range of district types, sizes, and diverse student populations, as determined by the commissioner in accordance with commissioner rule. To be eligible to participate in the consortium, an open-enrollment charter school must have been awarded a distinction designation under Subchapter G, Chapter 39, during the preceding school year.

(d) The number of students enrolled in consortium participants may not be greater than a number equal to 10 percent of the total number of students enrolled in public schools in this state according to the most recent agency data.

(j) The school districts and open-enrollment charter schools participating in the consortium shall submit reports concerning the performance and progress of the consortium to the governor, the legislature, the State Board of Education, and the commissioner not later than December 1 of each even-numbered year:

## Appendix B: Summary of Characteristics of Consortium Districts

The 22 districts participating in the Consortium make up a diverse group of districts ranging from one district that serves 113 students to one serving 53,270 students. The Consortium includes three small districts ranging from 113 to 823 students, seven mid-size districts ranging from 1,453 to 8,796 students, and 12 large districts ranging from 11,539 to 53,270 students. No large urban districts or open-enrollment charter schools applied for admittance to the Consortium.

<b>Consortium Member</b>	<b>County/Region</b>	<b>Total District Enrollment</b>	<b>District Size</b>	<b>District Type</b>
Anderson-Shiro CISD	Grimes (093)/06	823	Small	Non-metropolitan
Clear Creek ISD	Galveston (084)/04	40,640	Large	Suburban
College Station ISD	Brazos (021)/06	12,377	Large	Suburban
Coppell ISD	Dallas (057)/10	11,539	Large	Suburban
Duncanville ISD	Dallas (057)/10	12,924	Large	Suburban
Eanes ISD	Travis (227)/13	7,937	Mid-size	Suburban
Glen Rose ISD	Somerville (213)/11	1,663	Mid-size	Non-metropolitan
Guthrie CSD	King (135)/17	113	Small	Rural
Harlingen CISD	Cameron (031)/01	18,625	Large	Suburban
Highland Park ISD	Dallas (057)/10	7,061	Mid-size	Suburban
Klein ISD	Harris (101)/04	49,180	Large	Suburban
Lake Travis ISD	Travis (227)/13	8,796	Mid-size	Suburban
Lancaster ISD	Dallas (057)/10	7,051	Mid-size	Suburban
Lewisville ISD	Denton (061)/11	53,270	Large	Suburban
McAllen ISD	Hidalgo (108)/01	24,590	Large	Non-metropolitan
McKinney ISD	Collin (043)/10	24,653	Large	Non-metropolitan
Northwest ISD	Denton (061)/11	19,760	Large	Suburban
Prosper ISD	Collin (043)/10	7,060	Mid-size	Suburban
Richardson ISD	Dallas (057)/10	38,496	Large	Suburban
Roscoe Collegiate ISD	Nolan (177)/14	582	Small	Rural
Round Rock ISD	Williamson (246)/13	47,098	Large	Suburban
White Oak ISD	Gregg (092)/07	1,453	Mid-size	Suburban

With respect to most demographic features, the Consortium is fairly well-aligned with the overall composition of the state's public schools. While there is a smaller percentage of students in the Consortium that are economically disadvantaged, at-risk, and Hispanic than the statewide student population, the Consortium is generally reflective of the larger statewide student population, particularly given the pool of districts that applied.