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 86th Texas Legislature
Members of the Texas State Board of Education

December 2018

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.

Members of the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium

Superintendent	District
Scott Beene	Anderson-Shiro CISD
Greg Smith	Clear Creek ISD
Clark C. Ealy	College Station ISD
Brad Hunt	Coppell ISD
Marc Smith	Duncanville ISD
Tom Leonard	Eanes ISD
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Bret Champion	Klein ISD
Brad Lancaster	Lake Travis ISD
Elijah Granger	Lancaster ISD
Kevin Rogers	Lewisville ISD
Jose Gonzalez	McAllen ISD
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Ryder Warren	Northwest ISD
Drew Watkins	Prosper ISD
Jeannie Stone	Richardson ISD
Kim Alexander	Roscoe Collegiate ISD
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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 11th Street, Austin, TX 78701-2617, 512-477-6361, www.tasanet.org

Contents

The concepts and examples included in this report are also featured online at www.FutureReadyTX.org.

Background

Establishment and Expansion of the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium

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

In 2015, the 84th Texas Legislature's House Bill 18 increased the number of districts and charter schools permitted to participate in the THPSC to 30. (As of this reporting, the commissioner of education had not yet initiated the process by which more districts and charter schools may join.) HB 18 also increased the number of students who may participate in the THPSC to no more than 10 percent of the total Texas public school population (up from 5 percent).

HB 18 also amended the statutory purpose of the THPSC, which is charged with informing the governor, 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.

THPSC Goal and Principles

The goal of the THPSC 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 business community, and individuals in higher education agree that they are looking for students who are critical thinkers, innovators, problem solvers, collaborators, and good communicators. The THPSC 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 (www.futurereadytx.org/goals/digital-learning)
- 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" (www.futurereadytx.org/goals/high-priority-learning-standards)
- 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 (www.futurereadytx.org/goals/multiple-assessments)
- 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 (www.futurereadytx.org/goals/cbas)

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 THPSC 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.

THPSC Districts

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

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

Creation of the Consortium Associates

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 THPSC. 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 THPSC established a process to invite other Texas school districts engaged in school transformation initiatives to participate in the research efforts and help move this important work forward.

In 2013, the THPSC invited other Texas school districts to join in the work as Consortium Associates and partner with the THPSC 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 THPSC 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 THPSC'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 THPSC 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 THPSC as Consortium Associates.

Consortium Associate Districts

Alamo Heights ISD
Alvin ISD
Amarillo ISD
Austin ISD
Bastrop ISD
Beeville ISD
Big Sandy ISD (ESC 6)
Bloomington ISD
Blue Ridge ISD
Bryan ISD
Bullard ISD
Callisburg ISD
Channing ISD
Chapel Hill ISD (ESC 7)
Chapel Hill ISD (ESC 8)
Commerce ISD
Corsicana ISD
DeKalb ISD
Denton ISD
Devine ISD
Diboll ISD
Dripping Springs ISD
El Paso ISD
Falls City ISD
Fort Elliott CISD
Friendswood ISD
Frisco ISD
Georgetown ISD
Godley ISD
Goliad ISD
Goodrich ISD
Graford ISD
Graham ISD
Grand Prairie ISD
Granger ISD
Greenville ISD
Groesbeck ISD
Harleton ISD
Harmony ISD
Hays CISD
Hereford ISD
Hillsboro ISD
Hudson ISD
Huffman ISD
Humble ISD
Huntsville ISD
Hutto ISD
Jayton-Girard ISD
Karnes City ISD
La Villa ISD
Latexo ISD
Leander ISD
Little Elm ISD
Livingston ISD
London ISD
Lufkin ISD
Lytle ISD
Mesquite ISD
Miami ISD
Midway ISD (ESC 12)
Millsap ISD
Mission CISD
Montgomery ISD
Nacogdoches ISD
Navasota ISD
New Braunfels ISD
New Caney ISD
New Diana ISD
O'Donnell ISD
Pine Tree ISD
Royse City ISD
San Angelo ISD
San Marcos CISD
Santa Fe ISD
Splendora ISD
Stephenville ISD
Sunnyvale ISD
Trinity ISD
Vidor ISD
Waxahachie ISD
West ISD
Willis ISD
Wilson ISD
Woodville ISD

Timeline of THPSC Activities

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 THPSC 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 THPSC as specified in SB 1557 and to develop the first report required by the legislation.

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

November 2013 – The THPSC 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 THPSC 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 THPSC (former maximum was 20). As of December 2018, the commissioner had not yet initiated the process by which additional districts and charter schools may apply to join the THPSC. HB 2804, also passed in 2015, created the Texas Commission on Next-Generation Assessments and Accountability. The bill required that an educator in a THPSC-participating school district be included on the Commission and that the Commission consider the THPSC's recommendations when it prepared its report.

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

December 2016 – The third THPSC report was prepared for delivery prior to the 85th legislative session. In it, the THPSC recommended the repeal of the A-F letter-grade school/district rating system in favor of "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."

2017 – Building on the work of the THPSC and recognizing the continuing need to develop alternatives to the A-F state-driven accountability system, the Texas Public Accountability Consortium (TPAC) was formed. TPAC is a group of Texas school districts, including some THPSC districts, working to build on the success of community-based accountability systems already in use in districts across the state by developing next-generation measures and assessments that would enable wider use of such systems.

December 2018 – This, the fourth, THPSC report was prepared for delivery prior to the 86th legislative session.

Positive Results of Previous THPSC Reports to the Legislature

SB 1557 required the commissioner of education to submit reports detailing the progress and performance of the THPSC 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 THPSC'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 THPSC acknowledges the flexibility provided by the 2013 Texas Legislature's HB 5, which substantially changed 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 THPSC appreciates the 2015 Texas Legislature's efforts to pass legislation that aligned with several recommendations 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 THPSC on the commission, which met seven times between January and June 2016. During a panel discussion in February 2016, then-THPSC Steering Committee Co-chairs Karen Rue and Dawson Orr (formerly the superintendents of Northwest and Highland Park ISDs, respectively) provided multiple recommendations.

While recommendations in the Commission's final report (https://goo.gl/VXPwG2) represented relatively small steps toward true next-generation assessment and accountability, the report did recommend limiting state testing to the readiness standards and made some other recommendations that the THPSC supports.

In addition, among the "considerations for further study" included in the report was a study of alternative, district-based assessment and accountability systems. The report recommended 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 accountability systems that promote family and community engagement and reflect their communities."

December 2016 Recommendations and 2017 Legislative Action

The THPSC appreciates the 2017 Texas Legislature's efforts to pass legislation that aligned with several recommendations from the Consortum's December 2016 report, including the addition of a requirement in SB 1839 that teacher certification candidates undergo training in digital learning, including a digital literacy evaluation and a prescribed digital learning curriculum.

The Legislature also took a small step toward lessening the state's over-reliance on high-stakes standardized tests by extending the availability of Individual Graduation Committees until September 2019. These committees allow students who have successfully completed the curriculum requirements for high school graduation but have not passed one or two of the STAAR end-of-course exams required for graduation to graduate on a case-by-case basis.

HB 657 also reduces the high stakes and repetitive testing of a student in grades 5 or 8 whose ARD committee can make the determination to promote the student to the next grade level if the committee concludes that the student made sufficient progress in the student's IEP, without requiring the student to take a STAAR reading or math test a second time.

While the Legislature did not repeal the A-F letter-grade school/district rating system established in 2015 and replace it with a community-based accountability framework as the THPSC recommended, HB 22 (2017 regular session) did delay campus A-F ratings until 2019, require that the method used to evaluate performance for A-F ratings allow for the mathematical possiblity that all districts and campuses receive an A, and created a local accountability plan pilot program. Unfortunately, the THPSC does not foresee the pilot resulting in a true model of community-based accountability as it is limited by a requirement that districts give campuses A-F labels based largely on student STAAR scores.

For this reason, the THPSC — working through the Texas Public Accountability Consortium (TPAC), formed in 2017 — 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. Although several TPAC districts are participating in the TEA-facilitated pilot, TPAC's work is not part of the pilot.

Work of the Texas Public Accountability Consortium

The THPSC continues to research and explore a community-based accountability framework through the Texas Public Accountability Consortium (TPAC), formed in 2017. This work is being done because the THPSC realizes that accountability is important, but the A-F school/district rating system implemented in 2018 is based primarily on standardized test scores and therefore not designed to provide meaningful feedback for improvement.

To prepare future-ready students, schools must collaborate with business and community stakeholders to align educational goals with diverse industry needs to build a talent pool for jobs, careers, and lifelong learning. Community-based accountability achieves this by empowering school districts to design their own internal systems of assessment and accountability that meet general state standards while fostering innovation to interlace educational preparation to align with demand-driven workforce needs. Community-based accountability systems engage students, parents, educators, business, and community stakeholders in building a learning community that honors and supports the work of Texas public schools. TPAC envisions Texas public schools led by local communities, benefiting every student, with next-generation accountability systems giving a full and transparent account of the successes and struggles within the district and its campuses.

Since 2017, 11 THPSC districts and 51 additional Texas public school districts have worked together to create an accountability system that establishes a partnership between communities and their schools that: enable each educator to account to the local community for his or her decisions in a manner that is accurate, believable, and actionable; support districts in returning the practice of assessment to educators; and create resources that all Texas districts will eventually be able to access to implement their own CBAS.

These districts came together with these common beliefs:

- The next generation of assessment and accountability must be created and driven locally.
- State efforts to communicate the quality of schools lacks the ability to account for schooling in a meaningful way, leaving policymakers, parents, and the public without a true understanding of the quality of their schools.
- A well-crafted community-based accountability system clearly communicates the quality of effort undertaken by a school and a district clearly to stakeholders.
- Educators are in the best position to assess student learning. By assigning this responsibility to the state, assessment and accountability are relegated to passive compliance activities for school systems.
- Current, high-stakes, testing-based accountability systems influence instruction in negative ways and lead to increased compliance, but fail to increase benefit for any student.

Since 2017, the 62 districts participating in TPAC have:

- Designed an approach to community-based accountability that accounts for all roles within public education to answer the question "For what am I accountable, and to whom?"
- Constructed an engine of continuous improvement to guide change in seven systems throughout a district: Student Learning and Progress; Student Readiness; Engaged and Well-Rounded Students; Community Engagement and Partnerships; Professional Learning and Quality Staff; Fiscal and Operational Systems; and Safety and Well-Being.
- Constructed a draft manual that TPAC districts can use to assist in implementation of community-based accountability systems.
- Published in academic ("Jobs for the Future") and popular ("Huffington Post," "Texas Tribune," "EdCircuit" Scholastic Administrator Blog, "Forbes") publications to advocate for community-based accountability and performance assessment. Find links to the articles at https://goo.gl/H1LW4w.
- Developed assessment expertise with task development, rubric development, and scoring within participating districts for both summative and formative assessment purposes.
- Crafted a sample letter for superintendents to use with their school boards, community communications, policymaker outreach, and others interested in understanding community-based accountability and next-generation assessment and accountability.
- Created tools and resources necessary to support a district implementing community-based accountability.

The THPSC believes the current state accountability system cannot and does not fully measure the capabilities of every student or the qualities of every school. In the spirit of offering concrete solutions, these districts are at various stages of building a more meaningful accountability that respects every child, every educator, and every community.

Learn more about TPAC at www.futurereadytx.org/key-players/tpac.

Principles That Guide the THPSC From Vision to Action

The major work of the THPSC 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.

House Bill 18, passed in 2015, amended the statutory purpose of the THPSC, 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.

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 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.

Learn more about digital integration at www.futurereadytx.org/goals/digital-learning.

High-Priority Learning Standards

The THPSC 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

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)

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.

Collaboration With State Board of Education on Streamlining of TEKS

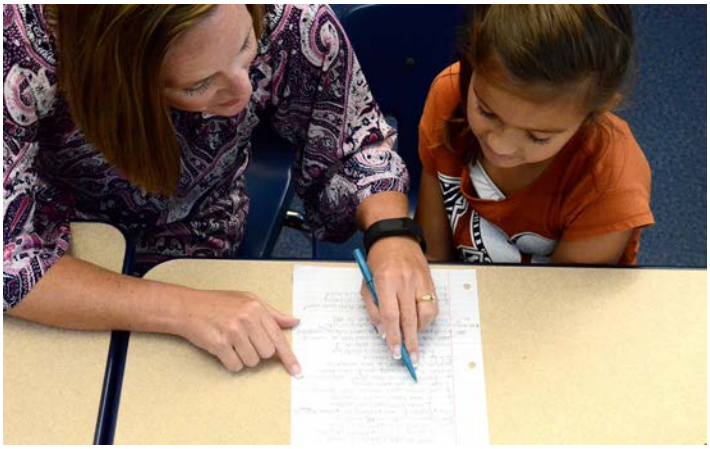
Since 2014, THPSC members have established and continue to build relationships with members of the State Board of Education (SBOE), TEA staff, legislators, and others who have a stake in the TEKS revision process.

The SBOE continues to revise and refine the TEKS streamlining process and engage members of the THPSC and others as they do so.

During the past few years, THPSC 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 learning standards that can reasonably be taught within a school year and that can be taught in depth.

Learn more about high-priority learning standards at www.futurereadytx.org/goals/high-priority-learning-standards.

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 the state accountability system and its over-reliance on a single-test as a measure of learning, the current state 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 THPSC 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.

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.

Learn more about multiple assessments at www.futurereadytx.org/goals/multiple-assessments.

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 THPSC 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.

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.

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.

Learn more about college and career readiness at www.futurereadytx.org/goals/college-career-readiness.

Community-Based Accountability

Community-based accountability 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.

Community-based accountability 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 community-based accountability 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.

Community-based accountability systems include:

Student and classroom-centered evidence of learning

- 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.
- 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. 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.

Strategic use of standardized testing

- 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 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.
- The state should pursue changes in federal policy that would allow use of 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.

- 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.

Comprehensive, descriptive reporting to parents and communities

- 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. 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.
- A community-based accountability system functions within a revitalized and transformed system of learning in which school accountability is communicated to students, parents, and community.
- 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.
- Community-based accountability system reporting draws from the collections of classroom evidence, strategic and customized testing, and the results of external reviews and validation of student learning. Districts 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.
- Locally designed accountability systems are more rigorous than the standards currently determined by the state and would eliminate an overreliance on standardized testing.

Learn more about community-based accountability at www.futurereadytx.org/goals/cbas.

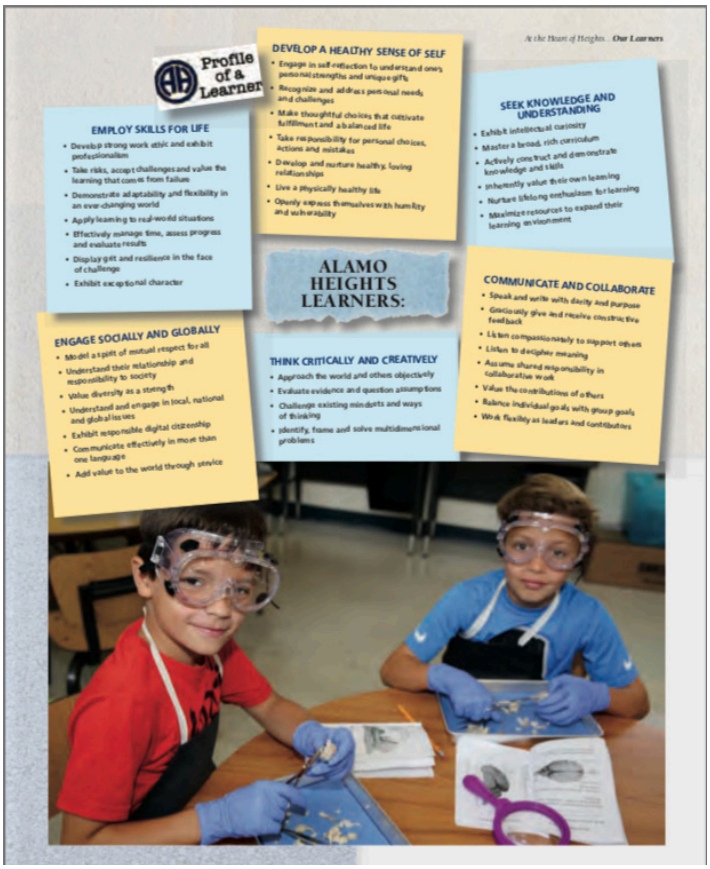
District Exemplars Reflecting Consortium Principles

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. See these and more exemplars at www.FutureReadyTX.org.

Alamo Heights ISD

A Profile of a Learner is a collection of characteristics, skills, and traits that a community wants its learners to have. The Alamo Heights ISD (AHISD) Profile of a Learner places students at the center of every decision and provides teachers with a roadmap for creating learning experiences for students. AHISD's Profile is enhanced by the Engaged Classroom model, which is in its third year of its "responsible roll out." With a total of 140 Engaged Classrooms now implemented across the district, thousands of students have access to new learning environments that embody the creativity, collaboration, digital literacy, critical-thinking, and problem-solving recommendations established in the Profile of a Learner. The student experience is enhanced through a focus on positive relationships, effective technology integration, a flexible classroom environment, and instructional best practices. Instructional coaching is provided to guide teachers as they design engaging experiences for students. Video: https://goo.gl/NgsRhE



Alamo Heights ISD has launched a Heights Business Incubator at its high school. A groundbreaking program, it is the first high school business incubator in the San Antonio area that provides students with access to mentorship, coaching, and support from local business leaders and entrepreneurs. This national entrepreneurship program, designed by INCubatorEdu, is an authentic learning experience — one that provides students with opportunities to conceive, develop, and launch a startup business. Video: https://goo.gl/HCKnk4

Bryan ISD

Project Lead the Way at Rudder High School in Bryan ISD engages students in interdisciplinary projects through pre-engineering STEM courses, with the ultimate goal of turning dreamers into doers. Students have the opportunity to learn essential skills like problem solving, critical thinking, communication, collaboration and perseverance — while earning college credit. Video: https://goo.gl/azoYAr

District growth is not always just about numbers — it's also about a new mindset. Regardless of their current circumstances, Bryan ISD students and staff members are encouraged to see the possibilities ahead and realize that hard work will lead to successfully reaching their goals. By taking advantage of extracurricular activities, dual credit and International Baccalaureate programs, and many more options, the Bryan ISD family is realizing that Opportunity Awaits! Video: https://goo.gl/ABPcvp

Bryan ISD students at all levels are encouraged to use technology to enhance and further their classroom learning. Kindergarten students at Fannin Elementary used augmented reality to enable their creative projects — done on paper — to come to life in interactive, 3D forms! Video: https://goo.gl/FDSEHi

Chapel Hill ISD (ESC 8)

Chapel Hill ISD in Region 8 has adopted a new motto: "We are Chapel Hill, where everybody is somebody, and everybody uses digital technology." Supported by its board of trustees, administrators, and community stakeholders, the district has implemented a groundbreaking technology initiative that integrates digital learning at all levels. Students are the beneficiaries of this innovative academic atmosphere; they graduate from Chapel Hill ISD as confident, college-and-career-ready professionals prepared to contribute to the digital world. Video: https://youtu.be/TBWWg832PZQ

Clear Creek ISD

Clear Creek ISD has implemented Standards-Based Grading, a system that allows teachers, students, and parents to plot a child's academic progress based on high-priority learning standards. The new grading system has replaced the traditional point/letter grade system in grades PK-4. Teachers have received extensive, job-embedded training on this new system, from redesigning lessons to starting student-led parent/teacher conferences. Video: http://vimeo.com/187237099

Clear Creek ISD has a robust Career and Technical Education program with signature offerings at each of its seven high schools. This past year, the district launched a dentistry program. Video: https://vimeo.com/255102640

For the past four years, Clear Creek ISD has asked its community, "What characteristics would you use to determine the quality of education in our district?" Year after year, residents have highlighted the following categories in response to this question: 1) create a variety of learning opportunities; 2) meet the needs of students; 3) strengthen the quality of curriculum by hiring qualified staff; 4) build persons of character; and 5) inspire high-levels of community involvement. STAAR results were perennially last on their list of priorities. To meet these expectations, Clear Creek ISD has implemented or expanded programs to meet student academic needs, harness community involvement through life-changing mentor programs, and create a culture of leaders as early as age 5. To measure its success based

on the characteristics the community outlined, Clear Creek ISD annually publishes a Community-Based Accountability Report. This report is available online as well as provided to parents and community members at various forums.

Report: https://goo.gl/JritxR

Coppell ISD

Coppell ISD uses technology as a teaching tool integrated into the curriculum to instill knowledge, foster collaboration and communication, and demonstrate learning, via: 1:1 iPads in grades K-12; personalized courses and assignments; interactive apps and digital portfolios that demonstrate learning outcomes; and digital citizenship initiatives and anti-cheating software that ensures responsible and ethical learning. Richard J. Lee Elementary, Coppell High School, and New Tech High at Coppell are designated as Apple Distinguished Schools for their continuous innovation in learning, teaching, and the school environment. According to the company, Apple Distinguished Schools are considered some of the most innovative schools in the world, as only 400 schools in 29 countries receive this distinction.

Student entrepreneurs taking the INCubatorEdu class at Coppell High School participated in a "Shark Tank"-like competition at VARIDESK headquarters in Coppell with a "final pitch night" as the course's culminating event in May 2018. The year-long course offered students an authentic and real-world entrepreneurship experience that allowed them to create and fully develop their own product or service. Three teams earned the opportunity to present their ideas in front of prominent local business and community member judges. Team "Simple Smart," consisting of three CHS students, won the competition for their startup business that pitched self-moving garbage containers that make trash pick-up more efficient. INCubatorEdu was featured in this "Dallas Innovates" article: https://goo.gl/VNkEXB

DeKalb ISD

Active Learning Space environments in DeKalb ISD schools have been designed to engage students and encourage student interaction, collaboration, choice, and critical thinking necessary for post K-12 education and the workforce. DeKalb ISD stakeholders talk about the benefits of these spaces for 21st century learning in this video: https://youtu.be/W3EK_4Q94sM

Grand Prairie ISD

Grand Prairie ISD was chosen by the Holdsworth Center to be in the first District Leadership Cohort. As part of the cohort's work, a new definition of leadership was developed that provides a framework for decision-making and district vision. GPISD had been working under the framework of Six Plays for many years. This video was shown district-wide in preparation for organizational transformation: https://goo.gl/BMb8Sb

Grand Prairie ISD is removing barriers for student success. Students like Spencer are encouraged and supported in exploring areas that interest them. Spencer is empowered to explore his world in a creative way that may even involve a really strong battery and re-engineering his mom's vacuum. As a 1:1 technology district, GPISD gives students access to advanced technology and the freedom to explore coding, programming and computer engineering. GPISD gives students like Spencer both the structure to learn and the opportunity to create. We may all have furry vacuums in the future. Video: https://goo.gl/U8U2jS

Grand Prairie ISD is focused on both college and career preparation for its students. In some cases, those worlds collide. As an example, Daniel will be attending college while working in his chosen field. He has studied dentistry in high school and has earned certifications that will prepare him to be success in his future career, exotic animal dentistry. Yes, Daniel is combining his love of animals and his skills in dentistry. He has worked at a large cat rescue and will continue to explore the world of veterinary dentistry. Video: https://goo.gl/WBJKFX

Harlingen CISD

Harlingen CISD has implemented a district-wide robotics program across all elementary, middle, and high school campuses that has ensured accessibility of STEM-related activities for all students. Robotics club sponsors meet to ensure vertical alignment across all levels and to cultivate a FIRST program that seamlessly arranges concepts and skills from introductory to mastery. Students use drafting, CAD skills, 3D modeling, and 3D printing technologies, adhering to engineering safety and documentation protocols. Robotics teams in Harlingen CISD are responsible for the

research, design, assembly, troubleshooting, and operation of different types of robots, including underwater, remotely operated vehicles (ROV), autonomous robots, and rockets with sensors and recovery systems. The high school teams have begun collaborating with elementary schools through mentoring and motivational events. All aspiring learners are experiencing first-hand the application of critical skills to real-world scenarios. HCISD is now the only district in the Rio Grande Valley to offer a full-scale robotics program at every campus. Video: https://goo.gl/fcwga4

The expansion of Career and Technical Education opportunities continued at Harlingen CISD in the 2018-2019 school year, bringing new career pathways to the district's existing academies, including a brand-new veterinary sciences academy. The new programs also include EMT, HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning), diesel technician, veterinary assistant, and plumbing. Through strategic and well-designed plans, HCISD has created an array of valuable CTE academies and programs that enhance the college and career readiness of the student body. The diesel technician program will complement the existing automotive services program. The new EMT program will be available to students in the Firefighters Academy because all firefighters are required to complete EMT training. With these new career pathways, 37 certifications are now available to students across all seven HCISD academies. Community partners, such as SpawGlass, have also committed to the students at HCISD by hosting a summer camp that provides students with authentic learning experiences for the past three years. Video: https://goo.gl/PWUGCF

Highland Park ISD

Teachers involved in Highland Park ISD's STEAM initiative say it is a fun way to teach that encourages students to think more deeply as they work to create something on their own. It integrates several disciplines, including reading and math, for real-world learning and engages not only students, but teachers as well. Video: https://youtu.be/k5wRiWGqbeY

Latexo ISD

Latexo ISD uses Chromebooks in just about every classroom. Every teacher has a whiteboard with a projector or a touch screen panel that they use to deliver their instruction to students. Learn more about the different areas and grade levels that use technology in this video: https://vimeo.com/299485446

Lytle ISD

Lytle ISD has implemented cross-curriculum projects that culminate in field trips that integrate digital learning tools. A recent field trip to Lost Maples included students bringing iPads to collect visual samples for biology and geography, as well as compose written reflections. Video: https://vimeo.com/299487292

For five years, Lytle ISD has been hosting a Student Showcase, a community engagement event that incorporates digital technologies. Students exhibit technology projects across all grade levels, receiving feedback from the community. Video: https://vimeo.com/298258372

Organizational transformation at Lytle ISD has spawned Career and Technical Education-inspired programs as wide-ranging as culinary services and student legislative sessions. Many of these programs incorporate digital technologies. A recent Skull Studios Student Club initiative had more than 30 students working on digital design, digital yearbooks, video production, livestream district events, social media posts, audio announcements, and PA setups. The Studios Student Club initiative provided students with the opportunity to incorporate drone video recording and photography in their special projects.

Roscoe Collegiate ISD

The Roscoe Collegiate P-20 System Model for Student Success is a collaborative, sustainable model for: 1) breaking the cycle of generational poverty by creating among all students, families, and communities a high standard and

expectations for college and career success, especially in STEM-based workforce shortage areas; 2) providing affordable access to relevant, rigorous education that leads to simultaneous attainment of high school diplomas/associate degrees and industry certifications by 90 percent of all students; and 3) strengthening a spirit of innovation necessary to transform and extend educational best practice. The district's next goal is for 90 percent of the associate degree cohort to earn bachelor's degrees.

The STEM context in Nolan County is principally agriculture and engineering with potential in biotechnologies. RCISD's P-20 program is seeking new ways to collaborate, share students and resources, and expand the elective opportunities for place-based students. The RCISD intention is to add partners, including Texas A&M University, to increase the educational attainment of students in small rural Texas schools and to multiply the social capital essential for Texas to prosper in the 21st century.

Video: https://goo.gl/xrUpBQ

Drone program video: https://vimeo.com/298262032

San Angelo ISD

A learner-centered environment is evident in San Angelo ISD, where Advanced Placement students from Lake View High School build models of roller coasters that they use to demonstrate and explain calculus and physics principles to fourth graders. The project teaches the high school students a real-world application of the principles but also brings the concepts to elementary level. Video: https://goo.gl/Q757JS

Splendora ISD

Splendora ISD is designing intentional structures and processes for student voice to inform their work in curriculum, instruction, leadership and culture. Students created a video for use in a teacher training in which they discuss different aspects of student engagement through NAAAPC: Novelty and Variety, Affirmation, Authenticity, Affiliation, Product Focus, and Choice. Video: https://vimeo.com/298269301

Stephenville ISD

Selected to join Digital Promise's prestigious League of Innovative Schools in 2015, Stephenville ISD has implemented a 1:1 initiative, coined iChampion, to leverage the power of technology to create a personalized, student-centric learning environment. Now, four years into the program, 100 percent of Stephenville ISD's students have access to a device. With this goal reached, the district continues to focus on the district's six core values — Growth, Integrity, Initiative, Relationships, Personalization, and Excellence — by redesigning the learning environment, extending it beyond the classroom, and strengthening home and community partnerships. Through the powerful and smart integration of technology, Stephenville ISD's students work together to improve outcomes and enrich their learning experiences. Video: https://youtu.be/iCIZfOkYcss

Vidor ISD

At Vidor High School, each freshman takes a semester-long course called M.A.P.S. (Methods for Academic and Personal Success). M.A.P.S. is a locally developed class that addresses the soft skills students need to be successful in academics, interpersonal skills, and future careers. Vidor ISD realizes that there is a plethora of needs that must be addressed for students to achieve. By enrolling each ninth-grade student in M.A.P.S., the district is setting the stage for student success, providing students with a strong foundation in resiliency and leadership that assists with college-and-career readiness. Video: https://vimeo.com/299509858

The Future of Public Education in Texas

The THPSC 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

Texas High Performance Schools Consortium Legislative Recommendations

Since its inception, the THPSC has focused on identifying methods to transform learning opportunities for all students in response to its statutory responsibility, as stated in Senate Bill 1557 (82nd 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 recent focus on updating the long-range plan for public education and streamlining the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

The THPSC recommends consideration of legislation consistent with the principles stated in Senate Bill 1557 (82nd 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 and expanded by HB 22 in 2017. 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.

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 THPSC recognizes that its statutory authority creates a unique opportunity for collaboration with the SBOE 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 standards 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 postgraduate study," through the P-16 Council.

In November 2018, after several years of collaborative work with the THPSC and other stakeholders, the SBOE adopted a new Long-Range Plan for Public Education that establishes goals through the year 2030.

The plan establishes an overall goal of access and equity so that all children receive what they need to learn, thrive, and grow. This reflects a desire to have equitable access to funding, advanced courses, and modern technology.

Developed after assessing the strengths, opportunities, and challenges across Texas, the plan also focuses on student engagement and empowerment; family engagement and empowerment; and educator preparation, recruitment and retention as key areas that are vital to educational progress.

Read the key vision statements and recommendations in the long-range plan at https://goo.gl/kBt3E1.

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 (≥ 10,000 student population); Mid-size district (1,000 to 9,999 student population); and Small district (≤ 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 19th through 23rd, 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 115 students to one serving 53,396 students. The Consortium includes three small districts ranging from 115 to 839 students, seven mid-size districts ranging from 1,508 to 9,203 students, and 12 large districts ranging from 11,851 to 53,396 students. No large urban districts or open-enrollment charter schools applied for admittance to the Consortium.

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.

Consortium Member	County/Region	Total District Enrollment	District Size	District Type
Anderson-Shiro CISD	Grimes (093)/06	839	Small	Non-metropolitan
Clear Creek ISD	Galveston (084)/04	41,061	Large	Suburban
College Station ISD	Brazos (021)/06	12,874	Large	Suburban
Coppell ISD	Dallas (057)/10	11,851	Large	Suburban
Duncanville ISD	Dallas (057)/10	12,761	Large	Suburban
Eanes ISD	Travis (227)/13	8,058	Mid-size	Suburban
Glen Rose ISD	Somerville (213)/11	1,726	Mid-size	Non-metropolitan
Guthrie CSD	King (135)/17	115	Small	Rural
Harlingen CISD	Cameron (031)/01	18,650	Large	Suburban
Highland Park ISD	Dallas (057)/10	7,054	Mid-size	Suburban
Klein ISD	Harris (101)/04	50,394	Large	Suburban
Lake Travis ISD	Travis (227)/13	9,203	Mid-size	Suburban
Lancaster ISD	Dallas (057)/10	7,315	Mid-size	Suburban
Lewisville ISD	Denton (061)/11	53,396	Large	Suburban
McAllen ISD	Hidalgo (108)/01	24,195	Large	Non-metropolitan
McKinney ISD	Collin (043)/10	24,626	Large	Non-metropolitan
Northwest ISD	Denton (061)/11	20,900	Large	Suburban
Prosper ISD	Collin (043)/10	8,254	Mid-size	Suburban
Richardson ISD	Dallas (057)/10	38,671	Large	Suburban
Roscoe Collegiate ISD	Nolan (177)/14	622	Small	Rural
Round Rock ISD	Williamson (246)/13	47,653	Large	Suburban
White Oak ISD	Gregg (092)/07	1,508	Mid-size	Suburban