

AGENCY STRATEGIC PLAN

FISCAL YEARS 2017 TO 2021

BY

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

JUNE 24, 2016

SIGNED: _____

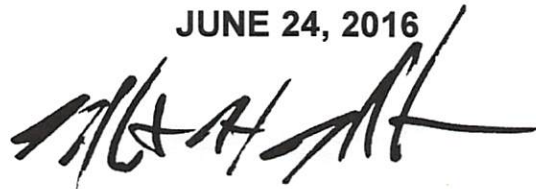
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Agency Mission

The Texas Education Agency will improve outcomes for all public school students in the state by providing leadership, guidance, and support to school systems.

Agency Goals and Action Plan

Goal 1—Recruiting, Supporting, and Retaining Teachers and Principals

The agency will improve educator pre-service and in-service training, and implement systems of continuous educator improvement, because teachers are the greatest asset in our school systems to improve student outcomes.

Specific Action Items to Achieve Goal 1

1. By August of 2018, establish and implement a more rigorous teacher preparation and certification process that uses performance metrics and student achievement data to evaluate teacher preparation program effectiveness. Improvement in pre-service training will help ensure an excellent teacher in every classroom and a world-class principal on every campus.
2. By August of 2018, incentivize and support clinical residency models in teacher pre-service programs. Clinical residency models are innovative because they place new teachers in the classrooms of experienced and effective teachers to learn best practices.
3. During the fall semester of 2017, pilot Lesson Study as part of Project Share (now Texas Gateway) as a method for teachers to improve their effectiveness, share best practices online with other teachers, improve student outcomes, and provide a platform to demonstrate mastery within the teaching profession. Lesson Study is cost effective as teachers develop and submit world-class lessons to TEA for review. The best Lesson Studies will be shared with teachers across the state on the Project Share (now Texas Gateway) website. Lesson Study is part of TEA's effort to improve teacher in-service training and support by introducing teacher-driven, reflective, job-embedded professional development and structures.
4. Monitor the ongoing implementation of the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) and the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS) to provide teachers and principals with the tools they need to improve teacher effectiveness and facilitate job-embedded professional learning. These efforts will help focus on building the capacity of principals and school leaders to improve instruction through observation, coaching, and facilitation of professional growth.
5. By August of 2018, pilot and expand distributed leadership staffing models that improve principals' span of control to provide more time for them to provide feedback to teachers while growing the leadership pipeline.
6. Throughout the next five years, continue to investigate and prosecute educator misconduct to ensure student safety and uphold the integrity of the teaching profession.

How Goal or Action Items Supports Each Statewide Objective

1. Accountable to the tax and fee payers of Texas.
These action items are cost-effective means for ensuring the highest quality educator preparation and support. They reflect a conscious effort to put taxpayer dollars as close to teachers and their classrooms as possible and are driven by the belief that educators are professionals who can continue to develop their skills and must be held accountable for student achievement results.
2. Efficient such that maximum results are produced with a minimum waste of taxpayer funds, including through the elimination of redundant and non-core functions.
These action items put a premium on improving student outcomes by using existing resources such as regional education service centers and do not require additional funds. They support the agency's core function of improving teacher quality through existing and new programs.

3. Effective in successfully fulfilling core functions, measuring success in achieving performance measures, and implementing plans to continuously improve.
These action items are directly aligned with the agency's core function to ensure that each child in the state of Texas has quality educators. These action items reflect the agency's commitment to continuous improvement and to implement new initiatives and best practice models for educators.
4. Providing excellent customer service.
These action items put educators first and provide them with the support they need to be successful with the students of Texas. Improving student outcomes and achieving the performance measures set by the legislature are at the forefront of each action item.
5. Transparent such that agency actions can be understood by any Texan.
TEA will provide guidance so that all programs will be fully understood by Texas educators and legislators. There will be no jargon or confusing language, but rather common-sense approaches to achieve results by improving the effectiveness of Texas educators.

Goal 2—Improving Transparency of District and Campus Academic and Financial Performance

The agency will improve the transparency of school district, open-enrollment charter school and campus academic and financial performance ratings so that all stakeholders understand the strengths in their schools and school systems and can more effectively chart paths of improvement.

Specific Action Items to Achieve Goal 2

1. By August 2018, create a comprehensive reporting model for the state's new A–F academic accountability system that provides a clear label and presentation of performance results for each school district, open-enrollment charter school, and individual campus. The model will ensure that parents, educators, legislators, and taxpayers have a comprehensive picture of each school's strengths and weaknesses and have actionable, user-friendly, and transparent information to drive improvement at every school system level (state, district and charter, campus, and individual student) in accordance with HB 2804 (84th Texas Legislature).
2. By September 2018, align the A–F system with the federal accountability requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to eliminate redundant systems that potentially send conflicting messages to stakeholders.
3. By August 2017, improve the Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) by providing each school district and open-enrollment charter school an A–F rating that better identifies areas of strength and weakness in financial operations and allows for comparison.
4. Continue to execute an annual statewide student assessment program that rapidly and accurately provides information to stakeholders that allows them to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Implement any changes resulting from the state's efforts to review options as a result of the Texas Commission on Next Generation Assessments and Accountability.
5. By March 2017, redesign the confidential student reports (CSRs) provided to teachers, parents, and students regarding student performance on the state assessment and other measures so that results can be readily understood, information can be actionable, and instructional approaches can be tailored to individual student needs.
6. By September 2019, build comprehensive online dashboards that display performance information so that parents, educators, and taxpayers can go to one place to understand the academic, financial, and profile information for each school district, open-enrollment charter school, and individual campus in the state and easily make comparisons.

How Goal or Action Items Supports Each Statewide Objective

1. **Accountable to tax and fee payers of Texas.**
These action items will ensure that performance information about school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, and individual campuses is meaningful and transparent so that parents, students, and taxpayers can hold schools accountable for performance.
2. **Efficient such that maximum results are produced with a minimum waste of taxpayer funds, including through the elimination of redundant and non-core functions.**
These action items, especially efforts to align the A–F system with the federal accountability requirements under ESSA, will eliminate redundant systems that potentially send conflicting messages to the public. Further, improved CSRs, dashboards, and financial rating systems will drive student improvements and ensure maximum results are produced with a minimum waste of resources.
3. **Effective in successfully fulfilling core functions, measuring success in achieving performance measures, and implementing plans to continuously improve.**
These actions items are consistent with TEA's core functions of measuring the success of the agency, school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, campuses, and individual students in achieving performance objectives and of making results transparent to ensure continuous improvement at every level.
4. **Providing excellent customer service.**
These action items are designed to improve transparency of student results so that all of the agency's customers—educators, parents, students, taxpayers, and legislators—can understand and take actionable steps at all system levels to drive continuous improvement.
5. **Transparent such that agency actions can be understood by any Texan.**
The action items will ensure that the agency provides clear student performance and financial integrity information about each school district, open-enrollment charter school, and campus in the state so that parents, educators, legislators, and taxpayers can easily understand each school's strengths and weaknesses and have actionable, user-friendly, and transparent information to drive improvement at every level.

Goal 3—Building A Foundation of Literacy and Numeracy

The agency will ensure that our youngest students are capable of reading and doing mathematics at grade level by third grade because a strong foundation sets students on a path to academic success and helps prevent expensive taxpayer-funded remediation later in life.

Specific Action Items to Achieve Goal 3

1. By August 2021, ensure that kindergarten through third-grade teachers in low-performing schools and schools with high percentages of students qualifying for free and reduced-priced lunch have had the opportunity to participate in a teacher mathematics achievement academy and received access to high-quality content and instructional strategies aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in accordance with SB 934 (84th Texas Legislature).
2. By August 2021, ensure that kindergarten through fifth-grade teachers in low-performing schools and schools with high percentages of students qualifying for free and reduced-priced lunch have had the opportunity to participate in a teacher literacy achievement or reading-to-learn academy and received access to high-quality content and instructional strategies aligned to the TEKS in accordance with SB 925 and SB 972 (84th Texas Legislature).

3. By April 2018, support the State Board of Education's (SBOE) process to streamline the TEKS in foundation subject areas to ensure that the TEKS are easily understandable by educators, parents, legislators, and taxpayers; sets standards that are targeted, meaningful, and achievable in a school year; and represent essential student learning in every subject and at every grade level.
4. By December 2016, begin providing information on early indicators of third-grade reading and math proficiency by publishing reports on metrics demonstrating progress toward satisfactory third-grade performance, including prekindergarten enrollment and kindergarten readiness.
5. By September 2016, award high-quality prekindergarten grants to school districts and open-enrollment charter schools and monitor and report on district implementation consistent with HB 4 (84th Texas Legislature).
6. By August 2020, work with the Texas Workforce Commission to support local public-private partnerships that increase high-quality prekindergarten opportunities for children across Texas.
7. By September 2016, implement legislation requiring a pilot program to provide struggling campuses with reading excellence teams that provide high-quality, targeted, intense, data-driven training to improve student reading outcomes in accordance with SB 935 (84th Texas Legislature).

How Goal or Action Items Supports Each Statewide Objective

1. Accountable to tax and fee payers of Texas.
Implementing these action items will provide intense support for elementary school teachers of reading and mathematics, ensuring more consistent delivery of high-quality instruction across the state and the improvement of student outcomes in school and life. This will save taxpayer money by decreasing remediation costs, the costs of higher education, and other costs associated with low student attainment in core foundational skills. Improved and clearly written TEKS standards will help schools focus on essential knowledge that will help students develop the skills necessary to be productive citizens. Providing access to high-quality prekindergarten for more students will help Texas families ensure their children are sufficiently prepared for future educational success and reduce later remediation costs. By monitoring and reporting on high-quality prekindergarten programs, TEA will provide taxpayers with data that ensures the program is being implemented according to HB 4.
2. Efficient such that maximum results are produced with a minimum waste of taxpayer funds, including through the elimination of redundant and non-core functions.
These action items support legislation that establishes some of the agency's core functions, such as implementing statewide reading and math teacher achievement academies, which will help eliminate the need for education service centers, school districts, and open-enrollment charter schools to develop their own expensive and duplicative professional development programs and resources devoted to implementing high-quality prekindergarten programs.
Improved and clearly written TEKS standards will eliminate the need for school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to develop their own tools, such as TEKS guidance documents, to interpret the standards. The TEKS standards will also improve educational attainment throughout the state.
3. Effective in successfully fulfilling core functions, measuring success in achieving performance measures, and implementing plans to continuously improve.
These action items support legislation that establishes some of the agency's core functions, such as implementing statewide reading and math teacher achievement academies and high-quality prekindergarten programs. They also support the agency's core function of ensuring that students in the public education system demonstrate exemplary performance in reading and writing and exemplary performance in the understanding of mathematics.
4. Providing excellent customer service.

These action items support customer service by providing teachers with meaningful support in reading and mathematics and school districts and open-enrollment charter schools with access to high-quality prekindergarten funding. Additionally, improved and clearly written TEKS standards and reports on student progress toward grade three grade-level proficiency can be easily understood by educators, parents, legislators and taxpayers.

5. Transparent such that agency actions can be understood by any Texan.

These action items support transparency in helping Texans understand student progress toward grade-level performance by third grade. Additionally, improved and clearly written TEKS standards support transparency in understanding expectations for students in each grade.

Goal 4—Improving Low-Performing Schools

The agency will reduce the number of D or F rated campuses by half within five years of the launch of the state's A–F academic accountability system, because all students should have access to high-performing schools.

Specific Action Items to Achieve Goal 4

1. By October of each year, TEA will thoroughly review and provide best practice feedback, templates, training, and thoughtful recommendations to improve the “campus turnaround plans” that struggling school districts and open-enrollment charters schools must submit to TEA. When possible, TEA will provide intense technical support to ensure campus turnaround objectives are implemented.
2. By September of 2018, develop a system to identify school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, and individual campuses that receive a C rating and have declining student performance as indicated in the state's new A–F academic accountability system and provide tools, support, and best practices to help the campus with early intervention and improved academic performance services.
3. Maximize the expertise in the education service centers (ESCs) so that ESC staff can provide instructional assistance to those school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, and individual campuses in their regions that have a C rating or below and declining performance as indicated in the state's new A–F academic accountability system.
4. By December of 2016, develop a TEA team with specialized skills, procedures, and templates to work with school boards, boards of managers, and conservators to provide assistance so that these governing bodies remain focused on improving student outcomes.
5. On a biannual basis, evaluate and make public Districts of Innovation best practices to all agency stakeholders to encourage local control and the implementation of school innovation concepts statewide.

How Goal or Action Items Supports Each Statewide Objective

1. Accountable to tax and fee payers of Texas.
By improving student outcomes at schools that are underperforming, this goal and action plan will save the state remediation, drop out, and other long-term costs associated with poor foundational skills and will help students graduate prepared for success in a career or college.
2. Efficient such that maximum results are produced with a minimum waste of taxpayer funds, including through the elimination of redundant and non-core functions.
These action items are consistent with the agency's core function of ensuring that all students are in a high-performing school. By focusing the efforts of both TEA and ESCs on school districts and open-enrollment charter schools that are underperforming or have declining results, TEA can maximize the state's use of funds.

3. Effective in successfully fulfilling core functions, measuring success in achieving performance measures and implementing plans to continuously improve.

By focusing action items on developing best practices, providing training, and identifying root causes for underperformance at the school district, open-enrollment charter school, and individual campus level, TEA will be able to improve the educational experience for all Texas students, as well as its own performance as a state agency.

4. Providing excellent customer service.

These action items will ensure that TEA provides support to its struggling school districts and open-enrollment charter schools and thus ensure that its most important customers—the school children of Texas—are in high-performing classrooms.

5. Transparent such that agency actions can be understood by any Texan.

These action items will help ensure that all Texans understand the steps TEA is taking to improve low-performing schools. TEA will encourage school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, and individual campuses to seek input from and engage with parents and community members regarding how to improve student outcomes.

Goal 5—Connecting High School to Career and College

The agency will improve the career relevance of the high school experience for Texas students to ensure better direct access and success in the workforce in accordance with HB 5 (83rd Texas Legislature) initiatives and to improve performance of students as they transition to a post-secondary institution.

Specific Action Items to Achieve Goal 5

1. By August 2017, support the State Board of Education in the adoption and implementation of expanded options for rigorous career and technical education (CTE) courses that satisfy high school graduation requirements for foundation subjects (English language arts and reading, math, science and social studies) in all school districts and open-enrollment charter schools. These expanded options are in accordance with the requirements of HB 5 (83rd Texas Legislature).
2. By August 2018, use agency resources to support the State Board of Education, school districts and open-enrollment charter schools as they develop meaningful, coherent sequences of courses that lead to endorsements and industry credentials and support career and college goals and TEKS alignment, in accordance with the requirements of HB 5 (83rd Texas Legislature) and HB 1613 (84th Texas Legislature).
3. Beginning in September 2016, implement Governor Abbott's Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative recommendations, including building an online career opportunity portal for counselors, parents, and students and continue to develop statewide programs that support dual credit and workforce preparation opportunities, such as Early College High Schools, T-STEM academies, and related school/industry partnership models. These initiatives will focus on increasing the relevance of workforce needs, particularly in high-need occupations, in the classroom; industry credentialing; dual credit; and student internship opportunities.
4. By August 2018, support the state's workforce development by expanding the agency's direct connections with business and industry to define education's connection to high-need jobs, identify appropriate and meaningful credentialing, and develop planning tools for students.
5. Provide information to agency stakeholders about current programs that support college enrollment (such as the GEAR UP program) and measure student progress on key indicators, including college and career readiness and attainment of the state's 60x30TX objectives including advanced course examinations such as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate; college admissions

testing; endorsements offered; and industry credentialing that inform student progress toward post-secondary success.

How Goal or Action Items Supports Each Statewide Objective

1. Accountable to tax and fee payers of Texas.

Implementing these action items will help students take coursework that is meaningful and keeps them engaged, which in turn reduces the dropout rate, increases student success in higher education, and saves taxpayer dollars. Programs that support dual credit and Advanced Placement courses will help reduce the cost of postsecondary education for Texas families and taxpayers, and the agency's support of appropriate workforce development efforts will help strengthen the Texas economy.

2. Efficient such that maximum results are produced with a minimum waste of taxpayer funds, including through the elimination of redundant and non-core functions.

Implementing this goal is consistent with core agency functions established by HB 5 and will help students identify pathways to careers, endorsements, and dual credit and credentialing opportunities, all of which ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to create a strong Texas workforce.

3. Effective in successfully fulfilling core functions, measuring success in achieving performance measures and implementing plans to continuously improve.

These action items support the agency's core functions under HB 5 and Governor Abbott's Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative objectives by encouraging school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to adopt student pathway programs, support the development of the Texas workforce in the state's high-need occupations, and accomplishment of the goals of the state's 60x30TX plan.

4. Providing excellent customer service.

Implementing these action items will develop the next generation of qualified employees to meet the needs of Texas businesses and will support the Texas economy. Providing students with a variety of career pathways and opportunities before they graduate from high school will help students be prepared for college and careers.

5. Transparent such that agency actions can be understood by any Texan.

Action item 5 will provide clear information about student progress toward college and career readiness and attainment. This information will help business leaders, parents, and students understand how students can make progress toward post-secondary success.

Goal 6—Using Taxpayer Resources Efficiently

The agency will use its resources efficiently and effectively and encourage school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to use limited taxpayer funding to improve student outcomes and accomplish legislative objectives.

Specific Action Items to Achieve Goal 6

1. By November 2016, develop and begin implementation of a comprehensive, strategic realignment of agency operations in a manner consistent with zero based budgeting principles. As part of this process, TEA will identify core functions, align state resources to achieve core functions, establish performance metrics for its business units, and implement continuous improvement processes. This effort will focus specifically on ensuring that the agency and the state's 20 ESCs work together and efficiently and effectively achieve core functions, disseminate best practices, remove redundancies and implement legislation and rules by established deadlines.

2. TEA will improve technology systems to provide reliable and secure services, especially with regard to student data, and ensure its contracts and contacting team receive appropriate training and reflect best practices.
3. By December 2017, develop and implement incentive funding programs to encourage school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to use all available state and federal funds to improve student outcomes. Some of these incentive programs will be included in the state's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) application. TEA will also encourage school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to use state and federal grant funds for high-use activities.
4. By August 2016, develop and implement a technical support and training program designed specifically for new open-enrollment charter schools to ensure compliance with state and federal fiscal requirements and to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse. The program will also be available to school districts and existing open-enrollment charter schools.
5. TEA will continue to develop and publish clear school finance and federal fund guidance so that school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, legislators, taxpayers, and the public can better understand state and federal formulas, requirements, and procedures.
6. TEA will implement the asset allocation for the Permanent School Fund in accordance with State Board of Education directives, continue to outperform funds with similar asset allocations, and maintain the fund's AAA credit rating.
7. TEA will collaborate with the Texas Department of State Health Services to ensure that the public is aware of the need for early childhood immunizations and to answer questions related to immunization requirements for students in Texas public schools.

How Goal or Action Items Supports Each Statewide Objective

1. Accountable to tax and fee payers of Texas.
Implementing these action items will help ensure that the agency and all 1,200 Texas school districts and open-enrollment charter schools use taxpayer dollars to improve student outcomes and ensure that funding is used only for authorized purposes.
2. Efficient such that maximum results are produced with a minimum waste of taxpayer funds.
Implementing these action items will ensure that the agency, and potentially all 1,200 Texas school districts and open-enrollment charter schools, use best practices to improve student success by focusing on core functions and the efficient use of funds.
3. Effective in successfully fulfilling core functions, measuring success in achieving performance measures, and implementing plans to continuously improve.
Implementing these action items will ensure the agency and the state's 20 education services centers align their activities around core functions, measure improvement, and leverage resources to improve student outcomes.
4. Providing excellent customer service.
These action items are focused on disseminating best practices, training, technical support, and leveraging funding tools and resources so that some of TEA's primary customers—the state's 1,200 school district and open-enrollment charter schools, legislators, business leaders, taxpayers, parents, and students—can understand how to use resources effectively to improve student outcomes.
5. Transparent such that agency actions can be understood by any Texan.
Action item 4 is specifically focused on improving TEA's transparency by developing and publishing clear and understandable guidance that explains complex state and federal funding formulas and related issues.