A History of Dropout Prevention Legislation and Policy in Texas

1984 – 68th Legislature 2nd Called Session

House Bill 72

- Authorized TEA to implement a **system for collecting data on student dropouts** and to begin developing a **program to reduce the statewide dropout rate** to no more than 5 percent of the student population.

1987 – 70th Legislature

House Bill 1010

- **Defined dropout** as a student in grades 7-12 who did not hold a high school diploma or a GED and was absent from school for 30 or more consecutive days and did not enroll in another public or private school.
- Required that TEA develop a **program to reduce the statewide longitudinal dropout rate**.
- Required TEA to develop a system for school districts to collected data on student dropouts, which was incorporated into the new **Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS)**. The **first PEIMS dropout records** were submitted for students who dropped out during the 1987-88 school year, and the **first TEA report on dropouts**, using actual student-level data, presented data on students who dropped out during the 1987-88 school year.

1989 – 71st Legislature

Senate Bill 417

- Directed the State Board of Education to adopt a set of performance indicators, which led to the establishment of the **Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS)** in 1990, using annual graduation counts and dropout rates as some of the initial performance indicators.

Senate Bill 222

- **Communities In Schools**, a dropout prevention program, received a legislative appropriation to expand the model. Funding for the program has been appropriated each biennium since 1989, and has increased to $41.9 million for the 2010-11 biennium.
1993 – 73rd Legislature

**Senate Bill 7**

- Directed that the AEIS data form the foundation of a performance-based accountability system to rate districts and campuses. TEA began using annual dropout rates as an indicator in the accountability system 1994.

1997 – 75th Legislature

**Senate Bill 247**

- Required compulsory attendance until the age of 18 years with exemptions for students who are at least 17 years old and are attending a GED course to prepare for the high school equivalency examination with parental permission or a court order to attend, are living in a home outside parental supervision or considered homeless.

1999 – 76th Legislature

**Senate Bill 4**

- Created the Basic Skills Program for High School Students, also known as the Ninth Grade Success Initiative, making $85 million available to increase graduation rates in Texas public schools by reducing the number of students who are retained in the ninth grade or who drop out that year.

2003 – 78th Legislature

**Senate Bill 186**

- Called for the adoption of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) definition of dropout, which is a student who is enrolled in public school in grades 7-12, does not return to public school the following fall, is not expelled and does not graduate, receive a GED, enroll in private school or home school, begins college or die.

**Senate Bill 976**

- Created the Early College Education Program, which came to be known as the Early College High School program (ECHS). ECHS uses a model to target at-risk students who would not otherwise consider attending college and provides an opportunity to earn a high school diploma and 60 college credit hours by the time they graduate from high school.
House Bill 1

- The Legislature appropriated $60 million for High School Completion and Success programs, which supported the development and implementation of high school reform models. Funding has been appropriated each biennium since 2004-05, and increased in 2008-09.

Texas High School Project

- State investment in dropout prevention and college and career readiness attracted private funding, leading to the creation of the public-private alliance the Texas High School Project, which receives funds from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, Communities Foundation of Texas, and National Instruments.

Completion Rate and Accountability System

- TEA added the Grades 9-12 longitudinal completion rate and the Grades 7-8 annual rate as indicators in the accountability system in 2004.

2006 – 79th Legislature 3rd Called Special Session

House Bill 1

- Established the High School Allotment, which provides districts with funding based on the amount of $275 per student in average daily attendance in grades 9-12 to prepare underachieving students for high school completion and college success.
- Called for the development of College and Career Readiness Standards that specify what students must know and be able to do to succeed in entry-level courses at postsecondary institutions in Texas.
- Established a College Credit Program which required that all districts offer students an opportunity to earn a minimum of 12 hours of college credit by the 2008-2009 school year.
- Required all students graduate with four years of math, science, English and social studies.
- Made provisions for an optional flexible school day program for students in grades 9-12 who are dropouts or at-risk of dropping out and provided districts with additional flexibility in scheduling for certain high school students.
2007 – 80th Legislature

**House Bill 2237**

- Increased to **$104 million the funding for high school completion and success** and established several dropout prevention and recovery programs.
- **Added dropout prevention to TEA’s Best Practices Clearinghouse** as one of the main topic areas.
- Directed TEA to contract with an outside entity to do a **study of best practices in dropout prevention** to identify high-performing dropout prevention programs and report recommendations to the legislature.
- Required districts and charter schools with high dropout rates to **develop and submit dropout plans for TEA approval** specifying how they intended to use Compensatory Education and High School Allotment for dropout prevention efforts.
- Established the **High School Completion and Success Initiative Council** to adopt a strategic plan to improve high school completion and reduce the dropout rate.

**Senate Bill 1031**

- Replaced the TAKS test in grades 9-12 with **end-of-course exams**. Students in the ninth grade class of 2011-2012 will be the first students required to pass end-of-course exams to meet graduation requirements.

**House Bill 1137**

- Allowed **individuals up to age 26 to attend public schools** for the purpose of achieving high school graduation and reengaging students who already dropped out.

2009 – 81st Legislature

**House Bill 3**

- Added **postsecondary readiness** as a factor in determining school accountability and accreditation ratings.

- **Excluded the following groups of students from completion and dropout rates** calculated for state accreditation and performance ratings:
  - court-ordered to attend a GED program
  - previously counted as dropouts
  - refugees or asylees
  - incarcerated in facilities not served by Texas public schools
  - ADA ineligible