

# 60x30TX

The logo features the text "60x30TX" in a bold, sans-serif font. The "60" and "30" are black, the "x" is blue, and the "TX" is red. Below the text is a horizontal bar with a blue section on the left containing a white star, and a red section on the right.

By 2030, at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.



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## Preamble to the 2015-2030 Texas Higher Education Plan

Higher education improves the lives of Texans. Our colleges and universities educate our teachers, nurses, and technicians. They find cures for life-threatening diseases and develop technologies that make our lives easier. They inspire, educate, and equip our students to be their best, encouraging them to be more civic-minded, helping them interact in diverse communities, and giving them a passion for lifelong learning. They retrain our adult population, including veterans, helping them find meaningful careers. They enrich us through the arts and new ideas. The impact of higher education is immeasurable.

Because of the importance of higher education, Texans united around the goals of the previous statewide plan, *Closing the Gaps by 2015*. Over a 15-year period, beginning in 2000, the Legislature established and funded new higher education institutions, appropriated \$3.3 billion for TEXAS Grants to help low-income students attend college, and increased funding for programs in critical fields. Institutions of higher education in the state responded by increasing access and improving completions. In 2014, they enrolled more than 1.6 million students – an increase of almost 600,000 since 2000. The institutions also awarded almost 250,000 bachelor’s degrees, associate degrees, and certificates – approximately 130,000 more than in 2000.

Texas institutions have distinctive strengths that include conducting world-class research, serving underrepresented student populations, and developing new certificate and degree programs quickly in response to local workforce needs. Yet, they have one thing in common: They help students succeed. The new higher education plan, *60x30TX*, focuses on this common goal by striving for 60 percent of the 25- to 34-year-old Texas population to hold a certificate or degree by 2030. The plan seeks to increase student success through the combined expertise and resources of many stakeholders. Because of these collaborative efforts, Texas institutions of higher education will have more opportunities to grow, which will enrich students and the state.

The *60x30TX* higher education plan is bold. Because of the creativity and hard work of the faculty, administrators, and staff at our institutions of higher education, as well as the hard work of K-12 educators over the past 15 years, Texas is ready. Our foundation is strong. We have the potential to achieve things we could not have imagined 15 years ago. We invite you to join us as we work together to make higher education attainable for Texans of all backgrounds.

# Executive Summary

The 60x30TX (“60 by 30 Tex”) higher education strategic plan contains four broad goals. Each goal contains a set of targets that will move the state toward reaching one or more goals. Many stakeholders across Texas will need to develop and implement a wide range of strategies to meet each target.



Without bold action, Texas faces a future of diminished incomes, opportunities, and resources.

## THE OVERARCHING GOAL: 60x30

*By 2030, at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.*

The 60x30 goal is essential to the future prosperity of Texas. Without bold action, Texas faces a future of diminished incomes, opportunities, and resources. The 60x30TX Plan is designed to ensure that a competitive and prosperous future remains for students seeking to better their lives and the lives of their families.

The first goal in the plan, the 60x30 goal, aims to increase the percentage of 25- to 34-year-olds in Texas who hold a certificate or degree. The goal focuses on 25- to 34-year-olds as an indicator of the economic future of the state and its ability to remain globally competitive. The state’s large population makes the Texas economy similar in size to that of many countries. Within this global context, the state has seen a relative decline in educational attainment among this younger population.

The 60x30 goal also uses 25- to 34-year-olds as a yardstick to answer the question: How prepared is Texas for the future? Through the focused efforts of industry, government, community organizations, K-12, and institutions of higher education, the state can respond positively to this question and achieve this goal.

## THE SECOND GOAL: COMPLETION

*By 2030, at least 550,000 students in that year will complete a certificate, associate, bachelor’s, or master’s from an institution of higher education in Texas.*

The completion goal complements the 60x30 goal by supplying graduates of all ages from all two- and four-year institutions of higher education in Texas. The state will need to continue the degree production increases of recent years to reach this goal, with large increases required among targeted groups. Growth in certificates and degrees among two- and four-year colleges is critical for reaching the 60 percent in the 60x30 goal and educating a skilled workforce, but it is only part of the solution for reaching that goal.

### THE THIRD GOAL: MARKETABLE SKILLS

*By 2030, all graduates from Texas public institutions of higher education will have completed programs with identified marketable skills.*

The marketable skills goal emphasizes the value of higher education in the workforce. Students need to be aware of the marketable skills embedded in their academic programs, and institutions must make certain that students graduate with marketable skills. This goal charges two- and four-year public institutions in Texas with documenting, updating, and communicating the skills students acquire in their programs. Private institutions of higher education in Texas may opt to participate in this goal.

The marketable skills goal does not diminish higher education's obligation to produce well-rounded and well-informed individuals familiar with all fields of human activity and with a strong understanding of our country's founding principles.

### THE FOURTH GOAL: STUDENT DEBT

*By 2030, undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.*

The student debt goal aims to help students who graduate with debt complete their programs with manageable debt. This goal challenges stakeholders to balance the levels of student loan debt with a graduate's earning potential the first year after college.

The intent of this goal is to hold student loan debt in Texas to 60 percent of first-year wages after college – 60 percent being the current level of loan debt for students who graduate with debt.

### MAINTAINING EXCELLENCE, FOCUSING ON SKILLS

Since the adoption of the former higher education plan in 2000, Texas increasingly has become engaged in a global economy dependent on skilled and knowledgeable workers. Most of those workers must come from the state's institutions of higher education. While continuing to pursue increased knowledge and higher standards of excellence in teaching, research, and innovation, two- and four-year colleges in Texas will need to consider more explicitly the primary reason most students attend college: to get a better job and achieve a better life.

For Texas to solve problems and address public concerns now and in the future, it must have a large workforce with the skills and knowledge to push the state forward. This workforce must be educated and able to adapt and compete at the highest levels to maintain a strong state economy.

The four goals in the 60x30TX Plan are essential to the future prosperity of Texas.



### THE OVERARCHING GOAL: 60x30

At least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.

- *Supports the economic future of the state*



### THE SECOND GOAL: COMPLETION

At least 550,000 students in 2030 will complete a certificate associate, bachelor's, or master's from an institution of higher education in Texas.

- *Requires large increases among targeted groups*



### THE THIRD GOAL: MARKETABLE SKILLS

All graduates from Texas public institutions of higher education will have completed programs with identified marketable skills.

- *Emphasizes the value of higher education in the workforce*



### THE FOURTH GOAL: STUDENT DEBT

Undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.

- *Helps students graduate with manageable debt*

