

**Corpus Christi and Victoria
Community Conversations Summary
February 7, 2018**

Host(s): Region 2 (Corpus Christi) and Region 3 (Victoria) Education Service Centers

Participant Description: Approximately 33 participants

The State Board of Education (SBOE), under Texas law, is required to adopt a Long-Range Plan for Public Education. The 18-member steering committee, which is made up of state board members, various stakeholder group representatives and representatives from three state agencies, is leading the process. The steering committee will recommend long-term goals for Texas schools and will identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of the system.

To help the board gather public input that will shape the new plan and set long-term goals through the year 2030, community conversations are being held around the state. In each community conversation, participants identify the purpose or desired outcome of public education and give feedback on challenges, strengths, and opportunities in four topics: educator preparation, recruitment, and retention; equity and access; family engagement and empowerment; and student engagement and empowerment.

This document provides a snapshot of the data collected during the Corpus Christi and Victoria community conversations and highlights the main concepts captured during small-group conversations. Staff members from the Texas Comprehensive Center at the American Institutes for Research facilitated these community conversations virtually and prepared this summary.

To learn more about the development of the Texas State Board of Education's work on the Long-Range Plan, visit https://tea.texas.gov/SBOE/long-range_plan/.

What is the purpose or desired outcome of public education?

- Develop a sense of social justice.
- Develop perseverance.
- Develop the confidence to advocate for yourself.
- Develop the overall character of students to be able to embrace the change in education and society in a healthy manner.
- Educate students to have meaningful career opportunities and skills for real world jobs.
- Educate — everything from ABCs to what they need to work successfully. Well-rounded citizens.
- Education serves as basis for stability in our society.
- Foster independence.
- Free! Equitable playing field so all students have a fair chance at success.
- Giving students the opportunity to become globally competitive and language ready, i.e., foreign languages that are required to be globally competitive, computer languages, and ASL.
- Helps students to identify strengths and passions.
- Lone Star governance and future readiness.
- Provide children a strong enough academic foundation that they can control their future, a foundation that gives them options/success in their own hands.
- Provide individualized instruction for a wide variety of needs. To serve all the different students we need time and resources. Students need to be made to feel confident and empowered at school to enter professions and be successful.
- Provide safety nets for students who have challenges, physical and mental.
- Soft skills, team building, communication skills.
- Students acquire tools for next steps, whether college, trade, etc.
- Teaching children to have growth mindsets.
- To create a sound foundation for all stakeholders to be collaborative and compassionate with each other.
- To develop successful individuals who are prepared for the real world academically and socially.
- To encourage critical thinking and decision-making skills.
- To give students what they need to think, reason, problem-solve, and defend the principles of the United States of America. (We are the leaders in the world.)
- To make learning rigorous, relevant, and relational.
- To provide a free, safe opportunity to learn and propel oneself to desired goals and future plans for success.
- Value creativity and innovation and risk taking.





Educator Preparation, Recruitment, and Retention	
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alternative certification programs have been watered down too much; not adequately prepared; not enough field experience.• Alternative certifications that vary in quality; weak in special populations classroom management.• Bilingual education.• Cannot find teachers in certain areas – math, science foreign languages, CTE, Special Ed.• Classroom management training.• Disconnect between local colleges and universities and local school districts.• District constraints on contract.• Funding for innovative programs.• Incentive pay determined by individual districts.• Increase in numbers of alternative certification programs.• Lack of incentives.• Lack of mentoring/support for novice teachers.• Money – small, rural districts can't pay competitively.• Parental support.• Retention is challenging for less financially affluent districts. They invest in training; larger districts take staff.• State of assessment rather than becoming a state of learning.• Tend to overload new teachers (class sizes, high-needs students).• Testing/accountability constraints.
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awareness of teacher prep training needs.• Beginning salaries are competitive.• Salaries and benefits are slowly rising.• School-University partnerships.• Stipends for high-need areas.• Teachers who are committed to teaching.• Texas teachers, Teach for America.• Traditionally certified teachers are well-prepared.• Universities being held accountable for improvements to teacher preparation programs.• Willingness at IHEs to collaborate.

Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Earlier field experiences.• Equitable teacher compensation opportunities across the state.• Hands-on experience for teachers in prep programs to simulate real world classroom experiences.• Methods courses.• More school-university partnerships.• Rigorous coursework at the university.• Soft skills development for teachers to deal with classroom management.• Stipends for high-need areas (state funding).
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Equity and Access

Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advanced course-awareness pieces for parents/guardians.• Building construction is very important, so it is a challenge to fulfill all needs. The districts must prioritize expenditures.• College programs not available for all at minimal cost.• Funding for infrastructure and classroom technology.• Funding is not equitable because of dependence on local tax revenue.• Lack of tutoring and academic support for students taking advanced courses.• Legislature “cannibalizes” districts – underfunded, private schools taking from public.• Overemphasis on high-stakes testing leads to funding/scheduling priorities on remediation and intervention.• Pay discrepancies create districts with lower quality, less-prepared teachers and high turnover.• School finance – Robin Hood system of funding.• Teacher training cost and funding.• Technology – Lack of resources for economically disadvantaged students so that they may have access at home.
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• AP/IB programs.• Availability of hardware for home/24-7 use.• Code.org – We teach computer science.• Collaboration between College Board and higher education.• Early College High Schools.• Flexibility of instructional opportunities.• Flipped classrooms.• Free internet resources.• Grant applications reduction by TEA.• Grant opportunities.• Online learning.• People who have access to funding are showing the growth and gains desired—ready for current/future workforce.• Professional development.• Students having access to technology.• The data provided by College Board and district is vital to identify students for advanced courses.• The timing is right for these conversations – really fleshing out conversations for solutions.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upward Bound. • Using technology to support teachers. • We do educate the masses.
<p>Opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency provides resources and AP test item banks which would be readily available to Admin. and teachers. • All kids should be offered same (equal) educational opportunities/funding. • Career certifications for students leaving high school. • District staff working together to identify students for advanced courses (potential reports). • Districts creating District Technology Advisory Councils to assess current needs and provide input on technology planning (provide for teachers and staff to have a voice). • Get more input from teachers, students, and parents. Use technology to express thoughts. • Legislative policy to alleviate barriers. • Offer more vocational/technical programs earlier in the K–12 program. • Partnering with four-year institution to hold the Advanced Placement Summer Institutes. • Policy to address ID of “highly qualified” teachers. • State incentives for teachers to attend AP Summer Institute. • Teachers, students, parents need training to be well-informed consumers of technology. • Using community and business partners to mentor students.



Family Engagement and Empowerment	
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavior of adults – want to cause trouble. • Decrease in parent involvement. • Immigration issues; some parents are afraid to visit the schools. • Lack of parent support/accountability. • Need to communicate better to parents about what is going on. • New Math – Parents aren’t trained in how to follow solving steps that are the same. • Nontraditional families may not be “welcomed” or “recognized.” Need to be more inclusive. • Parents are intimidated. • Schools need funding for parent training. • Time – Parents work, teachers have families. • Trust, intimidation, language barriers. • Young parents with little education or parenting skills.
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus/Community activities and festivals. • Campuses to communicate via School Messenger. • Communities in Schools, despite limited funding. • Extracurricular activities. • Fun activities that attach educational information. • Modeling strategies for parents (teacher models in class with 4 parents observing). • Open and cooperative school cultures. • Parent Academics. • Programs for parent engagement. • PTA. • Social Media. • VIPS (Volunteers in Public Schools).

Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborating with existing community groups and local businesses.• Communities in Schools and other social organizations that serve families.• Continue providing parent training/awareness about what is happening on campus.• Job/work place cooperation – give them time off to volunteer.• Need a volunteer system with clear confidentiality rules and multiple opportunities.• Opportunities for internships and partnerships with business for students, with parent involvement.• Principals create welcoming atmosphere.• Provide bilingual speakers for parents.• Provide outreach services for parents.• Reward system for involvement.• Student-led conferences; engage parents through students.• Training in relationships with authority figures for parent and child.• Use social media to promote campus activities.
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Student Engagement and Empowerment

Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A fear of change or failing in both students and adults.• College courses need to be better aligned to real classroom, world.• Education policy is too rigid or contains unrealistic expectations, such as special education students taking same tests for accountability.• Focus too much on “program” as opposed to education.• Helping teachers see the connection of their work to building future readiness into students (beyond current content/skills).• Importance of being at school every day.• Lack of trade/skills development.• Students need to take ownership of themselves.• Technology and infrastructure.• Testing and the constraints that it places on teachers, students, and schools.• Time (no time to engage long enough in skill/objective).• Understanding of student engagement vs. empowerment.• We have become a state of assessment (assessment-driven) vs. state of learning.
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better access to technology that enhances engagement.• Can learn from elementary sites how to build and promote engagement.• CCISD new building design – provide collaboration rooms.• Connection to 2 and 4–year institutions and to business community.• Data driven/data rich – Develops progress monitoring and goal setting.• Development of specialized schools.• HB5 has provided students more options and opportunities to pursue interests and areas of study relevant to them.• Improved number of organizations/academic curriculum offerings to provide student choice.• Increasing awareness of the need to shift our focus regarding technology gaps and trades.• Teacher professional development.• Teachers are more tuned in to concept of student engagement.

Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Align college courses to real-world classrooms.• Better defined understanding of what future-readiness really means.• Change accountability system.• Continue improving technology trends.• Continued partnerships with community and business to fill the needs.• Getting comfortable with students being advocates for themselves (empower kids).• Need to pursue more student/family voice in discussions around improving this topic.• Provide a clearinghouse or resource tool to identify best practices and highly successful models (for example, HB5, DO1, etc.).• Reinvest/develop trade/skills in schools.• Training for teachers to develop technology confidence and skills.
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