

II. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

A. Statutory Requirements

2. *Describe the career and technical education activities to be assisted that are designed to meet or exceed the State adjusted levels of performance, including a description of—*
 - (a) *The career and technical education programs of study, that may be adopted by local educational agencies and postsecondary institutions to be offered as an option to students (and their parents as appropriate) when planning for and completing future coursework, for career and technical content areas that—*
 - i. *Incorporate secondary education and postsecondary education elements;*
 - ii. *Include coherent and rigorous content, aligned with challenging academic standards, and relevant career and technical content in a coordinated, non-duplicative progression of courses that align secondary education with postsecondary education to adequately prepare students to succeed in postsecondary education;*
 - iii. *May include the opportunity for secondary education students to participate in dual or concurrent enrollment programs or other ways to acquire postsecondary education credits; and*
 - iv. *Lead to an industry-recognized credential or certificate at the postsecondary level, or an associate or baccalaureate degree;*

The current Texas Higher Education Strategic Plan, *Closing the Gaps by 2015*, ends in fall 2015. The next long-term higher education strategic plan is currently under development by a Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) task force. During the development process, the planning committee has been provided briefs by educational experts about how Texas and the economy will change between now and 2030. After a public review and comment period, the plan will be adopted by the THECB later this year. The draft goals for the plan include targets for educational attainment of a post-secondary credential or degree, number of students who complete a degree, student attainment of marketable skills, and student debt to earnings ratio. Collectively these goals are planned to keep Texas competitive in a global economy.

- (g) *How programs at the secondary level will prepare career and technical education students, including special populations, to graduate from secondary school with a diploma;*

Secondary CTE programs of study are based on three high school graduation programs that effectively prepare students for college and career success. The three graduation programs include the Foundation High School Program, Distinguished Achievement Program, and the Recommended High School Program. Each program of study includes a rigorous academic foundation (at least three credits each in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies) that is enhanced with relevant CTE career-related courses. Seventeen CTE courses meet secondary

graduation requirements for English, math, science, fine arts, or speech. Students on the Foundation High School Program may also earn endorsements which consist of a related series of courses that are grouped together by interest or skill set. They provide students with in-depth knowledge of a subject area. The state-recognized programs of study help students understand the importance of their secondary and postsecondary education in relation to their career goals. Programs of study also serve to better engage students in their learning so they make informed decisions, successfully graduate from high school, and enroll in and complete college.

- (i) *How funds will be used to improve or develop new career and technical education courses—*
- i. *At the secondary level that are aligned with rigorous and challenging academic content standards and student academic achievement standards adopted by the State under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended;*
 - ii. *At the postsecondary level that are relevant and challenging; and*
 - iii. *That leads to employment in high-skill, high-wage, or high-demand occupations;*

The recommendations for revision of the career and technical education (CTE) curriculum standards (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills/TEKS) by the State Board of Education (SBOE) appointed committees have been completed. Approximately half of the proposed revised courses are expected to be adopted by the SBOE in April 2015 and the remaining courses adopted in July of 2015. The official public comment period began in early March 2015 and comments are expected from all stakeholders, including business and industry. The TEKS are expected to be implemented in the 2018-2019 school year.

In the revised TEKS, Texas will emphasize the student development of general employability skills. The standards for each proposed CTE course begin with an employability skills strand with a knowledge and skills statement that says “the student demonstrates professional standards/employability skills as required by business and industry.” The student expectations under the knowledge and skills statement vary by course. Committees selected general employability skills most important to the occupation taught in the course from a list of 30 workplace basic skills compiled by the Texas Workforce Commission.

- (l) *How Texas will report on the integration of coherent and rigorous content aligned with challenging academic standards in career and technical education programs in order to adequately evaluate the extent of such integration. [Sec. 122 (c) (1) (A)-(L)]*

Beginning in 2014-2015, a yearly risk assessment has been implemented on this topic is undertaken to determine which community and technical colleges are subject to a desk review or site visit during a given year. The risk assessment factors are: number of years since the last desk review or site visit; number of unmet core indicators; number of application amendments; amount of the grant award; number of late reports; results of the annual THECB fiscal desk audit; SEFA compliance

review; and fiscal management concerns, if any. As part of the risk assessment rubric, weighted points are assigned to the risk factors and once computed, the review process establishes a ranking of colleges assessed based on the final scores in the risk assessment. The five institutions with the highest risk assessment scores are subject to a desk review and site visit. The remaining colleges that scored in the top quarter of the rankings are subject to desk reviews only.

7. *Describe efforts that your agency and eligible recipients will make to—*
- (a) *Improve the academic and technical skills of students participating in career and technical education programs, including by strengthening the academic and career and technical components of career and technical education programs through the integration of academics with career and technical education to ensure learning in--*
- i. *The core academic subjects (as defined in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended); and*
 - ii. *Career and technical education subjects;*

Beginning with students who entered grade 9 in the 2014-2015 school year, the default graduation program in Texas is the Foundation High School Program with an endorsement. Endorsements consist of a related series of courses that are grouped together by interest or skill set and provide students with in-depth knowledge of a particular subject area. Endorsements available to students include science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); business and industry; public service; arts and humanities; and multidisciplinary studies. In addition to the Foundation High School Program with endorsement, a student may earn a performance acknowledgment for earning a nationally or internationally recognized business or industry certification or performance on an examination sufficient to obtain a government-required credential to practice a profession.

Endorsements in the Foundation High School Program are in most cases promoting further student learning by encouraging increased use of CTE programs of study, with STEM, business and industry, and public services serving as three of the five possible endorsements with a CTE focus.

- (b) *Provide students with strong experience in, and understanding of, all aspects of an industry; and*

Texas strives to provide effective training and education opportunities for students in secondary career and technical education. Students participating in work-based learning have an opportunity to gain general employability skills and training. Opportunities such as on-the-job training, internships, or job shadowing are considered capstone experiences in a student's program of study.

In Texas, public school districts are responsible for ensuring that each teacher assigned using the work-based learning method of instruction has completed appropriate training in state and federal labor/child labor laws requirements and

safety. To further assist districts with consistency in training, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) contracted for the development of online training modules to help teachers who will be coordinating student work-based learning experiences for the first time. This work-based learning training covers the basic information needed to implement work-based learning at Texas high schools.

It is the expectation of the TEA and the State Board for Educator Certification that work-based learning instructors will continue to enhance their knowledge and skills by participating in additional professional development opportunities after completing this online training.

- (c) *Ensure that students who participate in career and technical education programs are taught to the same challenging academic proficiencies as taught to all other students. [Sec. 122(c)(7)(A)-(C)]*

As described in section 7.(a), the 83rd Texas Legislature passed House Bill 5 establishing the Foundation High School Program, which is available for all high school students beginning in 2014-2015 and required for students entering ninth grade in 2014-2015.

Texas has phased out the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests and implemented the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) end-of-course (EOC) assessments. Students who entered grade 9 in the 2011-2012 school year are the first cohort of secondary students who took the STAAR EOC assessments instead of the TAKS. House Bill 5 also reduced from fifteen to five the number of STAAR EOCs students must complete in order to graduate. The five remaining STAAR EOCs are English I, English II, Algebra I, U.S. History, and biology. Since Texas reports accountability data on a one-year lag, this change will affect Texas 1S1 and 1S2 reporting beginning with the 2016 Perkins consolidated annual report (CAR).

These graduation and assessment requirements apply to all secondary students (CTE and non-CTE students).

9. *Describe how career and technical education in your State relates to your State's and region's occupational opportunities. [Sec. 122 (c) (16)]*

In 2013, the 83rd Texas Legislature passed a bill to provide occupational and labor market information to help districts with planning and determining which programs of study to offer students. Information about current and projected job opportunities and wages helps inform students' decisions about which program to enter. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) will provide districts with information to use in their local planning and implementation of career and technical education and training programs. The TWC will update the information at least quarterly and disaggregate the data by county and region. Districts will be

able to plan their career and technical education programs based on state and regional occupational opportunities.

10. *Describe the methods you propose for the joint planning and coordination of programs carried out under this legislation with other Federal education programs. [Sec. 122(c)(17)]*

In 2014, the TEA joined with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to launch the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Early College High School Initiative. Four institutions of higher education were selected through a competitive grant to partner with school districts to implement CTE Early College High Schools. These programs offer students the opportunity to earn up to 60 college credit hours toward an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree or relevant licensures or certifications. All three agencies contributed funding to the initiative. The TEA used state funding rather than Perkins funding and the THECB used Perkins reserve funds.

B. Other Department Requirements

2. *Provide a description of your State's governance structure for vocational and technical education, including the approximate number of eligible recipients at both secondary and postsecondary levels.*

After an agency reorganization in 2014, the division name was changed from Workforce, Academic Affairs, and Research to Academic Quality and Workforce.

III. PROVISION OF SERVICES FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

A. Statutory Requirements

1. *Describe your program strategies for special populations listed in Section 3(29) of the Act, including a description of how individuals who are members of the special populations—*
(c) Will be provided with programs designed to enable the special populations to meet or exceed State adjusted levels of performance, and how you will prepare special populations for further learning and for high-skill, high-wage, or high-demand occupations. [Sec. 122(c)(9)(A)-(C)]

Texas launched a new testing program called the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, or STAAR, in 2012. It replaces the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). High school students must take and pass certain required courses and the end-of-course (EOC) exams for those courses. STAAR is given to students taking high school level courses in Algebra I, English I and II, U. S. History and biology. The STAAR EOC exams are based on the state curriculum standards, or TEKS, and are designed to ensure that students are learning the specific course material and are prepared to succeed in college and/or careers.

STAAR Modified was an alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards. The state intended this assessment for a small number of students receiving special education services who met the participation requirements. The state administered the STAAR Modified assessments for the final time during the 2013-2014 assessment cycle. The U.S. Department of Education has informed states that assessments based on modified standards for students served by special education no longer count toward accountability purposes after the 2013-2014 school year.

Another program that assists special population students in meeting the state's rigorous academic standards is the Personal Graduation Plan. Texas Education Code §28.0212 mandates that a school principal designate a guidance counselor, teacher, or other appropriate individual to develop and implement a personal graduation plan for each student in junior high or middle school, who does not perform satisfactorily on the state assessment, or who is not likely to receive a high school diploma before the fifth school year following the student's enrollment in Grade 9 (as determined by the district).

VI. FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

B. Other Department Requirements

3. *Describe the secondary and postsecondary formulas used to allocate funds available under section 112(a) of the Act, as required by section 131(a) and 132(a) of the Act.*

Historically, at the post-secondary level, after the conclusion of a grant year all unspent money has been reallocated back to grantees based on the allocation formula. In January 2015, the THECB approved a change to the methodology used to determine the distribution of the funds to be reallocated effective for the 2015-2016 grant year. The change applies only to the reallocated funds. Fifty percent of the funds will be allocated as they have been in prior years. The remaining funds will be allocated to grantees whose performance on three of the six federally designated core indicators meets or exceeds the federally negotiated state targets (for 2P1, 3P1, and 4P1). Effective for the 2016-2017 grant year and thereafter, 100 percent of the reallocated funds will go to grantees that meet or exceed the three targets.

4. *Describe the competitive basis or formula to be used to award reserve funds under section 112(c) of the Act.*

The THECB awarded four CTE Early College High School (ECHS) grants in four geographic regions of the state: Dallas, Houston, Odessa, and McAllen. South Texas College, in partnership with Mission ISD and Weslaco ISD implemented two CTE ECHSs in fall 2014. Programs of study include welding, diesel mechanics, and precision manufacturing. The other three CTE ECHSs will start in fall 2015.