



<http://ntrp16.org/>

**North Texas Regional P-16
Council Meeting Minutes**

December 7, 2021

9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Via Zoom

ATTENDEES

Members present - Leslie Birdow, Annette Duvall, Becky Frederickson, Javier Garza, Robert Gillies, Mary Harris, Lisa Harrison, Christine Hubbard, Jean Keller, Barbara Lerner, Karrabi Malin, Raul Martinez, Anna Mays, Gwendolyn Moore, Bobby Morris, Lawrencina Oramalu, Patsy Robles-Goodwin, Renee Parker, Theresa Paschall, Anita Perry, Ray de los Santos, Karen Walker, Rosalyn Walker, Tiffany Wilkerson, Karen Zeske

Invited Guest – Mathew Morris, Lewisville ISD

Presenters – Pritiben Patel, North Central Texas Council of Governments
Jarrad Toussant, Dallas Regional Chamber
Michael Wood, Dallas Regional Chamber

- **Greetings**

Jean Keller welcomed everyone to the North Texas Regional P-16 Council meeting.

- **Approval of Minutes**

September 21, 2021, meeting minutes were reviewed. Lisa Harrison moved to approve the minutes, Raul Martinez seconded, and the minutes were approved as written.

- **Regional Data** – Raul Martinez shared data from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) CBM002 report on the percentage of fall 2019 First Time in College (FTIC) student who were college ready. The report showed that 57% of the FTIC students, at two-year colleges, were not college ready, and at four-year colleges, 15% were not college ready. At all institutions, 36% of FTIC students statewide were not college ready.

60x30TX is addressing developmental education needs and representatives of ISDs and higher education continue working to meet the 60x30TX goals. College readiness continues to be an area of concern.

- **Panel: Legislative and Council of Government Updates** - Moderated by Anna Mays, Christine Hubbard, and Lisa Harrison

Prit Patel said the primary purposes of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) are long-range, comprehensive planning for matters that transcend jurisdictional boundaries, promotion of sound development for the 16-county region and fostering cooperation and coordination. The counties in NCTCOG are Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Erath, Hood, Wise, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Navarro, Palo Pinto, Parker, Rockwall, Somervell, and Tarrant.

The Council of Governments (COG) brings together local governments and organizations to work on regional issues related to everything from aging services to transportation. The Economic Development District (EDD) works specifically on issues related to economic development or recovery. The EDD designation comes from the Economic Development Administration (EDA), housed in the Department of Commerce, which has six regional offices. Ours is in Austin and supports five states (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas). Our region had not been designated an EDD prior to 2016, the only COG not to receive this designation, due largely to our not having been negatively impacted by a major disaster. In 2014-2015 our COG decided to seek EDD designation to qualify for funding opportunities provided by the EDA. In 2016, we were so designated. One seat was given to every county; the remainder represented different population brackets such as the private sector, principal economic interests, and the education sector.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Goals

Goal 1: Develop a globally competitive skilled workforce that encourages businesses to start, locate, and expand in the North Central Texas region.

Goal 2: Enhance the North Central Texas region's economic competitiveness.

Goal 3: Pursue opportunities and strategies that continue to make the North Central Texas region an entrepreneur-friendly region.

Goal 4: Explore and promote comprehensive planning solutions to ensure that regional transportation and public infrastructure meet the needs of employers and citizens.

Goal 5: Strengthen the quality of life through comprehensive community development throughout the region.

Goal 6: Integrate emergency management efforts with economic development strategies to strengthen regional economic resiliency.

We must update the CEDS every five years to remain an EDD. Due to the pandemic, an extension was given. The current CEDS is valid through June 2022. We are currently updating the document. Eight CEDS Cluster Committees were created to complete SWOT analysis for each of the industry/geographic clusters. The data received from the SWOT analysis will be compared/related to regional plans and long-term strategies. The education cluster includes Pre-K through post-secondary and will help to strengthen our CEDS as we update because it represents such a broad spectrum of the education community. Prit thanked Lisa Harrison for involving so many educators at different levels in the work of the education cluster. Many educators were Council members.

The EDA provides funding, predominately for infrastructure. EDA will fund broadband and telecommunications projects, and some incubators. Our region applied for and received nearly \$20 million in grant funding under the CARES Act. When applying for general funding, the EDA requires demonstration of distress in the area where your proposed project is located. Most of the

communities and counties across our region do not necessarily meet the distress threshold. However, due to the pandemic, the entire country was designated as “special needs,” and every community was eligible for funding with an 80 to 20 match. This created an opportunity to help communities come back from the negative economic impacts of the pandemic.

Currently, under the American Rescue Plan Act, the EDA was allocated \$3 billion. The Biden Administration created programs that provided funding, for example, the Good Jobs Challenge, Travel and Tourism, Outdoors Recreation Program, Build Back Better, and the Economic Adjustment Assistance Challenge. If there were a nonprofit within an ISD, it would be eligible for funding.

Jarrad Toussant, said the Dallas Regional Chamber (DRC) takes an aggressive role in helping to advocate on behalf of members to improve our general business climate and the overall quality of life in our city. The Chamber was active during both the regular and the three called Legislative sessions in 2021.

The education and workforce team looks at a segment of the policy issues ranging from early childhood to adult workforce and upscaling. Education in K-12 and higher education saw significant sustained investment through many of the key initiatives passed by previous Legislatures, as well as new strategies intended to mitigate enrollment and learning loss to the tune of roughly \$3.1 billion of investment in new funding for public education and over \$380 million of investment in higher education. The Chamber has been particularly interested in how those dollars will be allocated to not only mitigate the challenges that we know our students, educators, and systems are sustaining, but also to ensure they will address what we have come to understand will be a long-term crisis for our state. Our Commissioner of Education refers to it as the “\$2 trillion problem,” referring to mitigating the learning loss and disruption to instruction that happened across both K-12 and post-secondary education if the earnings loss potential is calculated over 10 years. We are looking at long-term challenges for our region and the entire state.

Michael Wood shared the following recap of the 87th Legislative Session. The information shared reflects the DRC priorities and is not necessarily a comprehensive list of every public education or higher education bill that passed during the regular or special sessions.

Education in the Budget

Approved: SB 1 provides \$116 billion in general revenue spending for the 2022-23 biennium, the final budget is a marked improvement for higher education and fully funds PK-12 as follows:

- | PK-12 Education | Higher Education |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Fully funds commitments made by HB 3 (86R), including an additional \$3.1 billion for enrollment growth, and ~\$1 billion related to property tax compression. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Increases funding formula by \$380 million to provide for enrollment growth for Texas’ public institutions.Provides an additional \$110 million for TEXAS Grants, the |

- Provides an additional \$70 million to cover costs related to transitioning STAAR assessments online.
- state’s most accessible needs-based financial aid offering.
- Does not fund backlog of Texas Research Incentive Program or TRIP matching grants.
- Maintains core research support funding.

Federal Stimulus Funding

Public Education

- With the December 2020 and March 2021 federal relief packages, Texas received more than \$17 billion dedicated relief for public education.
- In April 2021, state leaders announced that \$11.2 billion, from the American Rescue Plan (ARP), would begin flowing to school districts based on their Title I allocations.
- In June 2021, the Texas Education Agency announced that the remaining \$5.5 billion would flow to school districts. In part, this funding will be used to hold districts harmless for attendance declines during the 2020-21 academic year.

Higher Education

- Texas also received nearly \$5 billion in aid for higher education from the federal relief packages.
- Guidance from the U.S. Department of Education stipulates institutions must use at least half of this funding to provide emergency grants directly to students.
- The remaining funds have largely been used by colleges and universities to recoup unexpected operating costs incurred due to the pandemic.

Broadband Development

One of Governor Abbott’s emergency items for the 87th Legislative Session.

HB 5 by Rep. Trent Ashby

- Establishes a statewide Broadband Development Office, housed in the Office of the Comptroller
- Requires this office to develop a state broadband plan and study broadband access, affordability, and adoption rates, including patterns of discrepancies, throughout the state
- Establishes a program to award grants to expand broadband access and prioritizes public schools and higher education institutions
- Creates an advisory board for the office

Early Childhood Education

The DRC is supportive of legislation to improve the state’s childcare program, including supports for the childcare workforce, increased access to quality, affordable care, and accountability for public dollars.

HB 619 by Rep. Senfronia Thompson

- Requires TWC to create a strategic plan for Texas’ childcare workforce, including recommendations to provide for living wage attainment

HB 2607 by Rep. James Talarico

- Mandates “Texas Rising Star,” the state’s quality rating system, participation for childcare providers that accept subsidies, and improved reporting on public-private pre-K partnerships

Public Education

In addition to monitoring the budget process to ensure full funding of HB 3, the DRC is supportive of legislation to clean-up elements of HB 3 and provide programs to mitigate and recover COVID-19 learning loss.

HB 3 Clean Up: HB 1525 by Rep. Dan Huberty

- Provides technical corrections and improvements to HB 3 (86R). Notable provisions include bonus funding for school districts that equip a student with an Associate’s degree by high school graduation and a tiered allotment for progressively more rigorous career and technical education (CTE) courses.

Accelerated Learning: HB 4545 by Rep. Harold Dutton

- Establishes accelerated learning requirements for students performing unsatisfactorily on state assessments and creates the Strong Foundations grant program to support Pre-K through 5th grade instruction.

Higher Education

In addition to advocating for full funding of higher education in the budget, the DRC is supportive of legislation to promote reskilling and upskilling programs in Texas public junior colleges and provide for tuition revenue bonds.

TRUE: SB 1102 by Sen. Creighton

- Establishes the “Texas Reskilling and Upskilling through Education” initiative in public colleges, which will provide grant funding for public junior and technical colleges to develop and maintain workforce training programs aligned with regional needs.

TWU System: SB 1126 by Sen. Drew Springer

- Provides for the establishment of the Texas Woman’s University System, with campuses in Denton, Dallas, and Houston.

Workforce Development

The DRC is supportive of legislation to better align Texas’ systems of public education and workforce development through tri-agency collaboration, work-based learning, and incentives for paid internships.

Education & Workforce Alignment: HB 3767 by Rep Jim Murphy

- Requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA), Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to share data, coordinate on statewide workforce goals, designate high-priority career pathways, and evaluate career education and training programs.

Work-based Learning: HB 1247 by Rep. J.M. Lozano

- Requires TEA, THECB, and TWC to coordinate and develop a strategic framework to promote work-based learning throughout Texas by 2023.

Jarrad Troussant said the tri-agencies will produce the first report about the combined education and workforce goals that HB 3767 calls for in January 2022 for public comment and encourages everyone to be on the lookout. This will be the state's first attempt to take the investments made, which are in the multiple billions of state and federal dollars across higher education, workforce, and K-12, and provide for a coordinated roadmap of where we want to be as a state. This plan will help us to move toward connecting workforce and K-16 education.

87(3): Federal Funding Allotment

SB 8 by Sen. Jane Nelson

- Allocates \$16 billion in federal American Rescue Plan funding
- Notable allotments include:
 - \$77.25 billion to unemployment compensation fund
 - \$500 million for broadband development
 - \$325 million for university construction
 - \$286 million for the Teacher Retirement System
 - \$237.8 million for state behavioral health hospital in Dallas
 - \$15 million for TRUE program

87(3): Tuition Revenue Bonds

SB 52 by Sen. Brandon Creighton

- Authorizes the issuance of \$3.2 billion in tuition revenue bonds, including:
 - \$52.4 million for UT Arlington
 - \$52.4 million for UT Dallas
 - \$59.9 million for UT Southwestern
 - \$113.4 million for UNT
 - \$100 million for UNT Dallas
 - \$59.9 million for UNT Health Science Center
 - \$44.9 million for TAMU-Commerce
 - \$100 million for TWU

- **Discussion, Reflections and Actions.** Anna Mays thanked the presenters and turned the program over to Christine Hubbard, who led a discussion that included responses to questions she posed.

How can we, as the North Texas Regional P-16 Council, take this information and determine how we can work together for the benefit of our region?

Christine noted discussion of the comprehensive economic development strategy and specifically goal 1, Workforce Development, as highly relevant to our group, which contributes primarily to assuring a competitive skilled workforce. Through the American Rescue Plan Act, we can work together to create applications for funding of regional projects. A primary area relevant to our P-16 Council is the Texas Childcare Workforce. As educators, we provide curriculum, practical clinical work, and placements. Both community college and university teacher educator programs are relevant and could contribute to the TRUE (Texas Reskilling and Upscaling Education) Act. K-12, community colleges, and universities work closely with workforce boards to meet needs within our region.

Do you see anything in HB 3767 that gives us hope that this work will continue? Does it provide a stronger foundation for this work? How do you see it playing out?

- Michael Wood responded that what gives him optimism is the state's continued focus on data and being able to identify strategies that work through articulated objectives and measures. We saw reaffirmation of the importance of public education and higher education recognition that workforce development is important. I think the foundation and the stepping-stones are there for us to take the successes of this legislative session paired with the interim work that will be done through HB 3767, as well as the 60x30TX Refresh and really make 2023 the year for ongoing state commitment to workforce development.
- Rey de los Santos strongly endorsed the issue of citizenship, which is so crucial in this country right now, as we fight to preserve our democracy. It is very important that young people have a clear understanding of what it means to be a citizen in a representative democracy.
- Barbara Lerner shared concern about what happens when this one-time money is gone. We bring students back, we fund them with emergency funds, we get them through one or two semesters, and then drop them. We must recognize the funds will not continue, and therefore, we must build the infrastructure within higher education and K-12. When funds are temporary, they help a group of students but may not have the longer-lasting effect anticipated.
- Rey affirmed this is a big concern of him personally and organizations he works with in the community. Trio programs are currently engaged in an effort to double the Pell Grant from \$6,000 per student to up to \$12,000. He hopes other groups will join in this effort.
- Lisa Harrison shared information about the Perkins Reserve Fund that suggests need for collaboration. North Central Texas Aerial Robotics has received their third year of funding from the Perkins Reserve, so TEA is now looking at them as leading others. Drones are an emerging technology and do not necessarily exist in post-secondary programs. The Perkins Reserve funds are released every year in February. Jet Grants are issued from the Workforce Commission. TEA has put portions of its funds towards the Jet Grants this year to make sure K-12 is included.

We are beginning to see labor market information that funds are being expended by K-12 and post-secondary in careers training and skill upscale training that aligns to jobs that are going to be in our Metroplex. Are there areas other than robotics where we can use this model for the North Central Texas Area, or are you thinking this is one area we need to continue to focus on? Do we want to diversify and start working in other areas? For example, logistics and supply chain management is a huge area where we have needs. Would that be another area on which we could focus our efforts?

- Lisa endorsed logistics and advanced manufacturing. We have many large industries, and we are an aerospace center, not just airlines, but also manufacturing of parts, and we are a transportation hub. With Alliance Airport, we have the largest entity of its kind anywhere in the nation, and we need to tap into that.
- Annette Perry stated on behalf of ISDs that distribution logistics is a huge need. Crowley ISD has a new facility with a distribution and logistics lab. Of 32 programs of study, it is the most difficult to implement. They are unable to hire teachers who meet credentialing requirements for higher education. It is difficult to make industry connections; however, they know they have a responsibility to prepare students for that career field.

- Prit Patel said that as part of their CEDS update, they surveyed the region, asking each geographic and industry cluster to identify the industries they thought were most important. She will share the information with the Council when it becomes available.
- Rey observed that there are robotics programs in various districts, particularly in ISDs that have strong corporate partners. He has learned mentors are leaving these corporate partners due to the additional work responsibility and related staffing shortages.
- Barbara shared that in relationships to credentialed teachers, our Council has studied dual credit in general. Four-year and graduate institutions can assist in the pipeline by providing pathways for credentials. A Council such as ours can get information and create programs and opportunities about how to create pathways to credential teachers. The only way we can have these pathways for students is by providing instructors who can teach them.
- Anna said TEA had funded a few ISDs for Dual Credit Faculty Development Grants; however, it is relatively small funding, and not all districts that applied received funding. THECB should provide joint funding for this effort because it is a joint effort. Currently, credentialed instructors are pursuing additional hours to become credentialed by Dallas, Collin, or Tarrant Colleges, but in many cases, they are doing this in addition to their regular teaching loads. Can the THECB create more scholarships to incentivize going into education with support that is competitive with industries that are hiring, as well? We have to get individuals who have some work experience in the field, in some cases, and not just those who are in graduate education.
- Barbara shared an opportunity to work with regional accreditors. She has served as our SACS Liaison. Regional accreditors are becoming aware of the need for more encompassing credentialing requirements. We need to recognize the purpose of having a credentialed instructor and that how we define a credentialed instructor can vary. Making institutions aware of some of the discretions they have in credentialing would be helpful. In addition to working hand in hand with our regional accreditors, institutions would have more assurance that what they are doing is appropriate for students.
- Rey pointed out that there are equity issues, in particular, with the Grow Your Own programs in school districts. The Council has shared some great examples; however, we may not have been effective in getting the information to all districts. Also, we should look at our higher education institutions' equity in terms of the faculty and the administrators involved. Lots of studies show the positive impact when students have role models and mentors of their same gender and ethnicity. As a Council, we can promote successful strategies. For example, Texas A&M University Commerce is investing funds in equity partly because they found themselves as one of the few institutions still not a Hispanic serving institution. We must be sure our companies and organizations reflect the demographics of the communities we serve.

Karrabi Malin shared that a letter and petition that was created to counter the edTPA assessment. EdTPA is national and used in some states. The push is to add it as a part of a Texas certification credential. This would affect all universities and entities that are preparing future teachers. Teachers currently take two exams, a content exam and the PPR (professional practice and roles) exam to be certified. If you are EC-6 or Middle School ELAR, you must add the Science of Teaching Reading, as a third exam. EdTPA would add another layer and cost to the certification process. It includes a video, portfolio, and other documentation that is already required at many universities and alternative certification programs.

Patsy Robles-Goodwin observed that as we become more diverse in our schools, we want teachers with diversity instructing our students. Dual language teachers must currently take an additional test, the BTLPT, which makes it more difficult to get teachers certified.

- **Combined Committee Reports**

Rosalyn shared a discussion about a Teacher Education Campaign initiated by the Council through its Communicating, Networking, and Social Media Committee. A working group discussed breaking this work down into phases and the first phase will focus on paraprofessionals-to-teachers. Many, who have worked in K-12 schools, recognize that paraprofessionals have the heart for education and for students. The Department of Labor equates a paraprofessional with a teacher assistant. These personnel provide administrative as well as classroom support for lead teachers, and they are already in the schools. We want to look at materials, opportunities, and funding sources so that paraprofessionals can become lead teachers.

Lisa pointed out that the Grow Your Own Grant Program has multiple options, one of which provides funding to teachers who paraprofessionals.

Annette Duvall added that 4B is for Paraprofessionals and 4C is for High School Students to grow the Education and Training Program. Many districts also received funding for these programs. They would love to have thought partners on program implementation because there are hurdles.

Rey noted that in previous years paraprofessionals encountered a roadblock because of the student teaching component. They could not afford to give up their paid employment to complete the student internship. He asked if districts could help with this challenge.

Becky Fredrickson agreed this has been an ongoing problem. TWU has partnered with districts and allows students to keep their paraprofessional jobs while student teaching and have extended student teaching to one year. This provides a half-day of student teaching and a half-day of being a paraprofessional. The district is paying them for a full day of work, and they do not lose their jobs.

Annette pointed out that this is a timely conversation for ISDs due to critical shortages in teaching. They are expecting a mass exodus at the end of the school year and are grateful for any support.

Jean said that the teacher shortage is what triggered this conversation, especially in an area such Bilingual Education and the need for greater diversity among teachers. Paraprofessionals know the environment and if they become credentials classroom teachers, hopefully districts will have more diverse and well-qualified educators.

Lisa shared in meeting with district superintendents in the region about filling teacher shortages, she has become aware that another available resource is veterans leaving the military. Districts have also had success hiring retired police and firefighters to teach. That is a big transition, but perhaps it is something our Professional Development team can look at in the future and put together some sort of bridge program. Districts can reach out to people from these entities based

on their industry experience in law and public safety. With professional development, they can become successful in teaching law, public safety, and history, for example.

Jean agreed our two and four-year institutions, as well as workforce partners, can consider and build on past work experiences, degrees, and other training to enable individuals to move smoothly and seamlessly into the education workforce.

Barbara pointed out that several years ago; some districts recognized they could start with the end in mind. Paraprofessionals started in this role, and districts helped them move toward full teacher certification. Districts looked at how they recruited initially and then set individuals on pathways toward certification.

- **Additional Updates and Information Sharing**

Barbara cited the THECB's 60x30TX Refresh. The next meeting will look at what the framework will be and establish parameters. It aligns perfectly with everything we discussed today about the alignment of education and the workforce. There is concern as to how some of this language will be interpreted once it is put into code. THECB discussed the 60x30TX and know they are not going to meet that goals, so there has been reframing/redefining the goals and how to meet them. THECB has broadened the age range for completion of a degree, and the number of credentials that will apply. Part of the discussion was about credentials of value. We need to keep our eyes on how this will be reflected in new accountability measures. One potential accountability measure is to hold institutions accountable for salaries earned by their graduates.

Barbara shared one potential that has not been discussed much, but she suspects that four-year institutions may seek the ability to grant associate degrees because that would be an additional credential. Barbara also observed that everyone is struggling with waivers to the TSIA disappearing because students are no longer taking the SAT, and four-year institutions, are dealing with test-optional admissions in the absence of standardized testing.

Lisa asked if any of our postsecondary institutions have data on whether they are doing fine without the testing or if it is associated with a higher dropout rate or lower performance?

Barbara observed that test options are showing positive outcomes. We have all known that standardized testing can sometimes be an obstacle for students and that more privileged students have opportunity to better prepare. At TWU, we have looked at utilizing the data that we have, class rank and GPA. This requires communication between data folks and academic folks to predict retention and success. It really is an interesting time and may well prove that test options admission is an equalizer for students.

Lisa expressed excitement about positive outcomes but predicted some fight and pushback because a lot of money is made off tests.

Barbara said that most four-year institutions, at least in the past year, have moved to test optional, and even most of graduate programs no longer require the GRE, because data indicate there are better predictors of success than standardized testing.

Javier agreed they are seeing similar trends. His concern and part of the reason the significance of the test was hidden was that the minority populations were smaller and remained hidden within the larger white population. What we are seeing a bit more now is that the males are the smaller population. We found rank to be very strong, however, rank may be disserving the male population. Options must be available, and, unfortunately, it is going to take a while to find what works.

- **Adjournment**

Jean Keller adjourned the meeting with thanks to everyone for being a part of the Council. She thanked our panelists and Anna, Christine, and Lisa for their efforts in creating a meaningful educational discussion. She wished everyone a very happy and safe holiday season while looking forward to being back together in 2022!

Please mark your calendar!

2021-2022 NTRP-16 Council Meeting Dates and Programs

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

| Date | Location | Host | Topics | Program Facilitator |
|-------------------|--|--|--|---|
| February 15, 2022 | Virtual | Christine Hubbard (Technical Support) | North Texas Demographic and Education Challenges | Ray de los Santos Tiffany Gilmore Shareea Woods |
| April 26, 2022 | Collin College Technical Campus 2550 Bending Branch Way, Allen, TX | Raul Martinez | Career and Technical Education Pathways (HB-5, P-TECH, and T-STEM) | Javier Garza Anita Perry Lisa Harrison |