

New Report Tracks Texas' Education-to-Workforce Reforms

Texas 2036 releases analysis of landmark K-12 and higher education reforms as postsecondary credentials earned in high school surge 532% since 2018.

AUSTIN, TX, UNITED STATES, July 9, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Texas has spent the better part of a decade rewiring its education system from top to bottom. This has included rethinking how schools and colleges are funded, what outcomes students should achieve and what a credential is actually worth.

Today, Texas 2036 releases [The Next Generation of the Texas Miracle](#), a comprehensive analysis showing that the state's landmark reforms are producing real gains for students, while identifying some critical gaps that still threaten Texas' long-term economic future.

The report examines how K-12, higher education and workforce reforms are working together already — and where stronger data systems are still needed.

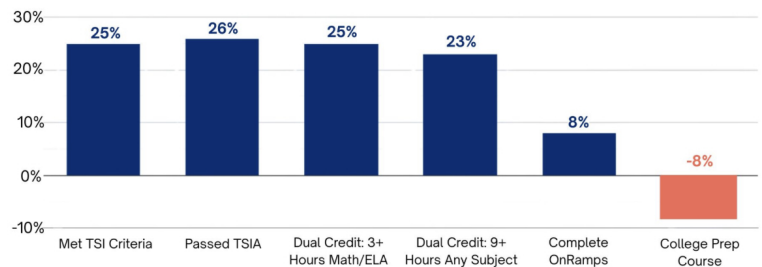
Texas Rewrote the Rules for How Education Gets Funded and Why It Matters

The rewrite started in 2019. House Bill 3 built outcomes into the school finance formula for the first time, creating College, Career and Military Readiness Outcomes Bonuses that provide districts bonuses when graduates meet benchmarks tied to postsecondary and career success — the state's first move to focus funding on what students achieve.

In 2023, Texas made national news by passing House Bill 8, moving away from the decades-old enrollment-based funding model for community colleges to one that rewards outcomes: dual

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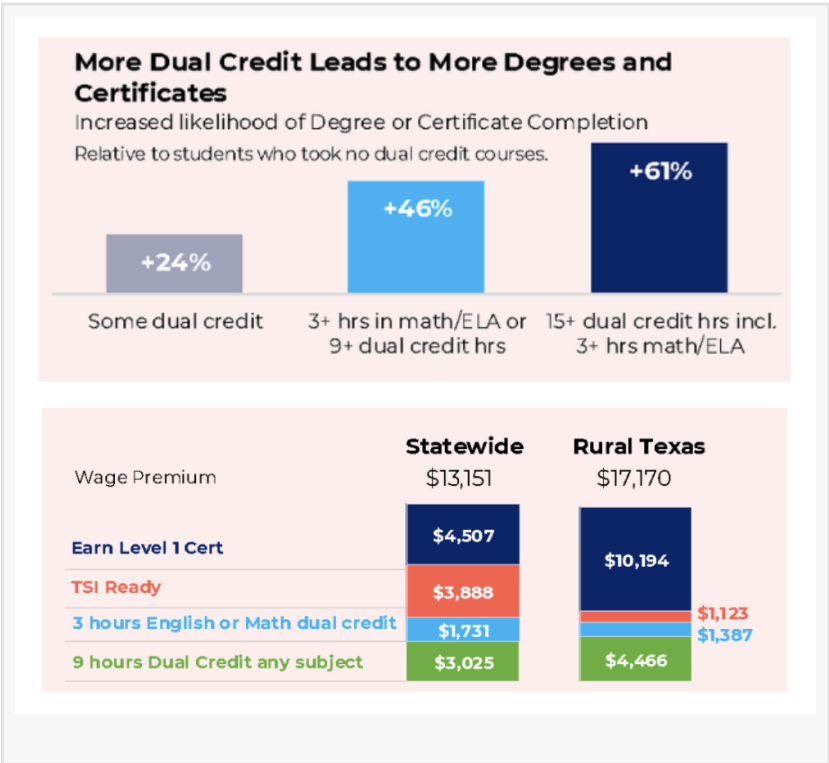
Degree or Certificate Completion Likelihood by CCMR Indicator



Note: Values represent percent differences in the likelihood of each outcome for students who met a given CCMR indicator, compared to otherwise similar students who met no CCMR indicators.

credit completion, transfer to a four-year university and credentials of value, which are certain certificates, licenses and degrees with proven workforce value.

In 2025, the Legislature went further, adding true college and career readiness as a formal goal of public education, and reforming the school accountability system so that higher-value college and career pathways are recognized and rewarded in the school accountability system. Prior to this change, Texas treated all college and career paths equally in the school accountability system. But several indicators were less predictive of success after high school graduation.



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Mary Lynn Pruneda

"Texas has a bright economic future ahead of it, but we have to make sure that Texas students are equipped to share in this prosperity," said Mary Lynn Pruneda, director of education and workforce policy for Texas 2036. "Texas needs to double down on improving and investing in high-quality career pathways so that all Texas students can take part in the Texas Miracle. Thankfully, due to the Legislature’s great work over the past four sessions, we are on our way to that critical goal."

A Once-in-a-Decade Window to Fix the System's Data Problem

Outcomes-based funding only works if the state knows which programs are [actually delivering results](#). Right now, Texas doesn't have a complete picture. The Texas Workforce Commission is currently undergoing its Sunset review, a periodic evaluation that determines whether the agency continues operating or what statutory or administrative changes could improve its effectiveness.

Texas 2036 is actively engaged in that process, pushing for data modernization and

interoperability reforms that would allow the state to track whether credentials are meeting real employer needs in communities across the state.

"Outcomes-based funding is only as strong as the data behind it," said Rahul Sreenivasan, director of government performance and fiscal policy for Texas 2036. "The TWC Sunset review gives Texas a clear opportunity to connect education and workforce data so the state can see which pathways are leading to good jobs, which programs need improvement and where public dollars are delivering the greatest value for Texans."

The Numbers Are Moving, But Gaps Remain That Should Concern Policymakers

The report documents significant momentum: postsecondary credentials earned in high school have increased 532% since 2018; community colleges awarded 140,000 Credentials of Value in 2024; and dual credit courses taken by high school students have grown 35% since 2018.

Students aged 25-30 with college experience ranging from some college to advanced degree holders earn from 7.2% to 85.3% more than peers with only a high school diploma. Rural students who complete blended college and career pathways earn a \$17,170 wage premium six years after graduation.

"The early results are encouraging: more students are earning credentials that can help them move into good jobs, and that is real progress," said Grace Atkins, policy advisor of postsecondary education for Texas 2036. "For students and families, these pathways can be the difference between getting by and getting ahead. The next step is making sure more Texans can earn credentials that lead to strong wages, real career options and greater economic mobility."

The full report, The Next Generation of the Texas Miracle, is available at [Connecting Credentials to Good Jobs](#).

About Texas 2036

Texas 2036 is a nonpartisan public policy organization dedicated to improving lives and opportunities for all Texans through 2036, Texas' bicentennial year, and beyond.

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