

The State of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness in Texas Education

More jobs across Texas will require a **postsecondary credential** to ensure employment and economic upward mobility.

In Central Texas, this is especially true as we continue to see multi-national corporations move to the greater Travis and Williamson County areas.

“We project that by 2030, 62 percent of all jobs in Texas will require some postsecondary education.”

Anthony Carnevale
Director and Research Professor
The Center on Education and the Workforce
Georgetown University

Similar to the design intent that workforce development and economic development must be synchronized, the same is true for postsecondary and workforce readiness.

Pre-K-12, higher education, and workforce must find alignment.

Dual Credit and CTE

We see substantive growth in the volume and breadth of Dual Credit participation across all student groups.

In Central Texas, of those students participating in Dual Credit, there is a notable increase in the number of credits earned between graduates from 2013 to 2022 (see Figure 1).

Occupational Concentrators are students that take at least five semesters in a single program of study that is workforce-aligned.

The same trend holds when we examine CTE participation.

Between 2012 and 2022, the gap between the highest two levels of CTE engagement closed.

Dual Credit Enrollment Increasing Over Time

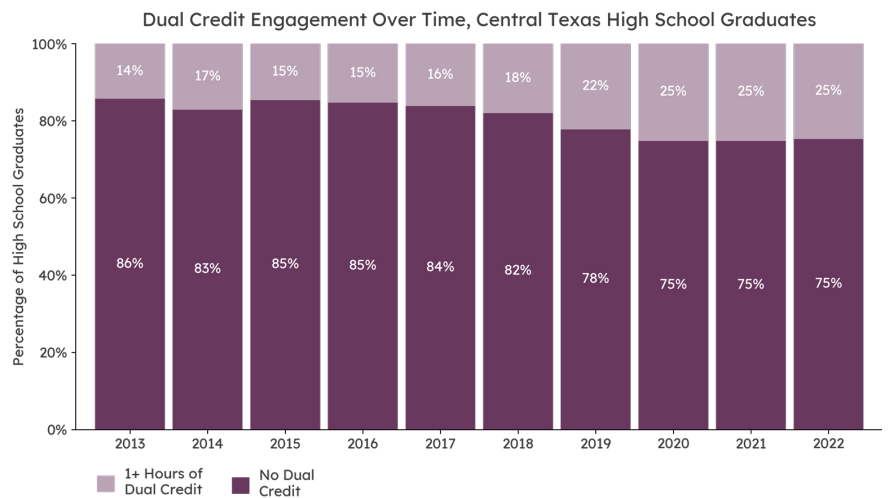


Figure 1. Source: E3 Alliance analysis of PEIMS data at the UT Austin Education Research Center.

The Largest Change Over Time Occurred in Both Concentrator Levels

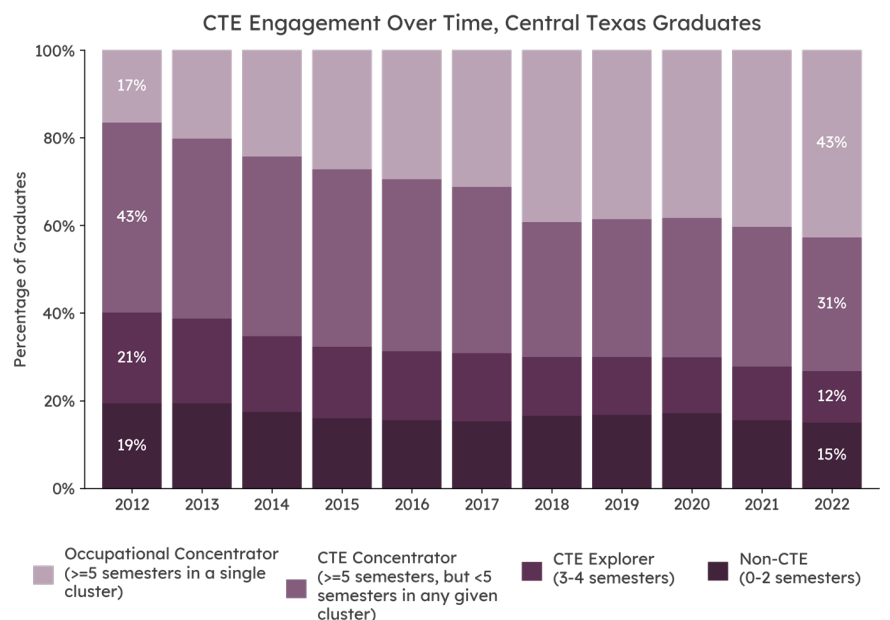


Figure 2. Source: E3 Alliance analysis of PEIMS data at the UT Austin Education Research Center.

We continue to see a decline in direct-to-postsecondary enrollment even with Dual Credit and CTE participation at an all-time high (see Figure 1 & 2).

While there was a slight increase in postsecondary enrollment in the previous two Texas high school graduating classes, postsecondary enrollment has not yet recovered to 2012 high school graduating class direct-to-postsecondary enrollment levels (see Figure 3).

Postsecondary Enrollment in Texas within One Year of Graduating High School

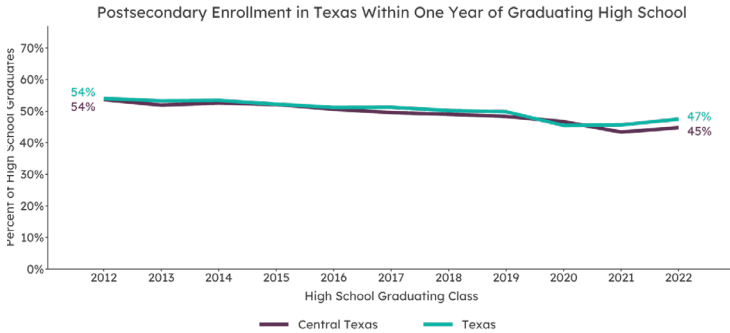


Figure 3. Source: E3 Alliance analysis of high school graduation and postsecondary enrollment data at the UT Education Research Center.

With the increase in Dual Credit and CTE participation, more students can access and complete postsecondary credentials prior to postsecondary enrollment, yet, Texas has seen only modest increases in credential completion rates over time at postsecondary institutions (see Figure 4).

E3 Alliance®

E3 Alliance is a nationally recognized, data-driven education collaborative based in Central Texas. We work across the state to transform education systems through data and collaboration so all students succeed. We also work to increase economic mobility and the overall quality of life for our community through education system alignment from pre-K to the workforce.

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1. E3 Alliance. (2024). Analysis of PEIMS data at the University of Texas at Austin Education Research Center.

2 Ibid.

Degrees Awarded by Texas Public Institutions per Year

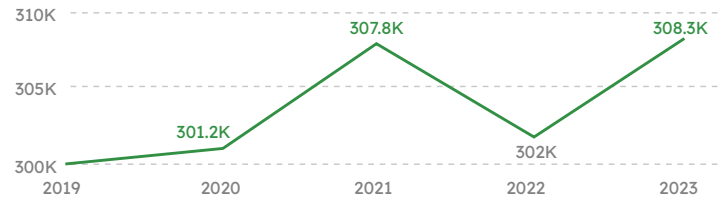


Figure 4. Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2025). THECB Data Bridge Degree Dashboard.

We continue to see a seismic shift in high school graduates moving directly to the workforce. In 2012, 23% of students graduated high school and went directly into the workforce without enrolling in postsecondary. In 2022, 32% of students proceeded directly into the workforce.¹

Similarly, the number of graduates who are enrolled and employed remained relatively unchanged between 2012-2022, highlighting the need for postsecondary education that can provide more Earn and Learn opportunities for students.²

Policy

To continue moving Texas—the world’s 8th largest economy—forward, we need to optimize programming that aligns secondary, postsecondary, and workforce opportunities available for students to pursue prior to high school graduation.

Through specific policy levers such as House Bill 3 College Career and Military Readiness Outcomes Bonus and House Bill 8 Community College Finance Reform, future graduates will be ready to thrive in our Texas workforce due to the access and alignment between K12 and Higher Education.