

Texas Success Center to Provide Content Frameworks for College Preparatory Courses called for in House Bill 5

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MAY 23, 2014

Contact: Steven Johnson
Phone (512) 476-2572
sjohnson@tacc.org

Alternate Contact: Angela Oriano
Phone (512) 484-0049
aoriano@tacc.org

AUSTIN – Today, the Texas Success Center (TSC) at the Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC) announced a critical initiative to create content frameworks and implementation guidelines for the college preparatory courses in mathematics and English language arts (ELA) called for in HB 5. In an effort to support Texas school districts with course development, the TSC convened a collaborative of K-12 and higher education leaders from across the state. This group is working to identify the essential student learning outcomes and content expectations.

HB 5 requires school districts to partner with at least one institution of higher education (IHE) to develop and provide college preparatory courses in math and ELA. These courses must be designed for 12th grade students who have yet to demonstrate college readiness. Students graduating under the foundation high school program, who successfully complete the math or ELA college preparatory course, may use the credit to satisfy advanced content-area credit requirements for graduation. Students who successfully complete the course are granted an exemption to TSI in the corresponding content area at the partnering institution. The college preparatory courses outlined in HB 5 must be made available to students 2014-2015 school year.

Preliminary content frameworks will be made available by the TSC at the end of May 2014. Executive Director of the Texas Success Center, Dr. Angela Oriano explained, “Currently, districts and colleges across the state are developing courses to fulfill the requirements in HB 5 with little or no state-level coordination and with very little time. TSC’s goal is to promote the success and consistency of these courses by convening a team of experts from across the state to identify essential skills and learning outcomes that all districts and IHEs can use to frame their courses.” She adds, “After the preliminary frameworks are released the work of this group will continue. We are committed to engaging in an ongoing and rigorous development process that includes all stakeholders to produce exceptional course materials.”

Although the documents will be universally available, districts and community colleges are being asked to pilot the course frameworks for the upcoming school year and provide feedback. Vice Chancellor for Instruction at Houston Community College, Dr. Charles Cook highlights the importance of this work by adding, “It is vital that students be provided high quality courses. By granting a TSI exemption, these courses have the potential to offer significant time and cost savings to students by reducing the need to enroll in non-credit bearing developmental courses. However, it is essential that these exemptions be earned as a result of completing rigorous coursework designed to ensure that students leave high school with a strong foundation in identified skills.”

K-12 curriculum leaders are excited about the availability of systematically developed outlines of course content from TSC. Dr. Suzy Lofton, Director of Curriculum and Instruction at Lago Vista ISD, explains, “Given the short timeline and the fact that over 1,200 school districts and charters are simultaneously developing courses with no agreed upon standards there was justifiable concern that any potential benefits from these courses might be impacted due to a lack of time and resources. Thankfully, our needs and concerns have been answered by the TSC.” She adds, “The resources and network of educators resulting from this collaborative effort will provide immeasurable benefits to students across the State for years to come.”

###

About the Texas Success Center

The Texas Success Center (TSC) organizes Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC) members around common action to accelerate their efforts to improve persistence and completion. The TSC provides the vision, support, and shared venue for TACC and educational community partners to develop and implement a collective student success agenda. For more information, please visit <http://www.tacc.org/pages/texas-success-center>.