



Testimony

Interim Charge 3

Texas House Higher Education Committee

by Erin Davis Valdez

Chair Turner and Members of the Committee:

My name is Erin Davis Valdez, and I am a policy analyst with the Texas Public Policy Foundation. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide information for interim charge 3. Question 7 of the interim charge reads:

What changes, if any, are needed to align data collection between the THECB, TWC and TEA in order to collect consistent metrics?

Texas Workforce Commission's digital infrastructure, as highlighted by the COVID-19 crisis, is in desperate need of updating. In addition, in order to better align workforce and secondary/postsecondary vocational training, TWC should explore whether unemployment insurance wage records are robust enough to give meaningful and actionable data on outcomes for vocational programs.

The Foundation recommends that the Legislature and the Tri-Agency Commission study how to create stronger incentives for transparency and data access for researchers to study and compare outcomes from various state-funded workforce training programs. This would enable policymakers to allocate funding toward educational and training interventions based on their return on investment. A national example of this is the Evidence-Based Policymaking Act (H.R. 4174), which "requires agency data to be accessible and requires agencies to develop statistical evidence to support policymaking."

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information, and I look forward to future discussions. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Erin Davis Valdez is a policy analyst at the Texas Public Policy Foundation. She has been passionate about the transformational power of education all her life, having been given the gift of being homeschooled. She taught for over a decade in Austin-area schools and served as an assistant principal at a charter school in Lewisville. These experiences have given her the opportunity to see first-hand how students can thrive when they have excellent options.

Since joining the Foundation, Valdez has conducted research on career and technical education at the secondary and post-secondary levels, civics education, and welfare to work programs in Texas.

Valdez earned an MA in classics from the University of California, Santa Barbara and a BA in classical studies from Hillsdale College.

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