



KEY DRC MESSAGES

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

For your reference as an attendee – not to leave behind with lawmakers/staff

About the Dallas Region and the Dallas Regional Chamber's Legislative Priorities

- The Dallas Regional Chamber serves as the voice of the business community in our region. We represent over **700 member companies employing more than 600,000 Texans**, and we were named the National Chamber of the Year last summer.
- The strength of Texas' economy is driven by the strength of the Dallas Region's economy. **222 companies have moved their headquarters to the Dallas Region since 2010, and 1.3 million new jobs have been created in the region.** That's more than one new company a month every month for 12 years.
- The Dallas Region's economy is the most diverse of any large market in the U.S. **Of the last 10 Fortune 500 companies to move to the region, eight have come from different sectors.**
- The Dallas Region is the fourth-largest market in the U.S. with a population of 7.8 million, and we're projected to pass Chicago in about 10 years. **It will be vital this legislative session to make the commitments we need to keep our region and state an attractive place to live, work, and do business.**
- The DRC's legislative priorities focus on pro-business, pro-growth policies that ensure continued prosperity while maintaining a high quality of life for all. **Our agenda for this session outlines our region's needs in economic development, education and workforce, health care, and quality of life.** It is the result of several months of engagement with our member companies and community partners across a variety of industries.
- The agenda is very focused on workforce development. With labor shortages and job market competition, the business community prioritizes policies that will help develop the talent pipeline for the jobs of both today and the future.

Issue Area #1: Community College Finance (Higher Education)

DRC agenda language: *Preserve the competitiveness of Texas' higher education institutions through improved state investment in the community college finance system and increased assistance for research initiatives and academic facilities.*

Lead Introduction

- By 2030, 62% of jobs in Texas will require some sort of postsecondary credential or degree. However, just 47.9% of working Texans today meet this requirement. As a result, more than 1.4 million "middle-skills" jobs remain unfilled throughout the state today.
- Texas' community colleges are uniquely qualified to address the skills gap at the root of these unfilled jobs at scale.



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- Community colleges enroll 43% of all postsecondary students in Texas – more than any other type of institution – and provide training pathways across a wide variety of credentials, certificates, and degrees, often in direct partnership with regional employers.

Request

- The DRC fully supports the recommendations from the Texas Commission on Community College Finance. The DRC is also supportive of the \$650M investment for community college finance reform as allocated by the initial House and Senate budgets.

Talking Points

- Recommendations from the Texas Commission on Community College Finance:
 - State funding for student outcomes, including attainment of a credential of value and successful transfer to a four-year institution
 - One-time investments in community college capacity to develop high-demand training pathways
 - Expanded access to student financial aid, including for dual-credit programs
- In a poll of North Texas voters, 84% agree that community colleges are key to the development of Texas' workforce.
- Additionally, 83% of North Texas voters support increasing the state's investment in community colleges based on the number of students meeting key academic and workforce outcomes.

Issue Area #2: Assessments & Accountability (PK-12 Education)

DRC agenda language: *Ensure an equitable and rigorous public education system through evidence-based state funding investments and a sustained commitment to academic accountability.*

Lead Introduction

- Student assessments and public school accountability are both critical to the development of a talented workforce.
- Texas invests more than \$160K per student over the course of their PK-12 career, yet only 27% are considered college, career, or military ready upon high school graduation.
- Summative annual assessments in key grades and subject areas are necessary to measure academic progress. Texas' current assessment instruments provide accurate information about student achievement and allow stakeholders to compare school and district progress across the state.
- The state's A-F Accountability System helps to ensure that schools are making progress and provides a transparent and objective measurement for stakeholders, including employers.



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- Texas' accountability system works: students attending "A" or "B" rated campuses are 2.7x more likely to be college ready upon high school graduation than students on campuses rated "D" or "F."

Request

- The DRC supports maintaining Texas' current PK-12 assessments and accountability framework. Since implementation in 2017, only two comprehensive sets of A-F ratings have been administered, with the three most recent school year ratings disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In addition, the DRC supports TEA's funding request for High Quality Instructional Materials to provide additional supports for educators and instructional materials to further ensure students are receiving grade-level content and meeting state academic standards.

Talking Points

- Students on campuses rated "A" or "B" are 1.8x more likely to meet grade-level reading standards and 2.6x more likely to meet grade-level math standards than students on "D" or "F" campuses.
- In a poll conducted of North Texas voters, 74% support Texas' current system of assigning an A-F letter grade to public schools.
- Additionally, 82% of voters support testing that provides parents a transparent measure of their student's progress in school.
- Studies of curriculum used in Texas classrooms find that less than 19% of Texas students are completing grade-level schoolwork. A pilot program from the Texas Education Agency found that swapping curriculum alone improved grade-appropriate assignments by 39%.

Issue Area #3: Four-Year University Funding (Higher Education)

DRC agenda language: *Preserve the competitiveness of Texas' higher education institutions, including through improved state investment in the community college finance system and increased assistance for research initiatives and academic facilities.*

Lead Introduction

- Higher education institutions in North Texas generate roughly \$13.3 billion in annual economic activity.
- DFW is the #1 region in Texas for higher education:
 - Leads the state in postsecondary enrollment and degree completion
 - Largest concentration of Carnegie-designated research institutions in the state (8)
 - Sixth highest graduate retention rate in the country
- Spending on research initiatives at North Texas higher education institutions produces a 7:1 return on investment.



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Request

- The DRC supports a one-time investment to fully or partially clear the backlog of Texas Research Incentive Program (TRIP) state matching grants. North Texas' three eligible institutions (UT Arlington, UT Dallas, UNT) have a TRIP backlog of \$120.1M, or 35.5% of the state's total backlog (\$337.8M).
- The DRC supports state funding to provide for the cost incurred annually by public institutions of higher education in serving Hazlewood Legacy students. In North Texas, waived tuition and fees are projected to cost local public institutions of higher education \$11.9M for the upcoming biennium.

Talking Points

- The Texas Research Incentive Program (TRIP) was created by the Texas Legislature in 2009 to provide state matching funds to emerging research universities to capitalize on private gifts made for the purposes of research productivity and faculty recruitment.
- Of the eight eligible institutions, three are in North Texas –University of Texas at Arlington, University of Texas at Dallas, and University of North Texas.
- The Hazlewood Act is a state-level benefit that provides qualified veterans, their spouses, and dependent children with an education benefit of up to 150 hours of tuition exemption. Institutions do not receive any reimbursement from the state for the cost incurred by serving the dependent children of Hazlewood recipients.