Background

Since 2003, Educate Texas has worked to strengthen Texas public schools and higher education. Originally called the Texas High School Project, Educate Texas began as an initiative to introduce the early college high school model to the state. It has become a change agent working with partners to increase academic achievement and educational equity.

Texas College Access Network (TxCAN) is one initiative of Educate Texas. TxCAN supports the mission through work focused on increasing college access. These efforts help Texas students earn credentials that allow them to earn a living wage and thrive. TxCAN supports the goals outlined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) in Building a Talent Strong Texas. This is their three-pronged approach:

- **Collective action** – TxCAN connects college access leaders from across the state. They encourage discussion, increase collaboration, and drive change.
- **Shared learning** – TxCAN connects college access leaders with training opportunities and important information.
- **Intentional partnerships** – TxCAN partners with state agencies such as the Texas Education Agency (TEA), Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), and THECB. The goal is to provide insight and solutions to problems facing public schools and higher education.

Connecting the State

Texas prides itself on being big! To have an impact in a state this size, organizations like TxCAN need to connect with all parts of the state. They need to understand the diverse needs of its people and its systems. By connecting with leaders from the Rio Grande Valley to the Red River and down to the Gulf of Mexico, TxCAN works to achieve a greater impact together than each agency or organization could achieve alone.

TxCAN’s leadership council is made up of stakeholders from a wide range of fields. These groups come together to offer guidance and move the state toward greater college access for all students:

- **Colleges and universities** – Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Texas Association of Community Colleges
- **College access providers** – Café College San Antonio, Dallas County Promise, National College Attainment Network
- **Foundations** – Greater Texas Foundation, Kresge Foundation, Powell Foundation, Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, Rainwater Charitable Foundation (T3), Trellis Foundation
- **Nonprofit organizations** – College Forward, Commit Partnership, Good Reason Houston, Reach Higher Texas, RGV Focus, United for College Success – KIPP, UP Partnership
- **Regional college access network** – Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce
- **Schools and school districts** – Education Service Center Region 19
- **State agencies** – TEA, TWC, THECB
Connecting with You

Data Monitoring
Accurate data is the foundation of college access initiatives. TxCAN helps school counselors and college access leaders use data to effectively plan for change. TxCAN's easy-to-use dashboards put all the data in one place. Dashboards on the TxCAN Resource Page monitor FAFSA completion for schools and districts in Texas over time. They also show current FAFSA completion rates and direct-to-college enrollment rates. By seeing how regions, districts, and campuses compare to state averages and change over time, you can see where you are now and where you need to be.

Future Focused Texas
COVID-19 impacted education in many ways. For high school students graduating in 2021 and 2022, the path to further education became even more challenging.
TxCAN used its college access network to develop Future Focused Texas. Its resources help school counselors keep students engaged in the process and overcome the obstacles put in their way by COVID-19. TxCAN developed these research-based, direct-to-student content packages with Get Schooled, United for College Success, College Forward, THECB, and Texas OnCourse. They also collaborated on related professional development.

Blogs and Newsletters
Keeping up with the ever-changing landscape of secondary and postsecondary education can be tough. Getting information from a trusted, research-based source is imperative. TxCAN works to provide school counselors and college access leaders with up-to-date, high-quality information through blogs and newsletters.

TxCAN Partner Highlights
TxCAN works with a wide range of regional and local college access providers and nonprofits to make a big impact across Texas. These are just a few of their success stories!

Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce
Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce knows that a local talent pool is key to a robust economy. The Chamber works with partner districts to improve college access by hosting financial aid events, recruiting volunteers, and providing financial aid training sessions. Their work has increased the FAFSA completion rate to over 70% in local districts. Explore their community partnerships spotlight.

The Commit Partnership
The Commit Partnership works to ensure that Dallas County residents can earn a living wage. They serve over 200 public school districts, charter school networks, and independent private schools in the county. Using their data portal, partner schools can pull FAFSA completion data and student rosters together to monitor and help students meet their goals. The Commit Partnership also provides free professional development. Not only that, they help to build the capacity of school counselors by highlighting and sharing best practices. Explore their community partnerships spotlight.

RGV Focus
RGV Focus recognizes the cultural challenges facing students in the Rio Grande Valley. Working with community organizations, higher education institutions, and public schools, they focused on student and family needs. This way, they increased the FAFSA completion rate to 71%. Explore their community partnerships spotlight.

Get Connected
Complete TxCAN's online form to get connected and keep up to date with their latest resources and initiatives.