



A New Vision for Public Education in Texas



Mission: School Transformation

An invitation from the Texas High Performance
Schools Consortium to join in the work of
transforming Texas public schools

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Supported by

TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
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Background

The 82nd Texas Legislature approved Senate Bill 1557 in 2011, calling for the commissioner of education to select schools for the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium (THPSC). After an application process, 23 Texas school districts were selected in September 2012 by Commissioner Michael Williams to comprise the Consortium.

SB 1557 is an extension of the work of the Visioning Institute that began in 2006 when a group of 35 superintendents from across the state of Texas came together and asked the question, “What should curriculum, instruction, assessment and accountability include as districts work to meet the needs of students?” From the work of the Visioning Institute, ideas emerged that included the importance of a) integrating technology into the learning process on a routine basis, b) using a curriculum that includes high-priority learning standards as opposed to a curriculum that is “a mile wide and an inch deep,” c) broad-based accountability that relies on a variety of measures, d) authentic assessment of students as a powerful tool that enables educators to customize learning, and e) local communities maintaining the lion’s share of control in determining the success of schools. This vision is captured in a white paper, [*Creating a New Vision for Public Education in Texas*](#).

Transformation Initiatives of the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium

To advance the principles described in the vision document, SB 1557 charged Consortium districts with improving student learning in the state of Texas through innovation in four areas:

- Development of high-priority learning standards
- Use of multiple assessments to measure learning
- Integration of technology into student learning
- Creation of robust community-based accountability systems

For more information on Texas High Performance Schools Consortium, view their [*Concept Paper on Transforming Texas Public Schools*](#).

Transformation Goal and Rationale

Through engagement in these four vision-driven initiatives, the goal of the Consortium is to transform education so that all Texas students are future ready. Students should be given the power to create and innovate, and teachers should be given the opportunity to use feedback and assessments to design learning that is both relevant and rigorous. Parents, members of the local business community, and individuals from higher education agree that they are looking for students who are critical thinkers, innovators, problem solvers, collaborators, and good communicators. Unfortunately, our current system focuses on teaching to high-stakes tests, not fostering the skills needed to be future ready.

Expanding the Transformation Initiatives Statewide

The Consortium districts are working together to research, explore, develop and implement an assessment and accountability framework that is not over-reliant on high-stakes testing and is malleable enough to meet the needs of urban, suburban, and rural communities.

To expand this work statewide and to learn with districts across the state that are engaged in similar transformation work, the THPSC is inviting other districts to join in the transformation work as Consortium Associates and partner with the Consortium members in statewide efforts.

Benefits of Joining the Work

Consortium member districts pledge to share ideas, resources, and results with all transformation partner districts. Your district will have the benefit of learning with innovative leaders committed to the vision principles and to creating future-ready learners. In addition, your district will have access to TASA's school transformation supports, including such things as access to national leaders in educational innovation, research on key transformation initiatives, and direct in-district services supporting your work.

Expectations of Consortium Associates Partnering in the Work

Districts that seek to join the Consortium's work are expected to share a commitment to the principles and premises outlined in "The New Vision for Public Education in Texas" and engage as a contributing partner with Consortium members and other districts in the on-going transformation work. A simple, online application will ask for the district's agreement with and commitment to the transformation goals and outcomes, evidenced by:

- Securing Board of Trustees support for participation, confirmed by a resolution or board meeting minutes
- Engaging meaningfully as a contributing and learning member of the group, sharing the work taking place in their district
- Participating in one or more Consortium working groups (learning standards, multiple assessments, digital integration, community-based accountability)
- Joining the School Transformation Network (TASA-supported group of districts committed to the vision work)* and participating in a regional consortium
- Committing staff time and resources to support the district's participation in the work
- Commitment to creating a community-based accountability system in accord with the vision principles

**STN subscription fee based on district size. [[Subscription Details](#)]*

Joining the Work of Transformation

To join in this important work, please complete and submit the online [Consortium Associates Application](#). Be prepared to commit to the items listed above, as well as provide the following:

- A brief description of your district's purpose and rationale for joining the transformation work of the Consortium, including current transformation efforts and any evidence of board/community support for this work
- Selection of one or more of the following Consortium working groups your district will be willing to join
 - Development of high-priority learning standards
 - Use of multiple assessments to measure learning
 - Digital integration into student learning
 - Community-based accountability systems

Please complete the online application by January 17, 2014. You will be contacted following a review of your application by the THPSC Steering Committee. Selected districts will be invited to a Consortium Associates Orientation and Planning Meeting to be held in conjunction with TASA's 2014 Midwinter Conference in Austin on Saturday afternoon, January 25. If you are unable to secure board support prior to the Midwinter Conference but are committed to partnering in the Consortium work, we encourage you to attend the orientation meeting.

This invitation is intended to be inclusive of all interested and qualified districts, but consideration will be given to ensuring broad statewide demographic and geographic representation.