



To: Texas House Committee on Higher Education
From: Mike Manigault, Associate Vice President of Strategy & Grants
Home Builders Institute (<http://www.hbi.org>)
1201 15th Street, NW, Sixth Floor
Washington, DC 20005
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Re: Committee request for information regarding interim charge #3

The Texas Legislature and state agencies should remove barriers for true “alignment” between public education, higher education and the diverse workforce needs of Texas employers.

One such barrier: the industry-based certifications (IBC) list available for “credit” in the K-12 public education accountability system. In the past, this IBC list was arbitrarily limited to those certifications that can be obtained prior to high school graduation (or the summer after), and the decision to include particular IBCs was the sole discretion of the Texas Education Agency staff.

Like it or not, many ISDs and superintendents across Texas will often not approve courses or curriculum to be taught unless that certification is included on this TEA “magic list”.

Going forward, the evaluation and determination of the K-12 accountability IBC list should:

A) be a **true tri-agency initiative** — TEA, THECB, and TWC, with robust input by business and industry partners – not just a passive survey sent to select employers. And TWIC – the Texas Workforce Investment Council in the Governor’s office – should be consulted too.

B) take into consideration that many valued IBCs cannot be completed before high school graduation. **Often, these certification programs can begin in K-12 and can be completed in post-secondary environments like community colleges, technical schools, TSTC, workforce training programs, and on-the-job apprenticeships.** ISDs should deserve some credit for offering coursework in these certification areas.

HBI strongly urges that evaluation and formation of the IBC list should be a key priority of all three agencies, but most especially the Texas Workforce Commission, local workforce boards, and employers through their statewide trade associations. Success will be measured when valued courses, curricula, and certifications are not arbitrarily excluded from consideration, and success will be achieved when the IBC evaluation process is completely re-engineered to reflect meaningful employer input, and worthy IBCs are not unnecessarily excluded.