

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New Texas High School Education: School District Viewpoints on HB5 Implementation

Key Findings: The Challenges of Preparing Texas High School Students for Success

- **Decentralization vs. State Guidance:** Most school districts are comfortable with the legislative intent behind HB5, but many are frustrated by a perceived lack of state guidance for implementation decisions.
- **Complexities of the Counselor Role:** Counselors are integral to carrying out the requirements of HB5, but most districts report that counselors have limited time and multiple responsibilities, and many districts feel they do not have enough counselors.
- **Challenges of Industry Partnerships:** Nearly all districts have at least one industry partnership in place, in accordance with HB5' focus on career readiness, but many districts report barriers to forming new industry partnerships, including lack of Career and Technical Education teachers and the cost of specialized facilities and equipment.

In 2013, Texas HB 5 (83R), also known as HB5, introduced a new system of graduation requirements into the state high school education environment. The policy aims to promote college and career readiness through a system of endorsements, specializations that allow high school students to choose a pathway based on their future college and career aspirations.

Research Questions

- How are school districts in Texas implementing HB5?
- How were implementation strategies selected within the districts?
- What challenges do districts face in implementing HB5?
- What implementation practices show promise for success, and how can they be replicated by other districts?

Study Design

- Exploratory, qualitative study
- Focus: perceptions and implementation strategies of district administrators across Texas
- 21 districts across 6 regions of the state, further sampled by district classification, school size, and student demographics (% minority and SES)
- 31 interviews

5 Endorsements with Examples of Typical Pathways



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Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium

Successful Implementation of HB5: Recommendations for Community Stakeholders

STAKEHOLDERS	RELEVANT RESEARCH FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
LEGISLATIVE POLCYMAKERS	Districts are frustrated by short policy implementation timeline.	Allow additional time for implementation in future education legislation and align timeline with school calendar.
	Districts feel they do not have enough counselors to serve all students.	Make additional funds available for districts to expand counseling program.
	Districts struggle to recruit Career and Technical Education teachers.	Improve CTE funding weight to make more attractive salaries possible.
	Districts are concerned that increased busing to meet student course needs may prove unsustainable.	Improve transportation funding allotment to cover cost of increased busing.
	Districts perceive a lack of state guidance.	Be aware of concerns for future education legislation.
TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY	Districts wish for a centralized resource at the state level.	Designate staff member or team as HB5 resource and make point of contact clear to districts.
	Districts are frustrated by the need to coordinate TEKS and endorsements.	Provide crosswalk between TEKS and endorsement course requirements to assist districts in course planning.
	Districts face barriers to certifying Career and Technical Education teachers.	Make CTE teacher certification process easier to help districts attract qualified teachers.
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS	Districts face administrative challenges around middle-to-high school transition.	Develop district-wide student information management system that tracks student endorsement and graduation plan progress through middle and high school.
	Large districts struggle to unify approach across all schools.	Form cross-functional team of personnel from all relevant departments to unify implementation strategy and communicate with schools.
	Districts worry about future staffing shortages for popular endorsements.	Closely monitor course enrollments and prioritize popular choices.
	Districts are concerned about repercussions on students of early specialization.	Closely monitor student outcome data as first cohorts graduate under HB5.
CURRICULUM SPECIALISTS	Districts worry about student challenges arising from strict sequencing of courses in endorsements.	Work with counselors for early identification of students at risk of failing a course or thinking of changing endorsements to minimize challenges.
COUNSELING & GUIDANCE SPECIALISTS	Counselors face multiple responsibilities and limited time.	Supplement counseling personnel by hiring more counselors or recruiting volunteer mentors.
	Counselors are not specifically trained in career counseling.	Offer additional counselor training.
	Middle and high school counselors operate in silos.	Revise counseling structure to allow counselors to rotate with student cohorts, starting in middle school.
	Counselors face barriers to communicating with all parents.	Collect data about how parents prefer to receive information and adjust strategies.
INDUSTRY & CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE	Rural districts lack available industry partners.	Reach out to districts in surrounding rural areas to offer opportunities to partner.
	Districts face difficulties recruiting and certifying CTE teachers.	Provide grants or incentives to help districts recruit CTE teachers.
	Districts without dedicated staff face challenges establishing partnerships.	Provide grants to hire staff or loan employee time to help schools develop partnerships.
	Districts lack specialized facilities and equipment.	Loan space or equipment or provide grants to make new partnerships feasible.
HIGHER EDUCATION	Districts worry about alignment of endorsements with higher education expectations.	Work with districts to improve alignment of K-12 and higher education standards.
	Small, rural districts struggle to establish partnerships with geographically distant institutions of higher education.	Work to establish partnerships with online institutions of higher education.