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Gov. Abbott's Tri Agency Workforce Initiative brings state education and workforce leaders to El Paso

EL PASO – As part of Gov. Greg Abbott's Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative, Texas Commissioner of Education Mike Morath, Texas Commissioner of Higher Education Raymund Paredes, Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Chairman Andres Alcantar and TWC Commissioners Ruth Hughs and Julian Alvarez today met with El Paso workforce and economic development representatives, as well as leaders from area independent school districts, community colleges and universities.

Morath, Paredes, Alcantar, Hughs and Alvarez are hosting a series of regional workforce and education forums across the state to assess regional needs and help establish a framework for closer collaboration between public education, higher education and workforce development entities to ensure Texas is poised to compete in an ever-changing 21st century economy.

Gov. Abbott established the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative to assess local economic activity, examine workforce challenges and opportunities and consider innovative approaches to meeting the state's education and workforce goals.

"Understanding the needs of job creators is paramount to ensuring that Texas remains the top state for business expansion and relocation," said Gov. Abbott. "By establishing this initiative, the State of Texas now seeks to ensure that the needs of both its growing workforce as well as new and existing businesses are met and each are prepared to successfully operate in an ever-changing 21st century economy."

The five public education, higher education and workforce agency leaders are assessing local workforce needs and innovative workforce development models that directly coordinate with industry partners and promote post-secondary success. The commissioners are also seeking input on regional services for Texas veterans, evaluating their access to education and employment opportunities to ensure a seamless and accelerated transition back into the Texas workforce.

"To assure all students are in position to succeed after high school, effective collaborations between public education, higher education and workforce leaders must take place in every community," said Commissioner Morath. "Giving students the flexibility to learn future career skills while attending public school will reap benefits for the local, regional and state economies of tomorrow."

Through these regional forums, Gov. Abbot has also charged commissioners with assessing how career and technical education (CTE) and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) educational programs are impacting Texas students.

“The intent of 60x30TX is to have a diverse and educated workforce that is able to adapt and compete at the highest levels to maintain a strong Texas economy,” said Commissioner Paredes. “Together, the tri-agency recommendations and the 60x30TX plan will enable Texas to take bold steps to meet the needs of its workforce and provide opportunities for all Texans.”

The agency leaders are also seeking to identify and advance public and higher education initiatives that make college more affordable and accessible for all Texans, keeping with the goals of *60x30TX*, the statewide strategic higher education plan spearheaded by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

“To continue in meeting the workforce needs of employers and support the growth of innovative industries, our middle and high-school students must receive the workforce skills that these jobs require,” said Commissioner Hughs. “These open discussions among education and industry partners are a vital part of preparing our students to compete for these high-demand jobs in our global economy and keep Texas number one in job creation.”

As part of the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative tour, Morath, Paredes, Alcantar, Hughs and Alvarez have hosted meetings in Midland, San Antonio, Houston and Dallas. Future meeting sites include McAllen (May 25), Tyler (June 2) and Austin (June 17).

The agency leaders will host an Austin Workforce Summit in September to make final recommendations taken from the regional forums.

For additional information regarding the regional workforce and education forums, contact:

Lisa Givens – Texas Workforce Commission
(512) 463-8556
Lisa.Givens@twc.state.tx.us

Lauren Callahan – Texas Education Agency
(512) 463-9000
Lauren.Callahan@tea.texas.gov

Kelly Carper Polden – Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
(512) 427-6119
Kelly.Polden@thehb.state.tx.us

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