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

MCALLEN – 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 McAllen workforce and economic development representatives, as well as leaders from area independent school districts, community colleges and universities.

The Commissioners 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 postsecondary 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.

“I am encouraged that these discussions among our invested stakeholders will result in the best solutions to link education and training with workforce needs,” said Commissioner Alvarez. “This in turn will ensure that our youth and future workforce in Texas is well prepared for the global jobs of the future.”

As part of the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative tour, the Commissioners have hosted meetings in Midland, San Antonio, Houston, Dallas and El Paso. Future meeting sites include 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:

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