



## What It Is

- Pathways enable students to earn industry-based credentials that are stackable and portable, allowing them to compete in the labor market.
- Degrees and credentials create on- and off-ramps for pathways that allow students to enter the workforce and pursue further education according to their interests and career goals.

## What Are Industry-Based Certifications?

College completion rates in Texas are improving, but not quickly enough. Only 20 percent of Texas 8th-grade students in 2006 graduated from college by 2017. This is far below what the state needs. Experts say that in 12 years, 60 percent of Texans will need a certificate or degree for the state to stay competitive in the global economy. Right now, not nearly enough Texas students are completing the education needed to fill the jobs that will be available.

Industry-based certifications represent skills and learning that open doors and act as a springboard for higher levels of achievement to ensure students' success. Industry-based certifications are one of the measures to demonstrate college and career readiness within Texas' K-12 accountability system.

## Why It Matters

- Students need credentials valued by employers in order to successfully compete in the labor market.
- Employers need more credentialed employees in order to address the skills gap.
- Opportunities to earn credentials along the pathway allow students to enter, exit, and re-enter the pathway as their education and career goals evolve.

## What It Looks Like

- Students have opportunities to earn stackable credentials that are aligned with the industry focus of pathways.
- The labor market value of certifications is validated through employer input and labor market information.

## Stakeholder Roles

- **Secondary and postsecondary educators** embed credentials with value in the labor market in programs of study and provide students with the supports needed to earn available credentials.
- **Employers** advise educators on the value of credentials.
- **Workforce development boards** provide labor market information, including real-time data, on in-demand credentials.
- **Intermediaries** support coordination and collaboration among educators and employers.

