



Greater Texas Foundation Strategic Plan Summary

Prepared for:

Greater Texas Foundation

Adopted: October 29, 2009

www.fsg-impact.org

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Strategic Planning Process

- In 2009, Greater Texas Foundation engaged FSG Social Impact Advisors in a six month process to examine its mission, vision, funding principles and internal operations, and develop a strategic plan for the five-year period from 2010 to 2015.
- **Phase I:** explored internal perspectives on the foundation's potential to create value. Internal processes consisted of interviews with all members of the Board of Directors in addition to some staff, as well as a survey of all staff and board. Interviews provided a context around GTF's areas of strength.
- **Phase II:** focused on gathering input from a range of external stakeholders with expertise in the Texas educational landscape. Forty-two interviews with external stakeholders (other funders, college presidents, government agencies, K-12 school districts, nonprofit organizations, and experts and academics) focused on external perspectives with regard to GTF's potential role and opportunities for impact.
- During this time, secondary research was done on topic areas identified by GTF and stakeholders as important and as possible impact areas for the foundation. This research served to reinforce many of the findings from the interviews with external stakeholders and also to provide evidence-based findings to inform GTF's decision making process.
- Based on findings from phases I and II, the new portfolio was designed to favor focused, proactive philanthropy, particularly with regard to partnerships and innovative programming.
- **Final Phase:** an action plan was developed to include potential goals, outcomes and evaluation measures for each component of the portfolio, relevant organizational implications, and a plan for communicating GTF's strategy.
- In all phases of the project, GTF's Board of Directors were highly involved with FSG and foundation staff, working to bring this project along and to ask the tough questions that shaped the outcomes of this project.

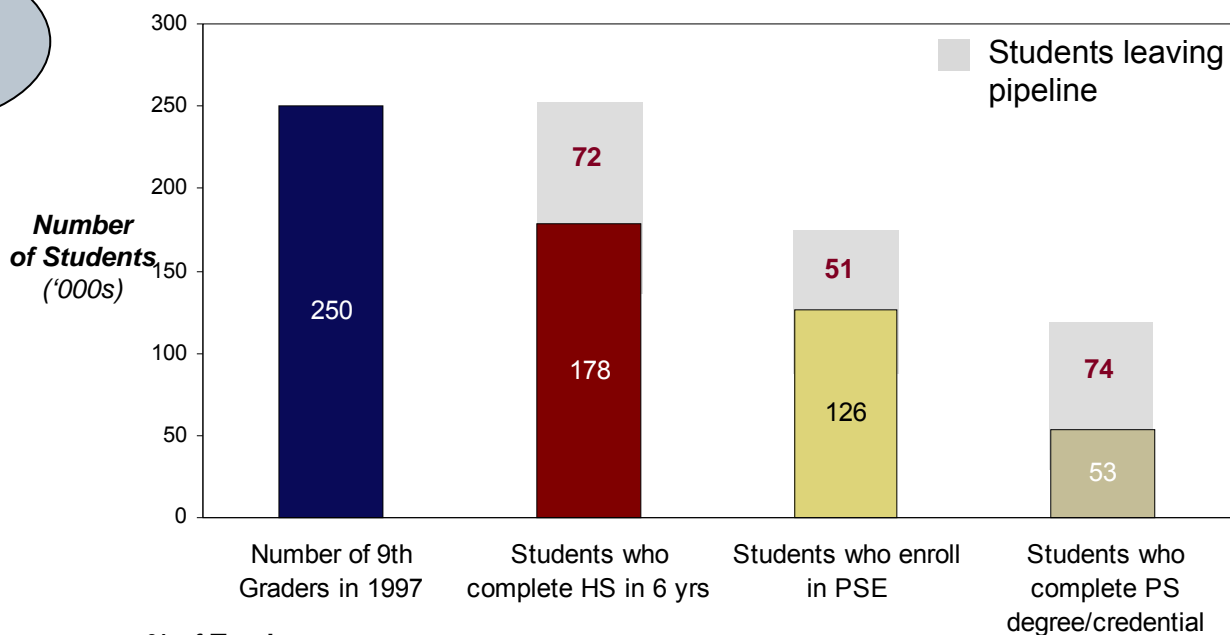
Strategy Goals

- The strategy's overall goal is to improve educational outcomes for Texas students, with a focus on post-secondary ***preparation, access, persistence and completion.***
- With this strategy, GTF has revised its vision and mission statements as well as its funding principles in accordance with its refined areas of focus.
 - **Vision Statement:** Greater Texas Foundation's vision is for a Texas where all students have equal opportunity to access and succeed in post-secondary education.
 - **Mission:** Greater Texas Foundation supports efforts to ensure all Texas students are prepared for, have access to, persist in, and complete post-secondary education.
 - *We put particular focus on helping underserved and disadvantaged populations.*
 - *We pursue our mission by forming partnerships, supporting research, sharing knowledge and making grants.*

Only One in Five Texas Youth Who Enter High School Complete a Post-Secondary Degree or Credential

Grade 9 – PSE Pipeline for Students in Texas Public Schools

20%



% of Total Students

Texas Completion Rate	--	71%	71%	42%
National Completion Rate	--	69%	67%	47%
TX Dropout Rate	--	29%	29%	58%

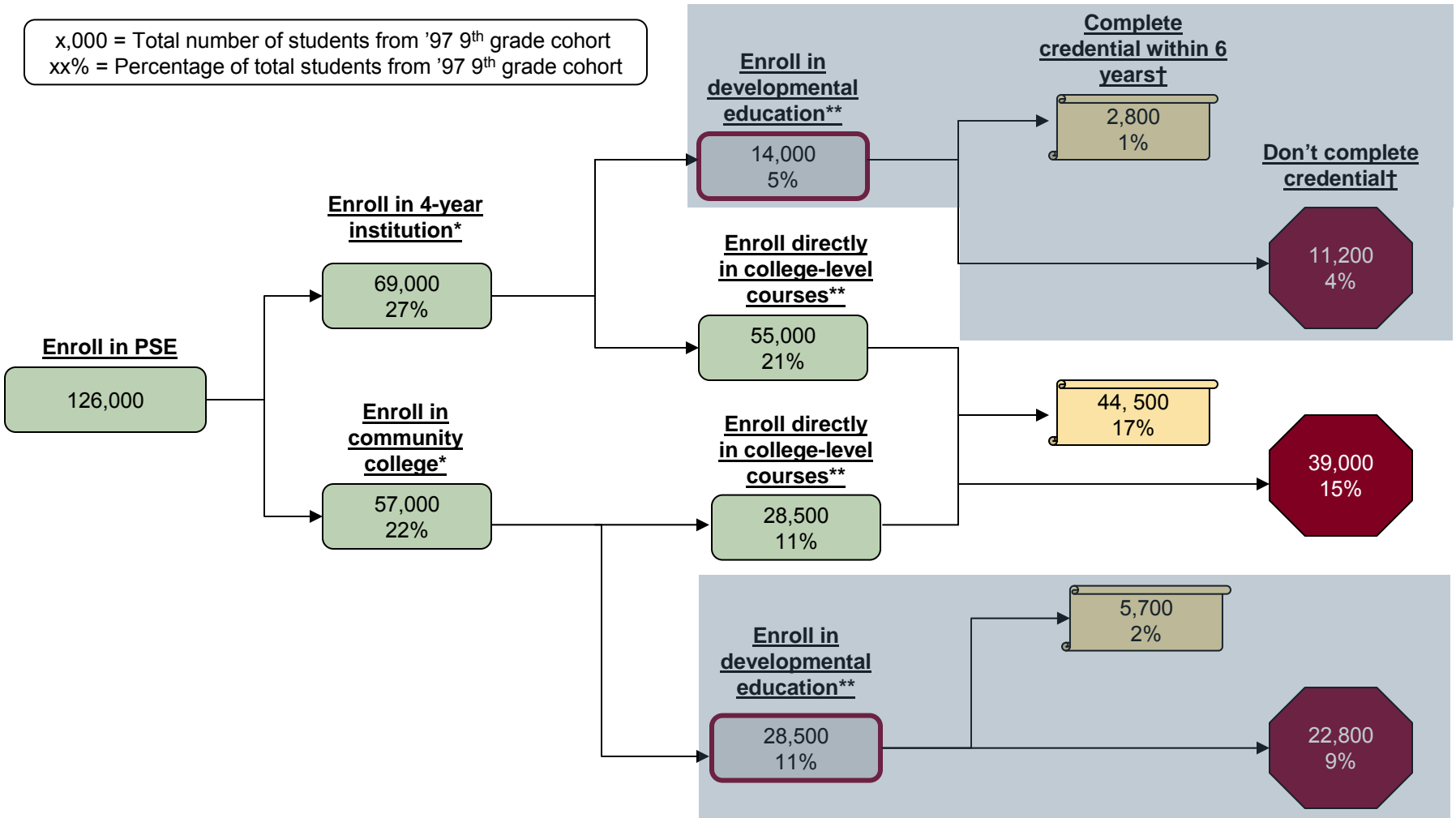
Sources: THECB 1995 Cohort Data; Education Week, Diplomas Count; National Center on Education Statistics, Student Effort and Educational Progress: Transition to College, 2007 Rate; NCES, College Persistence on the Rise? Changes in Degree Completion and 5-Year Persistence, 1995-96; Texas State Data Center and Office of the State Demographer; Murdock, S. Population Change in Texas: Implications for Human, Socioeconomic and Natural Resources for the 21st Century; U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2006 Annual Social and Economic Supplement

Post-Secondary Education: Crossing the Finish Line

- Three out of five Texas students who enroll in PSE do not attain a credential within six years, so 74,000 of the 126,000 students in Texas who enroll in PSE do not earn a degree or credential
- 50% of community college students and 20% of freshmen at 4-year institutions enroll in developmental education and most don't matriculate into credit bearing courses
 - 42,000 students entering post-secondary education enroll in developmental education
 - 8,000 of them complete a PSE credential or degree, while 34,000 do not
- Almost half of students who enroll but do not attain a credential are lost in developmental education
- Of the 83,000 students entering PSE without enrolling in developmental education, just more than half go on to complete a degree or credential

Three Out of Five Texas Students Who *ENROLL* In PSE Do Not Attain A Credential Within Six Years

x,000 = Total number of students from '97 9th grade cohort
 xx% = Percentage of total students from '97 9th grade cohort



Almost half of students who enroll but do not attain a credential are lost in developmental education

GTF's Strategic Portfolio

Portfolio Segment	Overview	GTF Roles
<p><i>Strategic Initiative</i> Post-Secondary Education: Crossing the Finish Line</p>	<p>The Foundation works to achieve specific program goals and five-year objectives by engaging all of its capabilities (e.g., grantmaking, strategic scholarships, research, convening, etc). GTF proactively seeks out specific partners and funding opportunities primarily through RFPs or by invitation, rather than accepting unsolicited proposals. The Foundation will hold itself accountable for achieving specific goals.</p>	<p>Grantmaking, Convening, Research, Scholarships Partnerships Field Building Capacity Building</p>
<p><i>Impact Area</i> Math and Science Education: Crossing the Finish Line</p>	<p>Goals are pursued primarily by grantmaking with other supporting activities. While the Foundation will track impact goals, accountability will be focused on whether its grantees meet grant objectives.</p>	<p>Grantmaking, Scholarships, Research, Partnerships</p>

A Strategic Focus on Post-Secondary Preparation, Access, Persistence and Completion is a Very Strong Fit for GTF's Internal Values and Expertise and Texas Needs

Post-Secondary Preparation, Access, Persistence and Completion	
Impact Statement	Greater Texas Foundation works to ensure that all Texas students have access to and persist in post-secondary education by working to overcome the barriers to college that underserved populations encounter.
Rationale	Ensuring that underserved populations have the ability to access and achieve a post-secondary degree or credential is a central tenant of GTF's internal values and expertise and is also a critical need identified in the external landscape.
Approach	GTF seeks to leverage strategic and targeted investments of foundation resources at key stages of the education pipeline with a goal of maximizing the number of underserved students who can access and complete a college education.
Roles	Grantmaker, partner, convener, capacity builder, and research/information clearinghouse are all key roles that GTF can play in this initiative.
Resources	GTF can leverage its entire toolbox for this initiative, leveraging grants and scholarships, partnerships and research, and all other foundation resources; significant staff time would be devoted to this initiative.

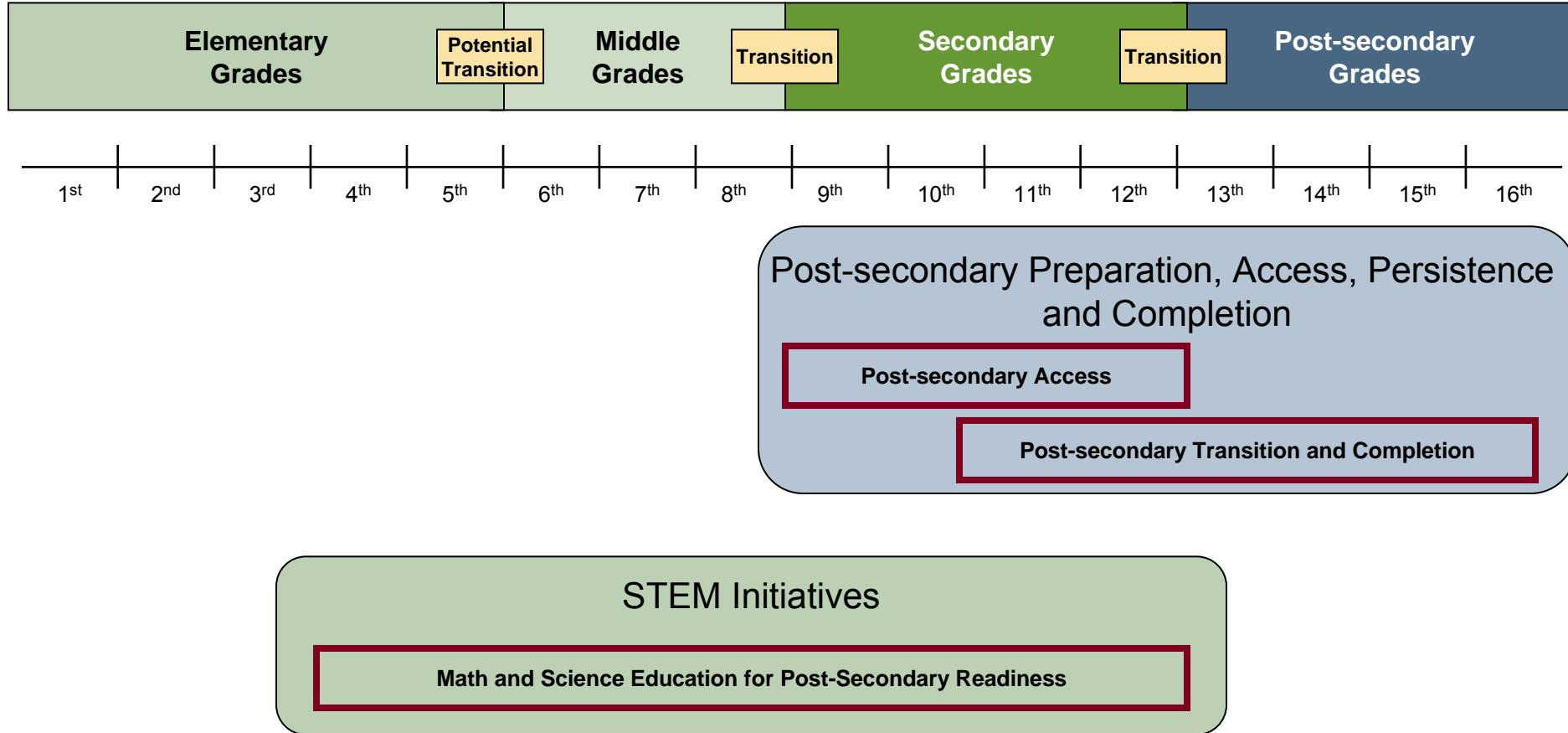
STEM Work Focused on Ensuring that Students Have the Math and Science Education Needed to be PSE Ready

STEM (PSE Readiness)	
Impact Statement	Greater Texas Foundation works to ensure that all Texas students have the necessary math and science background to gain access to and be prepared to succeed in post-secondary education.
Rationale	Completing Algebra II correlates significantly with success in college; those students who complete Algebra II are more than twice as likely to graduate from college compared to students with less preparation in mathematics*.
Approach	GTF seeks to improve mathematics student and teacher preparation beginning in 4th grade to ensure that students are on a path toward completing the prerequisites for Algebra II, with the goal of increasing Algebra II participation and completion rates, and therefore college readiness.
Roles	Primarily grantmaker; opportunities to act as partner, convener, capacity builder, research/information clearinghouse, should be considered carefully and not require significant staff time.
Resources	Primarily grants and strategic scholarships; partnerships and research, as applicable.

*Source: US Dept. of Education, The Final Report of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel, 2008

Each Strategic Focus Touches On Different Leverage Points

The Educational Pipeline



Greater Texas Foundation will support a different set of initiatives and track different metrics for each of these leverage points

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Post-Secondary Education: Crossing the Finish Line

The Problem

- The progression from PSE enrollment to completion is the biggest leakage in the high school to post-secondary pipeline.
 - 74,000 of the 126,000 students who enroll in PSE do not earn a degree or credential within six years.
- Developmental education is a central obstacle to post-secondary persistence for many students.
 - 50% of community college students and 20% of freshmen at 4-year institutions enroll in developmental education and most don't matriculate into credit bearing courses.

The Opportunity

- The challenge of post-secondary enrollment to completion is an emerging issue and is just beginning to receive attention
- Community colleges serve increasing numbers of students in Texas and have not received significant attention from local funders
- National funders working on the issues of post-secondary success at community colleges represent valuable potential partners

Potential Impact

- There is great potential to affect college persistence and completion by keeping students out of developmental education, helping those who enter it succeed, and ensuring that students complete a degree or credential.
 - 42,000 students entering post-secondary education enroll in developmental education
 - 8,000 of them complete a PSE credential or degree, while 34,000 do not
 - Of the 83,000 students entering PSE without enrolling in developmental education, just over half go on to complete a degree or credential.

Strategies Focused on Post-secondary Access and Persistence Reach Almost Two-Thirds of Ninth Graders Who Do Not Attain a Credential

Post-Secondary Access and Persistence

Goal: Increase rates of college enrollment and completion for all Texas students, with a particular focus on low socio-economic status and first-generation college-goers

Hypothesis: In order to close the gaps in post-secondary attendance and credential completion, Texas needs to facilitate successful transitions from high school to post-secondary and to enable and support students in complete a credential or degree once in post-secondary education



Primary Strategy:

Post-secondary Transition and Completion

Facilitate successful transition to post-secondary education through investments in student planning and preparation, improved developmental education programs and better alignment of education systems (e.g. ECHS); increase the rate of post-secondary completion through investments in support for students and systemic reform

Secondary Strategy:

Post-Secondary Access

Increase post-secondary enrollment through investments in increasing access to and support for post-secondary application and financial aid processes and improving post-secondary affordability

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Math and Science Education: Preparing for Success

The Problem

- Solid preparation in math is crucial to students' readiness for college. Although Texas has made good progress in math and science education, in some ways there are still dramatic achievement gaps that affect underserved and disadvantaged populations.
- Out-of-field teaching, which is correlated with poorer educational outcomes, is more prevalent in math and science disciplines at the secondary level and is more common among both rural schools and schools with large underserved student populations.
- Not all high schools come close to offering a full math and science curriculum. Underserved students are again disproportionately affected.

The Opportunity

- The combination of the highest level of math taken and the number of units of core lab science is the largest factor in academic intensity of curriculum, which is in turn the most important determinant of whether a student will complete a degree.
- Possibility of finding innovative uses of technology in this area
- Other funders, including corporate funders, are very interested in the issue and would be valuable partners.

Potential Impact

- Students who complete Algebra II are more than twice as likely to graduate from college compared to students with less mathematical preparation.
- Earning credits in college-level math in the first year of post-secondary education is correlated with increased likelihood of earning an associate degree and of transferring to a four-year institution.
- Improving math and science education in middle and high school also helps build the pipeline of students who are qualified to enter the STEM workforce in Texas, an area in which demand is growing.

Strategies to Improve Math and Science Education Address a Crucial Element of Post-secondary Readiness

Math and Science Education

Goal: Improve academic outcomes and increase post-secondary readiness through investments in math and science education at the middle and high school level

Hypothesis: High-quality math and science education is essential to success both within the educational system and in the working world. For students to be fully prepared for post-secondary education, they need informed guidance, qualified teachers and access to enriched curricula



Strategy:

Student Support: Increase the number of students who graduate high school prepared to enter and succeed in college through investments in guidance, support and rigorous programs focused on math and science

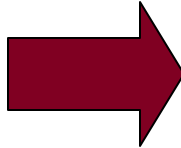
Teacher Preparation and Teacher Professional Development:
Increase the number of students who are graduate high school prepared to enter and succeed in college through investments in teacher preparation and support

In the GTF Portfolio, Scholarships Would be Integrated into the Strategic Initiative and Programmatic Impact Areas

Portfolio Segment

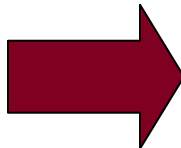
Examples of Strategic Scholarships

**Post-Secondary Access
and Persistence**



- Scholarships to help GTF target populations (e.g. underserved students, first generation college goers) attend and complete a post-secondary degree or credential
- Scholarships to support dual-enrollment and/or ECHS students

STEM



- Scholarships to support students going into STEM fields, including students traditionally underrepresented in STEM
- Scholarships to support students planning to go into teaching in a STEM field