Executive Summary

This report presents results of an independently contracted evaluation of activities and services delivered under the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 (PL 103-239) by the Capital Area Education and Careers Partnership (the Partnership). School-to-Work activities (known as “School-to-Career” in Texas) are provided largely through 27 existing regional School-to-Career (STC) Partnerships operating in the 28 Local Workforce Development Areas with funds provided by a five-year federal grant administered by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). The Partnership has received five successive one-year grants from TWC to implement School-to-Career activities in Travis County. As part of the Year Five (SFY 2002) grant, TWC required grantees to arrange an independent evaluation of their Year Four (SFY 2001) activities that included direct responses to key research tasks. This report assesses Year Four activities and responds to those key research tasks.

After a general overview section, the remaining sections of the report present the evaluation results and challenges/recommendations. Section II responds to the six required research tasks, first discussing the accomplishments of the Partnership in attaining its stated annual objectives as found in the planning/reporting matrix that the Partnership submits to TWC (and which also serves as the annual work statement for grant purposes). This is followed by an assessment of constraints to attaining all of the articulated objectives. Next, addresses the influence of STC activities regarding local economic and workforce development, student outcomes, strategies that will be sustained after the termination of federal STC funding and funding sources to support those strategies. Section III revisits persistent constraints that STC continues to confront and offers basic recommendations for those willing to continue voluntary collaboration to improve the livelihood prospects of local youth in the immediate future.

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1 The five-year federal grant awarded to Texas totaled $61.3 million. The Year Four allocation for the Capital Area was $291,302. By comparison, the total Year One allocation was $381,831, the Year Two allocation was $440,000 and the Year Three allocation was $430,094.

2 O’Shea and King (2000), op. cit., offered broader recommendations for actions regarding strategy, system-building, sustainability, and accountability/continuous improvement in the context of changing labor markets and rapid technology developments that remain pertinent to STC in and beyond Central Texas. O’Shea (2001) op. cit., offered more direct-operations related recommendations.