North Texas Technology Sector – Quarterly Meeting Notes

Date: Thursday, October 2, 2025
Time: 7:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
Location: T-Mobile Corporate Office, 3560 Dallas Pkwy

Welcome & Introductions

- **Opening Remarks:**
    - Moises Ramirez emphasized the purpose of the Next Gen model — industry-led, focused on identifying challenges, developing solutions, and driving impact.
    - Dr. Madeline Burillo-Hopkins highlighted the rapid growth of North Texas tech investment and reiterated the importance of industry-driven collaboration.
- **Acknowledgments:**
    - Thanks to T-Mobile for hosting and Plug & Play for sponsoring breakfast.
    - Recognition of co-conveners: Jennifer Sanders (North Texas Innovation Alliance), Lynn Hoffman (Workforce Solutions), Daphne Rickard (Interlink), and Paul Bendel (Tech Titans).

Action Team Report-Outs:

1. Policies to Encourage Businesses to Move to North Texas

- **Key Updates:**
    - Successfully launched policy podcast series (Sept 18) with 20+ in-studio and 40+ virtual participants. Featured Rep. Bhojani, Rep. Capriglione, Sen. Paxton, and Texas Policy Foundation's David Dunmoyer.
    - Four podcast episodes in production to continue statewide dialogue and soon to be shared to this group.
- **Legislative Session Recap:**
    - *Wins:* Outcomes-based community college funding, Responsible AI Governance Act (AI sandbox and guardrails), and Texas Cyber Command Act (state readiness).

    - *Misses:* HB 1709 AI Workforce Impact Act (would have supported reskilling displaced workers) failed to pass.
- **Next Steps:**
    - Employer survey results will be used to set priorities for the 2027 session (e.g., AI workforce grants, small business tax credits, regional cyber command engagement).
    - Action team seeks additional members, regardless of policy expertise, to strengthen the North Texas employer voice.

2. Building a Strong IT Narrative

- **Vision Statement:** Establish North Texas as a global catalyst for tech and innovation through unified messaging, local storytelling, and a central resource hub.
- **Progress:**
    - Mapping existing ecosystem players and messages.
    - Collecting relocation stories and case studies from employers.
    - Brainstorming consistent messaging to reach beyond Texas.
- **Interactive Session:**
    - Participants generated potential headlines for the next 12 months (e.g., "Dallas is where start-ups find revenue," "DFW is the U.S. AI hub").
- **Next Steps:**
    - Collect more employer and community stories.
    - Recruit volunteers for communications/media, speakers, and storytelling contributions.
    - Plan for an ideation session at the next quarterly meeting.

3. Education About the IT Sector

- **Partners:** Dallas ISD, Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD, McKinney ISD, Mesquite ISD.
- **Key Themes Across Districts:**

1. Career Exposure: Students lack visibility into IT career pathways; need more tours, job shadows, and guest speaking.
2. Internships & Hands-On Learning: Opportunities for summer programs, externships, hackathons, and site visits are critical.
3. Certifications: Students need access to industry-recognized credentials; barriers include cost and limited TEA-approved pathways.
4. Teacher Capacity: Teachers require externships and fellowships to remain current on industry practices.

- **Student Panel:** Dallas ISD video showcased student voices on IT career pathways. (Full video will be distributed in the follow-up email.)
- **Next Steps:**
    - Leverage employer input to align school programs with industry needs.
    - Expand internship and externship opportunities.
    - Strengthen industry-school partnerships with chambers and ISDs.

Public Partner Voices

- **Shared updates from Dallas College, Dallas ISD, Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD, Mesquite ISD, Tech Titans, T-Mobile, Interlink, Texas Charter Schools Association, Cyber Workforce, and others.**
- **Themes raised:**
    - Strong support for teacher externships (300+ teachers engaged in summer 2025; expansion planned for 2026).
    - Employers asked to forecast future job needs to inform curriculum development.
    - Call for industry to step up with internships, job shadows, and site visits to support both students and teachers.
    - Reinforcement that teachers cannot carry the full burden alone, industry engagement is essential.

Closing & Next Steps

- **All participants completed feedback forms for the action teams during the meeting.**
- **Feedback will guide which industry leaders get invited to what action team conversations. Once reviewed, calendar invitations will be sent for action team meetings, the "meat and potatoes" of this work.**
- **Resources:**
  - Full Dallas ISD Student Video Panel
  - QR Code or direct link for Ted's Report:
  - 2025 Texas Legislative Outcomes
- **Next Quarterly Meeting: January 2026 (exact date and location TBD).**

Attendees:

Industry Leaders

- Dan Sinawat – AI Connex
- John Rohrer – AMSYS
- Chris Foster – Accenture
- Veronica Valladarez – Cisco
- Sari McCoy – Coherent Cyber Education
- Adhitya Rajkumar – Digital Factory 24
- Ted Fujimoto – EF Internation Advisors
- Stefan Boehmer – InzpireU
- Santos Mathew – Johnstone Supply
- Keith Cullum – Lenovo

- Neha Kunte – MNK Infotech
- Ryan Bitters – Oh Hey Brands
- Mike Wilkes – Plug and Play Tech Center
- Rijo Walker – Plug and Play Tech Center
- Paulo Orosz – RobotLAB
- Parvez Syed – TripAI
- Samar Khan – TripAI
- Kimberly Wright – Uplift Education
- Brian Diggs – Web Apps America
- Srikanth Subramanian – hurixdigital

Public Partners

- Kathy Holdge – CFBISD
- Leigh Ann Stone – CFBISD
- Lori Wood – CFBISD
- Madison Clark – City of McKinney
- Sibusisiwe McNeal – Dallas ISD
- Tamara Robinson – Dallas ISD/Workforce Development
- Jarrad Toussant – Dallas Regional Chamber
- Daphne Kent – Interlink-ntx
- Kelly Brown – Mesquite ISD
- Michael Gallps – Metrocrest Chamber of Commerce
- Jen Sanders – North Texas Innovation Alliance
- Paul Bendel – Tech Titans
- Kelsey Borza – Texas Public Charter Schools Association
- Angela Farley – UNT
- Brandi Harrison – Workforce Solutions

- Lynn Hoffman – Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas
- Madeline Burillo-Hopkins – Dallas College
- Moises Ramirez – Dallas College
- Chantel Jones Bigby – Dallas College
- Chris Bradshaw – Dallas College
- Jeannette Papadopoulos – Dallas College
- Jo Ann Hill – Dallas College
- Konley Kelley – Dallas College
- Pamela Luckett – Dallas College
- Raghunath Kanakala – Dallas College
- Raytosha Jones – Dallas College
- Stephanie Boyce – Dallas College