

# CENTRAL TEXAS BUSINESS & EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

## "DTC70"

### **The Central Texas Direct-to-College Enrollment 70% Achievement Plan**

#### ***Rationale:***

Our public schools have achieved record regional graduation and college career-readiness rates. Direct-to-college enrollment rates have improved significantly between 2002-2007, then leveled at 62% ( $\pm 1\%$ ), lagging the national direct-to-college enrollment rate. At the same time, roughly 62% of local job openings require Associate's or Bachelor's degrees and nearly 85% of our unemployed lack either credential.

Higher direct-to-college enrollment rates will mean more economic opportunity, a higher standard of living, and lower rates of intergenerational poverty for our community.

Central Texas school districts, the Austin Chamber of Commerce and Austin Community College are committed to meeting or exceeding a 70% direct-to-college enrollment rate by the Class of 2016. When we do, an additional 1,400 graduates of the Class of 2016 will have a much brighter future.

The partnership framework below reflects consensus from the undersigned.

#### ***The Austin Chamber of Commerce will:***

1. Provide labor market intelligence to school district partners to help inform college/career guidance for students. To accomplish this objective:
  - Monthly data on the Central Texas labor market will be provided to school districts, counselors and students on job openings, growth in occupational fields, and post-secondary degree and certification requirements associated with labor market opportunities.
2. Fund research and data integration to help school districts identify and overcome student college going barriers, continue to identify drivers of direct-to-college enrollment, allow districts to use data to better target college transition support to increase direct-to college enrollment, and track student post-secondary/labor market outcomes to support continuous improvement. To accomplish this objective:
  - The Chamber will fund University of Texas Ray Marshall Center Student Futures Project surveys for all high school juniors and seniors to help counselors identify specific areas

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where students may need help, to determine what postsecondary options fit their college/career interests, to develop a financial plan to pay for college, and to provide other guidance to support postsecondary enrollment.

- The Chamber will continue to coordinate and help fund a Digital Messaging Campaign to support college enrollment via Harvard, UT-Austin and OneLogos for Class of 2015 juniors and Class of 2016 seniors. As part of this campaign, students in eight participating school districts will receive text notices/reminders of college/career fairs, SAT or ACT preparation opportunities, upcoming college application deadlines, financial aid, and other enrollment milestones. Harvard and UT Ray Marshall Center researchers will evaluate the pilot to determine effect and potential improvements to effectively support college going.
  - The Chamber will work through the UT Ray Marshall Center to track earnings and post-secondary outcomes for high school graduates for four years to help evaluate programs and refine initiatives which improve direct-to-college enrollment.
3. The Chamber will convene designated district experts from across the region to develop vertically aligned college/career measures/milestones to be embedded in district curriculum with short term focus on grades 9-12 in 2015/2016, and create a timeline for future development of PK-8 to include academic, financial and logistical elements.
- As outgrowth of our working group, the Chamber will act as convener to curriculum experts from school district partners to discuss development of a Central Texas Higher Education Transition curriculum, course or courses to support college enrollment.
4. Coordinate student and parent outreach around financial aid completion to improve FAFSA/TASFA completion and help Central Texas families fund college enrollment. To accomplish this objective:
- The Chamber will spearhead regional coordination of Financial Aid Saturdays Program events, FAFSA completion marketing and outreach to parents and students, and coordinate volunteer recruitment and training.
5. Empower counselors with better data to target college transition by funding the OneLogos College Readiness Portal to match/track college and financial aid applications against student records during the school year and during summer for 2015-2016. To accomplish this objective:
- The Chamber will fund the College Readiness Portal to link student ApplyTexas status, FAFSA/TASFA status with student level records on a weekly basis during the 2015-2016 school year and allow school district partners to track progress towards school district or campus goals via the College Readiness Portal Dashboard.
  - Provide bi-weekly/monthly regional ApplyTexas/FAFSA reports to school district partners showing progress towards regional, district and campus goals. We'll adjust

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frequency of reporting to align with peak college application, financial aid and enrollment deadlines.

- Through OneLogos, the Chamber will make the College Readiness Portal available to districts who fund extended counselor staffing for Summer Melt interventions between June and August 2015 and 2016.
  - Professional development for counselors and/or administrators/campus leadership, on use of college going milestone data for target setting and/or service delivery within the College Readiness Portal.
  - Collaborate with district partners to create a working group to pilot a “direct intrusive advising model using data” to support goal attainment--data elements to be developed in collaboration w/ ISD partners to create an executive summary of 20 key data elements related to DTC. (UTRMC levers, ISD levers (Dual Credit, AP, etc))
6. Communicate and recognize district progress on direct-to-college enrollment, college/career readiness, high school graduation and key college transition milestones. To accomplish this objective:
- The Chamber will work with the school district and research partners to track and communicate progress on partnership direct-to-college enrollment targets, recognize district accomplishments, and foster continuous improvement.
  - Recognize school district progress toward goals at the Chamber's Annual State of Education event and other Chamber education related events.
7. Advocate for local, state and federal policies which reinforce a college/career readiness culture. To accomplish this objective the Chamber will:
- support funding for Pre-K,
  - support levels of funding public schools which enable them to graduate the vast majority of students college and career ready,
  - support state funding of free ACT, SAT and TSI assessments, and
  - support simplified federal student aid and federal financial aid education tax credits.
8. Engage higher education partners to support Chamber and school district work to meet regional direct-to-college enrollment goals. To accomplish this objective:
- Work with Austin Community College and other higher education partners to integrate key college-going data into the College Readiness Portal to better support ISD counselors in helping students transition to college, e.g., TSI assessment and other college-going data milestones identified by ISD and research partners.

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- Work with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to improve accuracy and flow of real-time ApplyTexas and FAFSA available to school district partners.
- Where feasible, the Chamber may act as a convener and provide training space for professional development which advances the work of our regional partners.

## ***Partner School Districts will:***

1. Determine district out-year district/campus level college readiness and direct-to-college enrollment targets sufficient for region to accomplish 70% DTC for Class of 2016. To accomplish this objective:
  - School district partners will make achieving these goals a top priority for 2015-2016;
  - Set targets around identified college going milestones such as FAFSA, APTX, CCR, college prep course enrollment, College Career Fair attendance, etc.;
  - Include direct-to-college enrollment targets and strategies in District Improvement Plans;
  - Include direct-to-college enrollment targets and strategies in High School Campus Improvement Plans
2. Designate district experts from across the region to develop and identify vertically aligned college/career milestones to be embedded in district curriculum.
  - Short-term focus: grades 9-12 in 2015-2016. Create timeline for future development of PK-8 to include academic, financial, and logistical elements.
3. Maintain and improve student preparedness to enroll in college and pursue training in high demand careers.
  - Make or retain the Distinguished High School Graduation Plan as the default graduation plan for your students.
  - Track and review PSAT/ NMSQT or Aspire diagnostic data to identify college readiness trajectory.
  - Identify and assess non-college ready juniors using ACT, SAT, TSI and/or other applicable instruments.
  - As per HB 5, ensure all non-college ready juniors are counseled to enroll in an appropriate college preparatory course to improve the record rate of graduates who are prepared to enroll in credit-bearing postsecondary courses.
4. Improve college transition support to students. To accomplish this objective:

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- School districts will annually review progress of student-to-counselor ratios to ensure they have college and career guidance and support for postsecondary success by alignment to ASCA or district-defined standards.
  - School districts will address extension of counselor contracts/transition staff contracts over summer to help Class of 2015 and 2016 graduates overcome process barriers to college enrollment.
5. Renew and establish data sharing agreements with the Chamber and research partners which will strengthen student college-career readiness and postsecondary transition support to meet direct-to-college enrollment goals and evaluate student outcomes.
- School districts will renew and execute MOUs and data sharing agreements with University of Texas Ray Marshall Center, Chamber and Austin Community College to conduct student surveys, track student outcomes, and evaluate program impact.
  - School districts will work with the Chamber, Austin Community College, the University of Texas Ray Marshall Center and relevant higher education partners to develop a methodology for tracking high-need certificate completion and military enlistment for the Class of 2016.
6. Continue ISD/Chamber/ACC workgroup to encourage sharing best practices on parental engagement and other implementation strategies. This could include developing text messaging effort for parents.

## ***Austin Community College will:***

1. Continue to support college-readiness and college application completion to improve direct-to-college enrollment and ensure more high school graduates are able to enroll in credit-bearing college courses. To accomplish this objective:
- ACC's high school outreach programs such as dual credit, Early College High Schools, Career Academies and the Office Hours Initiative will provide college readiness, college application support, and financial aid awareness and support to partner school districts.
  - ACC will continue to partner with school districts on the HB5 college preparatory courses that should be offered to all non-college ready students identified by school district partners.
  - ACC will use the ApplyTexas application to help students complete college applications, and will advocate for ApplyTexas simplification to ensure school districts are better able to track college application rates.

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- ACC will continue to offer dual credit and early college high school programming (in partner schools) to help school districts meet college matriculation targets and support improvements in direct-to-college enrollment rates.
  - ACC's dual credit and early college high school programs will offer an educational success course that will include career planning, financial planning for college, and successful learning strategies to support college enrollment and degree completion.
  - ACC will provide a new, open access TSI Assessment preparation website that will support increases in college readiness rates and enrollment in credit-bearing college courses.
2. Work with partner school districts to integrate/share key college-going data for counselors to offer strategic, targeted college transition support to students. To accomplish this objective:
    - ACC will work with school district partners to determine data elements most helpful to high schools and ACC programs to improve college readiness and direct-to-college enrollment support.
  3. Continue to partner with school districts implementing summer college transition programs to support direct-to-college enrollment. To accomplish this objective:
    - ACC will pilot an enrollment center to assist with regional Summer Melt prevention efforts and provide ACC enrollment support.
  4. Work with school district, the Chamber, and area higher education partners to provide resources that will foster a regional college going culture to improve direct-to-college enrollment. To accomplish this objective:
    - ACC will partner with other regional stakeholders to explore establishment of a permanent college going support center at ACC's Highland Mall Campus or other central location to support college-going efforts.
    - ACC will collaborate with school district partners, the Chamber, and higher education partners to determine how college support center programming and resources can help improve college readiness, direct-to-college enrollment, student persistence, and accelerate certificate/degree completion.
    - ACC will collaborate with school districts to prepare high school teachers to teach dual credit courses on high school campuses.