Together We Educate Austin
Central Texas is at a critical juncture. Despite our booming economy, a wide gap exists between available jobs and local workforce talent. Approximately 50% of our current job openings require a bachelor’s degree, 12% require an associate degree and 85% of our unemployed lack either.[1] Over the last decade, nearly 100,000 Central Texas students, a majority of our high school graduates, directly enrolled in college. Our direct-to-college enrollment rates increased by ten percentage points between 2003 and 2008, but leveled off at 60% over the last five years and now sits below the national average.[2]

When Central Texans lack the skills and education to participate in the economy, the health and prosperity of our community is threatened.

As Chair of the Chamber’s 2015 Education Progress Report Taskforce, I believe we can work together as a community to close this opportunity gap. Our progress reports now unite 11 school districts, 11 regional chambers and dozens of business leaders to track regional challenges, successes and identify ways to improve student educational and

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career opportunities. These school districts and partners have worked to improve college readiness rates from 47% in 2007, to 64% in 2013.[3] In partnership with Central Texas school districts, the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce has also set a 70% regional direct-to-college enrollment goal for 2015, to ensure our students are prepared for college and 21st century careers.

So, to all of you who are engaged in this collective work—whether as educators, business and non-profit leaders or activists, thank you. Educating a child takes a community, and I am so proud to live in a community that comes together to put kids first.

Thank you,

Dawn Jones
External Affairs Manager, Intel
Education Progress Report Taskforce Chair


3 Texas Academic Performance Reports and Academic Excellence Indicator System 2007–2013
A Snapshot of AISD

AISD is the largest school district in Central Texas. Since 2002, AISD student enrollment increased by 9% and low-income student enrollment swelled from 53% to 62% in 2013.

85,014 Students

61% Economically Disadvantaged

27% English Language Learners

Demographic summary

- Hispanic: 60%
- Caucasian: 25%
- African-American: 8%
- Asian: 4%
- Two or more races: 3%

AISD currently serves 52,030 economically disadvantaged students. Nevertheless, the district is classified as a “property wealthy” by the state, and projected to send $175M in 2015 property tax revenue back to the state’s coffers under current school finance laws. Despite these budgetary limitations, AISD’s graduation rate for low income students increased by approximately 20 percentage points from 2002 to 2013, and college matriculation among low-income students also improved from 39% in 2008 to 45% in 2013.3

### Key Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>11,538</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Teacher Annual Salary</td>
<td>$46.9K</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Teacher Years of Experience</td>
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<td>2013–2014 Tax Rate ($ per $100 valuation)</td>
<td>$1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations Budget Without State Recapture</td>
<td>$734M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operations Budget With State Recapture</td>
<td>$851M</td>
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</tbody>
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What Share of AISD Students Directly Enroll in Higher Education?

Despite gains in college/career readiness and graduation rates, direct-to-college enrollment in Central Texas has remained stagnant at 60% since 2008. Recognizing that higher education is the key vehicle for economic mobility, AISD made the important management decision to tie principal and college counselor evaluations to college readiness, college application, financial aid, and direct-to-college enrollment rate targets. AISD extended college counseling support to high school graduates as part of a 2013 Summer Melt Pilot. AISD was one of four participating school districts that saw college enrollment for low-income/first generation students improve by 10 percentage points over low-income/first generation students who did not receive support. AISD scaled the program in 2014 and expects promising results. Additionally, during the summers of 2013 and 2014, AISD and the Austin Chamber partnered to extend counselor contracts to help AISD graduates complete the last tasks for post-secondary enrollment.
Percentage of Graduates Who Directly Enroll in Higher Education

Percentage of Austin high school graduates who enrolled in community college or four-year, degree-granting institutions, in Texas or outside of the state, for the first time no later than the fall following graduation.

College enrollment rates have remained largely flat since 2009.

Source: National Student Clearinghouse, AISD 2009-2014
How Do AISD Student Career Interests Align with Job Market Demand?

AISD’s high school graduation rate is at its highest point in history, and the district is working to ensure graduates have the skills required to pursue 21st century careers. In Central Texas there are 44,000 open jobs and 41,000 unemployed. AISD is working to address this mismatch in skills/interest and job market demand by continuously monitoring employment trends and encouraging coursework that excites and engages students in high-need fields. As of Fall 2014, 255 Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers offered 152 unique CTE courses at the high school level and 33 CTE courses at the middle school level across 16 career clusters.

18% of current job openings are computer-related

5% of AISD students are interested in computers & programming

4 Source: The Conference Board Help Wanted Online® (HWOL), November 2014

Source: AISD High School Exit Survey
Top 10 Current Job Openings in Central Texas

- Computers & Math: 18%
- Office/Admin: 11%
- Retail: 11%
- Healthcare: 10%
- Management: 9%
- Business/Finance: 6%
- Food Service: 4%
- Transport: 4%
- Installation & Repair: 4%
- Arts, Design, Media: 4%
- Other: 20%

Source: The Conference Board Help Wanted Online® (HWOL), November 2014
In order to reach AISD’s goal of enrolling 70% of our students in higher education, we are focusing on

3 primary goals.
Goal 1

Bolster Student College and Career Readiness

Percentage of high school graduates who met the state college and career readiness standard in:

- English Language Arts
- Math
- Both

- In partnership with Edgenuity, AISD provides free, online test preparation courses for SAT, ACT, SAT II, TSI, STAAR end of course, and AP tests.

- In 2013–14, 32% of AISD’s high school students completed at least one of the diverse advanced placement (AP), international baccalaureate (IB), or dual credit courses offered by AISD.

Goal 2

Increase Student Participation in College Prep Activities

Project ADVANCE provides staff at 12 high school campuses to help students seeking admission to college or other postsecondary institution with college applications and financial aid. ADVANCE staff helped the district achieve an 87% submission rate on the state common college application and a 62% federal aid application rate.

89% Aspire to Attend College
76% of those enrolled.

87% Applied via ApplyTexas
62% of those enrolled.

Source: AISD 2013 High School Exit Survey, National Student Clearinghouse, and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (ApplyTexas) online college application data prepared by University of Texas Ray Marshall Center Student Futures Project
The University of Texas Ray Marshall Center Has Identified Six Indicators That Increase the Likelihood That a Student Will Directly Enroll in Higher Education.

- **42%** Attended a College Fair, 73% of those enrolled.
- **71%** Met with a Counselor, 64% of those enrolled.
- **41%** Plan to Use Loans, 76% of those enrolled.
- **41%** Took SAT/ACT Prep Course(s), 76% of those enrolled.
- **27%** Thought Financial Aid Process was Easy, 68% of those enrolled.
- **62%** Completed FAFSA, 77% of those enrolled.

Source: AISD 2013 High School Exit Survey, National Student Clearinghouse, and US Department of Education FAFSA filing data prepared by University of Texas Ray Marshall Center Student Futures Project
Goal 3

Continue to Improve High School Graduation Rates

In 2014–15, more than 3,600 students were served by the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, which places students who rank in the middle of their class into a rigorous course of study to help them become top-ranking students. AVID gives students a daily elective that provides academic support, skills development, and a positive place to belong.

Visit austinchamber.com/aisdrpt to view more detailed breakdowns of the four- and five-year graduation rate chart shown above.
If we accomplish these goals, AISD will prepare students for higher education and 21st-century careers.
Recommendations

Direct to College Enrollment

Provide year-round support to college-bound seniors

• Congratulate AISD for extending senior counselor contracts between June and August to target college transition support to low-income and first-generation college intending students

Job Market/Career Aspirations

Expose students to high-demand careers

• Urge AISD to continue targeting high-demand careers like computer sciences that currently have low student interest

College or Career Ready

Expand access to & affordability of college readiness exams

• Assess non-college and career ready juniors/seniors and enroll them in a course which prepares them to graduate college and career ready

• Applaud AISD for making every high school an on-site test site for TSI to improve access to college readiness tests

• Praise AISD for funding PSAT testing for 10th & 11th graders, allowing equal access to testing for all students regardless of income
• Congratulate the district for partnering with Edgenuity to provide SAT/ACT prep courses, to provide all students the opportunity to demonstrate preparedness for higher education

College Prep Activities
Ensure that cost is less of a barrier to college enrollment

• Make it an administrative priority to ensure half of seniors submit the FAFSA before end of March to maximize student chances to receive aid

• Congratulate AISD for setting the goal to have at least 50% of high school seniors file a FAFSA by the end of March and for using a technology platform to target college transition support to students

• Make college enrollment a core district priority

• Actively promote student participation in influential college prep activities. (See pg. 10, 11)

4/5 Year Graduation
Set high expectations for all students

• Applaud AISD for being the first district in Central Texas to make the Distinguished Graduation Plan its default high school graduation plan. This graduation plan is better aligned to postsecondary admissions requirements and provides preparation for students to succeed in higher education and the high performance workplace
Acknowledgments

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Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Patricia Hayes
Greater Austin Black American Chamber of Commerce
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How Can You Give Back to AISD?

Get to Know AISD

Online
http://austinisd.org

Twitter:
@AustinISD
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Volunteer

Austin ISD multicultural committees and advisory bodies
austinisd.org/community

Austin Partners in Education
apie@austinpartners.org

Donate

Austin Public Education Foundation and Austin Community Foundation
supportaustined.org/donate

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