Moving the Needle:
Creating Better Career Opportunities and Workforce Readiness

Del Valle ISD Progress Report 2013
A Letter to the Community

More than 150 people move to the Austin area each day because of its dynamic economy, low crime, healthy housing market and quality school options, not to mention the overall great quality of life. That quality of life is reflected in the businesses that grow here, from Whole Foods and Seton Family of Hospitals to Samsung and Hanger Orthopedics to a slew of new entrepreneurial ventures.

But our workforce opportunities can be no stronger than our existing pool of talent. For almost a decade, the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce has partnered with business groups and school districts to encourage more Central Texas graduates to directly enroll in post-secondary education.

Our region has had years of improving scores and higher graduation rates, but direct-to-college enrollment has stalled. That’s a challenge we must address.

Now we’re taking that discussion one step further. Even as we see gains in college readiness in Central Texas, we also see the number of high-demand, high-pay jobs rise in the region. As of mid-January, we had 33,000 Central Texas job openings, in areas like IT and healthcare. One in five jobs was in computer science, even though few students indicate an interest in the field.

The time has come to talk to our students not only about pursuing post-secondary education, but also about choosing fields that can give them life-long careers.

We’ve included two charts in our report that capture the mismatch: One chart shows our regional job openings. The other shows graduating senior aspirations. Our goal is to minimize the gap between openings and aspirations.

Catherine Morse
General Counsel and Director of Public Affairs, Samsung
Education Progress Report Task Force Chair
THE DEL VALLE ISD PATH TO COLLEGE

100% APPLIED VIA APPLY TEXAS

84% OF ISD SENIORS SAY THEY'RE GOING TO COLLEGE

52% TOOK THE SAT OR ACT

50% OF STUDENTS ARE COLLEGE READY

47% COMPLETED FINANCIAL AID

42% OF THE STUDENTS IN THE CLASS OF 2012 DIRECTLY ENROLLED IN COLLEGE BY THE FALL AFTER GRADUATION

Sources: Available at http://austinchamber.com/edureports
THE ROAD TO HIGH SCHOOL

Initial passing standards on the new State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, STAAR, were set to “meet the students where they were” three years ago but will continue to rise to a final passing standard aligned with a path to career- and college-readiness.

The final STAAR passing standard, which will not arrive before 2016, is considered aligned to post-secondary readiness. The Austin Chamber’s goal, however, is to look to the Advanced performance level on STAAR, which is a standard considered best prepared for college and career. This standard is beyond both the current and final STAAR passing standards for the state, but it is best aligned to Central Texas workforce needs.

In 2013, between 7 and 16 percent of fifth-grade students and between 4 and 13 percent of eighth-grade students in Del Valle ISD scored at the Advanced level of performance, depending on subject area. Scores of eighth grade students taking the high school Algebra I end of course examination also are included.

Del Valle ISD implemented a number of strategies to improve academic performance across all subject areas. In a focused effort to improve academic literacy, the district established separate reading and writing classes for all middle school students. A secondary English/language arts coordinator, a position added this year, works with teachers in all content areas to support and reinforce literacy strategies acquired in the reading and writing courses.

Del Valle ISD English and math coordinators collaborate with teachers by observing classroom practice, modeling teaching lessons, joining teachers in professional learning communities and focusing on the improvement of curriculum, instruction and assessment. The district instructional specialists, as well as external consultants, are available and accessible to teachers on-site.

In addition, the District is strengthening programs for English language learners and students receiving special education services. A district-wide committee comprised of teachers and administrators met throughout last year to develop an updated ELL handbook. Reflective of legislative changes, the handbook delineates an Early Exit Bilingual model, including instructional resources, time on task, language proficiency guidelines and sheltered instruction strategies.

Department of Special Education reorganization yielded a special education coordinator and three special education instructional coaches to work directly with classroom teachers. The district implemented additional training to support case management and inclusion strategies.
Were 8th Grade Students on the Path to Being Career and College Ready?

Note: Students were allowed two opportunities to pass the math and reading assessments for a cumulative passing rate. All other levels are based on first administration. 51% took the Algebra I test.
Were 5th Grade Students on the Path to Being Career and College Ready?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Passed the Test</th>
<th>Met Final Passing</th>
<th>Met Advanced Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Texas Academic Performance Report and Pearson Assessment

Note: Students were allowed two opportunities to pass the math and reading assessments for a cumulative passing rate. All other levels are based on first administration.

The Del Valle ISD Task Force

- Praises Del Valle ISD’s impressive efforts to increase college- and career-readiness among district graduates, with gains of at least 30 percentage points in English, math and both subjects over the last five years

- Supports the district’s expansion of strategies to increase the percentage of students taking college entrance exams and completing federal financial aid forms so that college-ready students have a variety of post-secondary options

- Supports Del Valle ISD’s targeted efforts to improve reading and writing across the curriculum, which includes the creation of separate reading and writing classes, as well as the hiring of an additional English/language arts coordinator who works directly with Del Valle teachers in secondary classrooms

- Praises the strong performance of Del Valle ISD’s programs for English language learners, including a new handbook that will strengthen instructional strategies

- Supports Del Valle ISD’s efforts to increase the “college-going culture” on district campuses through counselor visits to middle schools, targeted events in partnership with Austin Community College and a sophomore field trip to local college campuses

- Supports the district’s efforts to continue to expand the list of available Advanced Placement and Dual Credit course offerings to assist all students defray the cost of college degree or a high-demand certification

- Supports Del Valle ISD’s and the Chamber’s collaboration to form additional partnerships with local industry to develop career-technology education sequences that lead to certifications that match the high-demand job market of Central Texas
**College, Career, and Beyond**

While Del Valle ISD continues to make gains in several areas of college and career readiness, the district is working to increase the number of students who enroll in college directly out of high school by cultivating a college-going culture starting in the early grades.

Part of this effort includes developing college admissions literacy in families and the community. For example, the district partnered with the Austin Community College to offer college-themed events for students and their parents.

While outreach efforts aimed at assisting students and families to understand the financial aid process increased last year, 47 percent of Del Valle ISD students chose to complete a financial aid application by the end of the school year, comparable to districts with similar demographics across the state. The district responded to this challenge by having school counselors deliver college and career programs at the elementary and middle schools. As part of this effort, students in the district’s audio-visual program produced a video showcasing various career pathways for students.

Del Valle ISD incorporates software, funded by an online college and career readiness grant, to educate and coach parents, students, and teachers on career options by assessing personal strengths and assisting with applications for college scholarships.

Del Valle ISD is committed to offering opportunities for students to gain college experiences on both high school and college campuses. The district continues to increase its offerings of dual-credit courses. Furthermore, the District sends the entire sophomore class to one of several universities on trips designed to focus on students’ areas of interest. Del Valle ISD also continues to offer its annual College and Career Fair on the high school campus where students meet representatives from colleges, trade schools, and the military and learn about diverse post-secondary opportunities.

**How Many Graduates Went Directly to College Upon Graduation?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fall Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: National Clearinghouse Data, UT Ray Marshall Center*

Percentages indicate students who have enrolled in at least one credit-bearing course at a community college or degree-granting institution for the first time in the fall following graduation, in Texas or out of state.
How Many Graduates Were Ready for College or a Career?

Source: Texas Academic Performance Report

Career- and college-readiness is measured by the SAT, ACT or the exit-level Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills. Students who fail to meet set standards must enter college taking remedial classes.
How Many Completed All Graduation Tests on Time?

How Many Graduated in Four Years?

How Did Students Perform on EOC Tests?

How Many Graduated in Five Years?
In addition to the actions on the Road to College, the UT-Austin Ray Marshall Center has identified a combination of six student actions which, if completed, indicate that a high school senior has the “best odds” for direct enrollment in some form of postsecondary education. This is not a multiple choice exercise. To ensure the vast majority of Del Valle ISD graduates directly enroll in college, we encourage completion of all six actions by seniors before graduation.

The higher the percentage on these activities, the more likely we will move the needle on college enrollment.

**“Best Odds” for Direct College Enrollment**

- Visited college or technical school: 62%
- Thought aid process was easy: 20%
- SAT prep class: 18%
- Parents filled out FAFSA: 70%
- Discussed college plan/process with school staff: 45%
- Plan to pay with loans: 31%

Source: Del Valle ISD Class of 2013 Senior Survey

For more about Del Valle ISD: www.delvalle.tx.schoolwebpages.com/education/district/district.php

To learn about the Austin Chamber’s progress reports and electronic versions of each report, visit www.austinchamber.com/edureports or call Senior Vice President of Federal/State Advocacy and Education/Talent Development Drew Scheberle at 512.322.5628.