Moving the Needle:

Creating Better Career Opportunities and Workforce Readiness

Hays CISD 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 were 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 job 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 HAYS CISD PATH TO COLLEGE

100% APPLIED VIA APPLY TEXAS

88% OF CISD SENIORS SAY THEY'RE GOING TO COLLEGE

67% TOOK THE SAT OR ACT

58% OF STUDENTS ARE COLLEGE READY

49% COMPLETED FINANCIAL AID

54% 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 Assessment 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.

After two years under the new test, Hays CISD shows strongest scores in reading at both the fifth and eighth grade levels, as well as science at the eighth grade level. We also looked at the final passing standard on each assessment, which ranged from 20 percent at eighth grade math to 44 percent on eighth grade reading.

The final STAAR passing standard, which will not arrive before 2016, is considered aligned to post-secondary readiness. The goal of the Austin Chamber and its business partners, however, is to look to the Advanced performance level on STAAR, which is a standard considered best prepared for college and career. The Advanced standard also is best aligned to Central Texas workforce needs.

STAAR is a more comprehensive assessment of content knowledge than any prior state test. Hays CISD, which is entering a new administration under Superintendent Michael McKie this school year, has remained flat on passing rates across both fifth and eighth grade STAAR assessments each of the last two years.

At the eighth grade level, Hays CISD shows its strongest passing rates in reading and science, but the percentage falling into Advanced, or best prepared for college and career, is under 20 percent in all categories.

Working to build math capacity from the very earliest grades up, Hays CISD embarked on a Balanced Math initiative in its elementary schools in the summer of 2013. Balanced Math provides teachers a framework that has the flexibility necessary to customize math instruction for students while encouraging collaboration among teachers in designing problem-solving tasks and among students as they work to apply math concepts.

Hays CISD middle schools have begun working with the Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) to facilitate learning across content areas. SIM strategies focus on learning frameworks to assist students in organizing their learning across content areas and between past and present learning. Through focusing on underlying processes of learning as well as content, Hays CISD students are better prepared in all content areas.
Were 8th Grade Students on the Path to Being Career and College Ready?


Note: Students were allowed two opportunities to take math and reading assessments for passing rate. All other levels based on first administration. 31% of 8th grade students took the Algebra I end of course test, which is not included on this chart.

2011
Board adopts single-member districts
After extensive input, Hays CISD divided into five single-member districts

2013
District begins paying for all AP exams
Increased number of students taking rigorous exams and number of students achieving scores of 3-5

2014
ACC campus opens
Increased opportunities for dual credit and articulated courses as well as access for Hays students to attend college close to home
Were 5th Grade Students on the Path to Being Career and College Ready?

- **Reading**
  - Passed the Test: 87%
  - Met Final Passing Standard (College & Career Ready): 38%
  - Met Advanced Level (Well Prepared for College & Career): 18%

- **Math**
  - Passed the Test: 87%
  - Met Final Passing Standard (College & Career Ready): 31%
  - Met Advanced Level (Well Prepared for College & Career): 14%

- **Science**
  - Passed the Test: 69%
  - Met Final Passing Standard (College & Career Ready): 28%
  - Met Advanced Level (Well Prepared for College & Career): 8%

**Source:** Texas Academic Performance Report and Pearson Assessment

Note: Students were allowed two opportunities to take math and reading assessment for passing rate. All other levels are based on first administration.

**Task Force Recommendations**

- Support district strategies that increase the percentage of career- and college-ready students so that it matches or exceeds the district's direct-to-college enrollment
- Support professional development around the new STAAR test that boosts the percentage of those students who perform at the level of “best prepared” for college and career
- Develop incentives for existing teachers to pursue the additional 18 hours of higher education credit to expand the teaching corps for dual-credit courses
- Expand the dialogue between Hays CISD and the new Austin Community College-Hays campus to focus on the high-demand workforce demands of the region
- Open up a dialogue with local chambers and economic development corporations to drill down to specific workforce needs of the region and expand local business partnerships
**College, Career, and Beyond**

Hays CISD is intent on improving its post-secondary outcomes under the leadership of new Superintendent Michael McKie and his staff.

The percentage of Hays CISD graduates headed to college has remained relatively flat over the last five years, peaking at 55 percent. However, college readiness rates, which indicate the ability to enter college or career without remediation, have picked up 18 percentage points in the last six years. Mastery of both subjects — English/language arts and math — is still at 49 percent.

A total of 80 percent of Hays CISD seniors fill out the state’s common college admissions form, indicating some intention to pursue post-secondary options. But only 67 percent take a college entrance exam and 49 percent complete a federal financial aid form, both of which are correlated with direct-to-college enrollment.

Hays CISD has added two additional counselors on high school campuses in an effort to encourage seniors, and especially potential first-generation college attendees, to review all of their options in a deliberate five-step process. The school district also participates in College Forward and Gear Up, which reaches students as early as the sophomore year to prepare them to directly enroll in post-secondary education.

Hays CISD will have an active partner in the recently opened Austin Community College-Hays campus, which plans to provide options in criminal justice, computer information and emergency medical services. District leaders say transportation to and from the ACC campus remains the biggest obstacle to increasing enrollment in the coming school year.

Much of the energy at a high school is focused on the Top 10 percent of the senior class that directly enrolls in a four-year college, McKie said. To fully succeed, the district also must focus on the balance of students — the 90 percent on each high school campus that may choose to pursue other types of post-secondary opportunities.

The superintendent also suggests Hays CISD may explore building a non-traditional high school in the future, in partnership with the local community college, that would be geared to part-time and full-time students with various interests.
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 Graduated in Four Years?

How Many Completed All Graduation Tests on Time?

How Many Graduated in Five Years?

How Did Students Perform on EOC Tests?

Source: Texas Academic Performance Report
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 Hays CISD 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.

Source: Hays CISD Senior Survey, Class of 2013
This is ninth year the Austin Chamber of Commerce has produced the education progress reports. The chair of this year’s task force effort is Catherine Morse, General Counsel and Director of Public Affairs at Samsung. Dawn L Jones, external affairs manager, Intel-Texas, serves as vice chair of the task force and chair of the launch event.

**HAYS CISD**

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For more information on Hays CISD: www.hayscisd.net

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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.