Together We Educate Hays
Letter to the Community

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

career opportunities. These school districts and partners have worked to improve college readiness rates from 47% in 2007, to 64% in 2013. 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

---

2 The Conference Board Help Wanted OnLine® (HWOL) and Travis County Workforce Board. Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, High School to College Linkages 2002-2013, and The University of Texas at Austin, Ray Marshall Center and National Student Clearinghouse Higher Education Enrollment Outcomes for Central Texas High School Graduates 2009-2014.

3 Academic Excellence Indicator System 2007 and Texas Academic Performance Reports 2013
A Snapshot of Hays CISD

Hays CISD is a rapidly growing district just south of Austin. Since 2002, student enrollment increased by more than 100%, and low-income student enrollment swelled from 38% to 51% in 2014.

17,205
Students

51%
Economically Disadvantaged

16%
English Language Learners

Demographic summary

- Hispanic: 63%
- Caucasian: 31%
- African-American: 3%
- Two or more races: 2%
- Asian: 1%

Hays CISD understands that funding for education comes from hardworking taxpayers. The district focuses its financial resources on recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers because that has the greatest impact on student achievement. The district maximizes its resources to meet the needs of its students.
What Share of Hays CISD Students Directly Enroll in Higher Education?

Despite gains in college/career readiness and graduation rates, Hays CISD’s (HCISD) direct-to-college enrollment rate hit a 5 year low at 52% in 2013. Recognizing that higher education is the key vehicle for economic mobility, HCISD focuses programmatic support for students on their path to college. In the summers of 2013 and 2014, Hays CISD participated in a summer college transition pilot that saw a 3% increase in college applications and financial aid submissions. HCISD’s focus on continuous improvement yielded a 5% increase in direct-to-college enrollment for low-income students between 2008 and 2013. A huge opportunity for HCISD students arose in 2014 when ACC opened its Hays Campus, which provides local students with access to college courses while still in high school and facilitates a transition to college after high school graduation.

4 The University of Texas at Austin, Ray Marshall Center, Outcomes and Impact Estimates for the Summer Melt Program in Central Texas, April 2014 and Trends in Low-Income Enrollment in Central Texas for School Districts and Campuses, 2008 through 2013
Percentage of Graduates Who Directly Enroll in Higher Education

Percentage of 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.

Source: National Student Clearinghouse, HCISD 2009-2014

College enrollment rates have remained largely flat since 2009.
How Do Hays CISD Student Career Interests Align with Job Market Demand?

Hays CISD is working to ensure their graduates have the skills required to pursue 21st century careers. In Central Texas there are 44,000 open jobs and 41,000 unemployed. HCISD is working to solve this mismatch in skills, interests and job market demand by continuously monitoring employment trends and encouraging coursework that excites and engages students in high-need fields. Hays CISD has dramatically increased the number of industry certifications across all fields offered since 2011. Hays CISD students earned 11 industry certifications in 2012, 119 certifications in 2013, and 965 in 2014—an increase of almost 90% in three years.

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

18% of current job openings are computer-related

5% of HCISD students are interested in computers & programming

Source: University of Texas Ray Marshall Center, Student Futures Project 2014 Student Survey
Top 10 Current Job Openings in Central Texas

- Computers & Math: 18%
- Office/Admin: 11%
- Retail: 11%
- Healthcare: 10%
- Management: 9%
- Installation & Repair: 4%
- Transport: 4%
- Food Service: 4%
- Business/Finance: 6%
- Arts, Design, Media: 3%
- Other: 20%

Source: The Conference Board Help Wanted Online® (HWOL), November 2014
In order to reach Hays CISD’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

- Hays CISD funds AP exams for all students in AP courses to allow them to earn college credit while in high school.
- Hays CISD provides free online SAT and ACT prep program and implemented classes to help students meet state college and career readiness standards prior to graduation.

Source: Texas Academic Performance Reports and Academic Excellence Indicator System 2009-2014
Goal 2

Increase Student Participation in College Prep Activities

• Hays CISD high school counselors are dedicated to helping students complete college and financial applications, enroll in dual credit courses, meet college deadlines, and partner with universities to support direct-to-college enrollment.

• The Austin Chamber and HCISD have hosted Financial Aid Saturdays since 2009, resulting in over $4 million in aid awarded and more than 750 families served.¹

75% Aspire to Attend College
69% of those enrolled.

81% Applied via ApplyTexas
65% of those enrolled.


Source: University of Texas Ray Marshall Center, Student Futures Project 2014 Student Survey, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (ApplyTexas) In-State Filing Data
The University of Texas Ray Marshall Center Has Identified Six Activities That Increase the Likelihood That a Student Will Directly Enroll in Higher Education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Enrolled Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attended a College Fair</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>71% of those enrolled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met with a Counselor</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>65% of those enrolled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought Financial Aid Process was Easy</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>61% of those enrolled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan to Use Loans</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>74% of those enrolled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took SAT/ACT Prep Course(s)</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>75% of those enrolled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed FAFSA</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>75% of those enrolled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Goal 3

Continue to Improve High School Graduation Rates

Percentage of students who graduate within four or five years:

- Graduate within four years
- Graduate within five years

- In 2012 Hays CISD implemented Project Hope, which identifies and provides assistance to students that are not on track to graduate.

- Hays CISD also set the Distinguished Graduation Plan as its default plan to set high expectations and ensure that students are prepared to succeed in higher education.

Visit austinchamber.com/hcisdrpt to view more detailed breakdowns of the four- and five-year graduation rate chart shown above

Federal graduation rate (without exclusions) AEIS & TAPR Reports from the Texas Education Agency 2009-2013
If we accomplish these goals, Hays CISD will prepare students for higher education and 21st-century careers.
Recommendations

Direct to College Enrollment
Provide year-round support to college-bound seniors
• Extend 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 HCISD to continue targeting high-demand careers, like computer science, that currently have low interest.

College or Career Ready
Prepare students for the rigors of higher education
• Continue to evaluate whether each junior has met college/career readiness threshold.
• Continue to counsel non-college/career ready rising seniors to enroll in college readiness courses.

Expand access to & affordability of college readiness exams
• Encourage HCISD to provide more on-site testing for the SAT, ACT and TSI to reduce the barriers to test completion.6

6 Passage of the TSI college readiness test allows students to enroll in credit bearing college level courses for dual enrollment and after high school graduation.
Congratulate HCISD for free online SAT and ACT prep program, allowing all students the opportunity to prepare for college entrance exams. Expand on-site testing within RRISD to improve access to TSI college readiness tests.

**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 Q1 to maximize student chances to receive aid.
- Use Counselor Portal to target FAFSA, ApplyTexas and College Career Readiness support to improve timely resolution of college enrollment requirements.
- Make college enrollment a core district priority
- Actively promote student participation in influential college prep activities (See pages 10, 11).

**4/5 Year Graduation**

Set high expectations for all students
- Applaud HCISD for making the Distinguished Graduation Plan the default.
Acknowledgments

Taskforce Chair
Dawn Jones
Intel

Hays CISD
Superintendent
Mike McKie
Joy Philpott

Austin Chamber Staff
Michael W. Rollins, CCE
Drew Scheberle
Gilbert Zavala
Isabel Shelton

Hays Business Volunteers
Ann Miller
Buda EDC
Diana Blank-Torres
City of Kyle
Jim Lewis
Noah’s Ark Self Storage
JR Gonzales
Buda Chamber

Julie Snyder
Kyle Chamber
Vince Collier
Encompass Lending Group
How to Get Involved in Hays CISD

Get to Know Hays CISD
Stay connected to Hays CISD at:
hayscisd.net
Facebook
facebook.com/HaysConsolidatedISD
Twitter:
twitter.com/HaysCISD

Volunteer
Join Hays CISD Volunteer in Public Schools (VIPs) Program.
Call or email Angie Mendez to learn how:
512-268-2141 x 6078
mendeza@hayscisd.net
hayscisd.net/vips

Donate
You can make a difference.
Contribute to the Hays CISD Education Foundation
haysef.com