Together We Educate Hutto
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

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3 Academic Excellence Indicator System 2007 and Texas Academic Performance Reports 2013
A Snapshot of Hutto ISD

Hutto ISD encompasses the city of Hutto, the surrounding rural area and the eastern part of the city of Round Rock. Over the last 5 years enrollment in the school district has grown by more than 1,000 students for a total increase of 23%.

5,915
Students

45%
Economically Disadvantaged

10%
English Language Learners

Demographic summary
- Hispanic: 42%
- Caucasian: 40%
- African-American: 12%
- Two or more races: 5%
- Asian: 1%

Hutto ISD (HISD) has one of the smallest amounts of money per student in Central Texas and is saddled with high debt due to construction of buildings to accommodate a fast-growing population. Despite demographic changes, Hutto ISD continues to have one of the highest graduation rates for students who are low-income in Central Texas. This graduation data is evidence of Hutto’s commitment to improving outcomes for all students despite budgetary limitations.
What Share of HISD Students Directly Enroll in Higher Education?

HISD is focused on promoting programs that support students on their path to college. During the Austin Chamber’s 9th Annual State of Education, HISD and Hutto High School were recognized for having 100% of seniors submit a college application and an 8 percentage point gain in direct-to-college enrollment rates in the campus and district category between 2012 and 2013. To counter the 2014 decline in college enrollment, HISD has empowered their team members to create a strong college-going culture that is tangible, pervasive, and accessible to all students. HISD has worked to send strong, consistent messages that every student is college material. Team members are focused on creating academic momentum, workable college plans, comprehensive college services and coordinating college supports.
College enrollment rates have remained largely flat since 2009.

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, HISD 2009–2014
How Do HISD Student Career Interests Align with Job Market Demand?

Hutto ISD is working hard 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. HISD 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. HISD has realigned and expanded their endorsement pathways to promote more STEM and hands-on learning coursework. This expansion resulted in more students enrolling in engineering, computer science and robotics classes.

18% of current job openings are computer-related

6% of HISD students are interested in computers & programming

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

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%
- Business/Finance: 6%
- Food Service: 4%
- Transport: 4%
- Installation & Repair: 4%
- Arts, Design, Media: 3%
- Other: 20%

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

• HISD utilizes the college and career readiness software program, Naviance, to facilitate college and career goal setting for all students.

• HISD funds the PSAT for all 10th and 11th graders and administers the TSI for all 11th and 12th graders.5

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5 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.

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

Increase Student Participation in College Prep Activities

• HISD implemented and staffed a College and Career Center with a college admissions industry expert to help all students file college applications, complete the FAFSA process, organize college fairs and college visits, and offer free SAT/ACT Prep classes.

• In collaboration with the Austin Chamber, HISD has hosted Financial Aid Saturdays since 2009 that have resulted in an estimated $1 million in aid awarded and almost 200 families served.6

80% Aspire to
Attend College
63% of those enrolled.

100% Applied via
ApplyTexas
59% of those enrolled.

The University of Texas Ray Marshall Center Has Identified Six Activities That Increase the Likelihood That a Student Will Directly Enroll in Higher Education.

- **60%** Attended a College Fair; 62% of those enrolled.
- **25%** Took SAT/ACT Prep Course(s); 73% of those enrolled.
- **79%** Met with a Counselor; 59% of those enrolled.
- **33%** Thought Financial Aid Process was Easy; 58% of those enrolled.
- **41%** Plan to Use Loans; 64% of those enrolled.
- **65%** Completed FAFSA; 67% of those enrolled.

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

• Every student meets at least twice with the counselor each year to discuss graduation plan and progress toward goals.

• Hutto ISD supports River Horse Academy, an alternative education program designed to help at-risk students reach their graduation goals. About 40 students graduate each year with the help of the River Horse program.

Visit austinchamber.com/hisdrpt 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, HISD 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 HISD to continue targeting high-demand careers like computer science and other STEM areas that currently have low student interest.

College or Career Ready

- Prepare students for the rigors of higher education
  - Assess non-college and career ready juniors/seniors and enroll them in a course which prepares them to graduate college and career ready.

- Praise HISD for funding PSAT testing for 10th & 11th graders, allowing equal access to testing for all students regardless of income.

- Congratulate the district for providing 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 Q1 to maximize student chances to receive aid.

• Tie college enrollment activity outcomes to relevant staff evaluations so key staff are recognized, rewarded and accountable to meet student college enrollment goals.

• Actively promote student participation in influential college-prep activities (see page 10, 11).

4/5 Year Graduation

Set high expectations for all students

• Congratulate HISD for making the Distinguished Graduation Plan the administrative guideline for all entering high school students.

Maintain focus on outcomes during assessment transitions
# Acknowledgments

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Dawn Jones  
Intel

**Hutto ISD**

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- John Darby  
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How to Get Involved in Hutto ISD

Get to Know Hutto ISD

hipponation.org

Volunteer

Become a Tutor or Volunteer at hipponation.org

Donate

Contribute to the Hutto Education Foundation at hipponation.org
www.austinchamber.com/edureports