

# Workforce Data Quality Initiative Research Brief 7

Summer 2014



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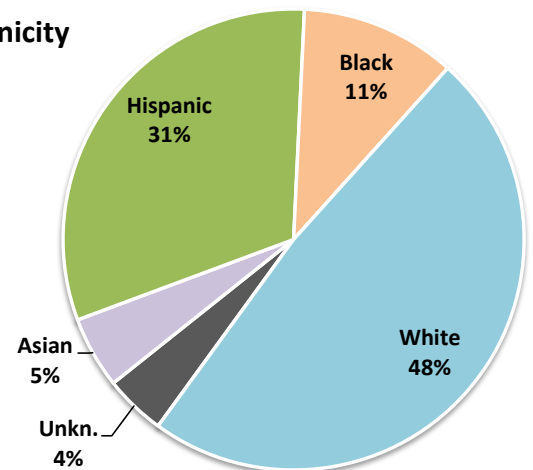
## Postsecondary Education and Employment Outcomes for 2008 and 2009 Central Texas High School Graduates

This research brief describes postsecondary education and employment outcomes for 2008 and 2009 Central Texas high school graduates.

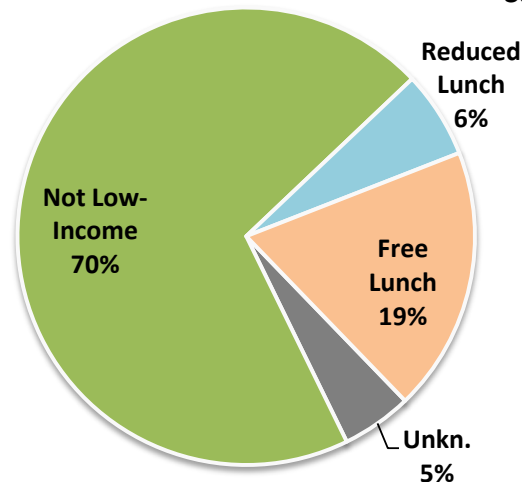
**Background:** As part of the Central Texas Student Futures project, the Ray Marshall Center developed partnerships with Central Texas independent school districts to document and analyze the postsecondary pathways and outcomes of the region's high school graduates. This work has been extended through the Texas Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) to examine the various paths that students take after high school and identify factors that are associated with them.

**Sample:** The sample (all graduates for whom data were available) includes a total of 23,809 graduates: 11,575 from the 2008 cohort and 12,234 from the 2009 cohort. The sample was predominantly White (48%), with smaller shares of Hispanic (31%), and Black (11%) students. Approximately 25% of the sample received free or reduced lunch in school (a proxy for low-income status).

**Sample Ethnicity**



**Sample Income**



More information on the Student Futures Project at:  
[www.centexstudentfutures.org](http://www.centexstudentfutures.org)

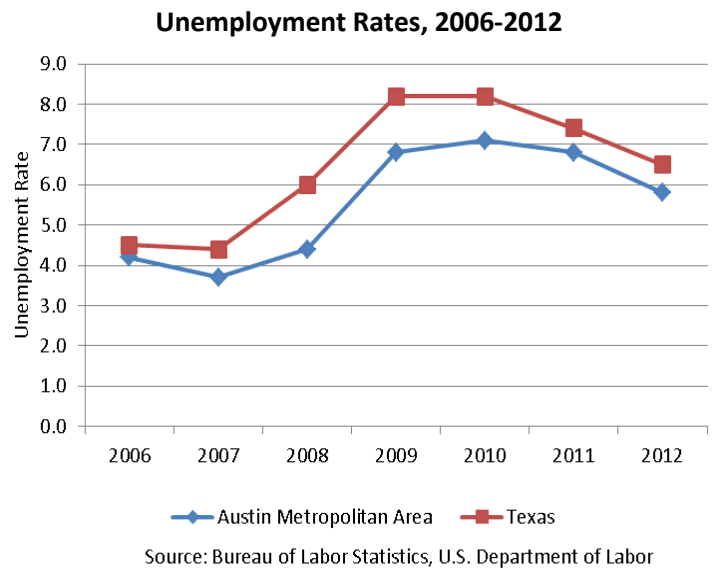
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**Data Sources:** Research data were drawn from secondary school records, the Student Futures Project Senior Exit Survey, National Student Clearinghouse records, Texas unemployment insurance wage records, and Texas death records. A graduate was considered employed in a particular quarter if he or she was found in the Texas unemployment insurance wage records; if a graduate was not found in the wage records, he or she could be unemployed, employed in another state, employed by an employer who does not report wages for unemployment purposes, or not in the labor force.

**Time Periods Examined:** Postsecondary data were examined through December 2012. This provided 4.5 years of follow-up for the 2008 cohort and 3.5 years for the 2009 cohort.

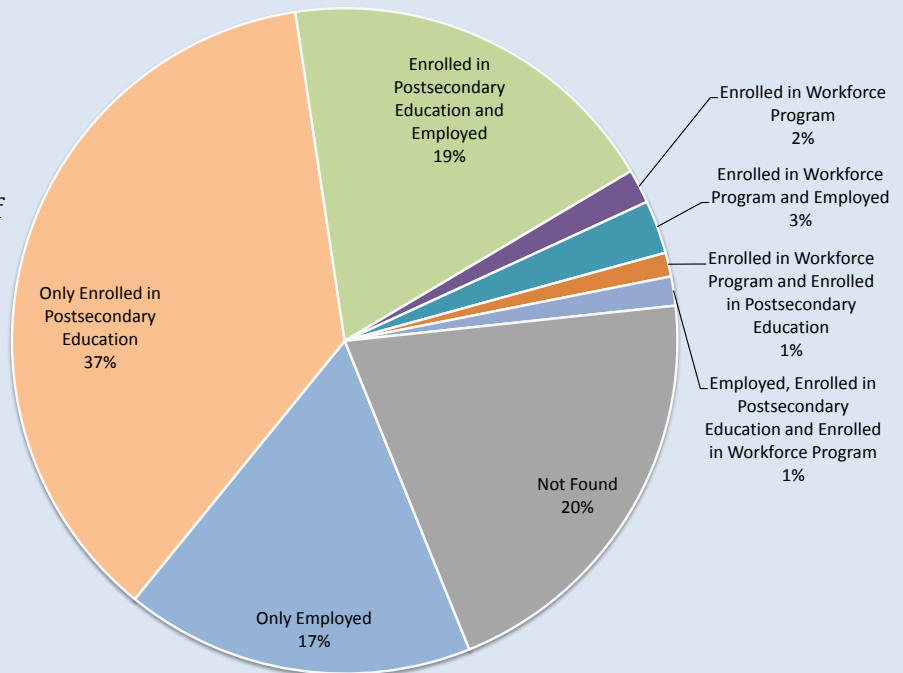
**Economic Environment:** When studying employment outcomes, it is important to consider the economic

environment into which these cohorts graduated. The Classes of 2008 and 2009 faced, more than any other class in recent history, daunting challenges to obtaining employment. The chart below illustrates this fact: just as the first of the cohorts graduated, the unemployment rate in Texas and the Austin Metropolitan Area began to rise sharply and did not improve substantially during the studied timeframe.



**Where Were They in the Fall Following HS Graduation?**

In the fall following graduation, over a third of the sample was only enrolled in postsecondary education. Another 17% of the sample was employed only and 19% was both employed and enrolled in postsecondary education school that fall. Only 7% of graduates were enrolled in a workforce program, either alone or in combination with other education or employment. The remainder of graduates were not located in the available records (20%).

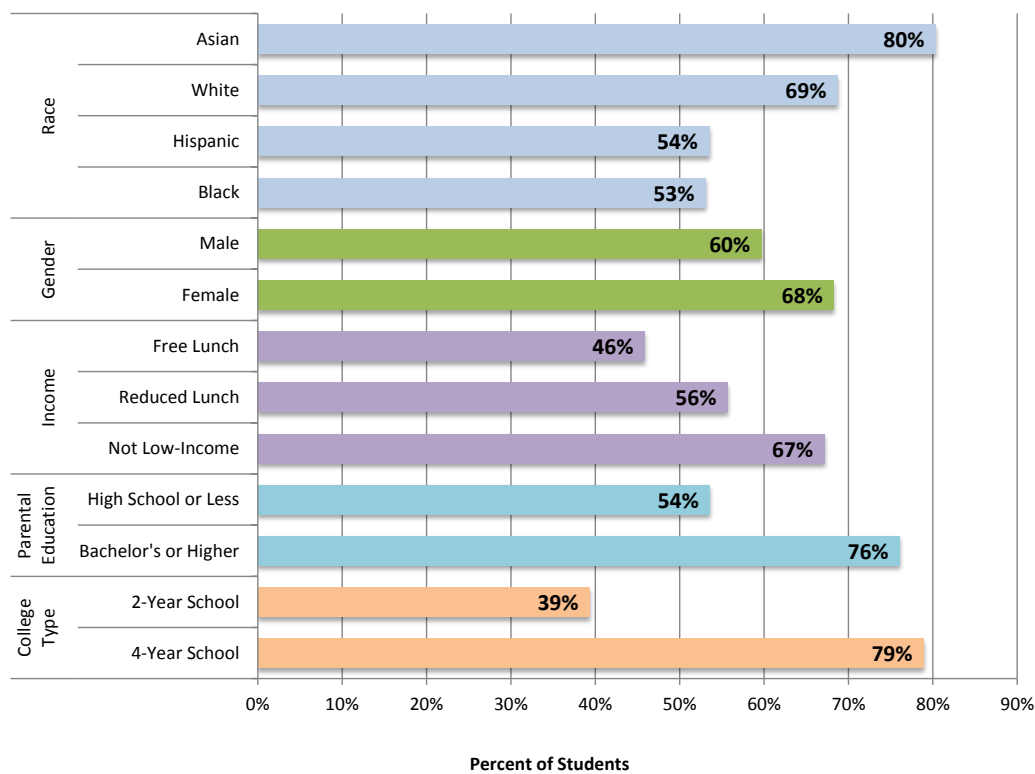


The table to the right provides a summary of outcomes through December 2012 by graduating class. These categories are non-exclusive; a graduate could be counted in multiple categories over time (with the exception of those “not located”). Three-quarters of graduates enrolled in postsecondary education in at least one semester since high school graduation. One-fifth of the 2008 cohort graduated from a postsecondary institution. Most were employed in at least one quarter. Only 7% participated in a workforce program, with most of them participating in ES or WIT services.

### Postsecondary Outcomes for 2008 and 2009 Central Texas High School Graduates through December 2012

	Cohort	
	2008	2009
<b>Ever Enrolled in Postsecondary Education</b>	75%	74%
Enrolled In-State	68%	67%
Enrolled Out-of-State	14%	11%
Graduated from Postsecondary Education	20%	3%
<b>Ever Employed (in Texas)</b>	85%	83%
Ever enrolled <u>and</u> employed	54%	49%
<b>Ever Received UI Benefits</b>	7%	4%
<b>Ever Participated in Workforce Program<sup>1</sup></b>	7%	7%
ES or WIT	6%	6%
WIA	1%	1%
TANF E&T (Choices)	1%	1%
SNAP E&T	1%	0%
<b>Not Located</b>	5%	6%

### Share of Students who Persisted in College for Four Years or Graduated, Among those Enrolled in Fall after 2008 HS Graduation



The chart to the left details the share of Class of 2008 graduates who, after enrolling in college in the first fall following high school graduation, either persisted in college for four years or graduated from college by December 2012. Students who initially enrolled in a 4-year institution were more likely to persist or graduate in the studied time period as compared to students who initially enrolled at a 2-year college.

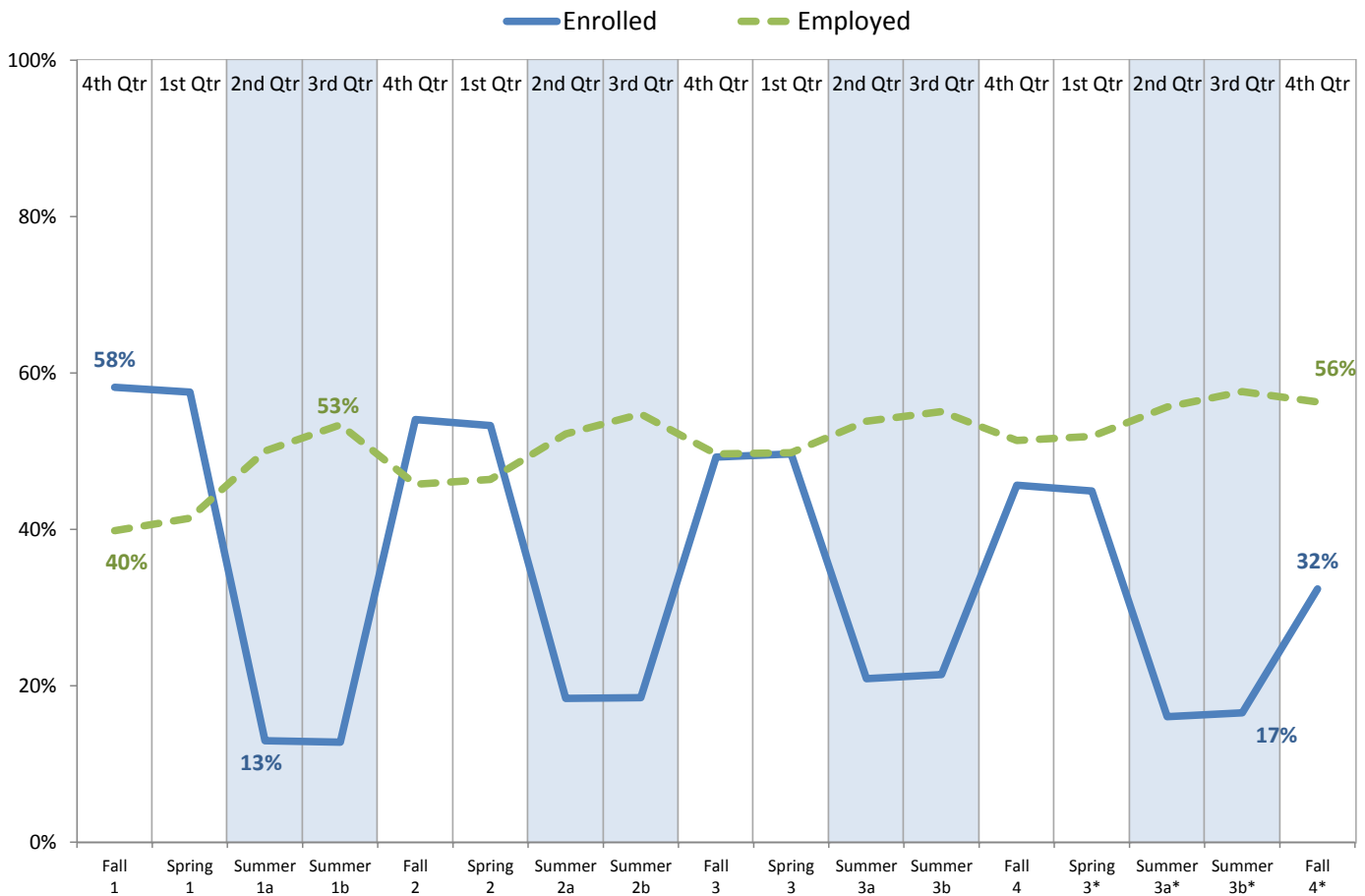
<sup>1</sup> ES=Employment Services  
WIT=Work in Texas  
WIA=Workforce Investment Act

TANF E&T=TANF Employment and Training  
SNAP E&T=SNAP Employment and Training

The graph below illustrates the seasonal nature of attending school and working. The solid blue line in the graph shows the percent of graduates who were enrolled in postsecondary education in each semester, starting with the fall following high school graduation. That semester, over half of the graduates were enrolled, and a nearly equal share were enrolled in the spring semester. College enrollment numbers dropped sharply during the summer semesters to as few as 13%. Over time, the percent who were enrolled in the fall and spring

semesters gradually decreased. The dotted green line in the graph shows the percent of graduates who were employed in each quarter. Less than half of the sample was employed in the fall following high school graduation with the share gradually increasing through the summer quarters. While the share who were employed continued to show seasonal fluctuations in contrast to college enrollment, those fluctuations appear to lessen over time.

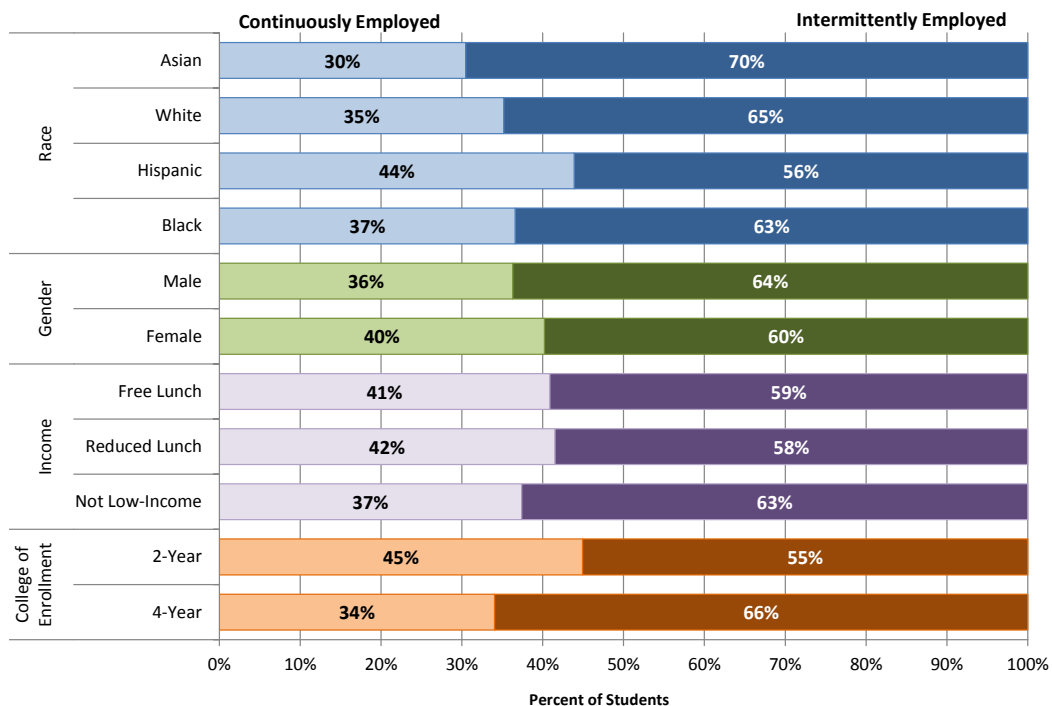
**Share of 2008 and 2009 Central Texas Students who were Employed and Enrolled in Postsecondary Education in Each Period Post-Graduation**



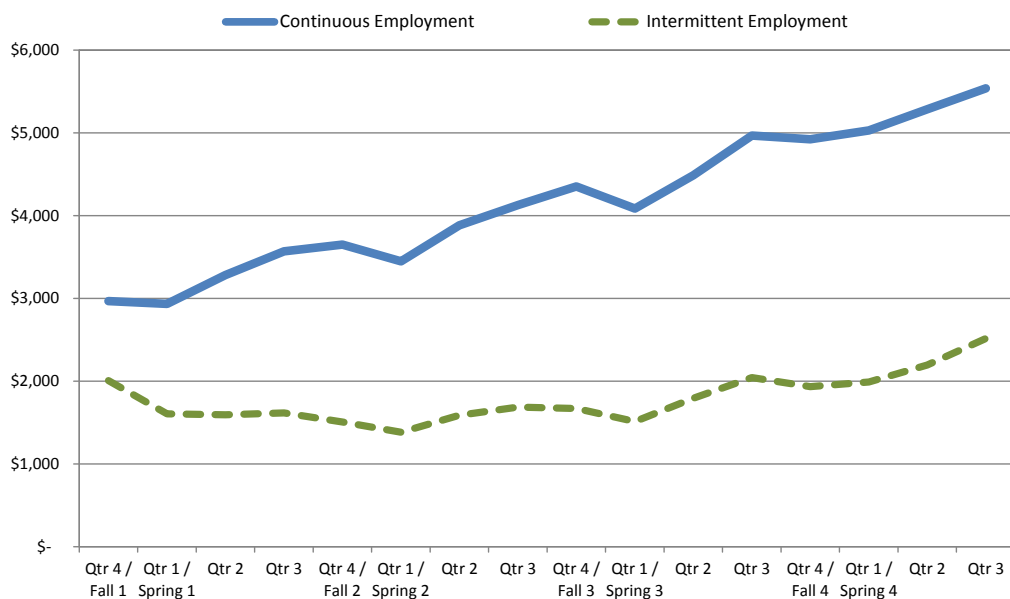
\* Data for 2008 graduates only.

The graph to the right shows the share of students who were employed in the fall following graduation and who were either continuously or intermittently employed in each subsequent quarter. Intermittent employment could be due to several factors, including unstable employment or seasonal employment in converse of college semesters. Regardless of demographic characteristic, all graduates were more likely to have intermittent employment than to work continuously throughout the year.

### Share of Students who were Continuously and Intermittently Employed, Among those Employed in Fall after 2008 HS Graduation



### Mean Quarterly Earnings of Those who were Employed in Fall After Graduation, by Continuous Employment or Intermittent Employment, Class of 2008

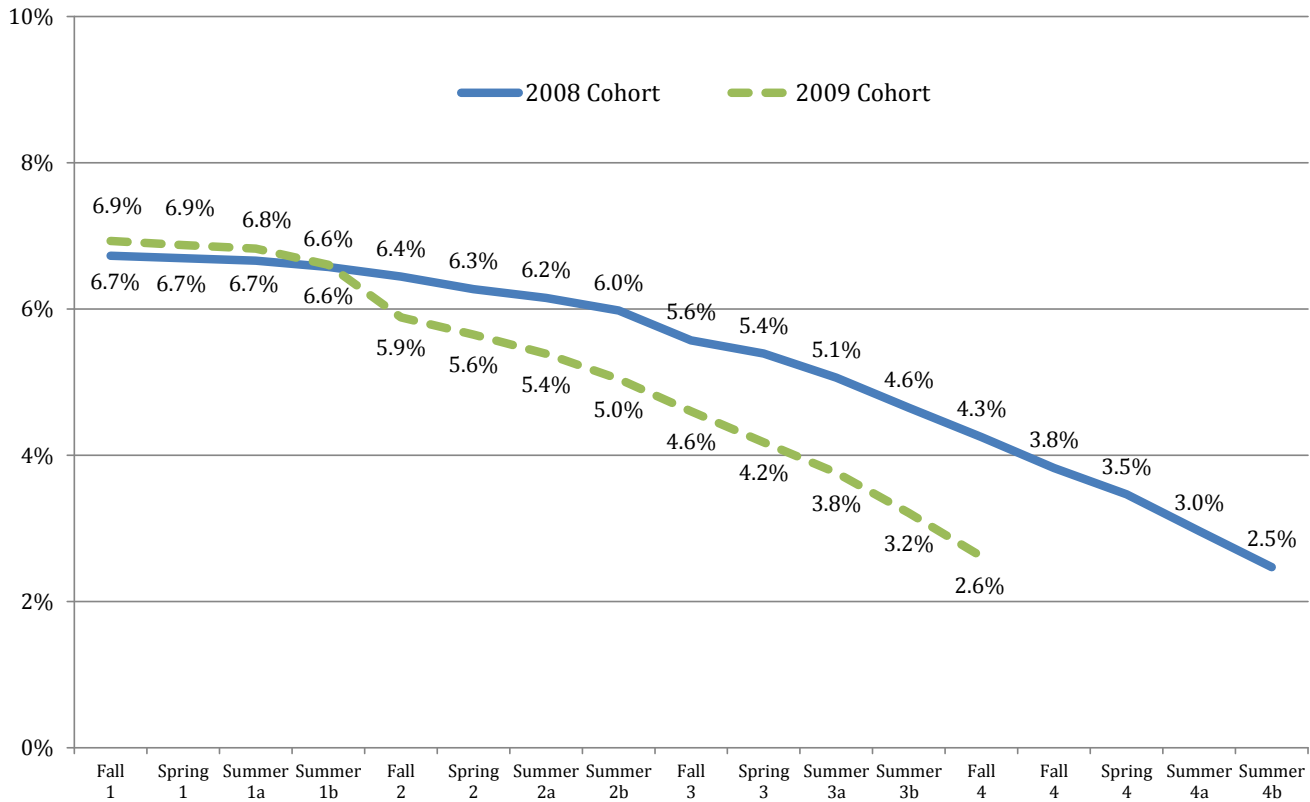


The effects of working intermittently rather than continuously can be seen in the average quarterly wages of the 2008 graduates who worked. Those who worked continuously throughout the year had higher average wages each quarter and also increased their wages over time. It is important to note that those working intermittently may or may not be students who expect to achieve higher wages upon completion of school.

The share of students who participated in any workforce program can be seen in the graph below. The participation pattern of the Class of 2009 was similar to, though lower than, the Class of 2008. For both classes, participation

was highest in the first fall quarter following graduation, with about 7% of the sample participating, and then steadily declined to less than 3%.

**Workforce Program Participation by 2008 and 2009 Central Texas Graduates**



**About the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI)**

The main objectives of the WDQI grant program funded by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment & Training Administration are:

- Develop or improve state workforce longitudinal data systems.
- Enable workforce data to be matched with education data to ultimately create longitudinal data systems with individual-level information beginning with pre-kindergarten through post-secondary schooling all the way through entry and sustained participation in the workforce and employment services system.
- Improve the quality and breadth of the data in the workforce data systems.

- Use longitudinal data to provide useful information about program operations and analyze the performance of education and employment and training programs.
- Provide user-friendly information to consumers to help them select the training and education programs that best suit their needs.

More information at:

<http://www.doleta.gov/performance/workforcedatagrants09.cfm>

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