

Education and Work After High School: Central Texas Outcomes through December 2008

**A Research Report of the
Central Texas Student Futures Project**

Greg Cumpton
Deanna Schexnayder
Christopher T. King

September 2009



Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs
The University of Texas at Austin
3001 Lake Austin Blvd., Suite 3.200
Austin, TX 78703 (512) 471-7891

This report was prepared with funds provided to the Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources at the University of Texas at Austin by TG and the Austin Chamber of Commerce. The views expressed here are those of the authors and do not represent the positions of the funding agencies or The University.

Table of Contents

List of Figures	ii
List of Tables	iii
List of Acronyms	iv
Acknowledgments.....	v
Executive Summary	vii
Initial Postsecondary Outcomes for 2008 Graduates.....	vii
Postsecondary Outcomes One Year after Graduating High School	viii
Postsecondary Outcomes Two Years after Graduating High School	ix
Postsecondary Education Completion by the Fall of 2008.....	x
Summary of Findings.....	x
Chapter I. Introduction.....	1
Organization of this Report.....	2
Research Questions.....	2
Research Methods.....	3
Construction and Description of the Research Dataset.....	3
Data Limitations and Interpretations	7
Chapter II. Class of 2008 Initial Postsecondary Outcomes	8
Initial Postsecondary Enrollment.....	8
Enrollment by College	9
Enrollment by Demographic Characteristics	10
Enrollment by District.....	11
High School and Initial Postsecondary Employment in Texas.....	14
High School Employment.....	14
Postsecondary Employment.....	15
Industry of Employment	17
Employment and Enrollment Activities.....	18
Post-High School Plans Compared to Actual Education and Employment	19
Chapter III. Postsecondary Enrollment and Employment Outcomes Over Time.....	20
Initial Postsecondary Outcomes by Class	20
Initial Postsecondary Enrollment by District.....	21
Overall Enrollment and Employment Outcomes.....	26
Postsecondary Outcomes One Year After Graduating from High School	28
Educational Persistence	28
Total Period of Enrollment	31
Postsecondary Employment.....	32
Postsecondary Earnings	33
Postsecondary Outcomes Two Years After Graduating from High School	36
Education	36
Postsecondary Education Completion by the Fall of 2008.....	37
Employment.....	37
Chapter IV. Summary	39
Bibliography	41
Appendix A: Technical Appendix	A-1

List of Figures

Figure 1. Percent of 2008 Graduates Enrolled in Postsecondary Education in Fall of 2008, by District	12
Figure 2. Percent of 2008 Graduates Enrolled in 4-Year and 2-Year Institutions, by District.....	13
Figure 3. Percent of 2008 Graduates Enrolled in In-State and Out-of-State Institutions, by District.....	14
Figure 4. Initial Postsecondary Education and Employment Outcomes for 2008 Graduates	18
Figure 5. Planned versus Actual Post-High School Education and Employment in Fall 2008 for Surveyed Graduates	19
Figure 6. Initial Postsecondary Enrollment for the Classes of 2006-2008, by High School	23
Figure 7. Postsecondary Enrollment Outcomes Over Time, by Graduating Class.....	26
Figure 8. Overall Post-Graduation Employment Status, by Graduating Class.....	27
Figure 9. Cumulative Enrollment Rates of 2007 Graduates, Fall 2007 through Fall 2008	32
Figure 10. Median Earnings by Quarter for 2006 Graduates Continuously Employed through the Fall of 2007, by Enrollment Status	34
Figure 11. Median Earnings by Quarter for 2007 Graduates Continuously Employed through the Fall of 2008, by Enrollment Status	35
Figure 12. Cumulative Enrollment Rates of 2006 Graduates, Fall 2006 through Fall 2008	36
Figure 13. Median Earnings by Quarter for 2006 Graduates Continuously Employed through the Fall of 2008, by Enrollment Status	38

List of Tables

Table 1. Sources and Time Periods of Data Used to Construct the Research Dataset.....	4
Table 2. Characteristics of 2006, 2007 and 2008 Central Texas Graduates	6
Table 3. Initial Postsecondary Enrollment for 2008 Graduates	9
Table 4. Ten Most Common Postsecondary Enrollment Institutions for the Class of 2008	9
Table 5. Initial Postsecondary Enrollment Rates of 2008 Graduates by Selected Characteristics and Type/Location of Institution.....	11
Table 6. Employment Prior to Graduation for 2008 Graduates.....	15
Table 7. Initial Texas Employment Outcomes for All 2008 Graduates, Fall of 2008.....	16
Table 8. Initial Employment for 2008 Graduates by Industry, Fall of 2008	17
Table 9. Initial Postsecondary Outcomes.....	20
Table 10. Initial Postsecondary Enrollment by District.....	21
Table 11. Class of 2006 Persistence One Year Out	29
Table 12. Class of 2007 Persistence One Year Out	30
Table 13. Share of Graduates Continuously Employed for One Full Year Following Graduation	33

List of Acronyms

GAC	Austin Chamber of Commerce
HS	High School
ISD	Independent School District
NSC	National Student Clearinghouse
PEIMS	Public Education Information Management System
RMC	Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources
SFP	Student Futures Project
SSN	Social Security Number
TEA	Texas Education Agency
TG	formerly, Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation
THECB	Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
TWC	Texas Workforce Commission
UI	Unemployment Insurance
UT	University of Texas at Austin

Acknowledgments

Many individuals and agencies shared insights, experiences, knowledge and data that contributed to this report. Researchers at the Ray Marshall Center express their gratitude to everyone who has contributed to this phase of the project, including Chandler Stolp who provided appreciated statistical guidance.

The project would not have progressed without the enthusiastic contributions of the ten districts participating in the project through spring of 2009 — Austin, Bastrop, Del Valle, Eanes, Leander, Hays Consolidated, Manor, Pflugerville, Round Rock and San Marcos Consolidated. The authors appreciate the support and assistance of district leadership, Advisory Committee members and other district staff who contributed to this project.

Without the financial resources provided by TG (formerly named the Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation) and the Austin Chamber of Commerce (GAC), this phase of the research could not have come to fruition. The authors particularly want to thank Drew Scheberle at GAC for his input and support throughout this project. Thanks also go to Kristin Boyer and Jacob Fraire at TG for their continued interest in this work.

Executive Summary

The Central Texas Student Futures Project is a research partnership of the Ray Marshall Center and ten Central Texas independent school districts (ISDs). The project follows the progress of Central Texas high school graduates as they make the critical transition from high school to postsecondary education and the labor market. This effort grew out of concerns among key education, business, workforce development and community stakeholders that the region's economy and its residents would not prosper in the near- and longer-term unless more of its graduates obtained higher levels of enrollment in postsecondary education and better labor market outcomes. Graduates' actual postsecondary education and work outcomes are computed annually (for at least four years beyond graduation) using postsecondary enrollment and employment records. Findings are shared annually with local educators, business and community leaders, and policymakers committed to improving education and supporting local initiatives.

This is the first report on class of 2008 initial postsecondary education and employment outcomes for Central Texas graduates from ten independent school districts. This report also describes postsecondary outcomes for the class of 2007 from the fall of 2007 through the fall of 2008 and for the class of 2006 from the fall of 2006 through the fall of 2008. In each successive year, the number of participating districts has increased, from four ISDs in 2006, to eight ISDs in 2007, and then to ten ISDs in 2008.

Initial Postsecondary Outcomes for 2008 Graduates

In the fall following graduation, 61% of the class of 2008 enrolled in postsecondary education, with 39% enrolled in 4-year institutions and 22% enrolled in 2-year institutions. Eanes ISD had the largest share attending 4-year institutions (75%) while Leander ISD had the highest share of graduates attending 2-year institutions (27%). A large number of high school graduates enrolled at a local 2-year institution, Austin Community College (18%). Students were also found enrolled at some nearby 4-year universities including the University of Texas at Austin (6%) and Texas State University in San Marcos (5%). Most graduates who went to college did so within the state of Texas (53%), while the district with the highest share of graduates enrolled in out-of-state schools (32%) was Eanes ISD. Higher

shares of Asian (83%) and White (71%) graduates enrolled in the fall following graduation than Black (55%) and Hispanic (44%) graduates did.

Over four of every ten (44%) 2008 high school graduates also worked in the fall following graduation. Graduates were most often employed in the retail trade (18%) or accommodation and food services (12%) industries. Higher shares of Black (48%) and Hispanic (50%) graduates worked in the fall following graduation than was true for Asian (24%) or White (42%) graduates. Postsecondary employment varied by district, with San Marcos ISD having the largest share of employed graduates (60%) and Eanes ISD having the lowest share (18%). Initial quarterly median earnings of high school graduates (\$1,911) varied by enrollment status, with enrolled student median earnings (\$1,471) being roughly half those of non-enrolled student median earnings (\$2,766).

Despite year-to-year differences in the district and racial/ethnic composition of Student Futures Project participants, the initial enrollment rates for the Central Texas region varied little for each graduating cohort examined, ranging from 60% in 2006 to 62% in 2007 and 61% in 2008. Overall initial employment rates varied a little more, ranging from 46% in 2006 to 47% in 2007 and dropping to 44% in 2008. The share of graduates who were only employed was nearly identical each year, 22% in 2006 and 2007, and 21% in 2008.

Initial postsecondary enrollment of high school graduates in the Central Texas area varied widely by school district and high school, generally reflecting the demographic make-up of each. While most schools showed little variability over time (5 percentage points or less over the three years studied) a few showed a large increase over this time, including Stony Point High School in Round Rock ISD from 50% for the class of 2006 to 60% for the class of 2007 and Del Valle High School from 35% for the class of 2007 to 45% for the class of 2008.

Postsecondary Outcomes One Year after Graduating High School

Students who enrolled in postsecondary education within a year after graduation and were also enrolled the following fall are considered to have persisted. The shares of high school graduates enrolled in postsecondary education within a year from graduation were similar for the class of 2006 (65%) and the class of 2007 (67%). Of those, 82% (class of 2006) and 81% (class of 2007) persisted to the fall following graduation one year later.

Graduates attending 4-year colleges/universities exhibited persistence rates of over 90%, while the persistence rate for 2-year college students was 68% for each cohort.

Nearly one third of all graduates (32%) were continuously employed from the fall following graduation to the fall one year later for both 2006 and 2007 graduates. In each class, Asian graduates were least likely to be continuously employed — 16% for the class of 2006 and 19% for the class of 2007. Of all race/ethnic groups, Hispanic graduates were most likely to be continuously employed in both years (37% for the class of 2006 and 40% for the class of 2007), followed by Black graduates (36% for 2006 graduates and 35% for 2007 graduates).

Median earnings for high school graduates continuously employed from the fall following graduation through the fall one year later varied by students' enrollment status. Predictably, high school graduates who never enrolled in postsecondary education earned more during each quarter than other students. Continuously employed graduates who enrolled intermittently in postsecondary education earned less each quarter than those who never enrolled, but more than students who were continuously enrolled. Median earnings of 2006 high school graduates one year after graduation were higher for all groups when compared to 2007 graduates, probably due to the economic down turn in the fall of 2008.

Postsecondary Outcomes Two Years after Graduating High School

Postsecondary information on the class of 2006 extended for two years following high school graduation. By the end of the fall of 2008, 72% of these graduates had enrolled for at least one semester of postsecondary education. At this time, half of the graduates had enrolled in four semesters and 41% had been continuously enrolled from the fall following graduation.

Only 25% of 2006 graduates were continuously employed for each quarter following high school graduation through the fall of 2008. Those who had never enrolled in postsecondary education consistently earned more per quarter than their counterparts. Graduates enrolled continuously in postsecondary education over this time earned roughly half compared to those who never enrolled by the fall of 2008.

Postsecondary Education Completion by the Fall of 2008

By the end of the fall of 2008, only 46 high school graduates from the class of 2006 and 15 graduates from the class of 2007 had received a certificate or diploma from a postsecondary institution. Most postsecondary education completers received their degrees from 2-year institutions. In future reports as the numbers of postsecondary degree receivers rise, more detailed information on postsecondary education completers will be included.

Summary of Findings

Most initial enrollment and employment patterns for 2008 graduates were very similar to those reported for 2007 graduates. The following findings noted in last year's report also apply to 2008 graduates.

- Most Central Texas graduates attending postsecondary education enrolled at 4-year institutions.
- Initial postsecondary enrollment rates varied widely by district, as did the type and location of the postsecondary institutions in which graduates enrolled.
- Initial enrollment rates in 4-year postsecondary education and the location of those institutions varied widely by graduates' background and characteristics, with the notable exception of gender.
- Initial enrollment rates for 2-year postsecondary education exhibited much less variation than 4-year postsecondary enrollments.
- Initial employment rates for graduates varied widely by district and most student background characteristics and were inversely related to 4-year postsecondary enrollment rates.
- Over eight of every ten graduates were located in either postsecondary education or employment through this analysis.
- A lower share of surveyed graduates actually enrolled in postsecondary education than planned to, while a higher share was working.

Additional analyses conducted on 2008 graduates revealed that 27% of these graduates attended college in the Austin MSA (18% at ACC) and that most of their employment occurred in the retail trade (18%) or food service (12%) industries.

Longer-term outcomes. Analysis of longitudinal postsecondary education and employment outcomes through the fall of 2008 revealed the following patterns for 2006 and 2007 graduates.

- One-year patterns of both enrollment and employment were generally similar for both 2006 and 2007 graduates.
- The highest rates of enrollment in postsecondary education occurred in the fall immediately following graduation for both 2006 and 2007 graduates. While the share of enrolled students declined slightly in each subsequent time period, the largest declines occurred between any given spring semester and the following fall semester.
- Of those graduates that did enroll during the first year after high school graduation, over 80% persisted and enrolled again the following fall. Graduates attending 4-year colleges/universities exhibited persistence rates of over 90%, while the persistence rate for 2-year college students was 68% for each cohort.
- The employment and earnings of recent high school graduates appears to have been impacted by the economic downturn that began in the fall of 2008. Initial postsecondary employment rates for the class of 2008 were lower than for their counterparts from previous years. Median earnings from continuously employed 2007 graduates were lower in the fall of 2008 than for continuously employed 2006 graduates one year following graduation.

Chapter I. Introduction

The Central Texas Student Futures Project is a research partnership of the Ray Marshall Center and ten Central Texas independent school districts (ISDs).¹ The project follows the progress of Central Texas high school graduates as they make the critical transition from high school to postsecondary education and the labor market. This effort grew out of concerns among key education, business, workforce development and community stakeholders that the region's economy and its residents would not prosper in the near- and longer-term unless more of its graduates obtained higher levels of enrollment in postsecondary education and better labor market outcomes.²

The purpose of the Student Futures Project is two-fold:

- To provide Central Texas school districts, postsecondary education institutions and employers with comprehensive, longitudinal research on what local high school students do after high school and how a variety of educational, personal and financial factors relate to their success in higher education and the workforce; and
- To foster best practices through workshops, seminars and applied research, assisting the region's ISDs, Education Service Center and postsecondary institutions to increase the number of Central Texas youth who obtain 2-year and 4-year postsecondary education and workforce credentials (e.g., occupational certificates).

To determine what students plan to do after high school and the key influences on those outcomes, the Student Futures Project surveys seniors in the spring prior to graduation. Graduates' actual postsecondary education and work outcomes are computed annually (for at least four years beyond graduation) using postsecondary enrollment and employment records. Data from high school records and the senior survey are linked to the outcome records to measure and analyze graduates' outcomes over time. Findings are shared annually with local educators, business and community leaders, and policymakers committed to improving education and supporting local initiatives.

¹ The Central Texas Student Futures Project was previously named the Central Texas High School Graduate Data Center.

² These concerns are described further in the 2006 *Beyond the Numbers* report by King, Schexnayder and Gourgey.

Organization of this Report

This report presents postsecondary enrollment and employment outcomes for 2006, 2007 and 2008 Central Texas high school graduates through December 2008.³ Chapter II presents initial postsecondary education enrollment rates and employment and earnings for 2008 graduates in ten independent school districts (ISDs). Chapter III compares initial outcomes for all three cohorts and examines longitudinal enrollment and employment information for 2006 graduates in four ISDs and 2007 graduates in eight ISDs. The technical appendix details the sources and methods used to construct the dataset used in this report.

Three previously published reports described and analyzed the initial outcomes for the classes of 2006 and 2007 as well as the outcomes one year later for the class of 2006.

Research Questions

This report addresses the following research questions for 2008 graduates:

1. What share of high school graduates enrolled in postsecondary education in the fall after graduation?
2. What share of graduates was employed in the fall quarter after graduation?
3. What share of graduates was both enrolled in postsecondary education and employed in the fall quarter after graduation?

This report also addresses the following research questions for 2006 and 2007 graduates:

1. What share of high school graduates was participating in postsecondary education from the fall following graduation through the fall of 2008?
2. What share of graduates was employed following graduation through the fall of 2008?
3. What was the earnings trend for graduates over that time period?

This report is the first of several annual outcomes reports on 2008 graduates and intermediate reports on 2006 and 2007 graduates.⁴ By design, the research questions addressed for each graduating class become more complex as additional years of postsecondary education and employment data become available.

³ Graduates include any student who graduated during the entire school year in each cohort of graduates.

⁴ A report to be released in 2010 will detail the factors associated with initial postsecondary outcomes for the class of 2008.

Research Methods

To answer this year's research questions, researchers used descriptive statistics to measure initial outcomes for 2008 high school graduates through December 2008 as well as to measure long-term outcomes for the classes of 2006 and 2007. The dataset used to analyze these outcomes is described briefly below and discussed in more detail in Appendix A.

Initial postsecondary enrollment and employment outcomes were analyzed by computing the total number and shares of all graduates in participating school districts who enrolled in postsecondary education in Texas and other states, were employed in Texas, or did both in the fall after high school graduation.⁵ Chapter II summarizes all enrollment and employment rates by major demographic group and district for the class of 2008. Chapter III compares initial outcomes for 2006, 2007 and 2008 graduates and includes a breakdown of district and high school year-to-year changes. High school graduate employment and enrollment activities are also compared for each class. Enrollment and employment outcomes for the classes of 2006 and 2007 one year following high school graduation are examined, including a discussion of college enrollment persistence and continuous employment.

Construction and Description of the Research Dataset

Data Sources: Table 1 identifies the data sources used to construct the research dataset described in this report and briefly describes each source. Further information about each data source is included in Appendix A.

⁵ The data source used to measure employment only captures employment covered by the federal/state unemployment insurance (UI) program within the state of Texas for those graduates who reported their Social Security numbers to their high schools.

Table 1. Sources and Time Periods of Data Used to Construct the Research Dataset

Type of Data	Data Source	Description
Historical High School Records	All participating ISDs	Demographic and program information for all 2006, 2007 and 2008 graduates
Senior Surveys	Austin ISD Senior Exit Survey	Results from Austin ISD survey for all 2008 graduates who took the survey
	Student Futures Project Senior Survey	Survey data for all 2008 graduates in the other 9 districts who both completed the senior survey and gave consent to use survey data in the longitudinal analysis
Postsecondary Education Enrollment	National Student Clearinghouse	Directory information for 2006, 2007 and 2008 graduates enrolled in postsecondary education up to and including the fall of 2008 at colleges throughout the U.S.
	University of Texas	Directory information for 2006, 2007 and 2008 students enrolled from the fall of 2006 through the fall of 2008 (UT is not included in NSC database)
Employment and Earnings	Texas Workforce Commission	Unemployment insurance quarterly wage records for employment within Texas from the 4 th quarter of 2006 through the 4 th quarter of 2008

Research Datasets: Each research dataset is based on high school graduates in participating ISDs for each cohort of graduates. The dataset for 2006 includes graduates from Austin, Manor, Pflugerville and Round Rock. For 2007 graduates, data from four additional ISDs — Del Valle, Eanes, Leander and San Marcos Consolidated — are also available. In 2008, the research dataset includes graduates from ten ISDs — the eight previously mentioned plus Bastrop and Hays Consolidated ISDs. Rates of initial postsecondary education enrollment and employment reported in Chapter II were computed for all 2008 high school graduates (N=11,586), while the initial and longer-term outcomes described in Chapter III were computed for all 2006 graduates (N=6,687) and all 2007 graduates (N=9,410).

Characteristics of Graduates: Table 2 presents the characteristics of all graduates participating in the Central Texas Student Futures Project. Note that graduates from only four districts are included in the class of 2006, while graduates from eight districts are included in the class of 2007, and graduates from ten districts comprise the class of 2008. While subgroup compositions of each graduating class appear similar, differences in outcomes across graduating classes are largely attributable to the inclusion of new districts. Roughly equal shares of male and female graduates were represented in each year, and between one-fifth and one-fourth of the graduates lived in low-income families. Additionally, roughly one in ten graduates were classified as Special Education for any given graduating class. The district composition of each class has changed substantially since additional districts joined the Central Texas Student Futures Project. For the graduating class of 2006, Austin made up more than one-half of the student population, with Round Rock comprising nearly a third. For the graduating class of 2008, the share of each district more closely reflected the share of graduates in the Central Texas region overall. Districts that participated in both 2007 and 2008 experienced an overall growth of 11% in their total number of graduates; Del Valle ISD experienced the largest percentage growth (41%) between the two years, followed by Manor ISD (17%). San Marcos was the only district to experience a drop in the number of graduates from 2007 to 2008 (-4%).

Table 2. Characteristics of 2006, 2007 and 2008 Central Texas Graduates

	Class of 2006	Class of 2007	Class of 2008
Totals	6,867	9,410	11,586
Ethnicity			
Asian	6%	6%	5%
Black	12%	11%	11%
Hispanic	30%	29%	32%
White	51%	52%	52%
Gender			
Female	51%	48%	50%
Male	49%	50%	50%
Family Income Status			
Low-income	25%	21%	24%
Not Low-income	75%	73%	73%
Unknown		6%	4%
Special Education Status			
Special Education	10%	9%	10%
Not Special Education	90%	85%	87%
Unknown		6%	4%
District			
Austin	52%	38%	34%
Bastrop			4%
Del Valle		3%	4%
Eanes		6%	5%
Hays			6%
Leander		13%	12%
Manor	2%	2%	2%
Pflugerville	14%	11%	10%
Round Rock	31%	23%	21%
San Marcos		5%	4%

Source: Student Futures Project calculations.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Data Limitations and Interpretations

Data issues affecting this analysis include the absence of some Texas postsecondary institutions from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) database,⁶ and an inability to measure out-of-state employment or employment not covered by the Texas Workforce Commission's UI wage records.⁷ Enrollment information obtained directly from the University of Texas at Austin was used to mitigate the largest gap in the NSC database. Furthermore, demographic characteristics were not reported for some 2007 and 2008 graduates in the PEIMS database. Tables report the share of graduates with unknown income status and special education status.

⁶ A complete list of Texas colleges and universities not participating in the NSC database is provided in Appendix A.

⁷ In Texas, more than 95% of wage and salary employment is covered by unemployment insurance. Gaps in coverage exist for those who are self-employed, including independent contractors, as well as employees of religious organizations, railroads, small farms and the military (Stevens, 2002).

Chapter II. Class of 2008 Initial Postsecondary Outcomes

This chapter presents initial education and employment outcomes in the fall following graduation for all 2008 Central Texas graduates, both overall and for key subgroups. To answer the first three research questions listed in Chapter II, this chapter examines which graduates in the ten participating school districts (N =11,586) were enrolled in postsecondary education, which were working, and which were both enrolled in postsecondary education and working. Planned enrollments for those students who completed a senior survey prior to graduation (N=4,734) also were compared to their actual enrollments in the fall following graduation. This is the first of four annual reports that will follow this cohort of graduates.

Initial Postsecondary Enrollment

Enrollment outcomes in the fall of 2008 are reported for 2008 graduates from Austin, Bastrop, Del Valle, Eanes, Hays Consolidated, Leander, Manor, Pflugerville, Round Rock and San Marcos Consolidated ISDs.⁸ Overall, 61% of the 11,586 graduates were enrolled in postsecondary education in the fall of 2008.

As shown in Table 3, 39% of Central Texas 2008 graduates enrolled in 4-year colleges and universities in the fall following their high school graduation, while 22% enrolled in 2-year colleges.⁹ The overwhelming majority of Central Texas graduates who enrolled in postsecondary institutions did so within the state of Texas.

By comparison, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), which only reports in-state outcomes, found that 53% of these graduates enrolled in Texas colleges during this period.¹⁰ Their records indicate 22% of all Texas graduates enrolled in 4-year schools, while 27% enrolled in 2-year colleges, and a further 4% were enrolled in independent universities or colleges.¹¹ The United States as a whole had a 69% total enrollment rate, with roughly 40% enrolled in 4-year schools, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2009).¹²

⁸ Initial enrollment is defined as any graduate enrolled in a postsecondary institution in the fall of 2008.

⁹ 2-year colleges include technical schools and some proprietary schools.

¹⁰ See Appendix A for a comparison of the postsecondary enrollment rates in this report to those published by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB, 2009).

¹¹ The full report can be found at: <http://www.txhighereddata.org/Interactive/HSCollLink.cfm>. Note that information on whether independent colleges are 2-year or 4-year schools was not available.

¹² This report is based on data for 2008 graduates and reflects enrollment as of October 2008.

Table 3. Initial Postsecondary Enrollment for 2008 Graduates

	Number	Percent
Overall	7,078	61%
Type of Institution		
2-Year	2,563	22%
4-Year	4,515	39%
Location of Institution		
Out-of-State	994	8.6%
In-State	6,084	52.5%

Source: Student Futures Project calculations.

Enrollment by College

Table 4 shows the ten postsecondary enrollment institutions at which 2008 Central Texas high school graduates enrolled most often.¹³ In the fall following graduation, 18% of all Central Texas 2008 graduates enrolled in Austin Community College (ACC), which represents 30% of those enrolled in postsecondary education. For the 2008-2009 school year, graduating in the top ten percent of the class guaranteed automatic entry into any public university in the state of Texas, including the state’s two flagship public universities, the University of Texas at Austin (UT), and Texas A&M (A&M).¹⁴ In the fall of 2008, 6% of students enrolled at UT and 3% enrolled at A&M.

Table 4. Ten Most Common Postsecondary Enrollment Institutions for the Class of 2008

	Number	Percent
Total	7,078	61%
Colleges/Universities		
Austin Community College	2,115	18%
University of Texas at Austin	657	6%
Texas State University - San Marcos	548	5%
University of Texas - San Antonio	523	5%
Texas A&M University	324	3%
Texas Tech University	227	2%
Blinn College	221	2%
University of North Texas	123	1%
Baylor University	113	1%
St. Edwards University	108	1%
Other	2,119	18%

Source: Student Futures Project calculations.

¹³ Note that in this and subsequent charts and figures rounding occasionally means that totals do not appear to sum correctly.

¹⁴ The full text of Texas House Bill 588 can be found at: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/admissions/research/ HB588Law.html>

Enrollment by Demographic Characteristics

Table 5 provides information on the initial postsecondary educational enrollment status of 2008 high school graduates by demographic and other characteristics. Asian and White graduates enrolled in postsecondary education at higher rates (83% and 71%, respectively) than graduates of other racial/ethnic groups, while Hispanic graduates had the lowest overall postsecondary enrollment rate (44%) of any racial/ethnic group. Low-income graduates also enrolled in postsecondary education at far lower rates (39%) than graduates from higher-income families (70%). Finally, Special Education graduates enrolled at much lower rates (26%) than other graduates (66%).

The table also shows both the type and location of postsecondary institutions attended by different subgroups. Asian and White graduates enrolled in 4-year colleges and universities at higher rates (63% and 49%, respectively) than graduates of other racial/ethnic groups. A lower share of low-income and Special Education graduates (19% and 6%, respectively) enrolled in 4-year colleges and universities than graduates who were not low-income (47%) or not classified as Special Education (44%). In addition, lower shares of these same groups enrolled in out-of-state institutions. The rates of graduates enrolled in 2-year schools were far more similar, ranging from 20% to 23% for all demographic groups.

Table 5. Initial Postsecondary Enrollment Rates of 2008 Graduates by Selected Characteristics and Type/Location of Institution

	Number of Graduates	Percent Enrolled	Type of Institution		Location of Institution	
			4-Year	2-Year	In-State	Out-of-State
Overall	11,586	61%	39%	22%	52.5%	8.6%
Ethnicity						
Asian	587	83%	63%	20%	74%	9%
Black	1,284	55%	33%	22%	48%	7%
Hispanic	3,685	44%	22%	23%	41%	3%
White	5,974	71%	49%	22%	59%	12%
Gender						
Female	5,786	65%	42%	23%	56%	10%
Male	5,785	57%	36%	22%	50%	8%
Family Income Status						
Low-income	2,727	39%	19%	20%	37%	3%
Not Low-income	8,405	70%	47%	23%	59%	11%
Unknown	454	33%	12%	21%	29%	4%
Special Education Status						
Special Education	1,110	26%	6%	20%	24%	2%
Not Special Education	10,022	66%	44%	22%	57%	9%
Unknown	454	33%	12%	21%	29%	4%

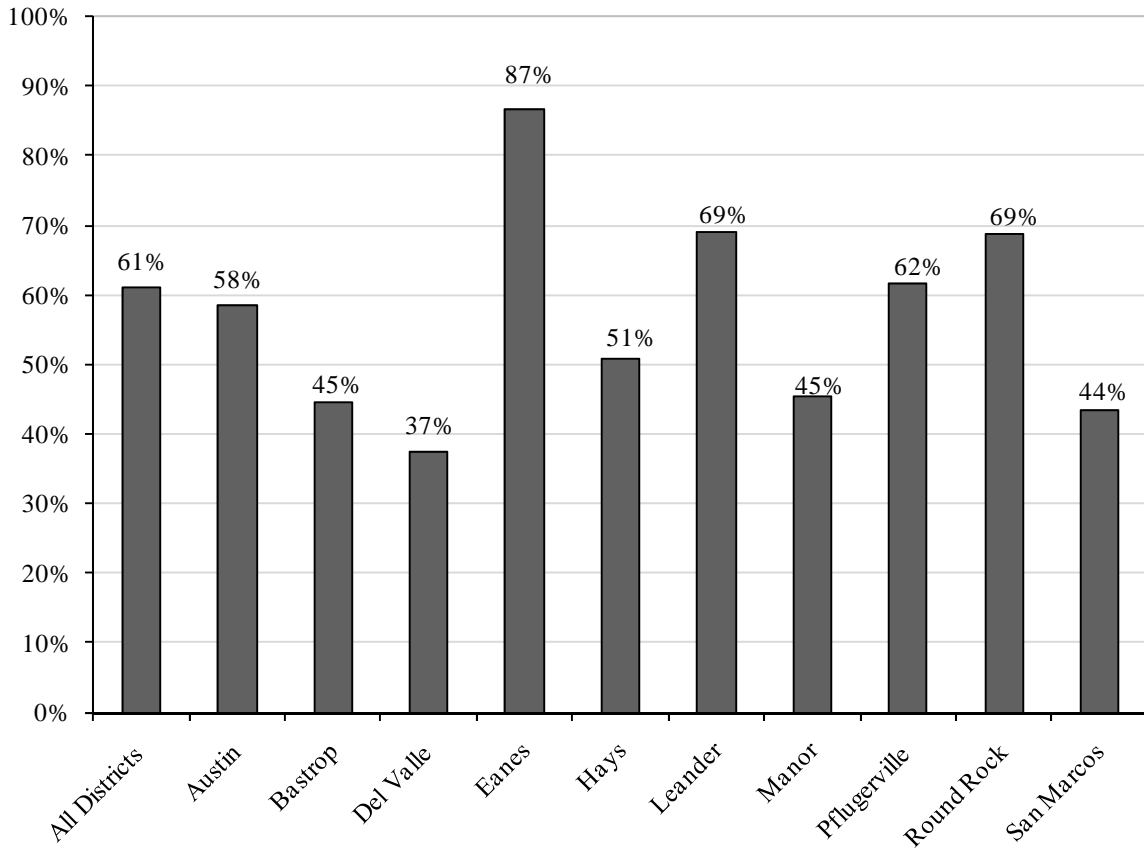
Source: Student Futures Project calculations.

Enrollment by District

As can be seen in Figure 1, postsecondary enrollment rates varied widely for 2008 graduates from individual districts. Enrollment percentages ranged from a high of 87% for Eanes ISD graduates to a low of 37% for graduates from Del Valle ISD.¹⁵

¹⁵ The enrollment rate for Del Valle ISD differs from the rate for Del Valle High School reported in Figure 6 due to the inclusion of an alternative high school in the district rate.

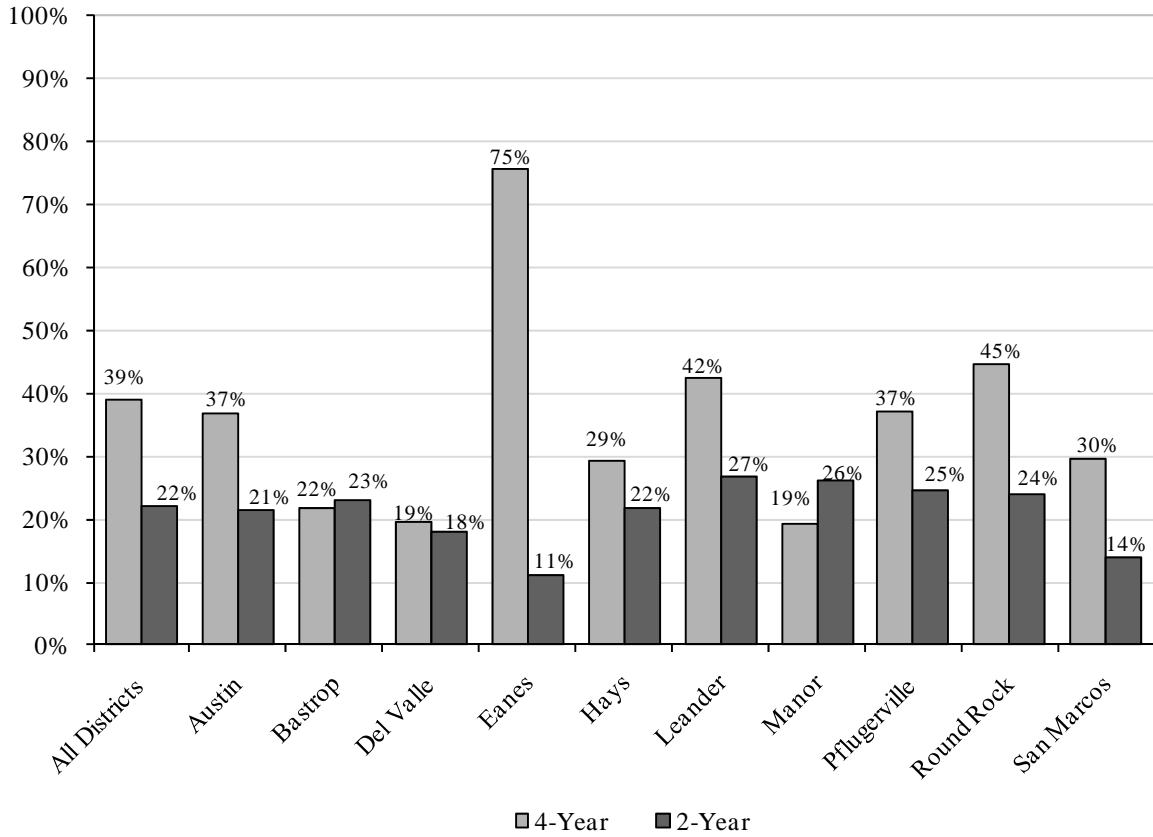
Figure 1. Percent of 2008 Graduates Enrolled in Postsecondary Education in Fall of 2008, by District



Note: District totals include alternative schools.

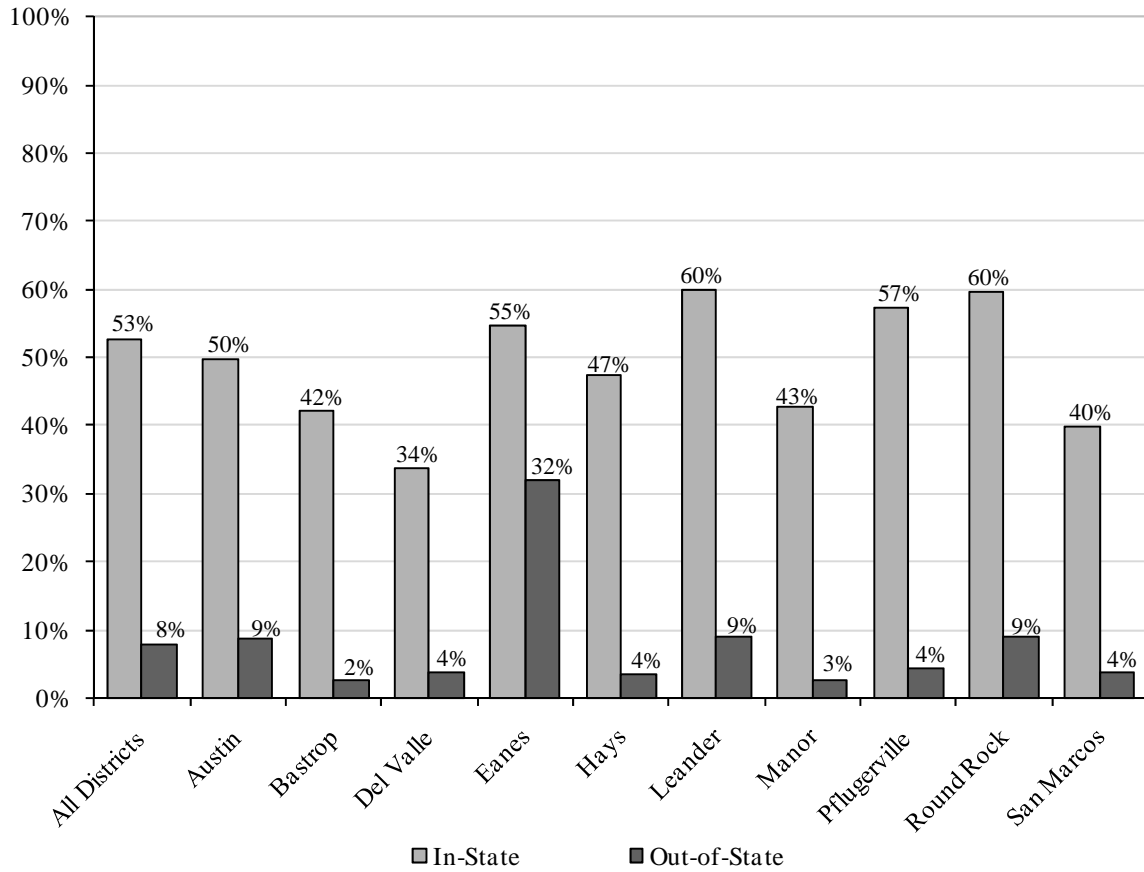
Additionally, the type of institution in which graduates initially enrolled varied widely by district. Figure 2 provides the breakdown of 4-year and 2-year enrollment by district. A larger share of graduates from most districts attended 4-year colleges and universities than 2-year schools, while a higher share of Bastrop and Manor graduates enrolled in 2-year colleges. Leander ISD had the highest percentage of graduates enrolled at 2-year colleges (27%), while Eanes ISD had the smallest percent of graduates attending 2-year colleges (11%).

Figure 2. Percent of 2008 Graduates Enrolled in 4-Year and 2-Year Institutions, by District



Over half of all Central Texas graduates (53%) attended in-state institutions during the fall after their high school graduation. Figure 3 details the variation between in-state and out-of-state enrollment by district. Across all districts, Eanes ISD sent the largest percentage of its graduates to out-of-state institutions (32%), while Leander and Round Rock ISDs had the largest share of graduates attending in-state institutions (60%).

Figure 3. Percent of 2008 Graduates Enrolled in In-State and Out-of-State Institutions, by District



High School and Initial Postsecondary Employment in Texas

High School Employment

Employment data were first examined to determine the share of graduates who had worked while in high school.¹⁶ Employment while in high school was only measured during the fourth quarter (October through December) and the first quarter (January through March) of graduates' junior and senior years so as to exclude summer employment from consideration.¹⁷ Table 6 summarizes employment and earnings data for all 2008 graduates during their junior and senior years. While up to 30% of graduates worked in UI-covered employment in Texas during their junior year, almost half of graduates worked during their

¹⁶ Students with missing SSNs could not be identified in the UI earnings database.

¹⁷ Most high school graduates work in the summer after graduation; thus this report does not focus on this employment rate.

senior year. During each quarter of their junior year, the median earnings of those employed ranged from \$835 to \$919. During their senior year, student median earnings were above \$1,150 in both quarters. Hence, not only were more students employed during their senior year, the median wages one year later of those employed increased by roughly \$200 per quarter.

Table 6. Employment Prior to Graduation for 2008 Graduates

	Number Employed	Percent of Graduates	Median Earnings
Junior Year Employment			
Fall of 2006	3,227	28%	\$835
Spring of 2007	3,445	30%	\$919
Senior Year Employment			
Fall of 2007	5,305	46%	\$1,169
Spring of 2008	5,535	48%	\$1,230

Source: Student Futures Project calculations.

Postsecondary Employment

Texas employment outcomes for high school graduates in the fourth quarter of 2008 were examined for the 11,586 graduates in the ten participating school districts. Overall, 44% of graduates were found employed in the state of Texas in the fall quarter following graduation. Nearly half of all employed graduates, or 21% overall, were only employed and not enrolled. Texas employment data were not available, or “unknown,” for 15% of the sample (1,802 graduates) due either to missing Social Security numbers (7%) or to being enrolled out-of-state (8%) where they also may have been working. Table 7 shows employment rates for selected demographic groups.

Table 7. Initial Texas Employment Outcomes for All 2008 Graduates, Fall of 2008

	Total Graduates	Percent Employed	Only Employed	Unknown
Totals	11,586	44%	21%	15%
Ethnicity				
Asian	587	24%	5%	25%
Black	1,284	48%	25%	10%
Hispanic	3,685	50%	28%	18%
White	5,974	42%	17%	14%
Gender				
Female	5,786	46%	19%	16%
Male	5,785	43%	22%	15%
Family Income Status				
Low-income	2,727	49%	31%	18%
Not Low-income	8,405	42%	17%	15%
Unknown	454	52%	36%	11%
Special Education Status				
Special Education	1,110	51%	38%	8%
Not Special Education	10,022	43%	18%	17%
Unknown	454	52%	36%	11%
District				
Austin	3,903	42%	20%	20%
Bastrop	484	47%	29%	7%
Del Valle	427	52%	32%	14%
Eanes	624	18%	5%	32%
Hays	650	55%	28%	8%
Leander	1,346	50%	19%	10%
Manor	192	48%	27%	14%
Pflugerville	1,159	50%	23%	7%
Round Rock	2,390	42%	17%	16%
San Marcos	411	60%	37%	7%

Source : Student Futures Project calculations.

The percentages shown in the table are largely consistent with researchers' expectations and the patterns of postsecondary employment seen in previous years. In the fall quarter after leaving high school, Texas employment rates were higher for Hispanic and Black graduates (50% and 48%, respectively) and those from low-income families (49%). Asian graduates were employed at the lowest rates across all racial/ethnic groups (24%). Employment rates for male and female graduates were comparable.

Similar patterns emerged when examining the share of graduates who were only employed (employed and not enrolled in postsecondary education). More than a third of graduates who had been classified as Special Education in high school were only employed in the fall following graduation. Around a quarter of Black and Hispanic graduates were only employed in the fall following graduation.

Employment rates generally were higher for graduates from districts and schools with lower overall rates of postsecondary education enrollment. After high school, graduates often work if they are not going to school while some enrolled students also work.

Industry of Employment

Most Central Texas high school graduates were employed in retail trade (18%) or in the accommodation and food services (12%) industries as shown in Table 8. The remainder of employed graduates worked in many different industries. Employed graduates' median earnings in the final quarter of the fall of 2008 were \$1,911. Employed graduates who were not enrolled in postsecondary education had median wages of \$2,766 in that same period, while enrolled graduates' earnings were \$1,471.

Table 8. Initial Employment for 2008 Graduates by Industry, Fall of 2008

	Number Employed	Percent of Total Graduates
Overall	5,139	44%
Employment Industry		
Retail Trade	2,066	18%
Accommodation and Food Services	1,362	12%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	288	2%
Health Care and Social Assistance	234	2%
Other Services	217	2%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	146	1%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	136	1%
Educational Services	131	1%
Construction	93	1%
Information	91	1%
Other Industries	375	3%

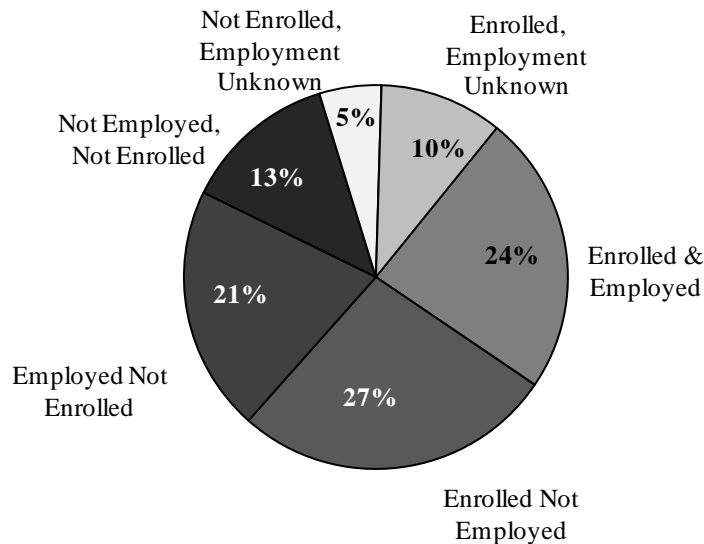
Source: Student Futures Project calculations.

Employment and Enrollment Activities

The third research question posed by the Student Futures Project asked which Central Texas 2008 graduates were both employed and enrolled in postsecondary education in the fall after high school. Over eight in ten graduates (82%) were either in postsecondary education, employment or both. The initial post-high school outcomes for all 2008 graduates can be seen in Figure 4. Across all districts, 24% of graduates were both enrolled and employed within the state of Texas, while a nearly equal share (27%) were enrolled but not employed. Twenty-one percent of graduates were employed within the state of Texas but not enrolled in postsecondary education, and 13% were neither employed nor enrolled in postsecondary education. Of the 15% of graduates for whom employment was unknown, 10% were enrolled in postsecondary institutions included in the research dataset.

Several other possible postsecondary outcomes of interest could not be measured for this analysis. These include: enrollment in postsecondary institutions not included in the NSC database, out-of-state employment, employment not covered by the Texas UI program, and enlistment in the military.¹⁸

Figure 4. Initial Postsecondary Education and Employment Outcomes for 2008 Graduates

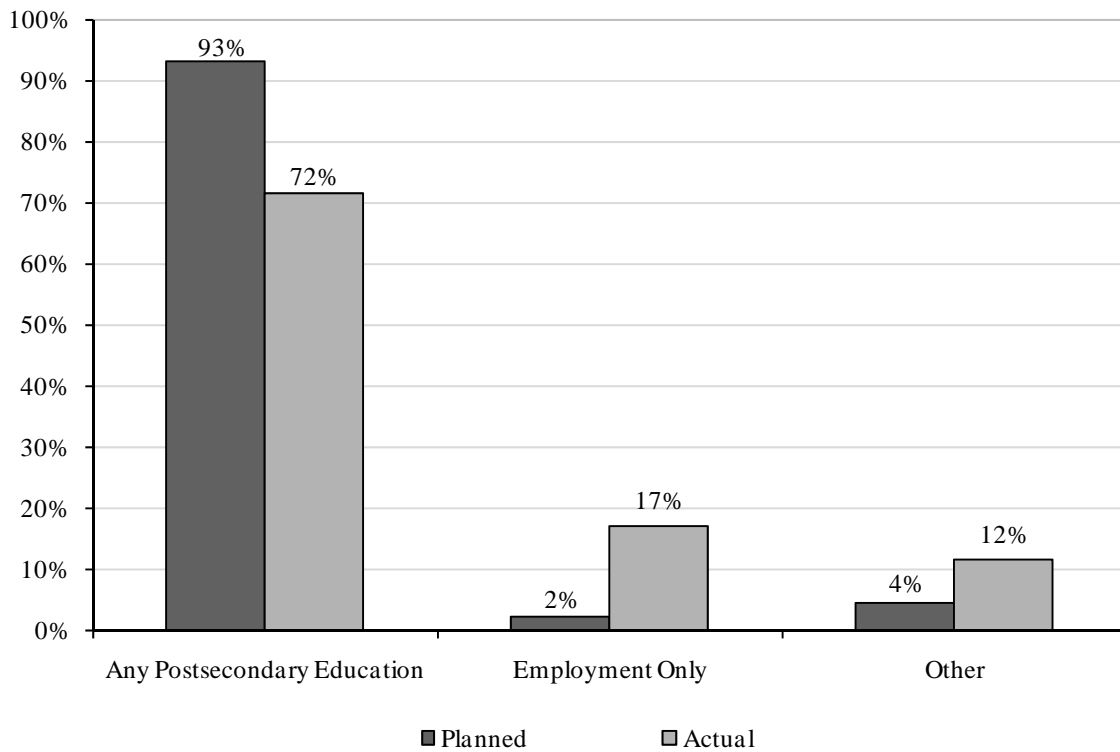


¹⁸ These non-coverage problems may improve in the future.

Post-High School Plans Compared to Actual Education and Employment

Prior to high school graduation, seniors in Central Texas took an exit survey that asked, among other questions, each student's plans for enrolling in postsecondary education, entering the workforce, both, or some other plan. For those graduates who both took this survey and whose outcomes could be found in either postsecondary employment or enrollment (N= 4,734 students) the comparison between their planned and actual outcomes are shown in Figure 5. While 93% of these students indicated they planned on enrolling in postsecondary education within a year of their high school graduation, only 72% had actually done so by the fall of 2008. While only 2% of students indicated on their survey that they intended to work either full- or part- time while not enrolling, by the fall of 2008, 17% of these students were actually employed and not enrolled. A further 12% of surveyed graduates were found in neither education nor employment records.

Figure 5. Planned versus Actual Post-High School Education and Employment in Fall 2008 for Surveyed Graduates (N=4,734)



Chapter III. Postsecondary Enrollment and Employment Outcomes Over Time

This chapter discusses postsecondary enrollment and employment outcomes for 2006, 2007 and 2008 Central Texas graduates. Graduate initial outcomes are compared across classes and include a breakdown of district and high school year-to-year changes. High school graduate employment and enrollment activities are compared between each class. Enrollment and employment outcomes for the classes of 2006 and 2007 one year following high school graduation are examined, including a discussion of college enrollment persistence and continuous employment. Finally, graduates’ outcomes through the fall 2008 for the class of 2006 are followed.

Initial Postsecondary Outcomes by Class

As discussed in Chapter II, the paths students take in the fall following graduation are defined as their initial postsecondary outcomes for this analysis. Each class analyzed in the Student Futures Project differed in total number of graduates, its demographic characteristics and the number of participating districts. Due to these differences, caution should be used when comparing the outcomes across each of the graduating classes. Even so, the shares of students who initially enrolled in college, worked or did both were remarkably similar for all three graduating cohorts.

Table 9. Initial Postsecondary Outcomes

Graduating Class	Number of School Districts	Number of Graduates	Initial Enrollment Rates	Initial Rates of Any Employment	Initial Rates of Employed Only
Class of 2006	4	6,867	60%	46%	22%
Class of 2007	8	9,410	62%	47%	22%
Class of 2008	10	11,586	61%	44%	21%

Source: Student Futures Project calculations

Initial Postsecondary Enrollment by District

As mentioned earlier, the district composition of high school graduates participating in the Student Futures Project varied from 2006 through 2008. In order to better demonstrate year-to-year differences, the initial enrollment rates for each graduating class are reported by district in Table 10. In each year, most participating districts experienced a growth in the number of graduates. When postsecondary enrollment rates remain flat over time but a larger number of high school students graduate, the overall number of students enrolling in higher education after graduation increases.

Table 10. Initial Postsecondary Enrollment by District

	Class of 2006		Class of 2007		Class of 2008	
	Number of Graduates	Percent Enrolled	Number of Graduates	Percent Enrolled	Number of Graduates	Percent Enrolled
Overall	6867	60%	9410	62%	11586	61%
District*						
Austin	3604	60%	3594	59%	3903	58%
Bastrop					484	45%
Del Valle			302	31%	427	37%
Eanes			535	84%	624	87%
Hays					650	51%
Leander			1180	66%	1346	69%
Manor	142	38%	164	45%	192	45%
Pflugerville	970	58%	1044	63%	1159	62%
Round Rock	2151	64%	2161	71%	2390	69%
San Marcos			430	35%	411	44%

Note: Percentages for the classes of 2006 and 2007 may differ slightly (within 1%) due to use of updated NSC data when compared to previously published reports.

*District totals include alternative schools.

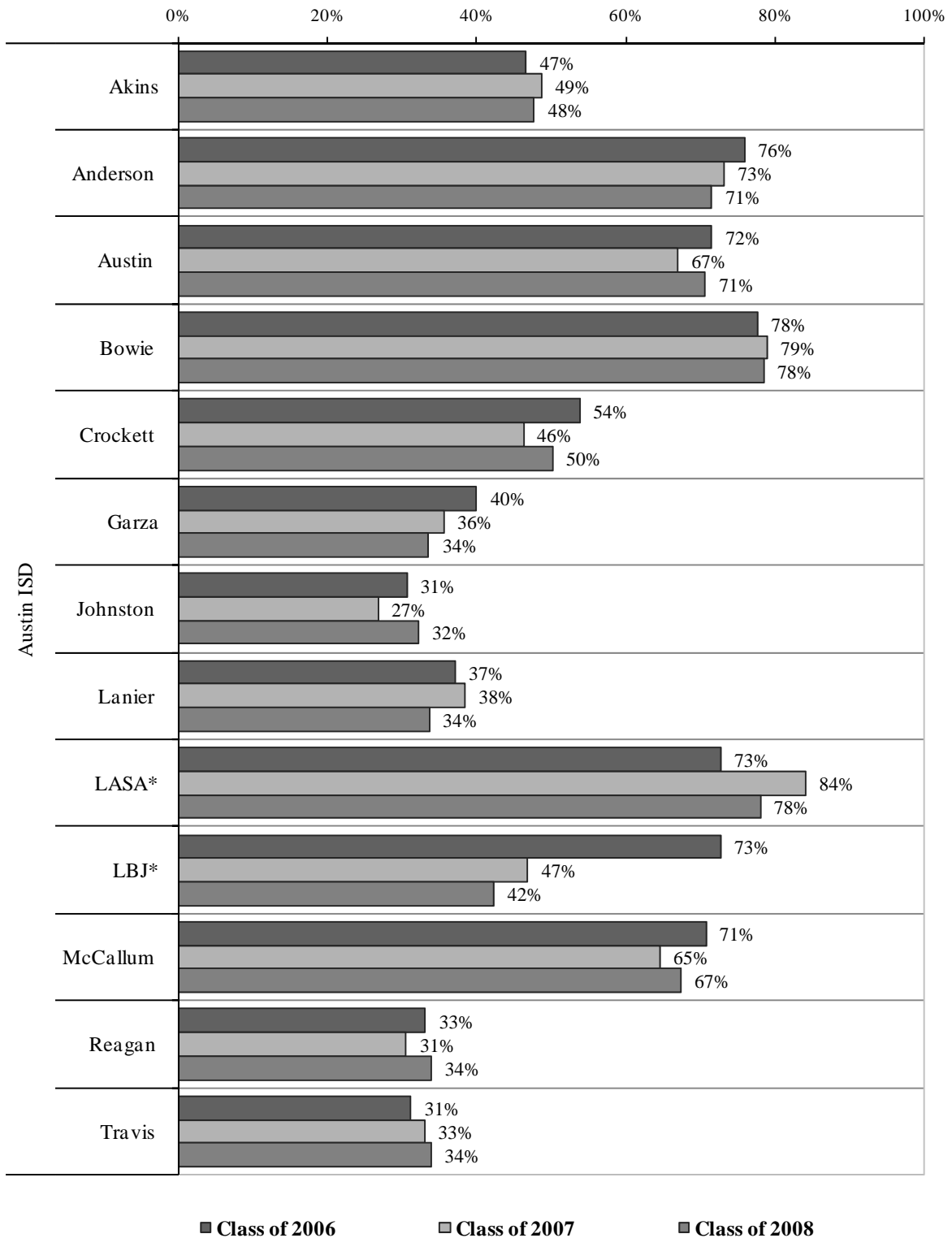
Postsecondary Enrollment by High School

While overall changes in initial outcomes between graduating classes can be influenced by changes in the number of districts involved and associated demographic changes, initial postsecondary outcomes by high school are less likely to vary. Some schools have a long tradition of sending a preponderance of their graduates to postsecondary

education, while others struggle to send a majority. Participation in the Student Futures Project allows examination of the trends of postsecondary enrollment for each school. The number of years of outcome data available for each school is based on the length of its district's involvement in the project as can be seen in Figure 6.

Of those schools whose districts fully participated in the Student Futures Project for more than one year, the two schools with the largest increase in the percentage of initial postsecondary enrollment over any year-to-year time span were Del Valle (10%) and Stony Point (10%) high schools, with Manor High School (8%) coming in a close second. The largest decrease in the percentage of initial postsecondary enrollment over the three-year time span was Garza High School (8%). The largest year-over-year decrease occurred at Crockett High School from the class of 2006 to the class of 2007 (8%).

Figure 6. Panel 1 - Initial Postsecondary Enrollment for the Classes of 2006-2008, by High School



*Prior to 2007, students attending LBJ and LASA were classified as enrolled in Johnson High School.

Figure 6. Panel 2 - Initial Postsecondary Enrollment for the Classes of 2006-2008, by High School

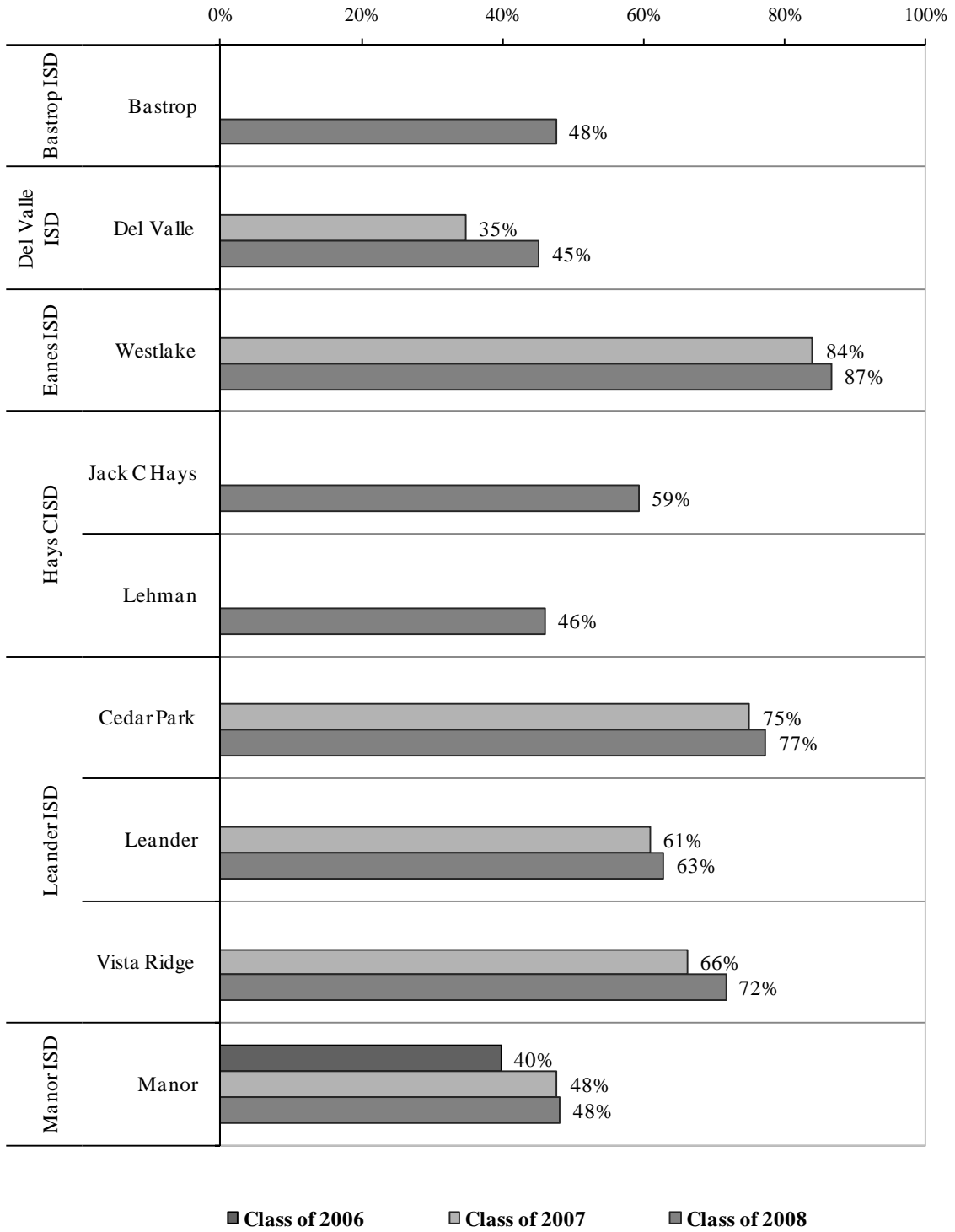
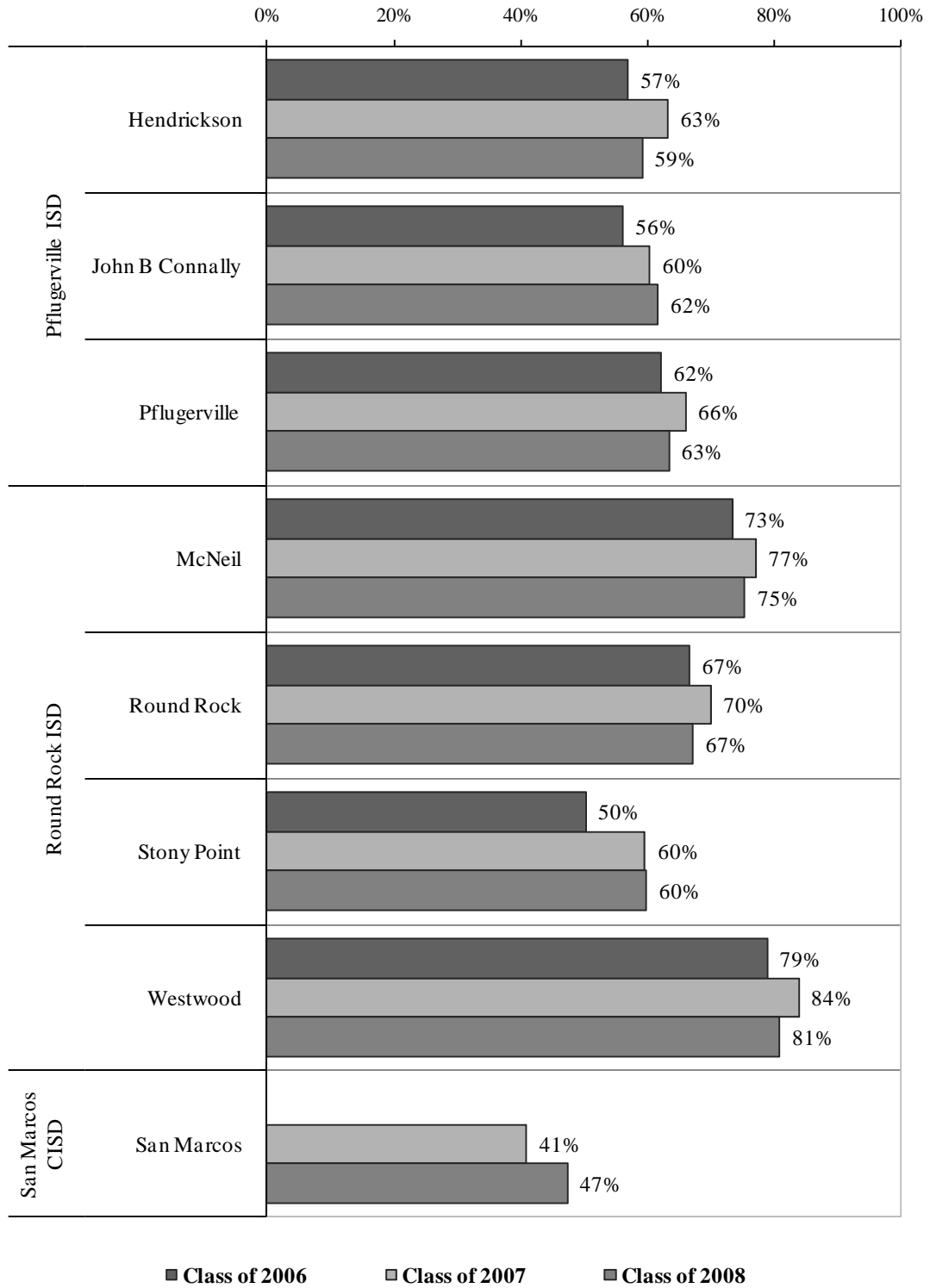


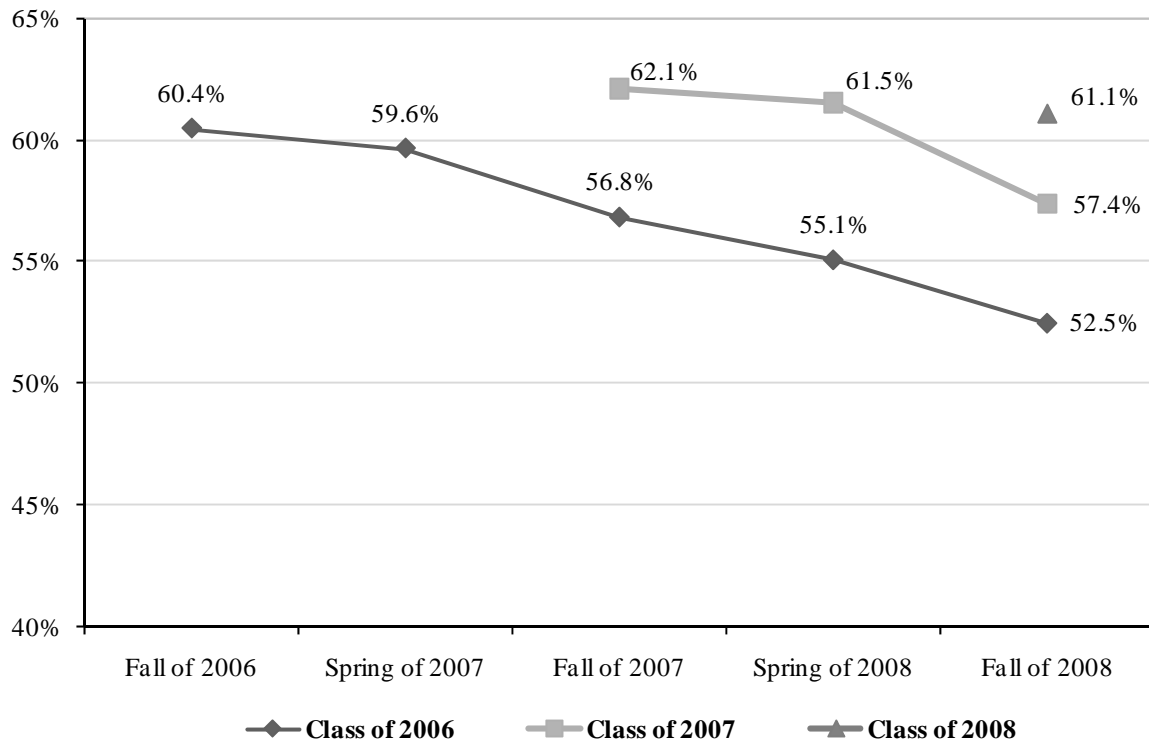
Figure 6. Panel 3 - Initial Postsecondary Enrollment for the Classes of 2006-2008, by High School



Overall Enrollment and Employment Outcomes

Enrollment outcomes were examined from the fall following graduation through the fall of 2008 for 2006, 2007 and 2008 graduates included in the Student Futures Project database. The shares of graduates enrolled in any given period are presented in Figure 7. In each year, the initial enrollment rate remained roughly the same the following spring but then began to decline. For example, while 60% of 2006 graduates were enrolled in postsecondary education in the fall following their graduation, only 53% were still enrolled two years later. Despite significant differences in the district-level composition of each graduating class, the range of initial enrollment rates varied little for the Central Texas region as a whole over the three years, ranging from 60% to 62%. Note that this figure represents the share of students enrolled in postsecondary education during each of the time periods for each graduating class.

Figure 7. Postsecondary Enrollment Outcomes Over Time, by Graduating Class



Note: The number of participating school districts varied for each class.

Employment outcomes were also examined over time for 2006, 2007 and 2008 graduates using Texas quarterly wage data. The share of graduates employed over each of the time periods is shown in Figure 8. Overall, 44-47% of high school graduates were employed in Texas in the fall following their graduation, regardless of the year in which they graduated. In the summer quarter a year after their high school graduation, 62% of graduates in both the class of 2006 and the class of 2007 were employed. The pattern depicted in Figure 8 indicates that the share of graduates who were employed during any quarter increased over the summer months (the 2nd and 3rd quarters) and then declined during the fall and early spring of each year when college students would traditionally return to school.

Figure 8. Overall Post-Graduation Employment Status, by Graduating Class



Note: The number of participating school districts varied for each class.

Postsecondary Outcomes One Year After Graduating from High School

Educational Persistence

Graduates who enroll at a college within a year from graduation and then enroll at a postsecondary institution in the fall one year after graduation are defined as “persisters.” Persistence was measured for the classes of 2006 (Table 11) and 2007 (Table 12). For the class of 2006, a total of 4,451 students (65%) enrolled within a year after high school graduation. This includes the 60% who initially enrolled in the fall after graduation and an additional 5% who enrolled later in the year. Of these, 3,670 (82%) also enrolled in fall of 2007.¹⁹ Similar patterns that occurred between student characteristics and initial postsecondary enrollment are also evident in measuring persistence. Of those who enrolled, a smaller share of Black (73%) and Hispanic (76%) students persisted to enroll in the fall of 2007 than was true for Asian (94%) and White (85%) students. A larger share of non low-income students (72%) enrolled within a year of graduating compared to low-income students (45%) and, of those who did enroll, a larger share of non low-income students (85%) persisted to the fall of 2007 than did low-income students (71%). A similar pattern existed for students who were classified in Special Education while in high school versus those that were not so categorized.

A much higher share of students whose initial postsecondary experience was at a 4-year institution (93%) persisted to the fall of 2007 compared to students whose initial college experience was at a 2-year institution (68%).

¹⁹ This persistence rate is somewhat lower than that reported previously due to use of updated NSC data, which resulted in an increase in the number of students found enrolled within a year from graduating high school.

Table 11. Class of 2006 Persistence One Year Out

	Enrolled Within a Year of Graduating		Persisted to Fall of 2007	
	Number Enrolled	Percent of Graduates	Number Persisted	Percent of Enrolled
Overall	4,451	65%	3,670	82%
Ethnicity				
Asian	327	80%	306	94%
Black	513	61%	373	73%
Hispanic	1,017	49%	777	76%
White	2,581	74%	2,202	85%
Gender				
Female	2,341	67%	1,982	85%
Male	2,110	62%	1,688	80%
Family Income Status				
Low-income	784	45%	559	71%
Not Low-income	3,667	72%	3,111	85%
Special Education Status				
Special Education	254	36%	161	63%
Not Special Education	4,197	68%	3,509	84%
District				
Austin	2,307	64%	1,892	82%
Manor	62	44%	41	66%
Pflugerville	610	63%	481	79%
Round Rock	1,472	68%	1,256	85%
Initial Enrollment Status				
2-Year Institution	1,874		1,277	68%
4-Year Institution	2,577		2,393	93%
Initial Enrollment Location				
In-State	3,975		3,242	82%
Out-of-State	476		428	90%

Source: Student Future Calculations

Persistence rates for the class of 2007 were quite similar to those observed for the class of 2006. The subgroups with a smaller share of students enrolled in postsecondary education within a year of graduating from high school for the class of 2006 also had similar outcomes for the class of 2007. The district with the largest share of students found enrolled

within a year from graduation was Eanes (87%) and, of these, a larger share was also found to have persisted through the fall of 2008 (92%).

Table 12. Class of 2007 Persistence One Year Out

	Enrolled Within a Year of Graduating		Persisted to Fall of 2008	
	Number Enrolled	Percent of Graduates	Number Persisted	Percent of Enrolled
Overall	6,313	67%	5,117	81%
Ethnicity				
Asian	456	84%	421	92%
Black	674	65%	458	68%
Hispanic	1,360	50%	1,004	74%
White	3,739	76%	3,173	85%
Gender				
Female	3,212	71%	2,656	83%
Male	3,043	65%	2,418	79%
Family Income Status				
Low-income	915	46%	624	68%
Not Low-income	5,205	76%	4,363	84%
Special Education Status				
Special Education	302	34%	180	60%
Not Special Education	5,818	73%	4,807	83%
District				
Austin	2,298	64%	1,824	79%
Del Valle	109	36%	77	71%
Eanes	465	87%	428	92%
Leander	835	71%	672	80%
Manor	78	48%	55	71%
Pflugerville	711	68%	538	76%
Round Rock	1,646	76%	1,391	85%
San Marcos	171	40%	132	77%
Initial Enrollment Status				
2-Year Institution	2,706		1,828	68%
4-Year Institution	3,607		3,289	91%
Initial Enrollment Location				
In-State	5,539		4,428	80%
Out-of-State	774		689	89%

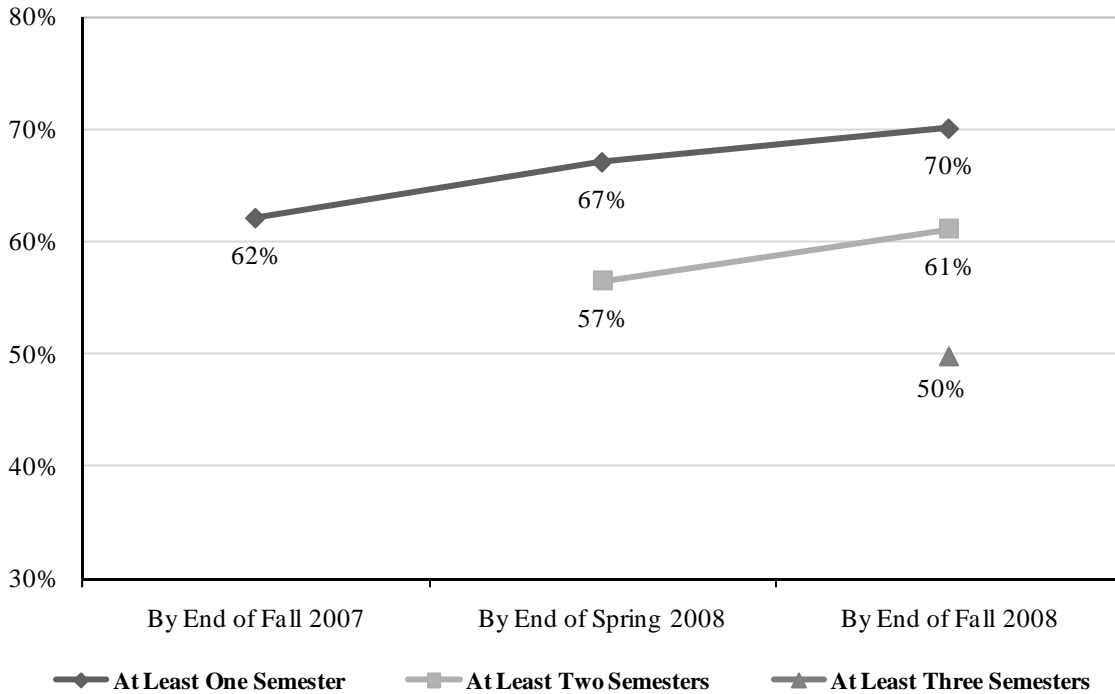
Source: Student Futures Project calculations.

Total Period of Enrollment

Persistence indicates whether a student who enrolled in either the fall or the spring following graduation then enrolled in the fall one year later and thus represents a snapshot in time. Alternatively, measuring the total number of semesters of college experience provides more detail regarding the amount of time students actually spend in college. Figure 9 shows the initial enrollment rate of 2007 graduates in the fall of 2007 (62%) as the share with at least one semester of college enrollment in the fall of 2007. By the spring of 2008, the share of students who had enrolled in at least one semester of college increased to 67%, a trend that continued in the fall of 2008 when it rose to 70%. Thus, by the fall of 2008, 70% of the class of 2007 had been enrolled in college at some point.

By the spring of 2008, 57% of graduates had enrolled in at least two semesters of college, representing the share of 2007 graduates continuously enrolled in college to that point. By the fall of 2008, the share of graduates who had enrolled in at least two semesters of college increased to 61%, while 50% had been continuously enrolled over all three time periods. These shares are comparable to those presented for the class of 2006 (see Figure 12 in the next section), with the shares of enrollment slightly higher in 2007 due to the inclusion in that year of four additional school districts.

Figure 9. Cumulative Enrollment Rates of 2007 Graduates, Fall 2007 through Fall 2008



Note: The number of participating school districts varied for each class.

Postsecondary Employment

Table 13 shows, overall and for subgroups, the percentages of graduates who were continuously employed in the state of Texas from the fall following graduation through the fall one year later. For the class of 2006, a total of 2,202 students (32%) were continuously employed from the 4th quarter of 2006 through the 4th quarter of 2007. For the class of 2007, a total of 3,018 students (32%) were continuously employed from the 4th quarter of 2007 through the 4th quarter of 2008. The share of Asian students continuously employed during this time (16% for 2006 and 19% for 2007) was far lower than was true for their counterparts, with Hispanic students having the highest rate of continuous employment (37% and 40% in each year, respectively). The largest differences in employment rates occurred between districts, with Eanes having the smallest share continuously employed in Texas for the class of 2007 (9%) and San Marcos having the highest (47%).

Table 13. Share of Graduates Continuously Employed for One Full Year Following Graduation

	Class of 2006		Class of 2007	
	Number Employed	Percent of Graduates	Number Employed	Percent of Graduates
Total	2,202	32%	3,018	32%
Ethnicity				
Asian	64	16%	104	19%
Black	301	36%	365	35%
Hispanic	766	37%	1,076	40%
White	1,060	30%	1,401	29%
Gender				
Female	1,150	33%	1,515	33%
Male	1,052	31%	1,446	31%
Family Income Status				
Low-income	618	36%	762	38%
Not Low-income	1,584	31%	2,058	30%
Unknown			198	38%
Special Education Status				
Special Education	247	35%	313	35%
Not Special Education	1,955	32%	2,507	31%
Unknown			198	38%
District				
Austin	1,122	31%	1,186	33%
Del Valle			108	36%
Eanes			46	9%
Leander			437	37%
Manor	51	36%	69	42%
Pflugerville	372	38%	346	33%
Round Rock	657	31%	626	29%
San Marcos			200	47%

Source: Student Futures Project calculations.

Note: The number of participating school districts varied for each class.

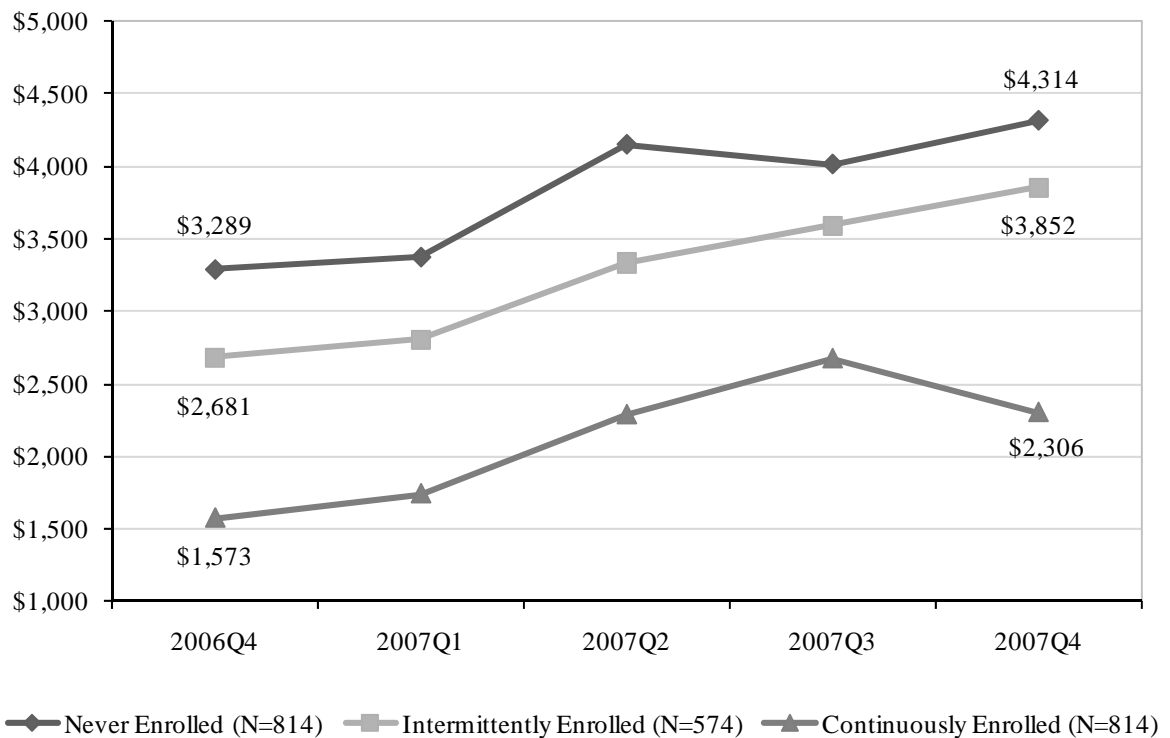
Postsecondary Earnings

Median earnings were also measured over time for those students who were continuously employed from the period of the fall immediately following high school graduation through the fall of the following year. Since some of these continuously employed graduates also enrolled in college, median earnings were examined for three

groups that likely experienced different earnings over this time period: students who never enrolled in college, those who were intermittently enrolled in college and those continuously enrolled over this time period.²⁰

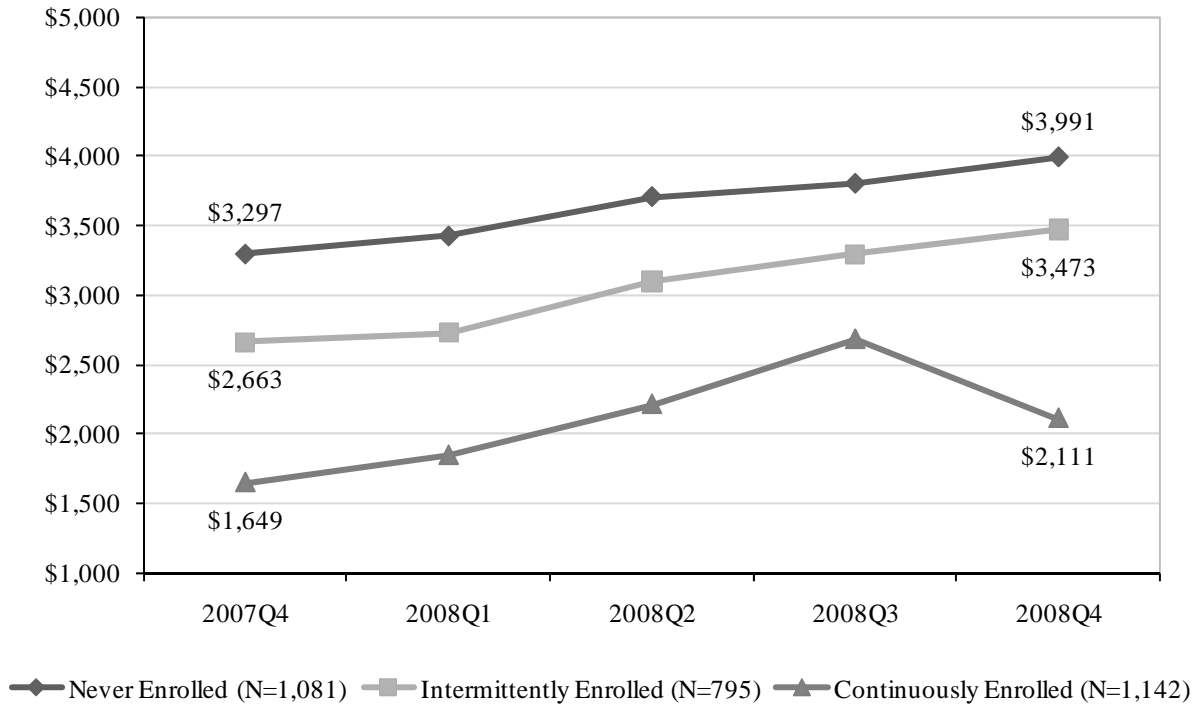
Initial median earnings for the class of 2006 were similar to those for the class of 2007 and marked by similar trends, as shown in Figures 10 and 11. The median earnings of continuously enrolled students who were also continuously employed rose from the winter through the summer months and then decreased during the fall.

Figure 10. Median Earnings by Quarter for 2006 Graduates Continuously Employed through the Fall of 2007, by Enrollment Status



²⁰ Continuously enrolled refers here to students enrolled during the three seasons following graduation: the fall after high school graduation, the spring following high school graduation, and the following fall.

Figure 11. Median Earnings by Quarter for 2007 Graduates Continuously Employed through the Fall of 2008, by Enrollment Status



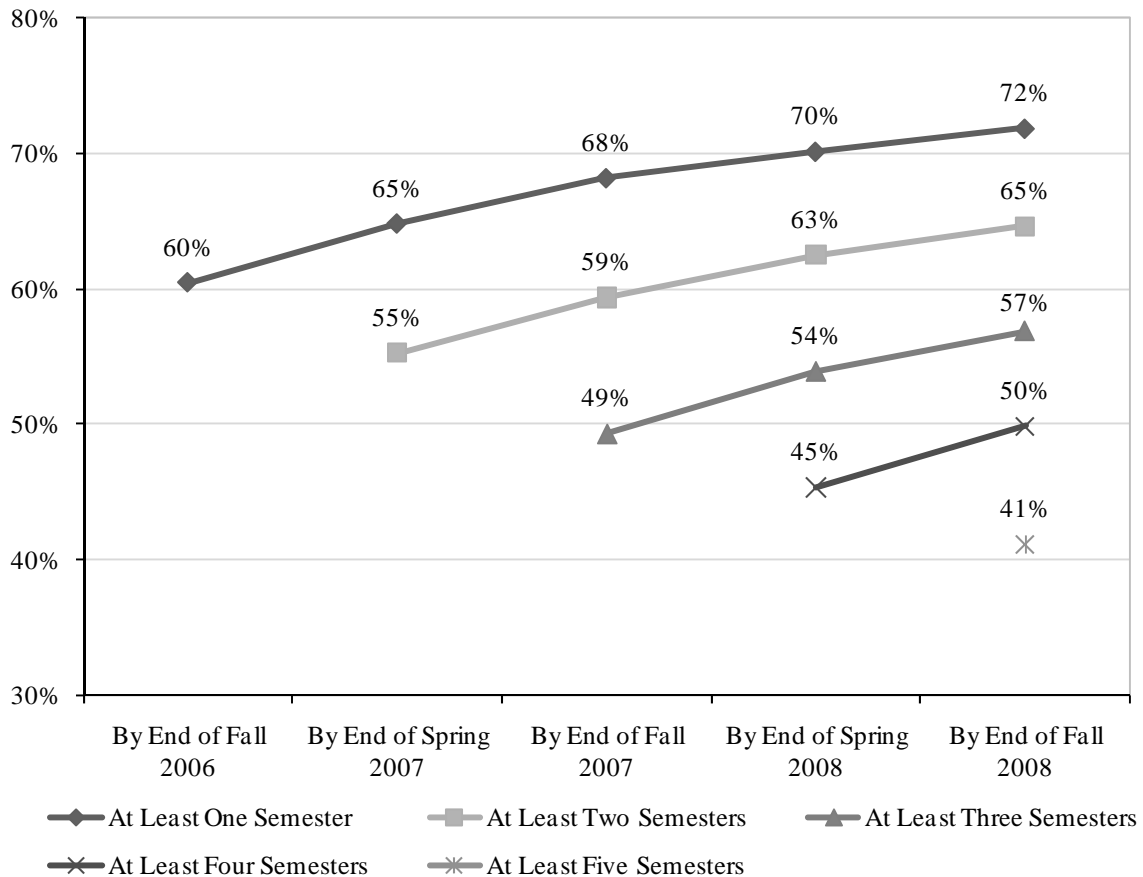
While the initial median earnings of both 2006 and 2007 graduates were comparable, their earnings a full year later differed markedly. Students in the graduating class of 2006 who were continuously employed and never enrolled in postsecondary education had median earnings of \$4,314 compared to the same types of individuals in the class of 2007, whose median earnings at the same time after high school graduation were \$3,991, a negative difference of \$323. A similar difference was observed for continuously employed students who were intermittently enrolled in college. A smaller decline in median quarterly earnings (\$95) occurred for 2007 graduates who were both continuously enrolled and employed when compared to 2006 graduates. An increase in the minimum wage in the summer of 2007 and the economic downturn in 2008 may have contributed to the differences in earnings trajectories between these two classes of graduates.

Postsecondary Outcomes Two Years After Graduating from High School

Education

Over the course of five semesters of college, the share of 2006 graduates who enrolled for at least one semester of college grew from an initial rate of 60% to 72% (Figure 12). For the class of 2006, the share of students who enrolled in at least two semesters increased from 55% by the end of the spring of 2007 to 65% by the fall of 2008. By the spring of 2008, a majority of 2006 high school graduates had enrolled in at least three semesters of college. However, by the end of the fall of 2008, only 41% of the class of 2006 had enrolled in every possible semester following their high school graduation.

Figure 12. Cumulative Enrollment Rates of 2006 Graduates, Fall 2006 through Fall 2008



Postsecondary Education Completion by the Fall of 2008

By the end of the fall of 2008, only 46 high school graduates from the class of 2006 and 15 from the class of 2007 had received a certificate or diploma from a postsecondary institution. The majority of postsecondary education completers in each class received their degrees from 2-year institutions, but a few students completed their education at 4-year institutions. Not all schools report the title of the degree conferred on their student to NSC, but this information was available for 32 students from the class of 2006 and for 14 students from the class of 2007.²¹ For the class of 2006, 17 students obtained an Associate degree, while 12 completed a certificate, and three completed some form of Bachelor's degree. For the class of 2007, 11 students obtained a certificate, while two completed some form of Bachelor's degree and one completed an Associate degree. The small number of certificate holders for the class of 2006 may be attributable to student transfers from 2-year to 4-year institutions, the possibility that students in 2-year postsecondary education often work while attending school and this takes longer to complete a degree, or to the lower persistence rate of students in 2-year postsecondary education. As more time elapses and more detailed information on postsecondary education completers becomes available, researchers will more closely examine this issue.

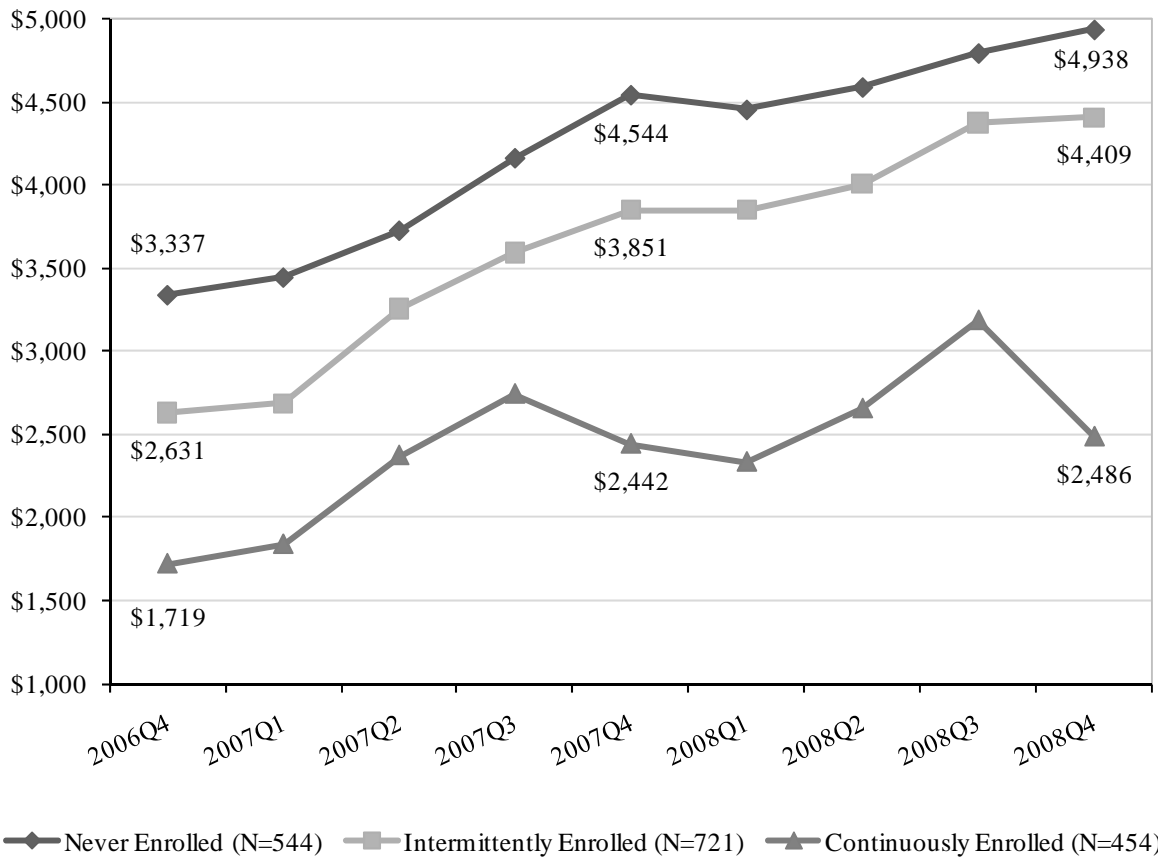
Employment

Only 1,719 (25%) of 2006 graduates were continuously employed from the fall following graduation through the 4th quarter of 2008. Median earnings for continuously employed graduates were broken down into three different subgroups and reported in Figure 13: graduates without any postsecondary enrollment, graduates with intermittent postsecondary enrollment, and graduates continuously enrolled.²² Looking across each subgroup, graduates who were continuously employed and never enrolled had the highest median earnings across the entire time period studied. In the fourth quarter of 2007 and the fourth quarter of 2008, median earnings of those graduates were nearly double those who were continuously employed and also continuously enrolled.

²¹ A list of institutions where this information was absent is provided in the technical appendix.

²² Continuously enrolled used here represents those students who were enrolled in the fall of 2006, the spring and fall of 2007, and the spring and fall of 2008.

Figure 13. Median Earnings by Quarter for 2006 Graduates Continuously Employed through the Fall of 2008, by Enrollment Status



Chapter IV. Summary

This is the first report on initial postsecondary education and employment outcomes for 2008 Central Texas graduates and a follow-up report of outcomes through December 2008 for 2006 and 2007 graduates. In each successive year of this study, the number of participating districts has increased — from four ISDs in 2006, to eight ISDs in 2007 and ten ISDs in 2008. Despite year-to-year differences in participating Central Texas districts, the overall demographic characteristics of each cohort of graduates have been surprisingly similar.

Initial outcomes. Initial enrollment rates in postsecondary education for Central Texas graduates (measured in the fall following graduation) varied little for each graduating cohort examined, ranging from 60% in 2006 to 62% in 2007 to 61% in 2008. While enrollment rates for most high schools varied by less than 5 percentage points across the three cohorts studied, both Stony Point HS (Round Rock ISD) and Del Valle HS (Del Valle ISD) increased the rates of initial college enrollment for their graduates by over 10 percentage points. Initial employment rates varied a bit more, ranging from 46% in 2006 to 47% in 2007 before dropping to 44% in 2008.

Most initial enrollment and employment patterns for 2008 graduates were very similar to those reported for 2007 graduates (Schexnayder et al, 2009). The following findings noted in last year's report also apply to 2008 graduates.

- Most Central Texas graduates attending postsecondary education enrolled at 4-year institutions.
- Initial postsecondary enrollment rates varied widely by district, as did the type and location of the postsecondary institutions in which graduates enrolled.
- Initial enrollment rates in 4-year postsecondary education and the location of those institutions varied widely by graduates' background and characteristics, with the notable exception of gender.
- Initial enrollment rates for 2-year postsecondary education exhibited much less variation than 4-year postsecondary enrollments.
- Initial employment rates for graduates varied widely by district and most student background characteristics and were inversely related to 4-year postsecondary enrollment rates.
- Over eight of every ten graduates included in this study were located in either postsecondary education or employment.

- A lower share of surveyed graduates actually enrolled in postsecondary education than planned to, while a higher share was working.

Additional analyses conducted on 2008 graduates also revealed that 27% of these graduates attended college in the Austin MSA (18% at ACC) and that most of their employment occurred in the retail trade (18%) or food service (12%) industries.

Longer-term outcomes. Analysis of longitudinal postsecondary education and employment outcomes through the fall of 2008 revealed the following patterns for 2006 and 2007 graduates.

- One-year patterns of both enrollment and employment were generally similar for both 2006 and 2007 graduates.
- The highest rates of enrollment in postsecondary education occurred in the fall immediately following graduation for both 2006 and 2007 graduates. While the share of enrolled students declined slightly in each subsequent time period, the largest declines occurred between any given spring semester and the following fall semester.
- Of those graduates that did enroll during the first year after high school graduation, over 80% persisted and enrolled again the following fall. Graduates attending 4-year colleges/universities exhibited persistence rates of over 90%, while the persistence rate for 2-year college students was 68% for each cohort.
- The employment and earnings of recent high school graduates appears to have been impacted by the economic downturn that began in the fall of 2008. Initial postsecondary employment rates for the class of 2008 were lower than for their counterparts from previous years. Median earnings from continuously employed 2007 graduates were lower in the fall of 2008 than for continuously employed 2006 graduates one year following graduation.

Bibliography

- Adelante Solutions, Inc. "City of Austin Opportunity for Prosperity: Hispanic Quality of Life Initiative." Presentation to the Austin City Council, January 2008.
http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/news/2009/downloads/opportunity_for_prosperity_2009.pdf. Accessed January 29, 2009.
- Andersson, Fredrik, Harry J. Holzer and Julia I. Lane. (2005). *Moving Up or Moving On: Who Advances in the Low-Wage Labor Market?* Russell Sage Foundation, New York.
- Beck, Nicole and Greg Cumpton. (2009) *Outcomes One Year Later: An Update on the Class of 2006*. Austin: Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources, The University of Texas at Austin, January.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008). "College Enrollment and Work Activity of 2007 High School Graduates." United States Department of Labor.
<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/hsgec.nr0.htm>. Accessed February 9, 2009.
- Brown, Clair, John Haltiwanger and Julia Lane. (2006). *Economic Turbulence: Is a Volatile Economy Good for America*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Chatterjee, S., A. S. Hadi and B. Price. (2000). *Regression Analysis by Example*. 3rd ed. New York: Wiley Interscience.
- Gill, Andrew M. and Duane E. Leigh. (2003). "Do the Returns to Community Colleges Differ between Academic and Vocational Programs?" *The Journal of Human Resources*. Vol. 38, no. 1: 134-155.
- Gleason, Philip M. (1995). "Participation in the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program." *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. Vol. 61: 213-220.
- Holzer, Harry J. and Robert I. Lerman. (2007). *America's Forgotten Middle-Skill Jobs: Education and Training Requirements in the Next Decade and Beyond*. Washington, DC: Skills2Compete Campaign.
- Kane, Thomas J. and Cecilia E. Rouse. (1995). "Labor-Market Returns to Two- and 4-year College." *The American Economic Review*. Vol. 85, no. 3: 600-614.
- King, Christopher T., Deanna Schexnayder, Greg Cumpton, Tara C. Smith, and Chandler Stolp. (2007). *Education and Work After High School: A First Look at the Class of 2006*. Austin: Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources, The University of Texas at Austin.
- King, Christopher T., Deanna T. Schexnayder and Hannah Gourney, Eds. (2006). *Beyond the Numbers: Improving Postsecondary Success Through A Central Texas High School Data Center*, Austin: Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, The University of Texas at Austin, Policy Research Report 148.
- Lerman, Robert I., Signe-Mary McKernan, and Stephanie Riegg (2004). "The Scope of Employer-Provided Training in the United States," In Christopher J. O'Leary, Robert A. Straits, and Stephen A. Wadner, Eds., *Job Training Policy in the United States*,

- Kalamazoo, Michigan: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, pp. 211-243.
- Levy, Brian L. and Christopher T. King (2009). *Understanding and Explaining Major Influences on Postsecondary Education and Labor Market Outcomes: Conceptual Model 1.0*, Austin: Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources, etc.. Forthcoming.
- Lochner, Lance. (2004). "Education, Work and Crime: A Human Capital Approach." *International Economic Review*. Vol. 45, no. 3: 811-843.
- Marcotte, Dave E., Thomas Bailey, Carey Borkoski, and Greg S. Kienzl. (2005). "The Returns of a Community College Education: Evidence from the National Educational Longitudinal Survey." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. Vol. 27, no. 2: 157-175.
- Prince, David and Davis Jenkins (2005). *Building Pathways to Success for Low-Skill Adult Students: Lessons for Community College Policy and Practice from a Statewide Longitudinal Tracking Study*, New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University, April.
- Roksa, Josipa and Juan Carlos Calcagno. "Making the Transition to 4-year Institutions: Academic Preparation and Transfer." Community College Research Center Working Paper No. 13. June 2008.
- Schexnayder, Deanna, Christopher T. King, Greg Cumpston, Nicole Beck, Brian Levy and Chandler Stolp, *Education and Work after High School: A First Look at the Class of 2007*. Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources, Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, The University of Texas at Austin (February 2009).
- Stevens, David W. (2002). *Employment That is Not Covered by State Unemployment Insurance Laws*. Technical Paper No. TP-2002-16. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD Program, January. Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (2000). *Closing the Gaps by 2015*. Austin: THECB.
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (2000). *Closing the Gaps by 2015*. Austin: THECB.
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (2004). *Closing the Gaps by 2015: 2004 Progress Reports*. Austin: THECB.
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (2009). Texas Higher Education Data. <http://www.txhighereddata.org/Interactive/HSCollLink.cfm>. Accessed January 29, 2009.

Appendix A: Technical Appendix

This technical appendix provides additional information on the data and methods used in this report. Descriptions of data sources and detailed information on dataset limitations are provided. Also included is a comparison of postsecondary education outcomes presented in this analysis to those reported by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB).

Description of Data Sources

Historical High School Records. Researchers obtained historical high school records on graduates from each district, including student demographic information, courses and grades, and program participation. Districts report the number of graduates from the previous year in the spring following graduation through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) to the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Since this recordkeeping is consistent across school districts, it is the preferred source of graduates' high school information.

Senior Surveys. In the spring of their senior year, students from participating districts complete a high school exit survey in which they are asked their postsecondary plans within a year of graduation. For non-Austin ISD districts, Student Futures Project (SFP) researchers developed a survey instrument to collect data on variables of interest that could not be obtained through prior student records. The Austin ISD Department of Program Evaluation conducts their own yearly senior exit survey and provided data from the survey to SFP researchers.

In both of these surveys, seniors were asked their postsecondary plans within a year of graduation. For those students who provided both consent and enough information to allow researchers to accurately link their survey information with their administrative records (N=4,734), their plans for further education or employment were compared to their actual initial outcomes.

Postsecondary Education Enrollment. Outcomes data for 2006, 2007 and 2008 graduates were collected through December 2008. Future reports will continue to extend the time period for which outcomes are measured for each graduating class.

National Student Clearinghouse: National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) collects college directory data from over 3,400 participating colleges nationwide. This directory information includes student dates of enrollment, state, name and type of institution, and whether any degrees were awarded. For Bastrop, Del Valle, Eanes, Hays Consolidated and San Marcos Consolidated ISDs, SFP researchers submitted student directory information to NSC to obtain postsecondary enrollment records. Austin, Manor, Pflugerville and Round Rock ISDs provided NSC data for their graduates to SFP researchers.

University of Texas at Austin: Not all postsecondary educational institutions in the state of Texas participate in the NSC student tracker system; the largest of these is the University of Texas at Austin (UT). Using directory information provided by the UT registrar, SFP researchers determined which high school graduates from the Central Texas area matriculated to UT.

Employment Data. The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) maintains the Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records database system. This database contains quarterly earnings data for over 95% of all Texas employment. SFP researchers linked high school graduate administrative records to the UI database using SSNs, when available. For this report, UI earnings data for each quarter from the 4th quarter of 2006 through the 4th quarter of 2008 were used to measure employment.

Dataset Limitations

Postsecondary Enrollment: The NSC database does not contain all postsecondary institutions within the state of Texas. A complete list of Texas institutions not included in NSC is presented in Table A-1 below, accompanied by the approximate number of students enrolled in each institution as reported by the NSC in the spring of 2009.

Table A-1. Texas Postsecondary Education Institutions Not Included in NSC Data

School Name	Approximate Enrollment
University of Texas at Austin	50,000
South Texas College	19,000
Texas Southern University	12,000
Laredo Community College	8,000
Lee College	5,000
Trinity Valley Community College	5,000
Angelina College	5,000
Texarkana College	4,000
Alvin Community College	4,000
University of Dallas	3,000
Texas Wesleyan University	3,000
Lamar State College-Port Arthur	2,000
Northeast Texas Community College	2,000
Lamar State College-Orange	2,000
Dallas Theological Seminary	2,000
Lubbock Christian University	2,000
The Art Institute of Houston	1,500
College of Biblical Studies-Houston	1,500
Education America	1,500
Court Reporting Institute-Wheeler Institute of Texas	1,000
Parker College of Chiropractic	1,000

Source: National Student Clearinghouse, Spring 2009.

Degree Completion: While all participating NSC schools provide information on whether a student completed a course of study, some do not report the degree title awarded to the student. A list of the schools that conferred a degree or certificate but did not report the degree title is provided in Table A-2.

**Table A-2. Degree-or Certificate-Conferring Institutions
Not Reporting Degree Title to NSC**

Name of Postsecondary Institution
Culinary Institute of America
Hill College
ITT Technical Institute
Kilgore College
Regency Beauty Institute
San Antonio College
Texas State Technical College - Waco
University of Findlay
Vernon College
Wharton County Junior College

Source: National Student Clearinghouse.

Employment: Employment outcomes for graduates residing within the state of Texas were confined to those who provided an SSN to their school district and were employed in jobs covered by Unemployment Insurance. Gaps in coverage exist for those who are self-employed, including independent contractors, as well as employees of religious organizations, railroads, small farms, and the military (Stevens, 2002). Additionally, employment records were not available for graduates employed outside the state of Texas.

Comparison of Postsecondary Enrollment Outcomes to THECB Outcomes

The Texas High Education Coordinating Board (THECB) reports the number of graduates who enroll in postsecondary educational institutions within the state of Texas in the fall following graduation. The THECB tracked graduates who either reported an SSN to their school district or provided enough information on their college enrollment forms for THECB to find their high school records. The Student Futures Project uses multiple data sources, described earlier, to calculate initial enrollment rates. These sources of data are not restricted to graduates with SSNs, and are not restricted to students enrolled within the state

of Texas. It is important to note that Texas institutions listed in Table A-3 are included in the THECB calculations but not the Student Futures calculations. Because of this, researchers calculated a best possible rate for each district based on the largest share of students found enrolled (using either THECB or SFP data) and combined this with the share of students found enrolled outside of the state of Texas. However, because detailed student records were not available from THECB, all calculations within the main body of this report are based solely on SFP calculations.

Table A-3. A Comparison of Initial Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for 2008 Graduates between THECB and the Student Futures Project, by District

	THECB		Student Futures Project				Best Rate
	Total HS Graduates	% Found In-State	Total HS Graduates	Total % In-State	Total % Out-of-State	Total % found	
Overall	11,597	54%	11,586	53%	9%	61%	62%
District							
Austin	3,901	51.2%	3,903	49.8%	8.6%	58.4%	59.8%
Bastrop	484	44.2%	484	42.2%	2.5%	44.7%	46.7%
Del Valle	427	34.0%	427	33.7%	3.7%	37.4%	37.7%
Eanes	624	54.8%	624	54.7%	31.9%	86.6%	86.7%
Hays	650	49.7%	650	47.4%	3.5%	50.9%	53.2%
Leander	1,357	60.6%	1,346	60.0%	9.0%	69.0%	69.6%
Manor	181	42.5%	192	42.7%	2.6%	45.3%	45.3%
Pflugerville	1,160	58.6%	1,159	57.3%	4.3%	61.6%	62.9%
Round Rock	2,402	60.6%	2,390	60.0%	9.0%	69.0%	69.6%
San Marcos	411	41.8%	411	39.9%	3.7%	43.6%	45.5%

Sources: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), and University of Texas at Austin directory information.

Note: The THECB changed its method used to match high school graduates between 2007 and 2008 so year-to-year rates from that source are not comparable.

