Project Partners

- A research partnership of
  - Ray Marshall Center, LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas at Austin
  - Skillpoint Alliance
  - Central Texas independent school districts (ISDs)

- Project funders
  - TG
  - Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce
  - Texas Education Agency
  - Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
  - Others
School District Partners by First Year of Participation:

2004-05 Austin Independent School District
    Del Valle Independent School District
    Pflugerville Independent School District
    Round Rock Independent School District

2005-06 Leander Independent School District
    Manor Independent School District

2006-07 Eanes Independent School District
    San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District

2007-08 Bastrop Independent School District
    Hays Consolidated Independent School District
Project Purpose

- **Conduct longitudinal research on:**
  - what regional high school graduates are doing after high school
  - why they are making these decisions
  - how educational, personal and financial factors contribute to graduates’ success in postsecondary education and the workforce

- **Foster educational improvement through:**
  - identifying and sharing best practices
  - workshops and seminars
Findings from
Education and Work After High School:
A First Look at the Class of 2006

TG Conference
April 24, 2008
Research Questions

- What share of seniors enrolled in 2-year and 4-year postsecondary institutions through December 2006?
- What share of seniors was employed through December 2006?
- What share of seniors was both enrolled in postsecondary institutions and employed?
- Which factors are significantly associated with postsecondary and employment outcomes?
Data Sources

High school records
- Student demographics
- Courses taken
- Course grades

Postsecondary education records*
- National Student Clearinghouse
- University of Texas at Austin directory information

Senior Survey
- Family background/influences
- High school experiences
- Preparation for life after high school

Employment records*
- Texas Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records

* through 12/06
Research Samples

- All 2006 seniors in Austin, Manor, Pflugerville and Round Rock ISDs; consenting seniors only in Leander ISD
  - 90% of all seniors
  - N = 8,295
  - Used to calculate enrollment and employment rates

- All 2006 seniors in these ISDs with complete survey and educational outcomes data
  - N = 4,393
  - Used to track steps in college pipeline
# Characteristics of 2006 Central Texas Seniors

N = 8,295

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Mother's Education Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>Bachelor's degree or above</td>
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<td>Hispanic, Latino, of Spanish Origin</td>
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<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<td>Family Income Status</td>
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\(^1\) Based on mother’s education only in Austin ISD but on both parents’ education in other ISDs
Postsecondary Enrollment

What share of seniors enrolled in 2-year and 4-year postsecondary institutions through December 2006?
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Postsecondary Enrollment

THROUGH THE FALL 2006 SEMESTER:

- 42% of 2006 seniors were enrolled in postsecondary education
  - 60% in 4-year schools
  - 40% in 2-year schools
- Postsecondary enrollment rates for individual high schools within most districts were similar.
  - Austin ISD rates varied widely by high school
What share of seniors was employed through December 2006?

What share of seniors was both enrolled in postsecondary institutions and employed after graduation?
Employment*

- In the 4th quarter of 2006, **49% of 2006 seniors were employed in Texas**
  - 28% employed only
  - 21% employed and enrolled in postsecondary education

- High schools with **lower** education enrollment rates tended to have **higher** employment rates

* Updated in April 2008
Initial Outcomes for 2006 Seniors through December 2006*

N=8,295

* Updated in April 2008
Tracking Steps to College Enrollment for 2006 Central Texas Seniors

N = 4,393

<table>
<thead>
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<td>Employed in Texas</td>
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<td>20</td>
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Share of 2006 Central Texas Seniors Completing FAFSA
N=4,393

Postsecondary path step

% of Senior Sample

% of Pathway Step

FAFSA completion rate

Senior

Intended to continue education

Applied to postsecondary

Accepted to postsecondary

Enrolled in postsecondary

Enrolled in 4-year

Enrolled in 2-year
Factors Associated with Outcomes

Which factors are significantly associated with postsecondary enrollment?
Factors Related to 4-Year Enrollment

More likely to enroll:
- specific college preparation activities (SAT/ACT, FAFSA, visiting colleges, sending transcripts)
- mother has college degree
- participation in sports

Less likely to enroll:
- thinking about college since childhood or later
- Hispanic
- lower family income
Factors Related to 2-Year Enrollment

- **More likely to enroll:**
  - taking SAT/ACT
  - meeting with counselor about financial aid or career information
  - thinking about college since childhood (vs. “as long as I can remember”)

- **Less likely to enroll:**
  - being much older than average
  - lower family income
  - weak parental encouragement
  - being retained in 9th grade
  - factors associated with positive 4-year enrollments
Conclusions

- Education and student background factors appear to influence overall 2-year and 4-year postsecondary enrollment in different ways. These factors assume varying levels of importance for seniors from different socioeconomic, race/ethnic, and family backgrounds.

- Factors most positively linked to seniors only being employed after high school are often negatively associated with postsecondary enrollment.
Recommendations

- Schools, districts, and other stakeholders should **tailor college preparation programs** and policies to meet the needs of different groups of students rather than adopting one-size-fits all approaches.

- Schools should **work harder to involve parents** in their efforts to create a college-going culture.
School districts and the community should focus on strategies to create a college-going culture much earlier in students’ school careers, focusing on pre-kindergarten and early elementary school.

Districts and schools should utilize the positive roles that counseling activities, college preparation and extracurricular activities (particularly sports) play in transitions to college for some of their students.
Future Plans

Research:
- Prepare reports on Senior Survey and Postsecondary Enrollment/Employment once each year
- Add more complete, longer-term postsecondary education and employment data
- Add school-level variables to account for differences among educational programs and practices at individual high schools (beginning with class of 2007)

Dissemination:
- Present research results to education stakeholders
- Collaborate with school districts and others to foster educational improvement in the region
For more information:

centexstudentfutures.org

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