



This document provides an update to information in the Community Action Network Assessment on Education K-16 report released in August 2002. All data included are the most current available. Please also refer to the related CAN FAQ on Youth Development.

**Education Area Defined:** This document presents information pertaining to K-12 and higher education in the five county Austin Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)—including Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis, and Williamson counties. This region includes 34 public school districts, 16 charter schools and 7 traditional institutions of higher education.

**Highlights:** While there have been significant improvements in education throughout Central Texas, particularly at the

elementary school levels, we still have a long way to go to prepare a well-educated workforce for a sustainable, globally competitive economic future.

- **Texas students performed very well compared to their peers in other states across the country on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).** Texas 4<sup>th</sup> grade students scored higher, on average, than did their peers nationwide in Math, Reading, and Science, and Texas 8<sup>th</sup> graders outscored 8<sup>th</sup> grade students nationwide in Math. (*National Center for Education Statistics*)
- **Achievement gaps between different ethnic and socioeconomic groups remain large:** TAKS passing rates in math across the region show a spread of at least 30 percentage points among different student demographic groups.
- **Educational requirements for jobs are changing.** According to US Census and Workforce data, two-thirds of the new jobs created in the next decade will require a Baccalaureate degree, and 90% of the fastest-growing jobs in the United States require some level of college education. (*US Census Bureau*)
- **Huge differences remain between the earnings potential of students who attain different levels of education.** On average, the lifetime household income of a college graduate is almost twice that of a high school graduate and almost three times that of a dropout. (*March 2001 Population Survey, Texas Data Center*)
- **The Austin MSA is growing and the demographics of the community are changing.** Texas has the fastest growing child population in the U.S. By 2040, it is projected that the child population in the state will double. It is also projected that from 2000 to 2010 the Hispanic population will increase by 48%, far greater than other racial/ethnic groups. (*Steve Murdock, Texas State Demographer, UTSA* [http://txsdc.utsa.edu/download/pdf/presentations/2006\\_10\\_06\\_Envision\\_Central\\_Texas.pdf](http://txsdc.utsa.edu/download/pdf/presentations/2006_10_06_Envision_Central_Texas.pdf))

**Q: How many students are there in the five county MSA and where do they attend school?**

- During the 2005-2006 school year, there were approximately 253,000 K-12 students attending public schools (including charter schools) in the five counties. In Travis County, there were approximately 130,000 students.
- Approximately 4,000 K-12 students were enrolled in charter schools during the 2005-2006 school year, primarily in Travis County. Charter school enrollment represents 1.6% of the total public school enrollment in the Austin MSA, and 3.2% of public school enrollment in Travis County. (*TEA 2005-2006 Standard Reports, Enrollment Reports*)
- As of Fall 2006, there are approximately 10,800 students attending private K-12 schools in the area, making up 4.1% of the total student population for the Austin MSA. (*Self-reported by school*)
- There are approximately 98,500 undergraduate students enrolled in the seven traditional higher education institutions in the area (*Austin Community College, Concordia University, Huston-Tillotson University, St. Edward's University, Texas State University, and the University of Texas at Austin*). (*Self-reported by institution*) About half of the high school graduates in the Austin MSA who go on to colleges in Texas do so in the Central Texas region. (*Texas Education Agency*)

## Facts And Questions About Education

### Q: What are the demographic trends that affect education?

#### Population Growth, Increased Economic Disadvantage, and Increased Limited English Proficiency

The Central Texas area continues to experience a dramatic increase in population. As the population in the five counties has increased over the past five years, so has the percentage of students classified as *economically disadvantaged* in the area. Economically disadvantaged students have lower graduation rates and higher dropout rates across Central Texas. (2006 Central Texas Sustainability Indicators Project)

##### Increase in Student Population From 2000-01 to 2005-06 School Years

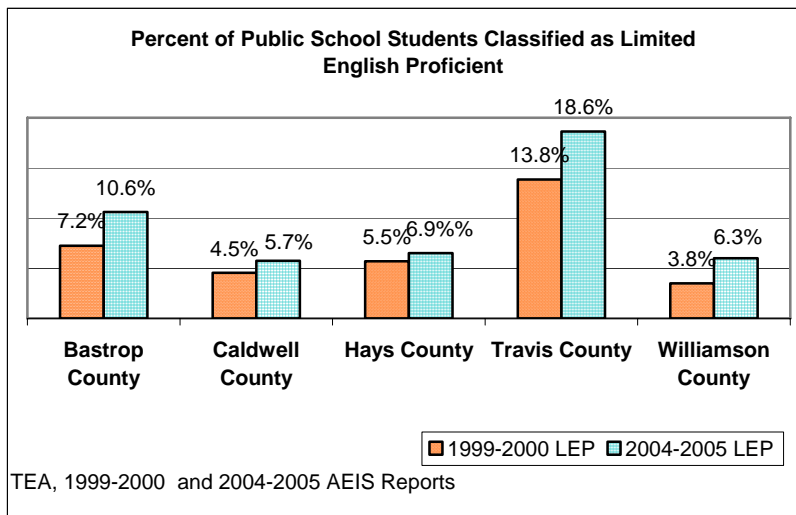
Bastrop: 17%  
 Caldwell: 2%      Hays: 20%  
 Travis: 13%      Williamson: 28%

##### Increase in Economically Disadvantaged Students From 2000-01 to 2005-06 School Years

Bastrop: 48%  
 Caldwell: 13%      Hays: 41%  
 Travis: 41%      Williamson: 90%

(Source: TEA 2000-2001 and 2005-2006 Standard Reports: Enrollment Report, Economically Disadvantaged Report <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/adhocrpt/StandardReports.html>)

The Limited English Proficient (LEP) student population includes students who qualify for Bilingual Education and English as a Second Language services. The number of LEP students continues to increase; for example, the population of AISD LEP students increased by 41% in the last five years alone. (AISD PEIMS Students Records)

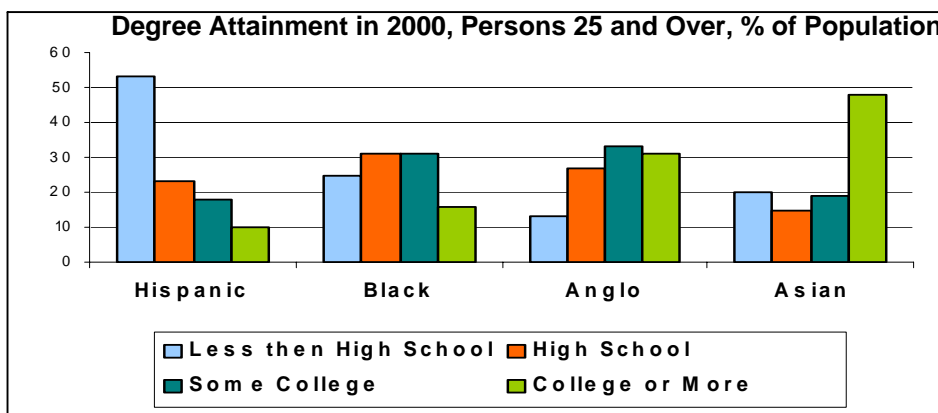


Within counties there are large disparities in the number of LEP students between school districts. For example, within Travis County, approximately 25% of students in Manor, Del Valle, and Austin ISDs are Limited English Proficient, whereas in Eanes and Lake Travis ISDs, less than 5% of the students are classified as LEP. (TEA AEIS Reports)

### Q: What are the educational outcomes across different groups?

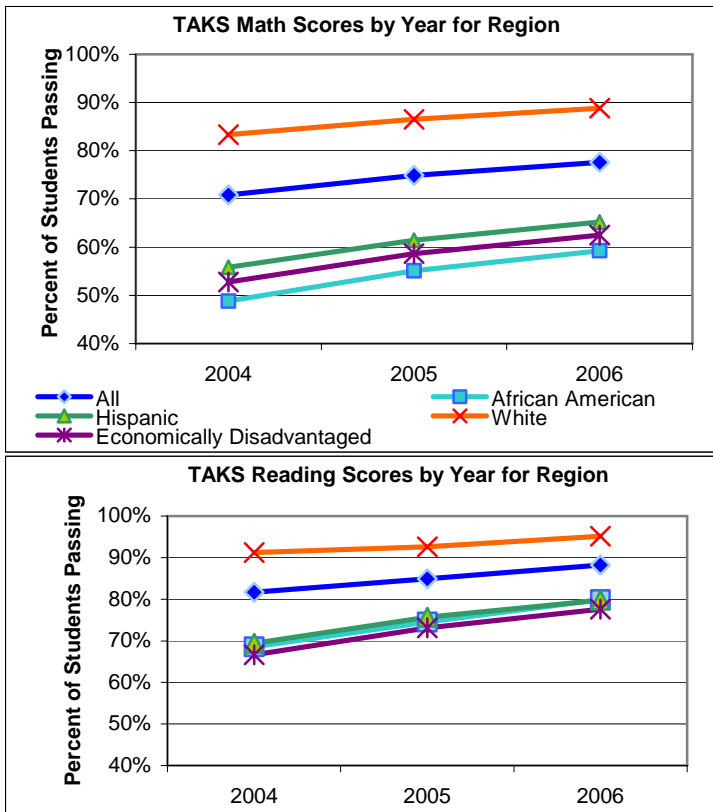
#### Economically Disadvantaged and Minority Groups Attain Less Education and Pass TAKS at Lower Rates

Across the state of Texas, there is a high degree of variability in educational attainment among different demographic groups. As the demographics of the state change and Hispanic and disadvantaged populations are projected to grow much more rapidly than other groups, our state's average educational attainment will fall drastically in the absence of broad-scale programmatic change.



Economically disadvantaged is as strong a drop out student characteristic as race or ethnicity. (2006 Central Texas Sustainability Indicators Report)

## Facts And Questions About Education



Source: TEA State Accountability Data Tables for 2005 and 2006. Note: Data for 2005 and 2006 are calculated at Panel Recommended (PR) standard; data for 2004 are at PR for all grades except 11th, which is at 1 SEM below PR.

Texas standards are more stringent than those of most other states, and despite a strong showing on NAEP in math and science relative to their peers nationwide, students across Texas continue to struggle with meeting state standards.

Districts within the Austin MSA vary dramatically in TAKS attainment. For example, the percentage of students passing the Math section of the TAKS, on which students generally score lower, range from a low of 53% to a high of 95%. The median score for all districts in the area is 78%. As can be seen in the charts, the attainment across racial/ethnic and socioeconomic groups in the region also indicates disparities, especially in the Math section. (TEA, State Accountability Data Tables)

### Q: What are the barriers to getting to and staying in college?

#### Not Enough Students Graduate from High School

Calculating dropout and graduation rates has become a rich topic of political and economic debate. Discussions have intensified due to the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which requires states and districts to calculate their high school graduation rates in determining Adequate Yearly Progress. Most values "are highly inaccurate, due to variations in calculation methodologies and inadequate reporting mechanisms." (Education Commission of the States. "High School Dropout Rates/Graduation Rates." <http://www.ecs.org/html/issue.asp?issueID=108&subIssueID=163>)

Various methods of calculating graduation rates indicate that in the 2004-2005 school year Travis County graduated between 63% and 85% of its students, with rates significantly lower for African-American (45-76%) and Hispanic (59-80%) students. (The United Way of Texas. "Travis County Community Overview: High School Graduation and College-Readiness Rates." [http://www.uwtexas.org/data/docs/Travis\\_County\\_Community\\_Overview.pdf](http://www.uwtexas.org/data/docs/Travis_County_Community_Overview.pdf))

Public High School Graduation Rates			
Region		Travis County	
All:	87.0%	All: 80.6%	
African American:	83.0%	African American:	75.6%
Hispanic:	80.6%	Hispanic:	71.3%
White:	90.8%	White:	88.8%
Economically Disadv.:	81.0%	Economically Disadv.:	70.9%

(TEA, Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2004-2005)

## Facts And Questions About Education

According to a recent national study undertaken by Civic Enterprises and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the most common reasons that high school dropouts cited for leaving high school are: low academic standards, uninteresting and disengaging classes, and poor preparation by earlier schooling. (Bridgeland, J.; Dilulio, J.; & Morison, K. "The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts." March 2006. Accessed 11 October 2006. Available at <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/nr/downloads/ed/TheSilentEpidemic3-06FINAL.pdf>)

### Too Few Students Succeed in Math and Science and Too Few Teachers are Available

Projected job growth indicates that we need a significantly higher number of students to be proficient in math, science, and technology in order to meet workforce demands, yet the number of Americans ages 18-24 who earn science degrees has fallen to 17<sup>th</sup> in the world. (Thomas Friedman, *The World is Flat*)

Teachers Teaching Out of Field in Central Texas	Schools with 0-25% of Students Economically Disadvantaged	Schools with 75-100% of Students Economically Disadvantaged
<b>Math</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>32.3%</b>
<b>Science</b>	<b>20.3%</b>	<b>46.6%</b>

While data from other states indicate that a more rigorous curriculum will drive college readiness and success, Texas already has a high number of math and science high school teachers teaching out of their field of certification, and in Central Texas those teachers are more likely to be at disadvantaged campuses. (Dr. Ed Fuller, Senior Researcher, Texas Center for Education Policy, UT-Austin, TEA "Who is Teaching in Texas in 2005" and teacher assignment files)

### College Capacity, Affordability, and Success

The state *Closing the Gaps* data indicate that in Central Texas alone, an additional 40,000 students must enroll in college by 2015—far beyond the current capacity of our seven regional traditional colleges and universities. Of those going to college in Texas, over 40% must take some type of developmental (non-credit prerequisite) courses, and these students are far less likely to successfully graduate. (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board)

#### Colleges in Texas are much less affordable

Compared with best-performing states, families in Texas devote a large share of family income (22% in 2006 compared to 20% in 1992) to attend public two-year colleges even after financial aid, and they devote an even larger share of family income (30% in 2006 compared to 22% in 1992) after financial aid to attend public four-year colleges and universities in the state. These two sectors enroll 88% of college students in Texas. (National Center for Public Policy & Higher Ed, 2006 *Measuring Up Report*)

	Undergraduate Enrollment	% of Undergraduates who Graduate	Average Tuition & Fees for Texas Residents- 2 Semesters
Concordia Univ.	1,200	31.5	\$16,740
Huston-Tillotson Univ.	600	15.8	\$ 9,218
Southwestern Univ.	1,300	75.1	\$23,650
St. Edward's Univ.	3,000	52.0	\$18,800
Texas State Univ.	23,600	48.5	\$ 5,800
Univ. of Texas	37,000	74.3	\$ 8,788
Austin Comm.College	33,200	N/A	\$ 1,600

*Information self-reported by institution, graduation rate from US Dept. of Ed. Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System, 1998-2004 6-Year Grad. Rate*

### Q: What can I do to help?

- Become involved in the local PTA (Parent/Teachers Association) or serve on a school's Citizen's Advisory Committee
- Mentor or Tutor a student – contact Austin Partners in Education (APIE-637-0900) or your local partners
- Assist families in filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for college – contact the Greater Austin Chamber, 322-5644 to participate in a Financial Aid Saturday, or contact your local high schools
- Vote in school board elections for trustees most qualified to guide policy on difficult challenges facing schools
- Provide your input through district surveys and community input forums and legislative funding and policy
- Encourage students to take rigorous classes including Advanced Placement, Dual Credit, and Tech Prep.
- Contact Hands on Central Texas [www.handsoncentraltexas.org](http://www.handsoncentraltexas.org) to see where to best volunteer

### Additional Information:

- To obtain a copy of this document or additional, current information regarding education or other issue areas, go to [www.caction.org](http://www.caction.org). Copies available at CAN offices, 1111 W. 6<sup>th</sup> St., Ste B220, Austin, TX 78703. 512-414-8203
- For additional information about this document, please contact: Susan Dawson at the E3 Alliance regional Education collaborative: [www.e3alliance.org](http://www.e3alliance.org)

CAN Partners: Austin Area Human Services Association ~ Austin Area Interreligious Ministries  
 Austin Area Research Organization ~ Austin Independent School District ~ Austin Travis County MHMR Center  
 Capital Metro ~ City of Austin ~ Community Justice Council ~ Greater Austin Chamber ~ Health Partnership 2010/ICC  
 Higher Education Coalition ~ Travis County ~ Travis County Healthcare Dist. ~ United Way Capital Area ~ WorkSource

