



Austin Independent School District

Department of Program Evaluation

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POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT SUMMARY REPORT: CLASSES OF 2002-2006

INTRODUCTION

This report is an update of the 2006 AISD report titled “Postsecondary Enrollment Summary Report: Classes of 2002-2004.” Student-level enrollment records from the National Student Clearinghouse served as the primary data source used to analyze postsecondary enrollment of AISD graduates. These data were augmented by specific campus-level enrollment counts at Texas colleges that were provided by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Enrollment rates were calculated for AISD by high school campus, race/ethnic group, economically disadvantaged status, gender, and GEAR UP status. These results can help district administrators understand how effectively the district is preparing its students for postsecondary education, and help them identify specific areas where additional support is needed.

BACKGROUND

The leadership of Austin Independent School District has long recognized that the district has an important role to play in preparing students for either a college education or specific career training. AISD Board Governance Results Policy R-3 states that all high school students will “demonstrate and understand the skills and knowledge to:

- Successfully enroll in postsecondary education;
- Access financial aid;
- Transition into the work force; and
- Be successful in a variety of jobs and careers.”

While pursuing these goals, however, the district has had to contend with the growing incidence of poverty among AISD students in recent years. From the 1999-2000 school year to 2005-2006, the percentage of AISD students who qualify for federally subsidized free or reduced-price lunch has risen from 47% to 60%. For a variety of reasons, these low-income students are significantly less likely than other students to consider pursuing higher education, and are often not academically prepared for it. Therefore, the district has implemented a range of specially targeted programs that offer specific support to students who face these challenges.

Since 1999, programs such as Project ADVANCE, GEAR UP, AVID, and AISD-ACC College Connection have served to increase students' awareness and understanding of postsecondary education, improve their academic readiness for college, and help guide students through the process of applications and financial aid.

To observe the cumulative effects of these programs and understand generally how postsecondary enrollment patterns have evolved over time, this report details the rates at which AISD graduates have enrolled in postsecondary institutions over the past five years. For this report, postsecondary institutions include all public and private colleges and universities, as well as trade and technical schools. Separate enrollment rates are provided for each high school campus and demographic group.

METHODOLOGY

The data used to calculate postsecondary enrollment rates came from three sources: the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA). The NSC is a non-profit organization that helps school districts evaluate postsecondary programs by providing verified postsecondary enrollment data of 91% of all U.S. college students enrolled in more than 2,900 colleges. The THECB was created by the Texas legislature in 1965 and provides leadership for and coordination of the Texas higher education system. The NCEA is a non-profit organization that supports the improvement of academic and college/career readiness practices.

Of the three data sources, the NSC is the most comprehensive. The NSC uses multiple components of a student's record to locate the student (e.g., social security number, last name, first name, middle name, birth date), and tracks every semester of enrollment. However, the NSC data are limited by the fact that a few large institutions often attended by AISD graduates do not participate in their tracking system.

The THECB data are used to supplement the postsecondary enrollment data that the NSC is unable to provide (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2007). Specifically, these data include postsecondary enrollment for the University of Texas at Austin and the University of North Texas, in addition to a few other small Texas colleges. The THECB data, however, are somewhat incomplete because they include only those students who attended any Texas college during the fall semester and who had valid social security numbers when they graduated from high school. For the AISD graduating class of 2006, 475 graduates (12%) did not have a social security number and could not have been determined by THECB to be enrolled in a postsecondary institution. However, in contrast to previous years, the THECB provided student level data for class of 2006 graduates who enrolled in Texas colleges in fall 2006 and gave consent to have their enrollment tracked. Merging these data with the NSC student-level data made it possible to create a near-complete student-level data set for former AISD students' postsecondary enrollment in 2006-2007.

The NCEA also provided a small amount of data related to students who initially enrolled in the spring semester at the University of Texas at Austin, University of North Texas, and Trinity University. These three schools did not provide student enrollment data to the NSC, and the THECB did not track spring enrollment, so the NCEA data fills this small void.

In this report, the methodology used to calculate the percentage of AISD graduates who enrolled in postsecondary institutions differed from the methodology of the previous district report on postsecondary enrollment (Alderete et al., 2006). In previous years, the THECB served as the primary data source because it was believed that it had the most complete and comprehensive data on in-state fall enrollees. It was also the most commonly cited source of college enrollment statistics by in the state. These data were augmented with fall out-of-state enrollment counts and spring enrollment counts from the NSC, and with NCEA's spring initial enrollment counts for the University of Texas at Austin, University of North Texas, and Trinity University.

Now, the NSC serves as the primary postsecondary data source for each year except 2002. This change in methodology was necessary as it became apparent that the NSC had grown into a more comprehensive data source than it was in the past. The NSC claims that the number of colleges participating in its tracking system has been increasing over the past five years (<https://nslc.org/about/history.htm>). A comparison of NSC and THECB student-level data for the class of 2006 revealed that a large number of enrollees were being excluded from the THECB enrollment counts because they lacked social security numbers. Therefore, the THECB enrollment counts are used only to determine enrollment at the three universities not tracked by the NSC.

Once it was determined how each source of postsecondary enrollment data would be used, each graduating class's postsecondary enrollment count was recalculated for 2002-2006. As in the previous report, "postsecondary enrollment" was defined as any enrollment in a two-year or four-year college or technical/vocational institution during the fall or spring semester in the school year after their May high school graduation (summer enrollment did not count). Students who were concurrently enrolled in more than one institution were identified to avoid double counting. The overall postsecondary enrollment rates for each year were then calculated by dividing the number of enrollees by the size of the graduating class. These rates were disaggregated to show the distribution of students attending two-year and four-year institutions, Texas and out-of-state institutions, and Austin Community College (ACC). For the class of 2006, the near-complete student-level data set that was compiled by merging the NSC and THECB student-level data makes it possible to disaggregate postsecondary enrollment by high school campus, race/ethnicity, gender, economically disadvantaged status, and GEAR UP participation. Many 2006 graduates participated in GEAR UP, a college preparation program focused on meeting the needs of economically disadvantaged and/or potential first generation college students. The absence of student level data in previous years for the University of Texas at Austin, University of North Texas, and Trinity University makes student-level analysis problematic for graduating classes before 2006.

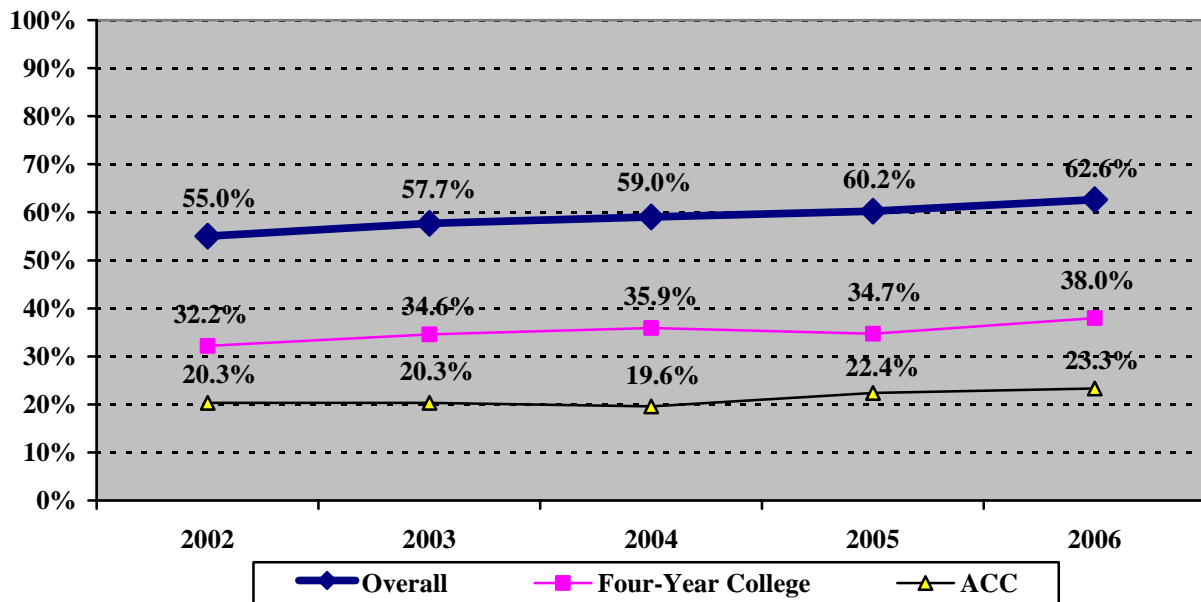
RESULTS

First, the districtwide postsecondary enrollment rates for each of the past five graduating classes were examined (Figure 1). In Figure 1, there is a trend line that indicates the steady increase in the overall postsecondary rate since 2002, going from 55.0% up to 62.6% in 2006. These rates include enrollment in any kind of postsecondary institution in either the fall or spring semester following graduation. Students who enrolled in more than one type of institution in that period are not double-counted.

There also were changes in enrollment rates associated with the two most common postsecondary education choices of AISD graduates: four-year colleges and ACC. Enrollment in four-year colleges has increased considerably since 2002, going from 32.2% up to 38.0% in 2006. The ACC enrollment rate increase was less than that of four-year colleges, rising three percentage points since 2002 to arrive at 23.3% in 2006.

Some students may have been enrolled in a four-year college *and* ACC or other two-year college in the fall and/or spring semester. Approximately 2-3% of graduates enroll in other types of institutions each year, and many of these students also transfer in and out of ACC and four-year colleges. In 2006-2007, “other” institutions were mainly community and junior colleges; only 25 graduates enrolled in specialized vocational or technical training institutions such as DeVry, ITT Tech, and Texas State Technical College.

Figure 1. Postsecondary Enrollment Rates by Graduating Class

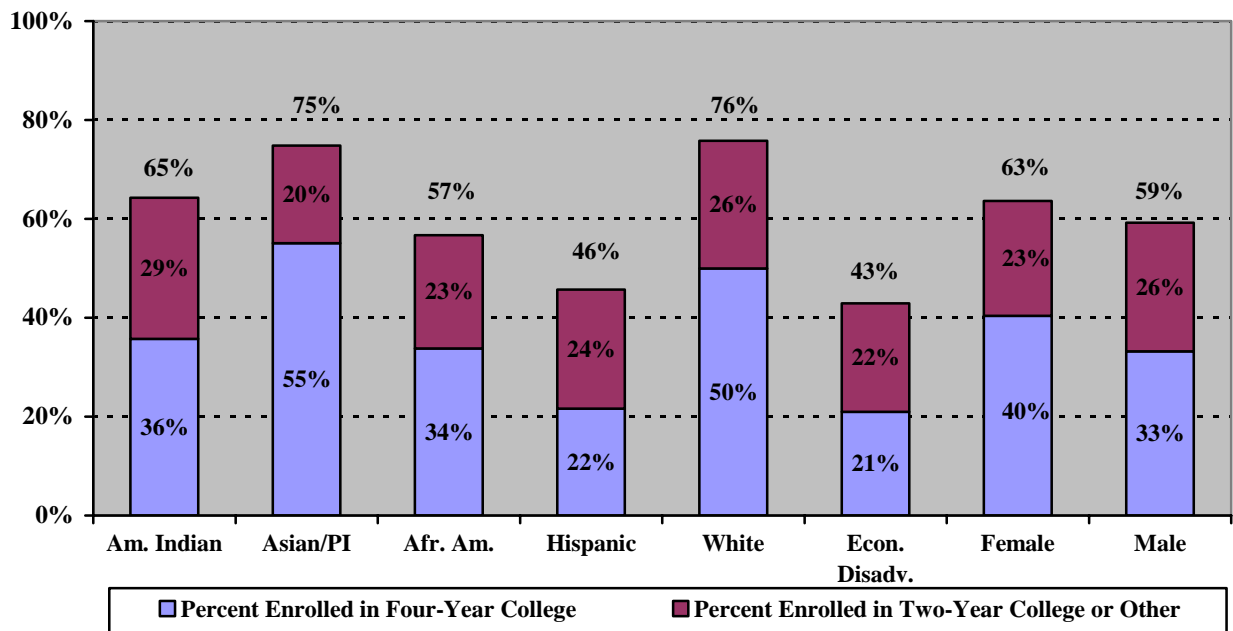


Sources: National Student Clearinghouse, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, National Center for Educational Accountability, prepared by the Department of Program Evaluation, May 2007.

Note. Each percentage includes the maximum number of student enrollments reported in those institutions from a single data source, which means that the percentage of four-year college enrollees and ACC enrollees are not independent of each other. However, the Overall percentages are nonduplicated.

The postsecondary enrollment rates for the Class of 2006 also are presented by race/ethnicity, economic disadvantage, and gender (Figure 2). The two student groups with the highest enrollment rates were Asian/Pacific Islander (75%) and White (76%) students. Economically disadvantaged students were the least likely of any group to have enrolled in any postsecondary institution (43%) or four-year college (21%). Females enrolled in postsecondary institutions at a slightly higher rate (63%) than did males (59%). However, females were much more likely than males to attend four-year colleges (40% compared to 33%), while males were more likely than females to attend two-year colleges (26% compared to 23%).

Figure 2. Postsecondary Enrollment Rates by Race/Ethnicity, Economic Disadvantage, and Gender for the Graduating Class of 2006



Sources: National Student Clearinghouse, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, prepared by the Department of Program Evaluation, May 2007.

Note. Students who were concurrently enrolled in a two-year and four-year college were categorized only as four-year college enrollees and do not count toward the “Two-Year College or Other” percentages.

District enrollment counts and percentages for the past five years were disaggregated by semester and by in-state/out-of-state status (Table 1). Since 2002, fewer students have been waiting to enroll in the spring semester as compared to enrolling in the fall. Additionally, there has been a slight increase in students attending college outside of Texas since 2002.

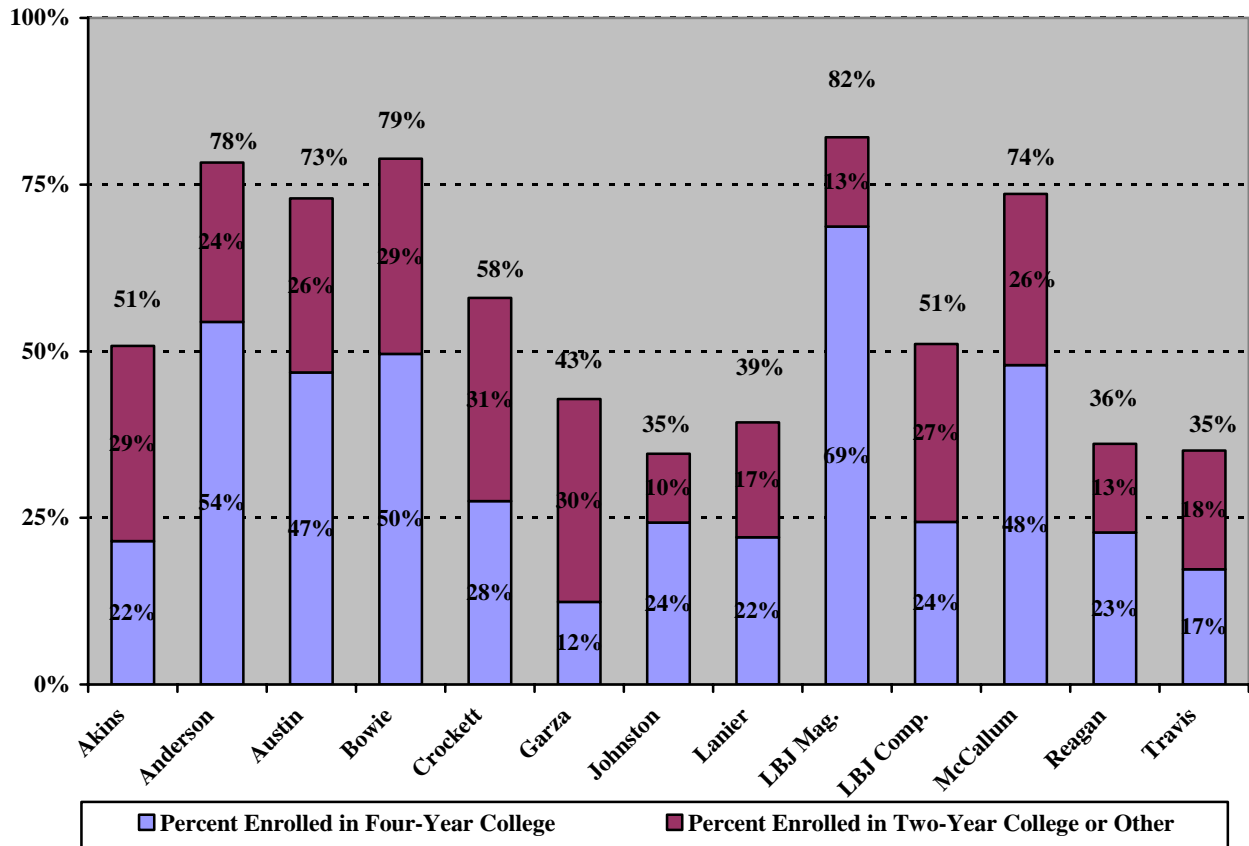
Table 1. Postsecondary Enrollment Counts and Percentages by Year, Semester, and In-State/Out-of-State Status

	Enrolled In-State		Enrolled Out-of-State		Total Enrolled	Percent of AISD Grads
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Class of 2002 (3,705)						
Fall 2002	1,618	43.7%	209	5.6%	1,827	49.3%
Spring 2003 (initial)	205	5.5%	7	0.2%	212	5.7%
Total	1,823	49.2%	216	5.8%	2,039	55.0%
Class of 2003 (3,861)						
Fall 2003	1,799	45.8%	234	6.1%	2,033	51.9%
Spring 2004 (initial)	181	4.7%	12	0.3%	193	5.0%
Total	1,980	47.5%	246	6.4%	2,226	57.7%
Class of 2004 (3,733)						
Fall 2004	1,809	48.5%	234	6.3%	2,043	54.7%
Spring 2005 (initial)*	154	4.1%	4	0.1%	158	4.2%
Total	1,963	52.6%	238	6.4%	2,201	59.0%
Class of 2005 (3,744)						
Fall 2005	1,856	49.6%	249	6.7%	2,105	56.2%
Spring 2006 (initial)*	142	3.8%	7	0.2%	149	4.0%
Total	1,998	53.4%	256	6.8%	2,254	60.2%
Class of 2006 (3,862)						
Fall 2006	1,985	51.4%	293	7.6%	2,278	59.0%
Spring 2007 (initial)*	131	3.4%	9	0.2%	140	3.6%
Total	2,116	54.8%	302	7.8%	2,418	62.6%

Sources: National Student Clearinghouse, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the National Center for Educational Accountability, May 2007, prepared by the Department of Program Evaluation. Notes. Spring 2005, 2006 and 2007 initial enrollment at the University of Texas at Austin and the University of North Texas were not available at the time of this report. All spring enrollment counts represent “initial” enrollment in the spring semester. These account for enrollees who did not take courses in the fall semester.

District-wide postsecondary enrollment rates for the Class of 2006 were disaggregated by high school campus for both four-year and two-year college enrollment (Figure 3). The schools with the lowest postsecondary enrollment rates had the highest percentages of economically disadvantaged students in their graduating class. Johnston, Reagan, Travis, and Lanier each had less than 40% of their students enrolled in a postsecondary institution, and at least 69% of their graduating classes were classified as economically disadvantaged. Alternatively, the schools with the highest percentages of college-bound students had the lowest percentages of economically disadvantaged students. Austin, Anderson, Bowie, McCallum, and LBJ-Magnet had between 6%-23% of their graduates classified as economically disadvantaged and at least 73% of their graduates enrolled in postsecondary institutions.

Figure 3. Postsecondary Enrollment Rates by High School for the Graduating Class of 2006

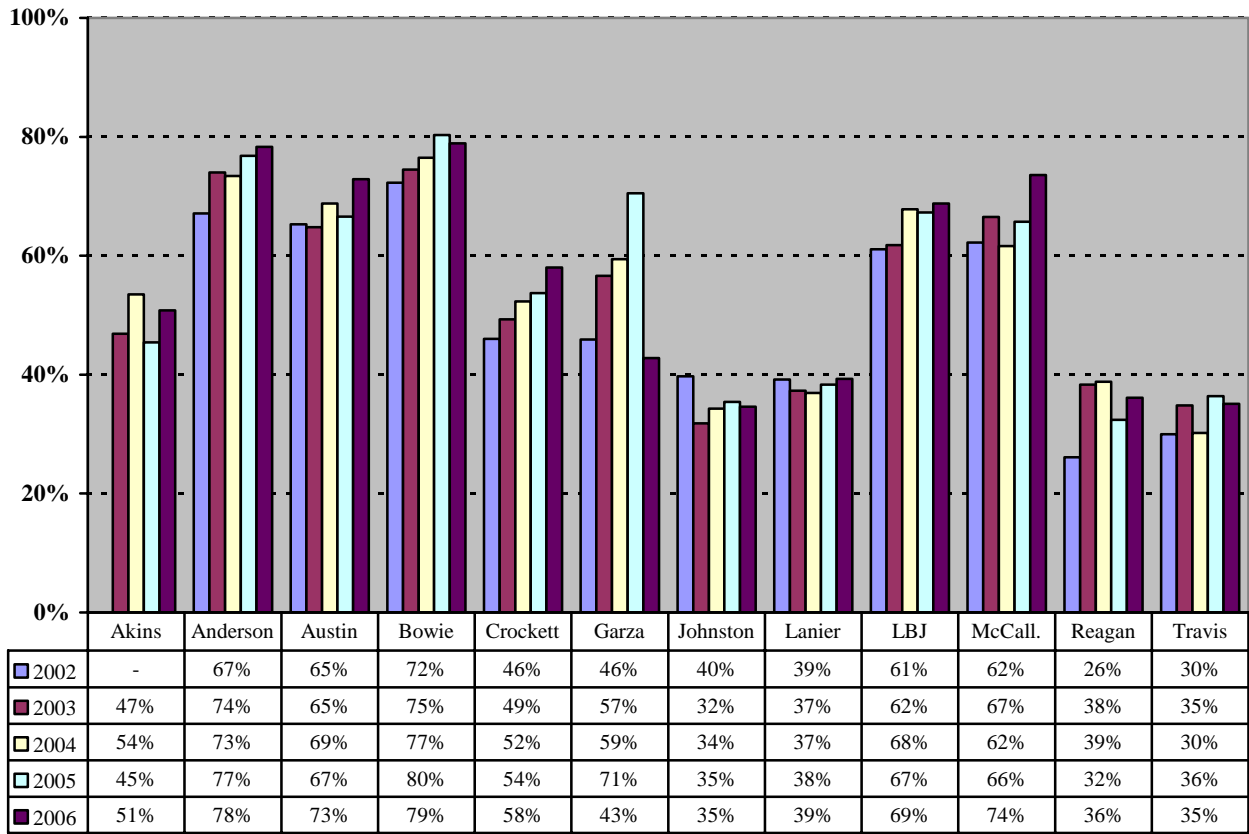


Sources: National Student Clearinghouse, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, prepared by the Department of Program Evaluation, May 2007.

Note. Two-year and four-year college enrollment percentages may not sum to total column percentages due to rounding.

Longitudinal postsecondary enrollment rates were examined for each high school campus across five years (Figure 4). Austin, Anderson, Bowie, Crockett, McCallum, and LBJ (separate percentages for the magnet and comprehensive programs were not available before 2006) high schools showed a very consistent pattern of increase in postsecondary enrollment rates through the Class of 2006. The postsecondary enrollment rates for graduates from all other high schools varied across the five years.

Figure 4. Postsecondary Enrollment Rates by High School and Graduating Class

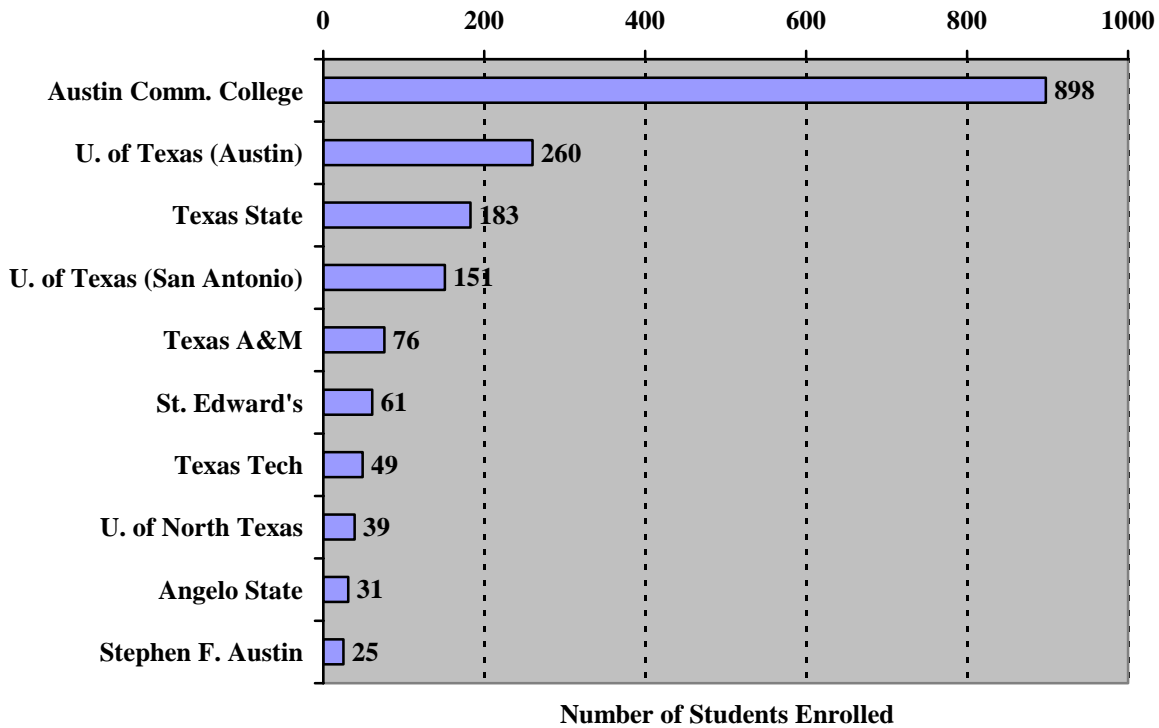


Sources: National Student Clearinghouse, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, prepared by the Department of Program Evaluation, May 2007.

Note. Percentages represent high school graduates who enrolled in a postsecondary institution during the fall or spring semester of the school year after graduation.

To identify the most common postsecondary destinations for AISD graduates in 2006-2007, the top ten colleges with their enrollment counts are displayed (Figure 5). ACC, with 898 enrollees, had more students enrolled from the Class of 2006 than the next nine most popular colleges combined. Approximately 58% of college enrollees remained in the Austin/San Marcos area and attended either ACC, the University of Texas at Austin, Texas State University, or St. Edward's University.

Figure 5. Ten Most Common Colleges Attended by the Graduating Class of 2006



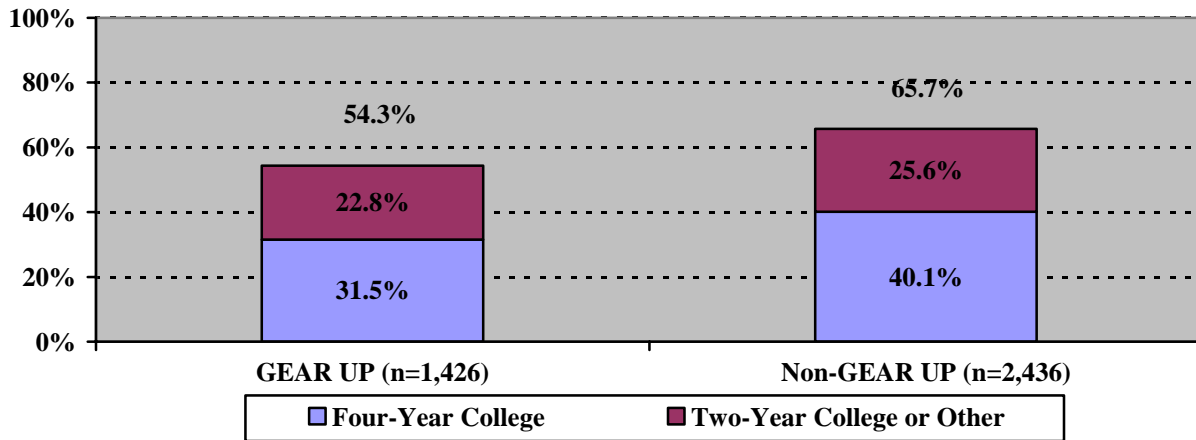
Sources: National Student Clearinghouse, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, prepared by the Department of Program Evaluation, May 2007.

Note. ACC enrollment includes some students concurrently enrolled in other schools in Fall 2006 or Spring 2007.

GEAR UP COHORT ANALYSIS

Of the 3,862 seniors who graduated with the class of 2006, 1,426 (37%) were participants in a federally funded six-year program called Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). GEAR UP's mission was to help prepare students for postsecondary education who were economically disadvantaged or whose families had no history of college education. GEAR UP supported various aspects of college preparation, including college visits, the application process, academic tutoring, signing up for college entrance exams, and parental engagement. Beginning in Fall 2000 with a cohort of 7th graders at specific middle schools, GEAR UP support staff worked with these students for six years, developing personal relationships with them and their parents and providing direct assistance up until their high school graduation. Of the 1,426 students in the GEAR UP cohort who graduated in 2006, 54% were from economically disadvantaged families, as compared to 21% of non-GEAR UP students. Figures 6 and 7 present comparisons of postsecondary enrollment rates for GEAR UP and other students. Lower percentages of GEAR UP graduates enrolled in two-year and four-year colleges than did other AISD graduates (Figure 6).

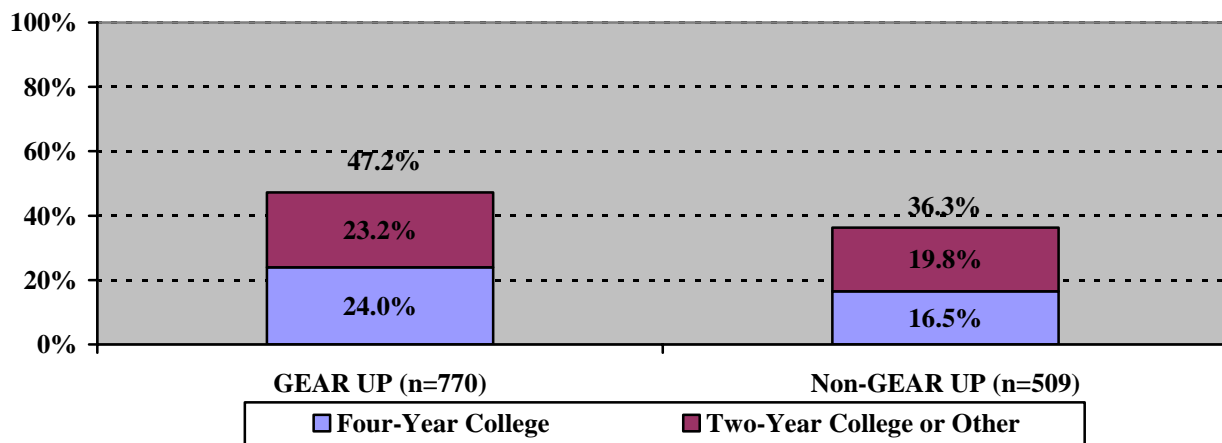
Figure 6. Postsecondary Enrollment Rates by GEAR UP Status, Class of 2006



Sources: National Student Clearinghouse, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, prepared by the Department of Program Evaluation, May 2007.

However, the comparison between GEAR UP and non-GEAR UP students (Figure 6) does not take into account the fact that GEAR UP students were 2.5 times more likely to be categorized as being economically disadvantaged than were other graduating seniors. Because such students were a primary target audience of the GEAR UP program, a comparison of GEAR UP and non-GEAR UP students was conducted just for those students categorized as having economic disadvantage (Figure 7). From among the 1,279 economically disadvantaged graduates, GEAR UP students enrolled at both four-year and two-year institutions at significantly higher rates than did non-GEAR UP students ($p=.001$). Overall, economically disadvantaged GEAR UP students enrolled in postsecondary institutions 30% more often than did other economically disadvantaged students.

Figure 7. Postsecondary Enrollment Rates of Economically Disadvantaged Students by GEAR UP Status, Class of 2006



Sources: National Student Clearinghouse, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, prepared by the Department of Program Evaluation, May 2007.

DISCUSSION

Since 2002, the percentage of AISD high school graduates who have enrolled in a postsecondary institution in the fall or spring semester after high school graduation has increased by approximately 14%, from 55.0% to the current rate of 62.6%. This increase has been steady, averaging 1-2 percentage points per year. Most of this increase is attributable to the growing percentages of students enrolling in four-year colleges, which rose from 32% in 2002 to 38% in 2006.

Nonetheless, the most common destination, by far, for recent AISD graduates has been Austin Community College, although the percentage of recent graduates who enroll at ACC each year has risen only slightly, from 20% in 2002 to 23% in 2006. In 2006-2007, 37% of all college-enrolled AISD graduates attended ACC. Other than ACC, the three most common destinations for AISD graduates were the University of Texas at Austin, Texas State University, and the University of Texas at San Antonio. Although over 90% of college-bound AISD graduates remain in Texas for their postsecondary education, the percentage of students heading out of state for college has slowly been increasing, from 5.8% in 2002 to 7.8% in 2006.

A disaggregation of postsecondary enrollment data reveals some considerable differences between various categories of students. Sixty-three percent of female graduates enrolled in postsecondary institutions, compared to 59% of males. The difference was even greater at four-year colleges, where 40% of females enrolled, compared with 33% of males. It should be noted, however, that this gender gap mirrors a recent nationwide trend of females outnumbering males on college campuses (King, 2006). When separated by race and ethnicity, the data show that approximately three-fourths of Non-Hispanic White and Asian graduates enrolled in postsecondary institutions, compared with 57% of African American graduates and 46% of Hispanic graduates. Forty-three percent of graduates who were classified as economically disadvantaged enrolled in a postsecondary institution. Twenty-one percent of economically disadvantaged students went to four-year colleges, which was the lowest four-year college enrollment rate of any of the above categories.

Among individual high school campuses, the highest 2006-2007 postsecondary enrollment rate was achieved by graduates of the LBJ Magnet program (82%), followed closely by Bowie (79%), Anderson (78%), McCallum (74%) and Austin (73%). These five campuses, plus Crockett, whose rate has increased four consecutive years, have been the ones most responsible for the districtwide increase since 2002. The other six high schools have been less consistent from year to year and experienced little overall improvement over the past four years.

The recent annual increases in districtwide postsecondary enrollment have taken place in spite of a steady rise in the percentage of economically disadvantaged students enrolled in the district. District initiatives such as the GEAR UP program have been implemented to help meet the college preparation needs of this growing segment of the AISD student population. An initial analysis suggests that GEAR UP succeeded in this regard, as 47% of the economically

disadvantaged GEAR UP students enrolled in postsecondary institutions, compared with 36% of similarly disadvantaged students who were not part of the GEAR UP cohort. Moreover, economically disadvantaged GEAR UP students enrolled in four-year colleges at a 45% higher rate (24.0% vs. 16.5%) than did other economically disadvantaged graduates from the class of 2006.

CONCLUSION

Cumulatively, these results indicate that the district is making progress in preparing students for postsecondary education despite the increasing presence of students who come from economically disadvantaged households. The schools with the lowest postsecondary enrollment rates, however, are generally those with the greatest concentrations of economically disadvantaged and minority students. District leaders should therefore continue to promote and implement programs targeted to these student populations that will increase awareness about the opportunities provided by postsecondary education as well as the steps necessary for admission and enrollment. Although more detailed and school-specific analyses of postsecondary enrollment data will be necessary to draw specific conclusions about the long-term efficacy of the various programs, the steadily growing districtwide postsecondary enrollment rate suggests that these programs have had positive effects. The Department of Program Evaluation will continue to monitor and report postsecondary enrollment of AISD graduates annually.

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