

Putting Research into Action for Student, School and System Success



CENTRAL TEXAS
Student*Futures*
PROJECT

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Outline



Background

Central Texas: A Multifaceted, Multi-sector Effort

Collective (or Individual) Impact?

Student Futures Project: Research in Action

Successes

Lessons Learned

Our Story Begins



A school board member, a chamber VP, a nonprofit director and an academic walk into a bar ...

Each is concerned about problems facing the education system in Central Texas.

Timely data about the situation and how best to address it are difficult to access, of dubious quality, and in short supply.

Background



***Closing the Gaps* reports** (2000, 2004) cite the challenge of changing demographics: rising % Hispanic, first-gen students with much lower college-going rates.

2004 **Market Street Report** highlights growing shortage of college-educated talent as problem for Austin v. other 'benchmark' cities/regions.

2004-2005, **Greater Austin Chamber (GAC)** asks UT's Ray Marshall Center (RMC) for help with data access and use, forms task force to address talent shortage.

2007, Texas creates 3 **Education Research Centers (ERCs)**. RMC partners with UT-Dallas and others.

Collective Impact?



Five (5) conditions—

- **Common Agenda**
- **Shared Measurement**
- **Mutually Reinforcing Activities**
- **Continuous Communication**
- **Backbone Support**

Does GAC's Central Texas Initiative qualify?

Source: Hanleybrown, Kania & Kramer, "Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work," *Stanford Social Innovation Review* (2012)

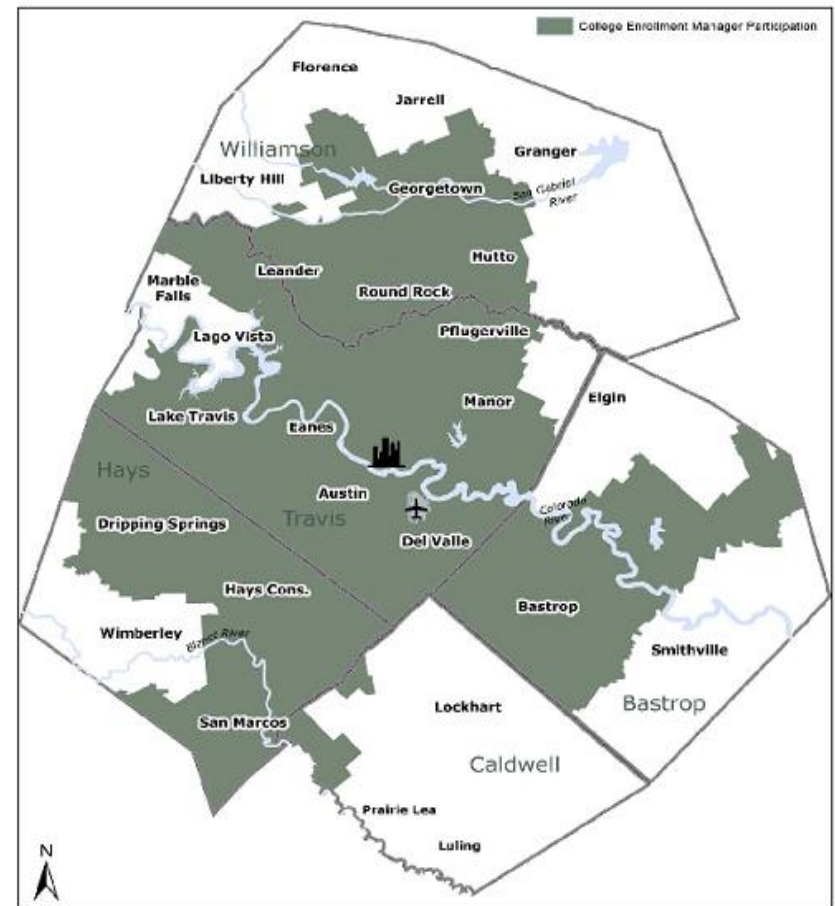
Common Agenda



Shared vision for change with common understanding of the problem and joint approach to solving it.

Goals

- To increase the direct-to-college enrollment rate to 62% in 2010, and to 70% in 2015.
- To increase college and career-readiness rates (added later).



Backbone Support



Separate organization with staff and specialized skills serving as 'backbone support' for the effort and coordinating participating organizations.

Greater Austin Chamber (GAC) has:

- Played a **vital, visible, respected role** in educational policy, programming and systems change.
- **Raised funds** via *Opportunity Austin* and advocated for bond elections.
- **Staff** highly skilled and experienced in education at all levels, and expertise in policy advocacy and coordination of complex, multi-faceted efforts.
- **Pressed for accountability** at all levels, serving as a 'critical friend'.

Mutually Reinforcing Activities



Activities differentiated but coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.

- Proactive **college and career-readiness counseling** (ISDs, campuses)
- **Tutoring** to bring students up to college/career standards (nonprofits)
- **Financial Aid Saturdays** (GAC, TG, ISDs, volunteers)
- **Early College Connection** (Austin Community College)
- **Data collection & analysis** (Student Futures Project of the RMC, some ISDs)
- **Lobbying** for policy and systems change (GAC)

Continuous Communication



Consistent, open communication building trust, assuring mutual objectives and creating common motivation.

- Monthly College Readiness and Enrollment Support Team (**CREST**) meetings, chaired by ISD counselor with reps from ISDs, campuses, colleges, non- and for-profits.
- Periodic **Financial Aid Task Force** meetings.
- Real-time **FAFSA and Common Application** reports.
- Regular **ISD and community briefings**, including reports from the Student Futures Project.

Shared Measurement



Collect data and measure results consistently across actors to ensure efforts are aligned and actors are accountable.

- ***Student Futures Project*** collects and analyzes data over time.
- In addition to real-time ***FAFSA and Common App reports***, Chamber produces periodic ***ISD and college progress reports***.
- ***Monthly CREST meetings*** convened by GAC serve as key neutral venues for presenting and discussing results and their implications for policies and programs.

Student Futures Project and its role ...

Our Story Continues



The school board member, Chamber VP and nonprofit director convince the academic to:

- ***Identify and assess best practices*** for data collection, analysis and performance management
- ***Design an approach*** to meet Central Texas' needs

The 2004-2005 LBJ School study led to the launch of the Central Texas Student Futures Project, which began with a 4 ISD pilot in Spring 2005.

Research Questions



- What are graduating seniors' **high school experiences, plans and preparation** for life after high school?
- What share of high school graduates **enroll in postsecondary education, become employed,** or do both in the fall after graduation?
- What share of graduates are **enrolled and/or employed** over time?
- Which **factors** are **significantly associated** with positive **postsecondary education and employment outcomes**?
- How do outcomes **change over time** for cohorts of graduates and selected populations groups?

Reports can be found at: www.centexstudentfutures.org

Data Sources



Historical School Records

- Student demographics
- Courses taken
- Course grades

Senior Surveys

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

Postsecondary Education Records

- National Student Clearinghouse
- Texas Education Research Center records

Employment Records

- Texas Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records

Student Futures Successes



SFP research has informed and contributed to policy and practice improvements since mid-2000s. For example:

- Data on 2- and 4-year, in- and out-of-state college enrollments and labor market outcomes
- ‘Aspiration gap’ and strategies for addressing it
- Role of financial aid processes and uncertainty
- Understanding cumulative effects of key activities on college-going and variation by student subgroup
- Describing and understanding varying college, training, career & other pathways (underway via WDQI & ERC)



Composition of Graduates (2007 Districts)



Shares of Hispanic and low-income graduates gradually increasing.

	Class of 2007	Class of 2008	Class of 2009
Totals	9,410	10,452	10,793
Ethnicity			
Asian	6%	6%	6%
Black	11%	12%	12%
Hispanic	29%	31%	32%
White	52%	52%	48%
Gender			
Female	48%	50%	50%
Male	50%	50%	50%
Family Income Status			
Low-income	21%	23%	26%
Not Low-income	73%	73%	70%
Special Education Status			
Special Education	9%	9%	9%
Not Special Education	85%	87%	87%



Postsecondary Enrollment of Central Texas Graduates in Fall Following Graduation

by College Type, Ethnicity and Income Status

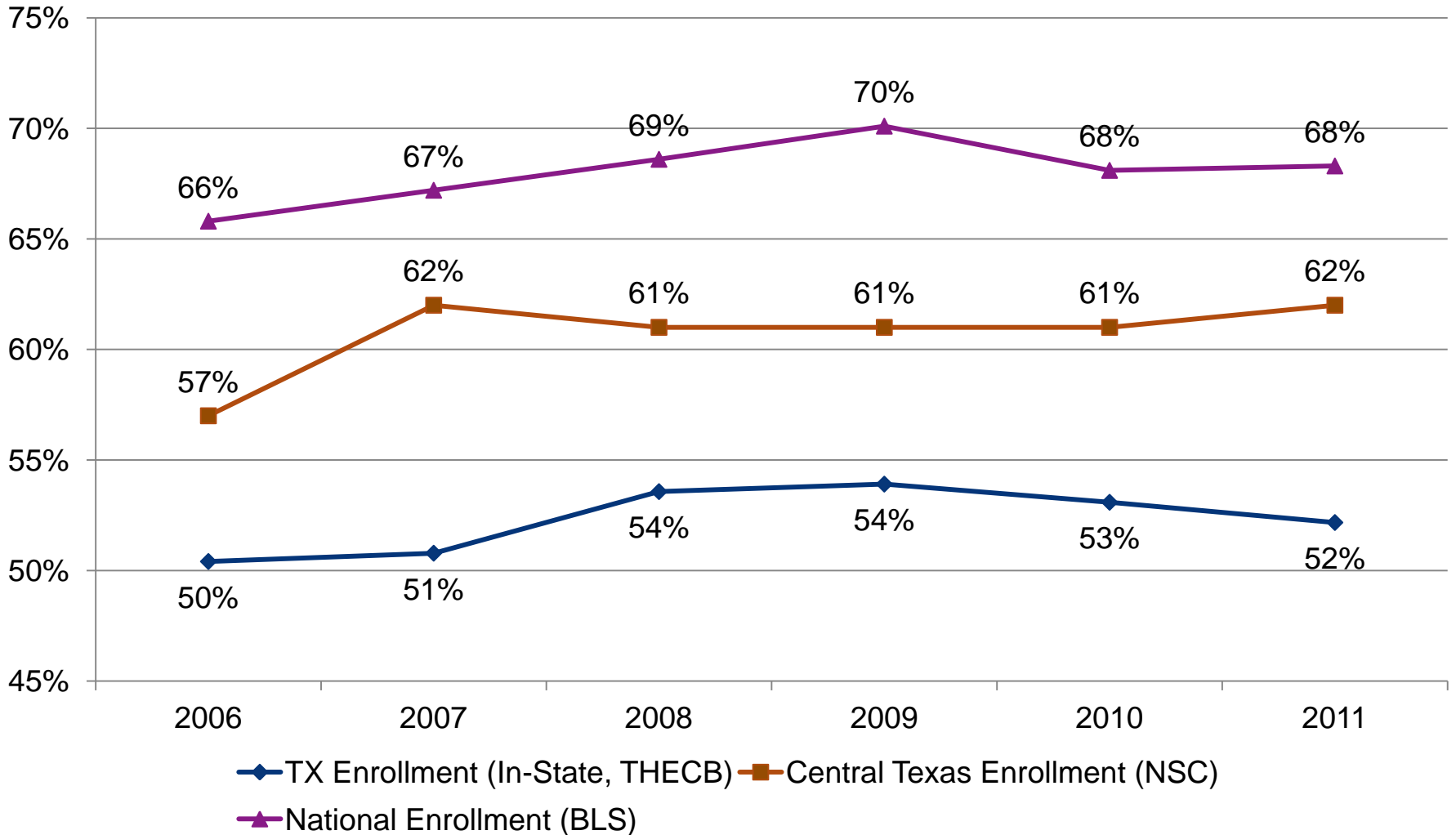


	2007		2008		2009*	
	2-Year	4-Year	2-Year	4-Year	2-Year	4-Year
Enrolled Graduates (%)	22%	40%	22%	39%	23%	38%
Ethnicity						
Asian	21%	57%	20%	63%	17%	64%
Black	23%	35%	22%	33%	26%	36%
Hispanic	22%	22%	23%	22%	25%	23%
White	23%	49%	22%	49%	23%	46%
Income Status						
Low-income	21%	19%	20%	19%	24%	21%
Not low-income	23%	47%	23%	47%	24%	46%
Unknown	21%	12%	21%	12%	19%	5%

* Overall demoninator includes 100 students who lacked enough information to link to NSC records; 61% reflects the best possible rate using NSC and THECB data.

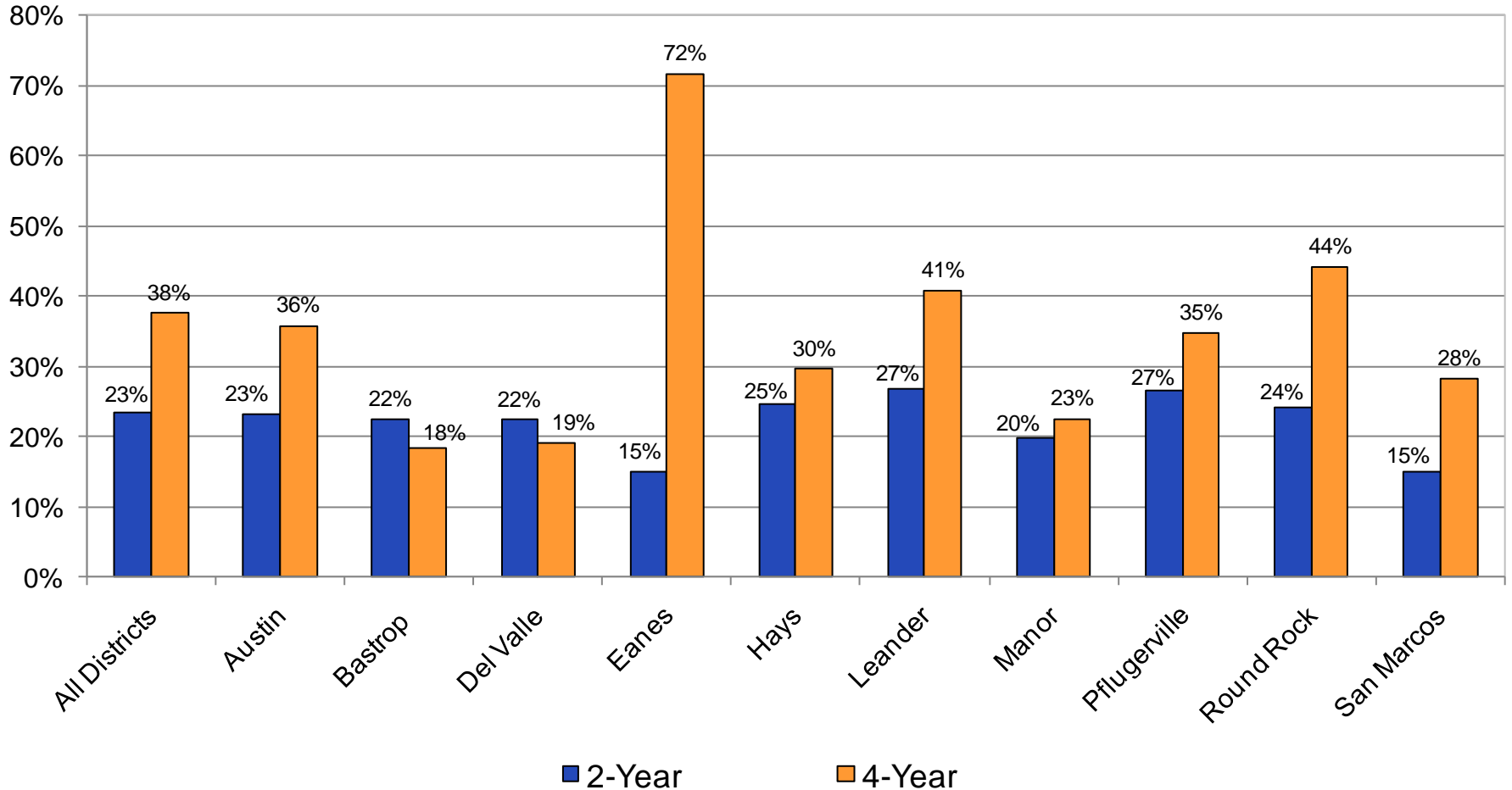


Regional, State, and National Postsecondary Enrollment Outcomes



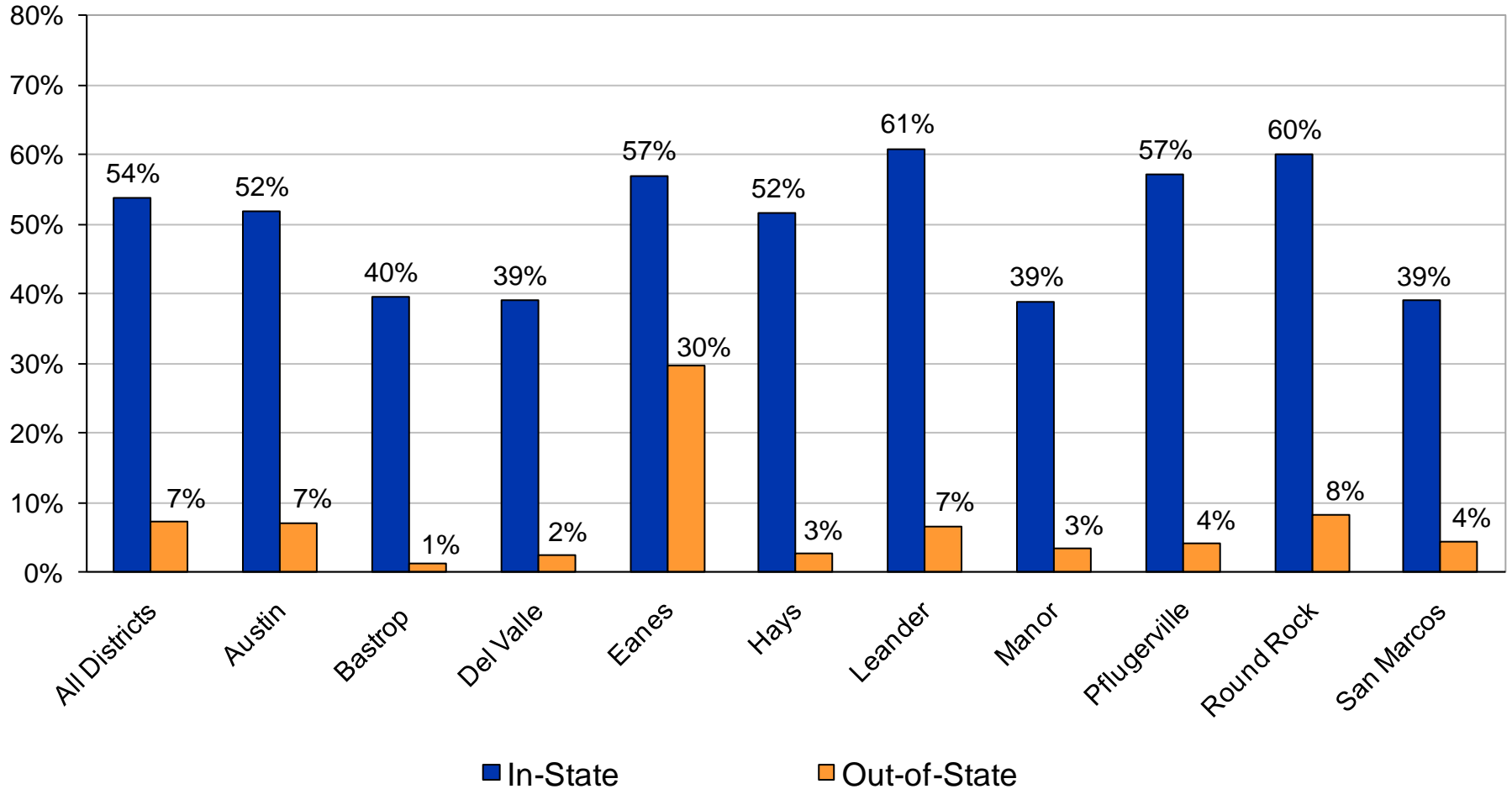


Percent of 2009 Graduates Enrolled in Fall 2009, by College Type and District (N=11,993)





Percent of 2009 Graduates Enrolled in Fall 2009, by Location and District (N=11,993)

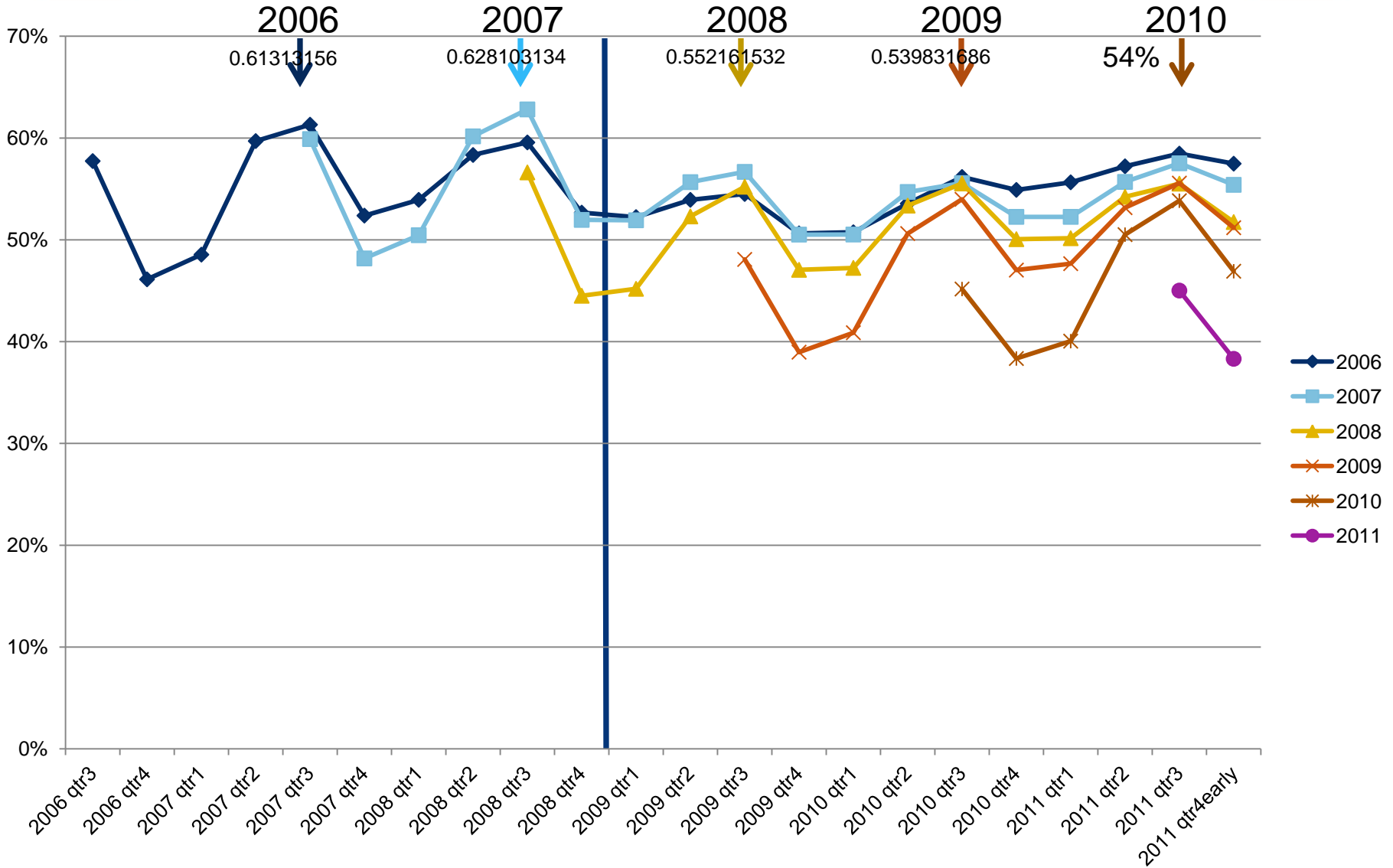




Employment Status, Graduation to Fall 2011



Five Quarters Post High School





Median Wages, Graduation to Fall 2011



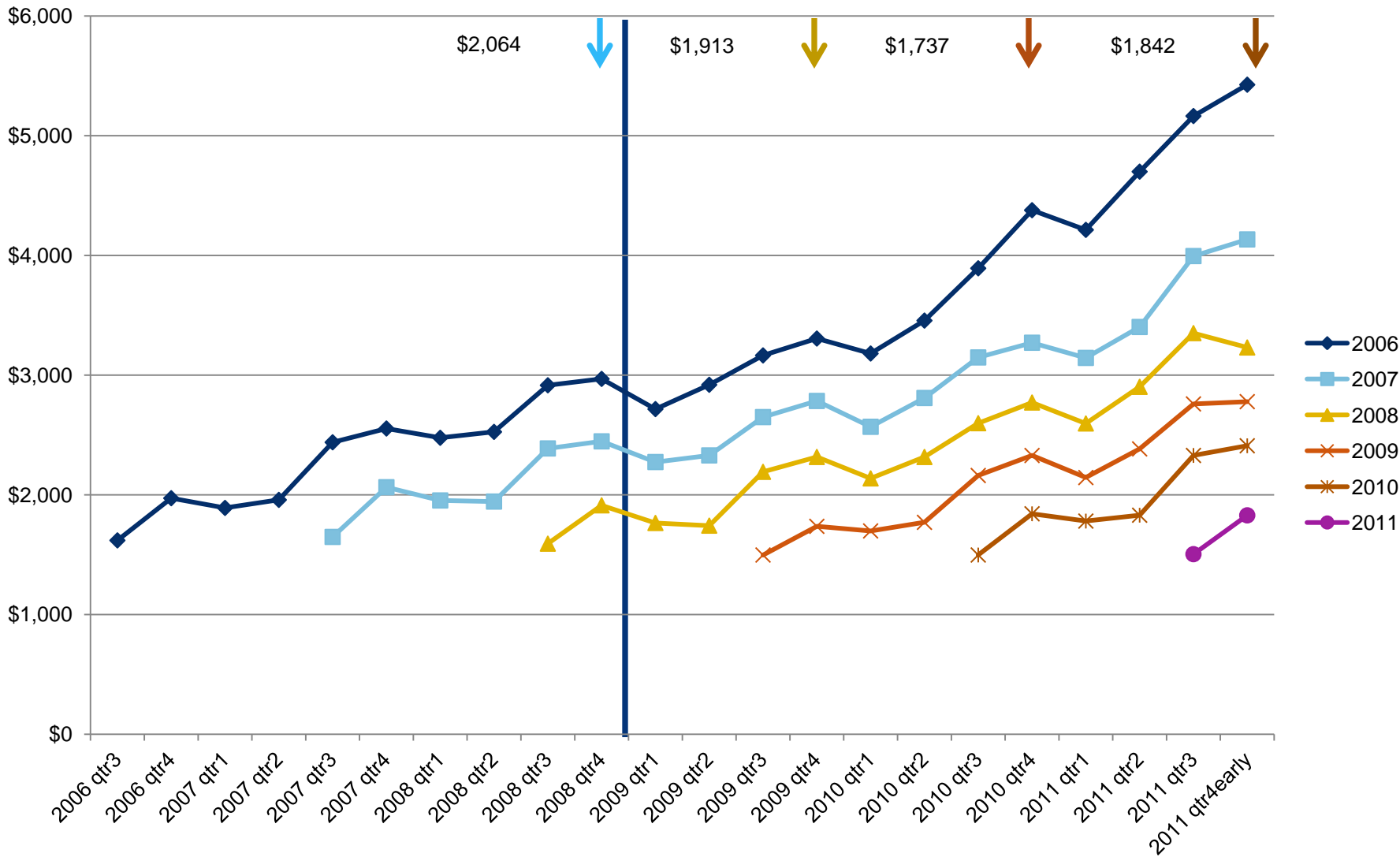
Fall After of High School Graduation

2007

2008

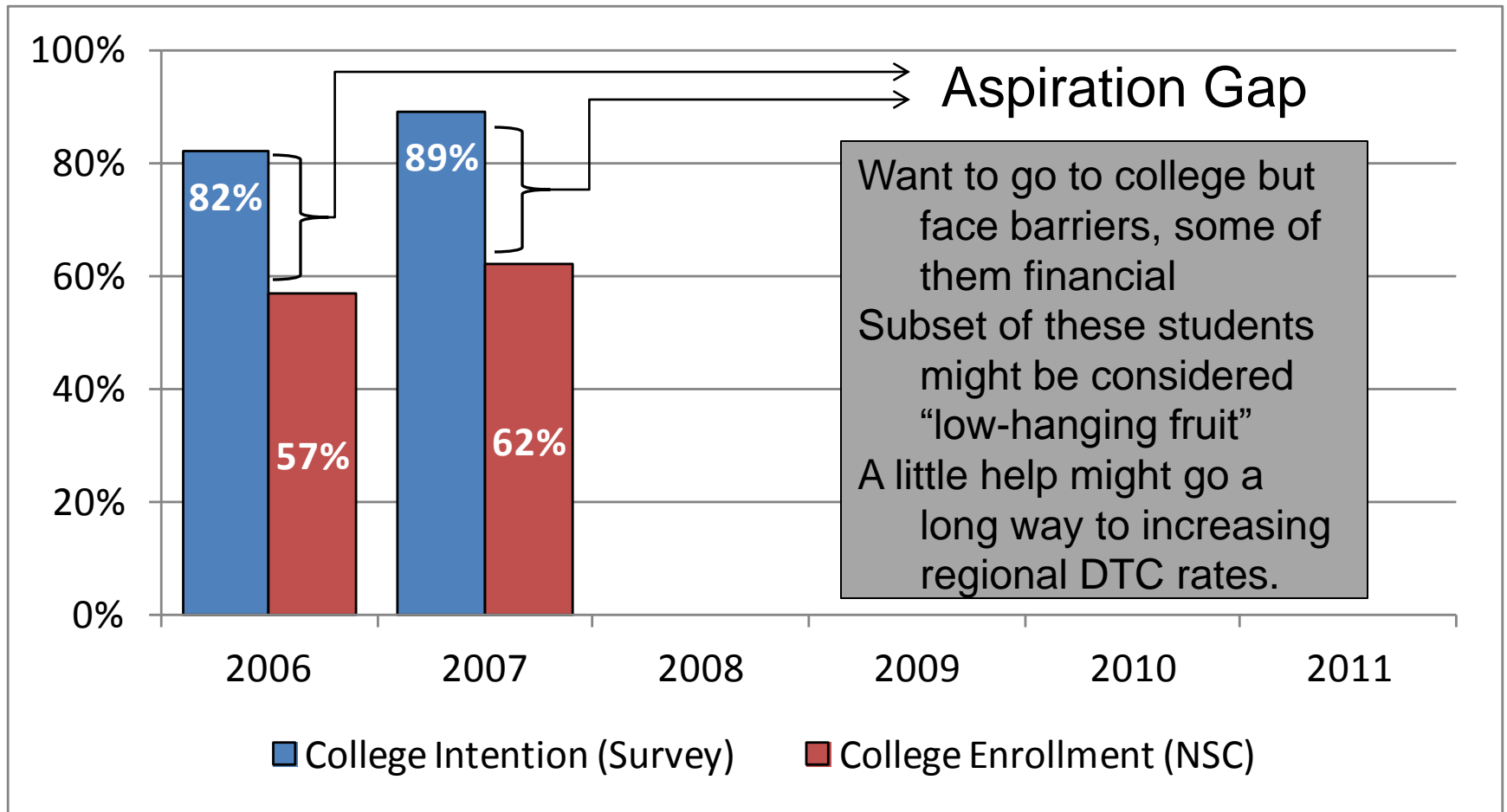
2009

2010



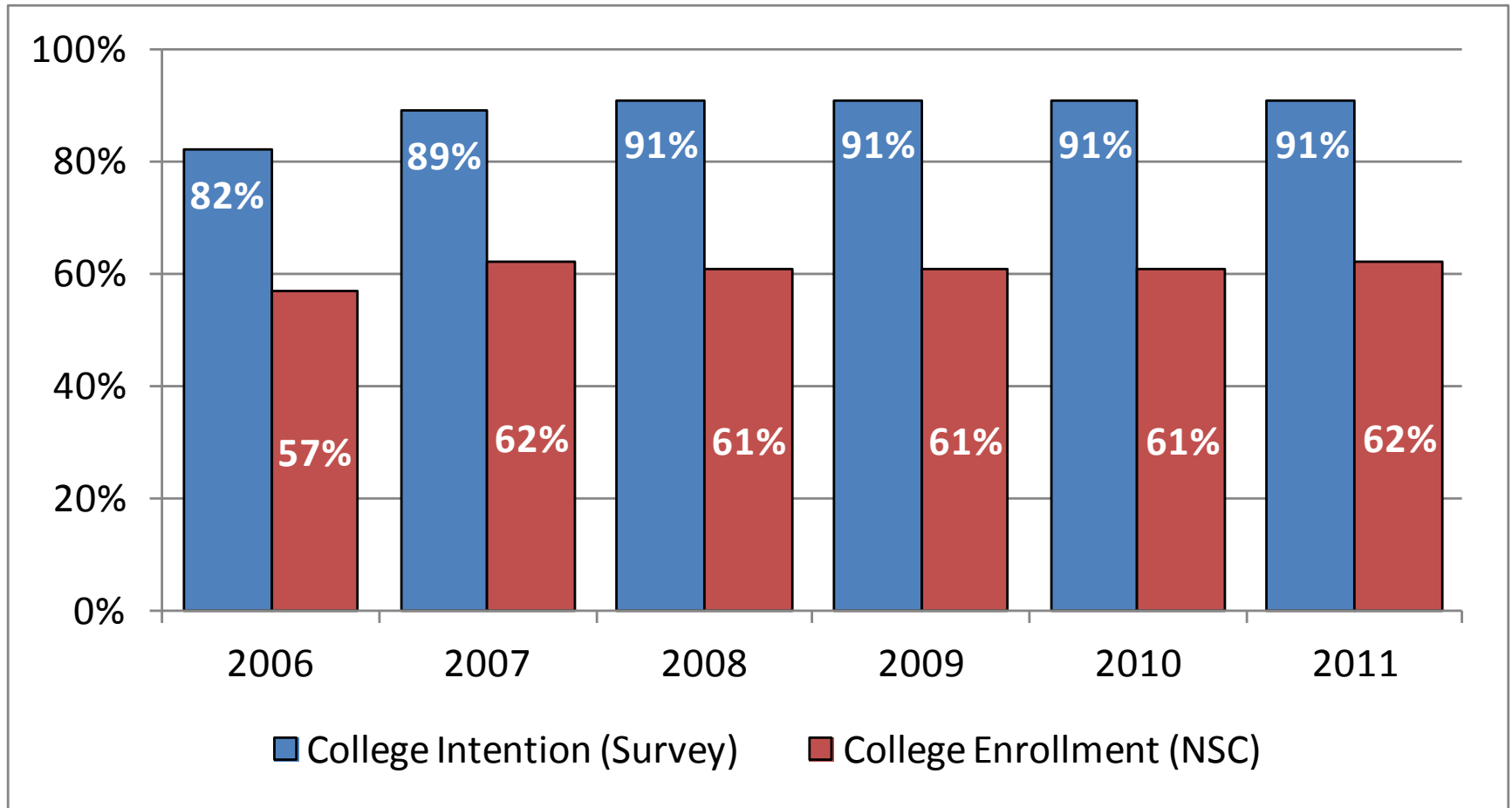


College Enrollment Aspiration Gap



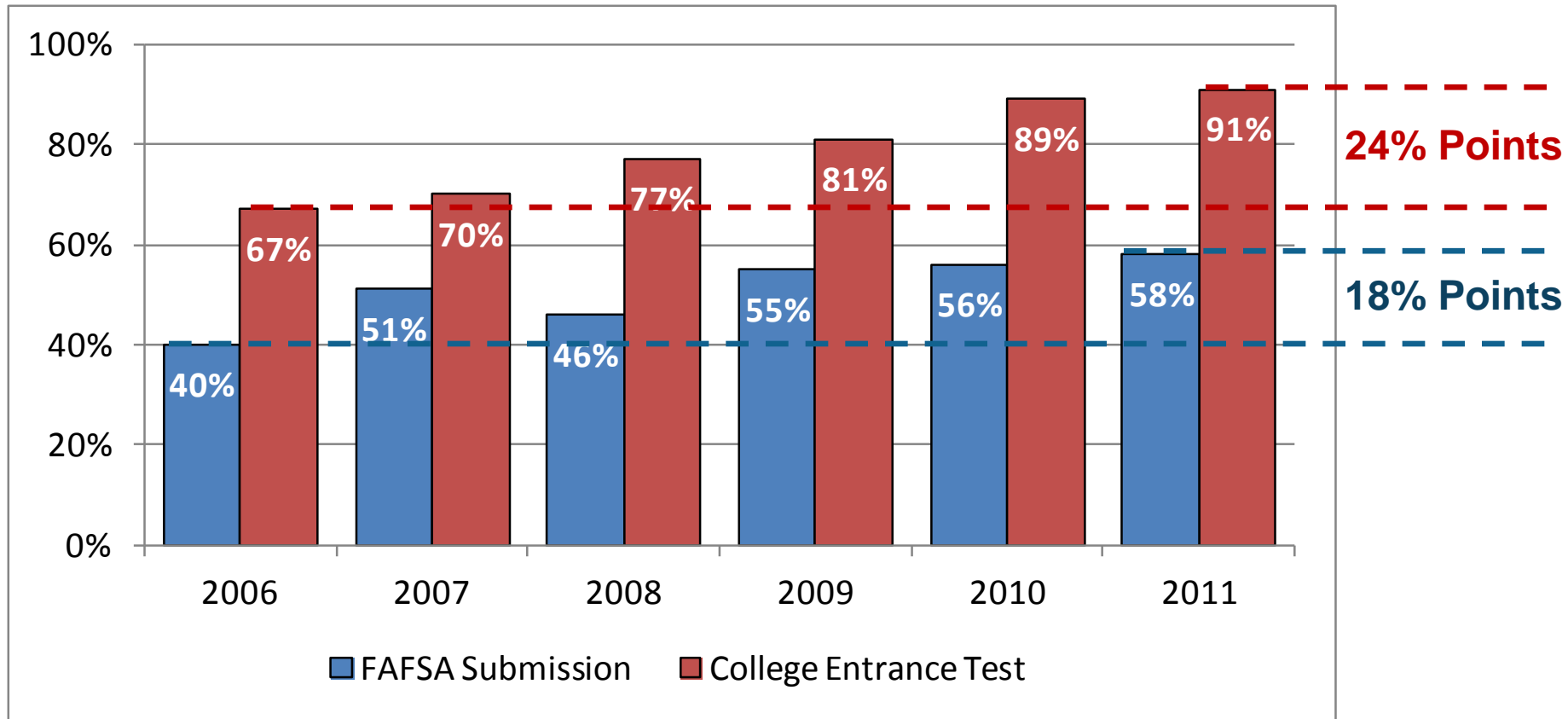


College Enrollment Aspiration Gap, 2006 through 2011





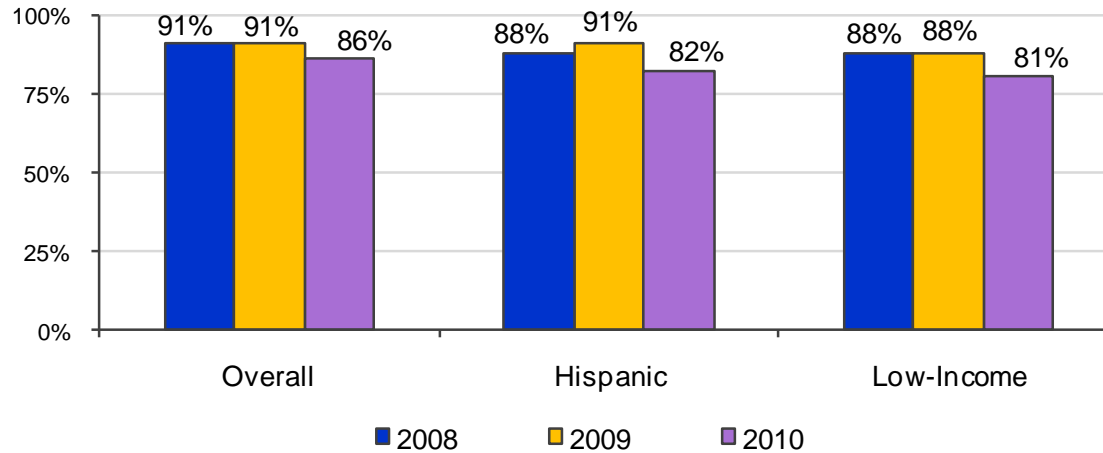
Participation in College Preparation Activities, 2006 through 2011



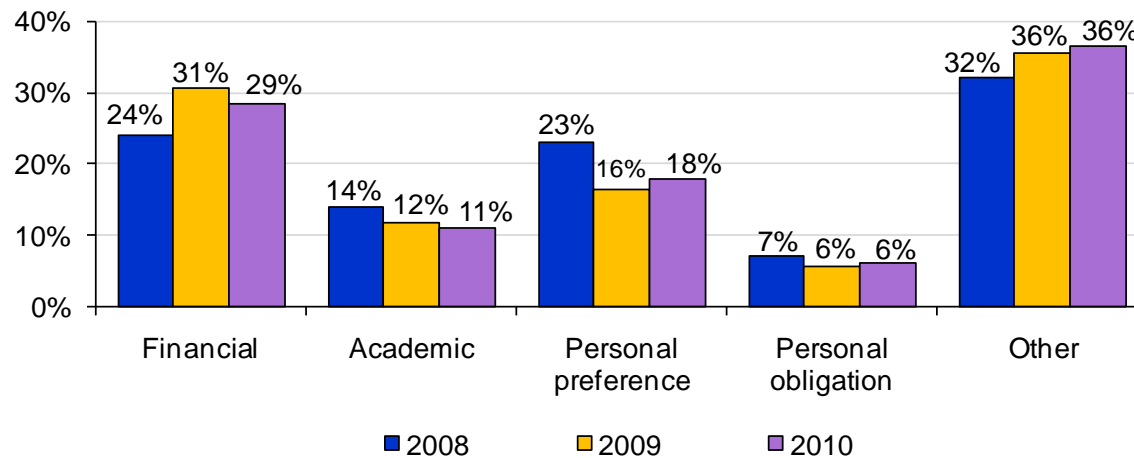
Senior Survey Recent Trends



Plans for Postsecondary Enrollment



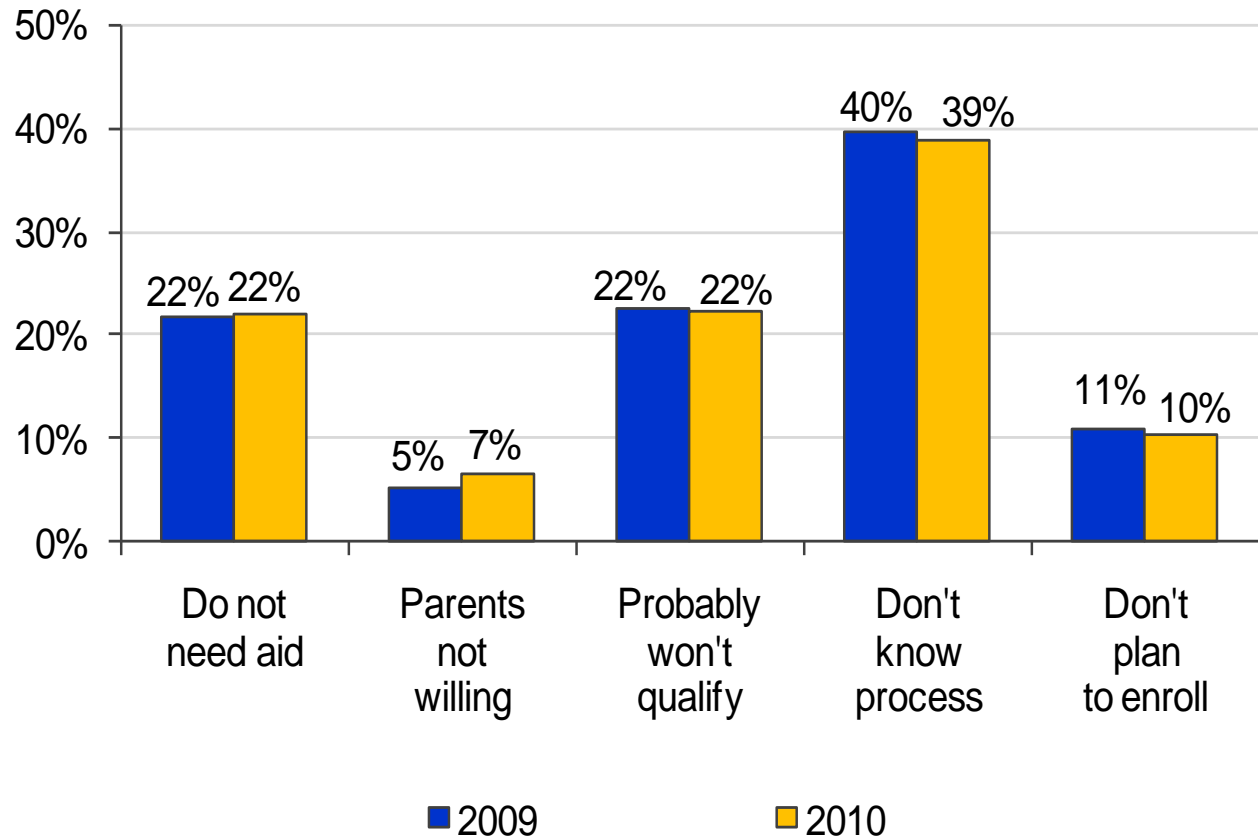
Primary Reason for Not Choosing Postsecondary Enrollment



Senior Survey Recent Trends



Primary Reason for Not Submitting FAFSA

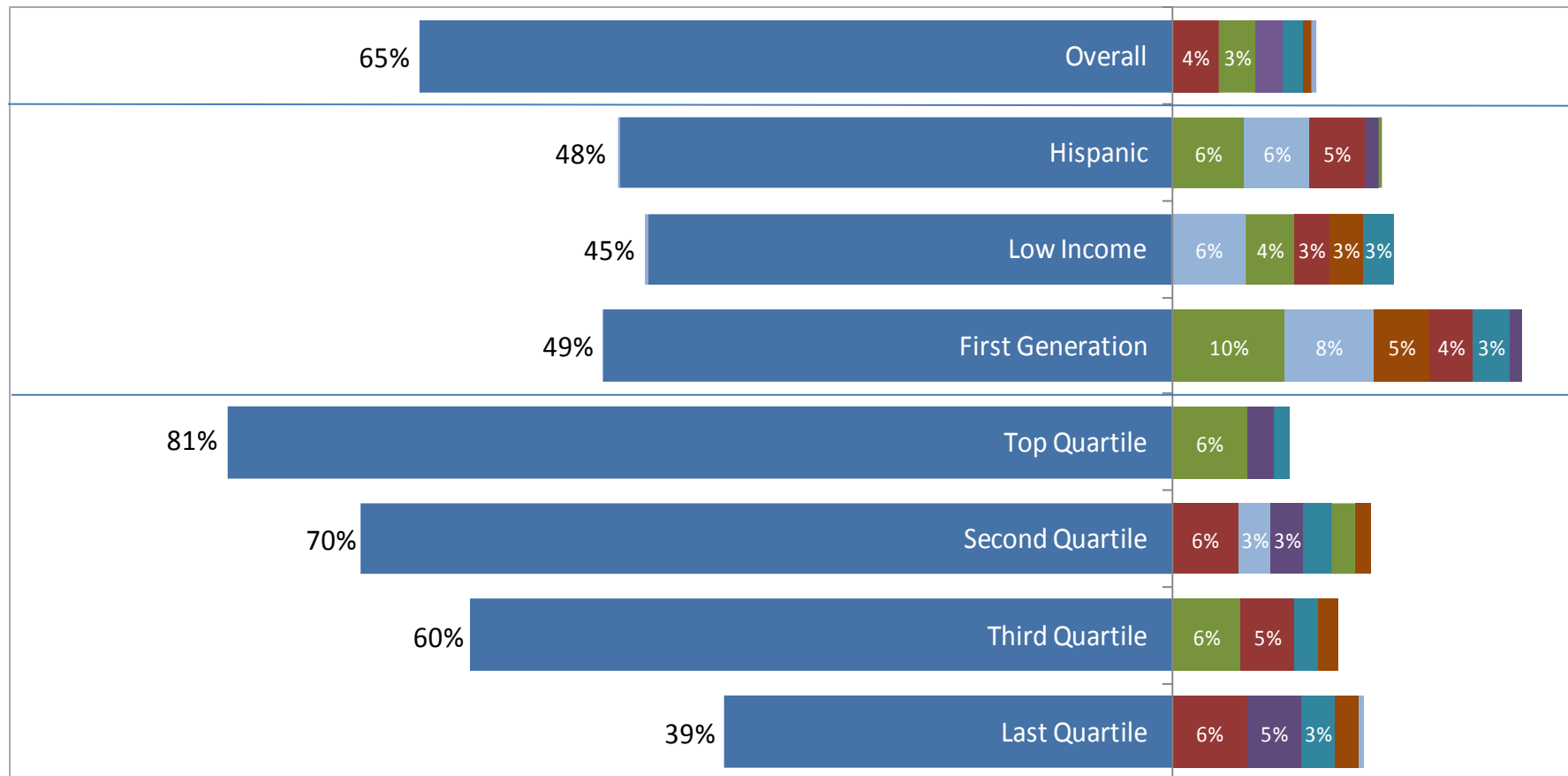




Predicted Cumulative Effects on College Enrollment



Baseline Enrollment | Cumulative Effect Enrollment



100%

80%

60%

40%

20%

0%

20%

Met w/Counselor about College

Completed FAFSA

Plan to Pay for College Using Loans

Took SAT/ACT Prep. Course

Participated in College Fair

Considered Financial Aid Easy

Lessons Learned



Establishing a robust data-driven approach to shaping policies and programs is time-consuming and complex.

Turnover will occur among leaders, supervisors, operating staff, counselors and others. Trusting relationships must be continually rebuilt.

A continuous improvement, learning process is preferred to more traditional accountability ones.

Posing the right questions and getting the right answers are two very different things. The latter may not be as susceptible to scheduling as the former.

Ongoing researcher/practitioner engagement, top-to-bottom, is critical, in part to ensure researchers understand data that practitioners are providing.

Lessons ...



Be mindful of unintended consequences; they are inevitable on both sides. (See “The Importance of Trusting Relationships”)

Despite recent progress, FERPA may still be a 4-letter word. Data access can be fragile.

Engaging non-education, non-researcher stakeholders—especially business and civic leaders—is difficult and time consuming, but it pays large dividends over time.

Maintaining research capacity based within colleges or universities is valuable and lends additional credibility to educational improvement efforts.

Our Story Isn't Over Yet



The school board member, Chamber VP and nonprofit director and the academic are still working together, now joined by an ever wider circle of partners and stakeholders.

The Student Futures Project has grown to 12 ISDs, surveys 85% of seniors in the 4-county region and has 50,000+ students in its longitudinal database. Other areas interested in replicating the GAC/SFP model.

The Texas ERC now allows survey and job training data to be uploaded and linked to education and employment records. ERCs are being rebid at present, though state support is lacking.

For More Information



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