

Factors Associated with Education and Work after High School for the Classes of 2008 and 2009

Greg Cumpton, Deanna Schexnayder and Christopher T. King with assistance from Chandler Stolp

In this brief:

Factors Associated with Postsecondary Enrollment 2

Factors Associated with Employment 2

Key differences in factors associated with college enrollment and employment between Central Texas and Texas 3

Factors associated with postsecondary transitions for Hispanic, low-income and first generation high school graduates 3

Report Conclusions 4

Factors Associated with Education and Work after High School for the Classes of 2008 and 2009 is the third report in a series examining factors linked to successful postsecondary transitions, and it builds upon information gained from earlier Student Futures Project multivariate analyses on smaller samples of surveyed 2006 and 2007 Central Texas graduates.

RMC researchers address the following research questions for 2008 and 2009 Central Texas graduates:

1. Which factors are associated with graduates' initial postsecondary education and labor market outcomes?
2. How well do the statistically significant factors hold across cohorts, data sources, location, and model selection?

3. What are the factors associated with postsecondary transitions for specific populations of interest in the Central Texas region, including Hispanic, low-income and first-generation high school graduates?

Data from several sources are used, including high school records, surveys taken during students' senior year and postsecondary enrollment and employment records. Researchers use several methods for their analysis, including descriptive statistics and multinomial logistic regression.



Outcomes for 2008 and 2009 High School Graduates

- A larger share of 4-year enrollment from students in Central Texas compared to Texas (around 38% and 31%, respectively) is the primary reason for the overall higher share of Central Texas graduates who enrolled in postsecondary education in the fall semester (61% for the classes of 2008 and 2009) compared to Texas (53% in 2008 and 55% in 2009).
- Initial enrollment at four-year colleges between the classes of 2008 and 2009 dropped, while two year enrollment increased for Central Texas. Texas shares of 4-year and 2-year initial enrollment both increased slightly from 2008 to 2009.
- The share of employed high school graduates decreased from 44% to 38% in Central Texas, compared to a drop from 47% to 38% in Texas.
- Both Central Texas and Texas saw a rise in the shares of Hispanic graduates (2% points) and low-income graduates (3% points) between 2008 and 2009.



Access the Full Report on the Student Futures Project Website:

www.centextstudentfutures.org



Factors Associated with Postsecondary Enrollment

- Graduates who completed one math course higher than Algebra II, or more than one AP/IB course, were more likely to enroll in 4-year colleges.
- Students who graduated in the top 10% of their high school class, took an SAT/ACT preparation course, visited one or more college campuses, or reported submitting a FAFSA were more likely to enroll in a 4-year college.
- Graduates not classified as college ready were less likely to enroll in 4-year schools.
- Failure to meet the 8th grade math standard was linked to lower 4-year enrollment.
- Students ever having participated in the free and reduced lunch program were less likely to enroll in college.

4 year College Enrollment	
More Likely to Be Enrolled	Less Likely to Be Enrolled
Black (Compared to White)	Ever been on free and reduced lunch
Completed one math course higher than Algebra II	Did not meet TAKS College Readiness standards
More than 1 AP/IB HS credit	Did not meet 8th grade TAKS Math standards
Top 10% of graduating class	In the bottom half of class rank for their graduating class
Visited one or more colleges	
Took a SAT/ACT course	Worked during the school year or the summer
Submitted a FAFSA	

Differing factors associated with college enrollment for Central Texas and Texas

- Receiving college credit in high school or being classified as gifted were both positively associated with 4-year enrollment for the entire state but not for Central Texas.
- Variables linked to lower 4-year enrollment rates in Texas (but not Central Texas) included special education participation, attendance at more than one high school, or failure to meet the 8th grade TAKS reading standard.
- Taking a coherent sequence of career and technology education courses was associated with higher 2-year enrollments in the state as a whole but not in the Central Texas region.

Factors associated with postsecondary transitions for Hispanic, low-income and first generation high school graduates

- As was true for all graduates, taking at least one advanced math course beyond Algebra II, taking more than one AP/IB course, or completing the FAFSA increased the likelihood of attending a 4-year college.
- Meeting with their counselors for help with college applications and essays significantly increased the chances of 4-year enrollment for these three student groups, but not for graduates in general.
- Graduating in the bottom half of the class or planning to pay for college by working reduced their chances of 4-year enrollment.
- Hispanic, low-income and first generation graduates whose families speak Spanish at home were less likely to enroll in 4-year colleges, which was not true for the general population.

High school graduates ever having participated in the free and reduced lunch program were more likely to be employed in the state of Texas but not enrolled in school the following fall.

Factors Associated with Employment

- Graduates ever having participated in the free and reduced lunch program were more likely to be only employed in the state of Texas in the fall semester.
- Graduates whose parents did not attend any postsecondary education or those graduating in the bottom quartile of the class were more likely to be only employed in the fall following graduation.
- Graduates in the top 10% of their high school class or those submitting a FAFSA were less likely to be only employed in the fall following graduation.

Employment	
More Likely to Be Only Employed*	Less Likely to Be Only Employed*
Ever been on free and reduced lunch	Top 10% of graduating class
Neither parent has more than a high school diploma	Submitted a FAFSA
In the 4th quartile of your graduating class	

* Only employed compared to being employed and enrolled in college or being not employed.



“A large number of factors associated with postsecondary employment differ between Texas and Central Texas. However, there are no instances where the direction of a statistically significant factor differs between Central Texas and Texas.”

Report Conclusions

- **Changes in the demographics of high school graduates, coupled with poor labor market conditions, have increased the need for higher skill levels among recent high school graduates.** The shares of high school graduates from groups traditionally less likely to attend college have been growing over time, but, due to interventions aimed at changing historical patterns of enrollment, overall rates of college enrollment have been maintained even with these demographic shifts. Weak economic conditions over the past few years have resulted in lower overall employment rates for recent high school graduates. Moreover, the types of jobs held by recent high school graduates do not provide strong potential for earnings growth without further education or skills development.
- **Academic achievement and participation in specific college preparation activities remain the largest and most consistent influences affecting 4-year enrollment.** This confirms earlier findings on factors associated with 4-year enrollment reported for 2007 high school graduates, while also providing additional information that could not be measured in the earlier work.
- **The differences in findings between Central Texas and the state as a whole confirm the need to conduct local policy analyses and to think critically about the meaning of the variables constructed from this data source.** Based solely on administrative data, consideration should be given to discerning if the differences in findings across geography might be due to varying meanings of some of the variables across school districts. Some administrative variables (e.g., attendance at more than one school, 8th grade TAKS standards) have a common meaning across the entire state while others (e.g., participation in a gifted program, receiving college credit in high school, and completion of a coherent sequence of career and technology education courses) could vary based on differing program definitions or availability of services across school districts.

Report Recommendations

- Research on the factors associated with postsecondary outcomes should include multiple years and models that include longitudinal variables to ensure that factors significantly and substantively associated with a particular outcome are consistent.
- Local efforts to increase enrollment in 4-year colleges should focus on academic achievement and college preparation activities found to be consistently associated with 4-year enrollment and should start in middle school or early high school.
- Research is needed to measure the impact of programs designed to improve postsecondary enrollment rates for members of student groups that have lagged in their overall enrollment rates.
- Researchers should continue to pursue their efforts to link survey variables with the longitudinal data available in the ERC in future research. Efforts presented on this topic could not determine the difference in data quality between data collected directly from local school districts compared to data reported by the state in the ERC.

Special Thanks to Student Future Project Partners and Funders

TG
Greater Austin
Chamber of Commerce
Texas Education Agency
The University of Texas
at Austin

Austin ISD
Bastrop ISD
Del Valle ISD
Eanes ISD
Hays CISD
Leander ISD

Manor ISD
Pflugerville ISD
Round Rock ISD
San Marcos ISD



Student Futures Project Background

The Student Futures Project is a research partnership between the Ray Marshall Center and a growing number of Central Texas independent school districts to identify and analyze the pathways and factors influencing how high school graduates transition from high school to postsecondary education and the labor market.



www.raymarshallcenter.org
3001 Lake Austin Blvd., Suite 3.200
Austin, TX 78703
(512) 471-7891