**Austin Independent School District**

***Department of Program Evaluation***

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# POSTSECONDARY E

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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 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 fo

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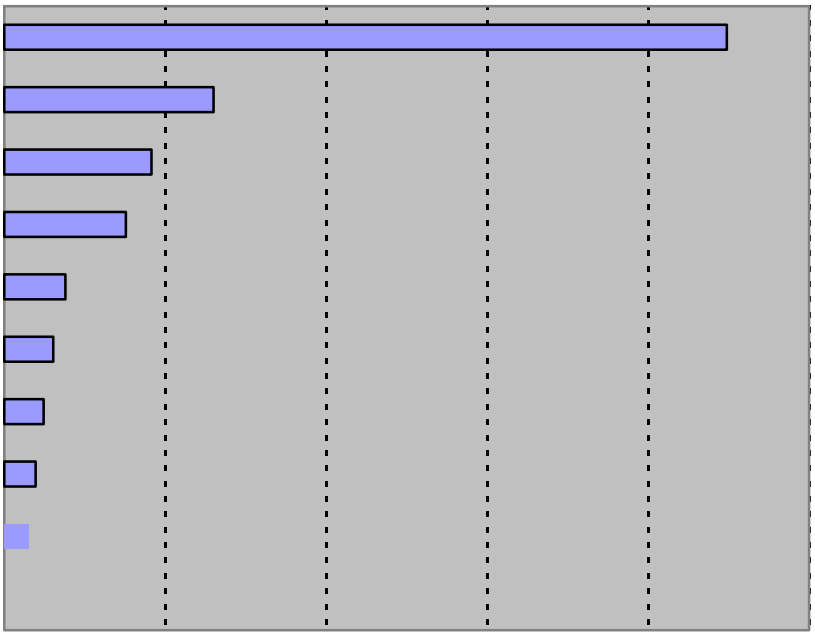
**Figure 5. Ten Most Common Colleges Attended by the Graduating Class of 2006**



## 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%), Mosely

## REFERENCES

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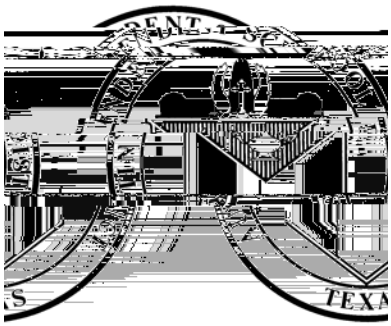


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