

Together We Educate **Leander**



Letter to the Community

Central Texas is at a critical juncture. Despite our booming economy, a wide gap exists between available jobs and local workforce talent. Approximately 50% of our current job openings require a bachelor's degree, 12% require an associate degree and 85% of our unemployed lack either.¹ Over the last decade, nearly 100,000 Central Texas students, a majority of our high school graduates, directly enrolled in college. Our direct-to-college enrollment rates increased by ten percentage points between 2003 and 2008, but leveled off at 60% over the last five years and now sits below the national average.²

When Central Texans lack the skills and education to participate in the economy, the health and prosperity of our community is threatened.

As Chair of the Chamber's 2015 Education Progress Report Taskforce, I believe we can work together as a community to close this opportunity gap. Our progress reports now unite 11 school districts, 11 regional chambers and dozens of business leaders to track regional challenges, successes and identify ways to improve student educational and

¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, College Enrollment and Work Activity of 2013 High School Graduates, April 2014

career opportunities. These school districts and partners have worked to improve college readiness rates from 47% in 2007, to 64% in 2013.³ In partnership with Central Texas school districts, the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce has also set a 70% regional direct-to-college enrollment goal for 2015, to ensure our students are prepared for college and 21st century careers.

So, to all of you who are engaged in this collective work—whether as educators, business and non-profit leaders or activists, thank you. Educating a child takes a community, and I am so proud to live in a community that comes together to put kids first.

Thank you,



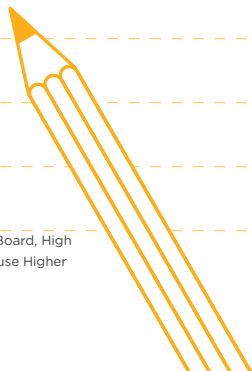
Dawn Jones

External Affairs Manager, Intel

Education Progress Report Taskforce Chair

² The Conference Board Help Wanted OnLine[®] (HWOL) and Travis County Workforce Board. Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, High School to College Linkages 2002-2013, and The University of Texas at Austin, Ray Marshall Center and National Student Clearinghouse Higher Education Enrollment Outcomes for Central Texas High School Graduates 2009-2014.

³ Academic Excellence Indicator System 2007 and Texas Academic Performance Reports 2013



A Snapshot of Leander ISD

Leander ISD (LISD) is a fast growing school district northwest of Austin in Travis and Williamson Counties.

Since 2002, LISD student enrollment increased by more than 127% making it one of the fastest growing districts in Central Texas.⁴

35,355

Students

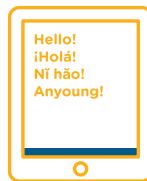
19%

Economically
Disadvantaged








5%

English Language
Learners



Demographic summary

-  Caucasian: 63%
-  Hispanic: 24%
-  Asian: 6%
-  African-American: 4%
-  Two or more races: 4%

Source: Academic Excellence
Indicator System 2001-2002 and Texas
Academic Performance
Report, LISD 2013-2014

⁴ Academic Excellence Indicator System 2001-2002 and Texas Academic Performance Reports 2013-14, Leander Independent School District



4,243

Employees



\$1.51

2013–2014 Tax Rate
(\$ per \$100 valuation)

\$48.9K

Average Teacher Annual
Salary

\$327M

Operations Budget

11.5

Average Teacher Years of
Experience

Leander ISD continues to face the challenges of being a Destination District, a district of choice. As LISD grows, the ability to keep up with the facility needs of an expanding community will be a challenge due to the current state funding system. LISD is working with the community to continue to be responsible stewards of taxpayers' resources.

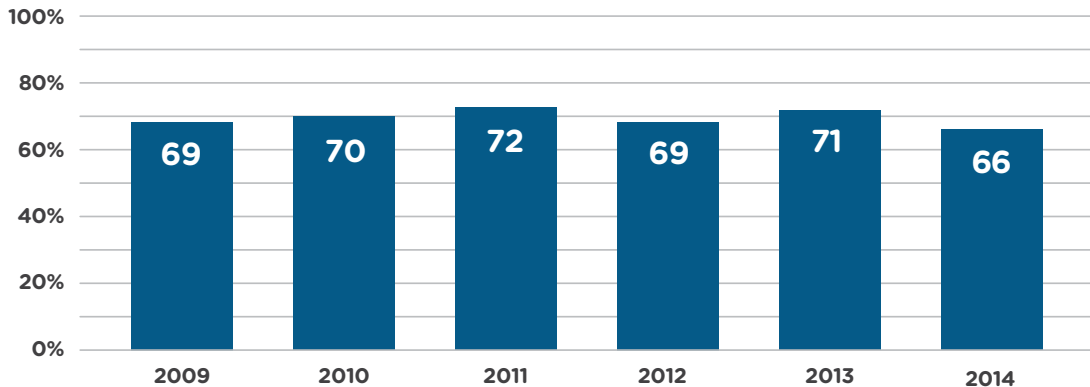
What Share of LISD Students Directly Enroll in Higher Education?

Despite gains in college/career readiness and graduation rates, Leander ISD's direct-to-college enrollment has leveled off at approximately 70% since 2009. Recognizing that higher education is the key vehicle for economic mobility, LISD remains focused on supporting students on their path to college. LISD offers the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program, 30 Advanced Placement (AP) courses and Dual Credit opportunities. Seventy percent of 2014 graduates took advantage of these academic challenges. Additionally, LISD leverages the power of partnerships by working with Austin Community College's (ACC) College Connections program to offer assistance with the college enrollment process, including assistance with college admissions applications, financial aid, and Texas Success Initiative (TSI) college/career readiness assessments.⁵

⁵ Passage of the TSI college readiness test allows students to enroll in credit bearing college level courses for dual enrollment and after high school graduation

Percentage of Graduates Who Directly Enroll in Higher Education

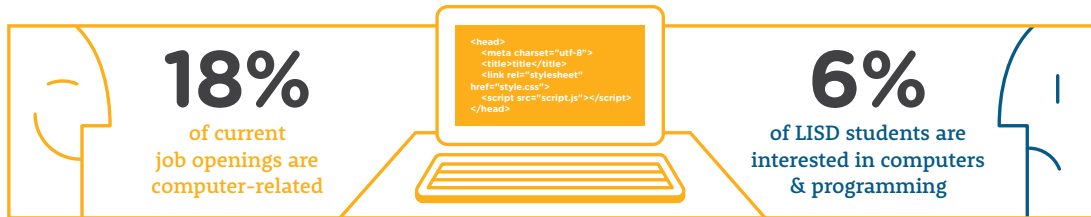
Percentage of high school graduates who enrolled in community college or four-year, degree-granting institutions, in Texas or outside of the state, for the first time no later than the fall following graduation.



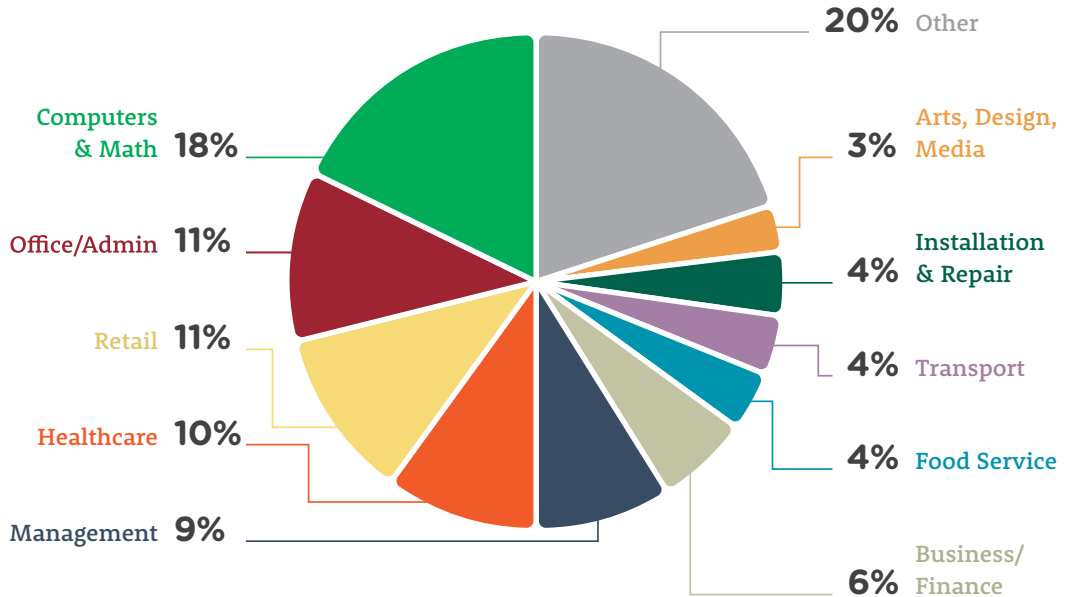
 College enrollment rates have remained level since 2009.


How Do LISD Student Career Interests Align with Job Market Demand?

Leander ISD works to ensure its graduates have the skills required to pursue 21st century careers. In Central Texas, there are 44,000 open jobs and 41,000 unemployed. LISD is working to solve this mismatch in skills/interest and high demand jobs by diversifying course offerings in computer science, engineering and biomedical STEM related course sequences. Between 2009 and 2015, LISD nearly tripled enrollment in computer science and programming courses from 339 to 889 students by adding robotics and mobile application programming course options.



Top 10 Current Job Openings in Central Texas



A background image showing three students in a chemistry laboratory. They are wearing safety goggles and are focused on their work with various glassware like flasks and beakers. The image has a warm, orange-yellow tint.

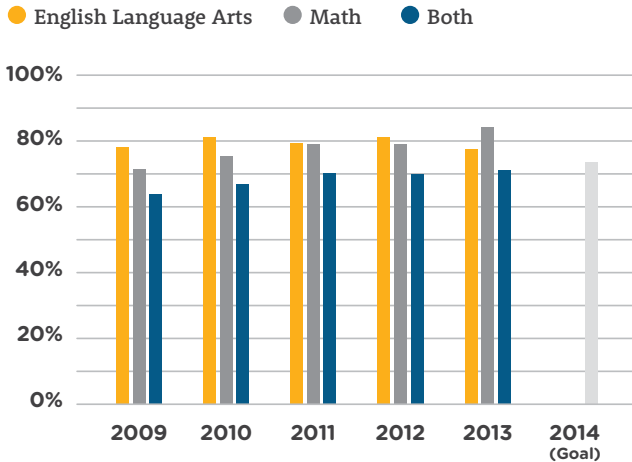
In order to reach LISD's goal of enrolling at least 72% of our students in higher education, we are focusing on

3 primary goals.

Goal 1

Bolster Student College and Career Readiness

Percentage of high school graduates who met the state college and career readiness standard in:



- Leander ISD completely funds the PSAT for all 8th through 11th grade students. LISD students consistently perform above the state and national averages on the PSAT, SAT, and ACT.
- LISD offers the ACT during the school day for juniors to increase opportunities and participation in this exam.

Goal 2

Increase Student Participation in College Prep Activities

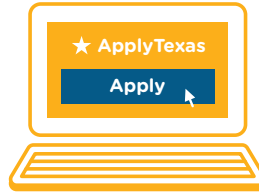
- LISD's college/career readiness team assists students with the college admission process, hosts college fairs/parent nights, helps on college applications, and FAFSA completion.
- The Austin Chamber and LISD have hosted Financial Aid Saturday/Sunday events since 2009, resulting in an estimated \$3.2M in aid awarded and almost 600 families served.¹



87%

**Aspire to
Attend College**

78% of those enrolled.



79%

**Applied via
ApplyTexas**

76% of those enrolled.

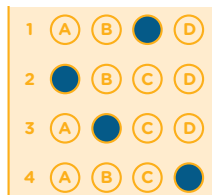
The University of Texas Ray Marshall Center Has Identified Six Activities That Increase the Likelihood That a Student Will Directly Enroll in Higher Education.



43%

Attended a College Fair

81% of those enrolled.



30%

Took SAT/ACT Prep Course(s)

85% of those enrolled.



61%

Met with a Counselor

77% of those enrolled.



23%

Thought Financial Aid Process was Easy

77% of those enrolled.



38%

Plan to Use Loans

77% of those enrolled.



56%

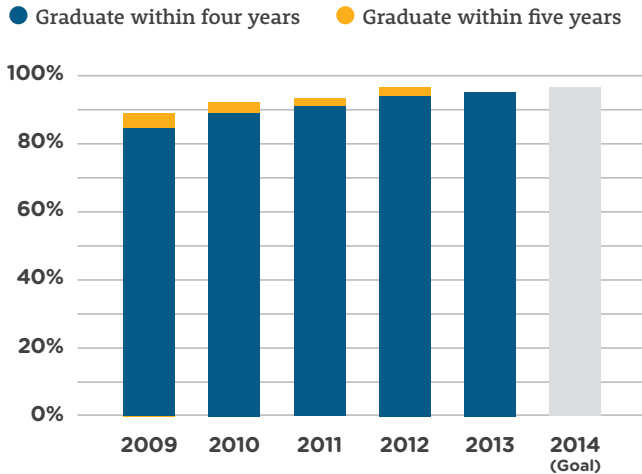
Completed FAFSA

83% of those enrolled.

Goal 3

Continue to Improve High School Graduation Rates

Percentage of students who graduate within four or five years:



- LISD's HOPE Program creates individual graduation plans for struggling students and helped improve graduation rates for low-income students from 73% to 91% over the last four years.
- LISD enrolls all high school students in its Distinguished with Honors Graduation Plan to ensure students exceed state graduation requirements and exit high school college/career ready.



If we accomplish these goals,
LISD will prepare students
for higher education and

**21st-century
careers.**

Recommendations

Direct to College Enrollment

- Extend high school counselor contracts between June and August to target college transition support to students.

Job Market/Career Aspirations

- Praise LISD for increasing student interest in, and knowledge of, high-demand careers in subjects like computer science and for diversifying Career Technology Education offerings yielding trade/industry certifications.

College or Career Ready

- Assess non-college and career ready

juniors/seniors and enroll them in a course which prepares them to graduate college and career ready.

- Praise LISD and its partners for funding PSAT testing for 8th, 9th, 10th & 11th graders, allowing equal access to testing for all students regardless of income.
- Congratulate LISD for offering ACT school day testing on campuses to increase opportunities to meet college entrance exam requirements and college/career readiness standards.
- Congratulate LISD for providing Career Opportunities on Location (COOL) Week

which has allowed nearly 650 students to shadow professionals at companies like IBM, National Instruments, Samsung and 138 other businesses between 2014 and 2015.

College Prep Activities

- Ensure a minimum of 60% of LISD seniors file for student financial aid before the end of March to maximize student chances to receive funding for college.
- Leverage technology to target FAFSA, ApplyTexas and College Career Readiness support to improve timely completion of college enrollment requirements.

- Continue to provide the TSI College Readiness test.
- Actively promote student participation in influential college prep activities (see page 10, 11).

4/5 Year Graduation

- Congratulate LISD for making the Distinguished Graduation Plan with Honors the default and offering rigorous courses to ensure students exceed state graduation requirements and exit high school college/career ready.
- Congratulate LISD for closing the gap between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students within the last four years.

Leander ISD Business Volunteers

Taskforce Chair

Dawn Jones
Intel

Leander ISD

Superintendent
Dr. Bret
Champion

Assistant
Superintendent
Veronica
Sopher

Lisa Brittain

Camille Clay
Brenda Cruz

Sarah Martinez

Veronica
Sopher

Austin Chamber Staff

Michael W.
Rollins, CCE

Drew Scheberle

Gilbert Zavala

Isabel Shelton

Leander Chamber of Commerce

Bridget Brandt
Jennifer Welch,
Keller Williams
Realty

Cedar Park Chamber of Commerce

Lyndee
Matthews
Tony Moline

How to Get Involved in Leander ISD

Get to Know Leander ISD

Leander ISD's award-winning and trendsetting community engagement opportunities include our marketing and advertising program, COOL Week, job training for students with special needs and more.

leanderisd.org

Volunteer

Get involved in a PTA, become a student mentor or volunteer as a Watch D.O.G.S.

Participate in Literacy Partners, a partnership with Hill Country Bible Church-Austin and championed by the Cedar Park Chamber of Commerce, or Laces for Leander, an effort organized

by the Leander Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Class.

hcbc.com/serve/community/education-connection/

Donate

Leander ISD Educational Excellence Foundation

leanderedfound.org

Hill Country Education Foundation

hillcountryedfoundation.org



www.austinchamber.com/edureports