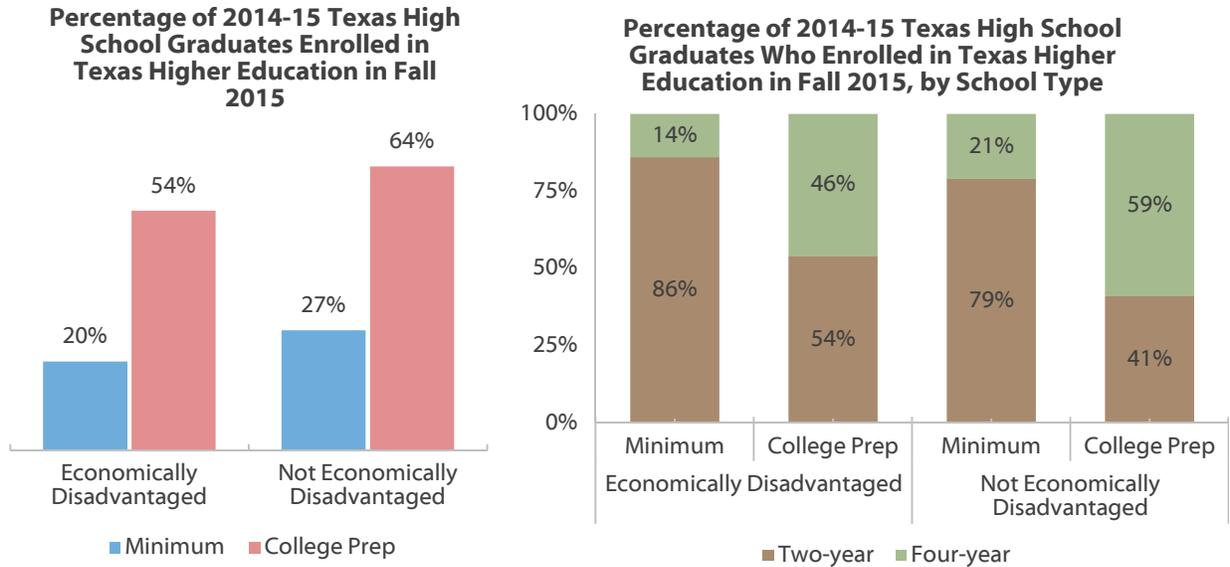


SECTION 2

Texas College Readiness

A High School Curriculum of Academic Intensity Boosts College Success for Disadvantaged Students



While family income has a positive association with college enrollment, access to a high school curriculum of high academic intensity and quality, such as the Recommended or Distinguished achievement programs in Texas, can also play a key role in students’ success. A U.S. Department of Education study found that the intensity and quality of a student’s high school curriculum has a bigger impact on bachelor’s degree completion than either the student’s high school test scores or the student’s grade point average (GPA).

In 2014–15, high school graduates with College Prep* diplomas were more likely to enroll in college immediately following graduation, with 54 percent of economically disadvantaged** students with College Prep diplomas enrolling in college compared to 20 percent of those with minimum diplomas. For students who were not economically disadvantaged, 64 percent of those with College Prep diplomas enrolled in college compared to 27 percent of those with minimum diplomas. “Economically disadvantaged,” college-prepared high school graduates are 13 percentage points less likely than college-prepared students considered “not economically disadvantaged” to enroll in a four-year college after graduation.

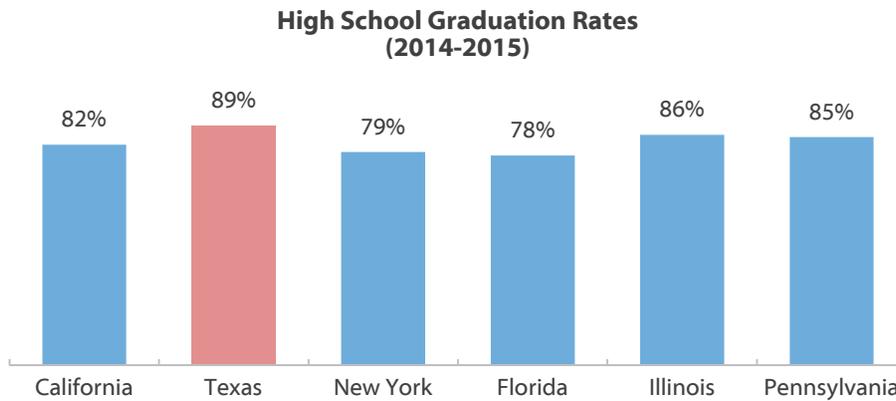
*A high school student who graduates under either the Recommended or Distinguished achievement program is considered to have a College Prep diploma for the purposes of this analysis, and a graduate of the Foundation or Minimum achievement program is considered a Minimum program. The Recommended and Distinguished programs require more completed credits (26) in mathematics, science, social studies, language other than English, and fine arts than the minimum program. The Foundation and Minimum programs have fewer required completed credits (22).

** The Texas Education Agency (TEA) collects data on whether a student is “economically disadvantaged” based on the student’s eligibility for free or reduced lunch as a proxy for family income. The TEA does not have detailed information about family income.

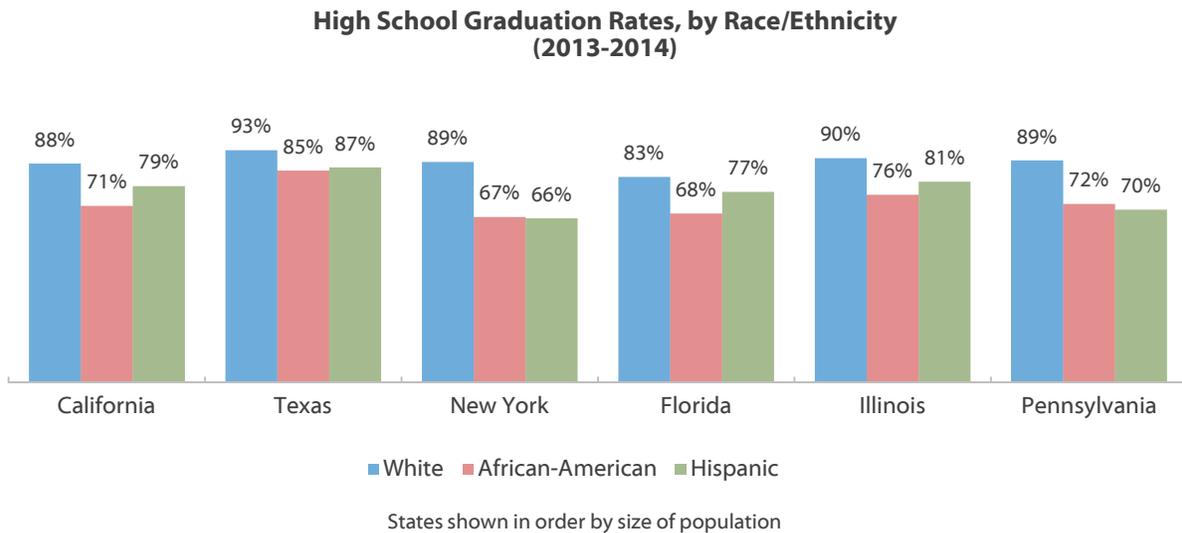
Sources: High school curriculum and degree completion: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, *Answers in the Tool Box: Academic Intensity, Attendance Patterns, and Bachelor’s Degree Attainment*, by Clifford Adelman (1999) (<http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/Toolbox/toolbox.html>); Side-by-Side Comparison: Texas Graduation Programs 2014-2015: (file:///C:/Users/tgksk/Downloads/SidebySideGraduationPrograms_030114.pdf); All other: THECB, “2014-2015 Texas High School Graduates Enrolled in Higher Education Fall 2015, by Economic Category, Diploma Type, and Ethnicity” (unpublished tables).



Texas Ranks Near Top in High School Graduation Rates



Texas ranked fourth in the nation for high school graduation rates in 2014-2015, tying with 2 other states at 89 percent. Texas ranked highest among the six most populous states in the nation and led the most populous states in graduation rates within racial and ethnic groups. Nationally, the overall graduation rate in 2014-2015 was 83 percent.



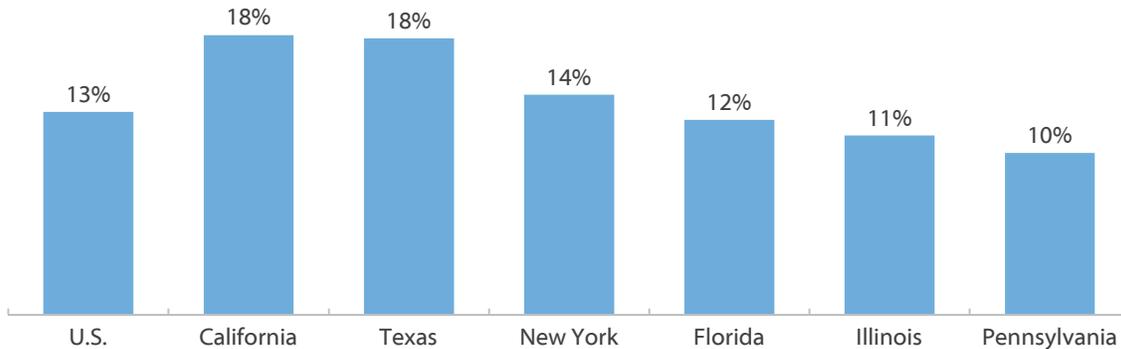
The recent increases in high school graduation rates have been due in part to dramatic reductions in the number of “dropout factory” high schools in the past 10 years. These schools are defined as having 60 percent or less of their ninth grade class still enrolled in their senior year. In 2002, more than 2.6 million students were enrolled in these type “dropout factory” high schools compared to around 900,000 in 2014.

Sources: Graduation Rates: U.S. Department of Education, ED Data Express, Data about elementary and secondary schools in the U.S. (<http://www.eddataexpress.ed.gov/>); All else: America’s Promise Alliance, *Building a Grad Nation: Progress and Challenge in Ending the High School Dropout Epidemic, 2016 Report* (http://www.gradnation.org/sites/default/files/civic_2016_full_report_FNL2-2_0.pdf).



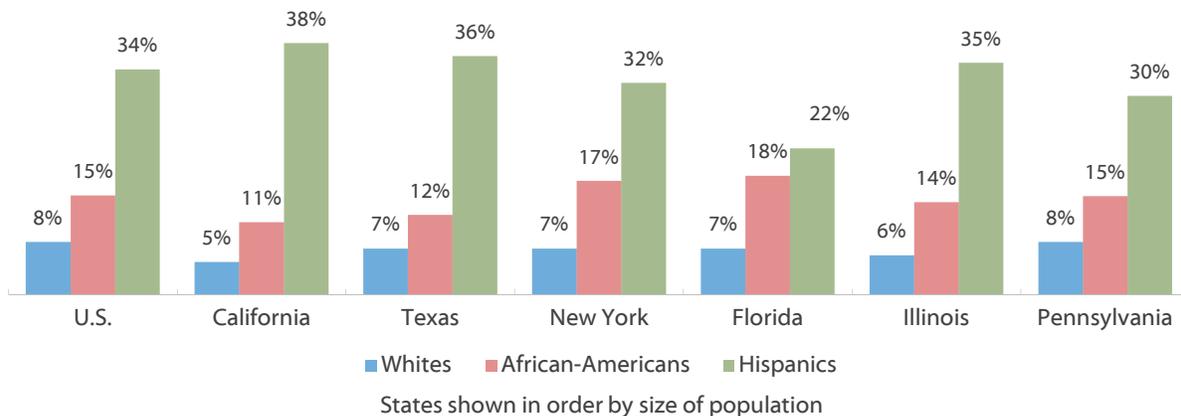
Texas Has Largest Percentage of People Age 25 and Older Lacking a High School Education

People Age 25 and Older Who Have Not Finished High School (2014)



In 2014, 18 percent of people age 25 and older (or 3 million people) in Texas had not finished high school. This is the same percentage as California and a higher percentage than any other state in the nation. In the U.S., 13 percent of adults had not finished high school. Not completing high school can have a detrimental effect on college access. However, overall high school diploma attainment in Texas is improving. Recent Texas high school graduation rates rank Texas near the top compared to other states.

People Age 25 and Older Who Have Not Finished High School (2014)



The completion rates of different racial and ethnic groups vary widely. Although these disparities exist in many areas of the country, they are particularly important for Texas, which has become a “minority-majority” state. At the high school level, data show that:

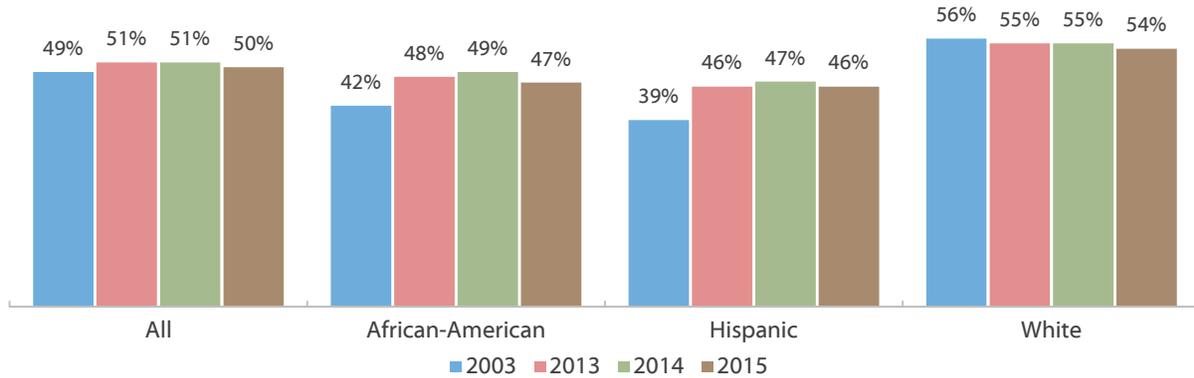
- Hispanics, who comprised over a third of the Texas population in 2014 and who are projected to comprise 53 percent by 2050, are the least likely to have obtained a high school diploma. As of 2014, 36 percent of Hispanics age 25 and older had not finished high school.
- Approximately 12 percent of African-Americans in Texas have not completed high school. This represents a major improvement since 2006, when 17 percent of African-Americans had not finished high school.

Sources: Texas State Data Center and Office of the State Demographer, Texas Population Projections Program, “Population Projections for the State of Texas and Counties in One File,” 2014 (<http://www.txsd.c.utsa.edu/Data/TPEPP/Projections/Index.aspx>). High school completion among 25 and older: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Detailed Tables (<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>); High school graduation rates: U.S. Department of Education, ED Data Express, Data about elementary and secondary schools in the U.S. (<http://www.eddataexpress.edu.gov/>).



Percentage of Texas High School Graduates Who Enroll in College Immediately after High School Remains Level

Percentage of Texas High School Graduates Enrolling in College Immediately after Graduation*



The 2010 U.S. Census revealed that a smaller percentage of the Texas population participated in higher education than in other large states and the U.S. as a whole. About 9.5 percent of the Texas population age 18 and older was enrolled in higher education in 2010, versus 11.2 percent for California, 10.0 percent for New York, and 9.9 percent for the nation.

In 2000, Texas set the goal of “closing the gaps” in participation and success in higher education by 2015 by increasing the number of students enrolled and the number of degrees awarded. A 2006 goal revision called for the number of students enrolled to increase from the original goal of 500,000 by 2015 to 630,000 by 2015. Also, the goal for the overall number of degrees awarded by 2015 was adjusted from the original goal of 163,000 to 210,000.

Although increasing the percentage of high school graduates who go on to college is not an official “closing the gaps” goal, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) reports that the percentage of students entering college in the summer or fall immediately after high school graduation* gradually increased from 2003 to 2011. However, between 2012-2014 this percentage remained constant across Texas at 51 percent. Currently, about half of all 2015 Texas high school graduates enrolled in a Texas public college or university by that fall, up from 49 percent in 2003. The percentage of Whites who enroll still exceeds the percentage of non-Whites; however, this gap is closing. For Hispanics, the percentage enrolling in college immediately after high school has increased greatly since 2003. Keeping track of this statistic is important, because delaying postsecondary enrollment after high school graduation is a risk factor for eventually dropping out of college or never enrolling.

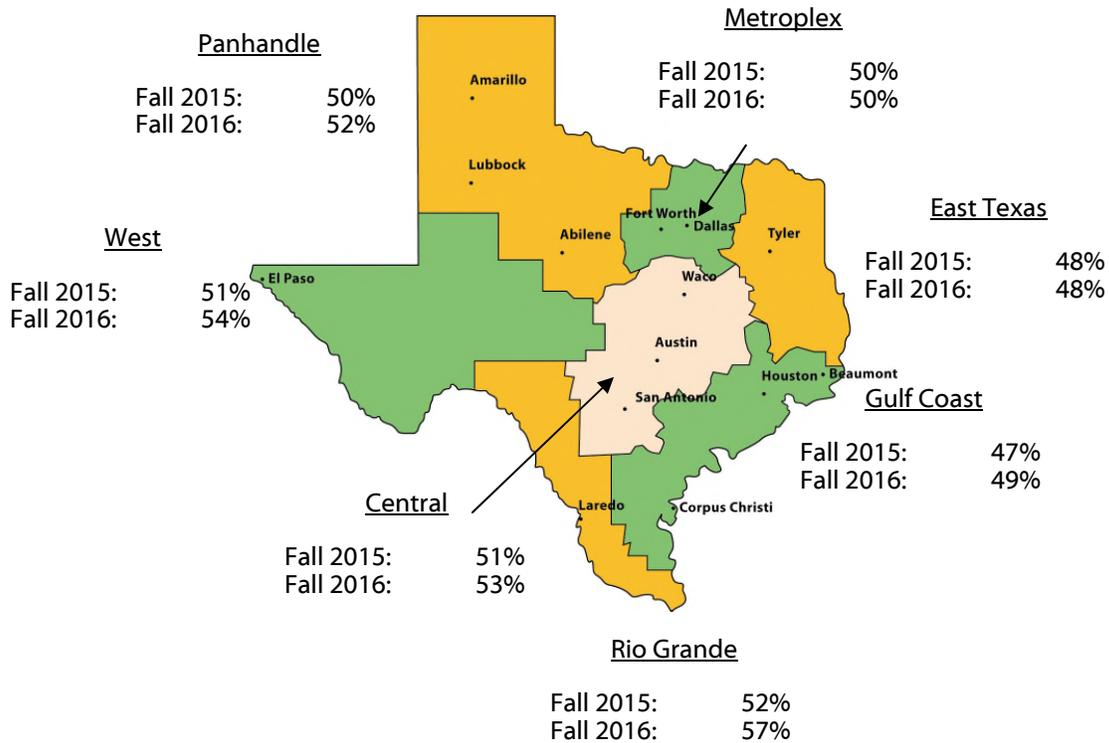
* Includes only Texas high school graduates who enrolled in a Texas public or private, nonprofit college or university. Data on students who enrolled at proprietary institutions or enrolled in out-of-state schools are not available. In AY 2007–2008, about 93 percent of Texas students who enrolled in college immediately after high school graduation were attending school in their state of residence.

Sources: “Closing the Gaps” goals: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) *Closing the Gaps*. October 2000 (<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/reports/PDF/0379.PDF?CFID=11742258&CFTOKEN=38987795>); “Closing the Gaps” revised goals: Closing the Gaps Revised Goals and Targets for 2015 (<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/reports/PDF/1176.PDF>); Percentage enrolled in higher education: U.S. Census Bureau, *Census 2000*, General Demographic Characteristics – DP-1 (population age 18 and over) and General Social Characteristics (population enrolled in higher education) (<http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html>); Texas high school students enrolling in college immediately after graduation: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) High School to College Linkages, 2015, “High School Graduates Enrolled in Higher Education the Following Fall: [State Summary](#) by Ethnicity and Higher Education Sector, Fall 2000 to Fall 2013” (<http://www.txhighereddata.org/index.cfm?objectid=2783AAA6-ADCB-E35A-5BFC8F501DC1D65A>).



Rio Grande Valley Has Highest FAFSA Completion Rates in Texas

FAFSA Completion Rate by Region*



The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the standardized financial aid application used by nearly all colleges and universities to award all types of financial aid. The form is administered by the Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA), part of the U.S. Department of Education. Many students and families do not realize that most colleges and universities use this form to award all financial aid, not only Federal loans and grants. By completing the FAFSA, students and their families may have access to more financial options and may be able to make more informed decisions about college enrollment. Because of the importance of filling out the FAFSA and the strong correlation between FAFSA completion and college attendance, FSA has made data on FAFSA completion available to high schools and the public.

With the exception of the Gulf Coast and East Texas regions, 50 percent or more of the seniors in the high school class of 2015-2016 completed the FAFSA. Completion rates increased from the 2014-2015 high school class in all but the Metroplex and East Texas regions. At 57 percent, schools in the Rio Grande Valley had the highest completion rate.

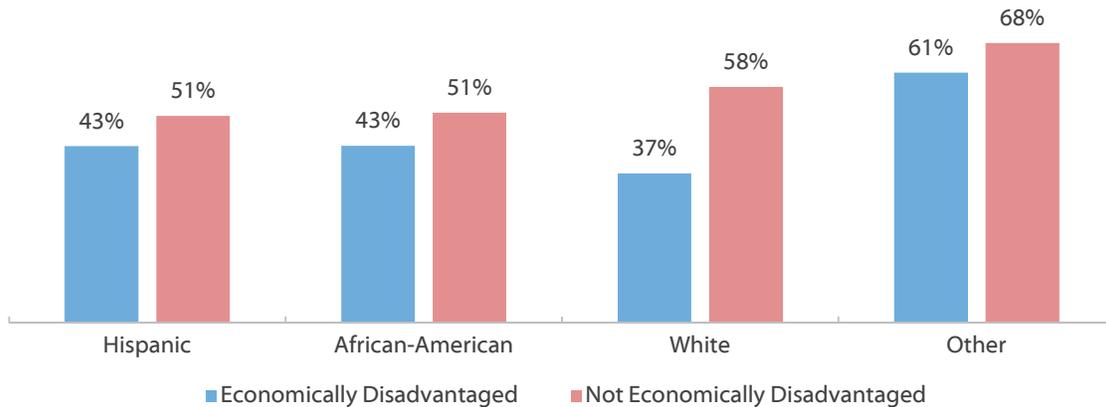
* Fall 2015 represents the class of 2014-2015 high school seniors completing the FAFSA as of October 23, 2015; Fall 2016 represents the class of 2015-2016 high school seniors completing the FAFSA as of October 28, 2016.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Federal Student Aid, *FAFSA Completion by High School* (<http://studentaid.ed.gov/about/data-center/student/application-volume/afsa-completion-high-school>). Number of high school seniors from Texas Education Agency, special request.



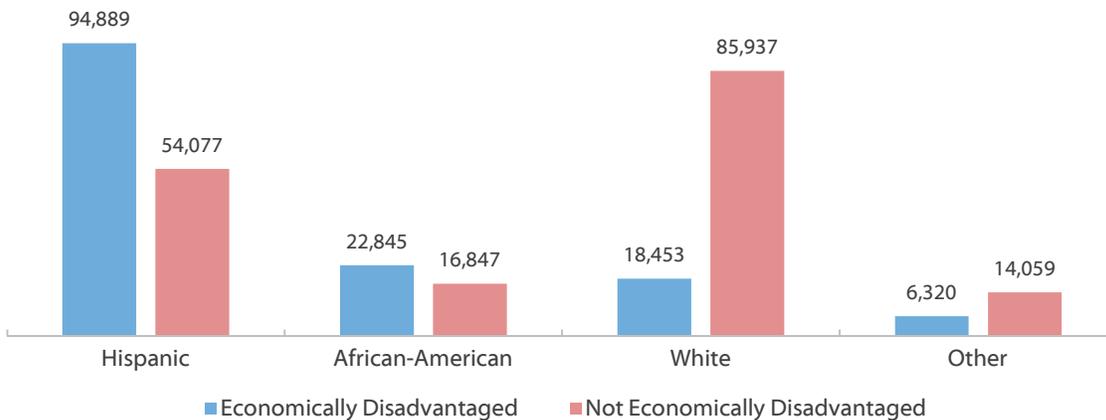
Low-Income Texas Students Are Less Likely to Enroll in College

Percentage of 2014-15 Texas High School Graduates Enrolled in Texas Higher Education in Fall 2015, by Ethnicity



Economically disadvantaged* high school graduates in Texas are less likely to enroll in college. This is true across all racial and ethnic categories but is especially pronounced for White students.

Number of 2014-15 Texas High School Graduates, by Ethnicity



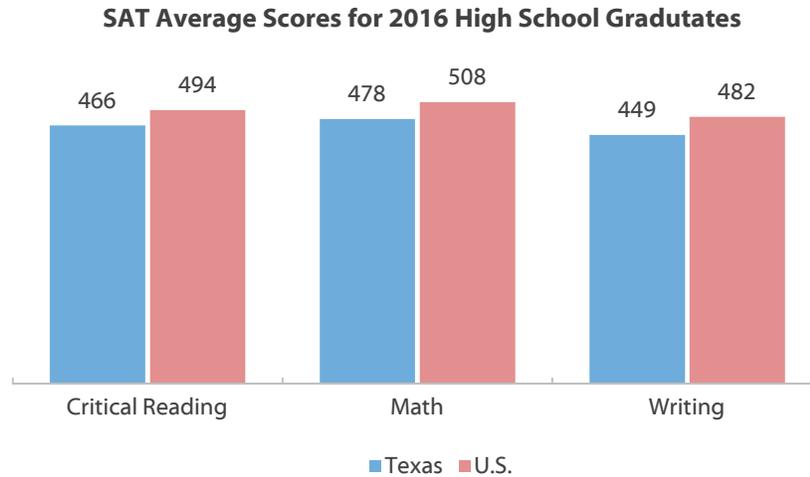
Only 18 percent of White high school graduates in Texas are considered to be economically disadvantaged, while 64 percent of Hispanic and 58 percent of African-American high school graduates are considered economically disadvantaged.

*The Texas Education Agency (TEA) collects data on whether a student is “economically disadvantaged” based on the student’s eligibility for free or reduced lunch as a proxy for family income. The TEA does not have detailed information about family income.

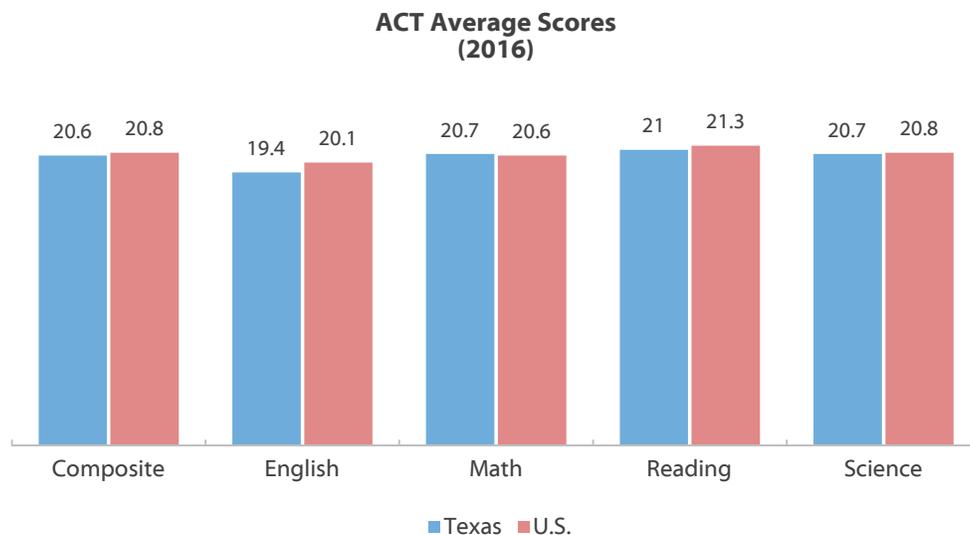
Sources: The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, “2014-2015 High School Graduates Enrolled in Higher Education Fall 2015, by Diploma Type and Ethnicity” (unpublished tables).



Texas ACT Scores Comparable to the Nation, SAT Scores Lag Behind



More than 196,000 Texas high school seniors and 1.63 million high school seniors nationwide — well over half the total graduating class for both groups — took the SAT in the 2014–2015 school year. Average SAT scores are lower in Texas compared to the U.S. in all categories.



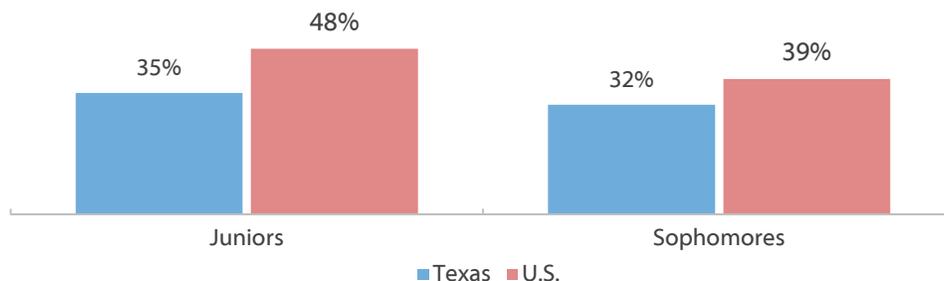
The American College Test (ACT) is less popular in Texas than the SAT but may be gaining in popularity. Forty-six percent of 2015-2016 Texas high school graduates took the ACT, up from 39 percent since 2012. Nationally, 64 percent of high school graduates took the exam. While average ACT composite scores in Texas have often lagged slightly behind national averages, the average composite score for Texas graduates has roughly mirrored that of the nation as a whole in recent few years, with slight variations in each subject area.

Source: SAT: The College Board, SAT Data & Reports, College-Bound Seniors <https://research.collegeboard.org/programs/sat/data/cb-seniors-2016>, ACT: ACT, National and State Scores 2016 (<http://www.act.org/newsroom/data/>).



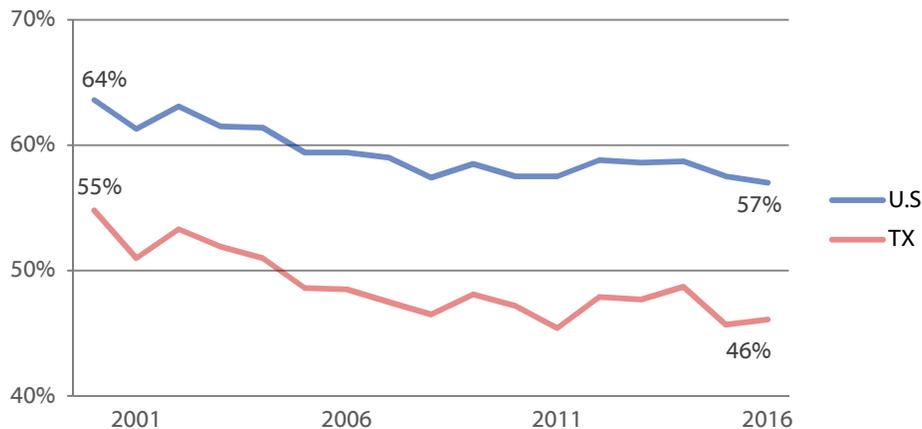
Texas High School Students Lag Behind Students Nationally in College Readiness

PSAT/NMSQT Test Takers Who Are on Track to be College Ready (2014-2015)



The Preliminary SAT (PSAT) and National Merit Scholar Qualifying Test (NMSQT) are taken by high school sophomores and juniors. The tests help the students prepare for the SAT and prompt them to begin planning for college. The College Board has developed college readiness benchmark scores that students should meet or exceed in order to be considered on track for college readiness. Based on this measure, Texas sophomores and juniors lag behind their national peers in college readiness.

Percent of AP Test Takers who Scored at Least a 3 on at Least One AP Test (2000 - 2016)



The Advanced Placement (AP) program offers more than 30 college-level courses and examinations to high school students, though a student can take an exam without having taken the course. These courses satisfy high school diploma requirements, and sufficient scores on the exams can help students gain admission to selective colleges and even earn college credit (at the institution’s discretion). Since 2005, all public higher education institutions in Texas that have freshman level courses have been required to grant credit to incoming students who earn a 3 or higher on an AP exam.

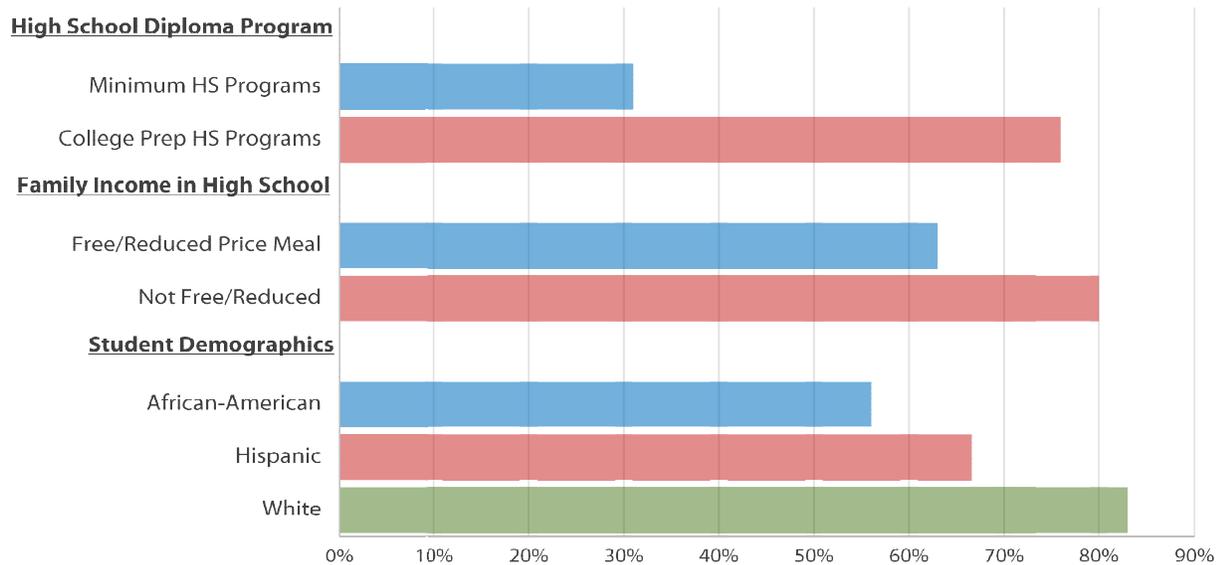
Twenty-seven percent of 2016 public high school 11th- and 12th-graders in Texas took an AP exam in high school, compared to 26 percent for the nation as a whole. Although a slightly higher proportion of Texas graduates took exams, Texas trailed the nation in success rates, with 46 percent of test takers earning at least a 3 on an AP exam compared to 57 percent nationally. The percentage of AP test takers who scored at least a 3 on at least one AP test has declined both nationally and in Texas since 2000, however, the total numbers of AP test takers have also increased significantly during this time period.

Source: PSAT/NMSQT: The College Board, PSAT/NMSQT Data & Reports (<http://research.collegeboard.org/programs/psat/data/cb-1r>); AP: The College Board, AP Program and Participation Data 2016 (<https://research.collegeboard.org/programs/ap/data/participation/ap-2016>)



The Importance of College Prep Programs in High School

Percent of 2013-14 Texas High School Graduates, Enrolled in Texas Higher Education in Fall 2014 that Met All TSI Standards



The Texas Success Initiative (TSI) was created by the state to help colleges and universities assess the college-readiness of incoming students in reading, writing, and math. To meet TSI standards, students either score high enough on an approved TSI assessment or complete an approved TSI exemption (e.g. scoring above a threshold on the SAT, ACT, or TAKS tests, or completing college-level coursework). Students who do not meet TSI standards may be required to complete developmental coursework – courses that often do not count towards a certificate or degree program – before enrolling in college-credit courses.

Of all 2013-14 high school graduates who enrolled in higher education the following fall, 73 percent met TSI standards in math, writing, and reading. However, the percentages of high school students who met all TSI standards varied widely when comparing characteristics. Students who enrolled in higher education after completing the minimum high school diploma program were far less likely to meet TSI standards than students who completed the College Prep* diploma. Seventy-six percent of students in the College Prep diploma program met all TSI standards, compared to just 31 percent of those completing the minimum diploma program.

Low-income high school graduates were also less prepared for college than their peers. Sixty-three percent of students who received free or reduced price meals in high schools – a common metric to identify low-income students – met all TSI standards compared to 80 percent of students who did not receive free or reduced price meals. College readiness measures also varied based on student demographics. Eighty-three percent of White students met all TSI standards, compared to 67 percent of Hispanic students and 56 percent of African-American students.

*A high school student who graduates under either the Recommended or Distinguished achievement program is considered to have a College Prep diploma for the purposes of this analysis, and a graduate of the Foundation or Minimum achievement program is considered a Minimum program. The Recommended and Distinguished programs require more completed credits (26) in mathematics, science, social studies, language other than English, and fine arts than the minimum program. The Foundation and Minimum programs have fewer required completed credits (22).

Source: TSI Description and Requirements, College for All Texas, (<http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/index.cfm?objectid=63176344-FFFA-217B-60C9A0E86629B3CA>). Student Performance on Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Readiness Measures 2013-14 High School Graduates Enrolled in Texas Public Higher Education in Fall 2014, THECB, September 2015. (<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/reports/PDF/6849.PDF?CFID=51345397&CFTOKEN=71711012>)

