

Texas Educational Pipeline and the Impact on University Enrollment 2004-05

Background

While the number of students enrolled in Texas public colleges and universities reached an all-time high in the fall of 2006, there is growing concern that current college-going rates will not meet the needs of the state or the *Closing the Gaps* targets.¹ To better understand the flow of students from ninth grade to college, this report on the Texas educational pipeline looks at the number of high school students who were enrolled in the ninth grade in 2001-02, who graduated four years later in 2004-05, and who attended a four-year public university in summer/fall 2005. Comparing the student counts at different transition points gives a clearer picture of the number of students available for the next part of the journey in the pipeline. In addition to providing an overview of university enrollment in Texas, this report also shows enrollment at U. T. System academic institutions.

Key Findings

- Over one third of ninth graders in 2001-02, almost 125,000 students, did not graduate from a Texas public high school four years later.² Leavers include students who left the state, are still enrolled, received a GED or dropped out of school.
- Only 173,336 or 72 percent of the high school graduates completed the college prep curriculum. Less than 60 percent of high school graduates took the SAT or ACT test and only 16 percent of graduates scored above the TEA performance criterion, 1100+ (SAT) or 24+ (ACT).³ About 23 percent of high school graduates enrolled at a Texas four-year public university in summer/fall 2005. The percentages varied by ethnicity: White (26%), Asian American (46%), African American (23%) and Hispanic (16%).
- U. T. System accounted for about one third of entering undergraduate enrollment in Texas public universities, almost 18,000 students.
- Over half of Asian American (55%) and half of Hispanic (50%) entering undergraduates who attended a four-year public university in Texas were enrolled at one of the U. T. System campuses. About 1 out of 4 White (26%) and 16% of African American entering undergraduates were enrolled at a U. T. System campus.
- Overall, Hispanics had the largest ninth grade population, but the lowest percentage of students
 - Graduating from high school
 - Taking the SAT/ACT
 - Attending a four-year public university
- Economic factors may be contributing to lower college going rates for Hispanic students. According to a recent report by the Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation, over half of Hispanic students (57%) who took college prep in high school were economically disadvantaged, compared to 38% of African American and 8% of White students.
- Applying the most recent college graduation rates to the 2001-02 ninth grade class, it is estimated that only 4 out of 100 will graduate within four years, and 9 out of 100 will graduate within six years from any Texas four-year university.

¹ *Closing the Gaps* is a plan adopted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board designed to close the educational gaps within Texas by 2015.

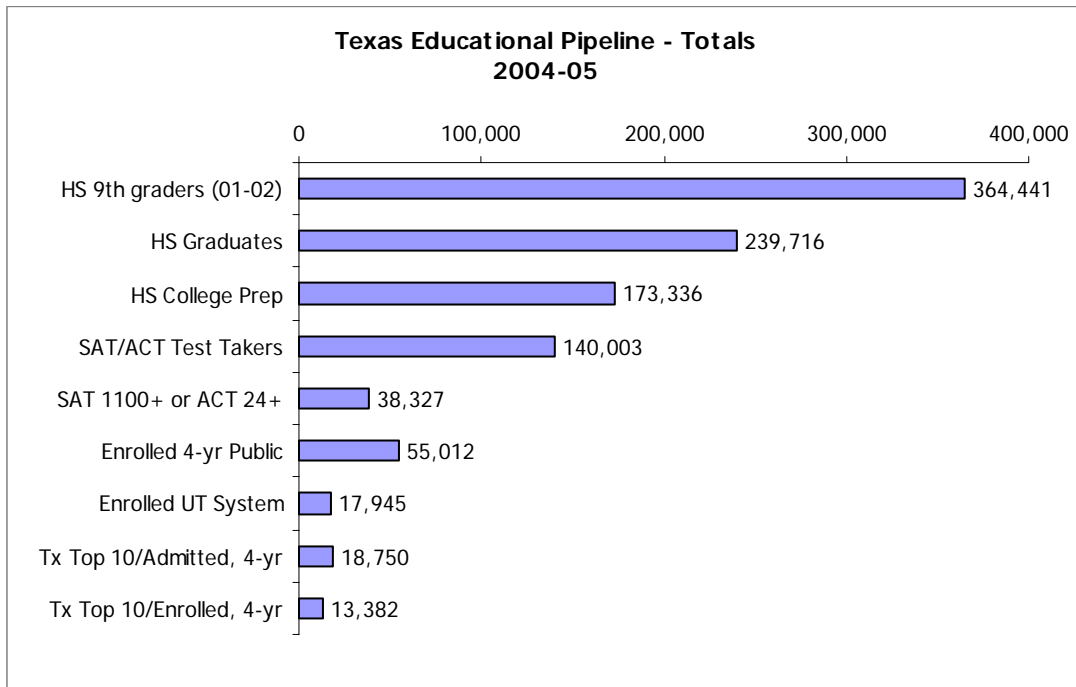
² This figure uses aggregate data to compare a graduating class to the ninth grade class four years earlier.

³ SAT and ACT criterion scores were established by the Commissioner of Education in 1996 to recognize high school campus and district performance.

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Conclusion

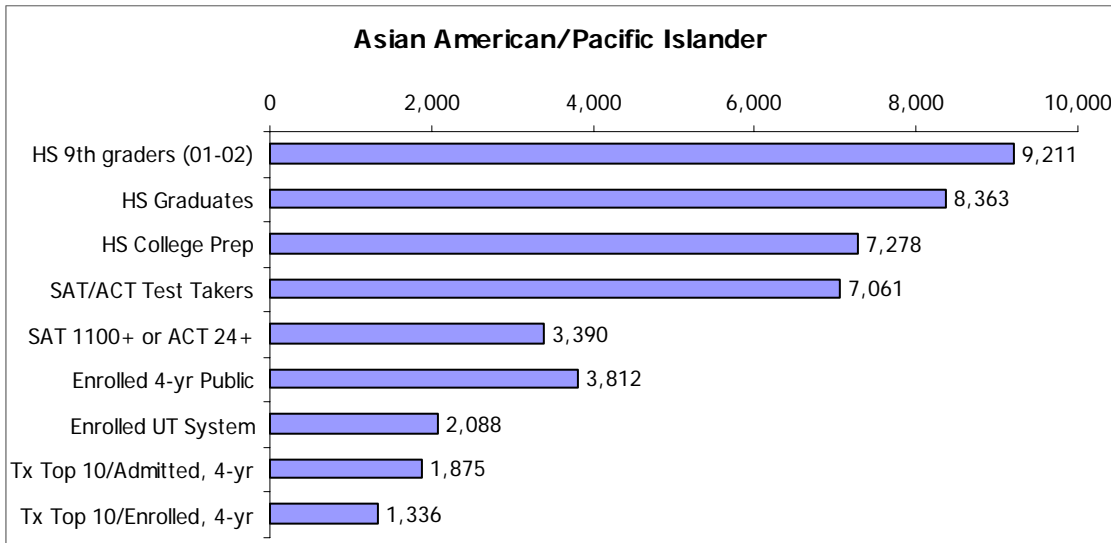
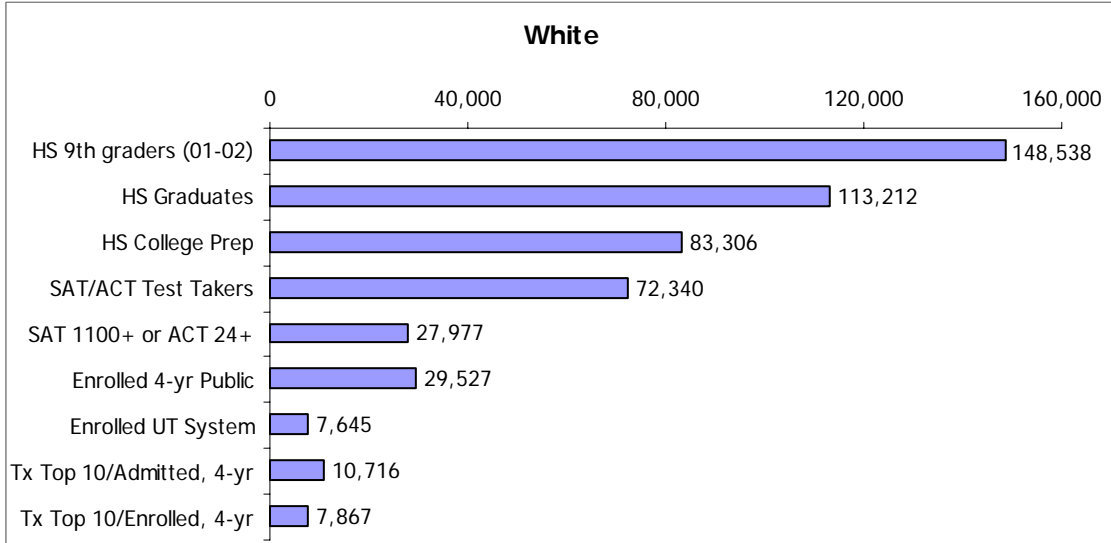
There is a hemorrhage in the Texas educational pipeline between the beginning of ninth grade and initial enrollment in a public university four years later. Roughly one third of ninth grade students do not graduate on time from a Texas high school. When compared to other states, Texas had the thirteenth highest percentage loss of students from the 9th to 12th grade.⁴ Of those who graduate, a small percentage (23%) enrolls in a four-year public university and an even smaller percentage (16%) is prepared for university level work.⁵ These percentages are lowest for African American and Hispanic students. While the U. T. System enrolls one third of all Texas high school graduates and half of all Hispanics entering four-year public universities, meeting the *Closing the Gaps* targets and the demand for an educated work force in Texas will remain a significant challenge as long as these leaks in the educational pipeline continue.



⁴ *Thinking Outside the Box: Policy Strategies for Readiness, Access, and Success*. March 2007.

⁵ Based on the percentage of students taking the SAT or ACT test and scoring above the TEA criterion.

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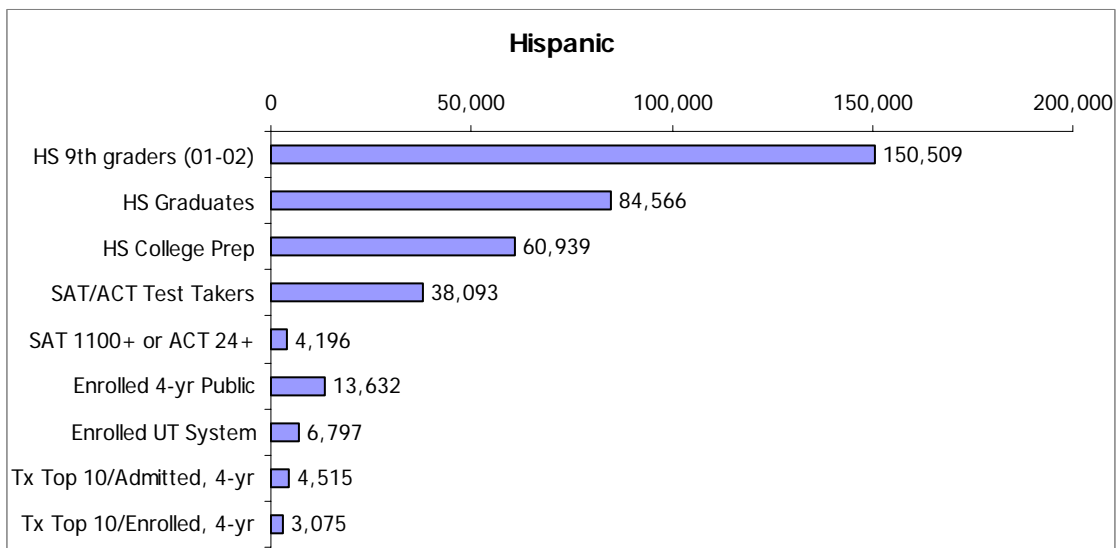
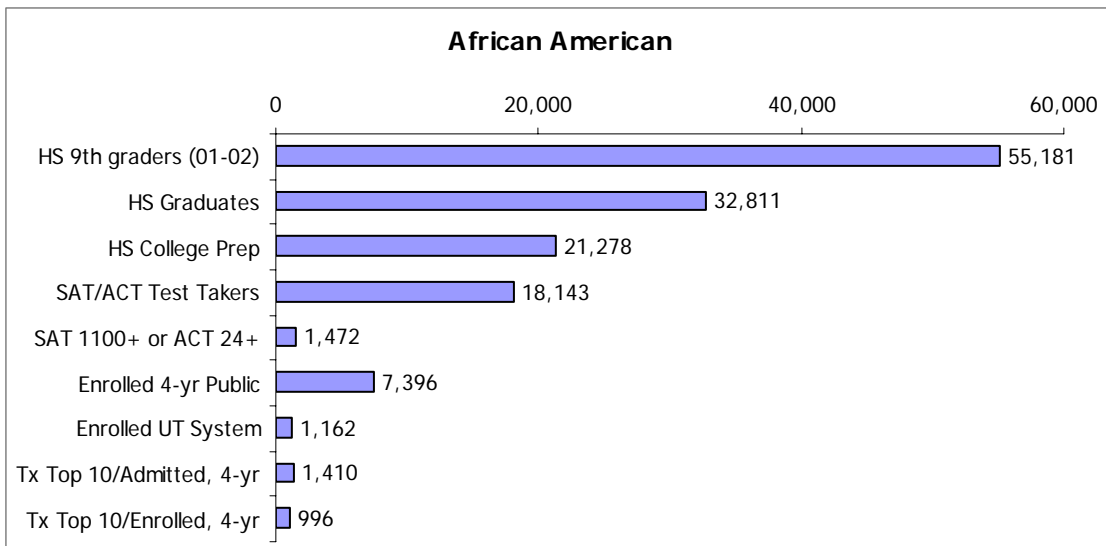


Chart Notes

High school counts are based on Texas public high school enrollment.

HS College Prep includes the recommended and the distinguished curriculum.

Enrolled four-year public includes Texas high school students who applied, were admitted and enrolled in the summer/fall of 2005 and includes a small percentage of high school graduates from previous years.

Enrolled UT System does not include first-time undergraduates from UT Brownsville.

Tx Top 10 Admitted and Enrolled are based on public university enrollment.

Sources

Blanco, Cheryl D., Jones, Dennis P., Longanecker, David A., Michelau, Demaree K., *Thinking Outside the Box: Policy Strategies for Readiness, Access, and Success*. Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, March 2007.

Texas Education Agency, Enrollment and Graduation Reports

Texas Education Agency, *College Admissions Testing of Graduating Seniors in Texas High Schools, Class of 2005*, October 2006.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, *First-time Undergraduate Applicant, Acceptance, and Enrollment Information for Summer/Fall 2005*.

Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation, *Ready, Willing and Unable: How financial barriers obstruct bachelor-degree attainment in Texas*, December 2006, p. 33.