THE FUTURE IS WHAT WE MAKE IT

2020 BLUEPRINT REPORT
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E3 ALLIANCE

“E3 Alliance is focused on solving complex problems. With their research and data expertise and partnerships with education institutions and organizations across Central Texas, E3 Alliance is uniquely positioned to inform and implement data-driven policy and practice to improve outcomes for students in the region and beyond. If we want to build a successful 21st century global economy, theirs is the kind of thinking we need to apply.”

– Wynn Rosser, Ph. D.
President & CEO,
T.L.L. Temple Foundation
With the recent pandemic crisis and racial unrest in our country and community, E3 Alliance has been challenged to stay true to its core mission while being a bridge builder to help our education partners and students get to the other side. That’s why we cannot take our eyes off transforming the systems that perpetuate these educational inequities for our students.

Our core mission — the one that every one of us strives for each day — is that “ALL students succeed.” Ensuring every student succeeds, no matter the color of their skin, zip code, or family income, requires strong, objective data and effective collaboration across partners who together can make systems change happen. At E3 Alliance, we are truly grateful that systems change is happening, in so many ways for so many students. This year’s results are no exception.

Pre-K students attending full-day school with a low student-to-teacher ratio have increased ninefold, from only 5% eight years ago to 45% this year. We’ve long worked to expand pre-K enrollment and quality, knowing that high quality pre-K is a strong predictor of school readiness, and we firmly believe future years will show striking improvements in school readiness for our students.

In a few short years of intense effort to provide equitable access to advanced math in middle school, the gap between high performing students from households with different income levels has been reduced by more than a third. Remarkably, the Black-White student gap has been reduced by 75%!

Rapid improvements in our high school graduation rates, especially for Black and Hispanic students from low-income households, have saved our region $3 billion in projected lifetime earnings! At the same time, we are taking proven solutions from Central Texas to the rest of the state. We are helping thousands more students succeed while building sustainability for our work at E3 Alliance.

This collective impact approach is accomplishing great results and we have much to applaud, but it is simply not enough. We know that a Central Texas student without a postsecondary credential has only a 12% chance of earning a living wage job within six years of leaving high school. Despite this alarming figure, college enrollment has consistently dropped over the last eight years. The future does not bode well either for our students or our economic future unless we turn this trend around. We need to double down as partners in education in the great Central Texas region, to make pathways to college access and achievement a reality for every student. Despite the unparalleled challenges our education partners and students will face this coming year, we are convinced that Central Texas will pull through this together, as a community dedicated to the success of every child.

Thank you for joining this journey with us. Let’s MAKE IT HAPPEN.

SUSAN DAWSON
PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, E3 ALLIANCE
ABOUT E3 ALLIANCE

E3 Alliance is a regional, data-driven education collaborative based in Central Texas and now expanding our work across the state. We are helping to build the strongest, most equitable educational pipeline in the country to drive economic prosperity. As a pioneer in collective impact, E3 Alliance partners with a broad range of community representatives to work together on achieving lasting systemic change.

OUR WORK

Since 2006, we have worked collaboratively to change education systems, working directly with students and families to identify goals, partnering deeply with 15 school districts, eight institutions of higher education, and over 200 businesses, nonprofits, and policy leaders across Central Texas to address complex community issues in education. Our combined efforts seek to improve student outcomes across every demographic of our 600,000 children and students throughout the region – from cradle to career!

OUR APPROACH

Every initiative of The Blueprint for Education Change™ is powered by objective data and guided by our Theory of Change, which offers a clear path toward collective action and changes in practice and highlights the need to understand the data with our Central Texas Community to take action together. Ultimately, this leads to systems change that sustains a culture of high performance for our students.

THEORY OF CHANGE
Central Texas Students

- **361,214** PK-12 Students
- **47%** HISPANIC
- **36%** WHITE
- **6%** ASIAN
- **7%** BLACK
- **19%** ENGLISH LEARNERS
- **43%** LOW-INCOME

Student Enrollment Trends

**POPULATION GROWTH GRADES PRE-K – 12**
FROM 2009 TO 2019

- **32%** Central Texas
- **15%** Texas

Central Texas Schools

- **277** Elementary Schools
- **89** Middle Schools
- **86** High Schools
- **8** Institutions of Higher Education
THE BLUEPRINT FOR EDUCATIONAL CHANGE™

Building the Strongest Educational Pipeline in the Country
E3 Alliance and our partners have established measurable objectives to improve student outcomes and decrease inequity across the cradle-to-career pipeline by 2023.

**2023 OBJECTIVES**

### School Readiness
1. 90% of eligible children enroll in Pre-Kindergarten
2. 70% of children enter Kindergarten school ready

### School Success
3. 70% of all 3rd graders meet reading standards on STAAR
4. 70% of all 8th graders meet reading standards on STAAR
5. 45% of all 8th graders complete Algebra I

### High School Graduation
6. 88% of all 9th graders are NOT chronically absent
7. 95% of students graduate high school on time

### Postsecondary Success
8. 70% of students enroll in college within 1 year of high school graduation
9. 55% of high school graduates complete a postsecondary credential within 6 years
IMPACT

Kindergarten Readiness increase from 2015 to 2020.

50% 41%

50% 41%

Kindergarten Readiness increase from 2015 to 2020.

SEVEN YEAR SAVINGS OF $37.5 MILLION

Money saved due to increase in attendance rates since 2011.

13 OUT OF 15 DISTRICTS

5 OUT OF 7 IHEs

Number of districts and institutions of higher education implementing commitments to improve and align advanced math pathways within the PK-16 pipeline.

Almost 90% of Emergency Bridge Funding recipients persisted from semester to semester in Central Texas Institutions of Higher Education.
Since The Blueprint for Educational Change was launched, there has been a strategic effort to coordinate initiatives and bring programs together so that we can leverage resources and do even more to help students succeed.”

– Donna Howard
Representative of the State of Texas
HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY FINDINGS

More Students Enrolled in Higher Quality Pre-K

With the most comprehensive data on kindergarten readiness in Texas, we know that students who were in high quality pre-K are more prepared for school when they entered kindergarten. We also know that students who are rated “Ready” by their teachers on domains of social emotional readiness, language and communication abilities, early literacy skills, and mathematics are far more likely to be on grade level at third grade. In Central Texas, United Way for Greater Austin and E3 Alliance have led a coordinated effort to promote the quality of pre-K and increase enrollment in high quality pre-K programs.

DATA TAKEAWAYS

- We have radically improved the landscape of Central Texas public pre-K programs in the past 10 years.
- Students in high quality (full-day, low student-to-teacher ratio) classes have increased nine-fold – from just 5% eight years ago to 45%.
- Although quality pre-K at age 4 helps children build school readiness skills, we know that we need to support children and families much earlier.
SPOTLIGHT

Brookhollow Elementary School Improves Kindergarten Readiness Using Continuous Improvement

Following the success of last year’s Peer Learning Network (PLN), E3 designed a new PLN concentrated on improving kindergarten readiness. Participating teams disaggregated data, set a goal, and tested strategies to improve outcomes for students.

Brookhollow Elementary from Pflugerville ISD joined the PLN to increase early literacy among kindergarten students. “Finding time with individual students is a challenge. Having leadership support allowed us to make time to decide how students can be best supported,” said Katelyn Patterson, Kindergarten Teacher.

The teams used their campus data to develop strategies, then implemented these ideas using small tests of change. This process helps ensure success before moving to full scale. “Our team developed vocabulary cards and large picture cards to support language as well as developed deployment groups for students to rotate to each different team teacher who would target specific skills,” shared Steven Brock, Instructional Coach.

Even after this first small test of change, Brookhollow has already seen increases in early literacy skills. “From beginning-of-year to middle-of-year testing, all benchmark students increased from 43% to 53% and Hispanic benchmark students increased from 42% to 51%,” says Brock. “We are very pleased with our first small test of change. It is intentional, focused, consistent, and proving to show student success.”

INITIATIVES

• Since 2014, E3 Alliance has partnered with multiple organizations, districts, and nonprofits to increase the enrollment of eligible students into pre-K across Central Texas.

• United Way for Greater Austin and E3 Alliance have formed Early Matters Greater Austin to mobilize and unite the business community to help assure every child in the Austin area enters kindergarten prepared for success.

• The Kindergarten Readiness Peer Learning Network launched in August 2019 with seven campus teams from four partner school districts across Central Texas.
SCHOOL READINESS

Equity Target

Data from E3 Alliance’s Kindergarten Readiness Study consistently shows that kindergarten students who attended any type of pre-K program were more likely to be rated as ready for school compared to their peers who did not attend pre-K. In addition, for children who attended pre-K as part of a school district, quality matters. Students who attend a full school day with a low, student-to-teacher ratio were rated as more ready by their kindergarten teachers.

With the ninefold increase we’ve seen this year in school districts offering high quality, pre-K models, we anticipate increases in school readiness rates in coming years.

By 2023 we will close the readiness gap by 1/3 between students from low-income and non-low-income households.
HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY FINDINGS

Central Texas within Reach of Middle School Algebra Completion Objective

We know that taking rigorous math in high school leads to postsecondary credentials aligned with high-wage, high-skilled jobs. This means improving math pathways in elementary and middle school and ensuring Algebra I completion by 8th grade for all students who are prepared. District partners have made significant strides this year in examining practices and identifying areas of opportunity to increase access to advanced math for all students. Their work has increased the percentage of Central Texas students completing Algebra I by 8th grade from 38% to 41%, and students from low-income households completing Algebra I by 8th grade from 26% to 30%. We are only 4% away from our regional target.

While celebrating this achievement, we also recognize considerable work remains to help more students access the most appropriate, higher-level math and strengthen their likelihood of:

• graduating high school college ready;
• enrolling and persisting in higher education; and
• completing a postsecondary degree or certificate.

DATA TAKEAWAYS

Students enrolled in advanced math courses, like Algebra I by the end of 8th grade, are more likely to be on a pathway associated with higher rates of high school graduation, college enrollment, persistence, and completion.

Central Texas leads the state with the highest percentage of students completing Algebra I by 8th grade (41%).

• Leading indicators are strong: the income gap in high performing 5th graders placed on advanced math pathway has been decreased by more than one-third, from 17% to 11%; and among our Black and Hispanic top performing 5th graders, the race gap has been reduced by 75%!

• Over time, Algebra I completion by 8th grade for our students from low-income households has increased by 12%. However, data still shows a large Algebra I enrollment gap between students from low-income households and those from non-low-income households, further exacerbated for our Hispanic and Black students.
INITIATIVES

The Pathways of Promise Steering Committee remains focused on addressing deeper systematic challenges impeding entry of Black, Hispanic, and students from low-income households into advanced math pathways.

- Elementary, middle, and high school recommendations are being refined to improve school systems, galvanize stakeholders, and enhance communication with families.

- While access to rigorous courses improves, additional efforts are underway to ensure that math instruction is equitable for all students.

SPOTLIGHT

Policy Change in Round Rock ISD Learning Community Results in Middle School Math Success

Inspired by E3’s data, key leadership in Round Rock ISD’s Stony Point Learning Community launched a campaign to provide middle school students the opportunity to take accelerated math in 6th grade. They introduced a more open enrollment approach. Deliberate communications with families helped parents understand the benefits of advanced math pathways for college readiness. Collaboration with educators in professional learning communities helped secure teacher buy-in.

This new method places students on track to complete Algebra I by 8th grade, which sets into motion the foundation to pursue higher level math in high school, a predictor of college and career success.

Natalie Nichols, Area Superintendent for the Stony Point Learning Community shared, “What I see is a system that changed in order to meet needs and to empower our parents and our students versus to hold them back.”
Data Trends

The gap between students from low-income households and those from non-low-income households completing Algebra I by 8th grade has been cut by a third since 2012. Still, more work needs to be done around changes in policies and practices to completely close the gap.

Equity Target

When considering how the persistent equity gap is manifested for our underrepresented populations, the systematic challenges impeding entry of Black and Hispanic students into advanced math pathways must continue to be addressed.

However, we are seeing rapid closing of the gaps between White, Black, and Hispanic students who scored in the top 40% of the 5th Grade STAAR, and who completed Algebra I by the end of 8th grade. In the past four years, when we look at our Black and White top performing 5th graders, the race gap has been reduced by 75%.
HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY FINDINGS

High School Graduation Rates Improve Across All Groups

On-time high school graduation in Central Texas continues to outpace the state and has increased for the seventh consecutive year. The largest increase we are seeing is in the percent of males from low-income households graduating on time, moving from 83% to 86% in one year. Although high school graduation rates are at an all-time high, and equity gaps are closing, there are still differences between groups. In addition, there is an indication that a rise in rates of students who are chronically absent in 9th grade could negatively impact graduation rates as early as 2020-21.

DATA TAKEAWAYS

On-time graduation rates in Central Texas have increased across all groups in the last six years

- On-time graduation rates for Hispanic students have increased by 8% over the last six years.
- Graduation rates for Black students have increased from 81% to 88% in the last six years; at the same time graduation rates for White and Asian students has remained relatively stable.
- The gap between students from non-low-income households and students from low-income households for on-time high school graduation decreased by 43% over the last six years, significantly narrowing the disparity.
- The percent of 9th grade students who were chronically absent has increased for the second straight year, raising alarms that we could see a drop in our graduation rates if we do not change this trend.
INITIATIVES

• Participating secondary schools in the Chronic Absence Peer Learning Network achieved, on average, 1% to 3% increase in average daily attendance and decreased chronic absence among targeted populations after one year.

• E3 has relaunched the Missing School Matters Task Force to reinforce collaborative learning around improving attendance across districts as well as dig deeper into the work within district cohorts.

SPOTLIGHT

Collaborating to Improve College Access and Success

The mission of many organizations across Central Texas remains focused on ensuring targeted populations graduate high school on time and successfully transition into a postsecondary pathway, which ultimately leads to a career that pays a living wage.

To meet the needs of these students, E3 Alliance formed a collaboration with several Central Texas organizations who support our highest-need students, including My Brother’s Keeper, Austin College Attainment Network, and Workforce Solutions. Career and Education Outreach Specialists from these organizations are working across five school districts and 25 campuses. They work directly with students from low-income households, giving guidance and support to and through college, with a specific focus on the skills needed to attain a high-wage, high-growth career in Central Texas.

Natalie Obregon, Workforce Solutions Outreach Specialist, explained some of the student success outcomes that have emerged. “Students have learned what an apprenticeship is and what the model of learning and working looks like and are genuinely excited about it.

Ms. Obregon is one of many professionals who are actively engaged with students. More than ever before, our Central Texas students have an opportunity to meet the demands of our regional workforce, expand their education, and earn a wage that will bring financial rewards for them and their families.
Equity Target

Increase four-year, on-time high school graduation rates of males from low-income households from 83% to 89% by 2023.

Data Trends

On-time, high school graduation rates in Central Texas have increased significantly for students from low-income households in Central Texas over the last 10 years, with the gap between students from non-low-income and low-income households decreasing.
**HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY FINDINGS**

**Transforming Postsecondary Education Systems**

E3 Alliance and Austin College Attainment Network (ACAN) are working to close college completion gaps by implementing a new strategic plan aimed at scaling proven practices while integrating new approaches for students of color and those from low-income backgrounds. Data not only shows a decline in postsecondary enrollment for Central Texas students, but also for those enrolled we see significant gaps in completion among student groups.

Systemic inequity, as highlighted in our postsecondary completion rates, impacts male students from low-income households the most.

E3 Alliance and ACAN, with major new support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, have launched an effort to transform outcomes for our students of color and first-generation students in institutions of higher education within our region.

**DATA TAKEAWAYS**

- 84% of Central Texas students who enroll in a higher education institution persist from their freshman to sophomore year.
- 66% of Central Texas students enroll in a two-year, public higher education institution.
- Almost 90% of ACAN students who received an Emergency Bridge Fund re-enrolled in the semester following their award.
- 51% of Central Texas students obtain a postsecondary credential within six years of enrollment.
INITIATIVES

• Austin College Attainment Network consists of nine community-based organizations dedicated to improving first-generation college success, by working with local school districts and institutions of higher education to support student enrollment and persistence in college.

• Emergency Bridge Funding supports students from stopping out of school by providing a small grant to Central Texas undergraduates, to ensure persistence when small financial crises arise.

SPOTLIGHT

Deliberative Dialogues Tackle Postsecondary Success

In the Spring of 2019, E3 Alliance launched the “Pathways to Prosperity” deliberative dialogue process to engage a diverse range of community members across Central Texas to explore what college means to our region, and to address the underlying factors that are limiting student success.

Research indicates that three-fourths of jobs in 2020 – and almost all living wage jobs – will require a postsecondary credential. Young adults without a postsecondary credential within six years of leaving high school have only a 12% chance of earning a living wage.

The dialogues enabled participants to delve into common narratives around postsecondary education, from a conception that college is always and only a four-year degree, to college is simply too expensive and not for everyone. Participants identified ideas and assets that could help students succeed in their education and careers.

Snehal Phirke, Council President of Round Rock ISD PTA, explained, “E3’s Pathways to Prosperity has been an insightful and interactive process towards a comprehensive, data-driven perspective on current education trends, gaps, and opportunities for all our students in Central Texas.”

This work continues, building the three priority areas selected by participants:

• increase awareness through unified marketing and communications;
• improve and enrich resources to allow for single portal access;
• enhance mentorship opportunities.

Today, members from community-based organizations, the Austin College Attainment Network, and self-elected delegates from the dialogues are working together to implement these priorities and change systems so that all Central Texas students have a prosperous future.
Equity Target

Increase direct-to-college enrollment of graduates from low-income households from 40% to 50%.

Data Trends

Texas higher education institution enrollment rates have been decreasing since 2011 among Central Texas students, and the gap between students from low-income households and students from non-low-income households remains consistent.
“Every part of our state’s education system must work in concert and with diligence to create the education outcomes Texas needs to succeed in the 21st century global economy. That’s why I so appreciate the work of E3 Alliance. They are able to act as an independent catalyst, providing powerful objective data and a platform for real collaboration across often disconnected institutions that help us work together toward the changes we need. Their work is unique and impactful, benefitting the smallest rural school districts to the flagship university.”

— Dr. Steven Leslie
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs,
University of Texas System
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School districts, higher education institutions, businesses, community organizations, and nonprofits make up our Alliance Partners. Through formal and informal relationships, we work together to ensure successful outcomes for all of our students in Central Texas.
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Success by 6
Sustainability Indicators Project
Texans Care for Children
United Way for Greater Austin
United Ways of Hays & Caldwell Counties
United Ways of Texas
Univision

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INVESTORS

“No one else in the region has been able to garner answers to our most-pressing questions in education and incite people to take action. E3 is much more than a research organization – it convenes and inspires people to change their behavior based on data and to truly understand the connection between education and the effect that it has on the prosperity of our region. With E3 as our guide to positive change in the region, funders, practitioners, and community members alike have the opportunity and data at their fingertips to enact lasting change as our population and its needs grow by leaps and bounds.”

— Virginia Potter
Portfolio Director of Central Texas, Michael & Susan Dell Foundation
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- Tito’s Handmade Vodka

### FOUNDING PARTNERS

### MAJOR INVESTMENT PARTNERS
DATA SOURCES:

• Pre-K enrollment, Algebra I, high school graduation, and higher education enrollment data comes from E3 Alliance analysis of the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and Higher Education Coordinating Board data at the UT Austin Education Research Center.

• School readiness data comes from E3 Alliance analysis of Ready, Set, K! weighted data.

NOTES
THANK YOU!

On behalf of all the Central Texas leaders who have been a part of this journey, and the many hours spent in the difficult work of changing systems so that all students succeed, we thank you for your tireless effort and commitment.