

PRELIMINARY RESULTS: POTENTIAL REASONS FOR DECREASE IN COLLEGE ENROLLMENT RATES FOR SPECIFIC AISD STUDENT POPULATIONS

QUESTION: What are potential reasons for the decrease in 4-year postsecondary enrollment rates for African American and Asian Austin Independent School District (AISD) graduates and overall postsecondary enrollment rates for White and special education (SPED) graduates?

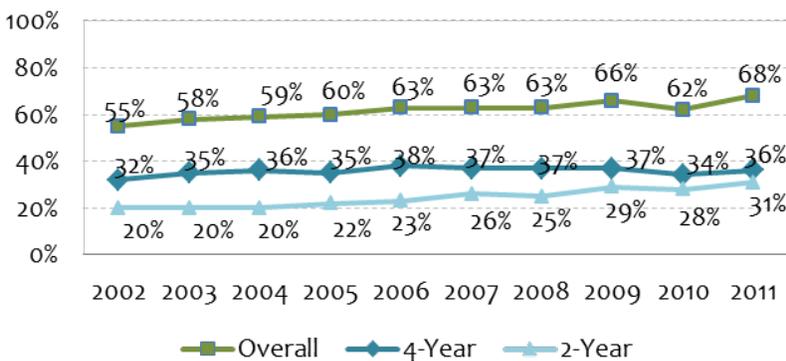
Method. Data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), district data systems and the 2012 High Exit Survey were analyzed. Descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted to summarize outcomes and explore factors predicting enrollment in a 4-year institution in the year after high school graduation. In this report, “4-year postsecondary enrollment” refers to students who enrolled in a 4-year institution within one year of graduating from high school. “Overall postsecondary enrollment” represents students who enrolled in a 2- or 4-year institution within one year of graduation. The determination of “high level of interaction with school staff” was calculated based on activities seniors reported on the High School Exit Survey. These activities included school staff helping them select courses needed for work or admission to college, talking about career information, and talking about academic and career issues.

Key findings. Overall, postsecondary enrollment for AISD graduates increased incrementally over the past 10 years for all student groups (Figure 1). Students enrolling in 2-year institutions accounted for the overall increase in postsecondary enrollment, while enrollment in 4-year institutions declined for all graduates, except those who were not economically disadvantaged (Figures 2 and 3).

Predictive factors for postsecondary enrollment in a 4-year institution were explored. Students who were female, not categorized as economically disadvantaged, and/or had high levels of interaction with school staff were significantly more likely to enroll in any type of postsecondary institution and more likely to enroll in a 4-year institution than were any other groups of students. Other factors explored, such as limited English proficiency status, were not significant predictors for postsecondary enrollment and are not reported.

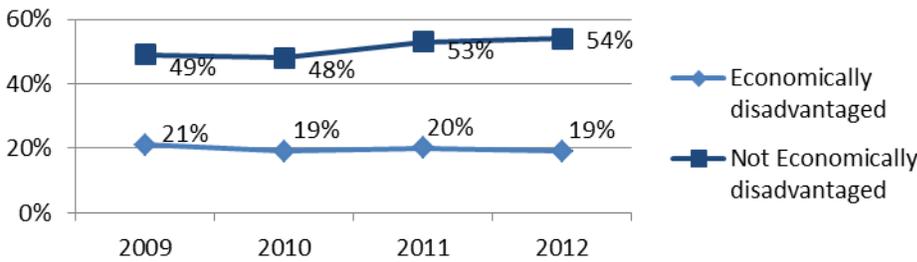
The overall district postsecondary enrollment rate and the decline in enrollment in 4-year postsecondary institutions are consistent with national trends reported by the NSC (2013). Economic recovery and concern for rising student debt are considered factors in the recent decline in postsecondary enrollment across the United States. According to Aud et al. (2011), college enrollment rates nationwide also tended to be lower for African American and Hispanic students than for Asian and White students.

Figure 1. Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for AISD Graduates, 2002–2011



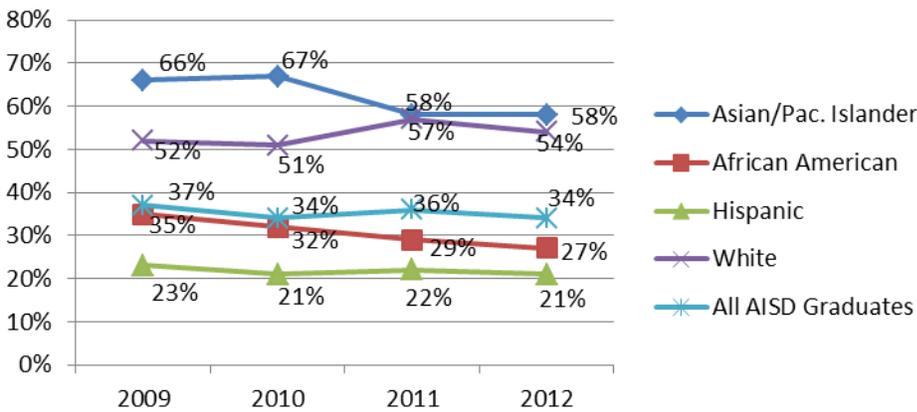
Source. National Student Clearinghouse, July 2012

Figure 2. Four-Year Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for AISD Graduates, by Economic Status, 2009–2012



Source. National Student Clearinghouse, July 2013

Figure 3. Four-Year College Enrollment Rates for AISD Graduates, by Race/Ethnicity, 2009–2012



Source. National Student Clearinghouse, July 2013

POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT: OVERALL

What are potential reasons for the decline in overall postsecondary enrollment rates for all AISD graduates? Graduates who were female and not economically disadvantaged were significantly more likely to enroll in a postsecondary institution (Table 1). Nearly half of AISD’s high school graduates are economically disadvantaged. This appears to be a driving force in the overall enrollment rates for AISD graduates. Students who had higher levels of interactions with teachers and administrators also were significantly more likely to attend college than were those who had fewer interactions.

Table 1. Significant Predictors of Overall Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for AISD’s 2012 Graduates

Population (n = 3,311)	Percentage of population	Overall enrollment rate	Significant predictor?
Female	51.4%	75.2%	<i>p</i> < .001
Male	48.6%	66.2%	<i>p</i> < .001
Economically disadvantaged	50.8%	59.3%	<i>p</i> < .001
Not economically disadvantaged	49.2%	82.7%	<i>p</i> < .001
High level of interaction with school staff	27.8%	72.8%	<i>p</i> < .05
Low level of interaction with school staff	72.2%	70.0%	<i>p</i> < .05

Source. AISD student demographic, 2012 High School Exit Survey, and National Student Clearinghouse files

What are potential reasons for the decline in overall postsecondary enrollment rates for White AISD graduates?

The overall postsecondary enrollment rates for White graduates exceeded the district average and the enrollment rates of African American and Hispanic graduates (Figure 3). A significantly lower percentage of White graduates than of the overall AISD population was classified as economically disadvantaged. This factor was an important predictor of overall postsecondary enrollment, with non-economically disadvantaged graduates enrolling at a significantly higher rate than their economically disadvantaged counterparts.

Table 2. Significant Predictors of Overall Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for AISD’s 2012 White Graduates

Population (<i>n</i> = 1,140)	Percentage of population	Overall enrollment rate	Significant predictor?
Female	51.0%	85.7%	<i>p</i> < .05
Male	49.0%	79.4%	<i>p</i> < .05
Economically disadvantaged	13.3%	68.4%	<i>p</i> < .001
Not economically disadvantaged	86.7%	84.8%	<i>p</i> < .001
High level of interaction school staff	24.6%	82.5%	No
Low level of interaction with school staff	75.4%	82.7%	No

Source. AISD student demographic, 2012 High School Exit Survey, and National Student Clearinghouse files

What are potential reasons for the decline in overall postsecondary enrollment rates for SPED AISD graduates?

Postsecondary enrollment rates tended to be lower for all SPED populations than for the overall AISD population. SPED graduates who were male, economically disadvantaged, and/or experienced fewer interactions with school staff were significantly less likely to pursue enrollment in a postsecondary institution than were any other student groups.

Table 3. Significant Predictors of Overall Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for AISD’s 2012 Special Education Graduates

Population (<i>n</i> = 348)	Percentage of population	Overall enrollment rate	Significant predictor?
Female	53.7%	74.3%	<i>p</i> < .05
Male	46.2%	62.1%	<i>p</i> < .05
Economically disadvantaged	45.7%	57.9%	<i>p</i> < .001
Not economically disadvantaged	54.3%	77.8%	<i>p</i> < .001
High level of interaction with school staff	30.7%	72.9%	<i>p</i> < .05
Low level of interaction with school staff	69.3%	66.8%	<i>p</i> < .05

Source. AISD student demographic, 2012 High School Exit Survey, and National Student Clearinghouse files

POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT: 4-YEAR INSTITUTIONS

What are potential reasons for the decline in 4-year postsecondary enrollment rates for all AISD graduates? Graduates who were female, not categorized as economically disadvantaged, and/or had high levels of interaction with school staff were significantly more likely to enroll in a 4-year institution. Specifically, graduates who were not classified as economically disadvantaged were more than twice as likely as were their economically disadvantaged counterparts to attend a 4-year institution. With the increasing proportion of students considered economically disadvantaged, this trend likely accounted for some of the overall decline in the percentage of students attending 4-year institutions within a year of graduation.

Table 4. Potential Characteristics Related to 4-Year Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for AISD’s 2012 Graduates

Population (N = 3,311)	Percentage of population	4-year enrollment rate	Significant predictor?
Female	51.4%	44.1%	$p < .001$
Male	48.6%	36.4%	$p < .001$
Economically disadvantaged	50.8%	23.5%	$p < .001$
Not economically disadvantaged	49.2%	57.8%	$p < .001$
High level of interaction with school staff	27.8%	43.2%	$p < .001$
Low level of interaction with school staff	72.2%	39.3%	$p < .001$

Source. AISD student demographic, 2012 High School Exit Survey, and National Student Clearinghouse files

What are potential reasons for the decline in 4-year postsecondary enrollment rates for African American AISD graduates? The percentage of African American students who were enrolled in a 4-year institution within a year of graduation was lower than that for the district overall and than that for Asian and White graduates. Nearly 80% of African American graduates were classified as economically disadvantaged. Economic disadvantage was a predictor that corresponded to lower 4-year enrollment rates. Gender also was a key predictor, with African American females attending 4-year institutions at higher rates than African American males.

Table 5. Potential Characteristics Related to 4-Year Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for AISD’s 2012 African American Graduates

Population (n = 320)	Percentage of population	4-year enrollment rate	Significant predictor?
Female	51.9%	39.8%	$p < .05$
Male	48.1%	29.9%	$p < .05$
Economically disadvantaged	79.7%	32.6%	$p < .05$
Not economically disadvantaged	20.3%	44.6%	$p < .05$
High level of interaction with school staff	33.8%	36.1%	No
Low level of interaction with school staff	66.2%	34.4%	No

Source. AISD student demographic, 2012 High School Exit Survey, and National Student Clearinghouse files

What are potential reasons for the decline in 4-year postsecondary enrollment rates for Asian AISD graduates?

Asian graduates enrolled in 4-year institutions at higher rates than did the other student groups; however, their enrollment in 4-year institutions experienced the sharpest decline. Unlike for other population subgroups, gender was not a significant predictor of 4-year college enrollment for Asian graduates. This may be due in part to the relatively smaller population size. Again, economic status was the primary predictor of 4-year postsecondary enrollment, with those not classified as economically disadvantaged pursuing higher education at a rate almost double that of economically disadvantaged Asian students.

Table 6: Potential Characteristics Related to 4-Year Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for AISD's 2012 Asian Graduates

Population (<i>n</i> = 130)	Percentage of population	4-Year enrollment rate	Significant predictor?
Female	45.3%	66.1%	No
Male	54.7%	59.2%	No
Economically disadvantaged	40.7%	41.5%	$p < .001$
Not economically disadvantaged	59.3%	76.6%	$p < .001$
High level of interaction with school staff	29.2%	63.2%	No
Low level of interaction with school staff	70.8%	62.0%	No

Source. AISD student demographic, 2012 High School Exit Survey, and National Student Clearinghouse files

References

- Aud, S., Hussar, W., Kena, G., Bianco, K., Frohlich, L., Kemp, J., & Kim, T. (2011). *The condition of education 2011*, NCES 2011-033. Washington, DC: US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.
- National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. (2013, December 11). *Term enrollment estimates: Fall 2013*. Retrieved from National Student Clearinghouse Research Center: <http://nscresearchcenter.org/currenttermenrollmentestimate-fall2013/>