

Introduction to Results for the Class of 2012

The purpose of this survey was to monitor high school students' perceptions of their high school experience. Results are used to improve the campus environment and program supports for students. Survey results also are used in the monitoring of the district's strategic plan Goal 3, which includes measures of students' self-confidence and attitudes toward school, work, and success. Seniors' responses to the multiple choice questions are organized into the following categories: postsecondary intentions and family support, high school experiences and campus climate, instruction and technology, postsecondary preparation and advising, and additional results.

Postsecondary Intentions and Family Support

1. *Within a year after graduating from high school, what do you plan to do? (Select all)*

	2010	2011	2012
Continue my education	91.8%	91.1%	90.8%
Attend a 4-year college or university	59.1%	56.8%	54.0%
Attend a 2-year and eventually transfer to a 4-year college	19.0%	20.8	32.4%
Attend a 2-year community college only (not planning to transfer to a 4-year)	17.8%	17.6%	8.1%
Attend a private career or trade school	.	.	2.3%
Go into the military	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%
Be a full-time parent	1.2%	1.6%	0.9%
Work full time	11.5%	9.5%	8.9%
Work part time	35.0%	32.3%	27.5%
Take a year off to do other things, then enroll in school	.	.	5.6%
No plans/not sure yet	5.1%	3.7%	3.9%
Other	.	6.7%	4.1%

Note. Missing values (.) indicate items were not included in the respective year's survey.

In 2012, most students who indicated "other" were entering military service.

About this survey.

The 10th annual Austin Independent School District (AISD) High School Exit Survey was administered online to seniors in every AISD high school during Spring 2012. On each campus, Project ADVANCE facilitators primarily were responsible for ensuring all seniors were given the opportunity to complete the survey. Special education chairs at each campus were tasked with providing eligible special education students with guidance and assistance in completing the survey.

This report contains the results for the entire AISD Class of 2012. Where available, data are presented from previous senior classes to compare with 2012 responses. In total, 3,413 students in the Class of 2012 completed the survey, for an overall response rate of 76.4%. The ethnic and gender distribution of the district survey sample closely resembled that of the district's senior class, indicating the results can be considered representative of the entire senior class population. Campus-level survey results are provided in separate reports and will be available online in September 2012.

2. If you are not planning to pursue further education, what are your primary reasons? (Select all)

	2010	2011	2012
Grades/test scores are not high enough	21.6%	22.6%	14.5%
Cannot afford to attend school	27.2%	21.7%	18.2%
Don't feel academically prepared for further education	17.0%	18.4%	11.6%
Family responsibilities or child care	9.2%	11.4%	6.9%
Need to earn an income to support myself/others	25.9%	21.7%	25.1%
A college or trade/technical school is not for me	.	.	5.3%
Want some time off from school to do other things, but plan to enroll after a year	.	.	31.7%
My goals do not require additional education	13.8%	18.8%	11.2%
Not sure what I want to do yet	.	.	26.1%
Other (please specify)	23.8%	25.4%	17.8%

Financial concerns were important in seniors' postsecondary plans.

Students who postpone education after high school are less likely to enroll in college and earn a degree than are students who do not postpone enrollment (Niu & Tienda, 2011).

3. During high school, to what extent were your parents involved in the following school-related activities?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Talking to you about homework	10.1%	22.1%	37.6%	30.2%
Making sure you completed your homework	14.2%	22.1%	35.6%	27.9%
Asking you about what you're learning in school	14.1%	23.6%	38.3%	23.9%
Helping you decide what classes to take	22.2%	24.3%	31.3%	22.3%
Talking to you about how you're doing in your classes	6.3%	13.8%	35.0%	44.8%
Rewarding you when you do well in school	19.4%	24.2%	32.7%	23.7%
Communicating with your teachers (e.g., teacher conferences, email, phone calls)	24.2%	31.8%	29.1%	14.9%
Attending school meetings	32.9%	25.4%	24.7%	17.0%
Attending school events (e.g., sports, performances)	24.4%	19.03%	25.0%	31.6%
Volunteering at your school	53.1%	21.9%	16.5%	8.4%
Joining and participating in the Parent Teacher Association	68.9%	14.0%	10.7%	6.2%

Note. Question changed in 2012 and precluded a comparison with the prior years' results.

4. How far did your mother, father, and older brother/sister go in school?

	Mother	Father	Sibling
Did not finish high school	23.2%	25.8%	11.0%
Graduated from high school or earned a GED	23.1%	21.7%	25.5%
Currently attending from 2-year college/technical school	2.9%	1.6%	12.5%
Currently attending 4-year college	1.1%	0.8%	24.4%
Attended 2-year college/technical school but did not complete degree	4.1%	2.9%	3.6%
Graduated from a 2-year college/technical school	4.3%	3.5%	2.4%
Attended 4-year college but did not complete degree	6.1%	6.6%	3.2%
Graduated from a 4-year college, bachelor's degree	21.9%	20.1%	13.6%
Graduated with a master's degree or equivalent	9.7%	10.4%	3.0%
Graduated with a PhD, MD, JD, or other advanced degree	3.4%	6.5%	0.9%

Parental education level influences children's aspirations for their own education, as well as their actual educational achievement (Dubow, Boxer, & Huesmann, 2009).

Note. Question changed in 2012 and precluded a comparison with the prior years' results.

High School Experiences and Campus Climate

5. Including your current school, how many different high schools have you attended?

	2010	2011	2012
1	71.9%	74.1%	76.0%
2	18.6%	18.4%	15.9%
3 or more	9.5%	7.5%	8.1%

Multiple school changes can disrupt students' academic lives, particularly for Hispanic youth, because important relationships are disrupted and curricula may differ between schools (Bregman, 2010).

6. Please indicate the number of years of high school in which you participated in each of these *extracurricular* activities. Indicate the average number of hours per week you participated in these activities.

In school	Did not participate	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	Avg. # of years	Avg. # hours per week
Music	66.1%	11.9%	5.3%	4.0%	12.6%	2.6	1.5
Theater	79.5%	12.3%	3.9%	1.4%	3.0%	1.8	1.0
Dance	79.0%	8.7%	5.4%	3.2%	3.6%	2.1	1.2
Sports	47.4%	10.2%	9.5%	8.1%	24.7%	3.1	2.0
Academic clubs or UIL academic competitions	66.4%	9.1%	6.8%	4.8%	12.8%	2.7	1.2
Speech/debate	74.1%	21.4%	2.9%	0.7%	0.9%	1.3	0.7
Student government	82.2%	11.9%	2.7%	1.1%	2.1%	1.7	0.9
Career and technical organizations	80.7%	7.8%	5.1%	3.0%	3.4%	2.2	1.4

Note. Question changed in 2012 and precluded a comparison with the prior years' results.

Outside school	Did not participate	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	Avg. # of years	Avg. # of hours per week
Music	71.8%	6.7%	4.6%	2.5%	14.3%	3.1	1.6
Theater	91.3%	4.5%	1.5%	0.7%	2.1%	2.2	1.2
Dance	86.4%	5.3%	2.7%	2.1%	3.6%	2.4	1.4
Sports	54.3%	7.1%	7.6%	6.0%	13.6%	3.3	2.1
Care for family members	79.9%	5.3%	3.5%	1.7%	9.5%	3.0	2.0
Community service	46.5%	13.5%	9.8%	5.9%	24.7%	2.9	1.6
Environmental projects	78.3%	8.8%	5.2%	2.0%	5.6%	2.3	1.3
Boy Scouts or Girls Scouts	92.2%	2.3%	0.7%	0.7%	3.9%	1.0	1.2

Note. Question changed in 2012 and precluded a comparison with the prior years' results.

Extracurricular activities provide intellectual and social development opportunities for students. Schools that provide more extracurricular activities and have more student participants have better academic outcomes in terms of students performing at grade level and staying in school than do schools that provide fewer such activities (Stearns & Glennie, 2009).

7. Please indicate the average number of hours per week you worked last summer and during your senior year.

	Percentage who worked <u>summer prior</u> to senior year		Percentage who worked <u>during</u> senior year	
	2011	2012	2011	2012
Did not work	49.7%	32.4%	51.4%	22.0%
1 to 5 hours	7.9%	9.1%	9.8%	12.0%
6 to 10 hours	8.7%	10.3%	9.0%	15.3%
11 to 15 hours	6.6%	10.2%	8.4%	15.8%
16 or more hours	27.1%	38.0%	21.4%	34.9%

Average # of hours worked per week	
Summer 2011	12.6
School year 2011–2012	11.9

Compared with those who did not work, seniors who worked longer hours had significantly lower academic achievement, attendance, and educational aspirations. They were less engaged in extracurricular activities. They also were less likely to enroll in college. However, seniors working longer hours were more likely to save their earnings for postsecondary enrollment and were less likely to be unemployed 2 years after high school (Marsh & Kleitman, 2005).

In 2012, seniors studied an average of 6.3 hours per week studying.

8. How many hours per week did you typically spend studying, doing research, or completing homework assignments outside of class?

	2011	2012
Did not study	8.4%	3.8%
1 to 5 hours	49.4%	49.2%
6 to 10 hours	26.6%	29.3%
11 to 15 hours	10.0%	10.5%
16 or more hours	5.6%	7.1%

9. Please mark the answer that best indicates how you feel.

Percentage who responded either Sometimes or Always	2010	2011	2012
I can do even the hardest schoolwork if I try	91.8%	91.6%	90.6%
I enjoy doing my schoolwork	58.6%	59.9%	55.8%
I feel/felt well prepared for TAKS	89.3%	90.7%	91.6%
I try hard to do my best work	89.5%	90.7%	90.4%
I feel successful in my schoolwork	90.3%	89.6%	88.8%
My teachers push us to think hard about the things we read.	.	.	83.5%
My teachers push everyone to work hard.	.	.	86.8%
I can reach the goals I set for myself	95.4%	94.7%	94.3%
My homework helps me learn things I need to know	75.9%	76.2%	76.1%
My schoolwork makes me think about things in new ways	68.4%	69.2%	69.2%
I have fun learning in my classes	76.5%	75.9%	75.2%
My teachers connect what I am learning life outside of class	66.1%	64.8%	65.0%
I like to come to school	71.4%	72.5%	70.7%

Note. Response options were Never, Not a lot, Sometimes, Always, and Don't know.

10. How well did your high school help you to actively develop knowledge and skills in the following areas?

Percentage who responded Somewhat well or Very well	2010	2011	2012
Teamwork	89.3%	90.6%	91.2%
Creative thinking	90.0%	90.6%	92.0%
Problem solving	91.8%	92.4%	92.7%
Conflict resolution	83.8%	84.2%	86.5%
Personal health/fitness	81.2%	82.9%	82.7%
Time management	82.7%	83.0%	83.6%
Technology	84.4%	85.6%	87.0%

“21st-century skills” is a term generally used to refer to competencies such as collaboration, digital literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving that will help students thrive in today's world.

11. Rate the quality of instruction you feel you received in the following areas.

Percentage who responded Good or Excellent	2010	2011	2012
English language arts	84.5%	82.3%	81.6%
Mathematics	70.3%	68.5%	68.6%
Science	67.1%	68.6%	68.7%
Social studies	79.7%	79.2%	79.5%
Computer/technology	68.7%	67.5%	66.3%
Foreign language	62.0%	59.8%	59.9%
Performing/fine arts	71.8%	73.2%	72.8%
Career and technical (CTE)	58.9%	58.3%	62.4%

Researchers have found students are important sources of information about what happens in classrooms. Students' responses are generally reliable, valid, and stable over time at the classroom level (Ferguson, 2010).

Note. Response options were Excellent, Good, Fair, and Poor.

12. Which of the following describes your computer access at home?

	2010	2011	2012
No computer	5.3%	5.5%	5.2%
No computer, but Internet access (e.g., cell phone, iPad, or iTouch)	3.6%	6.0%	5.3%
Computer, no Internet	5.8%	5.8%	5.4%
Computer with Internet access	85.3%	82.8%	84.1%

13. Do your parents use Parent Connect/Gradespeed to monitor your grades?

	2010	2011	2012
Yes	43.8%	48.9%	49.8%
No	43.7%	39.3%	39.7%
Don't know	12.5%	11.8%	10.4%

The odds of enrolling in a 2- or 4-year college, relative to not enrolling, was found to increase with the frequency with which parents discussed education-related topics (e.g., grades) with their children. Furthermore, a positive relationship between the frequency of parent-initiated contact with the school about academic issues and the odds of enrolling in a 4-year college was found to be particularly important for African American students (Perna & Titus, 2005).

14. How frequently do you use a computer or other Internet-capable devices (e.g., cell phone, iTouch, or iPad)?

	Never	Less than once a week	Once or twice a week	Every day or almost every day
At home	4.3%	4.6%	9.6%	81.5%
At school	2.8%	10.4%	25.8%	61.1%
To present material in class, for example, using PowerPoint	16.0%	56.9%	20.3%	6.9%
To type a paper or class assignment	7.0%	40.9%	38.6%	13.6%
To search the Internet to complete class-related assignments	4.6%	25.0%	43.6%	26.8%
To research college / career choices	12.9%	35.9%	35.6%	15.6%
To complete online forms or applications for college or employment	15.1%	42.0%	31.8%	11.2%
To communicate with teachers	35.5%	38.4%	17.1%	9.0%
To monitor grades/progress in school	14.9%	17.1%	33.8%	34.2%

15. Indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements about technology use at school.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Text books should be put online.	39.9%	35.1%	13.0%	5.4%	6.6%
My teachers need more training to use technology more in the classroom.	20.8%	38.4%	26.5%	3.2%	11.1%
We need newer software.	33.5%	36.9%	18.0%	2.1%	9.6%
My teachers effectively use the technology resources that are available.	22.1%	58.0%	12.7%	1.7%	5.6%
My school's technology is up to date. It does not need upgrading.	9.5%	36.3%	32.5%	9.4%	12.3%
Websites that are blocked (e.g., YouTube, Facebook) should be unblocked.	48.7%	27.6%	12.8%	4.2%	6.7%
Homework assignments should be online.	30.3%	31.7%	19.8%	8.0%	10.2%

Note. Question changed in 2012 and precluded a comparison with the prior years' results.

16. How frequently do you log into Naviance/Family Connection for the following activities?

	Never	Less than once a week	Once or twice a week	Every day or almost every day
Career exploration	46.1%	38.1%	13.2%	2.6%
Class rank and grade point average (GPA) inquiry	29.1%	49.3%	18.2%	3.5%
College search	33.0%	45.7%	18.1%	3.3%
College visit sign up	42.9%	44.1%	10.8%	2.2%
Counselor-directed activities (e.g., Personality Type Questionnaire or Explore Careers)	50.1%	39.0%	9.2%	1.8%
Resume building	51.0%	38.3%	9.1%	1.6%
Other	50.1%	32.2%	12.8%	5.0%

16b. How frequently do you log into Naviance/Family Connection for the following activities?

Percentage who responded once a week or more	2010	2011	2012
Career exploration	11.9%	13.3%	21.6%
Class rank and grade point average (GPA) inquiry	15.4%	17.9%	21.7%
College search	18.0%	20.4%	21.4%
College visit sign up	12.1%	13.4%	13.0%
Counselor-directed activities (e.g., personality type questionnaire or career exploration)	8.2%	9.8%	11.0%
Resume building	8.7%	9.5%	10.7%
Other	10.7%	14.7%	17.8%

Postsecondary Preparation and Advising

17. At what time in your life did you start thinking about college as a possibility after high school?

	2010	2011	2012
As long ago as I can remember	37.8%	36.9%	38.7%
In elementary school	8.4%	9.1%	8.6%
In middle school / junior high	20.3%	21.0%	20.8%
In high school	31.5%	30.7%	29.3%
Never thought of college as an option	2.1%	2.2%	3.0%

Students' early college aspirations have increased over the past decade, and their aspirations continue to be influenced in high school (Copper, 2009).

18. Overall, how well prepared or informed...

Percentage who responded Somewhat well or Very well	2010	2011	2012
Were you to plan your high school course selections?	92.1%	90.6%	88.6%
Were you to meet your college and career goals?	86.0%	85.4%	84.3%
Have you been for the college or trade/technical school application process?	82.3%	81.3%	78.9%
Have you been about obtaining financial aid for education after high school?	81.8%	84.2%	82.4%

Note. Response options were *Not well*, *Somewhat well*, and *Very well*.

19. How did you prepare for your education after high school (Select all)?

	2010	2011	2012
Took college entrance tests (SAT, ACT, THEA, Compass, Asset)	68.2%	69.5%	73.5%
Completed and submitted the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)	51.9%	56.7%	58.2%
Visited one or more colleges or technical schools	55.1%	56.6%	57.8%
Ordered and submitted a transcript to a college or trade/ technical school.	47.7%	54.2%	55.9%
Took one or more advanced placement or international baccalaureate class	47.5%	53.0%	53.9%
Met with a college recruiter at my high school	.	44.7%	47.0%
Took test prep class for the PSAT, SAT, ACT, etc.	39.6%	47.3%	46.1%
Completed and submitted a scholarship application	41.4%	44.3%	44.8%
Met with the school counselor/ADVANCE staff to discuss college plans/processes	.	52.0%	44.5%
Attended one or more college fairs	51.1%	47.1%	43.9%
Completed or are currently enrolled in Austin Community College (ACC) courses	34.6%	38.3%	40.3%
Participated in ACC College Connections	39.7%	40.2%	35.6%
Took other college level courses (e.g. Texas State, Texas Tech, TSTC)	6.3%	8.2%	8.8%
None of the above	10.8%	8.2%	7.0%

20. Have you applied to the following types of postsecondary institutions?

	2010	2011	2012
2-year	57.2%	61.7%	73.0%
4-year	69.1%	71.5%	78.5%
Business/technical/vocational school	14.5%	12.2%	10.1%

On average, Class of 2012 seniors applied to 3.5 postsecondary institutions and were accepted to 4.4 postsecondary institutions. Students who submitted 4 or more applications were found significantly more likely to become enrolled than were students who submitted fewer applications (Garland, 2008).

21. Have you been accepted to the following types of postsecondary institutions?

	2010	2011	2012
2-year	46.5%	51.9%	61.7%
4-year	59.4%	58.8%	67.1%
Business/technical/vocational school	9.2%	8.3%	6.9%

22. Which of the following did a family member help you with to prepare for life after high school (Select all)?

	2010	2011	2012
Talked to you about career and/or college options	.	81.6%	80.8%
Talked to you about finances	.	71.1%	72.2%
Talked to you about your responsibilities as an adult	.	77.5%	79.1%
Talked to you about what a career and/or college would be like	66.2%	70.1%	70.6%
Helped you with financial aid (FAFSA and/or scholarships)	59.1%	57.0%	56.1%
Helped you complete applications for colleges or trade/technical schools	44.9%	46.6%	48.3%
Encouraged you to apply to several different colleges	62.6%	60.9%	61.7%
No one in my family talked to me about or helped me with these things.	16.7%	10.0%	7.5%

23. Indicate if you know at least one teacher who would do the following:

	2010	2011	2012
Would be willing to give you extra help with your school work if you needed it	85.9%	87.1%	90.2%
Would be willing to help you with a personal problem	73.9%	76.2%	77.5%
Cares about how you're doing in school	81.4%	83.8%	84.8%
Would be willing to write you a letter of recommendation for a job or college	81.9%	84.0%	87.1%
Knows what you will be doing next year	66.1%	67.3%	69.1%
Would be willing to help you even after you graduate	68.4%	67.7%	70.3%

24. Were your school counselors available to talk to you about college and careers?

	2011	2012
Yes, they were available and I talked to them.	58.2%	52.2%
Yes, they were available, but I didn't try to talk to them.	23.5%	28.8%
No, I tried and wasn't able to meet with them.	9.1%	10.4%
No, they were not available, but I never tried to meet with them.	9.2%	8.6%

Garland (2008) found that students' interaction with a school counselor and/or college advisor influenced the likelihood that those students would become enrolled in a postsecondary institution.

25. Were your Project ADVANCE staff available to talk to you about college and careers?

	2011	2012
Yes, they were available and I talked to them.	56.7%	45.3%
Yes, they were available, but I didn't try to talk to them.	22.2%	28.7%
No, I tried and wasn't able to meet with them.	4.6%	6.0%
No, they were not available, but I never tried to meet with them.	16.5%	19.9%

26. Indicate whether the following people helped you with or encouraged you in any of the following activities (Select all).

	School counselor	Advisory teacher	Teacher	Project ADVANCE staff	None of these
Select courses needed for work or admission to college	32.9%	8.1%	21.5%	19.7%	17.8%
Push your academic abilities further (e.g., challenging courses, science fair or summer learning, extra credit work)	20.6%	10.4%	40.6%	13.4%	15.0%
Take advanced placement/honors courses	21.1%	7.1%	37.7%	9.7%	24.4%
Take dual credit or articulated credit courses	24.7%	7.2%	24.5%	15.1%	28.6%
Discussed career information and/or occupations you might want to pursue	23.2%	9.7%	26.7%	19.1%	21.2%
Continue your education after high school	25.8%	12.6%	32.2%	20.2%	9.1%
Talked to you about colleges suited to your interests and abilities	24.2%	9.7%	26.4%	23.7%	15.9%
Encouraged you to apply to multiple schools	25.0%	9.4%	23.4%	25.1%	17.1%
Helped you decide what school to attend	15.2%	6.2%	18.7%	20.4%	39.6%
Helped you fill out applications for postsecondary	18.3%	6.6%	15.0%	29.8%	30.2%
Helped you with your college application essays or personal statements	14.6%	6.0%	30.9%	23.3%	25.2%
Helped you with financial aid (e.g., Free Application for FAFSA and/or scholarships)	16.3%	6.4%	11.5%	30.5%	35.4%
Helped you plan how to pay for college/technical school and/or for living expenses	12.7%	6.6%	11.2%	23.6%	45.8%
Talked to you about meeting your financial needs	15.5%	7.4%	13.8%	25.3%	38.0%

Note. Question changed in 2012 and precluded a comparison with the prior years' results.

27. In which of these programs did you participate?

	2011	2012
AVID	7.4%	8.4%
ACC Early College Start/dual credit	35.5%	37.5%
ACC College Connections	19.4%	20.1%
None of the above	49.3%	46.0%

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) students had higher aspirations, more college knowledge, and significantly higher academic preparation, than did other students in the same schools (Watt, et al, 2007). Dual credit course enrollment is an effective strategy for encouraging student access to and persistence in postsecondary education (Karp & Hughes, 2008).

28. Indicate whether the following programs helped you with or encouraged you in any of the following (Select all)?

	AVID	ACC - Early College Start	ACC - College Connections
I wasn't in this program or class	48.9%	17.2%	33.9%
Selecting courses needed for work or admission to college	19.5%	56.9%	23.6%
Pushing your academic abilities further (e.g., challenging courses, science fair or summer learning, extra credit work)	22.1%	58.0%	19.9%
Taking advanced placement/honors courses	26.5%	55.0%	18.5%
Taking dual credit or articulated credit courses	19.7%	64.2%	16.1%
Discussing career information and/or occupations you might want to pursue	26.0%	51.4%	22.7%
Continuing your education after high school	21.1%	56.1%	22.8%
Discussing colleges / schools that were suited to your interests and abilities	24.5%	52.0%	23.5%
Applying to multiple schools	25.4%	51.0%	23.6%
Deciding what school to attend	24.1%	52.1%	23.8%
Filling out applications for colleges or trade / technical schools	23.5%	49.9%	26.6%
Completing college application essays or personal statements	25.5%	50.1%	24.4%
Applying for financial aid (FAFSA and/or scholarships)	23.5%	49.4%	27.0%
Planning how to pay for college/technical school and/or for living expenses	24.2%	51.2%	24.7%
Talked to you about how to meet your financial needs/ goals	24.3%	49.6%	26.1%

Note. Question changed in 2012 and precluded a comparison with the prior years' results.

29. How do you plan to pay for your education after high school (Select all)?

	2010	2011	2012
Scholarships and/or grants	60.5%	65.0%	67.2%
Loans	39.7%	41.4%	40.8%
Family or personal savings	52.7%	55.2%	58.7%
Tuition and fees exemption (e.g., military, foster care, adoption, deaf, blind)	.	.	9.6%
Working during the school year	47.8%	52.9%	56.4%
Working during the summer	50.6%	56.3%	59.2%
I don't know	14.8%	14.4%	5.6%

30. How easy has it been for you and your parents to understand the process of applying for financial aid?

	2010	2011	2012
Easy	24.2%	24.9%	21.8%
Some parts easy, some parts difficult	42.5%	46.6%	47.4%
Difficult	13.9%	11.8%	13.2%
I did not apply for financial aid	19.5%	16.7%	17.5%

The completion of the FAFSA is important to entering and completing postsecondary education, especially for economically disadvantaged students. Students who completed the FAFSA were found 50% more likely to enroll in a 4-year college than were those who had not. Eighty-three percent of AISD's Class of 2010 who were enrolled in a postsecondary institution after high school completed a FAFSA (Looby, 2011).

31. If you did not submit a financial aid application, why not?

	2010	2011	2012
I do not need financial aid to attend college.	20.9%	23.5%	19.3%
My parents were not willing to submit private financial information.	7.7%	8.1%	6.4%
My family did not think we would qualify or be eligible for financial aid.	22.1%	21.8%	18.8%
I do not plan to go to college.	10.1%	12.9%	16.2%
I did not know about the financial aid process.	39.2%	33.7%	39.2%

About 38% of students reported they did not need financial aid, and almost 40% did not know about the process.

32. Without including any financial aid (such as loans, grants, scholarships or exemptions), full-time tuition and fees for one semester at _____ costs about...

Austin Community College (ACC)		University of Texas		Harvard University		Total cost of books for one school year	
\$100	2.0%	\$1,000	1.2%	\$1,000	0.7%	\$100	2.1%
\$400	9.5%	\$5,000	7.3%	\$5,000	1.0%	\$1,500	40.8%
\$900	19.8%	\$10,000	15.1%	\$10,000	2.6%	\$5,000	9.7%
\$5,000	13.5%	\$15,000	12.9%	\$20,000	13.4%	\$10,000	3.2%
\$10,000	2.1%	\$20,000	21.6%	\$50,000	34.5%	\$15,000	3.4%
Don't know	53.1%	Don't know	41.8%	Don't know	47.9%	Don't know	40.7%

Researchers consistently show that most parents and students are uninformed or poorly informed about college prices and financial aid, and students' postsecondary decisions are influenced by this limited knowledge (Perna, Lundy-Wagner, Yee, Brill, & Tadal, 2009).

Full-time tuition and fees for a semester cost about \$900 at ACC, ranged between \$4,673 and \$5,369 at UT, and were \$20,433 at Harvard. The total cost of books and supplies for one year of college is estimated at \$1,100 by the College Board.

33. What is the one thing that "kept you going" through school all the way to graduation?

	2010	2011	2012
Club / extracurricular activities	5.2%	8.9%	8.4%
Connections with classmates	6.5%	12.7%	13.3%
Enjoyment of learning / classes that were fun	6.7%	6.2%	4.5%
Future college/career goals	38.7%	25.4%	21.9%
Parents' expectations	23.2%	21.8%	22.0%
School was a safe place	1.3%	1.9%	1.2%
Sports/athletics	8.8%	10.9%	12.5%
Supportive school staff	2.7%	4.3%	3.9%
Other (please specify)	6.8%	8.0%	12.1%

Open-Ended Responses

The High School Exit Survey provides the opportunity for student responses to two open-ended questions. Approximately 27% of seniors responded to one or both questions. All student responses to these items were analyzed to identify themes that may exist commonly across students' experiences. These themes and examples of student statements are reported below.

"Is there anything else on your mind about your high school experience, anything we haven't asked about?"

Staff or campus practices. The most commonly occurring remarks were related to specific staff or campus practices. The students' comments were mixed; half were positive, and half were negative. Of those comments that were positive, about 40% recognized the efforts of a specific teacher. Remarks also included a variety of topics, ranging from cafeteria and grading practices to personal stories students felt they needed to share.

Courses and extracurricular activities. The second most frequently mentioned topic that emerged was related to descriptions of particular courses and extracurricular activities. These included all comments about an academic area (e.g., journalism or mathematics) or an extracurricular program (e.g., band or athletics). Students also provided general comments about their perceptions of their schools' efforts to provide college and career preparation, and most felt their preparation was not adequate.

Campus climate issues. Climate issues were the third most frequently mentioned theme emerging from this question. Students' comments in this area were generally negative. Climate issues described included intergroup relations, staff-student relations, and individual students' social/emotional experiences on their campuses. Many students portrayed staff as being disrespectful to students or reported a general lack of teacher-student relationships needed for a positive school climate. Students reported many instances of bullying and a climate of general disrespect for others.

Other categories of students' responses about their high school experience included parents, technology, and grades.

Most Frequently Occurring Kinds of Comments

"The teachers rule and are super helpful."

"I am heartily disappointed in this school. However, there are many diamonds in the rough in the faculty in this school... [teacher names]."

"My advisory was horrible this year, and I feel my counselor didn't really assist me at all throughout the years. However, my teachers were wonderful people, and I look forward to sending a thank you letter to each and every one of them before I go."

Curriculum-Related Comments

"High school curriculum is stupid. It didn't prepare me at all for college, which is going to be tough since I'm going to an Ivy League college."

"The fine arts academy is the only thing that got me through school. I wish it got more support from our principal and the rest of the community."

"We need to have more college career advisors on staff. With a huge school, many kids, including myself, felt unable to connect with these counselors."

School-Climate-Related Comments

"I really wish the staff in the front office was nicer, more polite, and more respectful towards others. I don't think I ever felt welcome when I talked to them, and they are even in a service position where they need to assist people often."

"Bullying is a big problem verbal, physical, and emotional!!!!!! Talk about that because people are jerks in high school."

"The racial inequity, lack of education on LGBTQ students, and the lack of respect for the students in traditional schools was very, very hard to deal with."

"Last, what advice would you give incoming high school freshmen?" (Photocopy for students.)

Top Pieces of Advice to Freshmen from Seniors 2012

1. Study hard!! GPA matters!
2. Be yourself!
3. Join clubs or sports to help you learn about yourself and meet new friends!
4. Prepare for college all the way through high school (e.g. take the right courses, get good grades, show leadership and community engagement, complete applications). Don't Wait!

"Take it seriously now, don't slack off because you think you can fix it later. You can't."



"WHAT EVER YOU DO, STRIVE PAST WHAT YOU THINK YOUR BEST IS AND BELIEVE IN YOURSELF, BECAUSE THE MORE YOU BELIEVE THE MORE YOU CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN. SO AS LONG AS YOU HAVE FAITH IN YOURSELF, YOU CAN DO ANYTHING. DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE HARD TIMES BECAUSE IT COMES A TIME WHEN EVERYBODY MAKES IT OUR OF THE STORM SO KEEP YOUR HEAD UP AND STAY FOCUSED."



**"Do your homework.
Like, for real. SERIOUSLY."**

"Seeking help from teachers as soon as possible, especially in case of absence and not waiting when things have gone out of hand. Building a good relations with teachers is important and will make this easier."

"I would advise them to work hard, never give up, but most importantly, ask for help when needed. There are a lot of people willing to help students, but these students need to have a voice and express their concerns or questions."



"Join after school clubs and carefully choose the people you hang out with"

"Have an open mind when coming through high school doors. Every opportunity given to you is given for a reason. Take it."

"Do well in all your classes. Start out by taking Pre-AP and work your way up to AP because it really will pay off in the long run. Join as many extracurriculars as possible and explore your carrer classes, they will really give you a taste as to what you might want to be after high school. STUDY STUDY STUDY!! and apply to as many colleges as possible so you have many choices to pick from."



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