

# Overview of Enrollment Findings

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During Fall 2015, the Austin Independent School District's (AISD) Department of Research and Evaluation (DRE) supported the work of the Enrollment Innovation Design Team with several reports identifying leaver patterns and reasons. That work is summarized in this document. In Fall 2016, DRE will conduct an environmental scan of campuses with increasing enrollment and will investigate predictors of increasing or decreasing enrollment.

## 2015 Leaver Survey Results

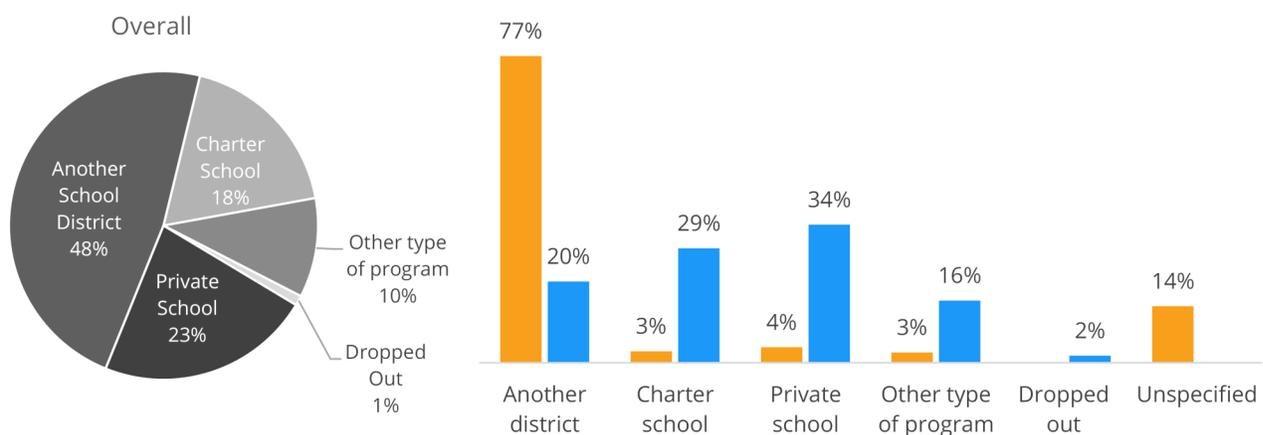
A survey was emailed in December 2015 to 6,181 parents or guardians of students who attended AISD during the 2014-2015 school year but who were not enrolled at AISD in October of 2015. Respondents (n=720) were representative of the overall district leaver population (N=11,567). Results indicated students were most likely to leave due to a residential move (46%; Figure 1). Those students were most likely to enroll in another school district, as opposed to a private, charter, or other school program.

Students whose families did not move left AISD for a variety of reasons associated with the school, including: academics (10%), social environment at the school (9%), availability of programs (7%) staff/teacher support (5%), and other school factors (9%). They were most likely to enroll in a private school, charter, or other school program.

Where students subsequently enrolled after leaving AISD differed by ethnicity. White students most frequently enrolled in private schools, Hispanic and African American students in charter schools.

Figure 1

**Overall (n=715)**, nearly half of the respondents indicated their students enrolled in another school district after leaving AISD, however, those who left due to a student or family move (n=312) were much more likely to do so than those



Source. AISD Fall 2015 Leaver Survey

Where students subsequently enrolled also differed by their reasons for leaving AISD. Those who enrolled in charter or private schools most frequently left due to academic and school reasons, while those who enrolled in other programs most frequently left due to social/support reasons.

## Enrollment Innovation

In Fall 2015, AISD leadership created innovation design teams to address pressing issues in AISD.

AISD enrollment had been decreasing over the last several years as the population within district boundaries changed and students within the AISD boundaries were recruited by charter schools.

The Enrollment Innovation Design Team's charge was to investigate these trends in enrollment, identify causes, and develop

innovative solutions.

## Enrollment Trends by Grade Level, Student Group, Vertical Team, and School

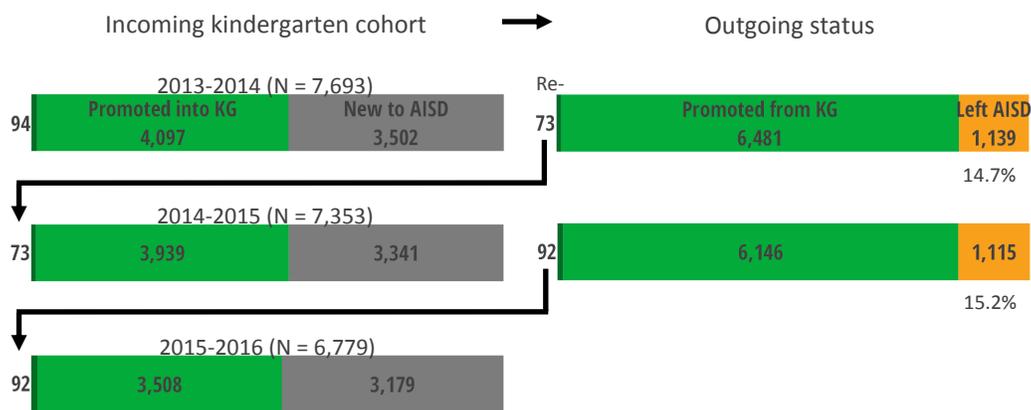
Overall, 657 fewer students were enrolled in AISD in Fall 2015 than in Fall 2014. The greatest decreases in total enrollment were for elementary primary grades. The largest increases were for White and Asian students, while the largest decreases were for Hispanic and African American students. English language learner enrollment decreased, while gifted and talented enrollment increased. Enrollment counts decreased most for Wooten elementary and increased most for McCallum and Reagan high schools.

However, changes in total enrollment counts do not reflect the multitude of other factors that influence student enrollment, such as birth rate, grade level retention, and movement into and out of the district. For example, Figure 2 shows how enrollment in kindergarten declined, but the relative composition of incoming and outgoing kindergarten students was largely unchanged.

From Fall 2010 to Fall 2015, early primary grades and 9th grade were more likely to attract new students than were the other grades. However, students were especially likely to leave AISD after early education, prekindergarten, and 5th grade. Analyses best

Figure 2

The percentage of students who **left AISD after kindergarten** was about the same after 2013-2014 and 2014-2015.



Source. Fall 2013 and 2014 PEIMS submission, Fall 2015 student enrollment as of October 1, 2015.

### Best Practices of districts facing declining enrollment.

A poll regarding actions taken by districts facing declining enrollment was conducted. The following item was sent to all member districts via the Research Directors Listserv of the Research and Evaluation Division of the American Educational Research Association (AERA).

If your district has suffered from decreasing enrollment, have you done anything to try to slow the decrease in or to actually increase enrollment (e.g. special programming, marketing, opening enrollment to students living outside of the district)? Has it worked [or not]?

Responses indicated that successful districts were providing programming options that offer a wider array of opportunities and deeper engagement of students and their families.

## AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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