



Philanthropy Advocates empowers philanthropy to invest and engage in public and higher education policy and advocacy. We work to protect, promote, and improve public and higher education so that all Texas students can achieve their educational goals from cradle to career. Together, we work to ensure that Texas students can pursue **pathways to college and career** success.

THE CHALLENGE

MOST JOBS REQUIRE HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board estimates that by 2030, 60% or more of all new jobs will require some level of higher education.¹ Yet, as of 2019, only 45% of Texans between the ages of 25 and 34 have a postsecondary credential.² Less than 1 in 4 Texas 8th graders are completing postsecondary credentials within 10 years.³ Students who are African American, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged are substantially less likely to graduate with a postsecondary credential than their peers.⁴

Overall enrollment in postsecondary education has declined since 2019, likely a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵ Only 45% of 2020 Texas high school graduates enrolled in higher education immediately after graduation, marking a continued decline in enrollment.⁶

Two-year postsecondary institutions enroll more students of color than four-year institutions.⁷ These two-year schools have seen the biggest enrollment decline, a nearly 12% decrease in public community college enrollment between 2019 to 2021, while universities saw nearly a 2% increase in enrollment between these same years.⁸

STUDENTS WHO ARE FOREGOING COLLEGE NOW ARE THE FUTURE WORKFORCE OF TEXAS

In population projections for 2050, 22% of Texans under 18 years old will be white, while 49% will be Hispanic, with a slight increase among African Americans.⁹

Enrollment declines suggest, in part, the trade-off students are making in pursuing future options. It is likely that high school graduates choosing work over postsecondary education today could lead to an outsized need in future years for more adult education options to meet a gap in workforce demand.¹⁰

In 2013, the Texas Legislature significantly altered high school coursework and graduation requirements. With increasing demand for postsecondary credentials and a decline in higher education enrollment, it is important to understand how current law supports the state's education and workforce needs.

RESEARCH FOCUS

While academic readiness is only one component of degree and credential attainment, it plays a key role in ensuring high school students are prepared to immediately enroll and succeed in a postsecondary program.

Philanthropy Advocates is collaborating with Texas Tech University's Center for Research and Learning in Education to better assess whether Texas high school graduation coursework requirements foster success after high school. Furthermore, our research aims to consider different definitions of college readiness and their impact on students and institutions.

ENGAGE

This work is made possible by pooled funding from Philanthropy Advocates members in our Pathways to College & Career policy work group. **Invest your dollars and expertise in this research and in our efforts to increase higher education attainment for Texas students.**

Contact Becky Calahan to engage with this work: bcalahan@cftexas.org

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