

# Success Indicator Report



## Overview

The Success Indicator Report is a document that provides a snapshot of the educational status and potential of Greater Waco. It will be refined and released each year of the Education Summits.

The underlying Eight Assumptions for the Greater Waco Community Education Alliance were developed with the advice of local experts in education who collectively advised that there are certain critical points in a child's educational development, and that the community needs to know the status of our children at those junctures. With that information, we can align ourselves to improve children's outcomes and measure our performance.

Sources for the Eight Assumptions and Success Indicators include:

- Gear Up Waco
- Local superintendents, teachers, administrators, and Region 12 professionals
- Faculty and departmental leadership from Baylor University, TSTC, and MCC
- Scholarship providers and financial aid professionals
- Closing the Gaps Report (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board)
- Texas Education Agency
- Center for Occupational Research and Development
- Existing local plans

The Greater Waco Education Alliance does not assume credit for strides made in school performance, so it will never be presumed that the Alliance is solely or even largely responsible for increases in TAKS scores for a particular district. However, TAKS performance is a tool for understanding need, and it serves as a guide where focus and alignment are required. It is the hope of the Alliance that TAKS scores will reflect overall positive changes in the lives of children that result from community support.

Because the work is so large, the Education Alliance will provide heavy focus on two or three of the Eight Assumptions each year of the Summit. During the 2009 Summit, Assumptions 1 and 2 received the most attention.

Assumption 1—early childhood—is such a vast field that a separate study was required before baselines could be set. That heavy focus is reflected in this report.

The Success Indicator Report is a guide and tool designed to help the Alliance in examining:

- How and where the community can assist educators.
- Areas of community need and progress.
- Where to focus efforts for highest impact.
- Benchmarks of progress.

Following the Summit, targets for improvements in baselines are to be determined where appropriate, and, with community input, additional and refined targets and progress will be added to future reports.

## Assumption 1

*The most valuable and cost-effective time to invest in education is between birth and the age of five.*



Community Goal: All children reach age five with experiences they need to develop learning readiness and social skills critical to success in school and in life itself.

Families must have access to high-quality education and preparation and be aware of the role they play, beginning with prenatal care, in enabling children to enter school ready to learn. The Early Childhood Quality of Life Index provides a great deal of data to assist community planning. The factors that influence a child's quality of life are beyond the reach of a singular community effort, but there are factors that, with focus, can be influenced with the implementation of evidenced-based programming.

From January through May 2009, the community will be convened to respond to the findings of the Early Childhood Quality of Life Index Report and develop a plan for addressing factors that can be influenced with programming. The

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challenge to the community will be to increase McLennan County's Early Childhood Quality of Life (QOL) Index from 40 percent to 50 percent during the next five years.

## McLennan County Early Childhood Quality of Life Score

Zip Code	City	Total	%
76633	China Spring, TX	96	80.00%
76712	Woodway, TX	89	74.17%
76638	Crawford, TX	87	72.50%
76630	Bruceville, TX	79	71.82%
76655	Lorena, TX	86	71.67%
76643	Hewitt, TX	85	70.83%
76624	Axtell, TX	83	69.17%
76691	West, TX	80	66.67%
76682	Riesel, TX	76	63.33%
76557	Moody, TX	68	56.67%
76524	Eddy, TX	65	54.17%
76640	Elm Mott, TX	63	52.50%
76664	Mart, TX	59	49.17%
76710	Waco, TX	56	46.67%
76657	McGregor, TX	49	40.83%
MC	McLennan County	48	40.00%
76706	Waco, TX	45	37.50%
76701	Waco, TX	38	34.55%
76708	Waco, TX	38	31.67%
76705	Waco, TX	37	30.83%
76704	Waco, TX	32	26.67%
76711	Waco, TX	28	23.33%
76707	Waco, TX	26	21.67%

Source: McLennan County Early Childhood Quality of Life Report, 2009

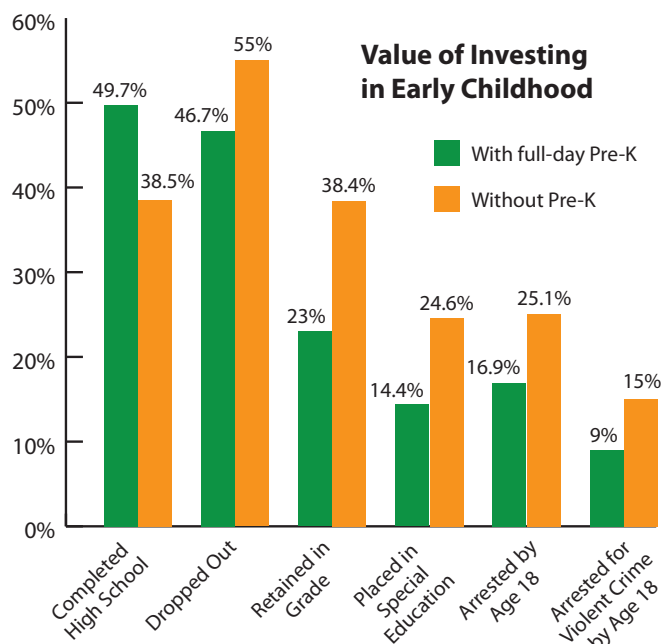
Parents and those caring for children need good information about how they can raise children ready for school and life. The community plan will also consider planning strategies for conveying good information to parents—particularly those in zip codes with QOL scores below 50 percent—and will determine the appropriate programming and measurement for the relevant factors.

Some businesses have expressed interest in supporting quality child care for their employees, and parents across the board have said they are interested in higher-quality child care and are willing to pay more for it. Another aspect of

community planning will involve an exploration of how to improve child care quality.

The overall measurement of effectiveness that will be available in future years is the Texas Primary Reading Inventory Score (TPRI), which measures a child's readiness to learn upon entering kindergarten.

In future years, TPRI scores will be tracked and reported for McLennan County school districts.



Source: Bush School of Government, Cost Analysis of the Benefits of Universal Accessible Full Day Pre-K in Texas, 2006



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## Assumption 2

*Reading on grade level by Grade 3 is critical to future education success.*



Community Goal: All children will read at grade level or above by the third grade.

Reading on grade level by third grade is a particularly critical milestone for education success, representing a shift from learning how to read to reading to learn.

What we are currently reporting:

- TAKS reading passing rates in McLennan County school districts for third grade
- Percentage of McLennan County school districts meeting/ beating the state passing rate
- Percentage of McLennan County school districts with 98 percent or higher passing rates

School districts exert great effort and focus in teaching reading, and those efforts will have the greatest net effect on TAKS reading scores. This means the Alliance will never assume credit for advances in these rates, but they hope to support improvements and provide a snapshot of student reading ability.



The Educator Stakeholder Group has developed the Best Practices Tutoring Program, which, when widely implemented, will significantly enhance a school district's classroom teaching and hopefully have a positive effect on TAKS scores. Early findings of the Best Practices Tutoring

Program pilot show strong increases in reading levels with relatively short exposures to the program.

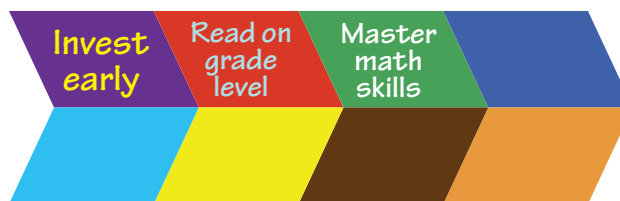
Added measurement for future reports:

- Number of tutors trained in Best Practices
- Number of community or school-based programs whose personnel have been trained in Best Practices
- Total reading grade levels achieved by students participating in the Best Practices program

In 2008, the highest-performing McLennan County ISD recorded a TAKS reading passing rate of 99 percent, while the lowest-performing district recorded 80 percent. In the same year, the State of Texas average was 87 percent.

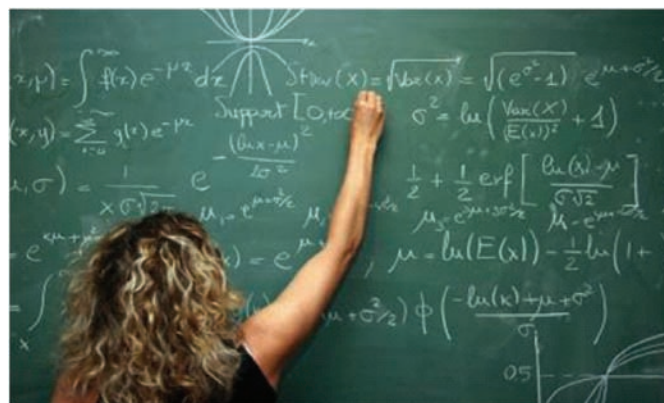
## Assumption 3

*Mastering mathematics fundamentals through Algebra I is a minimal requirement for high school graduation and postsecondary success.*



Community Goal: All children will be proficient in math through Algebra I by their graduation from high school.

A strong correlation exists between a grounding in mathematics through and beyond Algebra II and access to postsecondary education, graduation from college, and earning wages in the top quartile of income from employment.



What we are measuring:

- TAKS math passing rates in McLennan County school districts for fourth, seventh and ninth grades
- Percentage of McLennan County school districts meeting/ beating the state passing rate

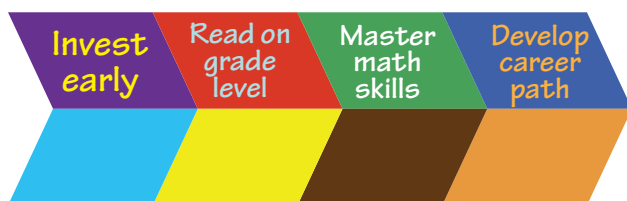
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- Percentage of McLennan County school districts with 98 percent or higher passing rates

In 2008, the highest-performing McLennan County ISD recorded a TAKS fourth-grade math passing rate of 99 percent, while the lowest performing district recorded 67 percent. In the same year, the State of Texas average was 87 percent. In 2008, the highest-performing McLennan County ISD recorded a TAKS seventh-grade math passing rate of 99 percent, while the lowest-performing district recorded 51 percent. The State of Texas average was 80 percent. The same year, the highest-performing McLennan County ISD recorded a TAKS ninth-grade math passing rate of 99 percent, while the lowest-performing district recorded 36 percent. The State of Texas average was 64 percent.

## Assumption 4

*All students must be prepared for postsecondary success by the time of their graduation from high school.*



Community Goal: All students will be prepared for postsecondary education while in high school.

All children need to graduate high school prepared for life, whether or not that is immediate employment, a four-year degree, or a certificate or associate degree. Although it is the goal of this initiative to increase the education level of the entire workforce, it is important to know that even those who begin working immediately after high school have the skills needed for postsecondary education in order to be part of a qualified workforce. Every student must graduate with enough skills to be a valuable worker able to start a good career.

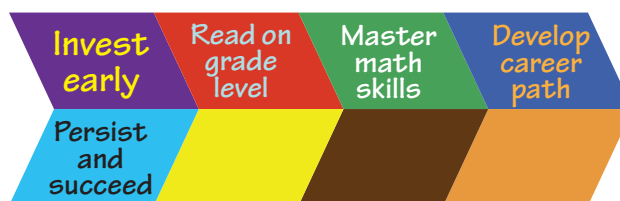
What we are measuring:

- Advanced course/dual credit
- SAT/ACT performance
- Remediation needs

In 2007, only 11 percent of McLennan County ISDs reached advanced course/dual credit completion average rates of the State of Texas.

## Assumption 5

*All youth must graduate from high school, overcoming challenges that discourage academic engagement.*



Community Goal: All students must be supported and encouraged to stay in school through successful high school graduation.

Dropouts are more likely than are high school graduates to be unemployed, in poor health, living in poverty, on public assistance, and single parents of children who drop out of high school. Being a dropout is a pathway to life limitations and poverty, and great effort is needed to impact this area. Dropouts are more than eight times more likely to be in jail or in prison than are high school graduates.

Median weekly earnings	Education attained	Unemployment rate
\$449	Less than a high school diploma	8.3 %
\$620	High school graduate, no college	5.3 %
\$727	Some college or associate degree	4.8 %
\$1,105	Bachelor's degree and higher	2.8 %

The measurements for this area are dropout rates, which are an imperfect measurement for understanding this category but provide useful information. In addition, students cannot graduate without passing all three sections of the TAKS twelfth-grade test, so those numbers are included to show how many high school graduates actually fulfill graduation requirements.

Dropping out is a difficult and complex issue that needs attention and will receive significant focus in future Summits. Better measures for this area and targets for community work will be developed in subsequent years.

We do know that in 2008 the highest-performing McLennan County ISD twelfth-grade TAKS passing rate for all three sections recorded 100 percent, while the lowest performing was 70 percent. The State of Texas average for that year was 86 percent.

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## Assumption 6

Parents and students should be aware of available high-school-to-postsecondary paths and financial aid options.



Community Goal: All parents and youth will know about, plan for, and seek access to postsecondary options and financial aid, if needed.



The first step in achieving postsecondary success for all McLennan County children is for parents to believe that higher education is possible for their students. Parents must know about postsecondary paths when children are young so that they can support decision making as children matriculate through school. In addition, parents need to know about all the financial resources available in McLennan County.

One of the resources revealed in the research of the Education Alliance is a study of Waco parents conducted by a partnership of McLennan Community College and East Tennessee State University. The study shows what parents currently hope for and believe about college access and affordability for their children. The study results were presented during the 2009 Summit. At some future time, the decision will be made as to whether the survey can be conducted again to identify changes in attitudes and perceptions.

The survey revealed that:

- 97 percent want children to attend college.
- 94 percent believe college is essential.
- 35 percent are aware of financial assistance programs.

Source: "Perceptions about Higher Education among Parents." Leslie McCallister, Joy Events, and Paul Illich, East Tennessee State University and McLennan Community College

## Assumption 7

Financial resources should not be a barrier to postsecondary success.



Although there are considerable resources to assist low-income families in obtaining higher education, no central affordability measurement has been developed to ensure that finances are not a barrier to higher education. There are plans to formally analyze local affordability information to ensure there are sufficient resources for students from low-income families to complete higher education. However, the fact that 60 percent of parents believe college is unobtainable indicates there should at least be more awareness about the availability of existing resources.

The Waco Foundation's MAC scholarship provides tuition to ALL recent McLennan County high school graduates with family incomes less than \$50,000 and assistance to anyone, regardless of income, in completing the federal financial aid application. The number of financial aid applications processed by the MAC program during the time period January–September 2009 was 1414.

## Assumption 8

The community should understand the region's secondary and postsecondary success rates and develop support programs to encourage the highest rates of successful completion.



Community Goal: All youth will complete postsecondary education leading to a chosen career opportunity.

Postsecondary success rates are difficult to understand because not every community college program terminates with a degree or certificate; however, it is important to examine the issue and learn what factors cause students to drop out of college when they should complete degrees.

In 2008, 1366 McLennan County ISD graduates enrolled in higher education, while 953 did not. Forty-four percent of those who enrolled went to McLennan Community College, 12 percent to TSTC, 5 percent to Baylor University, 5 percent to Texas A&M, and 34 percent to other institutions.