

2010 Community Success Indicator Report

Overview

In 2009, the Greater Waco Education Alliance produced the 2009 Community Success Indicator Report, which summarized results related to the eight assumptions that the Education Alliance identified as critical to the success of our students from early childhood through college. Over the past year, the Education Alliance has formalized its organization through the development of a governing board and permanent staff including an executive director. As a part of this restructuring, the Education Alliance conducted a comprehensive study of its assumptions and developed the 2010 Community Success Indicator Report that focuses on the following revised Education Alliance assumptions:

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

The foundation for K-12 mathematics is laid in the early years of elementary school

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

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

To assess the degree to which progress is being made toward these assumptions, a variety of data were retrieved from the Texas Education Agency including Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) scores for Grades 3, 5, 9, and 11. Performance data from McLennan Community College were also analyzed. The full version of the present report also includes dropout rates, performance data on SAT/ACT exams, and participation rates in dual credit courses.

The performance results presented in this report include results from school districts throughout McLennan County. The below table provides income and education data for Waco, McLennan County, and Texas. The substantial differences in poverty rates and educational attainment should be considered when interpreting the various results presented in this report.

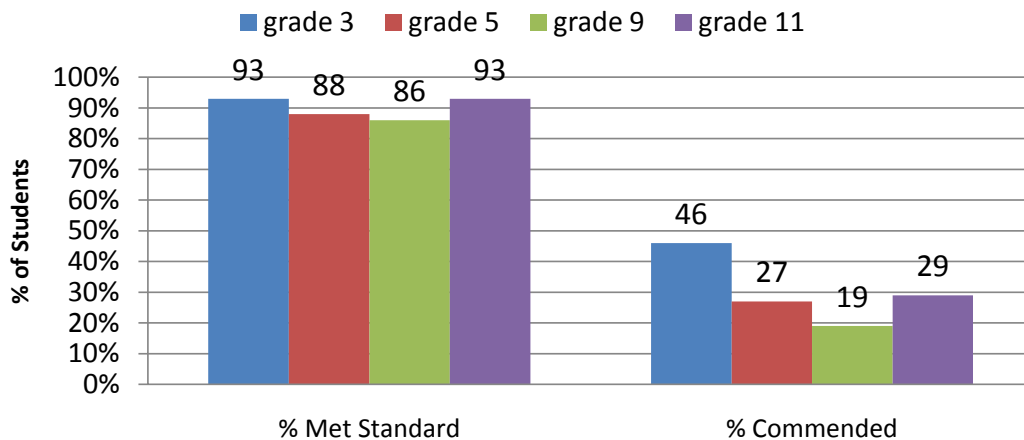
Demographic	State	McLennan County	Waco
Families below poverty level	12.8%	13.3%	20.4%
Median Family Income	\$49,078	\$40,342	\$30,093
< High School Degree	20.8%	20.5%	25.6%
HS Degree or GED	26.5%	29.1%	26.5%
Some College	21.2%	22.1%	22.0%
Associate Degree	6.3%	8.4%	7.1%
Bachelor Degree	16.9%	13.1%	12.3%
Graduate or Professional Degree	8.2%	6.7%	6.4%

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

Within McLennan County, over 85% of students meet the TAKS reading across Grades 3, 5, 9, and 11 with 93% of students meeting the standard in Grade 3. Students who meet the standard are considered to have a sufficient understanding of the target knowledge and skill at a particular grade level.

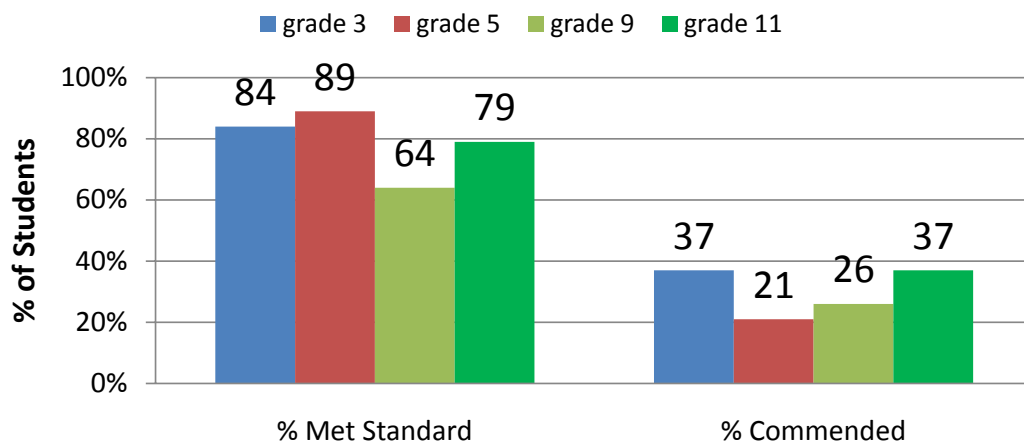
2009 McLennan County TAKS Reading Results



As this report will show, this expectation is not consistent with the fact that nearly half of the students who choose to attend McLennan Community College are required to enroll in at least one developmental course. In contrast to the percentage of students meeting the standard, less than 30% of students earn commended performance which in 2009 required that students miss three or fewer items on a 36 item exam. The percentage of students achieving commended performance was 46% in Grade 3 but as low as 19% in Grade 9.

The foundation of K-12 mathematics is laid in the early years of elementary school

2009 McLennan County TAKS Math Results



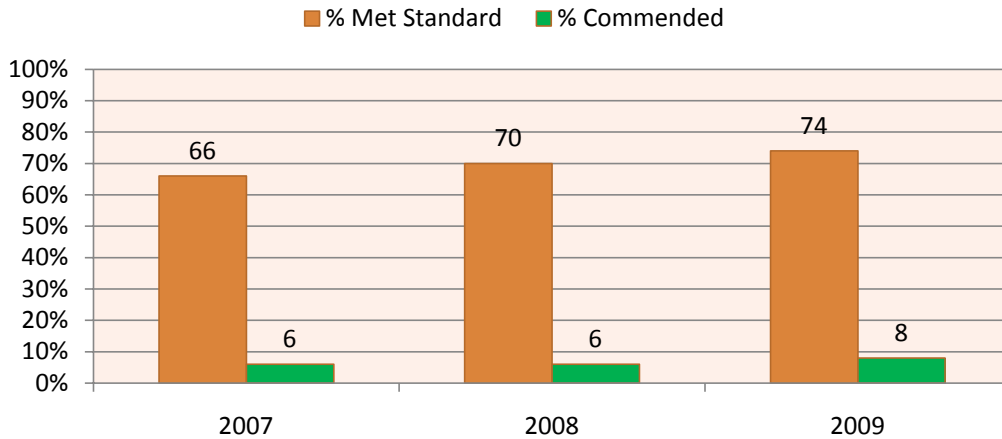
In 2009, 79% or more of the students in McLennan County met the TAKS math standard in Grades 3, 5, and 11. However, only 64% of the students met the standard in Grade 9. Less than 40% of the students achieved commended math performance on the TAKS exam. The other significant finding related to mathematics is that the percentage students meeting the TAKS standard were much lower than the percent of students meeting the reading standard with the exception of the Grade 5 TAKS exam.

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

Nearly all of the local independent school districts had dropout rates below the State average of 2.9%. However, by Grade 11 only 74% of students are meeting the standard in all sections of the TAKS exam and only 8% are achieving commended performance.

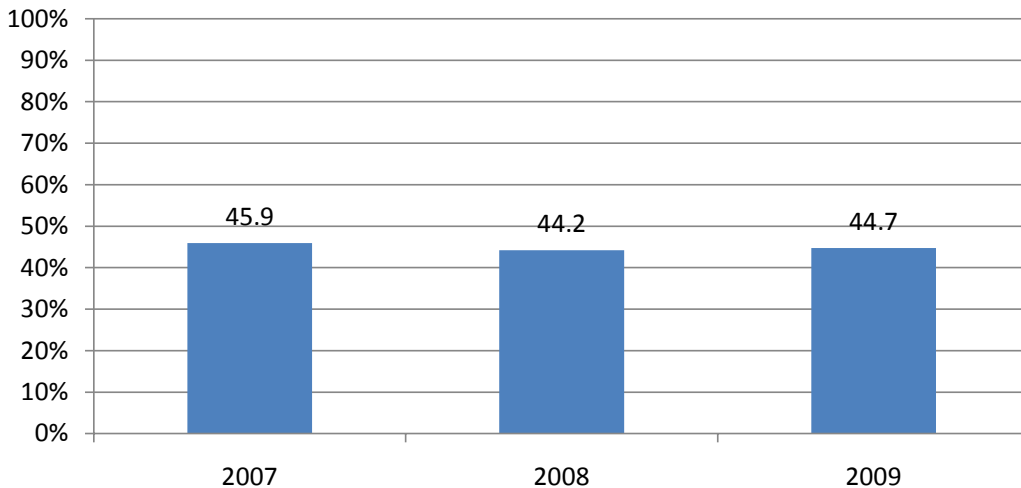
2007-09 McLennan County TAKS grade 11 All Sections (% Meeting Standard and % Commended)



These findings suggest that while most students are graduating from high school, many are not overcoming the challenges that discourage academic engagement. That is, many students are not adequately academically prepared upon graduation from high school.

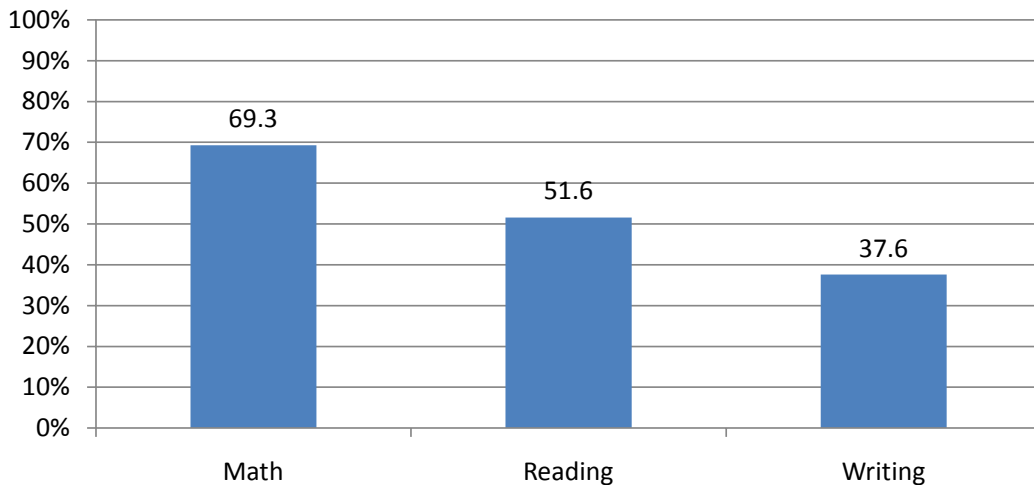
All students must be prepared for postsecondary success by the time of their graduation from high school

Percentage of Recent High School Graduates Attending McLennan Community College Needing Remedial Course Work



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Percentage of Recent High School Graduates Attending McLennan Community College Needing Remedial Course Work by Type of Remedial Need



Although the TAKS exams are designed to help schools ensure that students meet a target standard level of academic achievement, scores on this test are only an indirect measure of student preparedness for college-level work. The most direct measure of college-level preparedness is actual performance in college-level classes. Recent data collected from McLennan Community College shows that about 45% of recent high school graduates are required to enroll in at least one remedial class. In addition, mathematics represents the area in which students appear to be least prepared. It is important to note that above results only reflect students who choose to attend college.

Summary of Key Findings

The following represent the primary findings from the present report:

- Performance Gap Between Reading and Math:
 - There is a performance gap between reading and math across all grade levels except Grade 5 with the percentage of students meeting math standards greater than 20% below the percentage meeting reading standards
- Decline in Math skills by Grade 9:
 - The lowest percentage of students meeting the math standard occurred in Grade 9 and represented a 25% decline from Grade 5
- Mismatch Between Percent Meeting Standard and Percent Prepared for College:
 - 74% of students met the Grade 11 standard for all sections but only 55% of graduates [who attend college] are typically prepared for college level work
- Under Prepared Students in Mathematics:
 - Nearly 70% of recent high school graduates enrolling in remedial course work at MCC enroll in a remedial math course
- Variation Across School Districts:
 - The percent of students who met the Grade 11 TAKS standard in all sections ranged from 98% to 55% across districts
 - The percent of graduates requiring remedial course work upon enrollment at MCC ranged from 70% to 14%

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Recommendations

It is clear from the present report that the majority of students are meeting the current TAKS standard in both reading and math. However, nearly half of recent high school graduates are required to enroll in one or more remedial college courses with mathematics representing the area of greatest need. It is recommended that all constituencies work together to set a higher standard to ensure that all students, in all grades, are prepared for college level work. It is also recommended that greater emphasis be placed on mathematics on all grade levels.

