Our Kids. Our Tomorrow.

2019

DALLAS COUNTY SCORECARD

Published September 2020
Mission & Vision

The Commit Partnership is a community navigator and connector, working to ensure that all North Texas students receive an excellent and equitable education that prepares them to flourish in college and career.

We work collaboratively to solve the region’s biggest systemic challenges alongside a coalition of over 200 partners, including public and private schools, colleges and universities, foundations, businesses, and nonprofits.

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There’s a story my late friend Susan Hull used to tell that went something like this. Dr. Hull, not yet superintendent of the Grand Prairie Independent School District, was at a meeting of business leaders. A successful ice cream producer was detailing the key to their success, namely, an insistence on using only the highest quality ingredients. In particular, his blueberries were each handpicked, with only the very best making it into the final product.

At this point, Dr. Hull raised her hand to speak: “I think that’s where we’re different in the world of education.”

The gentleman stopped, curious to hear more. “Our blueberries are our kids. We don’t throw away those that have been bruised or damaged. We take those and we spend extra time with them because when we look at our blueberries, every single blueberry counts. All means all.”

We lost Dr. Hull far too soon, to a tragic accident that occurred last year. But the spirit of her words, a commitment to excellence and equity for all, lives on in the work of educators across our community.

We see it in Dr. Hull’s colleagues in Grand Prairie, who’re working to ensure all students, including English-language learners, can read on grade level by 3rd grade (Pg. 11). We see it in the Ft. Worth Leadership Academy at Forest Oak, where Principal Seretha Lofton and her team marry high academic standards and social-emotional health in order to increase success for students experiencing poverty. (Pg. 15)

And we see it in the work of Iesha Jackson and Taylor Terry, two recent college grads helping their “near-peers” in DeSoto ISD access a postsecondary credential. (Pg. 21)

Most powerfully, we have seen this spirit of equity suffuse the work of the state legislature. The recently passed school finance overhaul, House Bill 3, infuses billions of dollars in new funding into our public education system, and distributes it based on strategic outcome goals and student need. This legislation is already making a profound impact on classrooms across the state, some of which can be seen in the following pages.

Overall, we’ve seen important gains across our scorecard indicators since Commit’s inception in 2012 (Pg. 3). But now is not the time to rest on our laurels. Rather, we need to continue seeking out the classrooms, campuses, and districts doing the best by our students, and elevating their successful strategies to scale across our state.

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Dallas is the least inclusive city in America.

It’s hard to hear. It’s also hard to ignore.

In spite of the fact that the Dallas-Ft. Worth region had the fastest rate of job growth of any major metropolitan area from February 2019-2020, only 25% of Dallas County young adults (age 25-34) are currently earning a living wage. For Black and Hispanic young adults, it’s just 14%.

This is a situation that has undoubtedly been exacerbated by the coronavirus crisis. But our city’s racial inequity was a pre-existing condition that made us uniquely vulnerable.

For eight years, the Commit Partnership has published an annual report that measures eleven key educational indicators in Dallas County, meant to evaluate the overall health of our local cradle-to-career pathway and align community action to address the greatest gaps in opportunities affecting student achievement.

But our students don’t attend schools in a vacuum, a fact we have been reminded of by the recent uprising against racial injustice. Our city’s concentrated areas of poverty, food insecurity, housing instability, toxic stress and trauma all conspire against a child’s ability to thrive. Our educational outcomes, upon which our entire economy is reliant, are the result of a constellation of issues that have to be attacked holistically and systemically if we want to succeed.

Moreover, we know that arbitrary distinctions between cities and school districts don’t mean nearly as much to our students and parents as the ability to receive an excellent and equitable education that leads to success in college and career.

That’s why we’ve chosen to take a closer look at select educational outcomes by race, socioeconomic status, and English language ability, where data allows us to disaggregate. We’ve also chosen to highlight the disparate impacts of disciplinary policy, a key contributor to the school-to-prison pipeline.

That’s also why, this year, we’ve broadened the reach of our “Dallas County Scorecard” to include a feature on the Leadership Academy at Forest Oak, a school that has utilized and expanded upon the Accelerating Campus Excellence, or ACE, model first developed in Dallas.

Legendary athlete Kareem Abdul-Jabbar said, “Racism in America is like dust in the air. It seems invisible—even if you’re choking on it—until you let the sun in. Then you see it’s everywhere. As long as we keep shining that light, we have a chance of cleaning it wherever it lands.” We hope that the data contained herein can act as a ray of light, shining upon the progress we’ve made and the “cleaning” that still must be done.

Creating an inclusive, equitable and prosperous region where race, place and socioeconomic status no longer predicts educational and economic attainment should be the goal of every person living in Dallas County. We look forward to working with all of you, regardless of your background or life experiences, in making that goal a true reality.

Together, we can make the least inclusive city in America a model of equity for the world.

With hope for the future!

Dottie Smith
President, The Commit Partnership

Introducing the 2019 Dallas County Scorecard

Rate of Dallas County 25–34 year olds with living wage job by race.

9 in 20
White

3 in 20
Black

3 in 20
Hispanic

9 in 20
Black

3 in 20
Hispanic

9 in 20
White

3 in 20
Black

3 in 20
Hispanic

Rate of Dallas County 25–34 year olds with living wage job by race.
### The 11 Indicators:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Dallas County</th>
<th>State of Texas</th>
<th>Gap from Texas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRE-K ENROLLMENT</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KINDERGARTEN READINESS</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>+8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3RD GRADE READING</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4TH GRADE MATH</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8TH GRADE SCIENCE</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALGERBA I</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLEGE READINESS*</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>no data</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSTSECONDARY PERSISTENCE</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>no data</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>no data</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*Previously, College Readiness measured the percentage of students who scored at or above 1180 on the SAT or 24 on the ACT. Now, students who score at or above 1010 on the SAT or 23 on the ACT are considered meeting requirements.

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### At-a-Glance:

62,114 more students now achieving key benchmarks since 2012!

8 indicators with improvement since 2012:
1. Algebra I
2. 4th Grade Math
3. Pre-K Enrollment & 8th Grade Science

9 indicators with improvement from last year:
1. Kindergarten Readiness
2. Pre-K Enrollment
3. Algebra I

Most improved since 2012:
1. Algebra I
2. 4th Grade Math
3. Pre-K Enrollment & 8th Grade Science

Most improved in gap with Texas:
1. Kindergarten Readiness
2. Pre-K Enrollment
3. Algebra I

Biggest opportunities to close gap with Texas:
1. 8th Grade Science
2. College Readiness*
The 2019 Dallas County Scorecard
aka the Cradle-to-Career Pipeline

How the Data is Calculated:
All Scorecard data reported is provided by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), with the exception of Postsecondary Enrollment, Postsecondary Persistence, and Postsecondary Completion, which are provided to Commit by each school district.

PRE-K ENROLLMENT
KINDERGARTEN READINESS
3RD GRADE READING
4TH GRADE MATH
8TH GRADE SCIENCE
ALGEBRA I
COLLEGE READINESS*
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION
POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT
POSTSECONDARY PERSISTENCE
POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

KEY
% students meeting standards in 2012 and direction of growth
% students meeting standards in 2019

Dallas County
State of Texas
The 2019 Dallas County Scorecard:

3rd Grade Reading, Algebra I, & Suspension Rates—Disaggregated by Race, Economic Status, & Language Speakers

A consistent refrain in the Commit offices is “you can’t manage what you don’t measure.” It is our goal to help create an educational landscape in Dallas County in which your race, socioeconomic status, and language ability do not predict your likelihood of success. Unfortunately, we are far from that being the case today. The ability to read by the end of 3rd grade and pass Algebra by the end of 8th grade are two of the educational indicators most likely to predict success in college and career. That’s why we want to ensure that students of all backgrounds are being served equitably in these classes.

Postsecondary attainment is likewise incredibly important to future economic prosperity. Unfortunately, it is not yet possible to disaggregate postsecondary data. But recent research out the University of Texas demonstrates that harsher disciplinary policies lead to lower high school graduation rates and college enrollment. So we have chosen to likewise demonstrate the current disparities in treatment experienced by students of color, in the hopes these trends can be reversed.

Dallas County Students Meeting Standards in 3rd GRADE READING in 2019: Disaggregated by Economic Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Non-ELL</th>
<th>ELL/Non-ELL</th>
<th>Total ELL/Non-ELL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financially secure and proficient</td>
<td>10,118</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10,411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financially insecure and proficient</td>
<td>10,315</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>10,351</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 20,772 students

Dallas County Students Meeting Standards in 3rd Grade Reading in 2019: Disaggregated by Language Speakers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>English speakers learning to read English</th>
<th>Spanish speakers learning to read English</th>
<th>Vietnamese speakers learning to read English</th>
<th>Arabic speakers learning to read English</th>
<th>French speakers learning to read English</th>
<th>German speakers learning to read English</th>
<th>Korean speakers learning to read English</th>
<th>Portuguese speakers learning to read English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-ELL</td>
<td>10,118 by Dallas County families</td>
<td>10,118 by Dallas County families</td>
<td>10,118 by Dallas County families</td>
<td>10,118 by Dallas County families</td>
<td>10,118 by Dallas County families</td>
<td>10,118 by Dallas County families</td>
<td>10,118 by Dallas County families</td>
<td>10,118 by Dallas County families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELL/Non-ELL</td>
<td>10,315 by Dallas County families</td>
<td>10,315 by Dallas County families</td>
<td>10,315 by Dallas County families</td>
<td>10,315 by Dallas County families</td>
<td>10,315 by Dallas County families</td>
<td>10,315 by Dallas County families</td>
<td>10,315 by Dallas County families</td>
<td>10,315 by Dallas County families</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 20,430 students

In 2014, when these 3rd graders were 4 years old, only 37% of eligible students were able to access high-quality Pre-Kindergarten. Pre-K enrollment has increased, and funding from the state’s Early Education Allotment will help to perpetuate the growth.

41% of students living in privilege need more support to meet standards in 3rd Grade Reading. That’s 3,884 students.

65% of students living in poverty need more support to meet standards in 3rd Grade Reading. That’s 17,831 students.

57% of students Non-ELL students need more support to meet standards in 3rd Grade Reading. That’s 12,583 students.

62% of students ELL students need more support to meet standards in 3rd Grade Reading. That’s 9,373 students.

Over 40% of Dallas County residents speak a language other than English at home, and over forty different languages are spoken by Dallas County families. We must ensure all early educators are trained in the science of language acquisition, as House Bill 3 aims to do (see pg. 11).

† English language learners (ELL)/Non-English language learners (Non-ELL) data only presented for 3rd Grade Reading.
Institutional English ≠ regional dialects

As the work of State Board for Educator Certification member and Dallas ISD teacher Shareefah Mason illustrates, "Black kids are English language learners, too." Yet too often our early education curricula lacks the cultural awareness to develop these students’ inherent bidialectalism.

Dallas County Students Meeting Standards in 3rd GRADE READING in 2019*: Disaggregated by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Meeting Standards</th>
<th>Total Students Passing 3rd Grade Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>1,803 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>6,019 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>12,750 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,019 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One sentence = One percent of students tested in 3rd Grade Reading. A paragraph break and color shift indicates a change in demographic.
Dallas County Student SUSPENSION RATES in 2018-19 School Year: Disaggregated by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th># of students living in privilege</th>
<th># of students living in economic instability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black students</td>
<td>4,661</td>
<td>4,596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic students</td>
<td>14,048</td>
<td>8,405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian students</td>
<td>1,786</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

=14,625† students who need more support to meet standards in Algebra I.

Black & Hispanic students make up 89% (13,001) of these students.

Recent data released by Dallas ISD shows that proficient sixth graders living in privilege are twice as likely to access pre-AP courses as proficient sixth graders living in poverty. Students in both groups have passed all preceding coursework, but the former group is more likely to benefit from greater time and ability to advocate for a college-ready schedule.

Schools suspend Black students in-school at almost 2x the rate of White students.

Schools suspend Black students out-of-school at almost 3x the rate of White students.

Research demonstrates Black and Hispanic students are more likely to receive exclusionary discipline than their white peers, "even for the same or similar problem behavior." Studies also suggest the reduction of suspensions can lead to greater student achievement, higher attendance, and an improved school climate.

† Includes Native American, Mixed Race, and Pacific Islander students, a sum of 333 students, that are not visualized here.
Bright Spot: 3rd Grade Reading
an earlymattersdallas effort

"It's always about the kids," Bowman summarized. "And the cool thing was, the more we focused on the kids and getting them ready, all of a sudden we look up and the data is there."

That wasn’t always the case. When Bowman arrived at the district in 2012, different grade levels used different literacy assessments, making it difficult to track students’ progress. It was MJ’s job to bring everyone into alignment. The results, after a year of working toward that goal, were encouraging.

"The data indicated that we were losing students in kindergarten and first grade. I said, I think what we need to do, based on our data, is create a literacy academy for our early education teachers."

So, with support from her superintendent and Region 10 of the Texas Education Agency, that is exactly what Bowman did, and has continued to do for the past six years. "We’re very intentional about professional development," Bowman continued. "We all share the belief that our greatest resource is our classroom teachers, and if we treat and provide them with the support that they need to do their job, then I think we have a greater chance of holding onto them. So we’re always trying to figure out effective ways to empower teachers."

And not just teachers. Bowman also seeks to empower her principals. "Every year, no matter how long they’ve been a principal, at the very beginning of the year, I walk them through the components of reading and the science of teaching reading, because they are the instructional leaders on their campus."

Perhaps most importantly, this responsibility extended all the way to the very top. “[Superintendent Susan] Hull was held accountable to K-2 literacy goals, and had to be presented every January to the school board. That became a part of her evaluation, so that we send the message that we’re willing to do the work from the top down. Everything we did in terms of expectations and training had to be able to support that model or that belief.”

Doing this transformative work from the top down also meant breaking down barriers between different departments. “I’ve collaborated very closely with our counseling department, our special ed department, our 504 department, our assessment, our bilingual. We’re trying to break down the silos.”

This collaboration extends throughout the district and across the entire community. Bowman and GPISD have been working with Early Matters Dallas—a broad-based coalition of advocates for high quality early education—to prepare for the implementation of HB3, alongside the literacy specialists and early childhood directors of nearly every school district in Dallas County.

But it’s Grand Prairie ISD that is uniquely prepared for what’s to come. That’s because one of the largest requirements of House Bill 3 is the creation of reading academies to serve the early educators of every school district across the state of Texas. And the curriculum is one Bowman and her team have already been using in their training sessions for several years. As Bowman put it: “There’s power for our teachers to be able to say, ‘we’ve been doing this.’”

In the 2015–16 school year, only 30% of incoming GPISD students were considered “kindergarten ready,” compared with nearly 60% of the state. After three years of instruction under early educators trained in GPISD’s reading academies, this same exact cohort of students surpassed the state in 3rd grade reading scores, despite a disproportionate share of low-income students and English language learners.

"All means all" is a cliche in education," says MJ Bowman, Director of Literacy, Dyslexia, and PK-12 Interventions in the Grand Prairie Independent School District. "But oftentimes I want to stop people and say, ‘what does that mean?’ Because I think if you asked anybody in [GPISD] what is our number one goal? Student achievement. For all students."

As we enter a new year, Texas state and local leadership will be hard at work implementing House Bill 3, a massive school finance reform bill that promises to put over $6 billion towards initiatives aimed at increasing student achievement, and in particular early literacy. And Grand Prairie ISD, which currently outperforms the state in 3rd grade reading for its low income and English-learning students, is serving as a model for that work.

### Percentage of Students Meeting Standards in 2019: 3rd GRADE READING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Grand Prairie ISD Students</th>
<th>44%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELL Students</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All State of Texas Students</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELL Students</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Dallas County Students</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELL Students</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELL: English Language Learners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Closing the Gap in Cohort Early Literacy: KINDERGARTEN READINESS vs 3RD GRADE READING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015-16 Kindergarten Readiness</th>
<th>2018-19 3rd Grade Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Texas Students</td>
<td>GISPD Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your zip code doesn’t determine your ability to learn.
This is a hope chart!»

Here, every school district in the state of Texas is plotted out. The vertical axis represents the amount of students in that district meeting state standards for 3rd grade reading. The horizontal axis shows that district’s percentage of students experiencing poverty. The trend line illustrates that overall student achievement is likely to be lower as the proportion of low-income students is higher. But the districts who appear above the trend line (like Grand Prairie, Dallas, and many others in North Texas) are proving to the state that demographics aren’t destiny and students of all backgrounds can succeed at high levels in the right environment.

To view more hope charts and toggle parameters like demographics and grade level, visit: commitpartnership.org/dashboard/dashboard-gallery
Like most middle schools, mornings at the Leadership Academy at Forest Oak begin with the announcements. But what’s said in those announcements is indicative of a mindset that makes this campus special.

“Every day on the announcements, I say, ‘if no one’s told you that they love you today, remember that I do,’” said Principal Seretha Lofton. “And I always will.’ Yes, we are an institution of learning, but we have to embrace the whole child. Before we can even attempt to educate our students, we have got to address where they need to be socially and emotionally. Especially when you’re in this type of environment.”

Forest Oak serves the historically underserved community of southeast Fort Worth. 90% of its students qualify for free and reduced lunch, compared with under 80% of the district and about 60% for the state as a whole. And for years, Forest Oak and its surrounding community was a victim of serious neglect, with only 16% of its students meeting state academic standards.

“When we had those first meetings with parents,” Principal Lofton continued, “I had several come up to me and say, ‘We do not feel safe with our children here at this school. We did not know what was even going on at the campus.’ I asked the parents to give us an opportunity, give us a chance. We’re going to make things different.”

*Forest Oak enrollment was 96% EcoDis

EcoDis: Economically Disadvantaged

## Bright Spot:
### Algebra I

While it’s true that 63% of all Dallas County students go on to meet state standards in Algebra I, it is important to note that many are not given a chance to do so until high school. Passing Algebra I in 8th grade is necessary to continue on a college-ready mathematics track, but currently only 26% of Dallas County 8th graders are given the chance.

* Dallas County 8th graders
* All State of Texas 8th Grade Students
* Leadership Academy at Forest Oak, EcoDis Students
And that’s exactly what Principal Lofton and her team did, implementing a strategy known (in Fort Worth) as the Leadership Academy, with the assistance of Texas Wesleyan University and guidance from Best in Class—a collaborative initiative between Commit and Communities Foundation of Texas that seeks to attract, prepare, develop, and retain a diverse corps of effective educators.

When Principal Lofton took on her position nearly three years ago, she reconstituted the entire campus and had increased autonomy to build a team of experienced educators and support staff attuned to the specific needs of her new school community. Those staff members who demonstrated excellence in their field were offered increased pay to come to the formerly underresourced campus—and expected to earn it through increased hours and responsibility.

“You’ve got to work,” Lofton summarized. “The expectation is very clear.”

These high expectations extend to the students. The campus motto—which is invoked repeatedly over the course of a school day—reads “Only Excellence Will Do.” Lofton explains: “That’s excellence in your coursework. That’s excellence in your behavior. Everything that you do and everything that you touch should be touched with a spirit of excellence. And so that’s the message that we are making sure that all of our students embrace.”

All signs indicate students have, in fact, embraced that message. Discipline referrals are down significantly, with fewer “repeat offenders.” Conflict is dealt with through restorative justice—a discipline practice that keeps students in the classroom. And achievement is up—over 50% more students met standards on the state exam in Forest Oak’s first year as a Leadership Academy.

“When STAAR comes, it’s truly a different environment here as opposed to previous campuses I’ve been on,” says Assistant Principal Danny Fracassi. “In the spirit of our motto, our kids are prepped for excellence. They know what’s coming. We’ve started that from day one. This is where our expectation is. This is where you can meet it, and we’re going to put you there.”

This mindset shift shows up in subtler ways as well. Passing the state’s Algebra I exam in 8th grade is essential in order to stay on a college-ready mathematics track. Both before and after its reconstituation, nearly all Forest Oak students taking the exam passed. The difference is, under new leadership, more than twice as many students were given the opportunity to sit for it and they still had resounding success.

Under the recently passed Texas House Bill 3, school districts across the state will have the opportunity to access greater additional funding by replicating the Leadership Academy model. The new Teacher Incentive Allotment allows districts to draw down funds for employing the state’s most effective teachers, and districts are financially rewarded for incentivizing those educators to work on the campuses they’re needed most, equitably distributing talent.

“It’s all about the expectations that you set, and the follow through.” Principal Lofton concluded. “The kids really feel good about themselves. The whole community feels embraced, the children feel loved and empowered, and the teachers are more motivated as well because we give them the autonomy to do what needs to be done in that classroom. It’s been a very blessed opportunity and fulfilling journey, to say the least.”

Want to learn more about Fort Worth’s success? Read the whole story at: commitpartnership.org/only-excellence-will-do

Inspired to become a teacher? Visit dallasftworth.teach.org to explore your options and live chat with current educators.
Bright Spot:
College Enrollment

The first day I had two students who asked ‘Okay miss, are you the new college advisor? And I was like, ‘Yeah, I guess that’s me.’”

Iesha Jackson hadn’t planned on becoming an educator, but she knew she wanted to help others. So when the opportunity arose to serve as the college advisor to DeSoto High School’s three thousand students, she immediately threw herself into the work.

“Instantly I had to figure out a system of how to advise these students and explain to them what their options were based on their given circumstances. So I quickly pulled transcripts, looked at their test scores, and consulted an assured admissions list. I created a system.”

Despite a lack of direct professional experience, Jackson knew exactly what these students needed for one simple, but consequential, reason: just four years earlier, she had been in their shoes.

“I told them, ‘Hey, you have someone who literally just went through the process. So trust the process. We know what we’re talking about and I’m not going to have you do anything that’s a detriment to your success.’

“So I think it definitely has helped being a near peer.”

The benefits of this proximity are twofold. Jackson has a deep personal understanding of the modern college-going process and its attendant complexities. This also allows her to develop trusting relationships with the students she serves, a necessary element to embarking upon a postsecondary journey.

“Building those relationships is key,” Jackson elaborated. “Once a student sees that you’re invested in what they’re trying to do and you’re there to help them, they’re willing to do anything that you ask them to do. I have students whose teacher will say ‘they’re a terrible student,’ but I have no problems out of them. It’s that relationship piece that’s missing.”

The power of this relationship is perhaps demonstrated best by DeSoto’s financial aid completion rate. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is an essential step to attending college. It’s also a tedious and invasive mountain of paperwork no student is excited about undertaking. In her first year as DeSoto High School’s college advisor, completed forms increased by 7%. And that was before the district’s college advising staff doubled this school year, with the addition of Taylor Terry, another recent college grad.

“At first it was a little overwhelming because I’m like, how did you do this with 800 [graduating seniors]?’” Terry described. “But if you sit down and think about the different ways that you can reach them, and just be patient with it, then you’ll be able to do it. I have that scope to where I can see the end goal, because I was there. We literally tell our students, we were here, we’ve done this. We know, so please listen to us.”

Jackson and Terry credit these authentic, trusting relationships with DeSoto’s continued success in encouraging students to participate in the college application process generally, and in the Dallas County Promise specifically.

Challenges with PS Data
Postsecondary data is especially difficult to track, measure, and analyze. There is a yearlong delay, which means we don’t yet have data on the cohort that graduated in 2019. While college enrollment numbers do include students who attend school out-of-state, we cannot currently disaggregate this data by race or economic status.

Total Number of DeSoto ISD Students who have:
ENROLLED IN COLLEGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
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Iesha Jackson joins DeSoto ISD as college advisor
The Dallas County Promise is a tuition-free pathway to a postsecondary credential from the Dallas County Community College District and a number of local university partners, including the University of North Texas at Dallas and Texas A&M at Commerce, available to all seniors in participating Dallas County high schools across eleven traditional public school districts.

“Making sure you talk about transferring to a university is really, really big,” Terry explained. “Because I’ll have students who know they have lower GPAs or test scores and they think ‘I don’t even know if I can get into a university.’ I’m like, well, as soon as you graduate and go into any postsecondary institution, you get a fresh start. I’ve had that conversation with a lot of students.”

Jackson continued: “The Promise isn’t for everyone. The way we pitch it is: this may not be your first plan. This may not even be your second plan, but it’s better to have options than to just bank on one thing. Because what happens is, students get accepted and we celebrate and then they get those award letters and it’s a different story. ‘Oh miss, I didn’t know it costs $25,000 a year and they only gave me $2000.’ And so we start doing the math and, ‘Oh, miss, is it too late to do that Dallas County Promise?’ I’m like, aren’t you glad that we made you do it?”

In her two years serving as DeSoto High School’s college advisor, Jackson was able to secure 100% participation on the Promise Pledge, the agreement that kicks off the scholarship process. Last year, 72% of DeSoto seniors completed their financial aid forms, a rate comparable to the state’s despite having a larger population of students experiencing economic instability.

Meanwhile, Jackson is now serving as the district’s first ever To and Through Coordinator. That means she’ll be working with students of all ages and grade levels to ensure college, career, and military readiness across the entire district. “The expectations have amped up by a thousand. I’m still trying to figure out what that even means. How do you get kindergarteners excited about their future? What does that look like?”

It is a role unique to DeSoto ISD, with little precedent in other school districts, but one we may begin to see more of in the future. Under House Bill 3, Texas school districts are now financially rewarded for every student who both graduates from high school ready for college, career, or the military and completes a successful postsecondary transition. And as Jackson can tell you, that takes commitment from the entire school community.

“This is important work. It’s a necessity. It has to be done and there has to be buy-in from the top down, from those in charge to your teachers, your students, your parents, your community. Everyone has to be on the same page. If you don’t have those people invested in the work, it’s meaningless. It’s not sustainable. It’s more than college banners up on the walls. It’s more than acceptance letters. It’s more than getting the FAFSA completed. It should be a culture across the board. At the end of the day, our students have endless opportunities and there’s no reason they shouldn’t be successful if everyone does their part.”

Want to learn more about DeSoto’s success? Read the whole story at: commitpartnership.org/ive-been-you-before

Excited about college and career readiness? Sign up to mentor a Dallas County Promise student at: dallascountypromise.org/champions

iOS users: aim camera at QR code to activate. Android users may need to download QR reader.
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School Districts
The Commit Partnership would like to thank the following districts for providing data for various indicators and other metrics to assist the community in understanding where all of our students are academically:
Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD
Cedar Hill ISD
Dallas ISD
DeSoto ISD
Garland ISD
Grand Prairie ISD
Highland Park ISD
Irving ISD
Lancaster ISD
Mesquite ISD
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GE Capital
Granite Properties
Greater Dallas Hispanic Chamber
Istation
JPMorgan Chase
LIT OnLine
North Dallas Chamber
Ready to Work
The Real Estate Council
Signazon.com
Texas Instruments
Univision
Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas

Parent & Teacher Groups
Avance Dallas
The Concilio
Region 10 Education Service Center
Stand for Children
Teach for America DFW
Teaching Trust
Teach Plus
Texas PTA

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Parent & Teacher Groups
Avance Dallas
The Concilio
Region 10 Education Service Center
Stand for Children
Teach for America DFW
Teaching Trust
Teach Plus
Texas PTA
Partners cont.

Early Childhood
ChildCare Group
Dallas Early Education Alliance
Educational First Steps
Head Start of Greater Dallas
Mi Escuelita Preschool
Zero to Five Funders Collaborative

Higher Education
Austin College
Dallas County Community College
Parker University
Paul Quinn College
Relay Graduate School of Education
Southern Methodist University
STARS Program - UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas
Texas A&M University - Commerce
University of Texas - Dallas
University of Dallas
University of N. Texas - Dallas
University of N. Texas - Denton
University of Texas at Arlington
Texas Women's University

K-12 Education
Alcuin School: A Montessori and IB Education
Bishop Dunne Catholic School
Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD
Cedar Hill ISD
Coppell ISD
Cristo Rey
Dallas ISD
DeSoto ISD
Duncanville ISD
Episcopal School of Dallas
Garland ISD
Good Shepherd Episcopal School
Grand Prairie ISD
Great Hearts Academy
Greenhill School
Harmony Schools
Highland Park ISD
The Hockaday School
International Leadership of Texas
Irving ISD
Jesus College Preparatory
KIPP DFW
The Lamplighter School
Lancaster ISD
Mesquite ISD
Momentous Institute
Parish Episcopal School
Plano ISD
Responsive Education Solutions
Richardson ISD
Shelton School
St. Mark’s School of Texas
Texas CAN Academics
Trinity Basin Prep
Uplift Education
Village Tech Schools
The Winston School

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Communities Foundation of Texas
The Dallas Foundation
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The Hamels Foundation
The Hoglund Foundation
General Electric (GE) Foundation
JPMorgan Chase Foundation
Carl B. and Florence E. King Foundation
Eugene McDermott Foundation
Meadows Foundation
Rainwater Charitable Foundation
Harold Simmons Foundation
Texas Instruments Foundation
Vickery Meadow Youth Development Foundation
United Way of Metropolitan Dallas
Williams Family Foundation
Woodrow Wilson High School Community Foundation
W.W. Caruth, Jr. Foundation
George & Fay Young Foundation
Young Women’s Preparatory Network

Non-Profit
Aberg Center For Literacy
Academic Success Program
Admission Aid
After the Bell Alliance
After-School All-Stars North Texas
Behind Every Door
Big Brothers Big Sisters Lone Star
Big Thought
Bold Idea
Boys & Girls Club of Greater Dallas
Bryan’s House
Camp Fire Lone Star
Caring Loving All Youth (CLAY)
Catch Up and Read
Catholic Charities of Dallas, Inc.
Children’s Health
CitySquare
CityYear
Commemorative Air Force
Communities In Schools
Dallas After School
Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden
Dallas Children’s Theater
Dallas Community Fellowship Center
Dallas Public Library
Dallas Symphony Orchestra
Dallas Urban Debate Alliance
Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center
Dove Christian Fellowship
Educate Texas
Education in Freedom
Education Opens Doors
Education Pioneers
Empower American Children
Empowering Oak Cliff
First Three Years
Foundation of C.H.O.I.C.E
Friends of MLK
Friends of Wednesday’s Child
Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas
Granny’s Place Ministries
Holistic Education Institute
IGNITE
Jubilee Park & Community Center
Junior Achievement
Junior League of Dallas
Junior Players
Just Say YES
Kids-U
Leadership ISD
Lemonade Day
Literacy Instruction For Texas
Mercy Street
The Mission Continues
NAPE (National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity)
National Math & Science Initiative
New Horizons of North Texas
NHP Foundation
North Central Texas Interlink
North Texas Alliance to Reduce Teen Pregnancy
Parents Step Ahead
Perot Museum of Nature and Science
The Princeton Review Dallas
Project Transformation
Promising Youth Alliance
Rainbow Days
Readers 2 Leaders
Reading Partners
REAL School Gardens
Reasoning Mind
Scholarshop
Serve West Dallas
SkillQuest
SMU’s CCE - The School Zone
Stand for Children
Teach for America DFW
Teaching Trust
TeCo Theatrical Productions
Texas PTA
TexProtects
Trinity River Audubon Center
Trinity River Mission
TutorMate
Unite
Unlocking Doors
United to Learn
Victims Outreach
Wesley Rankin Community Center
West Dallas Community Centers
WiNGS Dallas
YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas
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**Lifetime Investment of $500 to $5,000**

- AKA Enterprise Solutions
- Anonymous
- Anonymous
- Barker Family Fund
- John and Pamela Beckert Family Foundation
- Bruce Binkley
- Ryan and Hannah Buchanan
- Don Carroll
- Kim Chi Le
- Edward Coligado
- Terry Conner
- Dallas Bar Association
- Dallas Surety Association
- Tony Dona
- FSG, Inc.
- Michael Gagne
- James and Robin Grisham
- Eric and Jaime Goff
- Ron Hadley
- Daniel and Betsy Healy
- High Profile Staffing Solutions
- Hoak Foundation
- Dan and Martha Hooper
- The Horchow Family
- Chris Hudgens
- Jim and Candace Krause
- Granville and Page McAnear
- Harvey Mitchell and Linda Helton
- James Moreney
- Robert Neely
- New Name Mission Society International Inc.
- Margot Perot
- Zachary and Rebecca Petrone
- J. Puckett
- Eric M. and Katherine Perot Reeves
- Justin and Kathryn Reeves
- Rob Richmond
- Seattle Foundation
- Jeff Shaddix
- Mike and Mary Silverman
- George and Charmaine Tang
- United Way Worldwide
- Leighton Watts
- Sarah Weinberg
- Westmount Foundation
- Phillip and Donell Wiggins
- Nancy Wonders

**Lifetime Investment of $5,000 to $10,000**

- Rick and Allison Benners
- Mike Boone
- Kevin and Deni Bryant
- Jim and Robin Carreker
- Tom Dunning
- Tom Ferguson
- Gibson Energy
- Goldman Sachs
- H.E.B.
- Bill and Mary Margaret Hickey
- Brad and Margaret Hirsch
- Insperity
- Scott Orr
- Michael Ronzio

**Lifetime Investment of $10,000 to $50,000**

- Ashford Hospitality Advisors
- Ken and Carolyn Barth
- Elizabeth and Henry (Peter) Beck Fund at the Dallas Foundation
- Henry C. Beck III Fund of The Dallas Foundation
- Brackets for Good
- The Katherine C. Carmody Charitable Trust
- Dallas Citizens Council
- Dallas Regional Chamber
- Michael and Jill Dardick
- Durham Family Foundation
- Jeff and Regen Fearon
- Steve and Sharon Folsom
- General Electric (GE) Foundation
- Gary Community Investments
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- Jay Henry
- IBC Bank
- Fannie & Stephen Kahn Charitable Foundation
- Carl B. and Florence E. King Foundation
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- Murray and Libby McCabe
- Microsoft
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- FW Murphy Family Fund
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- Trinity Church
- Tulsa Community Foundation
- Jack and Terri Sue Wensinger
- Workforce Solutions of Greater Dallas
- M.B. and Edna Zale Foundation

**Lifetime Investment of $50,000 to $100,000**

- Harry W. Bass, Jr. Foundation
- Bezos Family Foundation
- Educate Texas
- Esping Family Foundation
- Fluor Foundation
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- TEGAC
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- Texas Women’s Foundation
- Abigail Williams
- Ellen Wood
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- Anonymous
- Bank of America Foundation
- Bank of America U.S. Trust
- Byrne Family Foundation
- Capital One
- Citibank Foundation
- College Football Playoff Foundation
- Trammell Crow
- The Robert and Nancy Dedman Foundation at Communities Foundation
- AT&T Foundation
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- Lyda Hill Philanthropies
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- Hoglund Foundation
- M.R. and Evelyn Hudson Foundation
- Robert S. Kaplan
- Knowledgeworks Foundation
- Liberty Mutual Foundation
- Lumina Foundation
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- David B. Miller Family Foundation
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- PNC Bank
- Raise Your Hand Texas
- Robert and Anne Raymond
- Deedie Rose
- The Sealark Foundation
- Harold Simmons Foundation
- David Wallenstein
- Walton Family Foundation of Texas
- Wells Fargo
- George and Fay Young Foundation

**Lifetime Investment of $500,000 to $1M**
- AT&T Foundation
- Anonymous
- Boone Family Foundation
- Communities Foundation of Texas
- The Dallas Foundation
- Hirsch Family Foundation
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation
- Eugene McDermott Foundation
- Mike A. Myers Foundation
- Rees-Jones Foundation
- United Way of Metropolitan Dallas
- Texas Instruments Foundation
- Todd and Abby Williams Family Foundation

**Lifetime Investment of More Than $1M**
- The Addy Foundation
- Balzarelli Group
- Bezalel Fund at VCEP
- W.W. Caruth, Jr. Foundation
- Dallas County Community College District
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- JPMorgan Chase Foundation
- The Meadows Foundation
- Rainwater Charitable Foundation
- Texas Education Agency
- Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation
- StriveTogether
I. Pre-K Entry
Source: Texas Public Education Information Resource
Significance: 90% of the brain is developed by the time a person is five years old. Research shows a strong correlation between quality early learning and regional prosperity. For every $1 invested in early childhood, a community saves $7 in long-term costs such as educational remediation, criminal justice, and welfare. And quality Pre-K programming has been shown to close achievement gaps for low-income students and students of color. Quality early learning for all children can change the economic outcome of our community in one generation. When we ensure that all students and students of color can change the economic outcome of their lives.

2. Kindergarten Readiness
Source: Texas Public Education Information Resource
Significance: Currently, individual districts choose their own assessment to determine kindergarten readiness. A standardized and age-appropriate measure to be used by all districts across Texas is currently in development, as mandated by House Bill 3. Kindergarten Readiness report provided by the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

3. 3rd Grade Reading
Source: State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) data provided by TEA
Significance: In the early grades, children begin to transition from learning to read to reading to learn. At these grade levels, the reading curriculum becomes more complex in both meaning and vocabulary. Data shows that disparities in literacy during the early grades are linked to persistent achievement gaps. If children are behind by third grade, they generally stay behind throughout school. One longitudinal study found that students who do not read at grade level by third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school than proficient readers. Conversely, students at or above grade level reading in earlier grades graduate from high school and attend college at higher rates than peers reading below grade level.

4. 4th Grade Math
Source: State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) provided by TEA
Significance: Elementary math lays the foundation for all future mathematics, as students need a stronger understanding of arithmetic and finite number sets to effectively tackle more complex concepts, such as algebra and infinite number sets. Research indicates that an early understanding of math concepts is the most powerful predictor of later school success. Knowledge of fractions and division uniquely predicts subsequent knowledge of Algebra and overall math achievement more than four years later. And students in the lowest quartile of math achievement at ages 6, 8, and 10 are less likely to attend college than students who struggle in other subjects.

5. 8th Grade Science
Source: State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) provided by TEA
Significance: A strong foundation in math and science at the middle school level can dramatically impact future workforce opportunity. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, STEM occupations are growing at 17%, while others are growing at 9.8%, and 10 of the fastest growing occupations require science and math. Projections estimate the need for 8.6 million workers in STEM-related jobs. At all levels of education attainment, STEM job holders earn 11% higher wages compared with their counterparts in other jobs.

6. Algebra I
Source: State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) provided by TEA
Significance: Basic algebra has been referred to as the “gatekeeper subject” because of its correlation to both college and career success. Taking algebra in middle school opens the gateway to completing advanced mathematics courses in high school which, in turn, is highly valued for admission to many four-year colleges and universities. Students who leave high school without adequate mathematics preparation and skills require post-secondary remediation coursework later on. Approximately 25% of entering college freshmen fail placement tests for college level math courses and are placed in non-credit-bearing remedial courses. Economists estimate that if the U.S. could raise math proficiency to Canadian levels, economic growth would increase by 1.2% annually and over the long run add $75 trillion to the U.S. GDP.

7. College Readiness
Source: Texas Academic Performance Reports
Significance: SAT/ACT exams administered in the 11th and 12th grade help us determine if a student has developed the academic foundation necessary for a successful transition from secondary to higher education. As nationally normed tests, these indicators allow our community to compare the progress of our school systems against those from around the country. 58% of students who do not require remediation upon entering college ultimately earn a bachelor’s degree, compared to only 17% of students enrolled in remedial reading and 27% of students enrolled in remedial math. A strong correlation exists between SAT/ACT scores and first year college GPA and retention rates; SAT/ACT scores also help identify the need for remedial work. The three year graduation rate at Texas community colleges for full time students requiring remedial work is only 10%.

8. High School Graduation
Source: Texas Academic Performance Reports
Significance: High school graduation is not only a precursor to college enrollment; it is also a major indicator for earnings throughout adulthood. On average, high school graduates make at least $50,000 more annually than individuals who did not complete high school. Over a lifetime, high school graduates earn 33% more over their lifetime than those who drop out. If the number of high school dropouts in the 50 largest U.S. cities were cut in half, the extra earnings of those high school graduates would add up to $8.1 billion per year. High school graduation has been shown to predict health, mortality, teen childbearing, marital outcomes, and crime. Increasing the educational attainment of one generation improves the next generation’s academic and social outcomes.
Appendix cont.

9. Postsecondary Enrollment
Source National Student Clearinghouse
Reports provided by individual school districts
Significance Post-secondary enrollment marks one of the critical transitions in the cradle to career pipeline. By 2020, 65% of jobs nationally will require some form of postsecondary education. Post-secondary credentials are not limited to four year universities; two-year programs and technical certifications are also valuable in this knowledge-based economy.
Research has shown that “low income students, even those with high academic performance levels, are less likely to enroll in college, more likely to attend two year colleges when they do enroll, and less likely to apply to more selective institutions compared to their more advantaged peers with similar academic preparation.” Students from lower income schools enrolled in college at an average rate of 36%, compared to 71% of students from higher income schools.

10. Postsecondary Persistence
Source National Student Clearinghouse
Reports provided by individual school districts
Significance Often students begin higher education with strong ideals but the transition proves very difficult. Supporting students during this critical period is essential for improving degree attainment.
As many as 1 in 3 students nationally do not return for their second year of college. Just over 3.2 million first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students began their undergraduate careers at public four-year colleges and universities in the fall of 2010. Six in ten (62.4%) completed their degrees within six years. Of the 1 million first-time students who enrolled at two-year public institutions in fall 2010, only one in four (39.3%) completed degrees or certificates from their starting institution within six years.

11. Postsecondary Completion
Source National Student Clearinghouse
Reports provided by individual school districts
Significance The benefits of post-secondary education span across social and economic domains. An associate or bachelor’s degree holder earns on average $442,000-$1,051,000 more over a 40-year career than a high school graduate. According to the Lumina Foundation, the number of jobs requiring an associate degree has grown by 1.6 million and the number of jobs requiring a bachelor’s degree has grown by 2 million since the end of the recession. Society benefits from a more educated population, as well, through lower instances of child abuse, lower rates of criminal behavior, and fewer teen pregnancies among children of college-educated parents.

Misc. Sources with hyperlinks (for digital readers) & QR codes (for print readers):
1. Inclusive Recovery in US Cities

2. Patrolling Public Schools: The Impact of Funding for School Police on Student Discipline and Long-Term Education Outcomes

shorturl.at/MRWX8

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