Higher Education in Texas
REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

In the year 2000, Texas set forth an ambitious higher education plan, *Closing the Gaps by 2015*, to improve the state's national standing in postsecondary education. During the decade that has followed the introduction of *Closing the Gaps*, Texas has experienced significant progress in the four key areas targeted for improvement:

1) Participation - students enrolled in Texas higher education; *2) Success* - students who complete degree or certificate programs; *3) Excellence* - nationally recognized programs and services at Texas colleges and universities; and *4) Research* - federal science and engineering research funding for Texas institutions.

In fall 2009, an all-time record number of more than 1.4 million students were enrolled in Texas higher education. Texas is gaining ground on federal research obligations in comparison with key states like California and New York. Texas institutions are increasingly recognized by national organizations such as the Pell Institute for excellence. There is much to celebrate, but our work is not complete.

During the next five years, higher education institutions in every region of the state must continue their efforts to help Texas achieve the goals of *Closing the Gaps*. But now, more than ever, we must reinvigorate the focus on student success. If Texas is to fully realize the benefits of an educated workforce and take its place on the global economic stage, we must accelerate progress on awarding more degrees and certificates.

Texas must work smarter to ensure that more students who enter higher education also graduate.

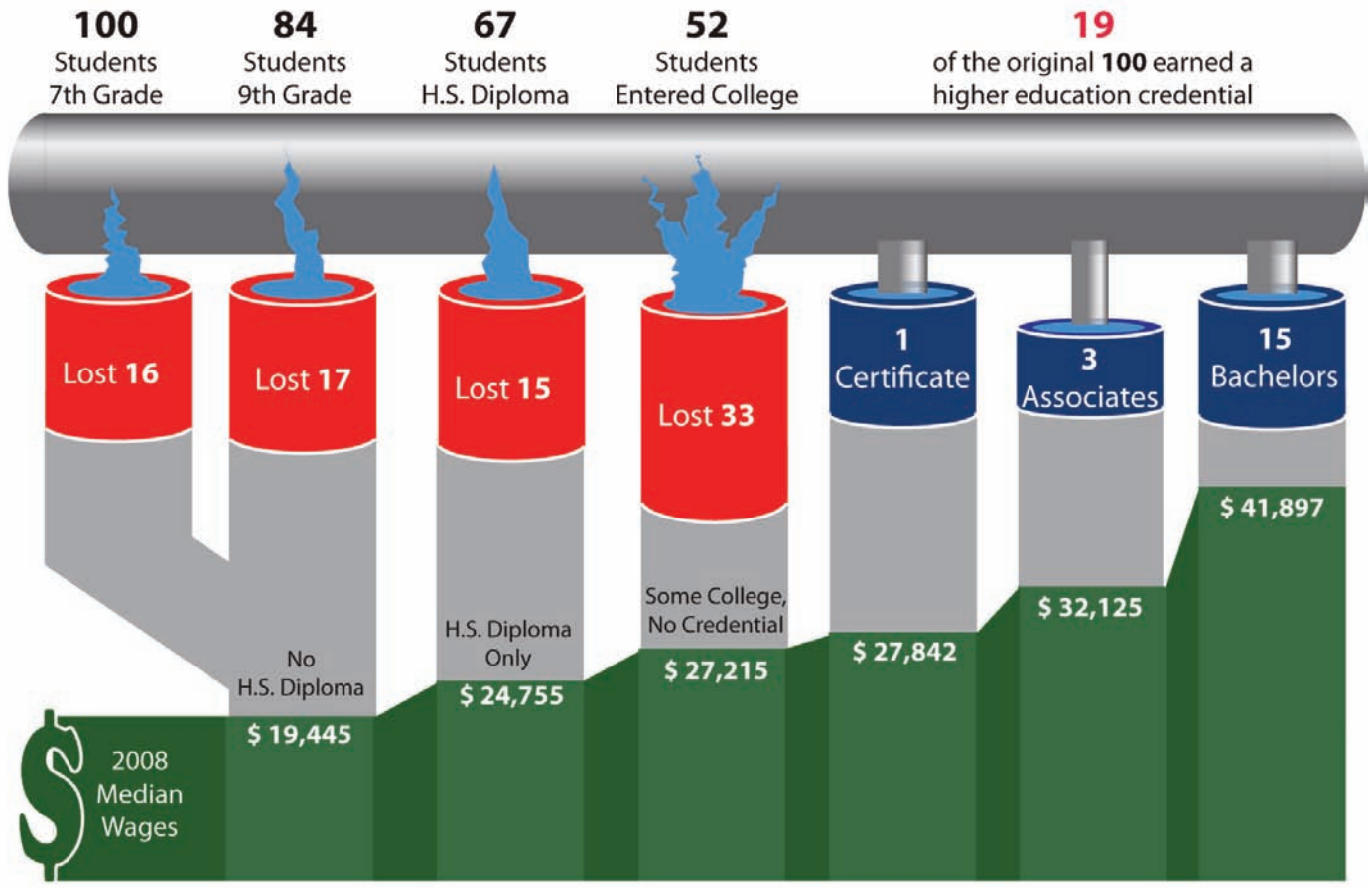
The student success agenda requires focused and coordinated action of many stakeholders. State government, institutions of higher education, the P-12 system, students and their families, and communities throughout Texas have a shared responsibility to help make the student success agenda a reality. Our most crucial responsibilities are to ensure that students enroll in higher education, earn a credential that makes them competitive in the workforce, and position Texas to compete in the global economy with a better-educated population.

Texas is a can-do state, and together we can realize the full benefits of *Closing the Gaps by 2015*.

The state of higher education in the Metroplex:

ARCHER, BAYLOR, BOSQUE, CLAY, COLLIN, COOKE, COTTLE, DALLAS, DENTON, ELLIS, ERATH, FALLS, FANNIN, FOARD, FREESTONE, GRAYSON, HARDEMAN, HILL, HOOD, HUNT, JACK, JOHNSON, KAUFMAN, LIMESTONE, MCLENNAN, MONTAGUE, NAVARRO, PALO PINTO, PARKER, ROCKWALL, SOMERVELL, TARRANT, WICHITA, WILBARGER, WISE, & YOUNG COUNTIES

Metroplex P-16 Pipeline...



The Metroplex P-16 Pipeline data are derived from the cohort of Metroplex students who entered the 7th grade in fall 1997 and are tracked through fall 2009. These data do not reflect students who enrolled and/or graduated from institutions outside of Texas.

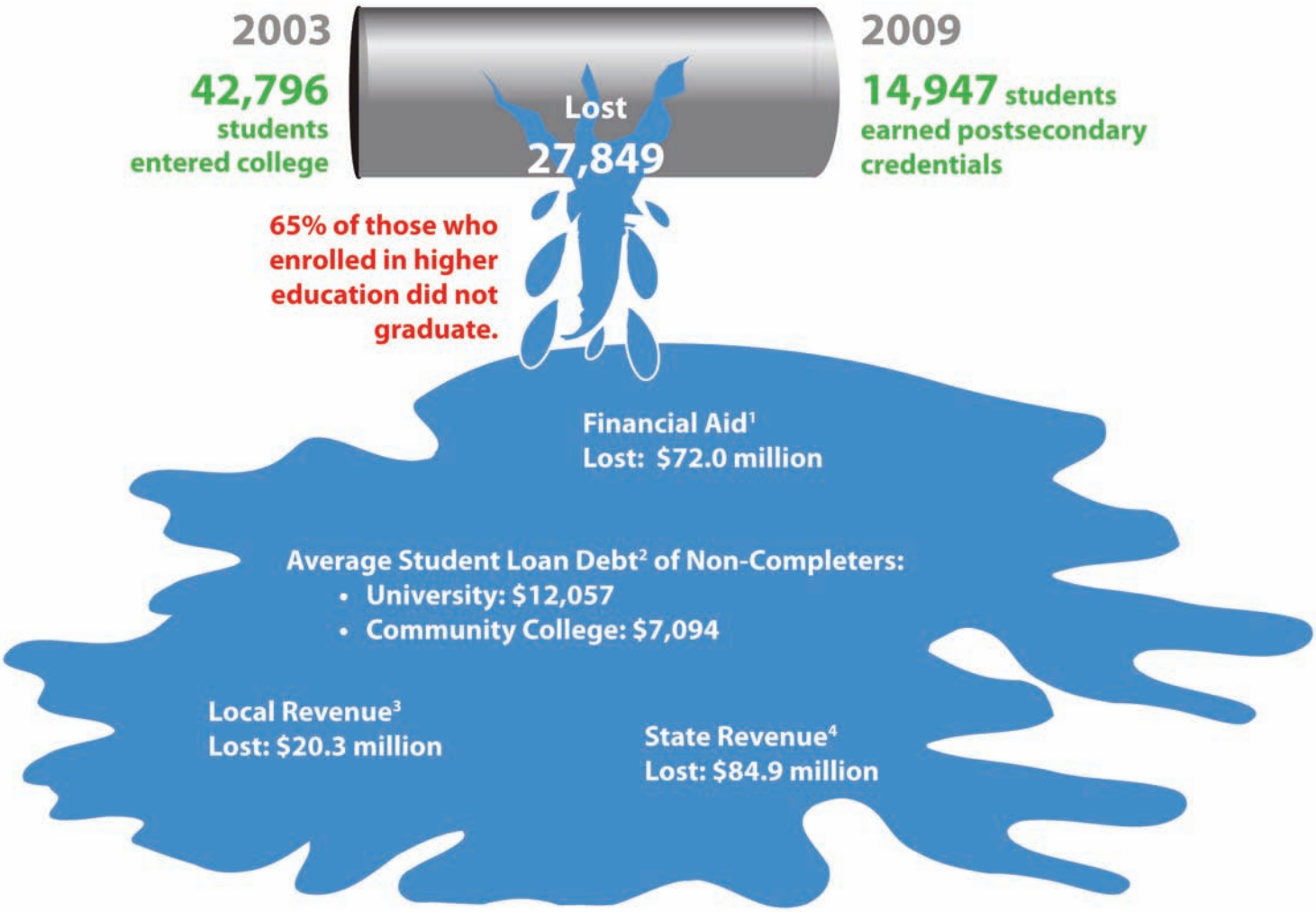
Texas experiences leakage in the P-16 education pipeline between the 7th grade and the completion of postsecondary education. Data from the Metroplex reflect that trend. Comprehensive analysis of a sample of 100 Metroplex students who were enrolled in the 7th grade in 1997 shows only 19 earned higher education credentials - a certificate, associate's degree, or bachelor's degree - by 2009.

The impact of high school dropouts is discussed often, but less attention is devoted to the devastating impact of students who enter higher education but fail to earn a credential. Student debt poses a significant burden. Non-graduates have reduced earning capacity, which jeopardizes their capacity to repay loans. The needs of communities for skilled graduates go unfulfilled. And Texas taxpayers have far less to show for their higher education investment.

Texas must work smarter to ensure that more students who enter higher education also graduate.

Metroplex Higher Education Pipeline Leak

Lost opportunity, lost investment



[1]**Financial Aid Lost** includes all major sources of public (federal/state) and private financial aid including grants, loans, scholarships, gifts, and work-study programs. Total reflects all such aid received by students who enrolled in 12 or more semester credit hours (SCH) at a Metroplex institution beginning in fall 2003 and who did not graduate and were no longer enrolled in any state institution in fall 2009.

[2]**Average Student Loan Debt of Non-Completers** includes total of all loans by source (state/federal) divided by total number of students who received a loan, enrolled in 12 or more SCH at a Metroplex institution (as indicated) beginning in fall 2003, and did not graduate and were no longer enrolled in any state institution in fall 2009.

[3]**Local Revenue Lost** represents a biennium projection of total cost via local sources of revenue for community and technical colleges in the Metroplex Region. The figure was calculated by determining the total contact hour cost for all courses not completed at an institution in FY 2009 and then distributed according to the institution's share of overall revenue generated from local sources. These data were then aggregated for the regional projection.

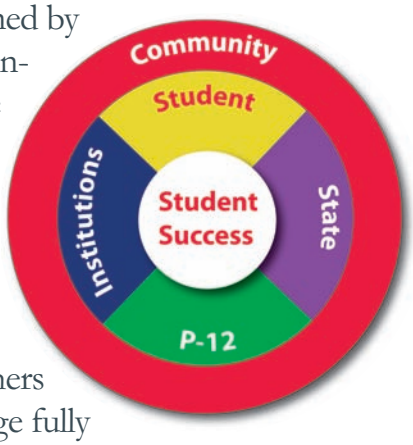
[4]**State Revenue Lost** represents a biennium projection of total cost via state formula funding for all courses not completed in FY 2009 at all Metroplex universities and community colleges. Universities = $20.2 million; Community and technical colleges = $64.7 million.

METROPLEX INSTITUTIONS INCLUDE Colin County Community College District, Dallas County Community College District, Grayson County Community College, Hill College, McClennan Communty College, Midwestern University, North Central Community College, Ranger Junior College, Tarleton State University, Tarrant County Community College District, Texas Woman's University, Trinity Valley Community College, TSTC-Waco, University of North Texas, University of North Texas-Dallas, UT-Arlington, UT-Dallas, Vernon College, Weatherford College

Sharing Responsibility for Student Success

We all have a vital role to play to ensure student success, which depends on deliberate and coordinated action by institutions of higher education, the P-12 system, students and their families, communities, and the state.

Institutions of Higher Education must renew their efforts to strengthen the support of student success. Funding of universities and colleges should be determined by student success in measures of academic progress and degree or certificate attainment. Enrolling students in courses is no longer sufficient. Completion must be the new benchmark. Student success also will require improvements in existing student support services, such as academic advising, mentoring, and tutoring.



The P-12 system must institutionalize and strengthen College and Career Readiness Standards so all Texas students are ready to enter the workforce and pursue higher education. The Coordinating Board and the Texas Education Agency have worked together with teachers and higher education faculty to ensure that high school graduates arrive at college fully prepared for the academic challenge. Through this process the agencies have adopted standards that will result in better-prepared students who will reduce the need for costly remediation after high school.

Students must work diligently in high school so they are ready to succeed when they enter college. State funding for student financial aid is limited, and the population of needy students continues to grow. With limited funding, those needy students who excel in high school should receive priority. Aligning limited state financial aid with needy students who have prepared well academically is the best way to promote a college-ready, success-oriented culture among students.

The community must help develop and foster a college-going, career-ready culture across the state. *Generation TX* is a grassroots, statewide marketing communication campaign designed to reinforce the importance of a college and career-ready culture. Scheduled to launch in fall 2010, the campaign will provide students and their families with key information on the college admissions and financial applications processes. *GenerationTX* will encourage communities throughout Texas to take an active role in promoting education.

The state must continue to support the education system and students at sufficient levels. Higher education enrollment is expanding at a record pace, and the state must continue to provide the necessary resources to institutions and students that will sustain the growth. As higher education outcomes improve, the state must reward success so Texas can achieve the goals of *Closing the Gaps by 2015*.

Working together, we can earn a better return on the investments made by students, their families, and Texas taxpayers. The future educational and economic vibrancy of Texas is in our hands.

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

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