

“Losing Ground, Losing Opportunity: The Time is Now to Make Education a Top Priority in Central Texas”

Although more students graduate from high school and college today than at any time in our history, the U.S. continues to fall behind in education. It’s true, most of the people we encounter day to day have a decent education and make a decent living. But our student demographics are changing rapidly, creating an even greater challenge to our education system. Consider:

Not investing in education costs us tremendously...

Each year’s class of high school dropouts costs Central Texas a minimum of **\$425 million** in lost earnings. That’s the equivalent cost of four UT Athletic Departments every year!

There were almost 7,000 students in Central Texas 9th grade classes 4 years ago who could have received a diploma this year but did not walk across the stage.

Their education impacts us...

Those who don’t stay in school have lower personal earnings, pay fewer taxes, and cost us more. A dropout acquires only 10% of the wealth of a high school graduate, and 1% of the wealth of a college graduate! Those who are less educated buy far less from our businesses. And there aren’t enough educated workers to fill critical jobs like nursing or pay into our Social Security. The fastest way to lower our social services costs and share the tax load is through better education for all.

Texas is losing ground globally...

U.S. high schoolers rank among the worst of all industrialized nations in math, science and problem solving, and Texas has the lowest percentage of adults who have graduated from high school of all states in the nation. Only 43% of those who go on to college get any degree within six years.

There’s a demographic tidal wave that has not yet crested...

In Central Texas, students that schools struggle the most to teach—typically, students from low income families and English language learners—are increasing at **three times** the rate of all students. Moreover, Central Texas’ student population is growing at **twice** the state’s rate, and Texas has the fastest growing child population of the 50 states. Our schools and workforce are losing ground to such rapid shifts in needs.

The ultimate impact is huge...

Unless many more students, especially Black and Hispanic students, enroll and graduate from college, noted economist Ray Perryman has calculated that our region stands to **lose 85,000 jobs and \$50+ Billion** in personal income and local spending by 2030.

Can we do anything about it?

This situation may seem overwhelming. But no one else is going to solve this for us. If we wait for the state or federal government, we’ll lose an entire generation of kids. That’s why hundreds of us have joined together to create *The Blueprint for Educational Change*. It’s different. It’s unprecedented. It’s based on *objective data* that has never been collected before. It requires our entire *region* to be *accountable* for the success of every student. It spans the *continuum* from early childhood to workforce success. It provides the tools for every one of us to be part of the change that we need.