



SMITH • COUNTY

2016 EDUCATION REPORT

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tap4e.org

Letter to the Community

Dear residents of Smith County,

In 2015, the **Tyler Area Partnership 4 Education** (TAP4E) issued a baseline education report to inform the community of our organization, commitment and strategies to increase educational attainment in our community. Our goal states that 60% of the population of Smith County will have earned a postsecondary credential or degree by the year 2025. As reported in 2015, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 35% of Smith County residents hold an associate's degree or higher. With the addition of new data released in 2016 estimating the percentage of residents with high-quality industry certifications at 5%, TAP4E is working toward closing a 20% gap over the next decade by enlisting the assistance of a variety of community experts and practitioners.

Our kindergarten readiness, postsecondary readiness, access and success, and newly formed middle to high school transition networks are working together to align resources and to rally community assets and innovative ideas. These groups are supported by the Data Support Council and Leadership Council, who ensure proper measurement and strategic alignment.

Improving educational outcomes impacts the entire community. The education level of our citizens affects the economy, health, community involvement and crime rate, along with numerous other outcomes. No single organization can achieve this goal alone. That is why TAP4E has called upon leaders and practitioners from all sectors of our community to join forces and work together.

TAP4E strives to drive student achievement in Smith County, from cradle to career, by leveraging data, community expertise and collaboration. These pillars comprise what is commonly known as "Collective Impact."

TAP4E action networks have been hard at work over the past 12 months and we hope that this summary of our work will be informative and inspirational. There is much to be done but, more importantly, there is much being done across our community to improve education and the lives of our citizens. This work is long-term work and change will not be seen overnight, but with the commitment of the entire community, Tyler and Smith County can and will be transformed.



Mayor Martin Heines,
City of Tyler

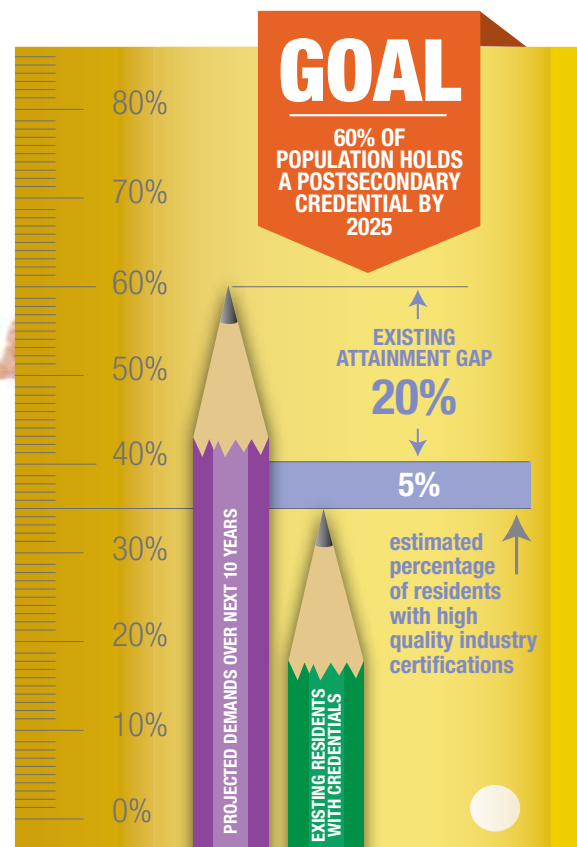
Christi Khalaf,
Executive Director, Tyler Area
Business Education Council

About us

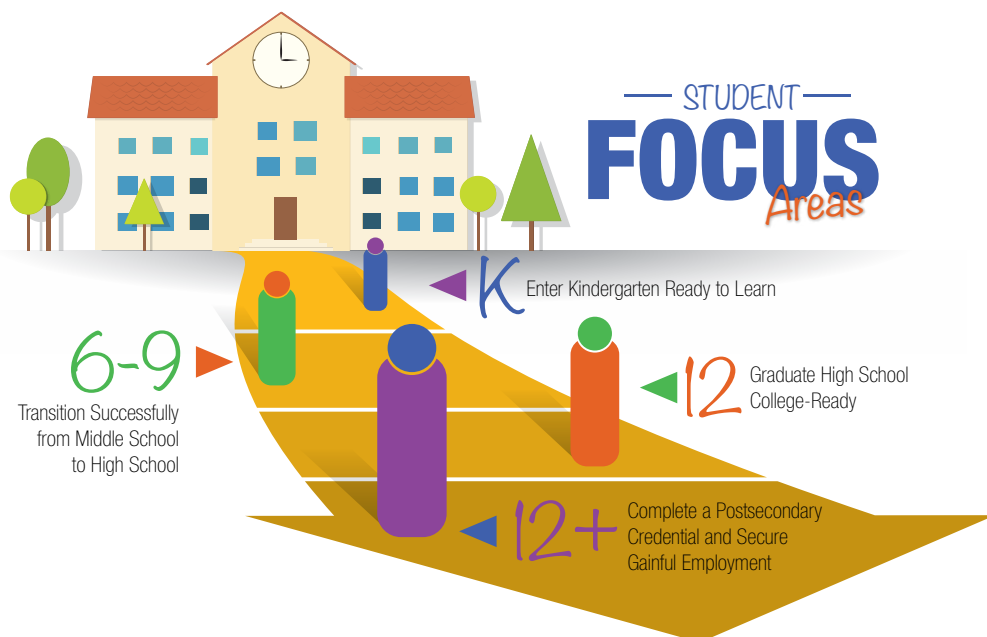
TAP4E was formed to align the community in support of local schools and higher education institutions with the goal of improving educational outcomes in Smith County. The goal of the partnership is to increase the percentage of residents possessing a postsecondary credential or degree to 60% by the year 2025. Currently, we have over 150 individuals engaged in our partnership, representing the education, business, civic, non-profit, philanthropic and faith-based communities.

Vision

Advancing our community through unifying leadership to increase educational attainment from cradle to career, leading to economic prosperity and improved quality of life.



Source: U.S Census Bureau American Community Survey 2015
Source: Lumina Foundation, A Stronger Nation Through Higher Education Report, 2016



Mission Statement

Tyler Area Partnership 4 Education unifies diverse organizations in order to nurture, empower and transform our community through individual achievement of postsecondary credentials leading to success in career and life.

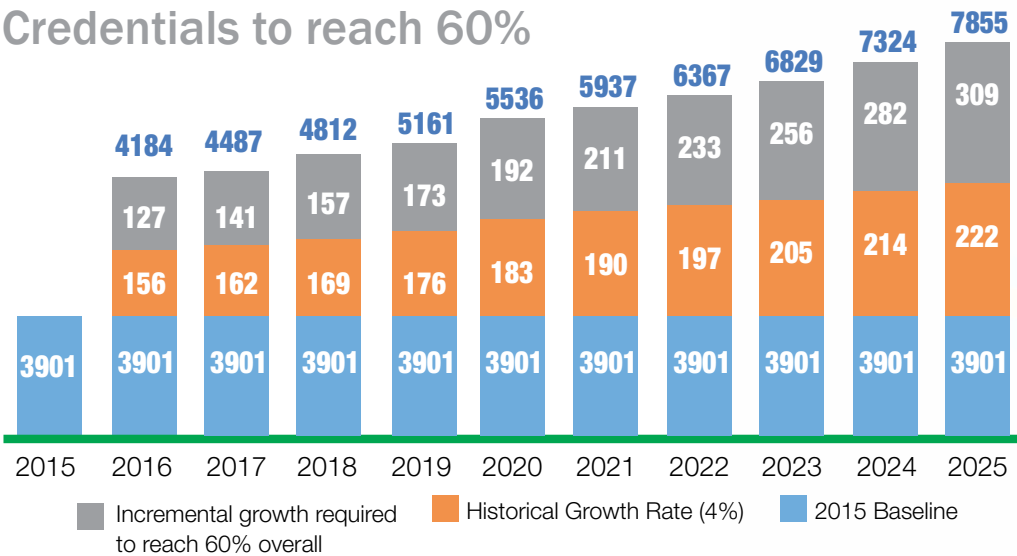
For more background information on TAP4E, please download our 2015 Smith County Baseline Report at www.TAP4E.org.

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Progress to Goal

Last year in our baseline report, the partnership set a goal to award 2,000 degrees and credentials by 2025, over and above normal growth expectations due to enrollment and population changes. This incremental growth will ensure that we reach our 60% goal. In 2015-2016, Smith County high schools and higher education institutions awarded 4,662 certifications and degrees. TAP4E is proud to report that our first annual goal was exceeded by 478 certificates and degrees, mostly due to a greater number of industry certifications being awarded to both high school and college students.

Growth in Degrees and Credentials to reach 60%



	2016 GOAL	2016 ACTUAL
Certificate Earned in High School	355	464
Certificate Earned in College	649	900
Associate Degrees	1,330	1,259
Bachelor Degrees	1,248	1,319
Advanced Degrees	602	720
TOTAL	4,184	4,662

EXCEEDED
GOAL BY
478

Sources: Region 7 Education Service Center Perkins Grant Report, Institutional research centers at TJC, UTT and Texas College 2016, U.S. Census Bureau Educational Mobility Study; Morgan, Farkas, Hillemeier, & Maczuga, 2009, Houston Endowment; Jaime Meristotis, Lumina Foundation



Smith County at a Glance

Smith County is made up of eight public school districts, twelve private schools, four charter schools, private homeschoolers and four higher education institutions which together serve over 63,000 students. The profiles of these students have changed and continue to change with respect to ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age and highest education level achieved.

Fifty-nine percent (59%) of Smith County K-12 students are economically disadvantaged as defined by National School Lunch Program qualifications, up from 56% in 2015. Research indicates that children from low-socioeconomic households and communities develop academic skills more slowly compared to children from higher socioeconomic groups. In Smith County, only 10% of economically disadvantaged students are earning a credential or degree within six years of high school graduation compared to 20% of their economically stable counterparts.

In addition, the Hispanic population in Smith County is growing while other ethnic populations are flat or declining. Hispanic students are underrepresented in higher education, making it even more imperative to address the barriers to education beyond high school for this growing sector of our community.

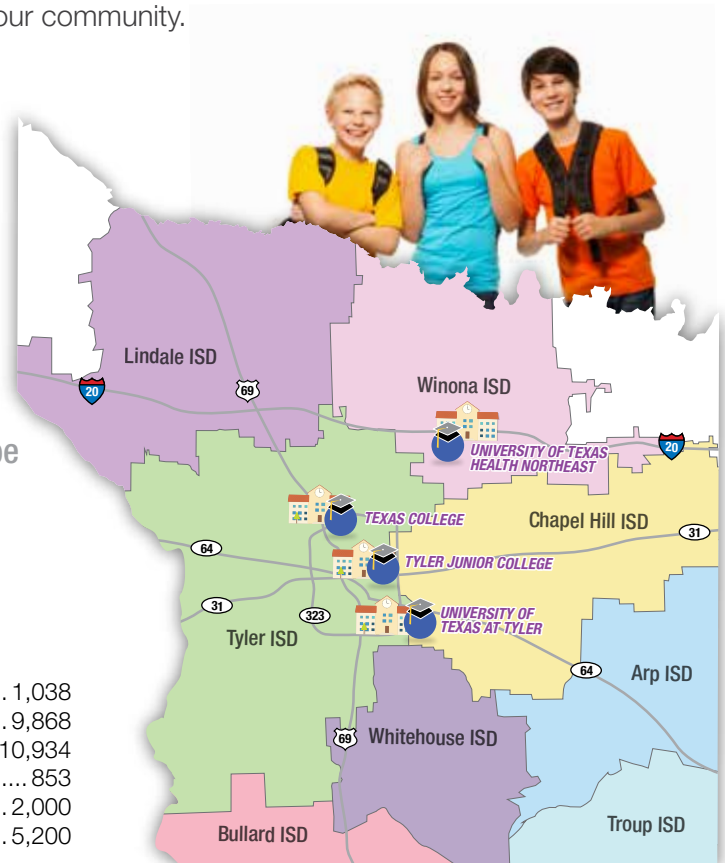
Finally, 38% of today's undergraduate students are older than 25, 56% work while in college and more than 25% are raising children. Only one-third of the college population in the U.S. is between the ages of 18 and 21 and attending school full-time, contrary to the long held definition of a "traditional" college student.



Smith County Student Counts by Institution or School Type (as of Fall 2016)

- **Population: 223,000**
- **Public School Enrollment: 35,500**
- **Higher Education Enrollment: 20,500**
- **Workforce Participants: 105,000**

Arp ISD.....	870	Winona ISD	1,038
Bullard ISD	2,450	UT Tyler	9,868
Chapel Hill ISD.....	3,537	Tyler Junior College.....	10,934
Lindale ISD	3,860	Texas College	853
Troup ISD	1,080	Homeschool	2,000
Tyler ISD	18,004	Private/Charter Schools.....	5,200
Whitehouse ISD.....	4,731		



Sources: Texas Association of Counties, Texas Education Agency, www.privateschoolreview.com, Tyler Area Homeschoolers ;Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Tyler Economic Development Council

Reflections on Progress

Data Support Council

Keeping track of the newest data is imperative to the efforts of a collective impact organization. The Data Support Council continues to gather the latest publically available data on demographics, socioeconomics and education and workforce outcomes in order to track changes and progress being made in Smith County. This data is used to drive strategic planning in our action networks and much of it is presented in our annual report documents. In addition, the Data Support Council has taken on new projects in 2016, highlighted below.

Actions Taken:

- Smith County high schools have joined together to better track the success of their students after high school by using National Student Clearinghouse data. This data tracks high school graduates for six years through higher education, including colleges attended and dates attended, transfers between colleges and ultimately, completion. This kind of data provides invaluable information that allows high schools to better tailor their college readiness and access efforts. Work on compiling this data is in progress with plans to release the findings in early 2017.
- A workforce survey was conducted in partnership with The University of Texas at Tyler Center for Social Science Research. The survey findings not only provided important information about hiring practices, educational requirements and skill gaps but also was able to give TAP4E an understanding of how local businesses support education. The respondents included 113 Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce member businesses. A few key highlights of the findings are as follows:
 - 50% of employers expect to increase educational requirements for new hires in the next ten years.
 - 60% of employers indicated that good verbal and written communication skills are lacking in new hires.
 - While over half of employers offer vacation, sick leave and flexible scheduling, only 26% reported offering any type of educational assistance to employees.
 - 55% of employers reported offering student internships.
 - 54% encourage employees to volunteer on school campuses.
 - 51% donate goods or services to schools and 33% allow staff to participate in mentor programs.

Smith County Data Currently Tracked:

- Demographics and Socioeconomics
- Childcare Center Data
- 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency
- Algebra I Success
- Advanced Placement and Dual Credit Participation and Success
- SAT and ACT Participation and Performance
- High School Graduation Rates
- College Readiness of High School Graduates
- High School Graduates Enrolling in Postsecondary Education
- Colleges and Universities Attended by High School Graduates
- College Application Submissions
- Financial Aid Application Submissions
- College Persistence Rates
- College Developmental Education Participation
- Certifications and Degrees Earned
- Workforce Participation
- Employment in Local Target Industries



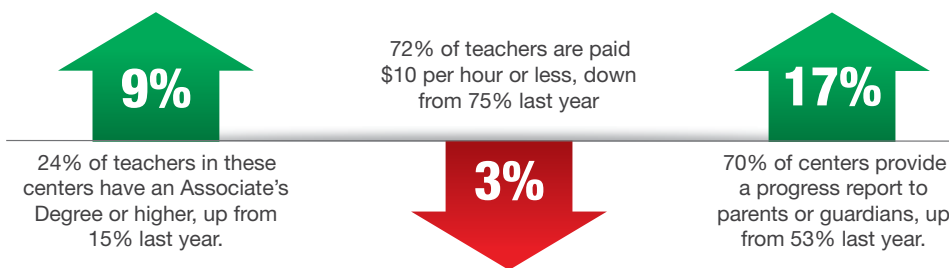
Kindergarten Readiness Action Network

Sixty-four percent (64%) of mothers with children under age 6 are working mothers today. For these working families, access to affordable, reliable and high-quality early education for their children is a necessity. New data from a survey of Smith County childcare centers and public school district data provide insight into the early childhood landscape in Smith County.

Early Childhood Data Snapshot

Source: Smith County Champions for Children Survey 2016, Texas Education Agency

- Seventy-eight licensed and registered preschool childcare facilities are located in Smith County that serve 4,700 children with capacity to serve 7,500 ages birth-4 years.**
 - 27% of centers have at least one type of quality rating – 19 Texas Rising Star* Designation (including 7 in process) and 2 national accreditations**
 - Only 60% of centers offer infant care, a growing need in our community**
- Head Start is available in 5 school districts and in total serves approximately 600 students in Smith County. Free prekindergarten, offered at 7 local school districts, also serves around 600 students. Most districts offer full day programs in both Head Start and prekindergarten and some districts are now offering tuition-based prekindergarten.**



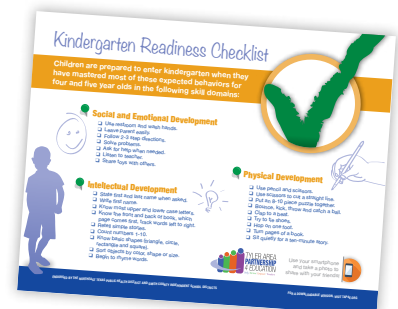
Actions Taken:

- A Kindergarten Readiness Checklist was created. This checklist details social, emotional, intellectual and physical development skills that children need to master before they enter Kindergarten. The checklist has been distributed through numerous outlets, including local magazines, the Tyler Paper, NetHealth Clinics and school district events. The action network has also secured digital billboard impressions around Tyler to drive the public to the website to download the checklist.
- A public service announcement was developed and is being aired by numerous local media outlets, and is posted on websites and social media of partner organizations.
- A progress report template has been made available to all early childcare centers to encourage dialogue with parents about the progress of their children toward kindergarten readiness benchmarks.
- An assessment is under development to provide a uniform measure of kindergarten readiness across Smith County.



GOALS

- 1) Increase quality ratings of Smith County centers with 48% of centers securing Texas Rising Star or national accreditation by 2020
- 2) Increase percentage of early childhood teachers with postsecondary education from 15% to 30% by 2020
- 3) Distribute Kindergarten Readiness information to all schools, community officials, Tyler ministerial alliance, Chamber of Commerce, health clinics, libraries and recreation centers by 2017



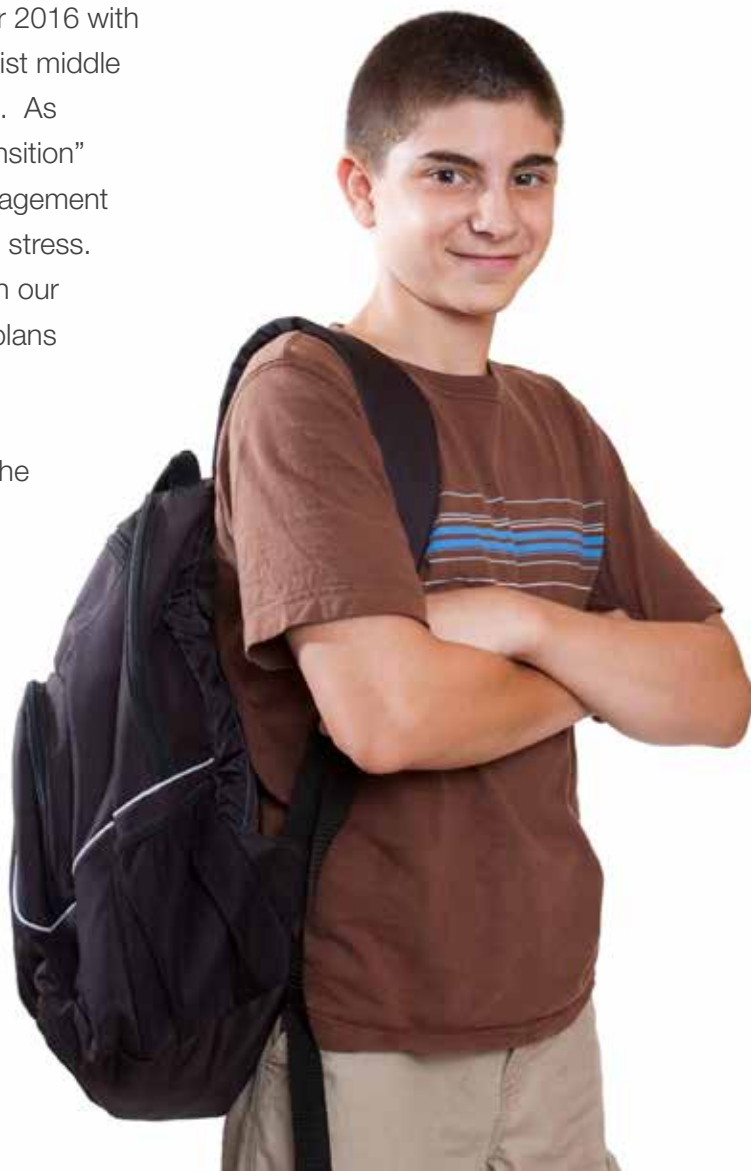
Download the checklist at
www.tap4e.org/kindergarten-readiness
 or visit the TAP4E You Tube Channel
 to view and share the public service
 announcement.

Middle School Action Network

According to ACT research, the amount of progress toward college and career readiness that students have made by eighth grade is crucial to their future success. Students who leave eighth grade without the skills necessary to be on target for college or career, too often also leave high school not prepared for a successful future. Recent evidence makes clear that each middle-grader's personal, individual engagement in school is essential to his or her success. Studies repeatedly show that students who lose interest in school in the middle grades are likely to flounder in ninth grade — and later drop out. Yet developmental and brain research confirms that by the middle grades, students are capable of making connections between their academic work, their personal interests and career aptitudes. Middle grades professionals can use these connections to help students prepare for success in high school and postsecondary studies. In order to maximize the benefits of high school rigor and academic opportunities, a strong middle school base is necessary and in fact, crucial.

The Middle School Action Network launched in September 2016 with the goal of developing strategies and action plans that assist middle school students with a successful transition to high school. As defined by the action network members, a “successful transition” means that students have developed reasoning, time management and study skills and are able to self-advocate and manage stress. This network will support the numerous efforts underway in our schools to help students and families in making informed plans for high school and beyond.

This group has compiled an asset inventory to determine the current actions being taken in middle grades that allows for identification of gaps, successful practices that can be scaled, and overlaps where new ideas may be warranted. Many members are utilizing a free national college awareness curriculum for middle schoolers in afterschool programs or as part of classwork. The network will discuss other resources, tools and initiatives to more effectively engage students and deepen parental engagement and knowledge during these critical years of education





Postsecondary Readiness, Access and Success Action Network

A new study from the University of Maine finds that citizens with postsecondary credentials not only contribute to the economic prosperity of communities but also live healthier and happier lives. College graduates are expected to live 7 years longer than those who hold a high school diploma or less, use 39% fewer government services, contribute thousands of dollars more in taxes and are three times more likely to donate to charity over a lifetime.

To ensure evidence based decision making in this action network, data is being collected and tracked on numerous academic measurements that are positively correlated with postsecondary attainment. Some key data points are as follows:

- **25% of Smith County students complete advanced course or dual enrollment courses compared to 33% for the State of Texas. Success in these courses is proven to significantly increase postsecondary enrollment and completion.**
- **57% of Smith County students take the SAT or ACT college entrance exam and 22% score at or above the college readiness criterion (SAT: 480 in reading/writing and 530 in Math or ACT: 24 composite). This data compares with the state average of 66% participation in ACT or SAT and 25% scoring at or above the college readiness criterion.**
- **Smith County high school senior FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) completion for the 2015 school year was 48%, lagging the state average of 52%. Increasing the percentage of FAFSA submissions could bring millions of dollars in federal, state and local aid to Smith County students.**



GOALS



- 1) By 2025, 74% of Smith County students graduate high school college ready
- 2) By 2025, 70% of Smith County high school graduates enroll in a postsecondary education program within six months of graduation
- 3) By 2025, Smith County high schools and higher education institutions will award 7,850 certificates and degrees

High school graduation rates, college readiness, and college-going rates of our local Smith County students are also being tracked. While high school graduation rates are on the rise, college readiness is flat and enrollment in higher education within six months of high school graduation is on the decline at 50%, down from 54% last year.

Aside from high school students, it is also important to note that a significant number of Smith County adults have attempted college but have not completed a credential or degree. According to U.S. Census Bureau Data, 25% of our local population have “some college, no degree”. These individuals have, at some point, attempted to earn a postsecondary credential but were unsuccessful. Focus on this returning adult population is critical to reaching the goal of 60% by 2025.

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Smith County Comparison Data

College-Going Graduates



College-Ready Graduates



High School Graduates



2015 2016



Source: Texas Education Agency Academic Performance Report 2016

Actions Taken:

- **Readiness:**

Smith County high school student participation in academic and technical dual credit courses is increasing as innovative approaches are offered to assist more students in becoming college ready. In addition, two Smith County Early College High Schools are helping numerous students earn college credit while in high school, at no cost to the student. These initiatives are partnerships between the school districts and Tyler Junior College. The Texas Success Initiative assessment is now being offered on all nine high school campuses in Smith County and efforts are underway to standardize a college preparatory course for high school students to drive college readiness and allow for expansion of dual credit. Finally, the Mayor's Mentorship Achievement pilot program is underway which pairs 45 high school seniors with 45 community leaders for monthly workshops and one-on-one sessions designed to assist students in achieving key postsecondary preparation milestones.

- **Access:**

TAP4E hosted the first-ever Smith County College fair on November 8, 2016. Over 60 colleges and universities were in attendance and resource information was provided to assist students with key milestone in preparing for postsecondary education. In addition, the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) Super Saturday event was held November 12, 2016 at six Smith County locations and assisted over 100 families in completing the FAFSA. UT Tyler's "Pathway to Success" guaranteed tuition program for limited income families was instituted to cover full tuition and fees for up to 15 credit hours per semester for those students meeting specific criteria, including admissions requirements. In addition, Tyler Junior College has created a Promise scholarship program which invites high school freshman to apply to receive financial assistance to cover all tuition and fees associated with earning his or her Associate's degree.

- **Success:**

UT Tyler has expanded its Bachelor of Arts and Sciences (BAAS) program by 280% over the past 2 years. This program was designed specifically for working professionals wishing to finish a baccalaureate degree. It incorporates 21st century job skills through virtual classrooms, video conferencing and online learning to create maximum flexibility and improved success. Patriot Pathways allows for seamless transition of TJC students to UT Tyler. In addition, the SUCCESS Program at Texas College offers convenient continuing education designed for adults who are seeking online and traditional classes to fit within their busy schedules. Finally, the Educational Opportunity Center opened on the Tyler Junior College West Campus and provides counseling and information on college admissions to qualified adults who want to enter or continue a program of postsecondary education.



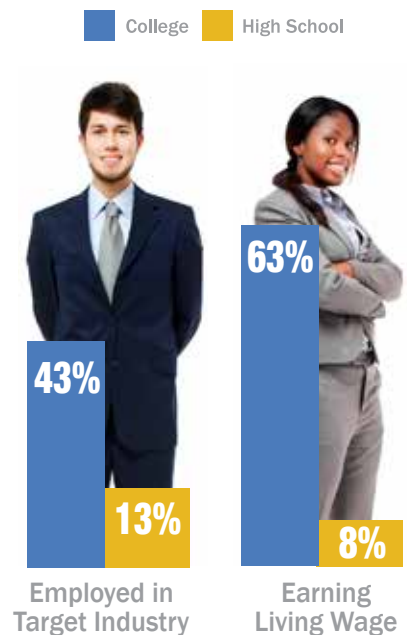
Workplace Implications

Workforce data gathered from the Texas Education Research Center at The University of Texas at Austin suggests that the employment environment for individuals with only a high school diploma is getting more difficult each year. Eight percent (8%) of 2014 high school graduates directly entering the workforce are earning a living wage and 13% are employed in a target industry for East Texas. In contrast, 63% of college graduates from Smith County higher education institutions are earning a living wage and 43% are working in a target industry for East Texas.

A living wage is the theoretical wage level that allows for a satisfactory standard of living. For Smith County, this amount is \$21,136 for one adult and is roughly double the poverty level wage. Target industries are those defined as high-growth, high-demand and emerging by the East Texas Workforce Development Board.

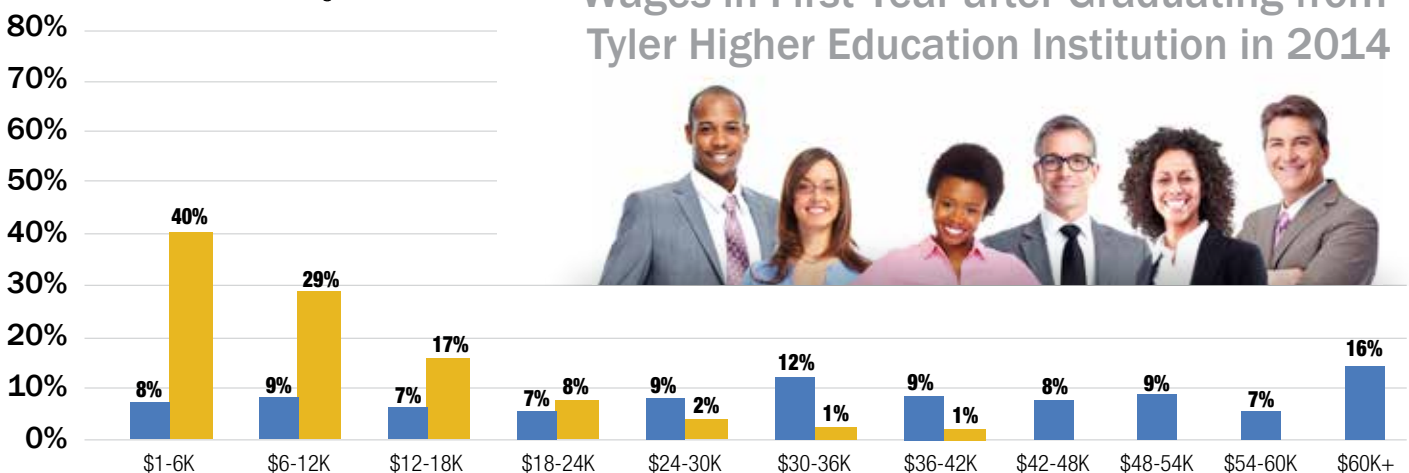
In addition, when wage data is compared for the two groups, it becomes even more evident that Smith County college graduates begin their careers in a much more economically stable position with a median income of \$31,699.

2014 Smith County Graduates Directly Entering the Workforce and Earning a Living Wage and Employed in East Texas Target Industry within 1 Year of Graduation



Source: e3 Alliance; Education Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin; MIT living wage calculator; Texas Workforce Commission

■ College Graduates ■ High School Graduates



Source: e3 Alliance; Education Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin

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JANUARY

Chamber of Commerce Career Connections Event

The Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce invites students from Smith County high schools to attend this day long conference that provides information on the college application process, careers, financial literacy, social media awareness and much more!



EDUCATION AWARENESS INITIATIVES

MARCH/APRIL

Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten Registration

Spread the word that it is time to register 3 and 4 year olds for a high-quality preschool program that will ensure that all students enter kindergarten ready to learn.

Community High School and College Internship Fair

A variety of local businesses participate in a student focused job fair to offer internship and summer job opportunities to high school and college students.

MAY

College Signing Day

Celebrate Smith County seniors and their plans for after high school by focusing on postsecondary education choices.

Kindergarten Registration

Be sure all children are registered for kindergarten and have mastered all of the milestones on the Kindergarten Readiness Checklist.



AUGUST

#SchoolisCool

Celebrate Back to School with a community wide event featuring afterschool programs and extracurricular activities, health and social services, postsecondary education and career information, financial literacy resources, immunizations, free haircuts, dental and vision screenings and much more! Backpacks stuffed with school supplies are given away to the attendees on a first come, first serve basis.

Kindergarten Readiness Awareness

Ensure your child is ready to enter Kindergarten by downloading the free Kindergarten Readiness Checklist at TAP4E.org.

OCTOBER

El Camino al Colegio (The Road to College)

An event focused on the key milestones necessary to prepare for postsecondary education. All sessions are held in Spanish.

NOVEMBER

Smith County College and Resource Fair

Smith County students are invited to visit with over 60 colleges and universities and to learn more about the college-going process from local experts.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Super Saturday

Join us at one of our many Smith County locations for assistance in filling out the FAFSA.

DECEMBER

Smith County Education Summit

A community wide event celebrating the successes in education across Smith County, Texas and our nation.





No single person, program or organization can guarantee an individual's success. Through collective impact, however, we can work together as a community to give all Smith County residents every possible opportunity for success.

Unify.

- Visit www.tap4e.org and find updated information on meetings, events and progress.
- Like us on Facebook.
- Download and share our resources.
- Talk to your friends, neighbors, family, professional colleagues or fellow church members about why the Tyler Area Partnership 4 Education is important to our community.

Nurture.

- Contact your neighborhood school or an institution of higher education and take a tour, meet the staff and talk to the students.
- Support education in our community by volunteering or donating to a school.
- Mentor a student.

Empower.

- Encourage postsecondary education success in your neighborhood, faith based institution or workplace.
- Take your children on college tours.
- Ask students how you can help.

Transform.

- Acknowledge and share the great things happening in Smith County.
- Spread the word about our transformative community collaboration.



Community Partners

Individuals from over 40 local organizations are actively involved with the Tyler Area Partnership 4 Education. Without the unwavering support of these community partners, we would not be where we are today!



For a list of individual participating members, please visit our website at TAP4E.org



Thank you!

On behalf of the **Tyler Area Partnership 4 Education**, we appreciate your support as we work together to improve educational outcomes in our community.

Please visit our website at
www.TAP4E.org or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/tylerareapartnership4education
for updates on the work and opportunities to get involved.



