Our Mission and Vision

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

A coalition of over 200 partners (public and private schools, colleges, foundations, businesses, and nonprofits), we work collaboratively to solve the region’s biggest systemic challenges.

Dear Valued Partners,

Since our founding in 2012, our Partnership has been relentlessly focused on finding the most impactful strategies to address the root causes hindering student outcomes. We work every day toward a future for North Texas in which:

- Every child can read by third grade
- Excellent educators are present in every classroom
- Every graduating senior is college and career ready

These three important goals inform the work of each of our three main coalitions: Early Matters Dallas, Best in Class, and the Dallas County Promise. These teams are dedicated to collaborating with local leaders to eliminate barriers and increase access across our region.

While it’s important to continue working within our community, we also recognize that some of the challenges we face are systemic and must be addressed on a statewide level. That’s why I was honored to serve over the past year on the Texas Commission on Public School Finance, providing recommendations that will improve the way we fund our schools across the state. Our Advocacy team has been down in Austin working hard to help ensure these new ideas become a reality.

Meanwhile, our Analytics team has been tirelessly examining the data contained within our state’s new A-F accountability system in order to identify the needs, challenges, and opportunities to grow student achievement throughout our state. Currently, almost half of our state’s students attend C-, D-, or F-rated campuses. Talent is distributed equally, but too often, resources are not.

Dallas County educates 1% of the children in this country. Texas educates 10%. What happens in our region and in the state of Texas matters greatly to the economic health of the country. Thank you for supporting us in our mission to make our county, state, and world a better place.

Todd Williams
CEO & President, The Commit Partnership

47,009 additional Dallas County students are now achieving key benchmarks since 2012.
With guidance from its Governing Board, Leadership Council and partners, the Commit Partnership annually measures 11 critical achievement indicators reflecting key milestones in a learner’s educational journey and helps to mobilize aligned community action to address the greatest gaps in opportunities affecting student achievement.

**25,585 STUDENTS MEETING BENCHMARK**
Percentage of eligible 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in public Pre-K. 1

**14,979 STUDENTS MEETING BENCHMARK**
Percentage of students who achieved at the meets standard (postsecondary readiness), answering at least 76% of questions correctly on STAAR. 3

**17,257 STUDENTS MEETING BENCHMARK**
Percentage of students who achieved at the meets standard (postsecondary readiness), answering at least 74% of questions correctly on STAAR. 3

**15,422 STUDENTS MEETING BENCHMARK**
Percentage of students who achieved at the meets standard (postsecondary readiness), answering at least 71% of questions correctly on STAAR. 3

**15,090 STUDENTS MEETING BENCHMARK**
Percentage of kindergarteners passing district assessments conducted within the first 60 days of the start of the school year. 2

**PRE-K ENROLLMENT**
Percentage of eligible 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in public Pre-K. 1

**KINDERGARTEN READINESS**
Percentage of kindergarteners passing district assessments conducted within the first 60 days of the start of the school year. 2

**3RD GRADE READING**
Percentage of students who achieved at the meets standard (postsecondary readiness), answering at least 76% of questions correctly on STAAR. 3

**4TH GRADE MATH**
Percentage of students who achieved at the meets standard (postsecondary readiness), answering at least 74% of questions correctly on STAAR. 3

**8TH GRADE SCIENCE**
Percentage of students who achieved at the meets standard (postsecondary readiness), answering at least 71% of questions correctly on STAAR. 3

**AVERAGE ALGEBRA 1 COLLEGE READINESS**
Percentage of students who achieved at the meets standard (postsecondary readiness), answering at least 58% of questions correctly on STAAR. 3

**HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION**
Percentage of 2013-14 9th grade cohort who started and graduated high school within four years. 5

**POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT**
Percentage of 2017 high school graduates who enrolled in a higher education institution within one year of graduation. 6

**POSTSECONDARY PERSISTENCE**
Percentage of 2016 high school graduates who enrolled and then returned for a second year of higher education. 7

**POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION**
Percentage of 2012 high school graduates who completed a two- or four-year degree within six years of high school graduation. 8

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All Scorecard data 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.
There are currently 681,537 children living in Dallas under the age of 18, of which 27.1% live in poverty. Additionally, 32% of households in Dallas County earn less than $35,000 per year.

DALLAS COUNTY 2018 ACCOUNTABILITY BREAKDOWN

The A-F accountability system was designed to ensure that every Texas student master the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, and are provided the necessary support to do so. A grade of A-F is determined through the measurement of three domains: student achievement, school progress, and closing the gaps between different student subgroups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEA ACCOUNTABILITY GRADE</th>
<th># OF CAMPUSES</th>
<th># OF STUDENTS</th>
<th>% ECO. DIS.</th>
<th>% HISPANIC</th>
<th>% BLACK</th>
<th>% WHITE</th>
<th>% ASIAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>80,167</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>181,933</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>177,749</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>52,154</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18,379</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the Scorecard has tracked our 11 indicators for the past six years, the data tells a more nuanced story because it can be disaggregated. For example, take a look at two key indicators, third grade reading and college readiness. Analyzing the data this way helps ensure that strategies to improve student outcomes are reaching the students who need it the most.

Dallas County high schools graduated 29,548 seniors in May 2018. Of those graduates, 18,173, or 73%, are economically disadvantaged. Only 1,300 economically disadvantaged graduates (7%) met the college ready standards on the SAT or ACT.

Please see page 18 for footnotes regarding the data for these indicators.
Early Matters Dallas is a broad-based coalition of business, civic, education, philanthropic and nonprofit organizations and volunteers, working together to raise awareness about, and advocate for, the importance of high quality early education for a strong economy tomorrow.

Early Matters leaders continuously advocate for increased financial resources allocated to this critical, high return-on-investment area. In partnership with Early Matters Houston and Early Matters Austin, Early Matters Dallas works to align efforts to advocate for the children in Texas – one of three of whom live in our three regions. Quality learning environments (whether at home with supportive and nurturing families or in classroom settings) significantly improve Kindergarten Readiness, Third Grade Reading mastery, high school graduation rates, postsecondary attainment, and workforce readiness. We envision a community where high-quality early learning environments are available to all children. To achieve this vision, the Dallas community must be coordinated, intentional, and results-oriented.

In 2018-19, nine of 14 Dallas County districts offered full-day Pre-K, with all southern Dallas districts making full-day available. In 2019-20, Richardson ISD plans to increase full-day Pre-K by an additional 594 seats.

Early Matters Dallas has contracted The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), a national expert in social-emotional learning (SEL) to support seven school districts to create districtwide SEL strategies. At the end of this engagement, districts will have a deep knowledge of the tenets of SEL, be prepared to pilot districtwide strategies, and identify ways to measure the effects of SEL on academic outcomes.

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Accelerating Campus Excellence:
Best in Class now supports 10 districts in their efforts to launch and implement the Accelerating Campus Excellence (ACE) program, leading to a total reach of over 17,000 students.

To date, 17 out of the 18 ‘Improvement Required’ ACE schools have met standards, most seeing double digit gains in student achievement.

Partner teacher preparation programs saw at least 373 new applications submitted by TeachDFW.org users, with 67% of candidates identifying as people of color.

For the four teacher prep programs we worked most closely with, TeachDFW users were 40% more likely to complete an application that they started than non-TeachDFW users, increasing the total number of applications to those programs by 13%.

PRIORITY AREA: EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS
Best in Class Coalition

"I can come into my classroom and do whatever is necessary to get my kids where they need to be, whether it’s using positive affirmations or getting them to understand data, because whenever I go to meetings, my administration is doing the same thing. How can you not put in that kind of commitment when the people above you are putting in that kind of commitment? We take ownership over what we’re doing in the classroom to grow them. And then our students take ownership. Whatever we give them, they’re just basic tools that allow them to see success— and see themselves. They set themselves up for success."

DANI ALEXANDER
Accelerating Campus Excellence (ACE)
Teacher at C.F. Carr Elementary, Dallas ISD

The Best in Class Coalition is a local initiative focused on increasing access to well-prepared, effective, diverse educators so that a greater proportion of our region’s students can be on track for college and career success. A unique partnership between Communities Foundation of Texas and Commit, Best in Class has over 50 educational entities committed to this goal, including school districts, educator preparation programs, and nonprofit and philanthropic organizations. The group’s efforts are focused on four strategic parts of an educator’s pathway: attract, prepare, develop, and retain.

BestInClass.org
**Dallas County Promise**

**Promise Results: Year One**
Across 31 high-poverty high schools in Dallas County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promise Pledge</th>
<th>Financial Aid</th>
<th>Promise Student Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>96%</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,788 eligible students signed the Promise Pledge.</td>
<td>6,901 students completed financial aid, a 7% increase.</td>
<td>6,901 students completed financial aid, a 7% increase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Increase at Dallas County Community College District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Increase at University of North Texas - Dallas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ranked #4 US State for Completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ranked #3 US State for Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$3M New PELL Dollars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Dallas County Promise is a transformational effort between school districts, colleges, universities, workforce partners, and community members to increase college completion. At the core, the Promise is a scholarship from the Dallas County Community College Foundation in partnership with matching university scholarships, including University of North Texas at Dallas, Southern Methodist University, Texas A&M Commerce, Midwestern State University, and an increasing number of universities. All participating students have not only an affordable path to college completion, but access to a Success Coach to support them in effectively managing the college process.**

**DallasCountyPromise.org**

"The Dallas County Promise definitely came in handy because a lot of kids were not planning to go to college. A lot of students ended up wanting to go to college once we started, and they loved hearing about college. I'd see their faces light up talking about making a change. We want to go to college, and we want people surrounding us to go to college. The Dallas County Promise changed my life and the life of many students in my school."  

**JOSÉ ALVAREZ**
Former Grand Prairie High School class president and Dallas County Promise recipient
Creating systemic impact for students requires work beyond Dallas County. The Commit Partnership has a team of in-house staff members dedicated to advocating for student-focused public policy on local school boards and throughout the state, including inside the Texas Capitol.

School Finance
In 2018, Commit CEO Todd Williams served on the Texas Commission on Public School Finance and helped craft a comprehensive set of recommendations focusing on improving key academic outcomes through strategic investment and increased equity in our public school finance system. The Advocacy team is dedicated to championing these recommendations during the 2019 Legislative Session.

Early Education
The Advocacy team, on behalf of our Early Matters partners, seeks to increase awareness of the importance of early childhood education and expand access to high-quality early learning environments for all Texas students. The goal is to ensure that 80% of students are school-ready on the first day of kindergarten and 60% of third graders are meeting grade-level reading expectations.

Effective Educators
The Advocacy team, in partnership with the Best in Class coalition, focuses on increasing access to well-prepared, effective, and diverse educators so that a greater proportion of our region’s students are on track for college and career success. The efforts center on four strategic parts of an educator’s pathway: attracting, preparing, developing, and retaining effective educators.
our students are academically: various indicators and other metrics to assist. The Commit Partnership would like to thank:

Major Investors of 2018

CORPORATIONS & FOUNDATIONS
Anonymous
Ashford Hospitality Advisors
AT&T Foundation
Austin Community Foundation
Elizabeth & Harry (Peter) Beck Fund at the Dallas Foundation
Bezelal Fund at VCEP
Byrne Family Foundation
Capital One
Communities Foundation of Texas
Dallas Citizens Council
Dallas County Community College District Foundation
The Dallas Foundation
Dallas Regional Chamber
DTLR, Inc.
Educate Texas
Esquire Family Foundation
Fidelity Foundation
Floor Foundation
Gary Community Investments
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Highland Capital Management
Lydia Hill Foundation
Hirsch Family Foundation
Hoblit/azella Foundation
Hogland Foundation
IBM Corporation
JCI Creativitas
JPMorgan Chase Foundation
W. W. Caruth Foundation
Leadership for Educational Equity
Liberty Mutual Foundation
W. P. & Buhle Luse Foundation
Eugene McDermott Foundation
McNarra Foundation of CFT
The Meadows Foundation
The McChesney Fund of CFT
Microsoft
David B. Miller Family Foundation
Mike A. Myers Foundation
North Texas Community Foundation
PNC Bank
Rainwater Charitable Foundation
The Real Estate Council
Ross-Jones Foundation
Rosewood Foundation
The Sealark Foundation
Simmons Sisters Fund at the Dallas Foundation
State Fair of Texas
StriveTogether
Roy & Christine Sturgis Charitable Trust
Texas Instruments Foundation
Texas Women's Foundation
United Way of Metropolitan Dallas
Wells Fargo
Todd & Abby Williams Family Foundation

INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES
Bill & Lydia Allyn
Michael & Jill Darick
Steve & Sharon Folsom
Mary Hager
Jay Henry
Robert S. Kaplan
Jack Lowe
Libby & Murray McCabe
Casey & Megan McManmnon
Jon & Jennifer Mozie
Anna Raymond
Deedie Rose
Jeannine & Margaret Spellings
David Wallenstein
Jack Weisinger
Eileen Wood

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

Footnotes:

1 Pre-K Enrollment: Texas Education Agency - Texas Public Education Information - Texas Pre-Kindergarten Report: texaseducationinfo.org
The Kindergarten Ready metric calculation is a change from previous years. TEA made available statewide data and from this year forward the Kindergarten Ready metric will use the TEA Kindergarten Ready statewide report.
3 STAAR Indicators: Texas Education Agency – 2012-2018 STAAR Aggregate Data at the “meets” standard. teatexas.gov/student-assessment/staar/aggregate
4 College Ready: The percent of students who graduated from high school in 2017, who took the SAT or ACT, and who scored at least a 24 on the ACT or 1110 on the SAT (reading and math). Per the Texas Education Agency Texas Academic Performance Reports. Scores of at least a 24 on the ACT and 1110 on the SAT translate to a high likelihood of receiving a B- or C+ grade or better in higher education.
5 Graduation Rate: Per the Texas Education Agency Texas Academic Performance Reports. The percent of the 9th grade cohort from the 2013-2014 school year that graduated four years later in 2017.
6 Postsecondary Enrollment: The percent of students who graduated from high school in 2017 and enrolled in a postsecondary institution within one year after graduation. Fall 2018 National Student Clearinghouse Reports provided by Carrollton-Farmers Branch, Dallas, DeSoto, Garland, Grand Prairie, Highland Park, Irving, Lancaster, Mesquite, Richardson, and Uplift Education.
7 Postsecondary 1st Year Persistence: The percent of students who graduated from high school in 2016, enrolled in a postsecondary institution within one year after graduation and enrolled for a second year. Fall 2018 National Student Clearinghouse Reports provided by Carrollton-Farmers Branch, Dallas, DeSoto, Garland, Grand Prairie, Highland Park, Irving, Lancaster, Mesquite, Richardson, and Uplift Education.
8 Postsecondary Completion: The percent of students who graduated from high school in 2012 and obtained a postsecondary degree six years after high school graduation. Fall 2018 National Student Clearinghouse Reports provided by Carrollton-Farmers Branch, Dallas, DeSoto, Garland, Grand Prairie, Highland Park, Irving, Lancaster, Mesquite, Richardson, and Uplift Education.
9 United States Census Bureau, American FactFinder: 2017 5-year American Community Survey U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey Office.
10 TEA 2018 Accountability Ratings: The 86th Texas Legislature (2017) mandated that districts and campuses be evaluated with an A-F grade. Districts/Campuses rated 90 or above are an A, districts/campuses rated 80-89 are a B, districts/campuses rated 70-79 are a C, districts/campuses rated 60-69 are a D, and districts/campuses rated below 60 are an F. teatexas.gov/2018accountability.aspx

Thank you to Elliott Muñoz for his great photography of Dallas County students and schools.
THE COMMIT PARTNERSHIP IS A COMMUNITY NAVIGATOR AND CONNECTOR, WORKING TO ENSURE THAT ALL DFW STUDENTS RECEIVE AN EXCELLENT AND EQUITABLE EDUCATION THAT PREPARES THEM TO FLOURISH IN COLLEGE AND CAREER.

Reach Us

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