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## **Are Texas Students Actually Ready for College and Career? New report shows two ways to measure tell different stories**

HOUSTON – Two different definitions of “College and Career Readiness” in Texas show quite different outcomes for Harris County students, according to a [new policy brief](#) from The Education Trust. The brief explains two different policy definitions used in Texas and the resulting outcomes for Harris County students so that policymakers and advocates can better assess and improve students’ readiness to succeed after high school. Today, only 22% of Harris County students complete a postsecondary certificate or program within six years of their high school graduation.

Presently, Texas has two different ways of measuring students’ College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR). One framework is embedded in the state’s system of reporting and rating school performance — otherwise known as A-F accountability, introduced by House Bill 22 (2017). The other framework is known as the CCMR Outcomes Bonus, introduced as part of House Bill 3 (2019). While 72% of all Harris County students in the class of 2019 met the state’s accountability standards, just 31% met the outcomes bonus benchmarks

“When a student graduates from high school but is not ready for college or a career, the stakes for that student’s trajectory, potential earning power, and economic opportunity couldn’t be higher,” said Judith Cruz, Assistant Director for Texas with The Education Trust and author of the policy brief. “It’s time for school system leaders to invest in College, Career and Military Readiness and make sure the right data are being used to better support students.”

### According to the new brief:

- Texans ages 25-34 who earn an associate degree are nearly twice as likely to earn at least \$50,000 per year than those who don’t earn a degree (24% vs. 13%).
- Those earning a bachelor’s degree or higher are nearly four times as likely to reach this self-sustaining wage (49% vs. 13%).
- If every eighth grader in Harris County were to earn an associate degree, that one graduating class would collectively earn nearly \$818 million in additional annual income. Across the eight largest counties in Texas, annual income gains would total \$6.1 billion.
- If Harris County graduates in the Class of 2019 who met the CCMR accountability criteria had met the outcomes bonus criteria, Harris County districts would have received an additional \$115.1 million in state funding.

“Everybody benefits when we’re on the same page about how we measure college and career readiness in Texas,” said Dr. Anastasia Lindo Anderson, CEO of EMERGE, a Houston-based organization that helps high-achieving students from low-income communities apply to, attend, and graduate from the nation’s top colleges. “Having accurate, meaningful data will allow school leaders to invest in the initiatives that provide the most value for their money, and that is a win for all Texas children.”

### Key recommendations from the new brief:

- Districts should make disaggregated CCMR accountability and outcomes bonus data easily accessible.
- School boards should set and monitor concrete and timebound goals to improve CCMR metrics, particularly outcomes bonus metrics.
- Districts should use CCMR outcomes data to evaluate equity of access and participation in advanced coursework, certification offerings, and advising services.
- Districts should invest in targeted, evidence-based initiatives to improve CCMR outcomes, such as increasing the number of college and career advisors.
- Districts should incorporate CCMR metrics within their performance evaluations of school and administrative leadership.

[Read the full brief.](#)

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