

Written Testimony Submitted for Senate Bill 2124
Texas Senate Education Committee
Submitted by E3 Alliance

Honorable Chair Creighton and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

E3 Alliance and the twelve Texas organizations undersigned thank you for the opportunity to submit public comment **for** Senate Bill 2124 (SB 2124).

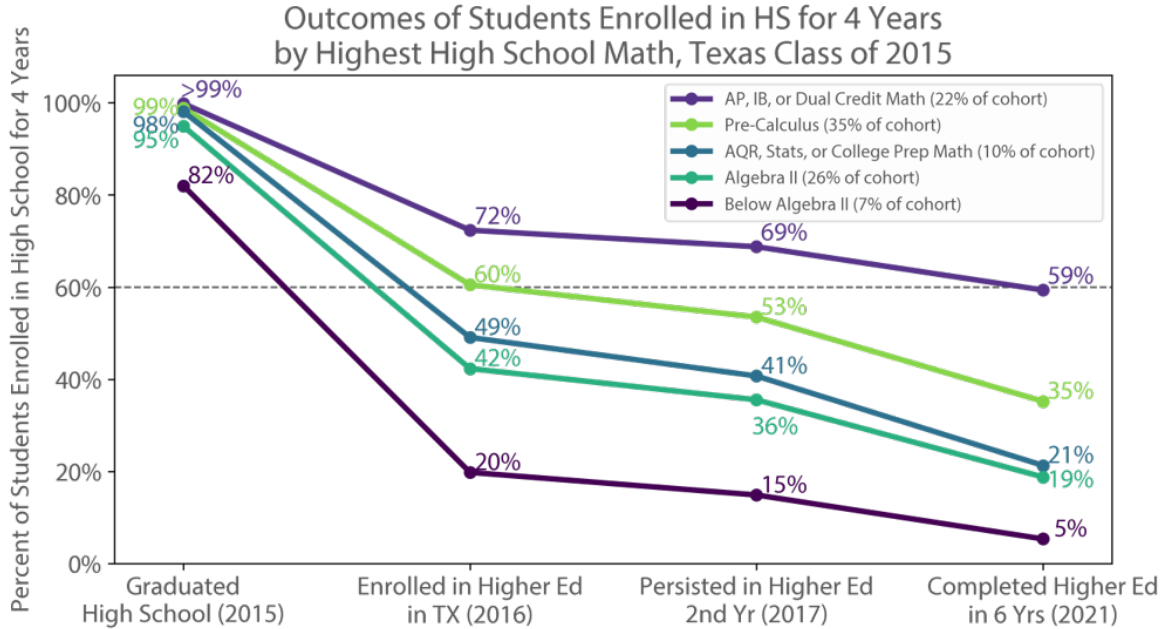
Research shows a clear link between math course-taking and postsecondary education and program completion. E3 Alliance data show that taking advanced math in middle and high school, significantly increases students' postsecondary success and wages in the workforce. Taking math all four years in high school doubles the likelihood of attaining a postsecondary credential, while students who take a college-aligned course in high school are six times more likely to complete a postsecondary credential. On the other hand, only one in five students whose highest high school math course was Algebra II earned a two- or four-year college degree or industry credential (see Appendix A). This leaves them with only a 12% chance of earning a living wage in workforce where over 60% of all Texas jobs will require some kind of postsecondary credential by 2030.

Students across Texas begin their journey in advanced math course-taking in middle school. School districts make this advanced pathway decision for students in 5th grade. However, research by E3 Alliance shows that these decisions are often not based on any objective measure of students' demonstrated ability to succeed, but instead on subjective or biased perceptions of their math aptitude. Of all 5th graders who took the STAAR, fewer than 33% of Black and 46% of Hispanic students with scores in the top 20% had completed Algebra I by 8th grade. Current policy and practice across Texas schools' districts cause too many high-performing math students to miss access to advanced math and to a wide range of subsequent coursework offered in high school, including progressing beyond Algebra II.

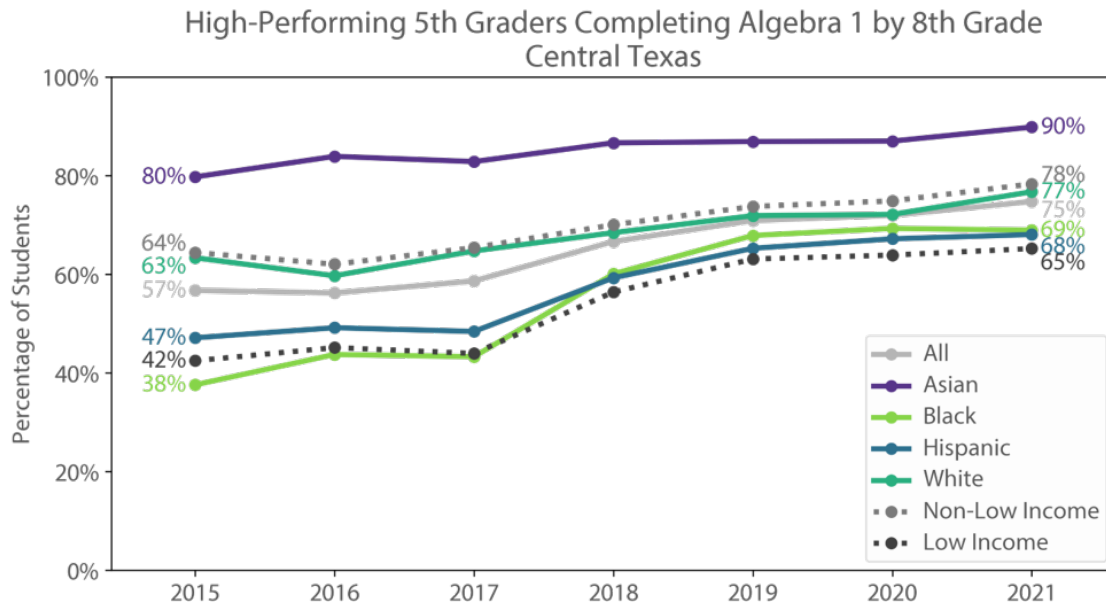
Several partnering school districts in Central Texas have already demonstrated remarkable results by replacing their current opt-in policy with automatic enrollment for high-performing math students. To be clear, these policies still allow families to opt-out and maintain the final say in their students' educational journey. By implementing an opt-out policy for middle school advanced math, a Central Texas district's Black-White opportunity gap for 8th grade Algebra I completion closed by 75% and increased the number of students on a pathway towards postsecondary readiness (see Appendix B).

SB 2124 will scale this success to all Texas districts by creating a consistent, statewide policy to ensure high-performing students who score in the top 40% of our state standardized assessment (or a local measure that includes class score and/or demonstrated proficiency in classwork) proceed into accelerated math in 6th grade, setting them on the ideal path to take Algebra I in 8th grade and setting them on the best pathway for their high school years, into college, and the workforce.

APPENDIX A



APPENDIX B



Contact

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Supporting Organizations:



The Education Trust
IN TEXAS



**PHILANTHROPY
ADVOCATES**
a COLLABORATION with EDUCATE TEXAS



EDUCATE TEXAS
at COMMUNITIES FOUNDATION of TEXAS



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