



**Texas Higher
Education
COORDINATING BOARD**

**2023 Texas Rider Report:
Advise TX
College Advising Corps**

**Evaluation & Assessment Solutions for Education
and
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
Division of College and Career Advising**

October 2023

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Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board



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The THECB will be recognized as an international leader in developing and implementing innovative higher education policy to accomplish our mission.

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The THECB's core values are:

Accountability: We hold ourselves responsible for our actions and welcome every opportunity to educate stakeholders about our policies, decisions, and aspirations.

Efficiency: We accomplish our work using resources in the most effective manner.

Collaboration: We develop partnerships that result in student success and a highly qualified, globally competent workforce.

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Please cite this report as follows: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2023). 2023 Texas Rider Report: Advise TX College Advising Corps. Austin, TX.

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i
Background	1
Student & School Comparison.....	2
Short-Term Outcomes	2
Student and Adviser Actions (KPI).....	2
College Applications	4
FAFSA Completion Rates	5
Enrollment Outcomes for Advise TX Students.....	7
Independent and Out-of-State Enrollment and Upward Economic Mobility	7
Propensity Score Matching.....	8
College Enrollment Outcomes.....	9
College Applications and Enrollment	11
Conclusion	12

Tables

Table 1. KPI and Additional Milestone Activity for Advise TX, 2022-23	3
Table 2. KPI Rates for Advise TX, 2022-2023	4
Table 3. Upward Mobility Metrics for Colleges Attended by Advise TX Graduates.....	8
Table 4. Advise TX Impacts on Enrollment for High School Class of 2021, Matched on Student and School Characteristics	10
Table 5. Advise TX Impact on Application and Enrollment, Conditional on Applications for High School Class of 2021.....	11
Appendix A Table 1. Advise TX Impacts on Enrollment for High School Class of 2021, Matched Only on Student Characteristics	13

Figures

Figure 1. Percentage of Seniors Applying to Texas Public Institutions, 2019-2021.....	4
Figure 2. Annual FAFSA Completion Rates for Seniors Applying to Texas Public Institutions, 2020-2022.....	5
Figure 3. Cumulative FAFSA Completion Rates for Select Months in AY 2021-2022, November-June.....	6

Executive Summary

Advise TX is an initiative that is conducted jointly between the College Advising Corps (CAC) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). Their shared goal is to increase college enrollment rates for students from historically underrepresented backgrounds. To accomplish this goal, recent college graduates are recruited, trained, and placed at underserved high schools. This annual report analyzes how Advise TX has impacted students' college-going behaviors and their postsecondary enrollment outcomes.

During the 2022-23 school year, Advise TX programs at Texas A&M University, Texas Christian University, Trinity University, and The University of Texas at Austin hired, trained, and placed at least one “near-peer” adviser in 113 public high schools. The combined student enrollment at these schools represents approximately 15% of all students enrolled in Texas public high schools.¹

Student data tracked by Advise TX indicate they completed essential college-going behaviors at higher rates in 2023 compared to 2022. Continuing a long trend, data from the state's admission application, ApplyTexas, show that students at Advise TX schools complete critical college-going steps at higher rates than students from other public-schools. Furthermore, Advise TX students were more likely to apply to college and submit a Federal Application for State Financial Aid (FAFSA) despite being more likely to experience financial challenges and graduate from a cohort at a school that was more than double the average enrollment size of all other Texas public high schools.

The analysis of 2021 cohort enrollment outcomes, which uses the most recently available data from ApplyTexas, finds that Advise TX students from the 2021 cohort were 1.4 percentage points more likely to enroll in a public, in-state university compared to their peers. Notably, Advise TX students exhibit a higher likelihood of attending college than their peers, conditional on applying to college. This result suggests positive trends for future enrollment rates at Advise TX schools because they lag the more recently available KPI data that shows college application and FAFSA completion rates are increasing.

Overall, Hispanic students who choose to attend a two-year college are largely responsible for higher enrollment rates of Advise TX graduates. Hispanic students are the vast majority at Advise TX schools, and the difference in their enrollment rates in 2021 is consistent with the findings from a randomized control trial study of Advise TX conducted between 2011-2012 and 2013-2014, which reported enrollment gains of 2 to 3 percentage points for low-income and Hispanic students.² Additional data tracked by Advise TX indicates their graduates attend institutions that rate highly for promoting upward economic mobility, especially for students from lower income families.

¹ Two new university partners, Texas A&M-San Antonio and The University of Texas-El Paso, introduced advising services mid-year to another 6,000 seniors at 20 additional high schools, enrolling about 30,000 students overall. These new programs will contribute to Advise TX capacity through a “hybrid” advising model, where one adviser assists seniors at two schools by balancing in-person activities with more assistance virtually.

² Bettinger, E., & Evans, B. (2019). College guidance for all: A randomized experiment in pre-college advising. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 38(3), 579-599

Background

There are four College Advising Corps (CAC) program partners that first comprised Advise TX: Texas A&M University, Texas Christian University, Trinity University, and The University of Texas at Austin. Two new Advise TX CAC program partners, Texas A&M University at San Antonio and University of Texas at El Paso, recently launched advising services within the 2022-23 school year. University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley and University of North Texas at Dallas will be added to Advise TX in 2023-24. All Advise TX programs share a common mission to increase college enrollment for students that historically have had significantly lower college attendance rates. This mission is aligned with the objectives stated in the current Texas strategic higher education plan, *Building a Talent Strong Texas*.³

Advise TX deploys an advising model that is fundamentally distinct from how other college access organizations operate. First, Advise TX focuses on increasing access to higher education for low-income, first-generation college, and other underrepresented student subgroups. This means Advise TX serves “high need” high schools. When Advise TX was introduced during the 2011-12 school year, it was mandated that schools to be served include at least 35% of students who were eligible to receive free and/or reduced-price lunch, the widespread absence of students who were enrolled in a rigorous curriculum, a class size minimum of 100 students, and historical “direct-to-college going” enrollment rates below 70%.

Second, Advise TX programs hire “near-peer” advisers to fill informational gaps about the college admission process. Critical adviser attributes are their age and a fresh connection to college. Advisers are not only recent college graduates, but they also ideally attended the same institution that employs them. Other factors that increase the value of being near-peer include demographically matching the majority of students they serve, having once lived in the same high school community, or their status as a first-generation college graduate.

Last, Advise TX aims to serve the whole school, not just a cohort of students within a school. Unlike other college access organizations who choose specific students to assist, advisers from Advise TX have an open-door policy to assist any student who asks for guidance. This also means Advise TX contributes to the capacity of schools to help students with questions about careers that don’t require attending a postsecondary institution. By serving the whole school, Advise TX also contributes to developing a schoolwide college-going culture that strengthens over time. One consequence of serving no less than the entire senior class is that advisers at Advise TX schools have student caseloads that are on average nearly triple the size of senior cohorts at other public schools in Texas.

Since 2018, Dr. Eric Bettinger has collaborated with Advise TX and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to publish an annual report assessing the most recent impact of Advise TX programs (the Rider Report), including college applications, FAFSA, and college enrollment rates. Bettinger is the Conley-DeAngelis Family Professor of Education at Stanford University and a partner in Evaluation and Assessment Solutions for Education (EASE). Before his role in writing the annual Rider Reports, Bettinger led a ground-breaking randomized, controlled trial study of college enrollment outcomes for Advise TX. His analysis of Advise TX, published in 2019, found the program led to increasing college enrollment rates, especially for low-income and historically underrepresented students who experienced gains of more than three percentage points.

³ <https://www.highered.texas.gov/our-work/talent-strong-texas/>

Student & School Comparison

During the 2022-23 school year, Advise TX placed at least one adviser at 113 high schools.⁴ These schools enrolled about 225,000 students, which is nearly 15% of all students enrolled in Texas public high schools. The average enrollment at Advise TX schools is 2,000 students, and about 75% are Hispanic. For comparison, the average public school in Texas enrolls approximately 800 students, half of whom are Hispanic.

In addition to an average of nearly 450 seniors per campus, Advise TX schools are considered “high need” schools for additional reasons that are negatively correlated with college enrollment. According to 2021 Texas Education Agency data, students from Advise TX schools have significantly lower STAAR achievement scores (average raw score of 38 versus 48), and fewer students test at grade level. Poverty rates are also 33% higher for Advise TX students.

Short-Term Outcomes

Student and Adviser Actions (KPI)

Advise TX advisers are trained to increase enrollment by encouraging and assisting with the completion of six key performance indicators (KPI).⁵ According to multiple independent analyses, completing these KPI increases the odds of enrolling in college.⁶ Half of the KPI are student-centered actions (applying to college, submitting three or more college applications, and submitting a FAFSA), while the others are adviser-facing actions (holding one-on-one meetings with students, assisting with FAFSA submissions, and engaging family members in the college-going process). Further, these KPI are aligned with key strategies of *Building a Talent Strong Texas*, which includes an emphasis on limiting student debt. The six KPI are:

- Student actions
 - Submitting one or more college applications
 - Submitting three or more college applications
 - Completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Adviser actions
 - One-on-one meetings with students
 - Engagement with students’ family members
 - Assisting students with completing their FAFSA

Cumulative KPI activity for the 2023 Advise TX cohort is presented in [Table 1](#). The data are supplied by Advise TX, which tracks them internally. The data point for the number of one-on-one meetings with seniors suggests advisers manage to hold an average of about two of this type of meeting with each student.⁷ Advisers also hold small group meetings, meeting with

⁴ Advisers were not placed at four high schools for at least half the academic year. While KPI activity at these schools is counted in [Table 1](#), these data are excluded in the comparison of KPI rates presented in [Table 2](#).

⁵ KPI results presented in the following tables come from the 2022 and 2023 cohorts. The analysis of college enrollment outcomes uses data from the 2021 cohort, which is the most recent data available.

⁶ Registering for the SAT/ACT was a KPI before 2021, but it was replaced by applying to three or more colleges due to changing college admission requirements that have deemphasized the role of entrance exams.

⁷ A one-on-one meeting lasts a minimum of three to five minutes, can occur anytime during a school year, and reflects a purposeful interaction between an adviser and a student where information is shared back and forth to build a relationship or help a student to complete a postsecondary-related task.

students in grades 9-11, and with parents to promote their engagement with their children for going to college. About 17,000 meetings with a parent were held, for example, and unreported in the table are 30,000 students recorded as attending at least one small group advising session, which often are about submitting a FAFSA. Although they are not KPI, a few other milestone activities are included in Table 1, such as submitting a scholarship application.⁸

Table 1. KPI and Additional Milestone Activity for Advise TX, 2022-23

Actions	Number of students
Student actions	
Submitted one or more college applications	40,128
Submitted three or more college applications	17,717
Completed FAFSA ⁹	40,385
Submitted a scholarship application	11,075
Received any scholarship dollars	6,257
Adviser actions	
One-on-one meetings with students ¹⁰	116,995
Meetings with students' families	16,998
Any meetings with students about FAFSA	33,364
Assisting students with FAFSA completion ¹¹	35,999

Source: Advise TX internal tracking data, July 2023

The KPI activity presented in Table 1 is informative, but interpreting its meaning requires more context. One way to do this is to calculate KPI completion rates by using the total number of seniors enrolled at Advise TX schools as the denominator. [Table 2](#) presents KPI rates for the last two cohorts and the percentage point difference in rates in 2023 compared to the prior cohort. KPI rates for Advise TX were uniformly higher in 2023 compared to 2022. Rates of family engagement, for example, increased by 4 percentage points, while the percentage of students advisers were able to meet with in a one-on-one setting increased by 5 percentage points. The percentage of students who completed a FAFSA and applied to college also increased by 5 percentage points in 2023. While these results about KPI performance come from data that is tracked internally by Advise TX, they are also consistent with the only comparable and validated data available from ApplyTexas.

⁸ Advise TX students accepted by at least one college reported to advisers they received offers of institutional aid (grants, scholarships, loans) totaling no less than \$350 million. Since these data come from students' self-reports, advisers must confirm offers to record them, which leads to a significant undercount of assistance that was offered. Translated crudely, about \$10,000 in known financial support was offered per student accepted to college.

⁹ Source: Department of Education, July 01, 2023. Advisers also log another 1,000 Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TAFSA) are submitted each year, which isn't included in the FAFSA counts or completion rates in this report.

¹⁰ This number represents the total number of one-on-one meetings held with students in the 2023 cohort. Advisers met at least once with 43,455 students.

¹¹ This number includes assistance with completing the TAFSA.

Table 2. KPI Rates for Advise TX, 2022-2023

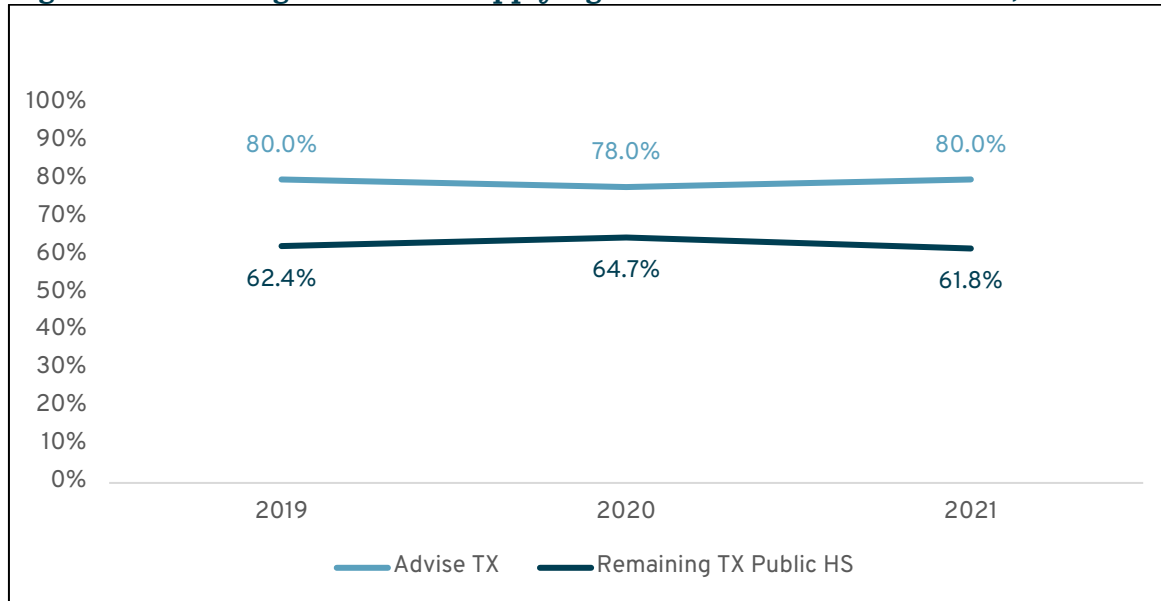
KPI	2022 KPI Rate	2023 KPI Rate	Rate Difference
FAFSA Completion	65%	70%	5%
1+ College Apps Submitted	77%	82%	5%
3+ College Apps Submitted	34%	37%	3%
1:1 Meetings	87%	91%	5%
Family Engagement	28%	33%	4%
Financial Aid Assistance	74%	77%	2%

Source: Advise TX

College Applications

More than 40,000 Advise TX students applied to at least one college, according to data internally tracked by Advise TX and shown in Table 1.¹² That translates to 82% of all seniors from Advise TX schools applying to at least one college.¹³ The Apply Texas data presented in Figure 1 shows 80% of Advise TX students applied to college in 2021, the most recent data available. The 2021 application rate also compares favorably to the 2022 cohort rate of 77%, reported in Table 2, using data tracked internally by Advise TX. For each year of data presented in Figure 1, about 80% of Advise TX students applied to at least one college, and their application rates are consistently and significantly higher than those of students at other Texas public schools. Advise Texas students are no less than 13 and as much as 18 percentage points more likely to apply to college. These results are consistent with prior annual reports that included data for earlier cohorts.

Figure 1. Percentage of Seniors Applying to Texas Public Institutions, 2019-2021



Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

¹² This number includes applications to independent (“private”) institutions and ones outside of Texas. Overall, Advise TX reported that their students submitted close to 140,000 total college applications in 2023, while nearly 100,000 were applications to four-year institutions.

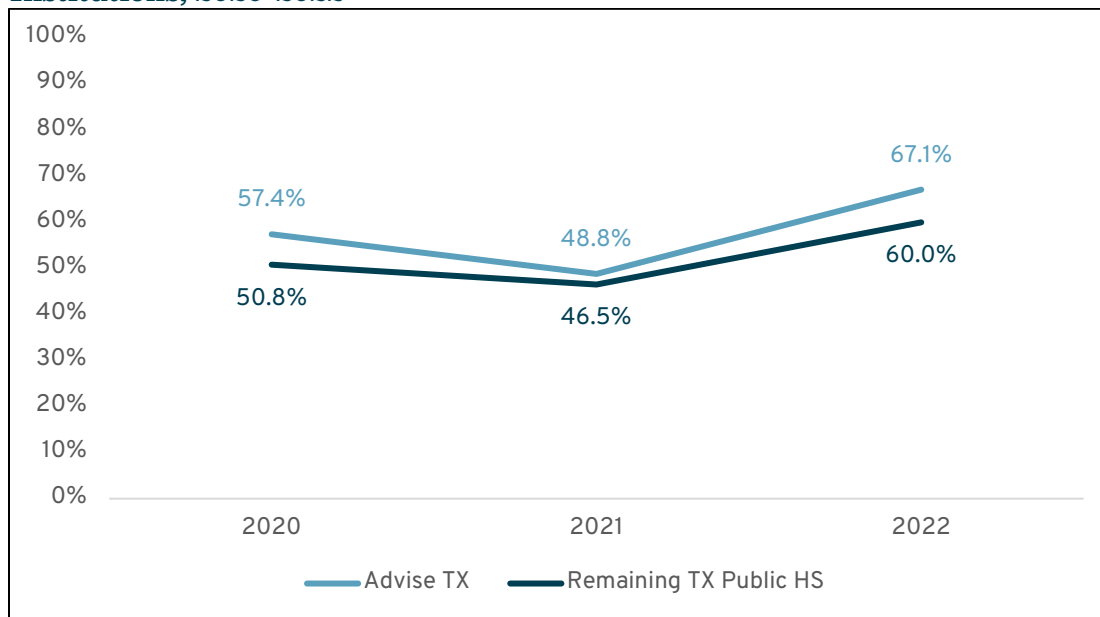
¹³ About one-third of all students submitted three or more applications. Research supports submitting at least three applications for increasing enrollment at a “matching” institution, therefore maximizing students’ return on investment.

FAFSA Completion Rates

Over 40,000 students from the 2023 Advise TX cohort completed the FAFSA, according to internally tracked data. That translates to a 70% completion rate, reported in [Table 2](#). Similar FAFSA completion rates were observed for the 2022 cohort using ApplyTexas data, which is the most current cohort of data available.¹⁴ Figure 2 presents FAFSA completion rates for Advise TX schools from 2020 through 2022 and uses ApplyTexas data to compare them to the FAFSA completion rates at all other Texas public schools.

Although COVID-19 effects during the 2021 cycle clearly dampened overall FAFSA completion rates in Texas, Advise TX students appear to have been more adversely affected. Despite being disproportionately affected in 2021, Advise TX students still completed the FAFSA at a higher rate. In the year immediately preceding 2021 and the one right after it, Advise TX schools had a FAFSA completion rate about 7 percentage points higher than elsewhere in Texas.

Figure 2. Annual FAFSA Completion Rates for Seniors Applying to Texas Public Institutions, 2020-2022

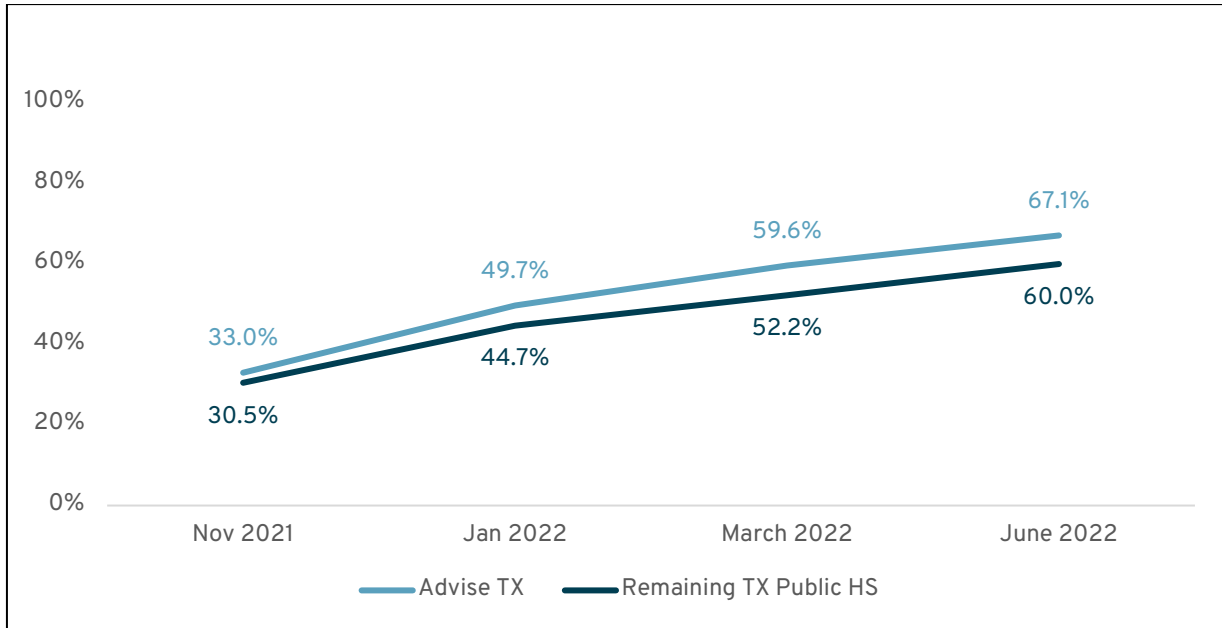


Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

The timing of FAFSA completion rates during the 2021-2022 cycle is presented in [Figure 3](#). Earlier filing of FAFSA is preferable because more guaranteed aid is available then. When Advise TX completion rates are compared to other schools over the course of the 2021-2022 filing cycle, even as early as November, Advise TX students demonstrate completion rates at least 2.5 percentage points higher than other schools. The higher completion rate for Advise TX accumulates over the filing cycle and grows to about 7 percentage points by June.

¹⁴ The 2022 FAFSA completion rate using Apply Texas data was slightly higher (67% versus 65%). FAFSA completion rates supplied by Advise TX were calculated from verified completion counts aggregated at the school level by the U.S. Department of Education, and completion counts are independent of whether students applied to college. These factors likely explain the small 2-percentage-point difference.

Figure 3. Cumulative FAFSA Completion Rates for Select Months in AY 2021-2022, November-June



Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Enrollment Outcomes for Advise TX Students

The remaining analysis examines enrollment outcomes for the Advise TX class of 2021. The first section briefly describes two additional enrollment outcomes that are new to this annual report. ApplyTexas data are exceptionally reliable, but they do not include information about independent or out-of-state colleges. Second, while data exist for measuring how well postsecondary institutions promote upward economic mobility, these types of metrics aren't yet available with ApplyTexas data. The mobility scores presented in this report are related to measures of return on investment (ROI), but they are uniquely centered on calculating ROI for students from lower income families.

Independent and Out-of-State Enrollment and Upward Economic Mobility

Advise TX tracks enrollment outcomes using validated data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC).¹⁵ According to NSC data, 91% of all Advise TX graduates with enrollment records attended a public institution in Texas. It's unlikely, but possible, that excluding 9% of enrollment outcomes in past reports would affect their substantive conclusions. However, the NSC data can't be used to examine this possibility because, unlike the ApplyTexas database, they don't include information about students who weren't graduates of Advise TX schools.

Consistent with priorities found in *Building a Talent Strong Texas*, this section examines how well institutions attended by Advise TX students promote the upward economic mobility of those students. For example, the graduation rate for all Hispanic students at four-year institutions in Texas is 40.8%, but for the institutions attended by Advise TX Hispanic students, it's 51.5%.¹⁶ Graduation rates are not the only factor affecting mobility, though, especially for lower-income students. Colleges are compared using a "price-to-earnings premium" (P2E) and an "economic mobility index" (EMI).¹⁷

More precisely, P2E measures the number of years it takes students from a low-income household to recoup their net cost of attendance by earning a degree at that institution. A score of 2, for example, means it takes two years, on average, for the added value of a degree to offset the cost of obtaining it. EMI further centers ROI for lower-income students by weighting P2E scores according to the proportion of students enrolled at each college who are from low- and moderate-income backgrounds.¹⁸ Colleges with scores in the top 20% of EMI values are considered "Tier 1," while those in the bottom 20% are considered "Tier 5."

According to the P2E and EMI data shown in Table 3, Advise TX students' upward mobility is promoted by staying in state for college. For example, it takes students from lower-income backgrounds three times longer to recoup their investment in higher education if they attend

¹⁵ These data cover about 97% of all postsecondary-degree-granting institutions in the United States.

¹⁶ Graduation rates are available from College Scorecard. The 51.5% rate is a weighted average based on the graduation rates of colleges multiplied by how many Advise TX students they enroll. Scorecard data are available here: <https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/>

¹⁷ These scores were created by a former Director of the College Scorecard; their methodology and data downloads are available at: <https://www.thirdway.org/report/price-to-earnings-premium-a-new-way-of-measuring-return-on-investment-in-higher-ed>

¹⁸ The primary disadvantage of EMI scores is that they have more missing data and aren't calculated for two-year degree granting institutions. A second limitation is that raw EMI scores range from 0-67 and, unlike P2E, do not have a straightforward interpretation.

an out-of-state college. The average P2E score is 6 (years) for an out-of-state college, but just 2 (years) for a public institution in Texas.

Results are similar when looking at EMI data for Tier 1 and Tier 5 colleges. Advise TX graduates do not attend in-state colleges considered to be Tier 5, but 14% attend the lowest tier if they enroll out of state. Conversely, less than 20% of students who enroll out of state attend a Tier 1 institution, but almost 80% attend a Tier 1 institution if they enroll in Texas. For context, enrollment statistics from the College Scorecard indicate that 66% of all college students in Texas attend a Tier 1 school.¹⁹

Table 3. Upward Mobility Metrics for Colleges Attended by Advise TX Graduates

Institution Location	P2E	Tier 1	Tier 5
In State	2.08	78.90%	0%
Out of State	6.18	18.80%	14.30%

Source: *Thirdway.org*

Propensity Score Matching

This section describes the process for creating a benchmark to evaluate enrollment rates for Advise TX. A straightforward comparison of enrollment rates at Advise TX schools versus all other schools in Texas would create a significant bias against finding that Advise Texas positively affects enrollment outcomes. As described earlier in this report, Advise TX schools were deliberately selected to be served because their students went to college less often. These schools also have significantly larger cohorts of students who also have characteristics associated with lower college attendance.

This report uses a different analytic approach to address the problem of schools being incomparable. All prior reports have also attempted to construct a fairer evaluation of Advise TX enrollment outcomes by creating a student-level benchmark. The goal is comparing enrollment outcomes of Advise TX graduates to other graduates in Texas who, all things equal, are only different because they didn't attend an Advise TX school, irrespective of the school they graduated from.

This matching technique is relatively common in evaluation research about education outcomes.²⁰ Student demographics are used to match students in Advise TX schools with similar-looking students who are not in Advise TX schools. While matching techniques (frequently referred to as propensity score models) can produce unbiased estimates of effects like those theorized about the impact of Advise TX, they also have limitations. The main limitation is the quality of the data needed for matching. If the variables needed for accurate matching are too commonplace or not adequately predictive, then the matches can be biased.²¹

¹⁹ Texas higher education performs well on EMI scores because they enroll a disproportionate share of Pell grant recipients.

²⁰ Source: Evaluation and Assessment Solutions for Education (EASE) analysis using student-level Texas administrative data, August, 2023.

²¹ A common way to gauge the success of the matching is to compare the predicted probability of being designated for participating in the treatment group based on the selected matching criteria, across treatment and control groups. Without matching, there is a 5.5 percentage point difference. With matching, there is no measurable differences in these likelihoods.

Further, if the matching process is biased, the results of this enrollment analyses would be to understate the impact of Advise TX.

The 2022 Texas Rider Report stood out because it was the first time Advise TX enrollment rates were reported to be lower than its benchmark. Given the track record of Advise TX and the possibility of matching that negatively biases estimates, the analysis in this report pursued a more robust propensity score matching process. The results presented here are based on two student matching methodologies—the same methodology as prior reports and an alternative strategy that allows for matching by school type as well as student characteristics.

College Enrollment Outcomes

The overall college enrollment rate was 43.5% for students who were served by Advise TX and completed high school in 2021.²² Attendance rates for four-year and two-year institutions were 21.1 and 25.98, respectively.²³ Compared to 2020, the overall attendance rate for Advise TX declined by a half of a percentage point. While the four-year rate ticked up slightly in 2021, the two-year rate did the opposite.

The matched comparison using both school and student characteristics generates an estimated increase in college attendance of 1.4 percentage points for Advise TX students. This increase is entirely driven by attendance gains at two-year campuses, where enrollment rates for Advise TX students increased by 1.8 percentage points relative to similar students attending similar non-Advise TX schools. Four-year college enrollment rates were not different.

Recall that the comparison group was constructed by matching schools and then students and schools. In prior Rider Reports, we matched exclusively on student characteristics. [Appendix Table 1](#) shows the results when using the same matching approach used in prior reports. Similar to the report analyzing 2020 enrollment, results from matching only on student characteristics also suggest that Advise TX reduces college attendance rates.

Which methodology should be believed? Past results about Advise TX were generally positive and consistent with the conclusions of the randomized controlled trial. As such, there wasn't an obvious reason to question the methodology. Once the inconsistent results for the 2020 class were reported, questions were raised about validity of the matching process.

When matching on student characteristics, it's assumed that the outcome of interest (enrollment) can fairly be compared for two seemingly identical students. Biased comparisons can occur, though, if these two students are different on unobservable characteristics. For example, we might compare outcomes for a low-income, Hispanic woman at an Advise TX school to a low-income, Hispanic woman at a small charter school. If an engaged parent was responsible for enrolling the second student at this small school, the parent's unobserved engagement is affecting the students' college-going behavior while socio-demographic variables available for matching suggest the two students are comparable.

However, matching on school and student characteristics increases the validity of the student comparisons by increasing the odds both students have similar life experiences and situations. Unobserved characteristics will remain, but they should be more balanced. In the case of

²² This percentage refers to college attendance in the fall immediately after high school graduation.

²³ A small fraction of students attended both two-year and four-year colleges simultaneously, resulting in the averages in the respective sectors not adding up to the overall enrollment rate.

Advise TX, the improved matching explains the significant difference in the estimated impact of unobserved characteristics on enrollment.

While the overall college enrollment rate is an important metric, higher enrollment isn't consistent for all student subgroups. Outcomes for low-income and underrepresented groups are examined next using the more comprehensive matching process.

Impact on low-income students. The college enrollment rate was 37.7% for students from low-income families. As expected, the mean rate of enrollment is considerably lower than in the overall population of Advise TX students. In our matched comparison, enrollment rates for low-income students were the same for students at Advise TX schools as the comparison group. The minor differences in rates, either overall or by the type of degree-granting institution, are not statistically significant.

Impact by race/ethnicity. White students are more likely to enroll in college by about 6-7 percentage points compared to Hispanic or African American students, who had comparable group rates. The estimated impact of Advise TX, though, is overwhelmingly positive for Hispanic students. Overall enrollment for Hispanic students is higher by 2.2 percentage points, which is explained by their much higher enrollment at two-year colleges. For White students served at Advise TX schools, a small but negative difference exists for their two-year enrollment. There is no observable difference for African American students at Advise TX schools.

Other student subgroups. The impact of Advise TX is also estimated separately for males, females, and students specifically from larger schools because they are disproportionately served by Advise TX. In these instances, the results are more consistently positive. Students at larger schools are 2.5 percentage points more likely to enroll in any college when served by Advise TX, and the higher rates are observed at both four- and two-year colleges where enrollment is higher by 1.4 and 1.6 percentage points, respectively.

Males are less likely to go to college, but they attend two-year colleges at higher rates when graduating from an Advise TX school. For females, enrollment goes up by 1.6 percentage points in Advise TX schools. This effect is explained by higher two-year enrollment rates, which increased by 2 percentage points.

Table 4. Advise TX Impacts on Enrollment (EASE for High School Class of 2021, Matched on Student and School Characteristics)

Sample Group	Baseline Overall Attendance	Advise TX Difference in Overall Attendance	Advise TX Difference in Four-Year Attendance	Advise TX Difference in Two-Year Attendance
Overall	43.5%	.014***	-.002	.018***
Free/Reduced Lunch	37.7%	-.004	-.008	.000
Hispanic	40.9%	.022***	-.005	.029***
African American	39.9%	-.013	-.009	-.007
White	46.9%	-.006	.014	-.026**
Overall - Large Schools	37.6%	.025***	.014***	.016***
Female Students	44.0%	.016**	-.002	.020***
Male Students	32.9%	.006	-.005	.013**

Source: Evaluation and Assessment Solutions for Education (EASE) analysis using student-level Texas administrative data, August 2023

NOTE: * p-value ≤ 0.05, ** p-value ≤ 0.01, *** p-value ≤ 0.001

College Applications and Enrollment

One concern raised about prior Rider Reports is that all students are assumed to have been directly helped by an adviser because they attended an Advise TX high school. The issue being raised is that many of these high schools have more enrolled students than an adviser can assist, or to meet with for more than 3-5 minutes if meeting with every senior at least once is one of their KPI goals. For example, the 25th percentile of an Advise TX graduating class includes no less than 275 seniors.

Overall, there is little difference between students at Advise TX schools and students in other schools in the likelihood that a student applied to a four-year college or whether a student applied to more than three four-year colleges (as presented in [Table 4](#)). However, conditional on applying to a four-year college, or to three or more four-year colleges, Advise TX students are more likely to enroll in college by about 2.5 percentage points. This suggests that advisers are helping students to enroll *in any college*. A basic goal of college advisers is to encourage students to consider four-year colleges and to attend four-year colleges if the match and affordability work for the students. Advise TX students are not accepted at higher rates, suggesting the higher college enrollment rate occurs from counseling students about their enrollment options.

Table 5. Advise TX Impact on Application and Enrollment, Conditional on Applications for High School Class of 2021

Student Enrollment	Propensity Score with School Characteristics
Ever Applied to a 4-year College	-.006
Ever Enrolled, Conditioned on Student Applying to 4-year College	.023***
Applied to at Least Three Colleges	.001
Ever Enrolled, Conditioned on Student Applying to at Least Three Colleges	.027***

Source: Evaluation and Assessment Solutions for Education (EASE) analysis using student-level Texas administrative data, August 2023

NOTE: * p-value ≤ 0.05 , ** p-value ≤ 0.01 , *** p-value ≤ 0.001

Conclusion

Advise TX was established to increase college-going behaviors and college enrollment for Texas high school graduates. The focus was on assisting students that were underserved and historically have been underrepresented. By design, Advise TX serves schools that, on average, enroll more than twice as many seniors and historically send fewer graduates to college. For example, Advise TX students are disproportionately Hispanic, have lower scores on academic aptitude and readiness metrics, and are more likely to experience economic hardship.

Despite these challenges, data tracked internally by Advise TX and provided by ApplyTexas show that rates of key performance indicators at Advise Texas schools increased in 2023 and are consistently higher than other Texas schools. This means a greater percentage of students at Advise TX schools applied to college or completed their FAFSA. Since college enrollment data that's analyzed in every annual report always lags the reporting of KPI data by one or two full years, future enrollment outcomes should benefit from increasing KPI.

For the 2021 cohort, the highlight is the impact on Hispanic students. They were 2.9 percentage points more likely to go to two-year colleges and 2.2 percentage points more likely to attend college than similar Hispanic students at other high schools. Across the whole sample, Advise TX increases students' enrollment rates by 1.4 percentage points. The results may even be larger if we focus on students who worked with an adviser. Conditional on applying to college, a KPI that is more likely to happen if students met with an adviser, enrollment increased by 2.3 percentage points. Conditional on applying to three colleges, again a KPI that Advise TX advisers encourage, enrollment increased by 2.7 percentage points.

The initial randomized control trial of Advise TX was designed to assess potential gains in enrollment after introducing services. Annual Rider Reports, by way of contrast, examine whether enrollment rates are higher for students graduating from Advise TX compared to a cohort of hypothetically similar students enrolled elsewhere. Taken together, the current findings are consistent with most prior ones that Advise TX services increase students' enrollment rates, at least conditionally. Across multiple years, there has been a pattern of two-year college attendance increasing while four-year college attendance declines. For subgroups, this pattern is still apparent. Hispanic and low-income students from Advise TX schools, for example, were more likely to enroll at two-year institutions. Yet, overall enrollment rates were not higher for all Advise TX students.

It is also important to assess enrollment trends covered in this and other recent reports through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic. Across the United States, many low-income high schools were disproportionately affected by the pandemic, with a greater loss of teachers and lower engagement in online and hybrid options for schooling. Even in places where the quality of schooling was not impacted, low-income communities and communities with significant populations of underrepresented minorities were affected more strongly by COVID. Given the skewed distribution of the types of schools served by Advise TX, lagging college enrollment rates for the 2021 cohort are understandable. Schools most negatively affected by COVID will require additional support to help more students pass career readiness criteria, which is necessary for access organizations like Advise TX to be successful.

Appendix A: Advise TX Impacts on Enrollment for High School Class of 2021

Appendix Table 1. Advise TX Impacts on Enrollment for High School Class of 2021, Matched Only on Student Characteristics

Sample	Baseline Overall Attendance	Advise TX Difference in Overall Attendance	Advise TX Difference in Four-Year Attendance	Advise TX Difference in Two-Year Attendance
Overall	43.5%	-.023***	-.025***	-.005*
Free/Reduced Lunch	37.7%	-.009	-.010**	-.004
Hispanic	40.9%	-.020***	-.029***	.003
African American	39.9%	-.036***	-.011	-.035***
White	46.9%	-.039***	-.015	-.040***

Source: Evaluation and Assessment Solutions for Education (EASE) analysis using student-level Texas administrative data, August 2023.

NOTE: * p-value ≤ 0.05, ** p-value ≤ 0.01, *** p-value ≤ 0.001

Texas Higher Education COORDINATING BOARD

This document is available on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board website:
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