



High Schools That Work
Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates

Summary Report

SREB

Texas

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Regional
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High Schools That Work Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates Texas

The *High Schools That Work (HSTW)* Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates is a way for schools and technology centers to see how well graduating students are prepared for further studies and careers. This report provides an overview of what 2008 graduates of Texas have accomplished during the first year after high school and how well they transitioned from high school to college and careers. The survey also compares your school's or center's graduates to other graduates across the *HSTW* and *Technology Centers That Work (TCTW)* networks who completed the survey.

The survey was administered online to seniors who participated in the 2008 *HSTW* Assessment one year after they graduated high school, in spring and summer of 2009. School personnel provided participation information (via postcard, letter, e-mail or telephone) to students who participated in the 2008 *HSTW* Assessment¹. A total of 3,893 high school graduates from across the *HSTW* and *TCTW* networks completed the survey. Of these, **76** were graduates of Texas. A total of 3,681 surveys — 95 percent — could be linked to the students' 2008 *HSTW* Assessment results; **72** graduates of Texas were linked to their 2008 *HSTW* Assessment results.

Because the Follow-Up Survey data represent a small percentage of the students that participated in the assessment, differences in percentages and means between groups, although large, may not be statistically significant. To help with interpretation of results, the tables in this report include the number of students in addition to the percentages. The tables also include network-level results.

This report provides information on student outcomes based on high school curriculum, achievement, gender and completion of a career/technical concentration. It addresses the following questions:

What have graduates been doing since high school?

How well were graduates prepared for college and careers?

What do graduates say their high schools could have done to better prepare them for college and careers?

What actions can schools take to better prepare future graduates?

¹ A total of 61,044 high school seniors participated in the 2008 *HSTW* Assessment.

Section 1: Demographics

The demographic composition of students completing the *HSTW* Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates at all participating schools differs from the demographic composition of students completing the 2008 *HSTW* Assessment. The Follow-Up Survey has a higher percentage of female students, white students and students from a high socioeconomic (SES) background.² (See Table 1).

Of the **72** graduates from your high school whose follow-up survey data could be linked to their assessment results:

- 67 percent are female, compared with 63 percent across the network.
- 46 percent are white.
- 63 percent come from a high-SES background, based on their parents' level of education.

Table 1
Texas and 2008 *HSTW* Assessment Profile

	Texas ¹ <i>n</i> = 72	2008 <i>HSTW</i> Follow-Up ² <i>n</i> = 3,893	2008 <i>HSTW</i> Assessment ³ <i>n</i> = 61,044
Gender			
Male	33%	37%	47%
Female	67	63	53
Race/Ethnicity			
White	46	75	59
Other	54	25	41
Socioeconomic Status			
Low	38	32	38
High	63	68	62

Source: ¹ Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates results matched to 2008 *HSTW* Assessment results for **Texas**

² Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates results matched to 2008 *HSTW* Assessment results for *HSTW* and *TCTW* graduates

³ 2008 *High School That Work* Assessment

Notes: n/a = Not Available. Percentages are based on students who responded to the demographic questions. Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

² Parent education level is used as a proxy for socioeconomic status (SES). Students whose parents have no education beyond high school are classified as having a low SES. Students who have at least one parent complete at least some education beyond high school are classified as having a high SES.

Section 2: High School Achievement

Of your school’s graduates whose follow-up survey data could be linked to their 2008 *HSTW* Assessment results:

- 48 percent completed a career/technical (CT) concentration in high school.
- 38 percent completed all three parts of the *HSTW*-recommended curriculum.
- 62 percent met the readiness goal for reading.
- 67 percent met the readiness goal for mathematics.
- 67 percent met the readiness goal for science.
- 30 percent earned the *HSTW* Award of Educational Achievement.

Table 2
Academic Profile of 2008 Graduates

	Your Graduates¹ <i>n</i> = 72	All Graduates² <i>n</i> = 3,681
Career/technical student	48%	60%
Completed the <i>HSTW</i>-recommended curriculum³		
All three parts	38	35
Two parts	24	25
One part	21	22
No part	18	18
Met readiness goal⁴ for:		
Reading	62	72
Mathematics	67	68
Science	64	67
Earned <i>HSTW</i> Award of Educational Achievement⁵	30	29

Source: ¹ Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates results matched to 2008 *HSTW* Assessment results for **Texas**

² Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates results matched to 2008 *HSTW* Assessment results for *HSTW* and *TCTW* graduates

³ *HSTW*-recommended curriculum: four courses in college-preparatory English/language arts; four courses in college-preparatory mathematics, including Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II and a higher-level course; and three courses in science, with at least two at the college-preparatory level

⁴ *HSTW* readiness goals in reading (250), mathematics (257) and science (258) are set at the Basic level.

⁵ To earn the *HSTW* Award of Educational Achievement, students must complete at least two of the three parts of the recommended curriculum, meet all three readiness goals and complete a concentration in mathematics/science, humanities, or a career/technical area.

Notes: n/a = Not Available. Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Section 3: Post-High School Activities

The follow-up survey asked graduates several questions about the types of activities they undertook and are still undertaking since high school. Have they taken courses at any type of postsecondary institution? Have they held a job at any time since high school? Have they entered the military?

Most students who participated in the survey both worked and attended school after graduation. (See Table 3.) The most common activity for graduates is going to school and working at the same time — 43 percent of the graduates indicated they were currently in school and working. (See Table 4.) Of all graduates from your school who participated in the follow-up survey:

- 86 percent have taken courses at some type of postsecondary institution since leaving high school, with 34 currently only in school.
- 79 percent have worked since high school, with 14 currently only working.
- 46 percent currently are going to school and working.

Table 3
Activities Attempted After Graduation

Activity	Your Graduates ¹	All Graduates ²
	<i>n</i> = 76	<i>n</i> = 3,893
School	86%	81%
Work	79	80
Military	0	2
Training	14	8

Source: ¹ Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates for Texas

² Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates for all *HSTW* and *TCTW* graduates

Notes: Because students can engage in more than one activity, the percentages may total more than 100 percent.

Table 4
Current Activities of Graduates

Activity	Your Graduates ¹	All Graduates ²
	<i>n</i> = 76	<i>n</i> = 3,893
Currently only in school	34%	34%
Currently only working	14	13
Currently in school and working	46	43
Currently only in military	0	2
Currently in military and school	0	0
Current activities unknown	5	8

Source: ¹ Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates for Texas

² Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates for all *HSTW* and *TCTW* graduates

Notes: Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Section 4: Post-High School Education Experiences

The survey asked students who pursued a postsecondary education (PSE) to elaborate on their experiences regarding the type of school they attended, their status at that school, whether or not they are currently attending this school and what their plans are for the next year. (See Table 5.) Of graduates from your school who pursued postsecondary education

- 68 percent enrolled in courses at a four-year college or university.
- 94 percent are currently attending this school.
- 88 percent stated they were full-time students during the last month they attended school.

Table 5
Postsecondary Activities of 2008 Graduates

	Your Graduates Who Pursued PSE¹	All Graduates Who Pursued PSE²
	<i>n</i> = 65	<i>n</i> = 3,138
Type of postsecondary institution		
Colleges and universities (four years or more)	68%	65%
Community and junior colleges (two years)	28	28
Career/technical schools	3	6
Other/unknown	2	1
Students' status the last month at school		
Full-time	88	93
Part-time	11	5
Not sure	2	1
Currently attending this school	94	95
Student plans for next semester		
Will return to this school	80	87
Will transfer to another school	12	7
Will have completed the program of study	0	2
Will not be returning to any school	0	1
Other or undecided	8	3

Source: ¹ Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates for Texas

² Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates for all *HSTW* and *TCTW* graduates

Notes: n/a = Not Available. Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Postsecondary remediation rates are a common measure of how well-prepared graduates are for college-level course work. In the follow-up survey, students who indicated that they had taken classes at some type of postsecondary institution also indicated whether or not they had enrolled in, were required to take or chose to take remedial, developmental or support courses. Those who took remedial courses indicated the content area of the courses. (See Table 6.)

Table 6
Remediation in Postsecondary Studies

	Your Graduates Who Pursued PSE¹	All Graduates Who Pursued PSE²
	<i>n</i> = 65	<i>n</i> = 3,138
Took remedial, development or support courses		
Was required to take course(s)	17%	16%
Chose to take course(s)	9	5
Did not take course(s)	74	79
Of those graduates who took remedial courses:	<i>n</i> = 17	<i>n</i> = 669
Percentage who took remedial courses in		
Mathematics	22%	73%
English/language arts	6	37
Reading	3	22
Their main reason for taking remedial courses		
Score on ACT or SAT test	13	31
Score on a placement test given at college	63	44
Personal decision	13	12
Other or do not know	13	14
Number of remedial courses taken		
One	0	50
Two	13	28
Three or more	13	22

Source: ¹ Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates for Texas

² Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates for all *HSTW* and *TCTW* graduates

Notes: Percentages may total 100 percent because students may have taken remedial courses in more than one subject or due to rounding

HSTW research finds a strong relationship between students' performance on the *HSTW* Assessment in reading, mathematics and science and the need for remedial course work in these subject areas. Students who score below the *HSTW* readiness goals are more likely to take remedial courses when they enter college. Schools with a high percentage of graduates taking remedial courses in college may need to realign their curricula to college-readiness standards.

Section 5: Post-High School Work Experiences

The survey asked students who entered the workforce to elaborate on their experiences regarding their employment status, the number of jobs they have held and currently hold, their primary purpose for working, how much they make monthly and if they were ever unemployed. They also were asked if they had taken an industry-based certification exam. (See Tables 7, 8 and 9.) Of your graduates who have entered the workforce since graduating high school:

- 10 percent passed an industry-based examination certifying their skills.
- 71 percent of those who passed an industry-based examination certifying their skills thought it helped them get a job.
- 17 percent have worked full-time.
- 39 percent have held two or more jobs since graduation.
- 33 percent have been unemployed, with a median unemployment length of 8 weeks.

Table 7
Employment Activities of 2008 Graduates

	Your Graduates Who Worked¹	All Graduates Who Worked²
	<i>n</i> = 60	<i>n</i> = 3,094
Employment status		
Full-time (40 hours or more per week)	17%	22%
Half-time (20 to 39 hours per week)	47	41
Part-time (less than 20 hours per week)	27	32
Number of jobs held since graduating		
One	61	63
Two or more	39	37
Number of jobs currently working		
None	22	26
One	61	63
Two or more	17	11
Primary purpose for working		
Support themselves	44	45
Support their family	5	5
Pay for further studies	30	25
Where they worked while in high school	21	25
Ever unemployed	33%	32%
Median number of weeks unemployed	8 weeks	8 weeks

Source: ¹ Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates for Texas

² Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates for all *HSTW* and *TCTW* graduates

Notes: n/a = Not Available. Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Table 8
Employer Certification Activities of 2008 Graduates

	Your Graduates Who Worked¹	All Graduates Who Worked²
	<i>n</i> = 60	<i>n</i> = 4,765
Took an industry-based examination certifying during high school		
Yes, and passed	10%	25%
Yes, and did not pass	2	43
No	88	30
Of those students who took an industry-based certification examination:	<i>n</i> = 7	<i>n</i> = 772
Prospective employers recognized the credential		
All of them recognized it	14%	34%
Some of them recognized it	29	28
None of them recognized it	57	38
Percentage of graduates who strongly or somewhat agreed that passing an industry-based examination:		
Helped me get a job	71	62
Made me a better candidate for jobs compared with other recent graduates who did not pass such an examination.	86	71

Source: ¹ Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates for Texas

² Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates for all *HSTW* and *TCTW* graduates

Notes: n/a = Not Available. Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Table 9
Median Wage of Those Ever Employed Since Graduation

Students who reported being paid:	Reported Earnings	
	Your Graduates Who Worked¹	All Graduates Who Worked²
	<i>n</i> = 60	<i>n</i> = 3,094
On a contractual basis	\$80.00	\$30.00
On an hourly basis	\$7.59	\$7.83
On a weekly basis	\$10.50	\$8.50
On a monthly basis	\$303.75	\$100.00
On a salary basis		\$2,750.00

Source: ¹ Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates for **Texas**

² Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates for all *HSTW* and *TCTW* graduates

Notes: n/a = Not Available. Results may have too few responses to be significant.

Section 6: Perceptions of High School Experiences

Graduates were asked to respond to a series of statements about their high school experiences. (See Table 10.)

Table 10
Graduates' Perceptions of High School Experiences

Percentage of graduates who strongly or somewhat agreed with the following statements:	Your School ¹	All Graduates ²
	<i>n</i> = 76	<i>n</i> = 3,893
I should have worked harder while I was in high school.	67%	61%
I had the knowledge and skills necessary in mathematics to succeed in work and/or college when I graduated high school.	66	76
I had the knowledge and skills necessary in reading to succeed in work and/or college when I graduated high school.	89	90
I had the knowledge and skills necessary in writing to succeed in work and/or college when I graduated high school.	87	84
I was prepared with the verbal communication skills necessary to succeed in work and/or college when I graduated high school.	87	85
The courses I took in high school prepared me for my work and/or college experiences since I graduated high school.	64	76
I would have benefited from placing a greater emphasis on career/technical courses when I was in high school.	54	53
My school offered practical work experience opportunities to prepare me for the future.	54	57
I received the information and assistance necessary from my school to find employment when I graduated.	41	43
I received the information and assistance necessary from my school to continue my education when I graduated.	81	80
My school did a good job overall preparing me for my post-high school pursuits.	69	78

Source: ¹ Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates for Texas

² Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates for all *HSTW* and *TCTW* graduates

The survey sought feedback from career/technical students regarding whether their CT teachers had placed appropriate emphasis on particular activities that strengthen students' knowledge and skills in their CT courses. (See Table 11.)

Table 11
CT Students' Perceptions of Their High School Experiences in CT Classrooms

Percentage of students who thought more emphasis was needed on:	Your School CT Graduates ¹	All CT Graduates ²
	<i>n</i> = 26	<i>n</i> = 1,907
Reading and interpreting technical books and manuals	13%	20%
Writing technical reports, service reports and business letters	29	28
Using mathematics to address problems related to the career/technical area	21	26
Using science to address problems related to the career/technical area	33	23
Using computer skills in the career/technical area	17	21
Meeting high standards and expectations	42	24
How to get along with other people in the workplace	25	21

Source: ¹ Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates results matched to 2008 *HSTW* Assessment for **Texas**

² Follow-Up Survey of 2008 Graduates results matched to 2008 *HSTW* Assessment all *HSTW* and *TCTW* graduates

Notes: n/a = Not Available. Percentages are based on students who indicated completing a career/technical concentration consisting of four or more courses on the 2008 *HSTW* Assessment.

Section 7: Actions That Can Be Taken To Prepare Students for College and Careers

All schools and centers can take action to help more students complete a rigorous and relevant curriculum and create a culture of continuous improvement so more graduates are prepared for college and careers. The following actions are designed to assist schools and centers in improving high school graduation rates and students' readiness for postsecondary studies and careers.

1. Provide programs of study that lead more students to earn employer certification, an associate's degree and/or a bachelor's degree. These programs of study, or pathways, should contain key features, including:
 - a solid core of academic courses that help students meet college entrance requirements.
 - sequences of technical courses focused on essential college- and career-readiness standards.
 - project-based learning, with applications of course work outside of classrooms.
 - mentors and access to extra-help tutoring and instructional assistance for students.
2. Encourage all students to complete additional advanced-level academic courses in mathematics, science, humanities or fine arts, or a sequence of at least four courses in a broad career field leading to an employer certification, an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree or higher.
3. Form partnerships with community and technical colleges, feeder high schools or shared-time technology centers, employers, and other entities. The purpose of these partnerships is to create pathways that give students access to:
 - specialized occupation-specific courses that begin early in high school and lead to recognized employer credentials and enrollment in postsecondary studies.
 - high-quality CT programs in high-demand fields — including architecture and construction; business and finance; education and training; biomedical and health sciences; arts, media and entertainment; information technology; and science, technology, engineering and mathematics — leading to a certificate, an associate's degree and/or a bachelor's degree.
4. Create guidance and advisement systems in which:
 - all entering ninth-graders set six-year career and postsecondary goals and develop an outline of academic and CT courses to help them achieve those goals.
 - all students are paired with an adult mentor who advises them for all four years of high school and involves parents in reviewing students' progress toward their goals.
 - all school counselors are trained to: 1) help students plan a programs of study, 2) provide guidance to students for setting and achieving their goals, and 3) help students develop skills and habits required for college and careers.

5. Determine students' level of college and career readiness prior to their senior year and develop transitional courses in English/reading and mathematics — with common standards, syllabi and instructional materials — for 12th-graders who do not meet college- and career-readiness standards.
6. Improve annually the percentage of CT students who pass state-approved industry certification exams adopted by the state's secondary and postsecondary education systems *and* who meet standards on college-placement exams that allow students to enter college without remediation.
7. Invest in the training of current CT teachers to help them embed and teach essential academic content through project- and problem-based learning and through structured workplace learning opportunities.
8. Embed in career/technical courses essential college- and career-readiness standards on reading, writing and mathematics through work-related activities, projects and problems.
9. Provide sustained professional development to assist CT teachers to:
 - align CT curricula with essential college- and career-readiness standards and use the standards to guide classroom assignments and assessments.
 - use research-based literacy and numeracy instructional strategies to help students meet college- and career-readiness standards.
 - engage students in the application of academic and technical knowledge and higher-order thinking skills through hands-on projects and problems.

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