09.62 Postsecondary Outcomes for 2009 Graduates:
Technical Documentation

National Student Clearinghouse. All 2009 postsecondary reporting (district and campus) used data provided by the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) on June 8, 2010.

The NSC is a nonprofit organization that has provided postsecondary degree and enrollment verification for more than 15 years. Austin Independent School District (AISD) uses both of these services; degrees earned are included in the enrollment data. These data include 93% of postsecondary institutions nationwide. A list of participating colleges is on the NSC website, under Resource Center.

NSC data are updated daily. These data include a unique record for every occurrence of enrollment per semester, quarter, or year. The unit of enrollment time varies by institution and depends on program or degree offerings. The University of Texas at Austin did not participate in NSC in previous years; however, UT Austin began sending enrollment records to NSC in March 2010.[1]

For the most part, records returned as "not found" represent students who did not enroll in a postsecondary institution. However, there are caveats to this matching process. NSC provided a list of reasons a student record might not be matched in its database *even though* the student is enrolled in a postsecondary institution:

- The student attends a school that does not report enrollment information to NSC.
- The record was blocked either by the school or at the student's request. In this case, the student is counted in the aggregate report provided automatically by NSC, but his or her individual record is not included in the Detail Report.
- The student's record is in AISD's database but not within the search date (i.e., high school graduation date). If a requestor sends a file that includes a non-graduate, the last day that student attended

two last names, and a hyphenated name.[2] Although one of these inaccuracies may not cause a failed match, any combination of these inaccuracies increases the likelihood of a false negative. Colleges do not typically report any kind of punctuation in students' names.

Figure 1. Relationship Between AISD Student Data and National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Data for Postsecondary Analysis

Data Submission to NSC – Match Forward

Data sources. AISD student records were pulled from current and historical graduate records

records imprudent. Future submissions should not contain records for non-graduates.

Data also were pulled from the student information system (known internally as the ASTU table). This data table often included duplicate student records because of student mobility. Records with the most recent "last day of attendance" were retained for submission to NSC.[3] Data were then

Student records missing data for the variable "last day of attendance" were omitted from the submission to NSC because records missing this data point could not be processed. Records missing a high school ACT code also were omitted. Omissions of any kind are not recommended for future data submissions. All student records in the graduate file should be sent to NSC. Any records that cannot be processed will be deleted by NSC and missing from the returned file. These records can then be identified in the match back as "unprocessed."

Data sharing. Data were shared with NSC using the articulated process (i.e., secure file transfer protocol). Data files created in SAS were exported to Excel for sharing. (Note: if data files are "sent to" Excel from SAS instead of exported, each cell will contain trailing blanks that render the file unusable by NSC.)

Data Returned from NSC – Match Back

Data cleaning. Data returned to AISD from NSC first were linked to the original data file submitted to NSC. Records for enrollment in Summer 2009 only were considered "unmatched" to align reporting with best practices.[5] Summer enrollment was defined as enrollment that began on or after June 1, 2009 and ended on or before September 30, 2009. The following records were considered "not matched

- Records for which enrollment was withdrawn[5]

enrollment as enrollment on or after October 1, 2009. A parameter for an end date was not provided because doing so would have excluded enrollment when the end date extended beyond the reporting year (2010).

- First year of college attendance: "The first year after high school includes any collegiate term that ends after August 15 of the graduation year and before August 14 of the following year."

These data were then parsed down to a single record per student, using the following sequenced selections:

(1) fall over spring semester,

(2) 4-year over 2-year institution,

(3) full time over part time,

(4) latest enrollment begin date, and

(5) latest enrollment end date.

Demographic characteristics.

has a data-sharing agreement with AISD. As part of this agreement, DPE sends the center PEIMS graduate records. The Ray Marshall Center links these files to postsecondary data obtained directly from NSC. AISD results may differ from results reported by the Ray Marshall Center because student records shared with external researchers may be missing data regarding economic disadvantage. The National School Lunch Act (NSLA) establishes requirements and limitations regarding the release of information about children certified for free and reduced price meals provided under the National School Lunch Program (p. 315, paragraph (f) in hyperlink). Data on free and reduced price lunch obtained via the NSLP is suppressed in shared data. Data on free and reduced price lunch obtained directly from parents is shared.

Note that, as of the 2009–2010 academic year, not all student records could be shared with external researchers. According to the AISD board of trustees' regulations, parents have an opportunity every academic year to have their child opt out of participating in external research. Records of students who have opted out are omitted from shared data. **This does not affect the data shared for the 2009 graduate cohort.**

Recommendations for future work. Future data submissions to NSC should be limited to graduates only. This will help align district the NSC auto-generated aggregate reports woid(e)7(s1(w).04)1(w)(e)7(a)(w).04 urts

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