About **Commit!**

The Commit! Partnership is focused on building a culture of shared accountability and collaboration across the Dallas County community. Our approach is straightforward — to work together, using data and community expertise, to help prepare every student in our region for success in college and/or the global workforce. We invite and support all education advocates to our mission, believing that strategically aligning all of our efforts will lead to meaningful improvement at every step of a child’s education, from cradle to career.
Education Across Dallas County

The Commit! Partnership has defined its community as Dallas County, encompassing roughly 2.5 million residents within a 1,000-square-mile area and over 800,000 students involved in early childhood, public K-12 and higher education. Included in this total are over 80,000 students that are educated in a community college system that is Dallas County based.

With roughly 10% of all public school students in the nation’s second-largest state, the ability to make a meaningful impact is substantial.

A regional approach allows us to capture the best practices from numerous providers versus a sole focus on one entity.

The work of the Commit! Partnership is in part made possible by the financial support of those asterisked partners below as well as the Harold Simmons Foundation, Haynes and Boone, LLP, Executives in Action, and GE Capital. Our community is grateful for their support.

Current Partners Within the Commit! Partnership

**EARLY CHILDHOOD**
- Child Care Alliance
- Child Care Group
- Head Start
- Paul Quinn College
- Southern Methodist
- Texas Woman’s University
- University of Texas - Dallas
- University of N. Texas - Dallas
- Citibank*
- Dallas Regional Chamber*
- Ernst & Young
- Fidelity Investments
- Greater Dallas Hispanic Chamber
- JP Morgan Chase*
- Mayor Mike Rawlings
- North Dallas Chamber
- The Real Estate Council
- Texas Instruments*
- Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas

**K-12**
- Dallas ISD
- DeSoto ISD
- Grand Prairie ISD
- Highland Park ISD
- KIPP
- Lancaster ISD
- Richardson ISD
- The Shelton School
- Uplift Education
- The Greenhill School
- Boone*
- Communities/Caruth*
- Dallas*
- Hoglund*
- Meadows*
- Ti Foundation*
- United Way*
- Williams*
- CitySquare
- EducateTX*
- Salesmanship Club
- Teaching Trust
- Texas PTA

**HIGHER ED**
- Austin College
- Dallas County Community Colleges
- Bank of America*
- Beck Group*
- Capital One*

**FOUNDATIONS**
- Boone*
- Communities/Caruth*
- Dallas*
- Hoglund*
- Meadows*
- Ti Foundation*
- United Way*
- Williams*

**BUSINESSES/CIVIC**
- Bank of America*
- Beck Group*
- Capital One*

For more information about becoming a Commit! partner organization, go to: www.commit2dallas.org/partnership
All Together Now

These kids are our kids. They represent our future. It’s our moral and economic imperative to work together to improve their life potential through the most powerful weapon we have — a quality education.

In late 2011, educational advocates across Dallas County launched Commit!, a powerful community partnership to improve regional educational outcomes. We quickly rallied around four core beliefs:

• Every child is capable of learning and deserves the opportunity to succeed.
• Education is the most effective ladder for realizing one’s full potential.
• Our children’s potential is a resource we cannot afford to waste.
• Working together, we can and will create a thriving community.

Today, roughly one year later, our community has truly mobilized around our cause, creating and supporting a broad alliance of education, business, nonprofit, and civic leaders. Roughly 40 institutions have joined the effort to date, collectively representing over 400,000 students, 60,000-plus regional employees, and almost $200 million in annual giving to our community. These organizations and individuals are the founding members of the Commit! Partnership, and we hope to see many others follow in their footsteps in the months to come.

Each of these leaders shares the conviction that we have a strong mutual interest in giving students the support and tools necessary to succeed in school and life. With more than 800,000 children in our cradle-to-career educational pipeline, this is not only the right thing to do, it is also the smart thing to do.

We have also agreed that by working together and aligning our efforts, we can accomplish substantially more than by continuing to work alone. No great idea or practice should be an island — and our resources, while plentiful, are not unlimited. Wisely guided by data, the Commit! Partnership will help spread and share best practices wherever we find them, and use resources strategically to have the most beneficial effect for our community.

In this first annual report for Commit!, you will read about how our partnership will focus on attaining meaningful regional improvement as measured against our key indicators of student achievement, ranging from Kindergarten Readiness to Post-Secondary Degree Completion. You will learn about how our Support Councils of experienced community leaders will use robust data and local/national research to help guide the work of our Action Networks — practitioners collaborating to improve results for each of our indicators. Finally, you will be able to view our first Achievement Scorecard, which uses data from across Dallas County to collectively frame our academic progress with transparency, while highlighting our remaining challenges and guiding us where we need to focus first.

We hope this report will alert our broader community to the importance and scale of the job at hand. It should become clear that no one person or organization, including our educators, can or should be asked to tackle the obstacles facing our children alone. Our only way forward is to come together and work in the spirit of collaboration and shared accountability, guided by the sincere belief that we owe this effort to the children who follow us. It will not be easy, but the rewards to our community will be incredibly meaningful.

These are our kids. This is our tomorrow.

Todd Williams
Executive Director, Commit!

The Commit! Team Supporting the Partnership:
Ashley Bryan  Libby McCabe
Andy Canales  Ann Monroe
Alan Cohen  Jeanne Whitman Bobbit
Jonathan Feinstein  Andres Ramos
Marnie Glaser  Sameen Wahid
Michael Latham  Asil Yassine

Commit! 2012 Annual Report
Across our community, we have more than 1,500 early childhood providers, 15 public school districts, more than 20 institutions of higher education and more than 300 non-profits supporting our kids. While all these entities are doing tremendously important work, our collective effectiveness is impaired by a number of factors.

Data highlighting where we should first focus our philanthropic and volunteer resources is hard to access. Determining the efficacy of many efforts due to the same lack of data access is prevalent. While funders have a strong understanding of what they support, there is not a transparent capital market that would help highlight how many of our resources are directed toward education and where overlaps (or gaps in funding) exist. There is no mechanism to help scale best practices occurring across the region. Children are not tracked longitudinally as they progress from pre-K providers to K-12 educators to higher ed institutions, hindering the ability of each to understand their effectiveness and learn where practices could be improved.

The goal of the Commit! Partnership is to address many of these issues by asking the community to approach education like rowing a boat. If everyone is rowing in a different direction, the boat goes nowhere. When everyone agrees on the same direction, the boat begins to make progress. And when we all row in unison, the boat quickly begins to pick up speed.

The same theory holds true when it comes to making a positive impact on our education system. If we can align all of our community’s independent resources around the same goals and data measurements, collaboratively develop action plans and streamline improvements, the impact will be like getting everyone to row in the same direction. We call this “collective impact”.

**Collective Impact**

**Shared Community. Common Goals.**

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**Achieving Large-Scale Change Through Collective Impact Involves Five Key Conditions for Shared Success**

**Common Agenda:** All participants have a shared vision for change, including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed-upon actions.

**Shared Measurement:** Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold one another accountable.

**Mutually Reinforcing Activities:** Participant activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.

**Continuous Communication:** Consistent and open communication is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and appreciate common motivation.

**Backbone Support:** Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization(s) with staff and a specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies. Commit! acts as the backbone support for Dallas County.

**OLD/CURRENT BEHAVIOR**

- Disorder + Confusion
- Isolation

Inconsistent quality and sporadic accountability perpetuate poor results with some pockets of excellence.

Individual pockets of excellence operate disconnected from one another with little ability to scale results. “Everyone for everything.”

**NEW BEHAVIOR**

- Alignment
- Collective Impact

Shared ideas and goals begin to galvanize partners and shared aspirations inspire repurposed budgets and “random acts of partnership.”

Collaborative action rooted in shared responsibility and accountability using aligned budgets; work plans and measurements are understood by all partners and the community.

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“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

— African Proverb
A Cradle-to-Career Approach
Connecting developmental milestones from Birth to Adulthood

You must learn to read before you can read to learn. Mastering basic math and science lays the groundwork for future problem solving in a 21st-century economy. And being prepared to take advantage of a quality education beyond high school is essential for obtaining a position in our increasingly skilled workforce.

Education is a continuum — and the skills we teach children very early in life will build the ever-growing foundation to learn more advanced concepts in the future. Within the Commit! Partnership, we call this concept the Cradle-to-Career Pipeline.

We’re dedicated to using robust local data and national research to identify and help plug “leaks” at each stage of every child’s development, connecting and aligning resources throughout our community and tracking progress over time. Together, we can repair the breaks that slow advancement while helping connect isolated systems. The result will be greater opportunity for each student to ultimately enter our local workforce with the skillset necessary to enjoy a successful career that maximizes his or her life potential.

Education Pipeline and What We’ll Measure

The Goal
Dramatically improve student achievement metrics for each of our key developmental milestones identified throughout the cradle-to-career education pipeline — beginning with Kindergarten Readiness and ending with Post-Secondary Graduation. At Commit! we refer to these developmental milestones as Our Key Indicators.
Our Kids. Our Tomorrow.

Our Key Indicators
Measuring What Matters

At Commit!, we strive for transparent, understandable and measurable change. That means moving away from arbitrary state ratings and instead gathering data on student achievement, setting benchmarks for improvement, and tracking our progress over time. To enhance the spirit of cooperation and collaboration among the Partnership, our reports will focus on what is most important — our collective community’s results — and not on comparing district-against-district, or school-against-school, academic performance.

Our Key Indicators have been designed to measure collective student achievement at important milestones along their educational path, while indicating our progress against recent success and future goals established by our educational partners. Indicators are grouped by age, and the work to help improve them is guided by our three community-based support councils: The Early Childhood Council, the 4th – 12th Grade Council and the Higher Education & Workforce Council. Each Council brings together the expertise and research from local educators, other leaders and foundational supporters who are working throughout the region to focus on driving progress for each indicator.

Early Childhood (Birth — 3rd Grade) Indicators
The investment we make in a child’s education must begin at birth. By recognizing that the learning process starts during a child’s most formative years, we can act to ensure every student has the foundation needed to start kindergarten on track for success. Commit!’s Early Childhood Council will focus on two key achievement indicators:

1. Kindergarten Readiness
   Research shows that quality early childhood education can play a major role later in life. Beginning at age 3, the brain starts eliminating cells not being used. With a quality early-childhood education, more connections are made, the brain works faster and will be better prepared for the increased demands in kindergarten on learning and behavior.

2. Third Grade Reading
   Until the end of third grade, most students are learning to read. By fourth grade, students are required to read to learn, and those who aren’t at grade level by third grade begin having meaningful difficulty comprehending the written material that is central to learning all subjects in subsequent grades. Recent studies indicate that only 20% of students who are not reading at grade level by the third grade will go on to successfully attend college. Literacy is absolutely critical to a child’s success.

Criteria for Selecting Key Indicators
- must be produced by a trusted source
- must track data at appropriate intervals along the cradle-to-career pipeline
- must be reasonably similar across institutions
- must be affordable and easy to gather and report
- must be timely reported and consistently available
- must be significantly alterable by local action

Dallas County Early Childhood Snapshot

2 in 3 families report all caretakers must work and thus depend on childcare

only 1 out of 7 early childcare centers have received any type of quality rating

by 3rd grade, only 4 in 10 of our students read at a level on track for college

1 Halfon, Shulman and Hochstein, 2001
2 Lesnick, et al, 2010
4th — 12th Grade Indicators

As students progress to more advanced concepts, it’s vital they remain on track for high school graduation and build the foundation needed to successfully enroll in higher education courses without remediation. By tracking key milestones as they transition between primary and secondary schooling, we can identify and eliminate obstacles that commonly stand in the way. Commit!’s 4th-12th Grade Council brings together leaders, educators and engaged community members to focus on driving progress for the following six indicators:

3. Fourth Grade Math
Elementary math lays the foundation for all future mathematics, as students need a strong understanding of arithmetic and finite number sets to effectively tackle more complex concepts, such as algebra and infinite number sets. Research indicates that an early understanding of math concepts is the most powerful predictor of later school success. It’s also indispensable in teaching the fundamentals for reasoning, problem solving and everyday life skills.

4-5. Eighth Grade Math & Science
A strong foundation in math and science at the middle school level can dramatically impact future workforce opportunity. As one prominent technology-sector CEO recently commented, “Less than one-third of U.S. eighth graders show proficiency in mathematics and science, yet STEM jobs are expected to number eight million within the next five years and more than two million of these will be newly created positions.”

6-7. Percent College Ready per SAT/ACT
Pre-SAT/ACT exams administered in the 10th grade and SAT/ACT exams administered in the 11th and 12th grade help us determine if a student has developed the academic foundation necessary for a successful transition from secondary to higher education. As nationally normed tests, these indicators also allow our community to compare the progress of our school systems against those from around the country.

8. Four-Year High School Graduation Rates
A high school diploma has always been a celebrated milestone, but graduating from high school has never been more important to every student’s short-term and long-term career opportunities. As United States Secretary of Education Arnie Duncan recently stated, “If you drop out today, there are no good jobs out there. You’re basically condemned to poverty and social failure.”

Dropout Economics

5,000 Annual Dropouts  =  $5 billion Costs to the Region

Why We Must Act

The cost of choosing not to act is far greater than the cost of investing in our kids today. High school dropout levels result in a long-term economic drain to Dallas County exceeding $5.0 billion annually for each class of dropouts, even before accounting for increased social safety net and prison incarceration expenses. We spend $10,000/year to educate a student but $44,000 to incarcerate them if we fail to prepare them for a successful life and career. The benefits of a successful regional collaborative effort could provide tremendous leverage for each philanthropic dollar contributed to this cause.
By 2023, African American and Hispanic students will represent more than 80% of our high school graduating class.

Source: Texas Education Agency AEIS Reports 2010-11 for Commit! community of 15 public school districts in Dallas County.
Higher Education — Workforce Indicators

In today’s workforce, opportunities are increasingly tied to some form of higher education following high school graduation. As a result, a critical role of our education system has to be to ensure students successfully transition from high school to higher education and from higher education to meaningful employment. Commit!’s Higher Education & Workforce Council focuses on the following three indicators:

9. Post-secondary Enrollment
Since 1973, the percentage of jobs in the U.S. requiring some post-secondary education has risen from 28% to nearly 60%. To ensure our region has the talent to meet demands of the local economy, it is critical for students to begin post-secondary coursework.6

10. First-year Retention Rate
As many as one in three students nationally do not return for their second year of college.7 Often students begin higher education with strong ideals, but the transition proves very difficult. Supporting students during this critical period is essential for improving degree attainment.

11. Post-secondary Graduation
The median wage for workers with no post-secondary degree is nearing the poverty line for a family of four.8 Whether it’s a four-year bachelor’s degree, a two-year associates degree or a career ready certificate, post-secondary graduation is an increasingly necessary achievement for students connecting with good jobs.

Need for Post-secondary Degree in Workforce

By 2030, an estimated 60% of the jobs in the local workforce will require a post-secondary degree.

By 2030, research indicates that 60% of the jobs in our local economy will require achievement of a post-secondary degree. To meet this goal, we estimate that 90% of our students must graduate from high school each year academically prepared for the next step. Today we are at 13% — but working together, we can meaningfully change that.

To meet the demands of a 2030 workforce:

- **90%** of students need to finish high school with test scores indicating readiness for the next level.
- Of that **90%**, **90% of students** will need to enroll in post-secondary education.
- Of that **90%**, **75% of students** will need to complete some type of post-secondary education.

Our local workforce is facing an impending crisis if education does not improve:

- **13%** Currently, only 13% of our most recent 9th grade cohort graduated ready to succeed in higher education, with the balance requiring remediation.
- **50%** As a result of low readiness and other (financial, cultural, family) barriers, less than 50% of students are completing post-secondary education.

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6 Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2010
8 Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2012
To measure the improvement in our collective achievement tomorrow, we need a very clear picture of where we are today. Our Scorecard provides a transparent framework across each of our key cradle-to-career indicators while benchmarking progress against community outcomes in the prior year. Where we can, we’ve also highlighted the opportunity gaps between the academic achievement of our socioeconomically disadvantaged students (as measured by their qualification for free or reduced lunch) and those students with more resources.

Across our community, we are already seeing some academic gains, but the gaps remain substantial and our work has just begun. Each year, we’ll gather data and publish a new Scorecard. By using this data to strategically tell us not only where our efforts are working, but also where additional resources are needed and where strategies may need to be changed, we hope to be smarter about our investments. By being both strategic and highly transparent, it’s our sincere belief that more funding and volunteer resources will be inspired to assist this effort.

As a result of delays in the release of 2011–2012 school year data, due to the recent transition to the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) system, we are presenting results for the 2009–2010 and 2010–2011 school years. Commit! will release an updated Scorecard later in 2013, after these results are released.

In instances where information for Dallas County students was publicly available, data reflects the academic achievement levels for the county’s fifteen largest districts, representing 95% of all students within Dallas County. Where data was not publicly available, academic achievement levels are displayed only for the seven school districts that were founding K-12 partners within the Commit! Partnership. These districts (Dallas ISD, Desoto ISD, Grand Prairie ISD, Highland Park ISD, Lancaster ISD, Richardson ISD and Uplift Education) collectively represent a substantial ~250,000 students, or 55% of all K-12 students in the Dallas County.

Dallas County Community Scorecard
Holding Ourselves Mutually Accountable to Our Children

A special “thank you” to the data professionals at our seven partner school districts, whose continued assistance with scorecard reporting is vitally important to the work of the Commit! Partnership.

Dr. Cecilia Oakley
Dallas ISD

Dr. Carol Brown
DeSoto ISD

Melissa Rowe
Grand Prairie ISD

Denise Beautel
Highland Park ISD

Lamont Smith
Lancaster ISD

Elvia Noriega
Richardson ISD

Anisha Srinivasan
UPLIFT Education
How to Read Our Achievement Scorecard

This report provides information on trends and benchmarks as helpful information for understanding the data. Trends reflect changes in the data since the prior year, while target community goals for that indicator will be established in 2013. Subsequent scorecards will also reflect progress since the Partnership’s regional baseline year.

Legend
In the right corner of each divider, a legend addresses what each color indicates within the graph. In each graph, the benchmark value, represented by the color teal, denotes the starting point for comparing data over a period of time.

For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>Decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Trends
Trends are reflected as percentage point changes in the data since the prior year, and they follow the color scheme designated in the legend.

For example:

- **↑ 8 pts.** Indicator increased by 8 points.
- **↓ 1 pt.** Indicator decreased by 1 point.
- **no change** Indicator did not change.

Opportunity Gaps
The range for each indicator indicates the variance in overall level of academic proficiency for that Key Indicator between students who are economically disadvantaged and those who are not. A green line denotes that the opportunity gap closed during the most recent school year being measured, while a red line indicates that the opportunity gap widened. Economically disadvantaged is defined as someone living within a family with a household income of 185% or less of the federal poverty guidelines.
Cradle to Career Scorecard
Measuring K-12

Collective Commit! Community (15 largest school districts in Dallas County, 446,271 students enrolled in 2010-2011 school year)

### Kindergarten Readiness
The percent of students’ kindergarten ready for the county is based on student performance on district assessments. The assessments and kindergarten-ready performance measure vary by district and currently only assess literacy.

### 3rd – 8th Grade Indicators
Student proficiency results for 3rd - 8th Grade indicators are based on the percent of students achieving a commanded score on the state standardized TAKS testing.

### Four-Year Graduation Rate
Four-Year Graduation Rate based on Adequate Yearly Progress data made available through the TEA website. The rate for the class of 2010 and 2011 are based on the 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 ninth grade cohorts, respectively.

### TAKS – STAAR Acknowledgment
The STAAR performance standards will not be released until Q1 2013. Therefore, the indicators for this report are based on 2010 and 2011 TAKS and other assessments because it is the most-recent year for which data is available across the continuum.

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**Percent of Dallas County Proficient**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2011 Current Year</th>
<th>2010 Baseline Year</th>
<th>Since Prior Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten Readiness</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>↓7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Grade Reading</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>↓3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Grade Math</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>no change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Grade Math</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>no change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Grade Science</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>↑1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average 10th/11th Grade PSAT Score</td>
<td>131 pts.</td>
<td>142 pts.</td>
<td>↓11 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-Year High School Graduation Rate</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>↑4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolling in Post-Secondary Education</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>↑1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returning to PSE after One Year</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>no change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Opportunity Gap**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2011 Point Gap</th>
<th>2010 Point Gap</th>
<th>% of Students Economically Disadvantaged (2011)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economically disadvantaged students compared to more affluent peers</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 Point Gap</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Point Gap</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2015 Goals Will Be Established During 2013

All other reporting came from publicly available data for the 15 largest districts within Dallas County.
## College Readiness Scorecard
### Measuring SAT/ACT Entrance Exams

**Collective Commit! Community** (15 school districts, 446,271 students enrolled in 2010–2011 school year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent of Graduates Taking SAT/ACT</th>
<th>SAT Score: Reading &amp; Math / ACT Score: Composite</th>
<th>Percent of Tested Students College Ready</th>
<th>Percent of Graduates College Ready</th>
<th>Percent of Original 9th Grade Cohort College Ready (Includes Dropouts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>960 / 20.0</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>969 / 20.0</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Since Prior Year</td>
<td>↑ 3%</td>
<td>↓ 9 pts. / no change</td>
<td>↓ 1%</td>
<td>no change</td>
<td>↑ 1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Higher Education Scorecards
### Measuring Our Four-Year Colleges

**Collective Commit! Community** (14 Four-Year Colleges, 104,160 undergraduate students enrolled in Fall 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st Year Full Time Retention</th>
<th>Graduation Rate Within 4 Years</th>
<th>Graduation Rate Within 6 Years</th>
<th>Degrees Conferred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011 Current Year</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>22,078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Baseline Year</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>21,037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Since Prior Year</td>
<td>no change</td>
<td>↑ 1%</td>
<td>no change</td>
<td>↑ 5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Measuring Our Community Colleges

**Collective Commit! Community** (7 Dallas County Community Colleges, 87,782 students enrolled in Fall 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st Year Full-Time Retention(^1)</th>
<th>Rate of Transfer to Four Year College(^2)</th>
<th>Degrees Conferred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011 Current Year</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>7,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Baseline Year</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>5,581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Since Prior Year</td>
<td>↓ 4%</td>
<td>↓ 6%</td>
<td>↑ 27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Higher education data derived from the National Center for Education Statistics. Four-year colleges include Austin College, Dallas Baptist, Dallas Christian, Northwood, Paul Quinn, Southern Methodist, Texas A&M Commerce, Texas Christian, Texas Wesleyan, Texas Woman’s, University of Dallas, Universities of North Texas at both Denton and Dallas, University of Texas at Arlington, University of Texas at Dallas.

SAT/ACT College Ready Indicator
A score of 24 on the ACT (composite) or at least 1100 on the SAT (reading and math) is the criterion scores for the college admissions tests. Per SAT/ACT, these scores translate into a high likelihood of receiving a B- or C+ grade in higher education.

\(^{1}\)Roughly 20% of DCCCC students began their studies as full-time, first-time degree/certificate seeking students.
An Education Ecosystem for Our Kids
It Takes a Village

For more than half a century, efforts to assist educational outcomes have focused on “the little red schoolhouse.” This iconic K-12 institution has been held responsible for preparing every child for a successful life and career through an education that starts at age 5 and ends with his or her senior year of high school. But the educational process begins much earlier — at birth — and continues long after for those able to achieve academically at the increasingly higher levels required by our global economy.

Prior Efforts
Early K-12 improvement strategies invested in reducing student-teacher ratios, followed by the subsequent introduction of public school choice through the creation of open-enrollment schools. The next wave of efforts focused on increasing school and district accountability. Most recently, efforts have focused on scaling educator pipelines while calling for enhanced evaluation methods. While each of these strategies has had varying levels of impact on student outcomes, none has proven yet to be a silver bullet capable of dramatically improving overall results.

Beyond the Little Red Schoolhouse
The strategy of the Commit! Partnership is different. We recognize that a K-12 school is part of a much larger educational ecosystem, one that is ultimately charged with enabling each child to maximize his or her life potential while developing a robust talent pipeline for the greater community. To address this need, Commit! has created a civic educational infrastructure designed to create thriving neighborhoods and attract businesses to our region based on our ability to graduate students with 21st-century job skills.

We want to know:

How can we use data to identify where critical resources are most needed?

Where are students achieving outlier results after adjusting for their relative demographics, and what are the best practices creating this achievement that can be spread throughout our region?

Concurrently, where are the most significant leaks occurring within our educational pipeline and what are the root causes of these leaks?

How can we alter our strategies, better align our efforts and substantially mobilize our plentiful (but not inexhaustible) resources in a much more strategic way to help each child succeed?
Overview of Civic Infrastructure Components

**Action Network**
Action Networks develop and execute community-level plans to address the root causes impacting our key student achievement indicators. Action Networks are composed of practitioner groups working in the field with education providers to collaboratively improve outcomes identified as top priorities by each Support Council.

**Support Council**
Support Councils set strategic priorities to impact our key student achievement indicators using the best available national research, local data and community input. Each Support Council is composed of a highly knowledgeable collection of research experts, funders, retired practitioners, association chairs and community advocates, which uniquely allows the Support Council to add necessary context to the data.

There are six Commit! Support Councils guiding the work to serve our children.

- Early Childhood (Birth – 3rd Grade) Council
- 4th – 12th Grade Council
- Higher Ed – Workforce Council
- Data Council
- Human Capital Council
- Advocacy Council

**Leadership Council**
The Leadership Council, composed of education, business and civic leaders from across the region, uses its meaningful influence to help strategically direct resources to Support Councils and their Action Networks, rally public support for Commit! Partnership efforts and advocate for the necessary steps throughout the region and in Austin at the state level.
Common Goals, Coordinated Efforts
Commit! brings change agents together, serving as the backbone organization to coordinate and support the efforts of all our partners and provide continuous communication regarding our collective current progress and remaining gaps in student performance. All stakeholders share a common agenda, and all have agreed upon statistically definable goals and shared measurement systems.

How do the strategies set by Support Councils become Action Network initiatives?
When a Support Council decides on a strategic priority, it will form one or more Action Network(s) to develop and execute community-level plans. Support Councils are responsible for providing Action Networks with a clear scope, approving all community-level plans and tracking their progress.

How does a Support Council communicate with the Leadership Council?
The chairperson for each Support Council will also sit on the Leadership Council, ensuring a two-way flow of communication. Support Councils are responsible for keeping the Leadership Council updated on strategy decisions and the ongoing work of Action Networks. With that necessary information, the Leadership Council can focus its influence to provide Support Councils with the resources necessary for success.
The Success of Collective Impact
Join the Movement for a Better Tomorrow

The Collective Impact approach works. We’ve seen its success through programs created in other parts of the United States, and we’re beginning to see its impact in Dallas County. In order to learn from the positive experiences of others that have benefited from a collaborative strategy, we’ve researched and formed relationships with groups like Strive, E3 Alliance, Educate Texas, and All Kids Alliance.

In June 2012, Commit! engaged the national Strive Network in a 15-month consulting agreement, primarily funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, to assist in our critical ramp-up period through weekly calls, site visits and access to their online resources. The Commit! Partnership subsequently joined Strive’s rapidly growing national network of more than 80 collective impact communities, and will ultimately benefit from having access to the most-effective practices and strategies being employed nationally.

Through our national and local partnerships, we’re committed to making a positive collective impact on education in Dallas County. The more individuals and organizations that take part in our efforts, the better our results will be.

The Strive Partnership, which was created in 2005 to serve Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky, brings together public and private school districts, higher education institutions, foundations and corporations. Since its formation, it has made significant strides in raising academic performance, as illustrated by the following numbers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KINDERGARTEN READINESS</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOURTH GRADE READING RATES</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIGHTH GRADE MATH RATES</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLEGE COMPLETION RATES</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We hope you’ll join us in supporting our kids today, so we can all share a better tomorrow.

Learn more about the Commit! Partnership:
www.commit2dallas.org

Learn more about educational employment opportunities in the Dallas County region:
www.reimagedallas.org

Photography courtesy of the Dallas Morning News.