

Attendance, grades, advanced courses best predict if HISD students will go to college

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Credit: HERC/Rice Kinder Institute

The best way to predict whether Houston ISD students will go to college is to examine a combination of attendance rates, grades, and credits in advanced courses, according to a study by Rice University's Houston Education Research Consortium (HERC), part of the Kinder Institute for Urban Research.

"Transitioning to College and Work: A Study of Potential Enrollment Indicators," compares the merits of three different methods that can be used to forecast whether a [student](#) is likely to attend college. The study also recommends how district staff can better identify and support students who are at risk of not attending college. The report draws on Houston ISD data from 2007 to 2014.

HERC, the University of Chicago, and the state of Texas developed three different, annual measures to predict the future education paths of high school students. HERC's [indicator](#) was designed to predict college enrollment based on students having an attendance rate of over 90%, at least a B average (80% or higher), and earning at least

half a credit in an advanced course. The Chicago indicator, which the university developed to predict high school graduation, set a standard of earning six course credits—the minimum to advance to the next grade in Houston ISD—and having no more than one F in a core subject (English, math, science or social studies). The indicator used by the state of Texas was based on meeting the benchmark on English/language arts and math tests.

Of the three indicators, HERC researchers and report authors Brian Holzman and Horace Duffy found that the HERC indicator was the most effective at predicting college enrollment. They also found that all three indicators underestimated the college enrollment rates of white, Asian and non-economically disadvantaged students, but they were more accurate for Black, Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students. Finally, students were most at risk of not meeting the Chicago and HERC benchmarks during their freshman year of high school.

Based on their findings, the researchers offer the following three recommendations:

- School and district practitioners should use the HERC indicator to identify and intervene with students who are less likely to attend college.
- Practitioners should be aware the indicators do not predict college enrollment equally well for different groups of students.
- Practitioners should give more support to high school freshmen and help them stay on the path toward college [enrollment](#). The indicators examined in the study may be part of these efforts if they can help teachers, counselors and administrators identify students who need special assistance.

The data contained information on students'

demographic, socioeconomic, behavioral and academic characteristics. They were also matched to records from the National Student Clearinghouse, which provided information on whether a student attended a [college](#) or university.

More information: Brian Holzman and Horace Duffy. Transitioning to College and Work Part 2: A Study of Potential Enrollment Indicators: kinder.rice.edu/sites/g/files/.../f/documents/College%20Enrollment%20Indicators%20-%20report%207.8.2020.pdf

Provided by Rice University

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