



2015/2016

COOL ANNUAL REPORT

College Offers Opportunities for Life
Abilene Education Foundation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 A Letter From the COOL Team

02 Our Story

06 A Story of Adventure

07 A Story of Celebration

08 A Story of Professional Growth

10 A Story of Collaboration

12 A Story of Impact

16 A Story of Generosity

21 A Story of Accomplishment

22 A Story of Gratitude



We've Got a Story to Tell...

A LETTER FROM THE COOL TEAM



Amanda Wiskow
COOL Program Coordinator
College Advisor - District Wide



LaQuiera Gantt
COOL Program Coordinator
College Advisor - Cooper High School



Dustin West
College Advisor - ATEMS & WCE
IT Coordinator



Hannah Holmes
College Advisor - Abilene High School

Everyone loves a good story. Whether told through a good book, an action film, or a fireside chat with a loved one, storytelling is what connects us to the human race. It is what connects us to our past and provides a glimpse into our future. It is what allows us to take our imaginations and fly over the Himalaya Mountains, fight against warriors and ride into the sunset with our Prince Charming. Everyone loves a good story.

Over the past year, the COOL Team has played a supporting role in the stories of triumph, celebration, courage and hope of our students. Their stories have evoked excitement, laughter, tears, and compassion in all of us. It's the stories of perseverance – like that of LeAndra Middleton, a 2013 Abilene High School graduate, who overcame seemingly insurmountable odds to chase after her college dreams – that stir us to press onward toward our goals in the COOL Program. LeAndra's mother was 13 when LeAndra was born, and they grew up together. LeAndra helped raise her younger siblings and had to take on many adult responsibilities at a young age. These were the odds that were stacked against LeAndra. But the odds didn't win. LeAndra emerged the victor over her circumstances, as she has completed her first semester of nursing school, a dream she has had since high school. As a first-generation student who walked into the COOL Program in 2012, she has left a lasting impression on the hearts of all the COOL Counselors and has introduced her younger siblings to the program, paving the way for them and insisting that they follow in her footsteps.

It's witnessing and partaking in stories of growth - like that of Joselin Alfaro, who entered the COOL Program as a shy, reserved young lady with unwavering determination to go to college in 2011 – that spurs us on to provide the highest quality services possible to our students. Over the past four years of her journey, Joselin has blossomed into a bold, confident woman who has apprehended one of her most precious life dreams by graduating from college in 2015! Our COOL students have a story to tell!

And, so do we!

We are excited to share our story with you. This past year, the COOL Team served over 600 students, presented multiple middle school and underclassmen workshops, hosted the Texas Association for College Admission Counseling Workshop in West Texas, attended the National Association for College Admission Counseling National Convention, and increased the number of FAFSA workshops offered in AISD, alongside McMurry University and Hardin-Simmons University financial aid experts.

We hope you take the time to read our stories of adventure, celebration, growth, collaboration, impact, generosity, accomplishment, and gratitude as they shine light on the joy we experience every day from working with these amazing young people. Their stories are still being written and it is our honor to help them write it.

Our Story...

...IS ABOUT HELPING:

- Mentored 603 2015-2016 senior COOL participants at AHS, CHS, ATEMS, and WCE with the college admissions process.
- Conducted over 50 private parent meetings, via face-to-face or telephone contact, to assist with various aspects of the college admissions process, including assistance with the college application, scholarship applications, and financial aid.
- Assisted over 400 students in registering for the SAT/ACT, including assisting them in accessing fee waivers, when eligible. Additionally, assisted junior student athletes in registering for NCAA (through the Eligibility Center) and ACT/SAT tests.
- Promoted American College Application Day at ATEMS, Woodson, and Cooper, where over 100 students applied for college in one day. Throughout the day, students came to the designated computer labs on each campus to submit college applications. Our college advisors were on-hand to answer questions and help students navigate the complex application process. Students were encouraged to take a picture and post it on social media to promote the application day.
- Guided 416 students across the state of Texas on 25 college tours, for a total of just over 4,000 bus miles. To put it into perspective - that's enough mileage to travel from Seattle, WA, down the California coastline, and across Texas to Miami, FL!



...IS ABOUT COLLABORATING:

- Organized the Annual AEF-AISD College Fair at the Abilene Civic Center with approximately 50 universities, colleges, and trade schools represented. An estimated 1,000 students and parents attended from Abilene and the surrounding area.
- Hosted the Texas Association for College Admission Counseling (TACAC) Drive-In, where school counselors and local non-profit agencies from Abilene and the surrounding areas attended to hear from various university representatives and stakeholders about pertinent topics surrounding the state of college admissions. (See p. 8 [TACAC] for details.)
- Helped coordinate a Fall and Spring “ATEMS Goes to College Day” where the entire student body visited five different universities for the day to learn about college life, admissions, and scholarship opportunities. Since ATEMS is a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) school with a goal of encouraging 100% of their graduates to pursue college degrees, the school shuttles all of their students to various colleges to help them visualize themselves as students on each campus.
- Coordinated with Abilene Christian University to host an early admission reception on the campuses of AHS and CHS, where students who applied by the early admission deadline to ACU were surprised by a ceremony in their honor. Students received their acceptance letters during the ceremony, and their parents were also invited to attend the event this year.
- Partnered with McMurry and Hardin-Simmons financial aid representatives to present multiple FAFSA workshops (both during the evening and during the school day) for families at AHS, CHS, and ATEMS. Through these workshops, over 80 families were able to get immediate, hands-on assistance in completing the potentially daunting FAFSA process. In addition, assisted over 50 students/families in completing the FAFSA through private meetings.
- Coordinated with college admissions counselors throughout Texas to meet with AISD juniors and seniors about the college admissions process for their respective institutions. Hosted 12 universities on CHS campus, eight universities on AHS campus, and seven universities at ATEMS and Woodson.
- Partnered with McMurry University to assist with the first annual College PASS event, a free event for high school students and their parents to attend sessions about a wide array of college readiness topics. Our team presented two sessions at the event (including Crafting the College Essay and Transitioning from High School to College) and had a booth available to field questions and provide information about the COOL Program.
- Collaborated with Communities in Schools (CIS), a program for at-risk students in Abilene ISD. CIS refers students who need one-on-one college admission mentoring to the COOL Program. COOL also refers students to CIS who need additional resources outside of the scope of COOL, especially homeless or unaccompanied youth participants. Each year, CIS hosts a special senior celebration luncheon with additional support from the COOL Program.

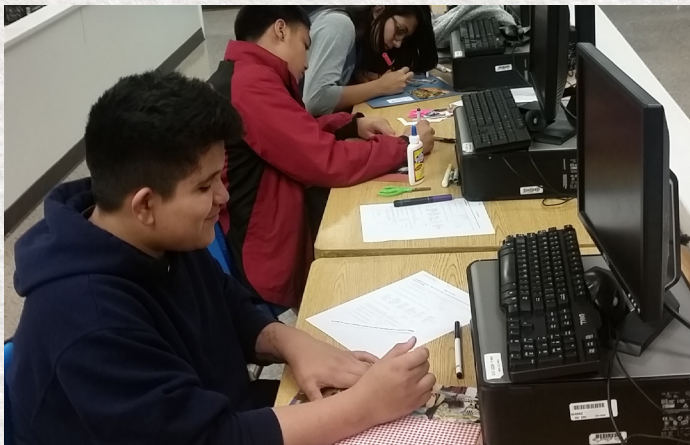


- Participated in Dyess Air Force Base's Annual College Night where our team facilitated a workshop on college and leadership for a group of high school students from military families. We adapted the Leadership Man (See Educational Outreach p. 11 for full workshop description) to make it more college-relevant, through an interactive workshop in which students drew a life-sized college student, and then engaged in thought-provoking discussion about what it takes to not only make it to college, but also to succeed in college. The purpose behind the activity was to highlight the importance of being proactive about one's college future tomorrow by making good personal, social, and academic choices today.



...IS ABOUT EDUCATING:

- Presented in over 70 high school classrooms on topics such as the career exploration and college selection, college admissions process, financial aid, and essay writing.
- Presented at two AHS senior class meetings, two CHS senior class meetings, Holland Medical Early College High School Parent Night, along with junior class meetings, senior and junior parent meetings, CIS meetings, and open houses on each campus.



...IS ABOUT SHARPENING OUR SAW:

- Attended the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) National Convention in San Diego, CA in October. (See p. 9 [NACAC] for details)
- Our newest team member, Hannah, attended the TACAC Admission & College Counseling Institute (ACCI) at St. Edwards University in Austin, which provided a vast array of fundamental knowledge, professional partnerships, and basic training necessary to establish the framework she will routinely access in her role as a college advisor.
- LaQuiera and Hannah participated in a two-day Leader in Me training for their respective high schools. The program is designed to help students and faculty understand that they all have the essential qualities to become leaders, and to empower them to implement and activate the skills they already possess. Leader in Me is based on the work of Dr. Stephen Covey's book The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People. This training is forthcoming for the remainder of our COOL Team, at a later time.
- LaQuiera and Amanda presented at a forum on Interactive Icebreakers at the Kiwanis District Convention for Texas-Oklahoma. They were able to use concepts from the Paradigm Shift Training the team participated in during February 2015, in preparation for Camp COOL. The forum was well attended and they received great feedback regarding the usefulness of the information shared.



...STARTS EARLY:

- Served approximately 2,500 elementary and middle school students, through educational workshops, including (but not limited to) such topics as Reach for the Stars, Leadership Man, Vision Boards, Goal Setting, and Career Day. (See p. 10-11 [Educational Outreach] for workshop descriptions.)
- Led College Pep Rallies at five Abilene elementary schools (Austin, Reagan, Jane Long, Dyess, and Bonham) for 5th graders, introducing the path to college through educational games, skits, and, of course, cheerleaders!
- Coordinated college tours for the AHS and CHS Peer Assistance and Leadership (PALS) junior and senior classes, along with their elementary mentees from Austin, Ward, and Martinez elementary schools to tour the ACU campus, many visiting a college for the first time. (See p. 6 [college tours] to learn more about the COOL/PALS Partnership.)
- Promoted the COOL Program through participation in the AEF PASS for Success program, where 5th grade students from the AISD elementary schools participated in a football passing contest before the AHS and CHS home football games at Shotwell Stadium. Students meeting the distance goal set for the evening won \$200 for their respective campuses and received an AEF Pass for Success t-shirt. Pass for Success is sponsored by Abilene Education Foundation.



...IS ABOUT ALL OF THIS AND SO MUCH MORE:

- Sometimes, college advising requires the ability to think outside of the box. The COOL Program recognizes the importance of using alternative approaches to reach our first-generation students, which is why we helped sponsor a girls' conference at Abilene Christian University called "Love is in the Hair." The conference was planned and organized by a member of the COOL Team, who also initiated a Curly Coogs (Natural Hair Club) on campus during Megalunch this year. The conference focused on encouraging young people to love their mind, body and soul. A number of topics were discussed including the importance of a college education, taking care of your body, and chasing your dreams. Activities included a fashion show, hair tutorials, and reflective time where participants wrote letters to their future selves in college. The girls were given a private college tour of the campus and got to eat in the World Famous Bean. There were over 50 girls in attendance, most of whom will be the first in their families to graduate from college.
- Continued to follow-up and provide support to COOL alumni, assisting them to attain their post-secondary goals.
- Continued to promote the COOL Program on social media via Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, which has proven to be an ideal avenue for conveying important information to a large number of students at once, while also enabling us to keep in touch with graduates.

FOLLOW US AT @AEFCOOLZ



A Story of ADVENTURE



2015/16 COLLEGE TOURS

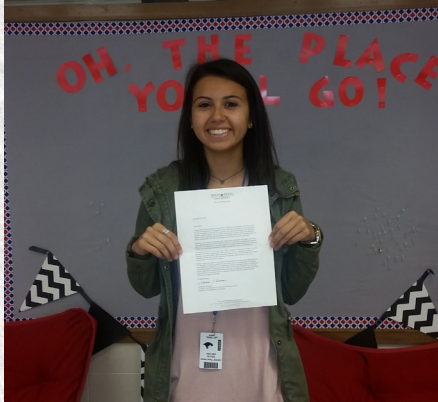
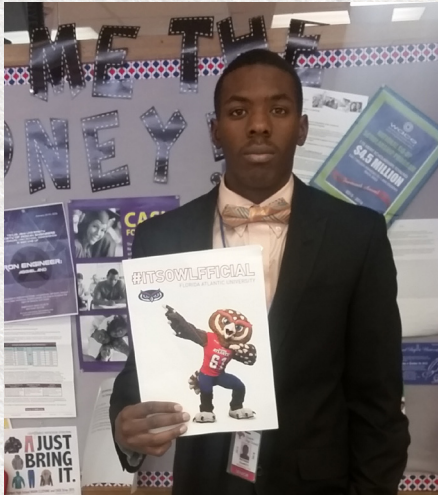
Abilene Christian University | Angelo State University
| Baylor University | Cisco College | Hardin-Simmons
University | Huston-Tillotson University | McMurry
University | Midwestern State University | Tarleton
State University | Texas A&M University | Texas
Christian University | Texas Southern University |
Texas State Technical College - Abilene | Texas
State Technical College - Sweetwater | Texas State
University | Texas Tech University | University of
Houston | University of North Texas | University of
Texas at Arlington | University of Texas at Austin |
University of Texas of the Permian Basin | University
of Texas at San Antonio | Vernon College

One of the greatest adventures for prospective college students is the thrill of choosing the right college. While there is great value in researching various post-secondary options, nothing quite beats getting a first-hand look at the institutions students are considering, by visiting the campuses, personally. When it comes to choosing the right college, there is so much more to consider than academics. Most students have their own unique checklists of the things they are looking for in a school. By offering college tours, we afford COOL program participants the rare opportunity to envision themselves on a college campus, by visiting numerous colleges each year. This enables them to better evaluate whether a particular college will be able to meet their personal learning and survival needs - from housing and meal options, to campus life, to the most fitting academic rigor - thus increasing the likelihood that they will successfully navigate the adventurous waters of college to achieve their educational goals. A typical tour includes admissions and financial aid presentations, a tour of the campus and dorms, lunch in the campus dining facility and a stop at the bookstore for students to purchase college souvenirs.

One of the highlights of our tours is the opportunity to reconnect with former COOL participants on their current college campuses. We contact them in advance to arrange for them to join us on the tour and offer encouraging words of advice to the COOL students we bring on the tour. This gives our current students a chance to ask "real" college students questions, while also giving former COOL participants an opportunity to give back and serve as role models for their younger peers.

During the 2015-2016 school year, we took 416 students on 25 tours (some schools were visited more than once), averaging approximately 25 students per tour. Included in our tours this year was a whirlwind trip through Austin and Houston, where we got the opportunity to tour two historically black universities, in addition to touring the University of Houston. This was a fantastic opportunity to teach our students about the history of HBCUs and to provide a rare opportunity for side-by-side comparison of two historically black institutions in one tour.

A Story of CELEBRATION



A Story of PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

TACAC DRIVE-IN WORKSHOP

On March 8, 2016, the COOL Team, in collaboration with the Texas Association for College Admission Counseling (TACAC) hosted a Drive-In Workshop for Abilene-area counselors. Twenty-one counselors and representatives from Abilene ISD and surrounding school districts, along with a few non-profit agencies, participated in the workshop. Experts from West Texas gathered to speak about the redesigned SAT, college admissions essays, college tours, financial aid, and changes to the State of Texas high school graduation plans and how those changes are affecting college admissions. Participants received 4.5 hours of continuing education credits, as well as an open forum to ask the presenters questions and collaborate with other area counselors. It is rare to have workshops of this caliber in West Texas and we received positive feedback. One participant said, "Much information was presented in a short amount of time, which is great in this profession, because time is precious."

We started the workshop with breakfast and a fun icebreaker called The Great Sorting Game where participants held cards with a GPA on one side (not visible to the audience) and characteristics of the applicant they represented on the other side. Participants initially lined up according to their GPA, from lowest to highest. The order in which they lined up represented the likelihood of being granted admission at a hypothetical university. A facilitator then called out scenarios such as "if you will be the first in your family to attend college, move up two spaces," and "if you did not write the optional essay for your college application, move down one space." In the end, the participants (who were then lined up completely differently from their original order) flipped their cards over to reveal their GPAs. To the surprise of the audience, some "students" with the lowest GPAs had moved into the top admissions slots, which demonstrated that the holistic college admissions process considers so much more than just a student's GPA in making an admissions decision. A student's complete application is truly taken into consideration.

It was a privilege to partner with local and surrounding school districts, non-profit agencies and colleges to bring this workshop to Abilene. So many statewide organizations hold trainings in large cities, and West Texas often gets overlooked. We were thrilled to be able to host the workshop and were so pleased with the turnout and the feedback. We look forward to continuing this workshop.

"Much information was presented in a short amount of time, which is great in this profession, because time is precious."

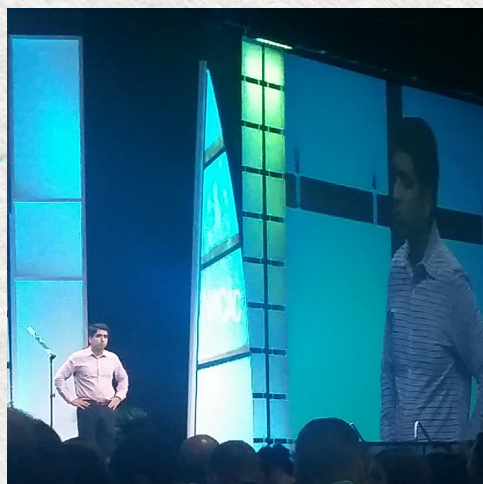


NACAC NATIONAL CONVENTION

The world of college admissions is continuously evolving, and it is vitally important for college advisors to keep up with the latest trends, continuously growing in knowledge and understanding to incorporate the best practices into our programs. For that reason, our team elected to attend the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) National Convention in San Diego, CA this year.

NACAC, founded in 1937, is an organization of more than 15,000 professionals from around the world dedicated to serving students as they make choices about pursuing post-secondary education.

Our team embarked on the journey to the National Convention (along with approximately 6,000 other professionals of the field) in October 2015, where we were able to discover the newest trends, innovations and technologies, and identify best practices available in issues affecting the students and families we serve. As an added bonus, we also got the chance to meet and network with some of the best and brightest in the college admissions profession, creating valuable connections which have enabled us to better advocate for our students.



As there were more than 100 educational sessions offered, our team opted to divide and conquer by splitting up and attending separate sessions, and then meeting together to share notes on a variety of topics. By doing this, we were able to gather and assimilate information on many pertinent areas of college admission, including, but not limited to:

- Developing strategies to address the “summer melt” (the time between high school graduation and the start of college when many students tend to “melt away,” failing to matriculate to college).
- Understanding the array of nuances we may encounter with the FAFSA, including crucial upcoming changes beginning in Fall 2016
- Acquiring ideas to develop a more proactive outreach continuum to students beginning their freshman year.
- Learning how to help our students get past the “sticker shock” of the cost of college by assisting them to utilize net price calculators and fully understand how financial aid and scholarships fit into the picture of their college future.
- Garnering inspiration and ideas to develop an “application camp,” which our team will be implementing in August 2016.
- Gathering insight on the college essay, including what colleges are looking for in the essay, so we can better guide students to craft the best possible essays for admissions.
- Attending a national college fair with over 300 colleges represented, which not only gave us the opportunity to learn more about various higher-ed institutions, but also helped enhance our vision for the local Abilene-area college fair, which we host each fall.

A Story of COLLABORATION

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

The primary goal of COOL is to encourage and assist students (especially seniors in high school) who will be the first in their families to successfully transition into post-secondary education. COOL also offers several interactive classroom learning workshops for middle and high school classrooms as well as a few select projects for elementary students. This past year our educational workshops reached approximately 3,500 students in AISD!



COOL COLLEGE PEP RALLIES

For the third year in a row, COOL produced *College Pep Rallies* for students at select elementary schools. This year, we were able to bring College Pep Rallies to three new elementary schools: Dyess, Jane Long and Reagan. The rallies provided a fun environment for 5th graders to learn key college terminology and post-secondary education concepts needed to achieve their personal best and to become excited about college! Students played a variety of games, earned prizes, and incorporated their college spirit alongside the AHS and CHS cheerleaders and mascots. The pep rallies focused on the importance of reading, scholarships, grade point average, class rank, ACT, SAT, and challenging themselves academically throughout elementary, middle, and high school.



PALS COLLEGE TOUR

Peer Assisted Leadership (PALS) is a mentoring, leadership, and community service class in which seniors at CHS and AHS serve as one-on-one mentors with elementary students. In partnerships with the PALS Program, COOL provided college tours for these high school seniors and their 4th and 5th grade mentees. This year, the PALS mentors and mentees toured Abilene Christian University, where they were able to get a glimpse of what college life is all about.

COOL REACH FOR THE STARS

Reach for the Stars is an interactive workshop that helps elementary students identify (S)pecific, (M)easurable, (A)ttainable, (R)ealistic, and (T)imely goals for the school year and gives them practical steps to reach those goals. The workshop intentionally focuses on the importance of setting goals for college, even as elementary-aged students. The students are read *Mahalia Goes to College*, a fun fiction about a mouse who gets trapped in a backpack and finds herself at a university and decides to reach for the stars by attending and graduating from college.



CREATE YOUR COLLEGE

For the fourth year in a row, COOL participated in the Business Information Systems classrooms at the middle school campuses, using the activity *Create Your College*. Eighth grade students created college boards using construction paper, stickers, magazine cut-outs, markers, and crayons to create a collage of their idea of a perfect college.



COOL COLLEGE DREAMS

For the third consecutive year, the COOL Program presented at Lee Elementary School's Career Day. The COOL Counselors presented *COOL College Dreams*, an interactive workshop in which students drew pictures of themselves in various careers and then brainstormed the types of college education that would be required to prepare for each specific career.

LEADERSHIP MAN

The COOL Team presented the *Leadership Man Workshop* to several student groups this year. *Leadership Man* is a perfect way to implement a leadership goal with a group while discussing leadership characteristics, group social norms, and expected group contributions. The students broke into groups and traced the outline of a student. Students then wrote down the traits they thought a leader should possess. The groups share their "Leadership Man," and facilitators then led a discussion on what it takes to become an actual leader. Students walked away with real life tips on how they can use their influence to step up as leaders in the community around them.



FILL THE BUCKET

Fill the Bucket is an activity designed to help the participants learn how to not only set realistic goals, but also how to achieve them. To begin the activity, the team establishes a unified "points" goal, and the objective is for the team to hit its goal by scoring as many points as possible. Team members earn points by tossing items into three buckets available (each assigned different point values, based on proximity to participants). At the beginning of each round, new rules are established concerning game play and the various ways team members can and cannot score points. Team members must work together to evaluate their goals and performance and develop new strategies, accordingly. Middle school students who participated in this COOL workshop this year had a blast while learning the invaluable concept of setting, continuously re-evaluating, and attaining their goals – a concept that will prove to be essential, as the college years rapidly close in.

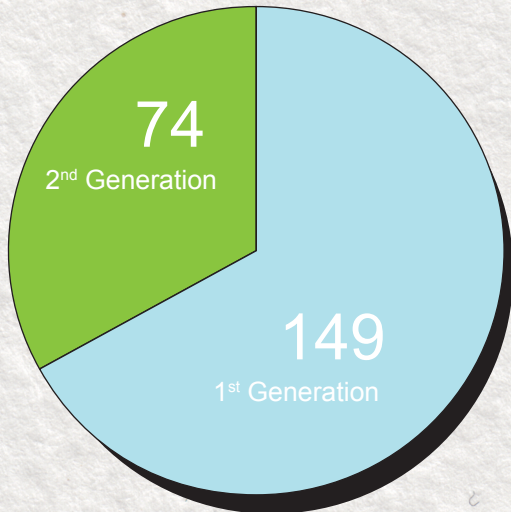
HIGH SCHOOL WORKSHOPS

The COOL Team facilitated numerous classroom presentations and workshops to all grade levels at CHS, AHS, WCE, and ATEMS high schools. A few of the workshops this past year included: College Goal Setting, Financial Aid 101, Career Exploration & College Selection, Crafting the College Essay, and Tips & Tricks for First-Generation College Students.

A Story of IMPACT

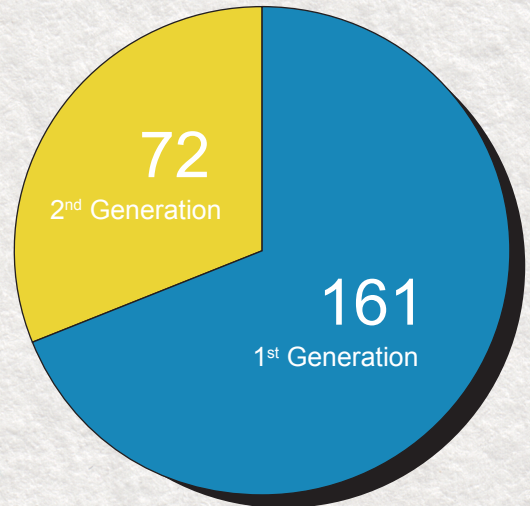
AHS/CHS STATISTICS: 1ST & 2ND GENERATION PARTICIPANTS

ABILENE HIGH SCHOOL COOL PARTICIPANTS: 223

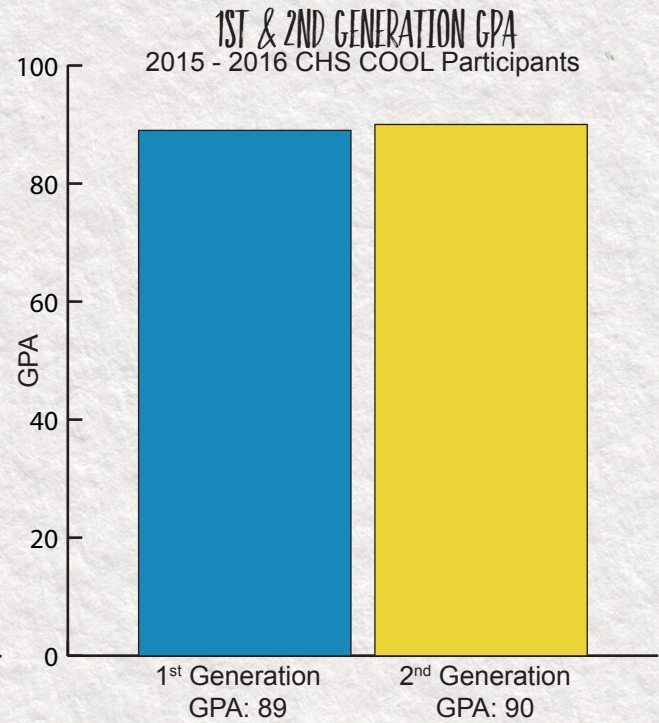
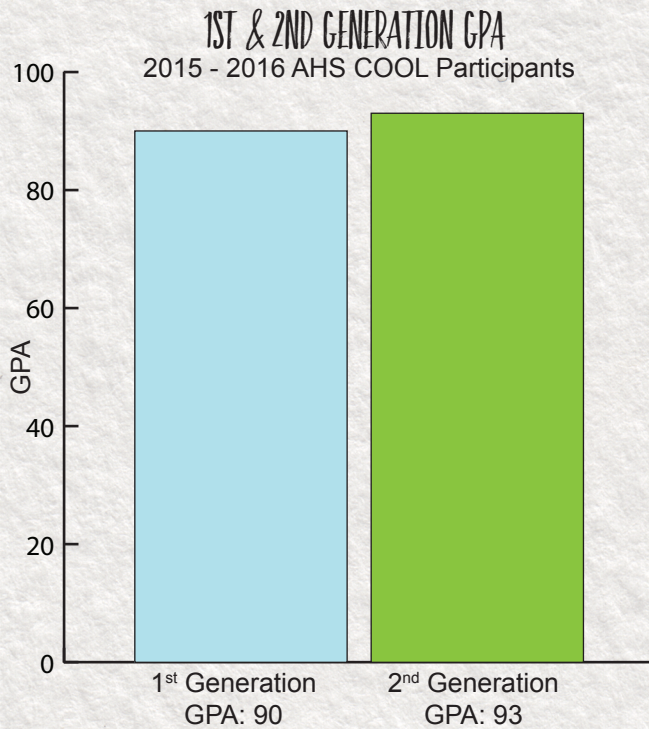


42% of the 2nd Generation students are economically disadvantaged and/or at-risk.

COOPER HIGH SCHOOL COOL PARTICIPANTS: 233



35% of the 2nd Generation students are economically disadvantaged and/or at-risk.

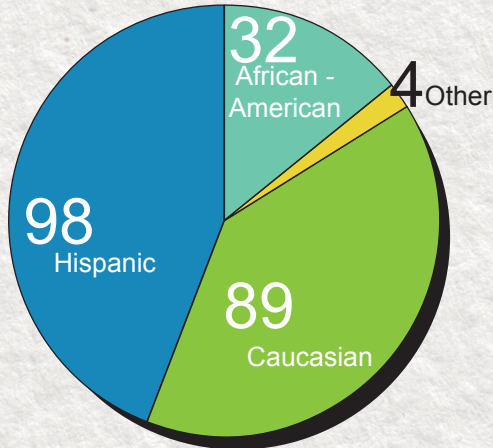


This chart indicates the overall Grade Point Average (GPA) of COOL Program senior participants for the 2015-2016 school year. Our statistics typically indicate that first-generation students tend to have a lower GPA than second-generation students. It is important to note that 80% of students in the COOL Program are first-generation and/or classified by AISD as either at-risk or economically disadvantaged.

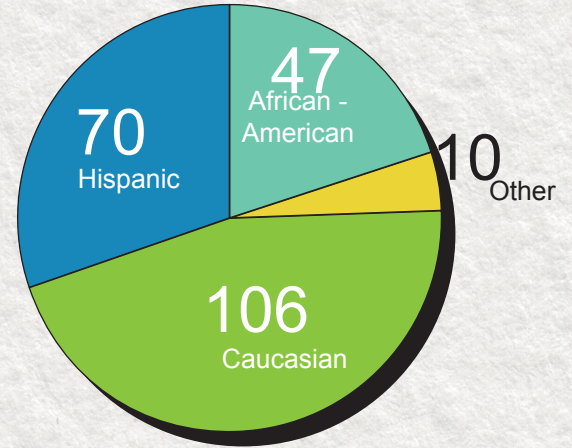
AHS/CHS STATISTICS ETHNICITY BREAKDOWN



ABILENE HIGH SCHOOL COOL PARTICIPANTS

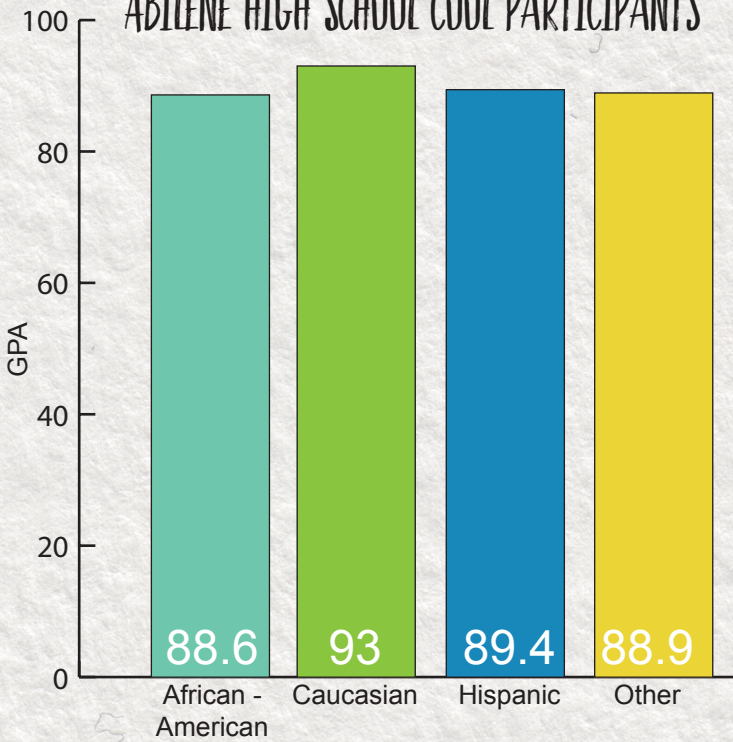


COOPER HIGH SCHOOL COOL PARTICIPANTS

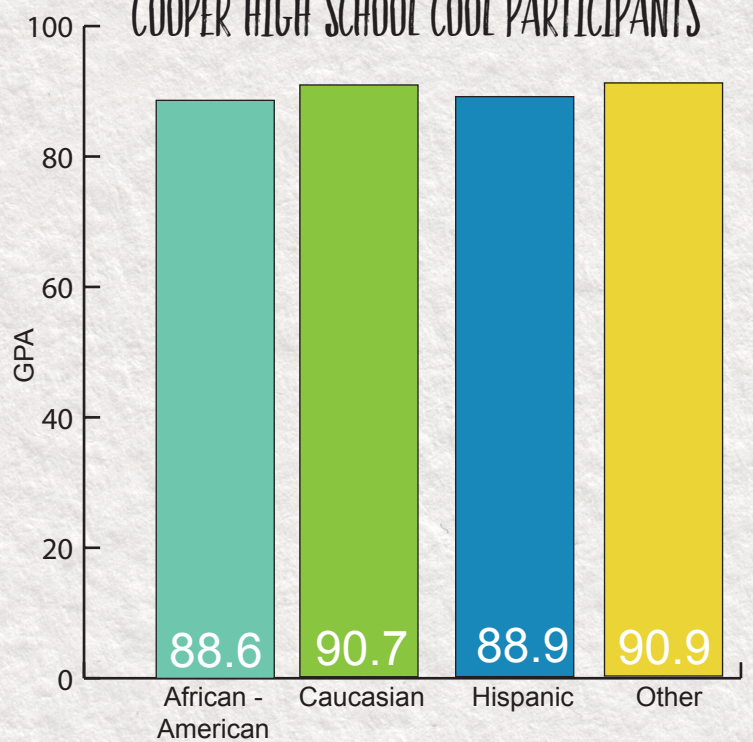


This chart indicates the different ethnicities of the senior participants in the COOL Program for the 2015-2016 school year.

ABILENE HIGH SCHOOL COOL PARTICIPANTS



COOPER HIGH SCHOOL COOL PARTICIPANTS



This chart indicates overall Grade Point Average (GPA) of COOL program seniors for the 2015-2016 school year by ethnicity.

ATEMS STATISTICS

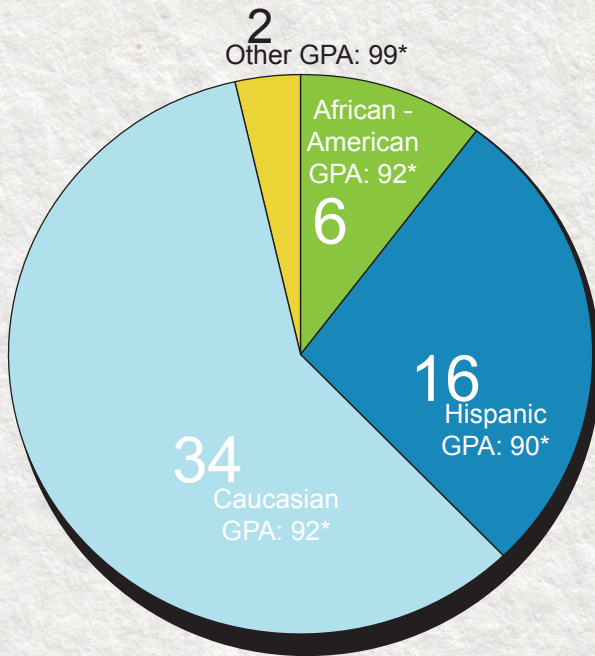
TOTAL ATEMS COOL SENIOR PARTICIPANTS: 58

1st Generation = 39 // 2nd Generation = 19

37% of 2nd Generation students are economically disadvantaged and/or at-risk.

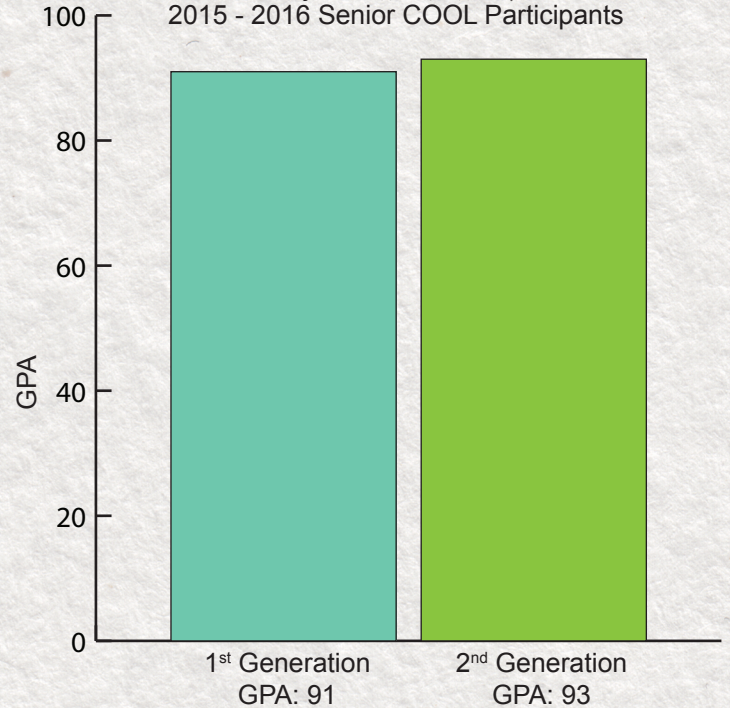
ETHNICITY BREAKDOWN/GPA*

2015 - 2016 Senior COOL Participants
*represents Average GPA



1ST & 2ND GENERATION GPA

2015 - 2016 Senior COOL Participants



WOODSON CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE STATISTICS

Woodson Center for Excellence (WCE) is an alternative high school for students in Abilene ISD. It is a school of choice offering a self-paced curriculum designed to accelerate a student's education and meet the state and local graduation requirements. Many of the students at WCE campus have the potential to attend college and be just as successful as their counterparts at AHS, CHS, and ATEMS. In fact, for the first time in COOL Program history, WCE students attended many of the COOL college tours. The style of college advising differs at WCE because many of the students have family obligations, extreme financial situations, or children of their own. Students who attend WCE may not be able to enroll in college right away due to the varied graduation times or other circumstances, so we work with these students to formulate a plan to get them into college as soon as possible. Although the COOL Program makes an effort to work with as many seniors as possible at WCE, this year we actively assisted 90 seniors who are planning to enroll in post-secondary education including college, community college or a certificate program. Some are joining the military and plan to further their education while serving their country.

TOTAL WCE COOL SENIOR PARTICIPANTS: 90

1st Generation = 67 // 2nd Generation = 23

74% of 2nd Generation students are economically disadvantaged and/or at-risk.

93% of WCE COOL Senior participants were either 1st generation, economically disadvantaged, or at-risk.

32% of students at WCE were classified as unaccompanied youth or homeless.

A Story of GENEROSITY

In conjunction with Star Family of Dealerships, the Abilene Education Foundation (AEF) acknowledged the 2016 scholarship recipients on Tuesday, May 17. AEF granted a total of \$45,950 in scholarships.

AEF granted a total of \$45,950 in scholarships.

If the AEF scholarship recipient decides to attend Abilene Christian University, Hardin-Simmons University, McMurry University or Cisco College, the institution will match the AEF scholarship amount, within certain guidelines. This makes the dream of attending a local university an attainable option for many of our students. AEF is very appreciative of their enthusiastic collaboration.

ABILENE EDUCATION FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

Abilene Education Foundation Scholarships are funded due to the tremendous generosity of the Abilene community at our past Cajun Fest fundraisers. This year the Abilene Education Foundation was pleased to provide scholarships for seven deserving students.

Cheyenne Vinita, AHS \$1,000: Hardin-Simmons Univ.
Gabriel Tolentino, CHS \$1,000: Abilene Christian Univ.
Allison Scott, AHS \$1,000: Abilene Christian Univ.
Leighton Tidwell, ATEMS \$1,000: Univ. of Texas at Arlington
Ariel Maddox, CHS \$1,000: Texas A&M Univ.
Holly Pettijohn, AHS \$1,000: Harding Univ.
Josaline Alexander, CHS \$1,000: Austin College

AHS AND CHS ALUMNI ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS

AHS and CHS Alumni Scholarship funds are endowed monies that provide scholarship opportunities for the graduating seniors of Abilene High School and Cooper High School. The AHS Alumni Scholarship fund began in 2008 by the AHS class of 1958 and includes donations from the classes of 1943, 48, 53, 55, 57, 58, 59, 60, 63, 64, 65, 93, 95, 96, 2001 and 2002. The CHS Alumni Scholarship fund includes donations from the classes of 1964, 65, 67, 69, 78 and 79. Abilene Education Foundation also contributes to the growth of these funds. This year's award recipients were:

Alyssa Ruffin, CHS \$1,100: Dallas Baptist Univ.
Katherine Newton, AHS \$1,100: Univ. of Texas at Austin

DONOR-DIRECTED: INDIVIDUAL

Each year we have individual donors from the community who choose to invest in the future of AISD students with a scholarship. This year's donor-directed scholarships were awarded to:

Gladys Jurado, CHS \$500: Texas State Univ.
Elizabeth Bertsch, AHS \$500: Trinity Univ.
Bronwyn Taff, CHS \$500: Univ. of Mary Hardin-Baylor
Brianna Krabill, ATEMS \$500: McMurry Univ.
Anne Wooliscroft, AHS \$500: Baylor Univ.
Garrett Swenson, CHS \$500: TAMU – Corpus Christi
Adam Krause, ATEMS \$500: Abilene Christian Univ.
Carlee Freeman, CHS \$500: Harding Univ.
Raissa Teta, AHS \$1000: Texas Southern Univ.



ROYCE CURTIS EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP (AHS ONLY)

During their 20th class reunion, the AHS Class of 1993 announced, to a very surprised Royce Curtis, a permanent scholarship fund which will help future Eagles reach their goals of a college education. The endowment was established by graduate Bracken Kolle and his wife, Joana. Royce served as the AHS Principal for 14 years and as the AISD Associate Superintendent of Personnel for seven years until retiring in 2010. This year's recipient of the Royce Curtis Excellence in Education Endowed Scholarship was:

Lorenzo Ellis, AHS \$2,000: Abilene Christian University

JOHNNY ORTEGA, JR. MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP (AHS ONLY)

The Johnny Ortega, Jr. Memorial Scholarship is provided by Mary and Juan Ortega, Sr. in memory of their son Johnny Ortega, Jr. who passed away in February 2011. Johnny was a 2006 graduate of Abilene High, an active duty soldier of the U.S. Army from 2007-2011 and an avid runner. While at Abilene High, Johnny participated in cross-country. To honor his memory, this scholarship was awarded to an Abilene High male senior who has participated in varsity athletics.

Rowdy Riggins, AHS \$1,000: Abilene Christian Univ.



CITIZENS BANK OF ABILENE

The Citizens Bank of Abilene is committed to building strong and enduring relationships with their customers and in the community. Candidates for the scholarship must possess a cumulative GPA of 85 or higher and show active participation in extra-curricular activities or volunteer in the community, and possess a sense of school pride. This year's recipients were:

Devin Thomas, CHS \$1,000: Univ. of North Texas
Andrew Alcantar, AHS \$1,000: Hardin-Simmons Univ.

MICHELE SCOTT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP (AHS ONLY)

Michele Scott was a remarkable friend, person, coach, and teacher. She had an incredible personality and influenced all with whom she came into contact. In fact, some of the funds from this scholarship were directly raised by her students. This award celebrates her life and is sponsored by AISD employees.

Ashley Pierce, AHS \$1,000: Hardin-Simmons Univ.



COUGAR NATION SCHOLARSHIP (CHS ONLY)

“Rise Up” is the official motto of Cooper High School. The Cougar Nation scholarship is for a student who exemplifies what it means to be a Cooper Cougar, both in school pride and academic excellence, and it is funded by AISD employees. This year’s recipients were:

Chris Stockdale, CHS \$1,000: Texas Tech Univ.
Kelsey LaBrenz, CHS \$1,000: Texas A&M Univ.
Kendra Isibor, CHS \$1,000: Texas A&M Univ.
Lauren Marrow, CHS \$1,000: Dallas Baptist Univ.

COACH JOHN MCCABE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP (AHS ONLY)

Coach John McCabe devoted himself to a 46-year career in teaching, coaching, and mentoring high school students. He was regarded as a history teacher and football/track coach with an enthusiasm for helping students reach their highest potential. For many years, Abilene hosted the “John McCabe Big Country Relays” as a tribute to the impact he made on students and athletes. Although he received many honors during his career, one of his most valued was the opportunity to serve on the Board of Directors of the Texas High School Coaches Association. This scholarship is awarded to a student athlete at AHS who exudes the Eagle spirit and possesses a love of learning.

Cheyenne Vinita, AHS \$500: Hardin-Simmons Univ.



THE RISING PHOENIX SCHOLARSHIP (ATEMS ONLY)

The Rising Phoenix Scholarship is awarded in honor of Zach Church, a young man who graced this world for only a brief nine years. It is in his spirit that the Rising Phoenix Scholarship was started. This scholarship recognizes a student who has overcome adversity and shares Zach’s love of education. This year, it was awarded to:

Jesse Sahabo, ATEMS \$500: Univ. of Texas at Austin



META ALICE KEITH BRATTEN FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP (AHS ONLY)

Meta Alice Keith Bratten graduated with the AHS class of 1943. She was active in Personality Girls, Pep Squad, The Battery, Glee Club and G&G Club (a club just for senior girls at Abilene High and meant "The Gang"). These awards are for two AHS students and are \$6,000 each. They are granted over a period of four years, pending a minimum college GPA of at least 2.5.

Briarston Ashford, AHS \$6,000: Abilene Christian Univ.
Tyler Boring, AHS \$6,000: Univ. of Texas at Dallas

AISD TRANSPORTATION SCHOLARSHIP

The AISD Transportation Department raises funds to award a scholarship to an AISD student who is both generous in spirit with one's time and actively involved in extra-curricular activities and community service. This year it was awarded to:

Clark Neil, ATEMS \$750: Univ. of Texas at Austin

YOUNG MASTERS JURIED ART EXHIBITION SCHOLARSHIPS

In collaboration with The Grace Museum and Abilene Independent School District, the goal of the Young Masters exhibition is to celebrate young master artists (enrolled in Advanced Placement art courses) and their dedicated teachers with a quality museum exhibition. The 2016 Young Masters event was held on March 31st, and the following winners were recognized at that time.

Billy Cano, Senior, AHS \$2,000: Best In Show
McKenzie Hanson, Senior, CHS \$1,250: 1st place
Lauren Wertheim, Senior, AHS \$1,000: 2nd Place
Blaine Beltran, Junior, CHS \$750: 3rd Place
Alyssa De Leon, Junior, AHS \$500: Merit Winner
Kaitlyn Harris, Junior, CHS \$500: Merit Winner
Claudia Vaughan, Junior, CHS \$500: Merit Winner
Anny Nduwayo, Sophomore, CHS \$250: Honorable Mention
Asa Santos, Junior, CHS \$250: Honorable Mention
Allison Scott, Senior, AHS \$250: Honorable Mention
Devin Thomas, Senior, CHS \$250: Honorable Mention
Ashley Woods, Senior, CHS \$250: Honorable Mention
Marianne Yuan, Sophomore, CHS \$250: Honorable Mention

2015-2016 COOL SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE

With an average tuition increase of 3% per year, the need for scholarships continues to grow each year.

As College Advisors, we stress the importance of students submitting as many scholarship applications as possible, in anticipation of gaps in financial aid.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, students are able to meet this challenge head-on by earning scholarships from civic organizations, foundations, individual donors, and educational institutions, which include athletic and merit-based awards.

The COOL Program is pleased to announce that ATEMS, AHS, and CHS 2015-2016 senior participants received \$5,535,053 in scholarship money to be used over a four-year period!

This amount only includes money received as academic, need-based, athletic, and/or community scholarships. This amount does not include any traditional financial aid opportunities such as federal and state grants.

COOL SENIOR PARTICIPANTS

1ST GENERATION: \$3,109,450

2ND GENERATION: \$2,425,603



A Story of ACCOMPLISHMENT

The COOL Program, using the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) database, has been able to track individual COOL senior participants after high school graduation. A majority of COOL senior participants enrolled in a post-secondary institution after high school and all were accepted to at least one college of their choice. There were a wide variety of reasons why some of our participants chose not to pursue a post-secondary education. Some students joined the military or made personal choices which increased their need to immediately enter the workforce or postpone enrollment. Percentages of COOL participants who enrolled in a post-secondary institution after high school graduation has remained steady at around 80% since the program's inception in 2007-2008. Although the percentage has remained fairly consistent, as the COOL Program grows, the actual number of students who enroll after high school should continue to steadily increase.

It has been five years since the 2010-2011 COOL senior class enrolled in college and four years since the 2011-2012 senior class first began their college journey. We are pleased to report the following information on our graduates, our students still enrolled, and those who, although yet to earn a degree, have earned some college credit. It is our sincere hope that those who have postponed their education will one day return to complete their degrees. We seek out these past COOL graduates in an attempt to encourage them to re-enroll by providing assistance and guidance to further their post-secondary education options.



The actual number of COOL senior participants who enrolled in post-secondary education directly after high school is listed below. Please note these numbers only include students we could verify through the NSC or personal contact.

COOL CLASS OF 2010-2011

280 - Enrolled in post-secondary education directly after high school.

237 - Graduated from college or are still enrolled

25 - Earned some college credit, but not a degree

18 - Earned some college credit, but we are unable to verify their current enrollment status.

COOL CLASS OF 2011-2012

261 - Enrolled in post-secondary education directly after high school.

203 - Graduated from college or are still in enrolled

32 - Earned some college credit, but not a degree.

26 - Earned some college credit, but we are unable to verify their current enrollment status.

ACTUAL NUMBER OF COOL SENIOR PARTICIPANTS ENROLLED IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION DIRECTLY AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

2008-2009: 220

2009-2010: 258

2010-2011: 280

2011-2012: 261

2012-2013: 393*

2013-2014: 391*

2014-2015: 362*

*In these years, there were four full-time COOL Program College Advisors, including services at ATEMS and Woodson Center for Excellence high schools.

A Story of GRATITUDE

Being a part of the COOL Program is a phenomenal experience. To be able to assist students, as they chase their dreams of achieving a higher education, is one of the most rewarding opportunities in life. While we never expect it, nothing brings us more joy than to find the occasional note of gratitude on our desks. Students' own words of gratitude best express the very essence of the impact of the COOL Program.

Words cannot express how grateful we are for you investing in our kids. Taking time out of your schedule wasn't something you had to do but it made a world of difference for our kids, their siblings + parents. Thanks again, Mrs. Osborne

Thank you for Telling us about ACU Isaiah B.

I am thankful for you
Thank you for showing us around
I am thankful for, the backpack, the sticker. -Alma

I am thank full for showing us the library, bean, and recording studio. Love Danyella Gutierrez
Thank you for showing us around. Jaqueline
Thank you for the Free stuff and Heather

Thank you for all you have done with me these past few weeks. You have truly been a blessing.

I can't possibly thank you enough. You are the nicest woman. I wish I could take you back to Georgia. Stay snuggles,
Quintoria Garrison

Thank you for everything you have done for me this year for preparing me for college!! You're the best and you personally care for each of your students. Thank you for going out of your way to help college become a reality for us.

♥ Bethany Dor

Thank you for all that you do. You have helped me with college things that my parents aren't able to do and I thank you for that. College tours would be boring without you. The seniors appreciate you!!!

-Asia Gutierrez

It has been a joy, honor, and privilege spending my last two years of high school in your wonderful presence. I am so thankful to have your support and guidance on my journey to a better life. You do so much and you are not only a blessing in my life. You are a blessing to everyone you come in contact with. Without you I don't believe I'd be on the path I'm traveling today. Thank you for sharing your knowledge and always being there when I needed to ramble. I truly consider you a friend and I wish you happy times and a blessed life because I know you've made those possible for me

You're the

Thank you
-Bian

Where do I even begin? I couldn't have made it through this school year without you. Thank you for calming me down through my freakouts and always supporting me with my decisions. Thank you for being a strong, Christian influence in my life. Thank you for giving me the courage to make those decisions and always being there when I needed to talk. I'm going to miss you so much! Love you!

Thanks for everything you do. You've been so helpful w/ me & my college adventure. Thanks again for your POSITIVE & helpful spirit. You are extremely needed. -AH

Thank you so much for your help thus far in my college and scholarship process, especially with the Jade Kent Cooke Scholarship! I'm sorry if it seemed like I was a pain shade for the form being filed out. I just have tons of anxiety. Thank you, again, and I'm extremely grateful for all of your effort.

-Sincerely, Kelsey Lammons

Getting to know you over these past 9 months has been great! Not only are you an amazing college advisor, but you're also an amazing friend! Thank you so much for all your help! I truly believe I wouldn't have been as successful without you! I appreciate everything you did!

Your thoughtfulness certainly made a difference in mine.
Thanks Again

I'll make sure to come visit while I'm in college to fill you in on all the latest details!

Love always,
Kenya

The COOL Program would like to thank the following community partners for their support.

Shelton Family Foundation
Dian Graves Owen Foundation
Abilene Independent School District

Abilene Christian University
Azle Education Foundation
Cisco College
Community Foundation of Abilene
Communities in Schools
Dodge Jones Foundation
First Financial Bank
Hardin-Simmons University
Hispanic Leadership Council
Junior Achievement of Abilene
Kiwanis Club of Abilene
McMurry University
Star Dodge Chrysler Jeep Ram
Talent Search
Texas Association for College Admissions Counseling
Texas State Technical College: West Texas

A special thank you to the AISD Print Shop for printing this report.



**ABILENE
EDUCATION
FOUNDATION**

Abilene Education Foundation

P.O. Box 1999
One AISD Center
Abilene, Texas 79604

www.aaeff.org