



***Closing the Gaps:* It's About Economic Development Round Rock ISD/ACC Annexation**

What is *Closing the Gaps* and how does it apply to Round Rock?

- *Closing the Gaps* is a state initiative created to reverse an alarming trend toward decreased college participation among Texans. The state warns that Texas must enroll an additional 630,000 college students by 2015 if the state is to remain economically competitive and have a qualified workforce.
- *Closing the Gaps* tells us what should be obvious, but is sometimes forgotten:
 - If more people aren't in higher education, the state will not have a trained workforce expected by business and industry.
 - If Texas has an inadequate workforce, current business and industry will not expand and new business will choose to locate somewhere else that provides a quality workforce.
 - Not enough minorities are entering higher education.
- According to a fall 2005 report from the Texas Education Agency, 49 percent of Round Rock Independent School District (RRISD) graduates did not enter the public higher education system within the year after they graduated.
- According to the Basic Needs Coalition of Central Texas, Williamson County had a 90 percent growth in the number of low-income students, or 28 percent of the overall student population. The community college offers a wide array of services and programs for this population.

What are the implications of ignoring *Closing the Gaps*?

- Increased number of uneducated people
- Increased number of people making lower wages
- Less money for consumer spending necessary for local businesses and for the economy to thrive
- Increase in tax-funded social services

Why choose ACC?

- Community colleges are the primary gateway to higher education.
- Fastest growing populations are minorities that have been traditionally underserved in higher education. The majority of them choose community colleges.
- The ACC District has convenient locations with seven campuses.
- Tuition rates are lower than a four-year college. The University of Texas is over \$4,000 per year, compared with \$1,296 at ACC.
- The ACC District is the largest provider of transfer students to the University of Texas-Austin and Texas State University-San Marcos. As ACC grows so do four-year universities. ACC transfer students perform as well as or better than those who begin at a four-year college.