This report examined three potential indicators of college enrollment school and district staff might use to identify and support students at risk of not attending college:

- **Chicago**: Designed to predict high school graduation*; based on earning six course credits — the minimum to advance to the next grade in HISD — and having at most one semester “F” in a core subject (English, math, science, or social studies)

- **Houston Education Research Consortium (HERC)**: Designed to predict college enrollment (see Appendix A or information on its origins); based on having an attendance rate of 90% or higher, having a B-average (80% or higher), and earning at least 0.5 advanced course credits

- **State**: Designed to predict college enrollment by the Texas Education Agency; based on meeting the benchmark on the English/language arts and mathematics tests

First, the findings suggested the HERC indicator might be the best predictor of college enrollment. Second, ninth-grade was when students were most at risk of not meeting the HERC indicator and fell off-track from college enrollment.

*The full report is available at kinder.rice.edu/herc.*

**Key Findings**

- The Chicago indicator was less effective at predicting college enrollment than the HERC and state indicators.

- The HERC indicator was more effective than the Chicago indicator at predicting non-college enrollment, particularly in ninth and 11th grade.

- The three potential indicators underestimated the college enrollment rates of white, Asian, and non-economically disadvantaged students, but were more accurate for black, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students.

*The Chicago indicator was tested to see whether a high school graduation indicator could also serve as a potential college enrollment indicator.*
Ninth grade was a challenging time for students and many fell off-track.

- Students were most at risk of not meeting the Chicago and HERO indicators during the ninth grade.
- The state indicator did not show the same ninth-grade pattern likely because it was based on test scores, which might vary little over time or neglect to capture changes in student motivation and effort.

Figure 1. Falling Off-Track Based on HERO Indicator

![Graph showing estimated hazard and survival probabilities]

Source: Figure 2 in full report.

Note: The hazard probability curve shows the percentage of students who did not meet the HERO indicator in each grade. The survival probability curve shows the percentage of students still on-track by the end of each grade. This is a cumulative graph: by the end of high school, 15% of students met the HERO indicator in all six grade levels, seventh through 12th.

Recommendations

1: School and district practitioners should use the HERO indicator to identify and target potential non-enrollees for intervention.

2: Practitioners should be aware the potential indicators do not predict college enrollment equally well for different groups of students.

3: Practitioners should provide additional supports for ninth-grade students to help them stay on-track to college enrollment. The potential indicators may be part of these efforts if they can help teachers, counselors, and administrators identify students in need of special assistance.