

COOL Report

Annual Report for
2020-2021



College Offers Opportunities for Life

ABILENE 
EDUCATION
FOUNDATION

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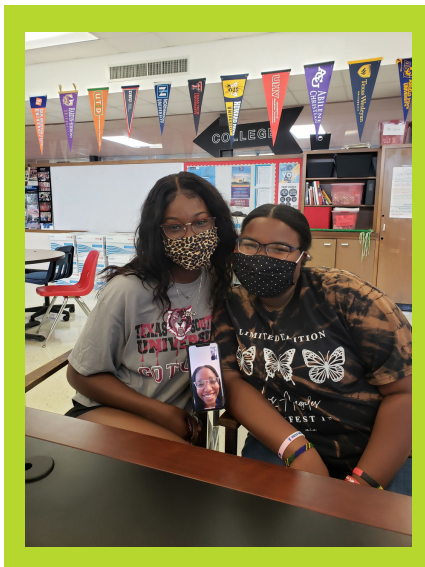
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MEET THE COOL TEAM

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AbileneEducationFoundation





MESSAGE FROM THE COOL TEAM

I truly cannot express how grateful and appreciative I am to have you in my life. From freshman year through my senior year you have been one of my biggest supporters. I definitely would not be in this position without you and your endless encouragement and support. -CHS 2021 graduate

Every year around this time we like to share a round up of what we consider the highlights of the past school year. Just like the year itself, the highlights from the 2020-2021 school year look a little different. Instead of taking students to visit college campuses, we brought the colleges to our campuses via Zoom. Instead of taking Camp COOL on the road for three days, we stayed in Abilene for one day and took a day trip the next. We weren't able to visit the elementary and middle schools in person, but that allowed us more time to intentionally invest in our 9th through 12th graders through small groups, classroom workshops, and one-on-one mentoring.

There is no question that COVID-19 has negatively impacted enrollment, not only for postsecondary institutions, but also in K-12 schools. The goal of the COOL Program is to get students to and through college and we are committed to serving them while they navigate these unprecedented times. While we, like the rest of the nation, saw a decrease in the number of students enrolling in college directly out of high school, we were thrilled to see the number of students who have graduated, or are still pursuing their degrees. We are inspired by their hard work and desire to make a positive change.

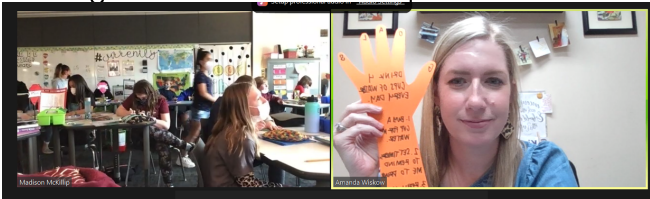
We thank you for your continued support of the COOL Program and the students of Abilene ISD. We hope you enjoy looking over our highlights from the past year.

-The COOL Team

*The COOL Program is pleased to announce that ATEMS, AHS, and CHS 2020-2021 senior participants received over **\$7.6 million** in scholarship money to be used over a four year period!*

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Mentored over 700 COOL seniors. Of those, we feel confident that 506 will pursue some kind of postsecondary education.
- Presented in 121 classrooms.
- Partnered with ACU, HSU, and McMurry Financial Aid departments to host Fall and Spring workshops at all high schools. AHS hosted specialty FAFSA workshops through the Fire Academy and English departments.
- Assisted juniors and seniors in registering for the SAT/ACT, including assisting them in accessing fee waivers, when eligible. Additionally, assisted junior student athletes in registering for the NCAA through the eligibility center.
- Continued to follow up and provide support to COOL alumni, assisting them in attaining their post-secondary goals.
- Virtually served elementary school students through educational workshops.



- Virtually hosted 15 representatives from multiple universities in COOL classrooms to meet with juniors and seniors who were interested in those schools.
- Lead Camp COOL for the fifth year for incoming high school freshmen (see page 4 for more details.)
- Presented at the AHS, CHS, ATEMS Open Houses, Holland Medical High School and hosted numerous junior/senior class meetings and parent meetings.
- Collaborated with Communities in Schools (CIS), a program for at-risk students in AISD. CIS refers students who need one-on-one college admissions mentoring to the COOL Program. COOL also refers students to CIS who need additional resources outside the scope of COOL especially homeless or unaccompanied youth participants.

- Assisted school counselors in registering the junior class in district-wide ACT. COOL Counselors presented tips on how to be successful on the test as well as provided study guides to help them prepare for the ACT.
- Created and sold handmade beaded mask lanyards to AISD and community members as a fundraiser for COOL.
- Supported the Hispanic Leadership Council's Planning for College Seminar. This seminar is geared towards first-generation college students with the intent of sharing information on college. Because the event was virtual, COOL Counselors helped with the plan to have college admissions counselors provide informative videos about their school to replace the physical booth that the admissions counselors would usually use to promote their school.
- Hosted "I Got In" celebration for CHS students who had been accepted to college.



- Participated in the interview and selection process for the 5th grade Junior Lighthouse Team at Ortiz Elementary.
- Tamika Braye was selected to serve on the Abilene High School Foundations Team.
- Facilitated CHS Black History Story Time Lunch and Learn event. The Assistant Dean of Oklahoma Christian University, Gary Jones talked about the Montgomery Bus Boycott and how MLK was chosen to lead, which started with a teenager named Claudette Colvin.

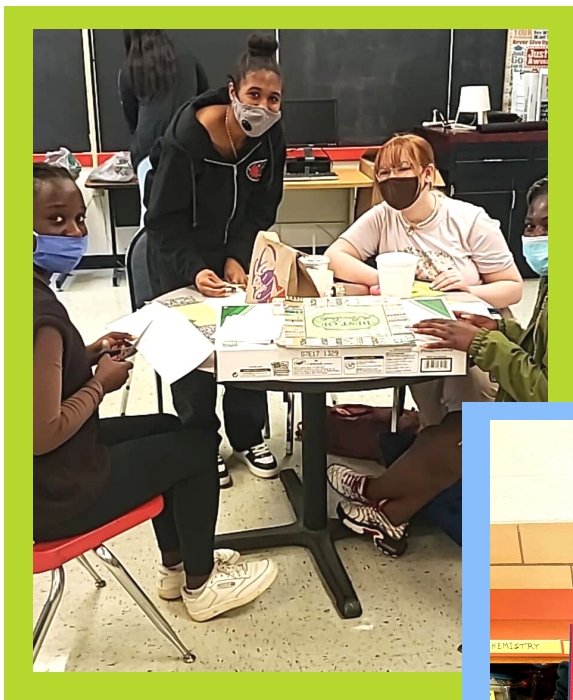


EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

The primary goal of COOL is to encourage and assist (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. While we weren't able to facilitate in-person elementary and middle school workshops this year, we were able to virtually present "Reach for the Stars" with some of our elementary partners. COOL counselors increased their underclassmen workshops as well. Our educational workshops reached approximately 2,670 students in AISD.

High School Workshops

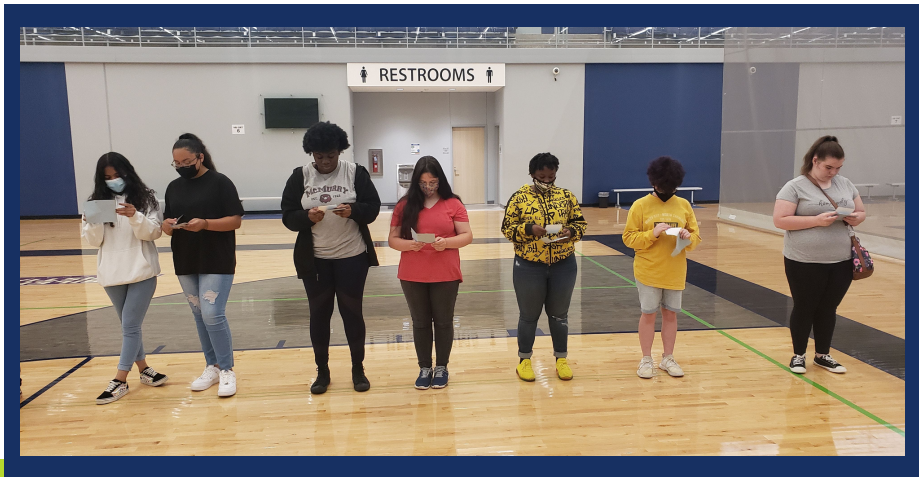
The COOL Team facilitated numerous classroom presentations and workshops to all grade levels at AHS, CHS, WCE, and ATEMS high schools. A few of the workshops this past year included: COOL Personal Finance, How to Become a Morning Person, Building Your Resume, and the College Admissions Essay. Additionally, we partnered with local university Financial Aid representatives to host evening FAFSA workshops for seniors and their families. Junior English classes spent a day with admissions representatives from Texas A&M University and Tarleton State University and learned more about the college admissions process and requirements. COOL seniors at Woodson had a Cisco and TSTC Application Day and were able to complete most admissions requirements in one sitting.



CAMP COOL

Camp COOL is an opportunity for incoming freshmen to learn about aspects of transitioning into high school and college, with a special emphasis on what it takes to be a leader in the world. Camp COOL allows first-generation or low-to-middle income students, who are aspiring to be leaders in their schools, to participate in a wide variety of fresh and engaging activities.

Due to COVID-19, this year's camp looked a little different, but still had a big impact. We offered a two-day camp that started at the Abilene Youth Sports Authority complex. There, the campers participated in a variety of interactive workshops on topics such as mental health, communication, personal finance, and the importance of a GPA. We ended the day with bowling and skating at First Baptist Church Family Life Center.



The next morning we loaded a bus and headed to Dallas, TX where we got to experience the Dallas World Aquarium. We were blown away by the exhibits and enjoyed learning about the different species. We then walked to lunch where the students were able to put their communication skills to use by ordering their own meals. From there, we went to Carrollton, TX where we got straight to the core of our leadership and team building at Group Dynamix. Students and counselors participated in a wide array of games to stretch everyone out of their comfort zones while developing communication, leadership and strategizing skills. At the end we ziplined our way through a high ropes course before heading back home.

We had the privilege of bringing two “junior counselors” along with us this year. Ozioma Ughanze and Avante Ralston, who had just graduated from Abilene High and Cooper (respectively), were an amazing addition to our team. Avante was a 2017 COOL camper, which made it even more special to have him with us. As recent COOL Program graduates, they were able to offer knowledgeable words of wisdom and advice to the campers as they start on their high school journey. The junior counselors were able to challenge the students to think of alternative solutions to problems and kept the students engaged in each activity. They were quick to jump into the games and activities with the campers and their endless energy and kind hearts made them an essential part of our team.



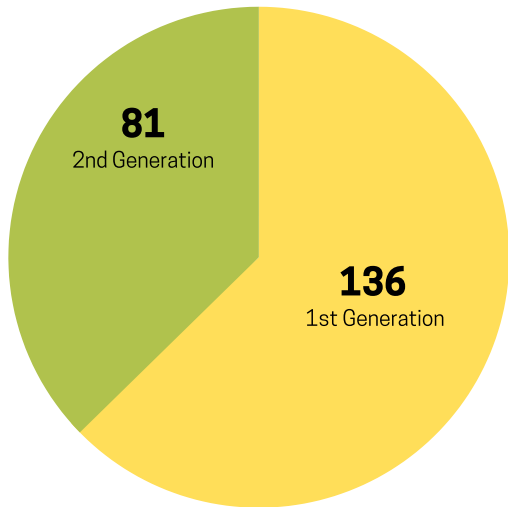
We were fortunate to receive a grant from the Community Foundation of Abilene to help us with a portion of the Camp COOL expenses. We have offered Camp COOL every-other-year since 2013 and this year marked our fifth installment of Camp COOL.

2020-2021

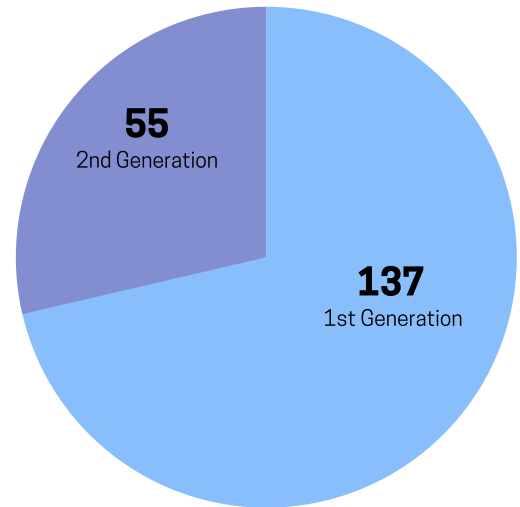
AHS & CHS Statistics: 1st & 2nd Generation COOL Senior High School Participants

Abilene High School COOL Senior Participants: 217

Cooper High School COOL Senior Participants: 192

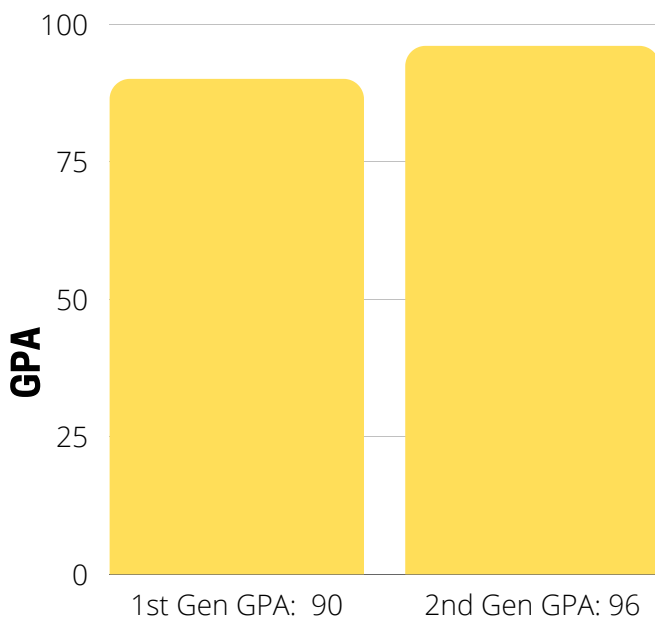


21% of the 2nd Generation students are economically disadvantaged and/or at-risk

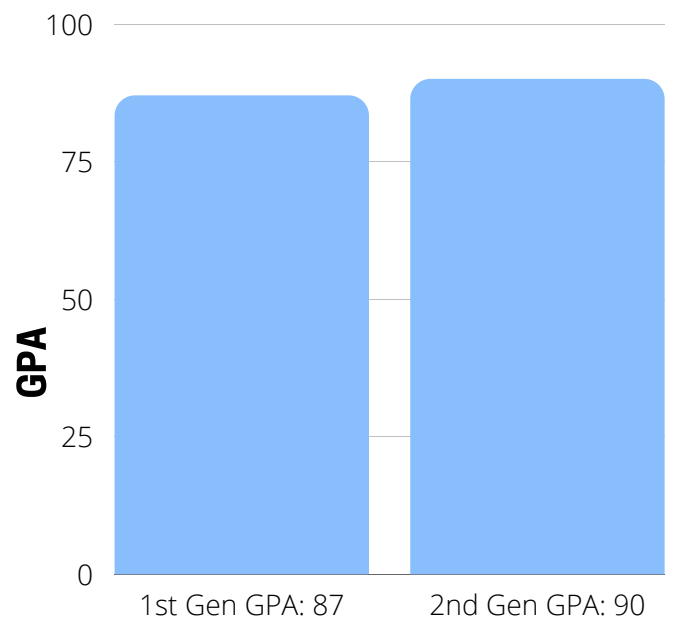


58% of the 2nd Generation students are economically disadvantaged and/or at-risk

1st & 2nd Generation GPA



1st & 2nd Generation GPA



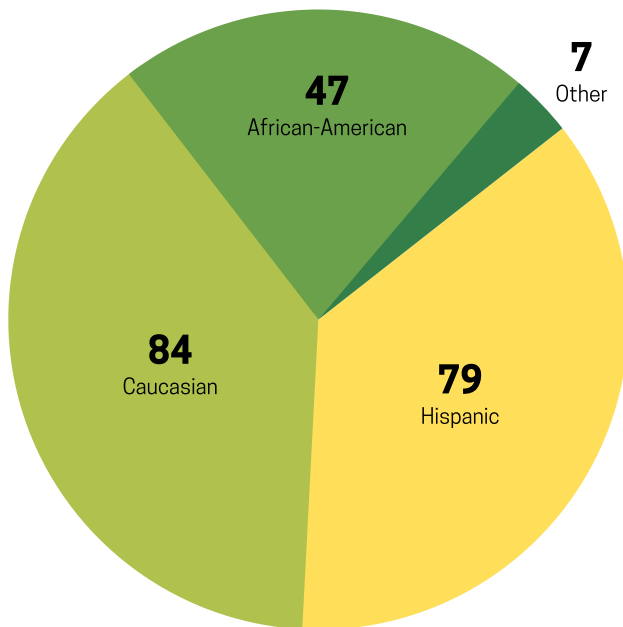
This chart indicates the overall Grade Point Average (GPA) of COOL Program senior participants for the 2020-2021 school year. Our statistics typically indicate that first-generation students tend to have a lower GPA than second-generation students.

7 It is important to note that 82% of the students in the COOL Program are first-generation and/or classified by Abilene ISD as either at-risk or economically disadvantaged.

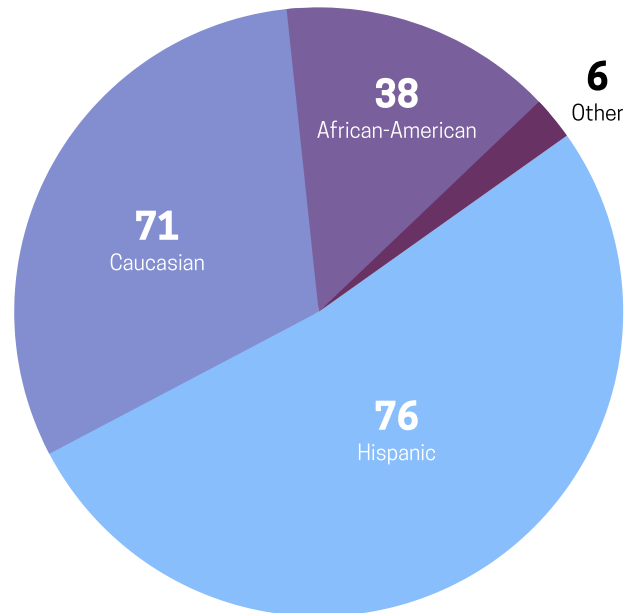
STATISTICS

AHS/CHS Statistics: Ethnicity Breakdown

**Abilene High School
COOL Senior Participants**

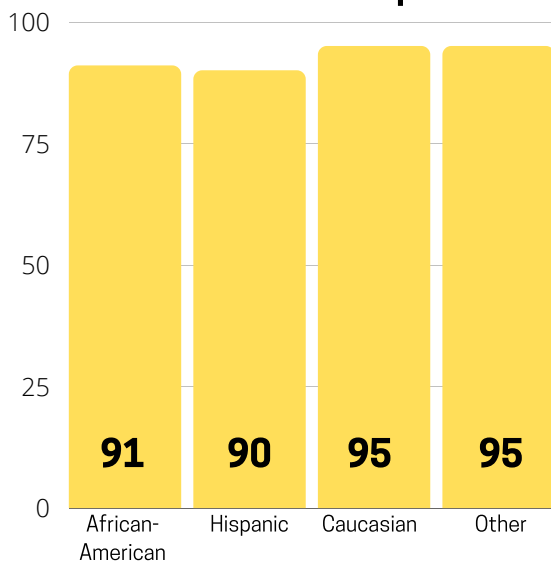


**Cooper High School
COOL Senior Participants**

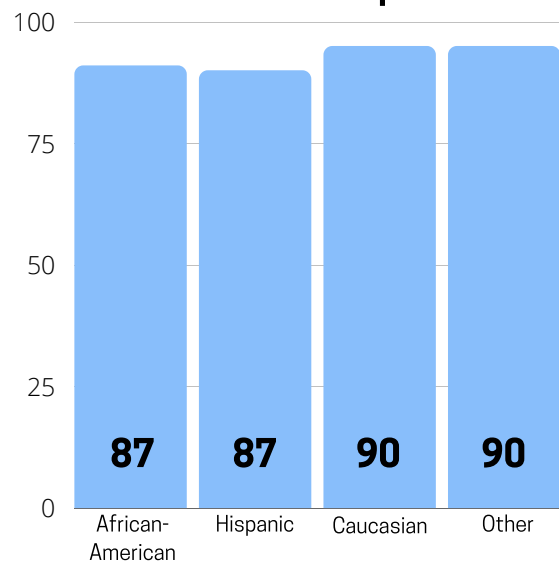


This chart indicates the different ethnicities of the senior participants in the COOL Program for the 2020-2021 school year.

**Abilene High School
COOL Senior Participants**



**Cooper High School
COOL Senior Participants**



This chart indicates the overall Grade Point Average (GPA) of the COOL Program seniors for the 2020-2021 school year by ethnicity.

ATEMS & WCE

Total ATEMS COOL Senior Participants: 53

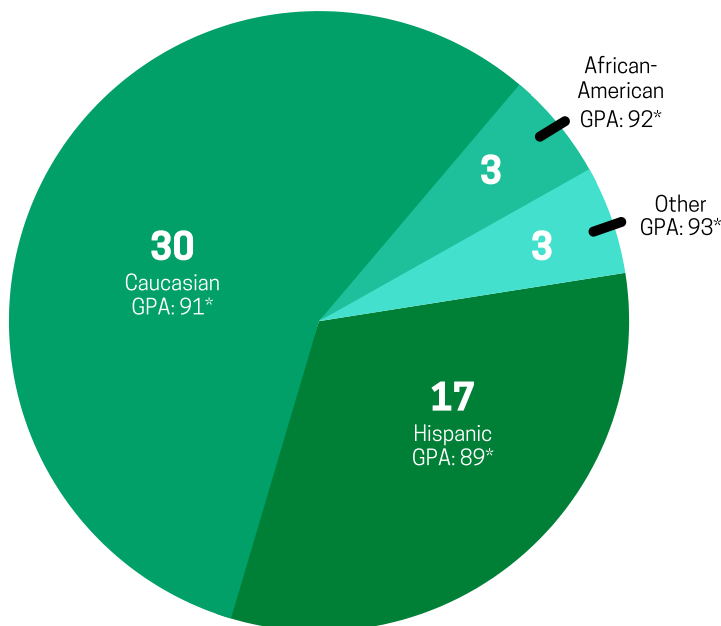
1st Generation : 31 || 2nd Generation: 22

81% of 2nd Generation students are economically disadvantaged and/or at-risk.

Ethnicity Breakdown/GPA*

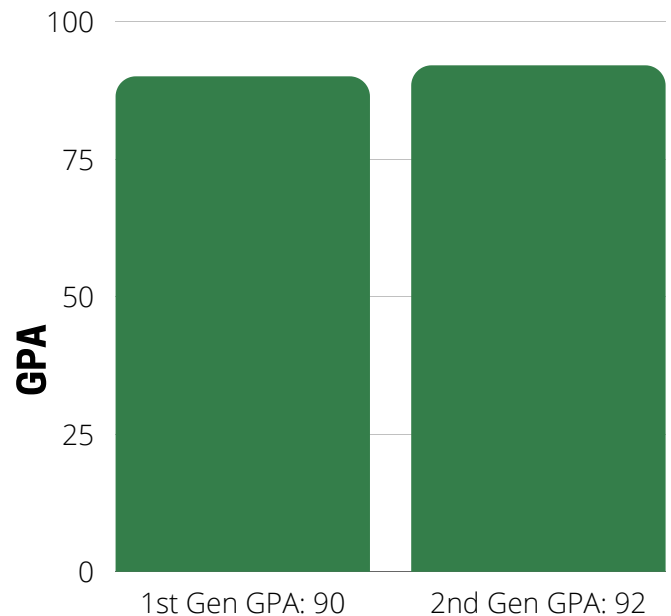
2020-2021 COOL Senior Participants

*represents average GPA



1st & 2nd Generation GPA

2020-2021 COOL Senior Participants



Woodson Center for Excellence

Woodson Center for Excellence (WCE) is an alternative high school for students in AISD. It is a school of choice offering an accelerated program designed to help students at-risk of not graduating on time meet the state and local graduation requirements. Many of the students at WCE have the potential to attend college and be just as successful as their peers at AHS, CHS, and ATEMS. The style of college advising differs at WCE because many of the students have unique 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 44 seniors who are planning to enroll in a post-secondary education including college, community college, or a certificate program. Some are joining the military and plan to further their education while serving our country.

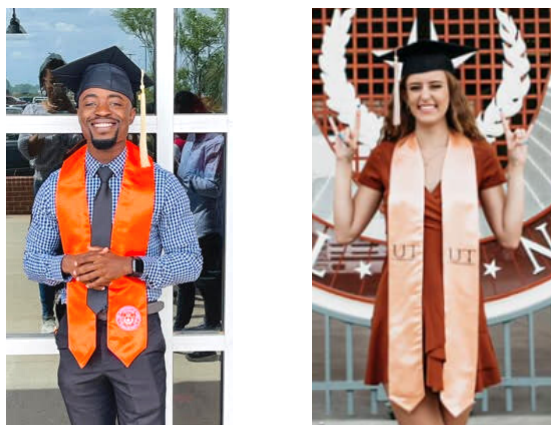
Total WCE COOL Senior Participants: 44

1st Generation: 37 || 2nd Generation: 7

100% of the 2nd Generation students are economically disadvantaged and/or at-risk.

COOL GRAD UPDATE

The COOL Program, using the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) database, social media, and personal contact, has been able to track most COOL senior participants after high school graduation. A majority of COOL senior participants enrolled in postsecondary institutions after high school and all were accepted to at least one college of their choice.



It has been five years since the class of 2016 and four years since the class of 2017 first enrolled in college. We are pleased to present the following information on our graduates, students still enrolled, and those who, although yet to earn a degree, have earned some college credit. We seek out past COOL graduates in an attempt to encourage them to re-enroll by providing assistance and guidance to further their postsecondary education options. Nationally, COVID-19 had a negative impact on enrollment. In June 2021, the NSC Research Center reported a 7% decline in students going to college immediately after high school from a year ago, an unprecedented one-year decline*. While we saw a decrease in the number of students enrolling in college directly out of high school, we were thrilled to see the number of students who have graduated, or are still pursuing their degrees.

*"Current Term Enrollment Estimates." National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, 10 June 2021, nscresearchcenter.org/current-term-enrollment-estimates/

The actual number of COOL senior participants who enrolled in postsecondary education directly after high school is listed below.

Please note these numbers only include students we could verify through NSC or personal contact.

COOL Class of 2015-2016

378 - Enrolled in postsecondary education directly out of high school.

226 - Graduated from college or are still enrolled.

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

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

COOL Class of 2016-2017

404 - Enrolled in postsecondary education directly out of high school.

251 - Graduated from college or are still enrolled.

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

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

ACTUAL NUMBER OF COOL SENIOR PARTICIPANTS ENROLLED IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION DIRECTLY AFTER HIGH SCHOOL:

2007-2008: 186*

2008-2009: 220*

2009-2010: 258*

2010-2011: 280*

2011-2012: 261*

2012-2013: 393

2013-2014: 391

2014-2015: 362

2015-2016: 378

2016-2017: 404

2017-2018: 408

2018-2019: 403

2019-2020: 340

*In these years there were only two full-time COOL Program College Advisors serving Abilene High and Cooper High Schools. The program expanded to four full-time advisors in 2012.

AEF SCHOLARSHIPS

In collaboration with STAR Dodge-Chrysler-Jeep-RAM, the Abilene Education Foundation (AEF) celebrated the 2021 scholarship recipients on May 11, 2021.

In 2021, AEF granted a total of \$58,900 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 restrictions/limitations of the financial aid package. 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 fundraisers. This year we provided scholarships for ten deserving students.

Joshua Gonzales, CHS \$1,000: TSTC

Ja'Korie Jones, AHS \$1,000: UT Arlington

Janah Moore, CHS \$1,000: UNT

Violette Nkurunziza, CHS \$1,000: Texas Tech

Emma Pfrimmer, AHS \$1,000: HSU

Nathan Salazar, AHS \$1,000: Texas Tech

Benjamin Smith, CHS \$1,000: Texas A&M

Ross Stevens, AHS \$1,000: HSU

Sarah Stultz, ATEMS \$1,000: Angelo State

Kate Wilson, ATEMS \$1,000: ACU

AHS Employee Funded Scholarship

The AHS Employee scholarship is funded by the employees at Abilene High School to a deserving high school student who understands that "once an Eagle, always an Eagle". The recipient was:

Holley Jeffcoat-Foster, AHS \$2,000: Tarleton State University

AHS and CHS Alumni Endowed Scholarships

The AHS & 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 1940, '42, '43, '48, '53, '55, '56, '57, '58, '59, '60, '63, '64, '65, '79, '93, '95, '96, and 2002. The CHS Alumni scholarship fund also began in 2008 and this fund includes donations from the classes of 1964, '65, '67, '69, '76, '78, '79, '80, '88 and '96. This year's award recipients were:

Coleman Patterson, AHS \$1,700: U of Alabama

Avante Ralston, CHS \$1,700: Texas State Univ.

Phenomenal Woman Scholarship

This is a new scholarship for 2021 created by Abilene High School graduate, Pepsi Windland and named after a beloved Maya Angelou poem with the same name. It is for a female athlete from Abilene High and is a one-time award. The first recipient of this scholarship was:

Jocelyn Reece, AHS \$1,300: Hardin-Simmons

Royce Curtis Excellence in Education Endowed Scholarship

During their 20th class reunion, the AHS Class of '93 announced, to a surprised Royce Curtis, a permanent scholarship fund which will help future Eagles reach their goals of a college education. The endowment was established by AHS '93 graduate Bracken Kolle. Royce served as the AHS principal for 14 years and as the AISD associate superintendent of personnel for seven years until retiring in 2010. The Royce Curtis Excellence in Education Endowed Scholarship is a one-time award and was awarded to:
Jade Spangler, AHS \$2,800: Southwestern Univ.

Coach John McCabe Memorial Scholarship

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. This scholarship is awarded to a student athlete at AHS who exudes the Eagle spirit and possesses a love of learning. This year the scholarship was awarded to:
Ross Stevens, AHS \$500: Hardin-Simmons Univ.

Jerry Taylor Memorial Scholarship

Jerry Taylor graduated with the AHS class of 1967. While at AHS he played football and participated in musical activities such as choir and ensemble and had his own singing group "The Vagabonds". After college, Jerry moved to Nashville, TN to pursue his dream of a music career as a songwriter and entertainer. In later years, he wrote music for theatrical plays. This year's recipient was:
Madi Sipe, AHS \$2,000: Texas Christian Univ.

Meta Alice Keith Bratten Foundation Scholarship

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 and meant "The Gang"). These awards are for two AHS graduates at are \$6,000 each. They are granted over a period of four years pending a minimum college GPA of 2.5. This year's recipients were:
Soni Rushimisha, AHS \$6,000: UT Arlington
Jeandodie Tangishaka, AHS \$6,000: Bates Coll.

Meta Alice Keith Bratten Foundation CTE Scholarship

The Meta Alice Keith Bratten Foundation also wishes to award a career tech scholarship in the amount of \$1,500 to be payable over two semesters or years, depending the program length and pending a minimum GPA of 2.5. This year the scholarship was awarded to:
Natalie Pickering, AHS \$1,500: TSTC

Cougar Nation Scholarship

"Rise Up" is the official motto of Cooper High School. A student who "rises up" is respectful and responsible. He or she is an individual who displays integrity, and is someone who supports others to rise up and give their best in all endeavors. The Cougar Nation scholarship is for a student who exemplifies what it means to be a Couper Cougar, both in school pride and academic excellence. This year's recipients were:

Ayana Allen, CHS \$1,000: Texas Tech Univ.
Julisa Castro, CHS \$1,000: ACU
Denzel Hernandez, CHS \$1,000: Cisco College
Annalise Hess, CHS \$1,000: Univ. of North Texas
Katelynn Smith, CHS \$1,000: Texas Tech Univ.

Citizens Bank of Abilene Scholarship

The Citizens Bank of Abilene is committed to building strong and enduring relationships with their customers and in the community. This scholarship is split into two \$500 payments throughout the school year and was awarded to:

Dylan Haught, AHS \$1,000: Hardin-Simmons
Ashley Isibor, CHS \$1,000: Texas Tech Univ.

AHS Class of 1956 Scholarship

The AHS Class of 1956 has always been a close-knit class, meeting together regularly through all these years with well-attended class reunions. But when the class celebrated its 65th reunion, they decided it was time to close out their class treasury and donate it to scholarships for their beloved AHS. This is a new scholarship and the first recipients were:

Brent Bardin, AHS \$1,000: Univ. of North Texas
Avery Bruntmyer, AHS \$1,000: Belmont Univ.
MaKenna Einkauf, AHS \$1,000: ACU

Double J/AHS Class of 1980 Scholarship

This is a new scholarship in memory of two beloved members of the AHS Class of 1980: Julie Eversdyk Hicks and Jimmy Sinclair. Jimmy passed away in February 2019 of ALS and Julie passed away in January 2021 of cancer. Their classmates wished to honor their lives with a scholarship for two AHS athletes. The first recipients were:

Nathan Salazar, AHS \$2,700: Texas Tech Univ.
Madisyn Slack, AHS \$2,700: Hardin-Simmons

Rising Phoenix Scholarship

The Rising Phoenix scholarship is sponsored by the employees of ATEMS High School. Recipients of this scholarship demonstrate school pride, integrity, and leadership skills. The ATEMS mascot is the Phoenix and the Rising Phoenix award represents a student who is not afraid of hard work. This scholarship was awarded to:

Jacob Elliott, ATEMS \$750: Angelo State Univ.
Carrmin Ray, ATEMS \$750: CO School of Mines

Young Masters Juried Art Exhibition Scholarship

In collaboration with The Grace Museum and AISD, 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 2021 recipients were:

James Wellborn, Jr, AHS \$2,000: Best in Show
Cody Farley, Sr, CHS \$1,250: First Place
Noa Moore, Sr, CHS \$1,000: Second Place
Micah Boykin, Sr, CHS \$750: Third Place
Mara Jade Condra, Sr, AHS \$500: Merit Award
Yesica Martinez, Sr, AHS \$500: Merit Award
Emma Horn, Sr, AHS \$500: Martha Kiel Award
Mackenzie Wasson, Jr, CHS \$250: Honorable Mention
Miller Bannister, Sr, CHS \$250: Honorable Mention
Vivian Palomarez, Sr, AHS \$250: Mike Lanier Memorial Award



COLLEGE TOURS

Due to the pandemic, colleges were unable to accommodate large groups of students on their campus for face-to-face college tours. College tours were geared towards small groups and families. Students were welcome to tour campuses on their own but a large percentage of our students were unable to tour any college campuses without the college tours that the COOL program would normally offer. To proactively serve our students, we utilized virtual college tours. The virtual tours took place for about an hour during lunch time via Zoom. The students were able to ask the admissions counselors specific questions about their school and the college admissions process. These virtual tours were a great way for the students to learn more about these universities from a distance until we are able to visit these campuses again.

Toward the end of the school year, we were able to take 56 seniors to Cisco College to complete paperwork and tour the campus. Cisco personnel assisted our group in completing their residency questionnaires, logging onto their student accounts, and explaining the registration process. The students were very excited to take a tour and experience a college campus for the first time.

VIRTUAL TOURS:

Texas Tech University | California Baptist University | Huston-Tillotson University
Sam Houston State University | Abilene Christian University | McMurry University
Southwestern University | Baylor University | Houston Baptist University | Rice University
Texas State Technical College | Texas A&M University | Tarleton State University



COOL College Tour to Cisco College



Virtual College Tour of Texas Tech University

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
Abilene Youth Sports Authority
Cisco College
Community Foundation of Abilene
Communities in Schools
Hardin-Simmons University
Kiwanis Club of Abilene
McMurry University
STAR Dodge-Chrysler-Jeep-Ram
TRiO Talent Search
TRiO Upward Bound
Texas Association for College Admission Counseling
Texas State Technical College - West Texas

