



THE OPPORTUNITY TO  
**FULL**  
HUMAN POTENTIAL

## Examining the Opportunity Gap

- Approximately **40 percent of the young children** entering Central Texas public schools are at least **18 months behind** in basic language and cognitive skills. The gap tends to persist over time, adversely impacting school readiness and lifelong success.
- Economically disadvantaged students have **lower graduation rates** and higher drop out rates across Central Texas. Almost one in five Hispanic and African American students in Central Texas **do not graduate high school**.
- **Forty percent of Central Texas families** live at or below the Family Security Index (FSI) income level, which measures the real income required to provide for families' most essential needs. Austin has a **higher proportion of workers earning poverty level wages** than any comparison city its size – and the highest racial income inequality among comparison cities.
- Population **groups that suffer the worst health** are those that have the highest poverty rates and the least education. Disparities in income and education are associated with differences in the **occurrence of illness and death**, including heart disease, diabetes, obesity, elevated blood lead level, and low birth weight. Higher incomes permit increased access to medical care, enable people to afford better housing and live in safer neighborhoods, and increase the opportunity to engage in health-promoting behaviors.

