

ACC - BY THE NUMBERS

Do you want your property taxes permanently increased by joining the Austin Community College taxing jurisdiction?

2

Bastrop's rank among highest school taxes in 20 central Texas school districts – *without* being added to ACC's taxing jurisdiction. ("2008 Comparison of Central Texas Schools," compiled from school district Web sites by Gracy Title Company)

50%

Reduction in state funding for community colleges over past 30 years. In 2000, Texas contributed 44% of community college funding. It is projected to drop to 31% in 2010. ACC's only other revenue sources are tuitions and taxes, so it is reasonable to expect tuitions, taxes, or both to increase sharply and very soon.

12.6%

Bastrop residents living in poverty, according to 2007 US Census estimates. (U.S. Census Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, 2007.) Presumably, 1/8th of Bastrop County residents, plus seniors on fixed incomes, cannot afford a major and permanent tax increase to subsidize lower ACC tuitions.

74.5%

Students who failed to achieve higher education after enrolling in ACC in 2001. That is, only about 1 in 4 students who enrolled in ACC for 12 or more credits in the fall of 2001 earned any certificate or degree within the next six years. This is a worse success rate than statewide rates for all community colleges in Texas (31.1%). (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board records, 2009; AAS story, 10/22/09)

1.4%

Difference in higher education enrollments between Bastrop and Travis County students, even though ACC has operated in Travis County for over 35 years.

Actually, Bastrop County has higher University enrollment rates than Travis County according to "*The Case for an ACC-Lost Pines College in Bastrop County*," published by ACC's prominent local advocates, "Bastrop County Friends of Higher Education."

30

Number of miles to commute to current ACC campuses from Bastrop - unless you enroll in Internet-based learning, where the commute distance is zero.

2020

The year ACC planned to establish a campus in Bastrop County - until Bastrop County Friends of Higher Education launched a campaign to accelerate the process of increasing Bastrop tax rates during the worst economy since the Great Depression.

5-to-1

Higher education alternatives suggested: 5. Alternatives being considered: 1. The Oct. 2007 report, "Opportunity Bastrop County," by the Bastrop County Citizens' Advisory Committee, suggests 5 different higher education opportunities for Bastrop. Since the Bastrop County Friends of Higher Education started its campaign to raise your taxes, the only alternative being given any consideration is ACC. Why?

\$5,000

Donation amount granted to Bastrop County Friends of Higher Education by the Bastrop Chamber of Commerce to help fund an expensive political campaign to increase Bastrop property taxes while ignoring free higher education alternatives.

Voluntarily published and distributed by Bastrop area residents, taxpayers and voters.

BASTROP NEEDS HIGHER EDUCATION

But how do we know whether Austin Community College is the best choice?

There is no doubt that the state of education in Bastrop needs serious attention. Bastrop currently faces the greatest growth rate in our history, but our high school graduation rates are completely unacceptable and our job market causes about two-thirds of Bastrop workers to commute to Austin.

In order to properly manage and capitalize on our growth rate, we need a well-educated workforce that can attract the kinds of jobs that will bring prosperity along with our rapid growth.

“Is ACC really the best way to educate Bastrop’s workforce, or is there another better and less expensive plan?”

Is anyone asking this important question?

Who has studied this?

There is a lot of talk right now about inviting Austin Community College to permanently extend its taxing jurisdiction into Bastrop.

However, there has been no independent study to determine the merits of the plan or compare it to other plans. Why?

What is Bastrop’s most urgent need for education?

The best opportunity to improve Bastrop’s education quality now is to improve high school graduation rates. But this has nothing to do with ACC, especially since ACC already offers services at BHS.

Bastrop should focus on high school graduation rates and defer tax increases until completion of an impartial study of all known options.

Will a new ACC campus mean that students’ need not commute to Austin?

No. ACC students frequently must travel to multiple campus locations to attend all the classes for a degree. Even if ACC tuitions become more affordable, students from low income households may not be able to afford the regular commute to other campuses.

How would ACC’s additional taxes affect family budgets?

Everyone would pay more taxes, regardless of age or income. Joining ACC’s taxing jurisdiction might reduce tuitions, but students’ costs for books and fees would remain the same. Also, ACC must raise taxes as state funding levels continue to decline.

Why are “out of district” tuitions at ACC so high?

Better ask ACC that question. Their “out of district” tuitions are 60% higher than the statewide average, according to a Texas Association of Community Colleges Senate Finance Hearing report, Feb. 2009.

Is the permanent ACC tax increase guaranteed to produce results?

No. Joining ACC’s taxing jurisdiction offers only one guarantee: *ACC revenues will increase at the expense of Bastrop residents.*

Isn’t “Bastrop County Friends of Higher Education” a political campaign?

Yes. BCFHE hopes to convince Bastrop taxpayers and voters that permanently raising property taxes is also Bastrop’s best opportunity for higher education – without considering any other alternatives.

Obviously, BCFHE is not a friend of Bastrop taxpayers, but they are a well funded political campaign – and very close friends of ACC.