



OPPORTUNITY AUSTIN



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Gilbert Zavala is Vice President of Education & Talent Development at Opportunity Austin. He oversees school district and higher education partnerships to execute Opportunity Austin education/talent development strategies across the Austin MSA and advocates for Opportunity Austin federal and state policy priorities to improve education attainment and talent development for Central Texas.

Gilbert represents the OA on multiple state and national boards. He has chaired the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) Education Attainment Division Advisory Board and represented Austin on the ACCE Board of Directors. He served as cochair for the Texas College Access Network (TXCAN), serves on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Financial Aid Advisory Committee, and served on the Texas Education Agency (TEA) Financial Aid Advisory Committee. Gilbert also represents OA on the Austin and Round Rock Partners in Education boards. He previously served on state leadership teams for the Texas Reach Higher Challenge, aligning regional education attainment efforts with First Lady Michelle Obama's Reach Higher initiative, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) *60X30 Strategic Plan* to improve education attainment in Texas. He currently serves on the THECB Commissioner's Economic and Workforce Council.

Thanks in part to Gilbert's leadership, the OA has received national recognition for its education attainment and talent development strategies. These efforts have been recognized as models by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, White House Reach Higher Initiative, the National Consortium for School Counseling & Postsecondary Success, and the National League of Cities.

Gilbert is an ACCE Education Attainment Division Fellow, a U.S. Chamber Business Leads Fellow, an ACCE Leadership Diversity fellow, and accepted ACCE's Regional Innovation Award for Education & Workforce Initiatives. Prior to joining the Opportunity Austin, Gilbert worked at the University of Texas at Austin, Charles A. Dana Center while in graduate school, and managed college programming for College Forward, a college completion non-profit serving low-income and first-generation college students. Gilbert holds a BA from the University of Texas at Austin and a Master of Public Affairs from the University of Texas at Austin, Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs.