

Columbus County

myFutureNC 2025 Attainment Profiles



Fayetteville-Lumberton Prosperity Zone Sub-Region
Peer County Type: Rural - Non-Metro

Educational Attainment

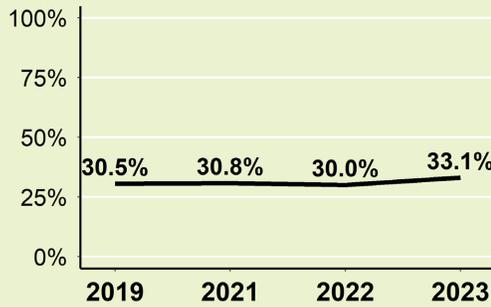
Columbus County residents ages 25-44, 2023

Have Degree or Credential
3,970
33.1%

No Degree
8,037
66.9%

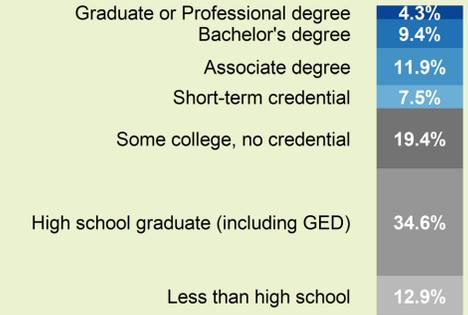
Residents Ages 25-44
12,007

Educational Attainment Trend



Note: 2020 data not shown due to inconsistency

Educational Level Breakdown, 2023



Note: Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding

2030 Proposed Columbus County Attainment Goal: 5,798 (Stretch Goal: 5,952)

2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

Population Spotlight

2020 Census: 50,629
2023 Estimate: 50,121
Change: -508

Growth Rate

-1.0% vs. 3.8%
County State

Race/Ethnicity

Amer. Indian 3%
Asian/Pac. Isl. 0.5%
Black 28.6%
Hispanic 5.5%
Multiracial 3.4%
White 59%



\$50,837
Median Household Income (2023)
State: \$70,838



72.3%
Home Owners (2023)
State: 66.3%



57.2%
Households with Broadband (2023)
State: 77.1%



26.1%
Child Poverty Rate (2023)
State: 17.6%



20.7%
Single Parent Households (2023)
State: 17.0%



2.2%
Foreign Born (2023)
State: 9.2%

Top Opportunities for Growth



Labor Force Participation

69% of Columbus County adults 25-44 are in the labor force, below the rural - non-metro county average of 78%.

In Fayetteville-Lumberton Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

79.1%

of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are aligned with labor market needs.

Top Misalignments

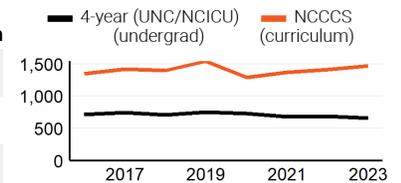
Job Openings vs. Degrees/Credentials

- Education & Training Jobs < Creds
- Health Science Jobs > Creds
- Transportation, Distribution & Logistics Jobs > Creds

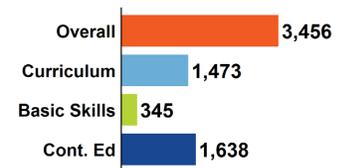
Top 3 Five-Star Jobs in Fayetteville-Lumberton Prosperity Zone Sub-Region

Job Title	Annual Growth
Nurse Practitioners	3.67%
Data Scientists	3.11%
Medical and Health Services Managers	2.49%

Postsecondary Enrollment for Columbus County Residents



Columbus County residents enrolled in NCCCS, Fall 2023



44 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2023

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

5,664 graduates in 2020
56.2% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021
\$38,415 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs), 2021

36.9% of adults (ages 25-44) in Columbus County earned a **family sustaining wage**. Peer: 40.5% | State: 57.6%, 2023

21.4% of youth (ages 16-24) in Columbus County were **Opportunity Youth**. Peer: 13.8% | State: 10.3%, 2023

68.6% of adults (ages 25-44) in Columbus County **participated in the labor force**. Peer: 78.3% | State: 84.2%, 2023

Top 3 Employers in Columbus County

Employer	Employment Range
Columbus Regional Healthcare System	500-999
NC Department of Adult Corrections	500-999
International Paper Company	500-999

Top 3 industries in Columbus County

Industry	Jobs Percent
Health Care and Social Assistance	2,521 17.4%
Retail Trade	1,958 13.5%
Public Administration	1,715 11.9%

Columbus County is served by:

- Cape Fear Workforce Development Board
- Cape Fear Council of Governments

LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

Top Opportunities for Growth



Adult Learners

19% of Columbus County adults 25-44 have some college, no degree, above the rural - non-metro county average of 16%.

Degree Credentials Awarded in PZ Sub-Region, 2023

1,729 certificate | 2,490 associate | 2,900 bachelor's

Adult Learners

Columbus County Residents Aged 25+ enrolled in NC Community Colleges, Fall 2023

208 Basic Skills
1,418 Continuing Education
336 Curriculum

19.4% of residents (aged 25-44) have some college but no degree. Peer: 15.9% | State: 11.7%, 2023



12.1% of Columbus County residents have student loan debt. 2.5% of debt holders had student loans in default. 2024

Success of Columbus County High School Graduates

81.7% of students who enroll persist to their second year.

Peer: 79.6% | State: 83.8%, 2023

87.2% UNC | 78.0% NCCCS | 95.0% NCICU

60.0% of students who enroll earn a degree or certificate within 6 years. Peer: 55.5% | State: 60.0%, 2023

28.7% UNC | 25.9% NCCCS | <5% NCICU

Top destinations of all college-goers, 2023

- 2,699 of all college-goers attended Southeastern CC
- 209 of all college-goers attended Cape Fear CC
- 159 of all college-goers attended UNC Pembroke

COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

Top Opportunities for Growth

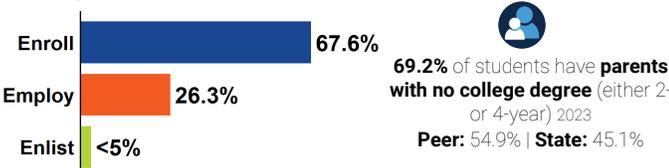


Postsecondary Enrollment

55% of Columbus County seniors enroll in postsecondary education within 12 months of graduation, below the state average of 59%.

74.6% of 2024 high school class completed the FAFSA as of Sept. 27, 2024. 27 more need to complete in 2024 to meet state goal of 80%. Peer: 54.0% | State: 55.0%

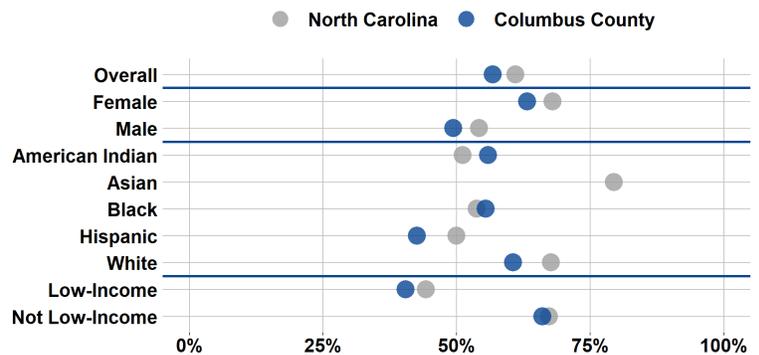
Post High School Graduation Intentions



86.4% of 9th graders graduated within four years. 51 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. Peer: 85.7% | State: 87.3% 2024

55.0% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months. Peer: 52.6% | State: 59.3% 2023

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Columbus County, 2023



Note: Outcomes for groups with less than 10 students, <5% or >95% are not displayed.

ACADEMIC READINESS

Top Opportunities for Growth



Chronic Absenteeism

33% of Columbus County students are chronically absent from school, above the rural - non-metro county average of 28%.

Columbus County has met the goal for Pre-K enrollment (Goal: 75%). Peer: 71.0% | State: 57.2% 2024

Note: Enrollment numbers only include students served by the NC Pre-K Program and may not represent all Pre-K offerings available.

Columbus County Traditional Public Schools students:

19.9% of 3-8 graders earned college-and-career-ready scores in reading in 2024. 1,708 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. Peer: 24.5% | State: 29.8%

27.1% of 3-8 graders earned college-and-career-ready scores in math in 2024. 1,893 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. Peer: 30.3% | State: 36.5%

33.0% of students were chronically absent from school in 2024. 1,668 fewer needed to meet state goal of 11%. Peer: 27.7% | State: 25.7%

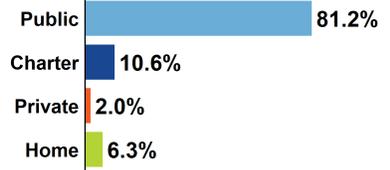
Columbus County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 335:1 compared to 332:1 in peer counties. 2024

1.8% of students drop out of high school (45 total students), compared to 2.1% statewide. 2023

School & Student Overview (2024 school year)

Traditional Public School District(s): 2
Traditional Public School(s): 17
Charter School(s): 2
Private School(s): 3
Home School(s): 359

8,728 total K-12 students enrolled in schools.



Pathways to College and Career

Students in traditional public schools completed 2,961 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials and 277 concentrations. 184 (6.2%) of credentials were industry-valued in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations: Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; Health Science; and Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics.

39 (<5%) high school students took at least one AP, IB, or CIE exam. State: 16.8% (2023).

317 (58.1%) high school graduates participated in Career & College Promise programs. State: 36.0% (2024).

For more information about each indicator, including data sources and methodology, visit:

dashboard.myfuturenc.org/county-data-and-resources/

Columbus County Schools

City/District School Profiles

myFutureNC 2025 Attainment Profiles

This profile is a supplement to the Columbus County Profiles



□ district boundary

Total Schools: 12 Total Students: 5,105 (2024)

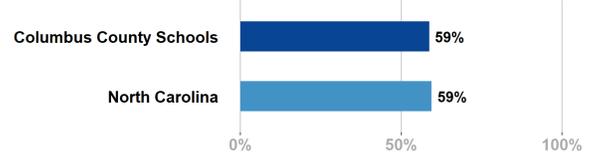
POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

Top destinations of all college-goers, 2024

- Southeastern CC
- Cape Fear CC
- UNC Pembroke

80.2% of students who enroll **persist to their second year.**
2023

Percentage of students enrolled in North Carolina postsecondary institution who graduate within 6 years of enrollment, 2023



COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

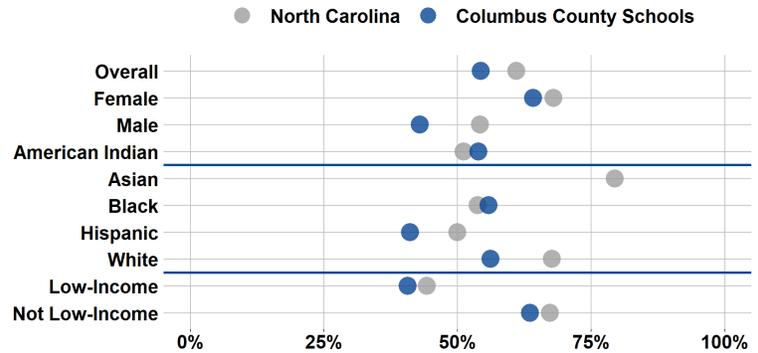
How students in Columbus County Schools are planning for and enrolling in college:

77.3% of high school class of 2024 **completed the FAFSA** as of Sept. 27, 2024. 10 more need to complete in 2024 to meet state goal of 80%.

65.0% of high school graduates **intended to enroll in a postsecondary institution.** 2023

52.6% of graduates **enrolled in a postsecondary institution** within 12 months. 2023

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Columbus County Schools, 2023



Note: Outcomes for groups with less than 10 students, <5% or >95% are not displayed.

ACADEMIC READINESS

How students in Columbus County Schools are currently doing:

18.8% of 3-8 graders **earned college-and-career-ready scores in reading** in 2024. 1,251 more needed to meet state goal of 73%.

24.5% of 3-8 graders **earned college-and-career-ready scores in math** in 2024. 1,417 more needed to meet state goal of 86%.

34.8% of students were **chronically absent from school** in 2024. 1,295 fewer needed to meet state goal of 11%.



Columbus County Schools has a **student-to-school counselor ratio** of 363:1. 2024

Pathways to College and Career

Students in traditional public schools completed **2,027 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials and 198 concentrations. 131 (6.5%) of credentials were industry-valued** in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations: Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics; and Hospitality & Tourism.



39 (<5%) high school students took at least one **AP, IB, or CIE exam.**
State: 16.8% (2023).



254 (62.0%) high school graduates participated in **Career & College Promise programs.** State: 36.0% (2024).

** Observations <10 or no data available

For more information about each indicator, including data sources and methodology, visit:

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Whiteville City Schools

City/District School Profiles

myFutureNC 2025 Attainment Profiles

This profile is a supplement to the Columbus County Profiles



■ district boundary

Total Schools: 5 Total Students: 1,980 (2024)

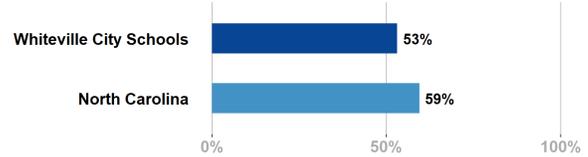
POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

Top destinations of all college-goers, 2024

- Southeastern CC
- Cape Fear CC
- UNC Pembroke

86.5% of students who enroll **persist to their second year.**
2023

Percentage of students enrolled in North Carolina postsecondary institution who graduate within 6 years of enrollment, 2023



COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

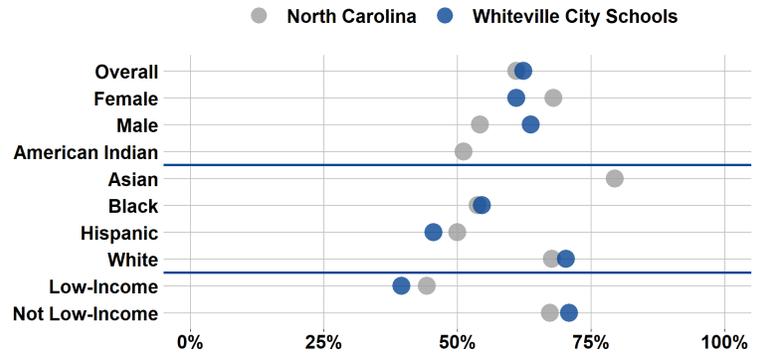
How students in Whiteville City Schools are planning for and enrolling in college:

66.7% of high school class of 2024 **completed the FAFSA** as of Sept. 27, 2024. 17 more need to complete in 2024 to meet state goal of **80%**.

73.8% of high school graduates **intended to enroll in a postsecondary institution.** 2023

60.6% of graduates **enrolled in a postsecondary institution** within 12 months. 2023

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Whiteville City Schools, 2023



Note: Outcomes for groups with less than 10 students, <5% or >95% are not displayed.

ACADEMIC READINESS

How students in Whiteville City Schools are currently doing:

22.7% of 3-8 graders **earned college-and-career-ready scores in reading** in 2024. 457 more needed to meet state goal of **73%**.

33.6% of 3-8 graders **earned college-and-career-ready scores in math** in 2024. 476 more needed to meet state goal of **86%**.

28.5% of students were **chronically absent from school** in 2024. 373 fewer needed to meet state goal of **11%**.



Whiteville City Schools has a **student-to-school counselor ratio** of **280:1**. 2024

Pathways to College and Career

Students in traditional public schools completed **934 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials** and **79 concentrations**. **53 (5.7%) of credentials were industry-valued** in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations: Health Science; Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; and Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics.



<10 (<5%) high school students took at least one **AP, IB, or CIE exam.**
State: 16.8% (2023).



63 (46.3%) high school graduates participated in **Career & College Promise programs.** State: 36.0% (2024).

** Observations <10 or no data available

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