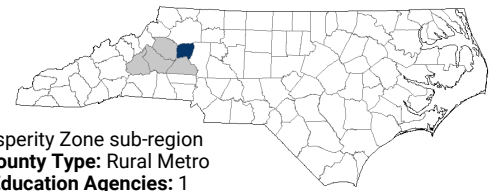


# Alexander County

NC goal: 2 million by 2030  
2020 County Attainment Profile



Updated: Aug 12 2020

## INTRODUCTION

From birth to career, there are many opportunities to develop strategies and interventions to increase attainment and improve workforce alignment. Below are some key areas and indicators that highlight where interventions may be possible to improve overall educational attainment outcomes.

## COUNTY OVERVIEW


Alexander County is in the **Hickory** Prosperity Zone sub-region. It's one of 28 rural metro counties in NC.

Overall, 4% of 25-44-year-olds in Alexander County have earned a master's degree or higher as their highest degree; 9% have a bachelor's degree; 13% have an associate degree; 19% have some college, no degree; 40% have a high school diploma; and 15% have less than a high school diploma.

<b>2018 Population</b>	38,303
<b>2030 Population</b>	41,021
<b>K-12 Students (2019)</b>	
Traditional Schools	4,746
Charter/Private/Home	927
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$49,138
<b>Child Poverty Rate</b>	20%
<b>Households with Broadband</b>	70%

## Building the Foundation: Pre-K to 8

High-quality early learning and strong academic progress in early years helps prepare children for future success.

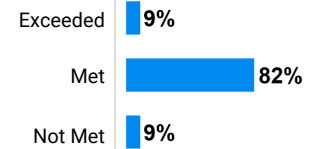
 Alexander County has 11 public schools with performance grades. Of these schools, none were classified as low performing in 2019.

## How students in Alexander County traditional public schools are currently doing:

To meet state goals, Alexander County needs:

- **47 more eligible 4-year-olds** enrolled in NC Pre-K program (goal: 75% vs. 45%).
- **562 more 3-8 graders** earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading (goal: 73% vs. 48%).
- **901 more 3-8 graders** earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math (goal: 86% vs. 46%).

## Percent of Alexander County schools by academic growth status, 2019



## Ready for College & Career

High school completion is a crucial step on the pathway to postsecondary success or the beginnings of a career. Activities that prepare students to navigate the transition to postsecondary include gaining experience in college-level coursework and applying for financial assistance.

To meet state goals, Alexander County needs:

- **43 more 9th graders** to graduate within four years (goal: 95% vs. 83%).
- **78 more seniors** to complete the FAFSA (goal: 80% vs. 55%).
- **Alexander County has met the goal for students** to attend school regularly (goal: 11% chronic absenteeism vs. 10%).



**157 students** took at least one AP course (11%) versus 10% of peer counties.




**287 students** participated in Career & College Promise programs (21%) versus 18% of peer counties.

Students in Alexander County completed **260 Career & Technical Education concentrations** in 2019. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; Architecture and Construction; and Health Science.

## Postsecondary Access and Success

These metrics capture student progression and educational attainment from high school graduation to postsecondary completion. They indicate relative strengths and weaknesses of Alexander County at each stage of the postsecondary pipeline.

 Alexander County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 297:1.

Among Alexander County high school graduates:


- **60% of graduates** enroll in a postsecondary institution within 12 months versus 57% of peer counties.
- **81% of students** who enroll persist to their second year versus 73% of peer counties.
- **54% of students** who enroll earn a degree or credential within 6 years versus 50% of peer counties.

## In your Prosperity Zone sub-region, 2018-19:

<b>300</b>	individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program.
<b>3,422</b>	Basic Skills enrollments at NC community colleges.
<b>22,503</b>	Continuing Education enrollments at NC community colleges.

## Labor Market Outcomes

Lack of technical skills and lack of education are among the primary reasons why NC employers struggle to fill vacancies. These metrics capture labor market outcomes among recent graduates, the alignment between postsecondary degree production and labor market demand, and future job demands.

 10.6% of teens ages 16-19 are not working and not in school versus 9.4% of peer counties.

In your Prosperity Zone sub-region:

Public postsecondary institutions graduate **2,073 students per year**. After 5 years, 82% of 2013 graduates were employed in NC, earning an annual average wage of \$33,373.

64% of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are aligned with labor market needs. The top gaps are: **Transportation, Distribution & Logistics** (below bachelor's); **Health Science** (above and below bachelor's); and **Business Management & Administration** (bachelor's).

There are **188,511 job openings** projected between 2017-2026. The top 3 in demand jobs with median wages of \$50,000 or more are: 1) **Registered Nurses**; 2) **First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers**; 3) **Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products**.

## Opportunities for Growth

Compared to rural metro counties and the state, these three areas represent the biggest opportunities for Alexander County to improve future attainment outcomes.



### NC Pre-K Enrollment

45% of Alexander County eligible 4-year-olds are enrolled in NC Pre-K, below the rural metro county average of 54%.



### High School Graduation

83% of Alexander County 9th graders complete high school in 4 years or less, below the rural metro county average of 86%.



### Disconnected Youth

11% of Alexander County youth ages 16-19 are not working and not in school, above the rural metro county average of 9%.

Largest postsecondary institutions in your Prosperity Zone sub-region		
Institution Name	Undergraduate Enrollments 2017-18	Graduate or Transfer in 8 Years
<b>Total Enrollments</b>	<b>16,315</b>	<b>52%</b>
Catawba Valley Community College	6,125	62%
Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute	4,636	53%
Western Piedmont Community College	2,306	36%
Lenoir-Rhyne University	1,830	70%
McDowell Technical Community College	1,418	44%

**Notes:**

Enrollments reflect degree- or credential-seeking undergraduate enrollments. The graduate or transfer rate is drawn from IPEDS and represents the share of students who either graduate with a degree or credential from the institution or transfer to another institution within 8 years. The 8-year outcome is the only measure that includes information on transfer out. Detailed data guidance is provided at <http://go.unc.edu/countydata>

### Local Cross-Sector Promising Practice: Alexander Furniture Academy

The Alexander County Furniture Academy is an industry driven training program designed by local furniture manufacturers and Catawba Valley Community College to prepare students for the skilled positions that are in high demand by some of the largest employers in our area.


We identified this example of an emerging cross-sector promising practice in partnership with local leaders. If you have additional examples you'd like to share with myFutureNC, please respond to this [short survey](#).

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


[dashboard.myfuturenc.org/county-data-and-resources/](https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/county-data-and-resources/)

### ABOUT CAROLINA DEMOGRAPHY

Located within the Carolina Population Center at UNC-Chapel Hill, we use data and other available research to help you put a face or a story on the population-level changes facing your community. Our analysts provide a full array of demographic data and research services to inform decision making, evaluation, and policy across North Carolina, where we serve organizations and people in all 100 counties.

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### ABOUT MYFUTURENC

MyFutureNC is a statewide nonprofit organization focused on educational attainment and is the result of cross-sector collaboration between North Carolina leaders in education, business, and government. Our mission is to prepare North Carolina for the future by empowering individuals, strengthening communities, and ensuring our economic viability in a global economy.

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