Columbus County

myFutureNC 2024 Attainment Profiles

2030 Proposed Columbus County Attainment Goal: 5,798 (Stretch Goal: 5,952)  
2030 State Attainment Goal: 2 million

Population Spotlight  
2020 Census: 50,625  
2022 Estimate: 49,885  
Change: -740

Growth Rate  
-1.5%  
County vs. 2.5%  
State

Educational Attainment  
Columbus County residents ages 25-44, 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No Degree</th>
<th>Have Degree or Credential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 8,469    | 3,633  
70.0%     | 30.0% |

Median Household Income (2022)  
$45,379  
State: $67,516

Home Owners (2022)  
71%  
State: 67%

Child Poverty Rate (2022)  
27.3%  
State: 17.2%

Opportunity Youth Rate (2022)  
20.7%  
State: 10.9%

Households with Broadband (2022)  
53%  
State: 77%

Unemployment Rate (2022)  
4.2%  
State: 3.7%

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

Top Opportunities for Growth

These three areas represent the biggest opportunities for Columbus County to improve future attainment outcomes.

Earning College Credit in High School

<5% of Columbus County high school students took at least one AP exam, below the rural - non-metro county average of 8%. Also, 51% of graduates participated in the Career & College Promise programs, below the peer county average of 51%.

School Counselors

Columbus County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 391:1, above the rural - non-metro county average of 325:1.

Chronic Absenteeism

33% of Columbus County students are chronically absent from school, above the rural - non-metro county average of 29%.

Promising Attainment Practices

The new Promising Attainment Practices Database is a curated, searchable, and filterable collection of about 250 county, region, and state-level initiatives and programs that directly address various components of the state’s attainment challenge. The Database allows local and regional initiative leaders and other stakeholders to identify groups across the state who are developing or operating initiatives designed to boost attainment.

Follow link to discover how Columbus County has been meeting local needs:  
https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/promising-attainment-practices/?wdt_search=Columbus

In Fayetteville-Lumberton Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

80.5% of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are aligned with labor market needs.

1,855 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2020

Top areas of misalignment:

- Business Management & Administration bachelor’s  
- Health Science below bachelor’s  
- Transportation, Distribution & Logistics below bachelor’s

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

5,664 graduates in 2020  
56% 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)

33% of adults (ages 25-44) in Columbus County earned a family sustaining wage, 2022

Columbus County is served by:  
Cape Fear Workforce Development Board  
Cape Fear Council of Governments

Top 3 Employers in Columbus County  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer</th>
<th>Employment Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employer Hr Llc</td>
<td>1000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus County Board Of Education</td>
<td>500-999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Paper Company</td>
<td>500-999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Annual Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Practitioners</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Scientists</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical and Health Services Managers</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First-time Curriculum Enrollments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continuing Education

<table>
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<th>Continuing Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Fayetteville-Lumberton Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

80.5% of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are aligned with labor market needs.
Updated: Apr 10 2024

**Basic Skills**
3,112

**Continuing Education**
1,411

**Curriculum**
11%

% of Columbus County residents have student loan debt. 15% of debt holders had student loans in default. 2022

**Success of Columbus County High School Graduates**
- 80% of students who enroll persist to their second year versus 78% in peer counties. 2022
- 57% of students who enroll earn a degree or certificate within 6 years versus 55% in peer counties. 2022

**Top destinations of all college-goers, Fall 2023**
- 2,568 of all college-goers attended Southeastern CC
- 185 of all college-goers attended Cape Fear CC
- 106 of all college-goers attended Bladen CC

**How students in Columbus County traditional schools are doing:**
- Columbus County has met the goal for Pre-K enrollment. (Goal: 75%). 2023
- 22% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading, compared to 30% statewide; 2,015 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. 2023
- 26% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math, compared to 35% statewide; 1,889 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. 2023
- 85% of 9th graders graduate within four years, compared to 87% statewide; 64 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. 2023
- 33% of students are chronically absent from school, compared to 27% statewide; 1,674 less needed to meet state goal of 11%. 2023

Columbus County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 391:1 versus 325:1 in peer counties. 2023

2% of students drop out of high school (45 total students), compared to 2% statewide. 2023

**School Choice**
8,788 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Columbus County in the 2022-23 school year.

Note: This profile focuses on outcomes of students enrolled in district schools.

**Access to Postsecondary Credits**
Students in Columbus County completed 2,961 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials (184 (6%) were industry-valued credentials) and 277 concentrations in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; Health Science; and Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics.

40 high school students took at least one AP test (<5%) versus 8% in peer counties (2023).

281 high school students participated in Career & College Promise programs (51%) versus 51% in peer counties (2023).

For more information about each indicator, including data sources and methodology, visit: dashboard.myfuturenc.org/county-data-and-resources/
How students in Columbus County Schools are currently doing:

- 21% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading, compared to 30% statewide; 1,159 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. 2023
- 23% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math, compared to 35% statewide; 1,408 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. 2023
- 86% of 9th graders graduate within four years, compared to 87% statewide; 38 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. 2023
- 36% of students are chronically absent from school, compared to 27% statewide; 1,378 less needed to meet state goal of 11%. 2023

Columbus County Schools has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 420:1. 2023

Access to Postsecondary Credits

Students in Columbus County Schools completed 2,027 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials (131 (6%) were industry-valued credentials) and 198 concentrations in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics; and Hospitality & Tourism.

40 high school students took at least one AP test (<5%) (2023). 210 high school students participated in Career & College Promise programs (54%) (2023).

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

- 59% of seniors completed the FAFSA in 2023, compared to 62% statewide; 79 more need to complete in 2023 to meet state goal of 80%. 2023
- 69% of graduates reported intentions to enroll in a postsecondary institution. 2022
- 56% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months. 2022

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates (within 12 months) for Select Groups in Columbus County Schools, 2022

Top destinations of all college-goers, Fall 2023

- Southeastern CC
- Cape Fear CC
- Bladen CC

- 79% of college students persist to their second year of attendance. 2022

For more information about each indicator, including data sources and methodology, visit: dashboard.myfuturenc.org/county-data-and-resources/
Total Schools: 5  Total Students: 2,001

ACADEMIC READINESS

How students in Whiteville City Schools are currently doing:

- 25% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading, compared to 30% statewide; 444 more needed to meet state goal of 73%. 2023
- 34% of 3-8 graders are earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math, compared to 35% statewide; 481 more needed to meet state goal of 86%. 2023
- 82% of 9th graders graduate within four years, compared to 87% statewide; 25 more needed to meet state goal of 95%. 2023
- 25% of students are chronically absent from school, compared to 27% statewide; 296 less needed to meet state goal of 11%. 2023

Whiteville City Schools has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 334:1. 2023

Access to Postsecondary Credits

Students in Whiteville City Schools completed 934 Career & Technical Education (CTE) credentials (53 (6%) were industry-valued credentials) and 79 concentrations in 2023. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Health Science; Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; and Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics.

Less than 10 high school students took at least one AP test (<5%) (2023). 71 high school students participated in Career & College Promise programs (43%) (2023)

COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS

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

- 61% of seniors completed the FAFSA in 2023, compared to 62% statewide; 29 more need to complete in 2023 to meet state goal of 80%. 2023
- 72% of graduates reported intentions to enroll in a postsecondary institution. 2022
- 52% of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months. 2022

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates (within 12 months) for Select Groups in Whiteville City Schools, 2022

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

TOP DESTINATIONS OF ALL COLLEGE-GOERS, FALL 2023

- Southeastern CC
- Cape Fear CC
- Bladen CC
- 80% of college students persist to their second year of attendance. 2022

POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

Percentage of students enrolled in North Carolina postsecondary institution who graduate within 6 years of enrollment, 2022

- Whiteville City Schools 53%
- North Carolina 59%

** Observations <10 or no data available

For more information about each indicator, including data sources and methodology, visit:
dashboard.myfuturenc.org/county-data-and-resources/