Gaston County
NC goal: 2 million by 2030
2020 County Attainment Profile

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.

Building the Foundation: Pre-K to 8
High-quality early learning and strong academic progress in early years helps prepare children for future success.

Gaston County has 50 public schools with performance grades. Of these schools, 11 or 22% were classified as low performing in 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, Gaston County needs:
• 202 more eligible 4-year-olds enrolled in NC Pre-K program (goal: 75% vs. 61%).
• 4,837 more 3-8 graders earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading (goal: 73% vs. 40%).
• 6,913 more 3-8 graders earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math (goal: 86% vs. 38%).

How students in Gaston County traditional public schools are currently doing:
Percent of Gaston County schools by academic growth status, 2019
Exceeded 39%
Met 37%
Not Met 24%

To meet state goals, Gaston County needs:
• 263 more 9th graders to graduate within four years (goal: 95% vs. 85%).
• 612 more seniors to complete the FAFSA (goal: 80% vs. 51%).
• 2,092 more students to attend school regularly (goal: 11% chronic absenteeism vs. 18%).

Students in Gaston County completed 1,386 Career & Technical Education concentrations in 2019. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Architecture and Construction; Health Science; and Business Management.

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 Gaston County at each stage of the postsecondary pipeline.

Gaston County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 351:1.

Among Gaston County high school graduates:
• 56% of graduates enroll in a postsecondary institution within 12 months versus 62% of peer counties.
• 73% of students who enroll persist to their second year versus 78% of peer counties.
• 50% of students who earn a degree or credential within 6 years versus 54% of peer counties.

In your Prosperity Zone sub-region, 2018-19:
3,322 individuals served in an Apprenticeship program.
12,019 Basic Skills enrollments at NC community colleges.
64,398 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.

8.6% of teens ages 16-19 are not working and not in school versus 6.8% of peer counties.

In your Prosperity Zone sub-region:
Public postsecondary institutions graduate 12,162 students per year. After 5 years, 74% of 2013 graduates were employed in NC, earning an annual average wage of $43,374.
79% of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are aligned with labor market needs. The top gaps are: Business Management & Administration (bachelor’s); Finance (bachelor’s); and Information Technology (bachelor’s).

There are 1,361,336 job openings projected between 2017-2026. The top 3 in demand jobs with median wages of $50,000 or more are: 1) Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products; 2) General and Operations Managers; 3) Registered Nurses.

Opportunities for Growth
Compared to suburban counties and the state, these three areas represent the biggest opportunities for Gaston County to improve future attainment outcomes.

Transition to Postsecondary
56% of Gaston County seniors enroll in postsecondary within 12 months of graduation below the suburban county average of 62%.

Low-Performing Schools
22% of Gaston County schools are low-performing, above the suburban county average of 17%.
Largest postsecondary institutions in your Prosperity Zone sub-region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Name</th>
<th>Undergraduate Enrollments</th>
<th>Graduate or Transfer in 8 Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Enrollments</td>
<td>107,538</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Piedmont Community College</td>
<td>29,552</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of North Carolina at Charlotte</td>
<td>27,078</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowan-Cabarrus Community College</td>
<td>7,939</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaston College</td>
<td>7,333</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell Community College</td>
<td>4,188</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Piedmont Community College</td>
<td>3,935</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland Community College</td>
<td>3,883</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanly Community College</td>
<td>3,837</td>
<td>61%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wingate University</td>
<td>2,729</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardner-Webb University</td>
<td>2,454</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson &amp; Wales University-Charlotte</td>
<td>2,080</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens University of Charlotte</td>
<td>2,010</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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: Apprenticeship 321

The goal of the Apprenticeship 321 Program is to cultivate highly skilled workers for large and small manufacturers who can enter the workforce immediately upon completing the program. Through on-the-job training, successful apprentices will qualify for nationally recognized certifications as journeyworkers, academic credentials from Gaston College, and a National Career Readiness Certificate.

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/

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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