Gaston County

2030 NC Degree Attainment Goal: 2 million (67%)
2030 Proposed Gaston County Attainment Goal: 35,691 (58%)

Population Spotlight
2010 Census: 206,086
2020 Census: 227,943
Change: 21,857

Growth Rate
10.6% vs. 9.5%

Median Household Income (2020)
$60,622
Child Poverty Rate (2020)
18.8%
Households with Broadband (2020)
87%
Home Owners (2020)
66%
Voter Registration Rate (2021)
78%
Unemployment Rate (2021)
5.2%

Updated: Dec 08 2022

Charlotte
Prosperity Zone Sub-Region
Peer County Type: Suburban
Local Education Agencies: 1
Charter Schools: 5

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Educational Attainment
Gaston County residents ages 25-44, 2020

No Degree
53.7%
30,636

Have Degree or Credential
46.3%
26,465

11% Less than high school
27% High school graduate (including GED)
16% Some college, no credential
8% Short-term credential
12% Associate degree
19% Bachelor’s degree
8% Graduate or professional degree

Note: Numbers may add to more than 100% due to rounding

Top Opportunities for Growth
These three areas represent the biggest opportunities for Gaston County to improve future attainment outcomes.

Chronic Absenteeism
41% of Gaston County students are chronically absent from school, above the suburban county average of 26%.

Transition to Postsecondary
46% of Gaston County seniors enroll in postsecondary within 12 months of graduation, below the suburban county average of 55%.

FAFSA Completion
52% of Gaston County high school seniors complete the FAFSA, below the suburban county average of 57%.

Impact of Covid-19 on Education Pipeline
Covid-19 has affected critical transition points along the education continuum.

K-12 Enrollment (district schools)
-3.7% 2021-22 vs. 2019-20

Postsecondary Enrollment
-9.8% 2021 vs. 2020

FAFSA Completion
-6.7% 2021-22 vs. 2018-19

Postsecondary Intentions
-9.4% 2020-21 vs. 2018-19

Data Disruptions
- College-and-Career-Ready in Reading
- College-and-Career-Ready in Math
- Chronic Absenteeism

ncdemography.org

How students in Gaston County traditional schools are currently doing:
To meet state goals, each year Gaston County needs:
• 110 more eligible 4-year-olds enrolled in NC Pre-K program (goal: 75% vs. 67%). 2022
• 6,719 more 3-8 graders earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading (goal: 73% vs. 25%). 2022
• 7,948 more 3-8 graders earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math (goal: 86% vs. 29%). 2022
• 207 more 9th graders to graduate within four years (goal: 95% vs. 87%). 2021
• 8,730 more students to attend school regularly (goal: 11% chronic absenteeism vs. 41%). 2021

Gaston County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 307:1 versus 336:1 in peer counties. 2021

56% of Gaston County students have parents with no college degree (either 2- or 4-year) versus 49% in peer counties.

School Choice
39,559 total students were enrolled in K-12 in Gaston County in the 2021-22 school year.

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

Career and College Preparation
1,282 high school students took at least one AP course (14%) versus 15% in peer counties (2021).

618 graduates participated in Career & College Promise programs (29%) versus 33% in peer counties (2021).

Students in Gaston County completed 1,147 Career & Technical Education concentrations in 2021. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Human Services; Health Science; and Business Management & Administration.

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates for Select Groups in Gaston County, 2021

Note: Outcomes for demographic groups with fewer than 10 students are not displayed.
Gaston County 2022 Attainment Profile

Success of Gaston County High School Graduates

Top destinations of graduates, 2016-2020

- 41% of college-goers attended a public 4-year college
- 16% of college-goers attended a private 4-year college
- 42% of college-goers attended a public 2-year college
- <5% of college-goers attended a private 2-year college
- 91% of college-goers attended an in-state college

- 78% of students who enroll persist to their second year versus 77% in peer counties. 2021
- 56% of students who enroll earn a degree or credential within 6 years versus 60% in peer counties. 2021

Adult Learners

Gaston County resident enrollments in NC Community Colleges, 2021

- 344 Basic Skills
- 2,613 Continuing Education
- 4,117 Curriculum

14% of Gaston County residents have student loan debt; 10% of debt holders had student loans in default. 2020

In your Prosperity Zone Sub-Region:

82.2% of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by regional institutions are aligned with labor market needs.

Top areas of misalignment:
- Business Management & Administration (bachelor’s)
- Information Technology (bachelor’s)
- Finance (bachelor’s)

4,230 Individuals served in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2020

UNC and NC Community College Outcomes:

- 12,495 graduates in 2020
- 74% of 2016 graduates were employed in NC in 2021
- $45,387 annual average earnings of graduates employed in NC (includes both part-time and full-time jobs)

In 2021 your Workforce Development Board served:

- 4,821 in Basic Services
- 2,215 in Career Services
- 90 in Education Services

14.0% of young adults ages 16-24 in Gaston County were not working and not in school versus 11.2% in peer counties. 2019

Impact of Covid-19 on NC Community College Enrollment

Curriculum

First-time Curriculum Enrollments

2013 2015 2017 2019 2021

Degree Credentials Awarded, 2021

- 6,673 certificate
- 6,036 associate
- 9,688 bachelor’s

Postsecondary assets in Charlotte Prosperity Zone sub-region

Degree Credentials Awarded, 2021

- 6,673 certificate
- 6,036 associate
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For more information about each indicator, including data sources and methodology, visit: dashboard.myfuturenc.org/county-data-and-resources/

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 Gaston County has been meeting local needs:
https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/promising-attainment-practices/?wdt_search=Gaston