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.

Polk County has 6 public schools with performance grades. Of these schools, none 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.

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 Polk County at each stage of the postsecondary pipeline.

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.

Opportunities for Growth
Compared to rural non-metro counties and the state, these three areas represent the biggest opportunities for Polk County to improve future attainment outcomes.

How students in Polk County traditional public schools are currently doing:
To meet state goals, Polk County needs:

- **Polk County has met the goal for eligible 4-year-olds enrolled in NC Pre-K program (goal: 75% vs. 88%).**
- **96 more 3-8 graders earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading (goal: 73% vs. 63%).**
- **289 more 3-8 graders earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math (goal: 86% vs. 57%).**

To meet state goals, Polk County needs:

- **8 more 9th graders to graduate within four years (goal: 95% vs. 91%).**
- **4 more seniors to complete the FAFSA (goal: 80% vs. 78%).**
- **26 more students to attend school regularly (goal: 11% chronic absenteeism vs. 12%).**

Students in Polk County completed **135 Career & Technical Education concentrations** in 2019. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; Architecture and Distribution & Logistics.

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### Largest postsecondary institutions in your Prosperity Zone sub-region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Name</th>
<th>Undergraduate Enrollments 2017-18</th>
<th>Graduate or Transfer in 8 Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Enrollments</td>
<td>23,862</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College</td>
<td>10,492</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of North Carolina at Asheville</td>
<td>4,366</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Ridge Community College</td>
<td>2,812</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isothermal Community College</td>
<td>2,662</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mars Hill University</td>
<td>1,343</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montreat College</td>
<td>845</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brevard College</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren Wilson College</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>84%</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](http://go.unc.edu/countydata).

### Local Cross-Sector Promising Practice: Polk Vocational Services (PVS)
Polk Vocational Services (PVS) provides rehabilitation, development and employment services to people with barriers to employment, while providing quality products and services to our customers on time and error free. PVS is an economic development social enterprise demonstrating the Abilities behind disabilities in rural Polk County, North Carolina.

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/](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.

- [ncdemography.org](ncdemography.org)
- [demography@unc.edu](demography@unc.edu)
- [@ncdemography](@ncdemography)

### 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.

- [myfuturenc.org](myfuturenc.org)
- [facebook.com/myfuturenc](facebook.com/myfuturenc)
- [@myFutureNC](@myFutureNC)