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.

Union County has 50 public schools with performance grades. Of these schools, 3 or 6% 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.

How students in Union County traditional public schools are currently doing:
To meet state goals, Union County needs:
- 289 more eligible 4-year-olds enrolled in NC Pre-K program (goal: 75% vs. 41%).
- 2,718 more 3-8 graders earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading (goal: 73% vs. 59%).
- 4,736 more 3-8 graders earning college-and-career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math (goal: 86% vs. 61%).

To meet state goals, Union County needs:
- 73 more 9th graders to graduate within four years (goal: 95% vs. 93%).
- 563 more seniors to complete the FAFSA (goal: 80% vs. 63%).
- Union County has met the goal for students to attend school regularly (goal: 11% chronic absenteeism vs. 9%).

Students in Union County completed 1,374 Career & Technical Education concentrations in 2019. The top three CTE concentrations completed include Information Technology; Agricultural, Food, & Natural Resources; 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 Union County at each stage of the postsecondary pipeline.

Union County has a student-to-school counselor ratio of 340.1.

Among Union County high school graduates:
- 70% of graduates enroll in a postsecondary institution within 12 months versus 62% of peer counties.
- 82% of students who enroll persist to their second year versus 78% of peer counties.
- 60% 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.

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.

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.

- 2.8% of teens ages 16-19 are not working and not in school versus 6.8% of peer counties.

Labor market outcomes include gaining experience in college-level coursework and applying for financial assistance. Activities that prepare students to navigate the transition to postsecondary include gaining experience in college-level coursework and applying for financial assistance.

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

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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>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>
</tr>
<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](http://go.unc.edu/countydata).

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### Local Cross-Sector Promising Practice: Health Sciences Academy at Monroe MS

In partnership with Atrium Health of Monroe, UCPS offers a K-12 health science academy experience where students are provided in-depth coursework and hands-on experiences with the health profession.

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.

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

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### 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](http://ncdemography.org)
- [demography@unc.edu](mailto:demography@unc.edu)
- [@ncdemography](https://twitter.com/ncdemography)

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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.

- [myfuturenc.org](http://myfuturenc.org)
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- [@myFutureNC](https://twitter.com/myFutureNC)