

CURRENT STATE OF PATHWAYS TO ADULT SUCCESS

Big Takeaways

1. Nearly all young adults eventually earn a high school credential – diploma or GED
2. At least 80% are eventually enrolling in a postsecondary institution
3. Pathways from high school to work to adult success has become very bumpy
4. At least half of all students are successfully following the high school graduation to postsecondary credential path to adult success
5. The biggest change of path is for about 25% of students who enter postsecondary institutions, but do not receive credentials
6. There are significant variations in these outcomes by sub-groups of students, place, and student success in high school

Sources-Early Millennials: The Sophomore Class of 2002 a Decade Later, U.S. Dept. of Education June 2017 and High School Longitudinal Study of 2009: First Look at Fall 2009 Ninth Graders in 2016, U.S. Dept. of Education Feb. 2018.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

- Overall, 85% of public school students graduate on time with a high school diploma
- 5% graduate within two additional years
- 5% receive a high school credential other than a diploma (e.g. GED, etc.)
- In total, 95% of young adults are now receiving a high school credential
- On average, students who graduate on time, with a regular high school diploma, fare better in postsecondary schooling and the labor market than students who graduate later or earn a high school credential

Important Variations by Sub-groups and Place in On-Time High School Graduation Rates

- Low income students have an on time graduation gap of about 10 points compared to middle and upper level income students
- Black and Latino students have a similar gap compared with White and Asian students
- Students with disabilities and English Language Learners have even larger gaps

In most states, the vast majority of students not graduating from high school on time are low income, minority students, students with disabilities, and/or English Language Learners.

The state with the highest on-time high school graduation rate is 20 percentage points higher than the state with lowest on-time high school graduation rate.

Typically, city school districts that educate large numbers of low income students have on-time high school graduation rates in the upper 60s to the mid-70s. More affluent districts in neighboring areas typically have rates in the mid 90s.

There are about 800 regular high schools where high school graduation rates are below 67% and a growing number of alternative schools with similar outcomes.

- This represents an improvement across all states, driven largely by gains among low income and minority students; as a result, sub-group gaps have narrowed over the last decade.

HIGH SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY SCHOOLING TRANSITION

What percent of high school graduates enroll in postsecondary institutions at some point?

- 70 percent of on-time high school graduates are enrolling in an institution of higher education (two-, four-year, and for profit) immediately after high school.
- This translates into about 60% of the total cohort of all 17- to 18-year-olds
- Within three years of high school graduation, about 72% of the total cohort of 17- to 18-year-olds have enrolled in a postsecondary institution
- Within 8 years, this rises to 80%

Key takeaway – currently, the dominant pathway toward adult success that students are taking is to earn a high school credential and then, by their early twenties, enroll in a postsecondary institution.

Where are they enrolling?

Among the 70% percent of on-time high school graduates who enroll immediately in postsecondary institutions

- 36% are enrolling in two-year institutions
- 57% are enrolling in four-year institutions (41% are enrolling in public 4-year, and 17% in private 4-year)
- 7% are enrolling in for-profit institutions (which typically provide programs one to two years in duration)

ENTERING THE WORKFORCE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

Entering the workforce after high school was once the main pathway to adult to success for many students. It has become a very bumpy road.

Class of 2013 – three years after high school graduation in 2016

24% of the cohort are in the workforce, are not enrolled in postsecondary schooling, and do not have a postsecondary credential. Of these

- 70% were employed, 18% unemployed, and 13% not in the labor force
- Median hours worked is 40, indicating that half are working less than full-time
- 52% have been unemployed for at least a month; of those the median number of unemployment periods is two, and the median length of a period was five months
- 39% reported earning less than \$10,000 in 2015
- 60% worry that they will not have enough money to cover basic living expenses
- 26% receive help from their parents to cover the rent or mortgage
- Only 32% think that their current job provides a path to the career they want to have at age 30

POSTSECONDARY ASPIRATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS FOR NOT ENROLLING IN AND LEAVING POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

High school sophomores (2002)

- 90% expect a post-degree
- 75% expect a 4-year degree

Reasons given by high school graduates for not enrolling in a postsecondary institution within three years of high school graduation:

Class of 2013

- 9% -- academic
- 42% -- financial
- 43% -- personal or family
- 32% -- work
- 14% -- none of the above

Reasons why students left postsecondary institutions without a degree or certificate (within 3 years of high school graduation)

Class of 2013

- 24% -- academic
- 40% -- financial
- 48% -- personal or family
- 22% -- work
- 9% -- none of the above

POSTSECONDARY OUTCOMES BY AGE 26

The path to adult success through postsecondary schooling is working for about half of all students and for about two-thirds of those who attempt that path.

Among the 80% of the Class of 2004 who enrolled in postsecondary institutions at some point, by age 26:

- 62% earned a postsecondary credential
 - 39% earned a BA or advance degree
 - 11% earned an AA degree
 - 12% earned a certificate
- 14% are still enrolled in a postsecondary institution and have not earned a credential
- 24% left a postsecondary schooling before earning a credential

Alternative pathway -- struggle in high school, rapidly earn a postsecondary certificate

- 18% of students who graduated from high school in 2013 with low math achievement test scores (in the bottom 20%), and enrolled in postsecondary schooling immediately after high school, earned a postsecondary certificate within 3 years.
 - The same is true for 16% of students with GPAs below 2.5