

# EDUCATION PROGRESS REPORT

## BEXAR COUNTY Cradle To Career Trends

MARCH 2018

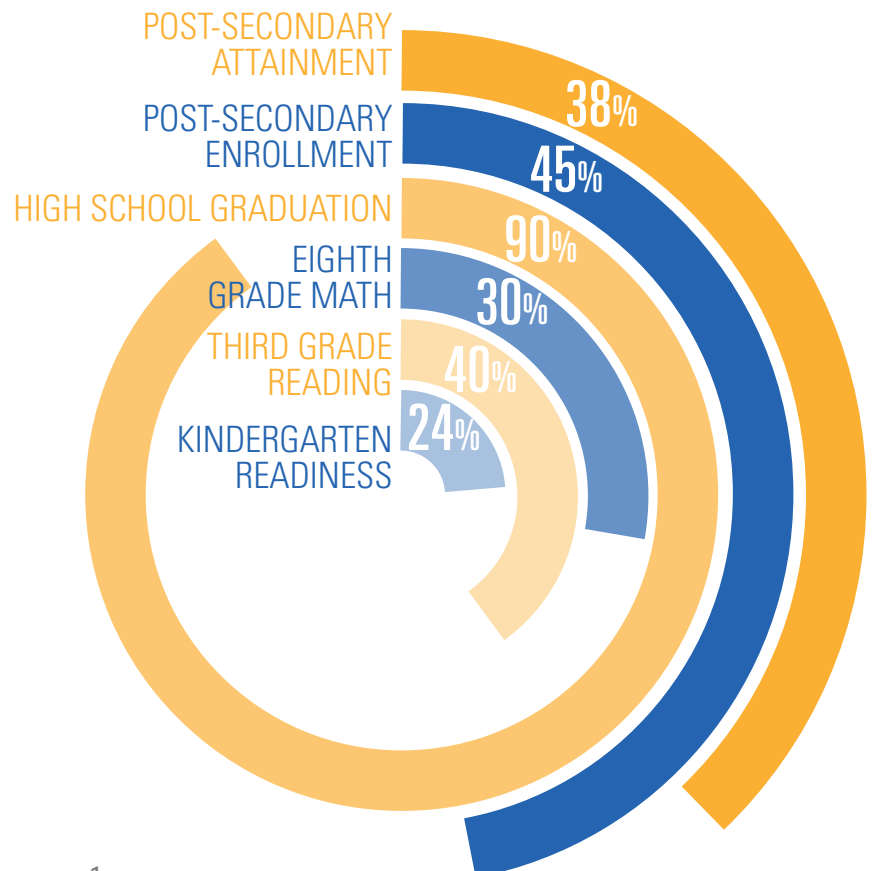
Is Bexar County on track to ensure all students are ready for the future? P16Plus tracks cradle to career milestones to understand young people's progress across their lifespan.

Important milestones include kindergarten readiness, third grade reading, eighth grade math, high school graduation, postsecondary enrollment, and postsecondary attainment. Taken together, they can help Bexar County education advocates understand where progress is being made and where the system isn't yet working for all students.

Today in Bexar County, high school graduation rates are at an all-time high. However, postsecondary enrollment and readiness are declining, suggesting there is more to do to ensure students graduating from high school are ready for future educational success. Meanwhile, postsecondary attainment has been increasing but not at the rate necessary to meet our state goal.

### Cradle to Career Milestones

To ensure all students are future ready, P16Plus networks monitor key milestones from cradle to career.<sup>1</sup>



# HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES ARE AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH

The four-year federal high school graduation rate is going up for Bexar County’s 15 independent school districts, and is currently at a higher rate than the state (90% vs 89%). Students in every subgroup are graduating at higher rates, though there are still gaps—94% of non-Hispanic White, 89% of Hispanic, and 87% of Black students graduate within four years. There are also considerable differences in high school graduation rates by campus, with rates at regular instructional high schools ranging from 77% to 100%. As Bexar County celebrates record graduation rates of 90%, it still aspires to ensure all students graduate on time, regardless of campus or ethnicity.

While 90% of Bexar County seniors are graduating from high school in four years, far fewer of them are prepared for future educational success. Of 2016 graduates who took the SAT or ACT, fewer than one in six were deemed college ready.

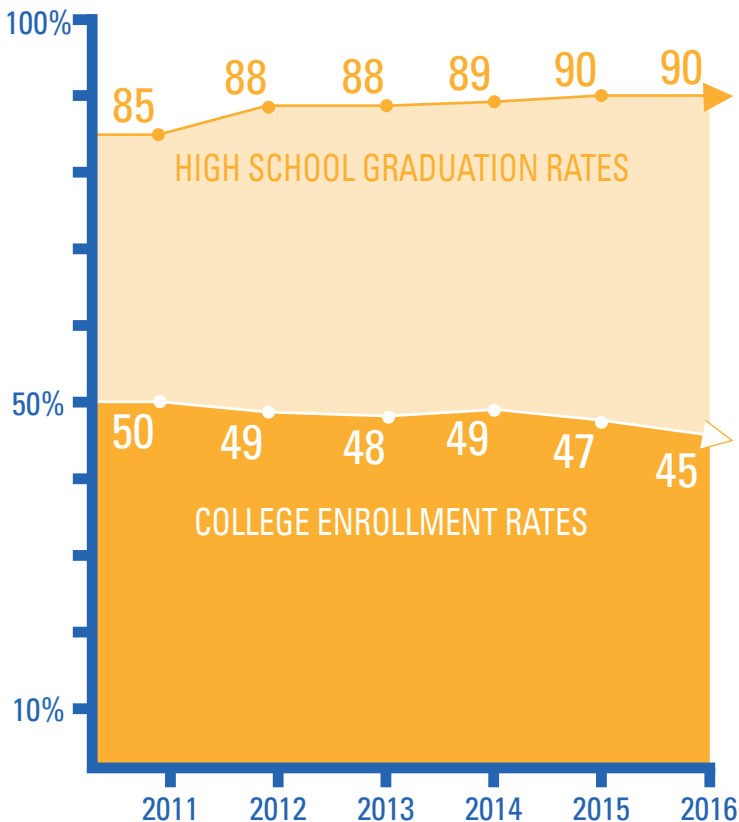
P16Plus reports on three milestones that influence high school graduation rates as well as how prepared young people are for future educational success: kindergarten readiness, third grade reading, and eighth grade math.

- **Kindergarten readiness** is measured by the rate of students assessed as “very ready” on at least four of five domains of the Early Development Instrument implemented by the United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County. CI: Now analyzes data on 245 census tracts throughout San Antonio to measure how the indicator has changed over time. In 2017, 24% of kindergarten students were deemed “very ready,” up from 22% in 2013.

- Rates of students **reading on grade level in third grade** have increased, from 35% in 2012 to 40% in 2017. This “meets grade level” standard has a higher threshold for passing than the current accountability standard.

- Thirty percent of **eighth grade students met the grade level standard on the state test in math** in 2017, a rate that has remained relatively flat since 2012. However, not all eighth grade students take the eighth grade math test. In the 2015-16 school year, 28% of eighth grade students took the Algebra I test, 80% of whom met the grade level standard. According to E3 Alliance’s analysis of longitudinal data, Bexar County students who take Algebra I in eighth grade are more likely to complete college. Both eighth grade math and eighth grade Algebra I participation are important measures to understand Bexar County students’ progress and preparedness for college.

## High school graduation rates at an all-time high, but college enrollment is declining



# COLLEGE ENROLLMENT IS DECLINING; DEGREE ATTAINMENT IMPROVING BUT OFF TRACK

Bexar County high school graduates are enrolling in Texas colleges and universities at a lower rate than the state (45% vs. 49%), and the rate has decreased over time.<sup>2</sup> This decline is consistent by ethnicity, gender, and economic disadvantage. There are also consistent ethnicity gaps in college enrollment rates—51% for non-Hispanic White, 43% for Hispanic, and 41% for Black high school graduates.

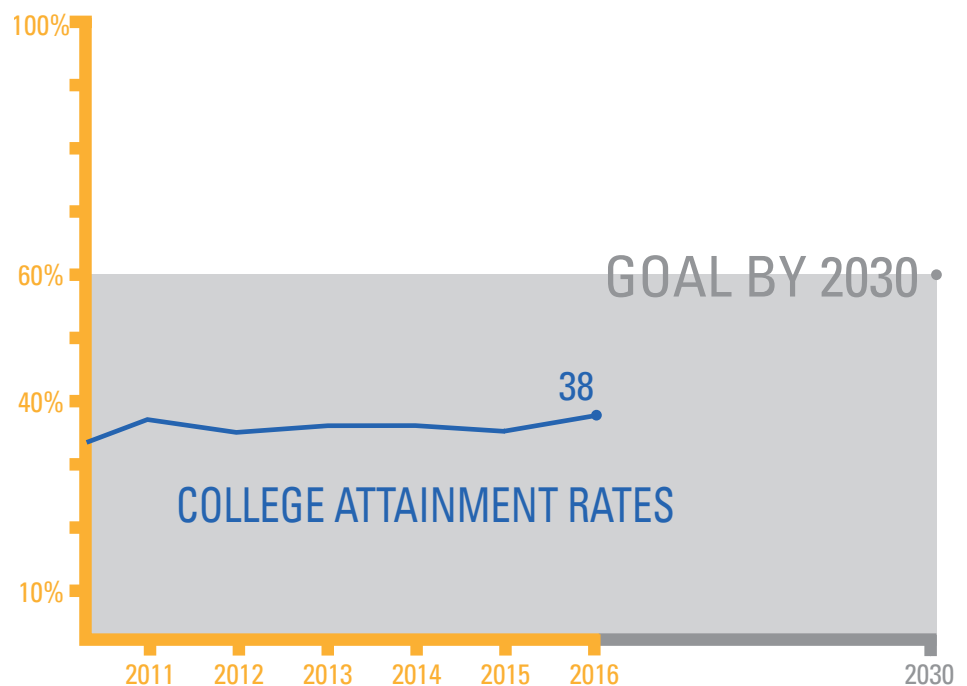
There is reason to hope the decline in postsecondary enrollment will be reversed based on recent efforts to increase student access to financial aid. FAFSA completion is one leading indicator of postsecondary enrollment, and the rate of seniors in Bexar County completing the FAFSA has increased in the last several years, from 48% in 2016 to 62% in 2017.

The rate of Bexar County young adults (ages 25 to 34) with at least an associate's degree has increased, from 33% in 2010 to 38% in 2016.<sup>3</sup> The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board goal is for 60% of Texas residents ages 25 to 34 to have

at least a postsecondary credential by 2030. The upward trend is a good sign, but attainment of a certificate or higher degree will need to increase much more rapidly in order to meet the 2030 goal. Ethnicity and gender gaps in educational attainment are wide—57% of non-Hispanic White females and 24% of Hispanic males have at least an associate's degree.<sup>4</sup>

The rate of students graduating from local colleges and universities is an important measure that helps drive overall attainment in San Antonio. Since 2011, the graduation rate within 150% of normal time to degree (e.g. a four-year degree in six years) has risen from 25% to 36% in 2016. Graduation rates for first-time students at both the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) and the Alamo Colleges increased over the same time period. The Alamo Colleges increased from a 7% graduation rate to a 19% graduation rate and UTSA increased from 27% to 35%. While that demonstrates remarkable improvement, there is work to be done to ensure students graduate college on time.

Postsecondary degree attainment is increasing, but not quickly enough to meet our goal of 60% attainment by 2030



# CONCLUSION

From cradle to career, every part of the pipeline matters and each milestone is predictive of later success. While trends are positive in high school graduation, declining trends in college readiness and enrollment suggest there is more to do to ensure students are ready for the future once they graduate. To help drive the progress needed, P16Plus networks are aligned around four strategic goals: remove obstacles to Pre-K through 12 education, expand access to high quality youth development programs, help students graduate from high school future ready, and ensure future postsecondary success. For more information about P16Plus visit our website at [www.P16Plus.org](http://www.P16Plus.org).

## Endnotes

- 1 Visit [www.P16Plus.org/data](http://www.P16Plus.org/data) for detailed definitions, sources, and disaggregated data on key milestones and leading indicators.
- 2 An additional 7% of high school graduates enrolled in colleges or universities outside of Texas, according to data from National Student Clearinghouse for five school districts in San Antonio (Harlandale, North East, Northside, San Antonio, Southwest ISDs, 2014).
- 3 In 2015, an estimated additional 4.3% of Bexar County residents ages 25-34 had attained a Level I Certificate as their highest credential.
- 4 The margin of error for the associate's degree attainment of all Bexar County residents ages 25-34 is +/-2.2%. For non-Hispanic White females, +/-9.4%, for Hispanic males, +/-4.6%.