

# The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2018

## North Carolina Key Findings

### Performance

- In the 2018 North Carolina graduating class, 109,256 graduates (100 percent) took the ACT test with a Composite score average of 19.1. This compares to 97,443 (100 percent) with an average of 18.9 in 2014. Nationally, 55% of 2018 graduates took the ACT with an average Composite score of 20.8.
  - ~ There were 22,773 African American graduates from North Carolina who took the ACT (21 percent) with an average Composite score of 16.0. This compares to 21,579 (20 percent) with an average of 16.2, and 20,710 (21 percent) with an average of 15.8, for the 2017 and 2014 graduating classes, respectively.
  - ~ There were 54,589 White graduates from North Carolina who took the ACT (50 percent) with an average Composite score of 20.9. This compares to 52,112 (49 percent) with an average of 20.9, and 50,499 (52 percent) with an average of 20.5, for the 2017 and 2014 graduating classes, respectively.
  - ~ There were 15,207 Hispanic graduates from North Carolina who took the ACT (14 percent) with an average Composite score of 17.2. This compares to 13,166 (12 percent) with an average of 17.5, and 10,206 (10 percent) with an average of 17.2, for the 2017 and 2014 graduating classes, respectively.
- The 2018 North Carolina graduating class average English score was 18.0. This compares to 17.8 and 17.5 in 2017 and 2014, respectively.
- The 2018 North Carolina graduating class average math score was 19.3. This compares to 19.3 and 19.6 in 2017 and 2014, respectively.
- The 2018 North Carolina graduating class average reading score was 19.5. This compares to 19.6 and 19.0 in 2017 and 2014, respectively.
- The 2018 North Carolina graduating class average science score was 19.2. This compares to 19.3 and 18.9 in 2017 and 2014, respectively.
- In 2018, 18 percent of North Carolina graduates met all four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This compares to 18 and 16 percent of 2017 and 2014 graduates, respectively.
  - ~ In 2018, 47 percent of North Carolina graduates met zero ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This compares to 47 and 47 percent of 2017 and 2014 graduates, respectively.
  - ~ In 2018, 46 percent of North Carolina graduates met the ACT English College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 46 and 47 percent of 2017 and 2014 graduates, respectively.
  - ~ In 2018, 31 percent of North Carolina graduates met the ACT Math College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 30 and 33 percent of 2017 and 2014 graduates, respectively.
  - ~ In 2018, 35 percent of North Carolina graduates met the ACT Reading College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 36 and 30 percent of 2017 and 2014 graduates, respectively.
  - ~ In 2018, 25 percent of North Carolina graduates met the ACT Science College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 27 and 23 percent of 2017 and 2014 graduates, respectively.
- In 2018, 30,184 (28 percent) of North Carolina graduates met three or four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This compares to 29,646 and 25,294 (28 and 26 percent) out of 2017 and 2014 graduates, respectively. For reference, the national percentage of 2018 graduates meeting three or four benchmarks was 38%.

## STEM

- Compared to a 2018 North Carolina graduating class average ACT STEM score of 19.5, graduates in 2017 and 2014 had STEM averages of 19.6 and 19.5, respectively.
- Compared to 13 percent of 2018 North Carolina graduates meeting the ACT STEM College Readiness Benchmark, graduates in 2017 and 2014 had STEM Benchmark percentages of 13 and 12, respectively.
- 2018 North Carolina graduates meeting the ACT STEM College Readiness Benchmark had an average science score of 28.6. This compares to 27.7 in 2014.
- 2018 North Carolina graduates meeting the ACT STEM College Readiness Benchmark had an average math score of 28.4. This compares to 28.6 in 2014.

## Career Readiness

- In 2018, 40,346 graduates (37 percent) earned a NCRC. 11,104 were at a bronze level, 15,764 were at a Silver level, 8,515 were at a Gold level, and 4,966 were at a Platinum level. The North Carolina Accountability measure for career readiness is Silver or higher and 29,245 (72 percent) of students met the standard.
  - ~ The ACT Composite scores associated with a 50% chance of earning each ACT WorkKeys NCRC level or higher are: 13 for Bronze, 17 for Silver, 25 for Gold, and 35 for Platinum. Based on those cut scores, students who earned an ACT Composite score of less than 13 would be classified as “Needs Improvement,” 13 to 16 as “Bronze,” 17 to 24 as “Silver,” and 25 or above as “Gold or Higher.”

## Impact

- Based on the actual test volume and ACT score distributions of 2018 ACT-tested North Carolina high school graduates, ACT research estimates that an increase of 0.1 in state average ACT Composite score for the 2018 graduating class would result in:
  - ~ 280 more students enrolling in college.
  - ~ 307 more students persisting to year two.
  - ~ 230 fewer students needing remedial English.
  - ~ 361 fewer students needing remedial math.
  - ~ 319 more students persisting to year four.
  - ~ 332 more students earning a postsecondary degree within six years.

## Behaviors that Impact Access and Opportunity

- In North Carolina, 22,668 of the 2018 graduates (20.7%) taking the ACT two or more times had an average Composite score of 22.8, compared to an average of 18.2 for 86,588 of the 2018 graduates (79.3%) who took the ACT only once.
  - ~ Nationwide, 847,940 of the 2018 graduates (44.3%) taking the ACT two or more times had an average Composite score of 22.7, compared to an average of 19.3 for 1,066,877 of the 2018 graduates (55.7%) who took the ACT only once.
  - ~ For North Carolina's 2018 ACT-tested graduates, the top five schools to which scores were sent were North Carolina State University at Raleigh, East Carolina University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Appalachian State University, and University of North Carolina at Charlotte.
- College and Career Readiness workshops were held throughout the fall of 2017 at nine colleges and universities with over 350 counselors, administrators, career development coordinators and other educators attending.
- 281,592 score reports were sent to colleges by 2018 North Carolina ACT-tested graduates.
  - ~ 171,402 score reports were sent to in-state public colleges by 2018 North Carolina ACT-tested graduates.
- In the 2017-2018 academic year, ACT issued 8,648 ACT fee waivers to qualified North Carolina students. However, 2,872 students (33.2 percent) did not take advantage of this opportunity to test for free. This compares to 542,506 waivers issued nationally, of which 152,227 (28.1 percent) students did not take advantage. Fee waivers represent a great opportunity for students of low socioeconomic status to retest without incurring any fees. Note: this is the number of fee waivers issued for the state, not specific to this graduating class.
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  - ~ While African American North Carolina students represent 48 percent of fee waivers issued, they account for 51 percent of unused fee waivers. This compares to 31 and 33 nationally.
  - ~ While White North Carolina students represent 17 percent of fee waivers issued, they account for 16 percent of unused fee waivers. This compares to 19 and 17 nationally.
  - ~ While Hispanic North Carolina students represent 21 percent of fee waivers issued, they account for 19 percent of unused fee waivers. This compares to 35 and 36 nationally.

## Pipeline

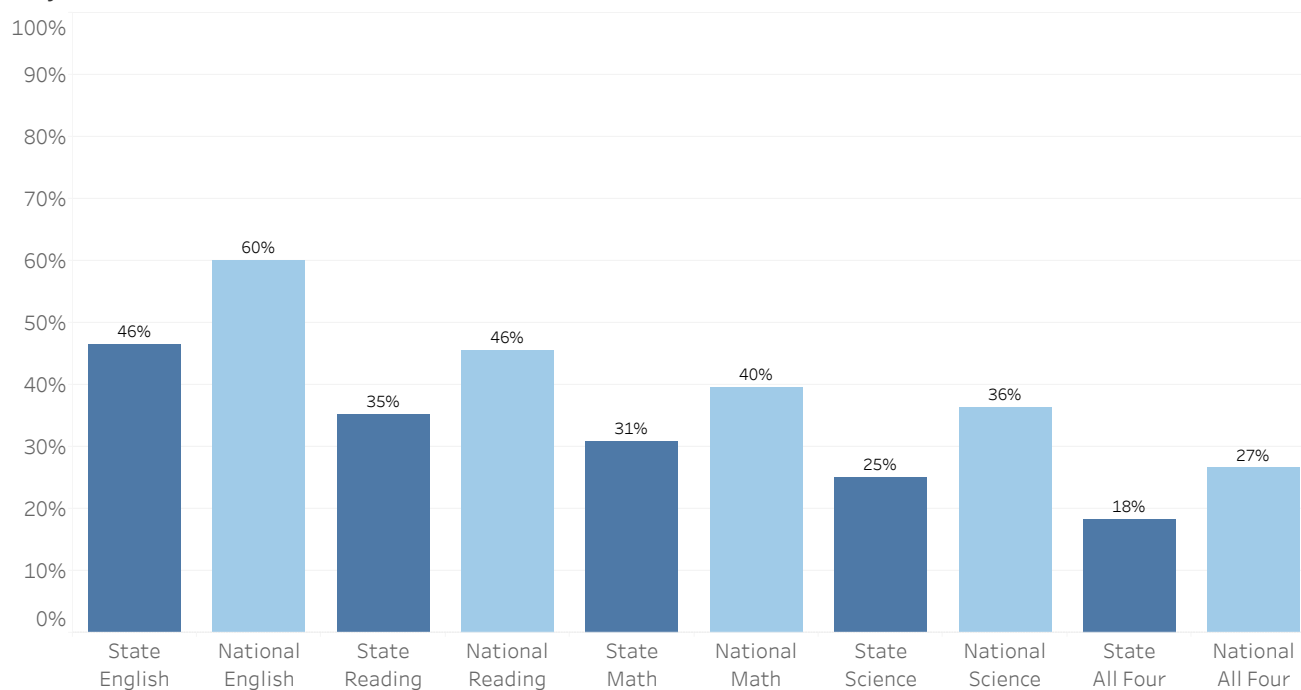
- Aspirations matter. Students who aspire to a higher level of postsecondary education typically achieve higher ACT Composite scores.
  - ~ 16,061 students (15 percent) aspired to attain a graduate or professional degree. They had an average Composite score of 23.3.
  - ~ 17,716 students (16 percent) aspired to attain a bachelor's degree. They had an average Composite score of 19.6.
  - ~ 2,982 students (3 percent) aspired to attain a vocational/technical or associate's degree. They had an average Composite score of 15.4.
- In the North Carolina graduating class of 2018, 7,791 students (7 percent) had parents who did not attend college.
- In order of prevalence, the five most commonly indicated college majors of interest for 2018 North Carolina graduates were: Undecided; Nursing, Registered (BS/RN); Medicine (Pre-Medicine); Business Administration and Management, General; and Biology, General.
  - ~ In the North Carolina graduating class of 2018, 4,993 students (5 percent) indicated being undecided about their college major. They had an average Composite score of 21.7. Decision making regarding college major can be facilitated through activities included in ACT Aspire and PreACT testing experiences. In addition, the Student Score Report is a valuable tool for conversations using the College and Career Planning and Interest-Major Fit sections.
  - ~ In the North Carolina graduating class of 2018, 1,411 (1 percent) indicated planning on majoring in education. They had an average Composite score of 19.8.
- This year, only 33% of North Carolina's 2018 ACT-tested graduates aspired to postsecondary education. Interestingly enough, 87% of North Carolina's 2017 ACT-tested graduating class aspired to enroll in postsecondary education, compared to 58% who actually did enroll. If we fully closed the aspirational gap, an additional 30,558 of the 2017 ACT-tested graduates from North Carolina would have enrolled in postsecondary education.

## Additional Points

- The North Carolina ACT State Organization continues to grow in membership and in diversity, with more than 240 members from across the state. The membership includes educators from state agencies, K-12, and postsecondary institutions, as well as members involved in workforce development. Each year, ACT hosts a state conference that bring together professionals representing each of these areas, providing a unique and diverse professional development opportunity.
- The ACT College and Career Readiness Champions are individuals across the country who support ACT's mission of education and workplace success. They are high school seniors, K-12, postsecondary, and workforce professionals, who have demonstrated exemplary behavior and contributions in support of college and career readiness in their respective communities. Congratulations to the North Carolina Champions: Tyler Osborne (High School Senior), Dr. Colin Kelly Batten Jr. (K-12 Professional), Susan Barbitta (Postsecondary Professional), and Jody Blackwell (Workforce Professional).

# NORTH CAROLINA College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

## Percent of 2018 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks\* by Subject



### Data From Graph Above

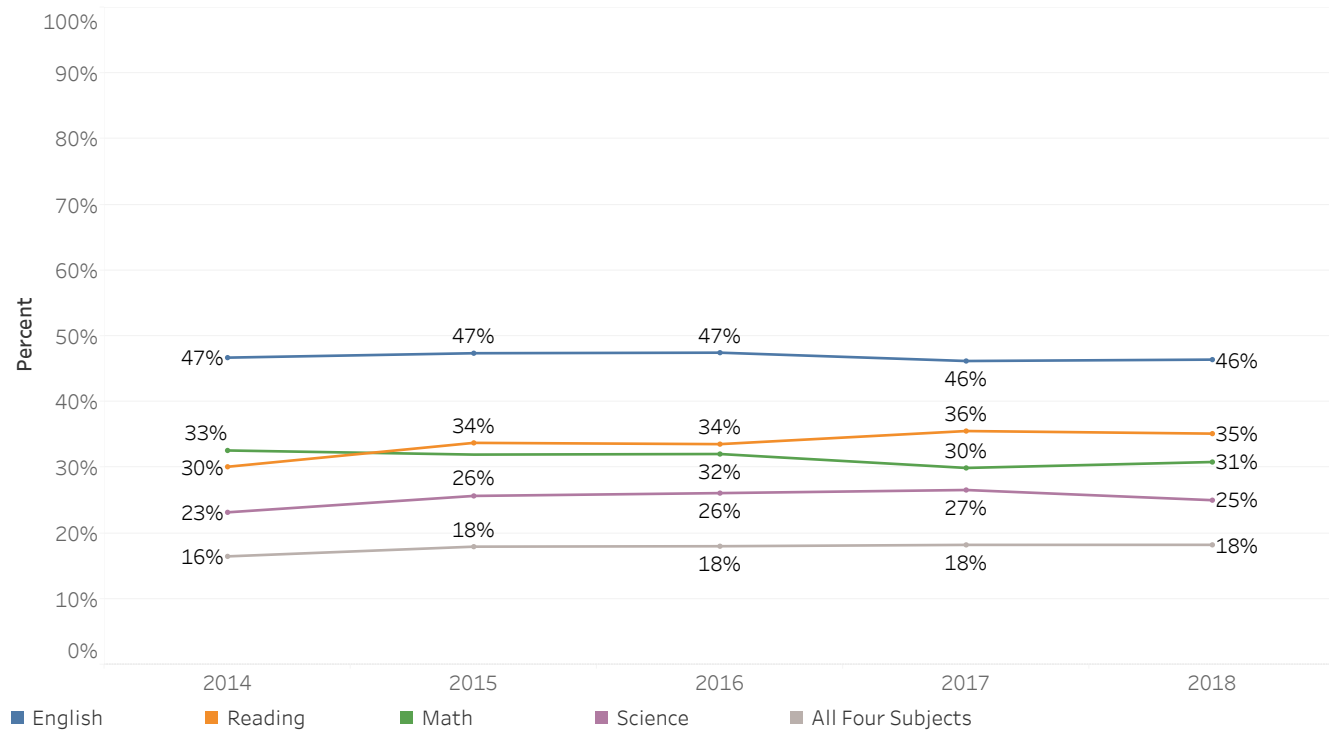
State English	National English	State Reading	National Reading	State Math	National Math	State Science	National Science	State All Four	National All Four
46%	60%	35%	46%	31%	40%	25%	36%	18%	27%

\* The ACT College Readiness Benchmarks are scores on the ACT subject area tests that represent the level of achievement required for students to have a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75% chance of obtaining a C or higher in corresponding credit-bearing first-year college courses. Throughout this report, benchmark attainment corresponds with students meeting or exceeding 18 in English, 22 in Reading, 22 in Math and 23 in Science.

Note, missing data points in tables and graphs reflect insufficient data for reporting.

# NORTH CAROLINA College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Percent of 2014–2018 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks\*



## Data From Graph Above

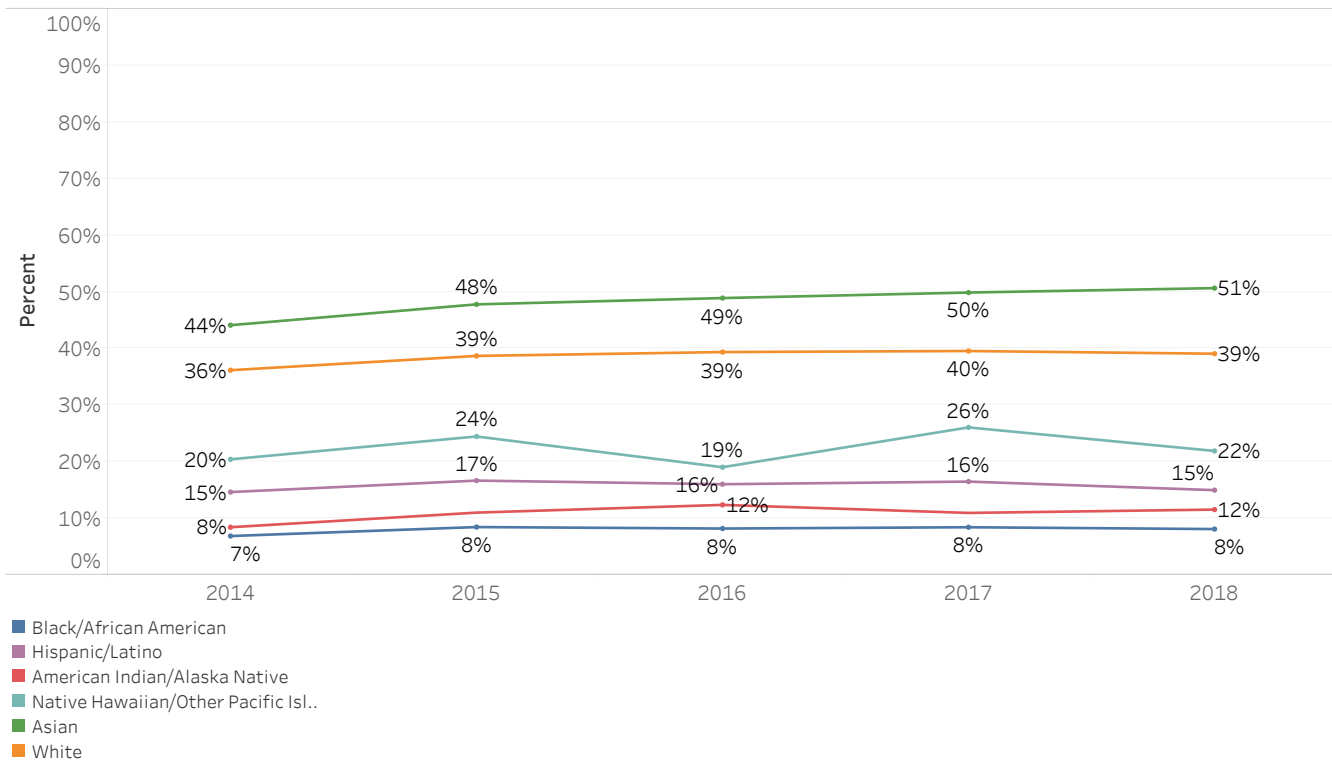
	English	Reading	Math	Science	All Four Subjects
2014	47%	30%	33%	23%	16%
2015	47%	34%	32%	26%	18%
2016	47%	34%	32%	26%	18%
2017	46%	36%	30%	27%	18%
2018	46%	35%	31%	25%	18%

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# NORTH CAROLINA College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

## Percent of 2014-2018 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting Three or More Benchmarks by Race/Ethnicity



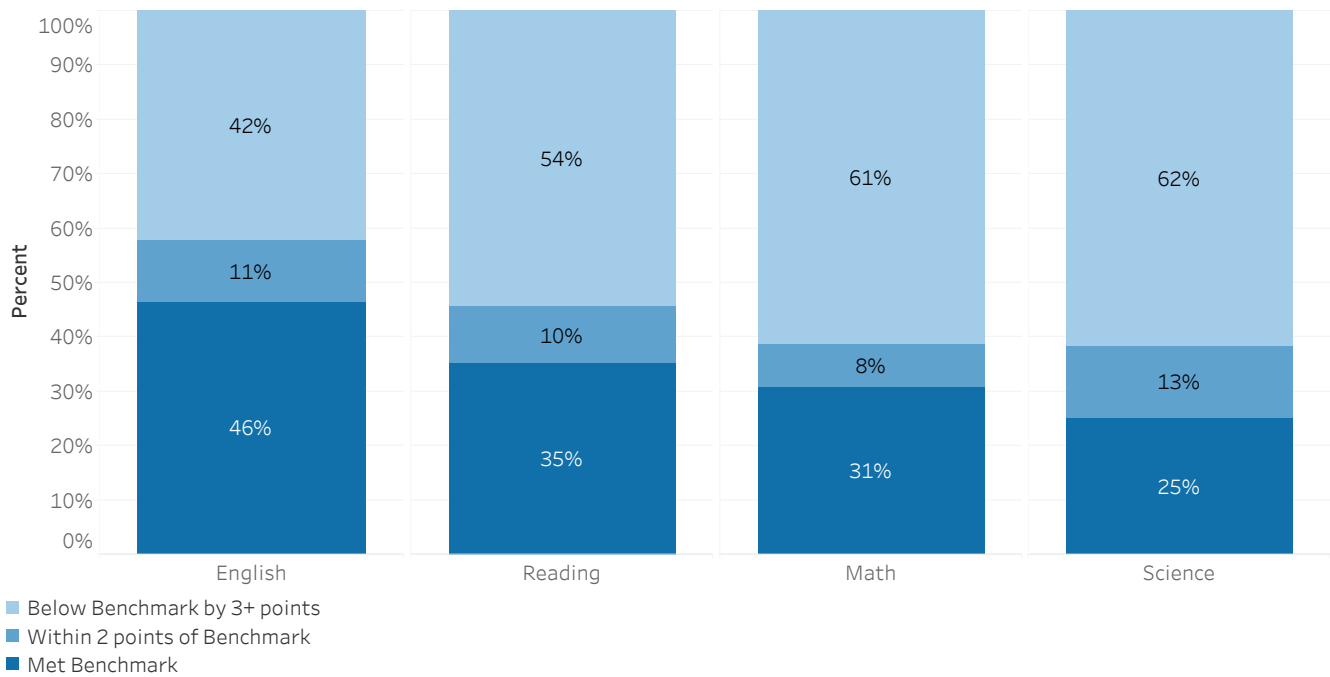
### Data From Graph Above

	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	American Indian/Alaska Native	Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	Asian	White
2014	7%	15%	8%	20%	44%	36%
2015	8%	17%	11%	24%	48%	39%
2016	8%	16%	12%	19%	49%	39%
2017	8%	16%	11%	26%	50%	40%
2018	8%	15%	12%	22%	51%	39%

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# NORTH CAROLINA College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Percent of 2018 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by ACT College Readiness Benchmark Attainment and Subject



## Data From Graph Above

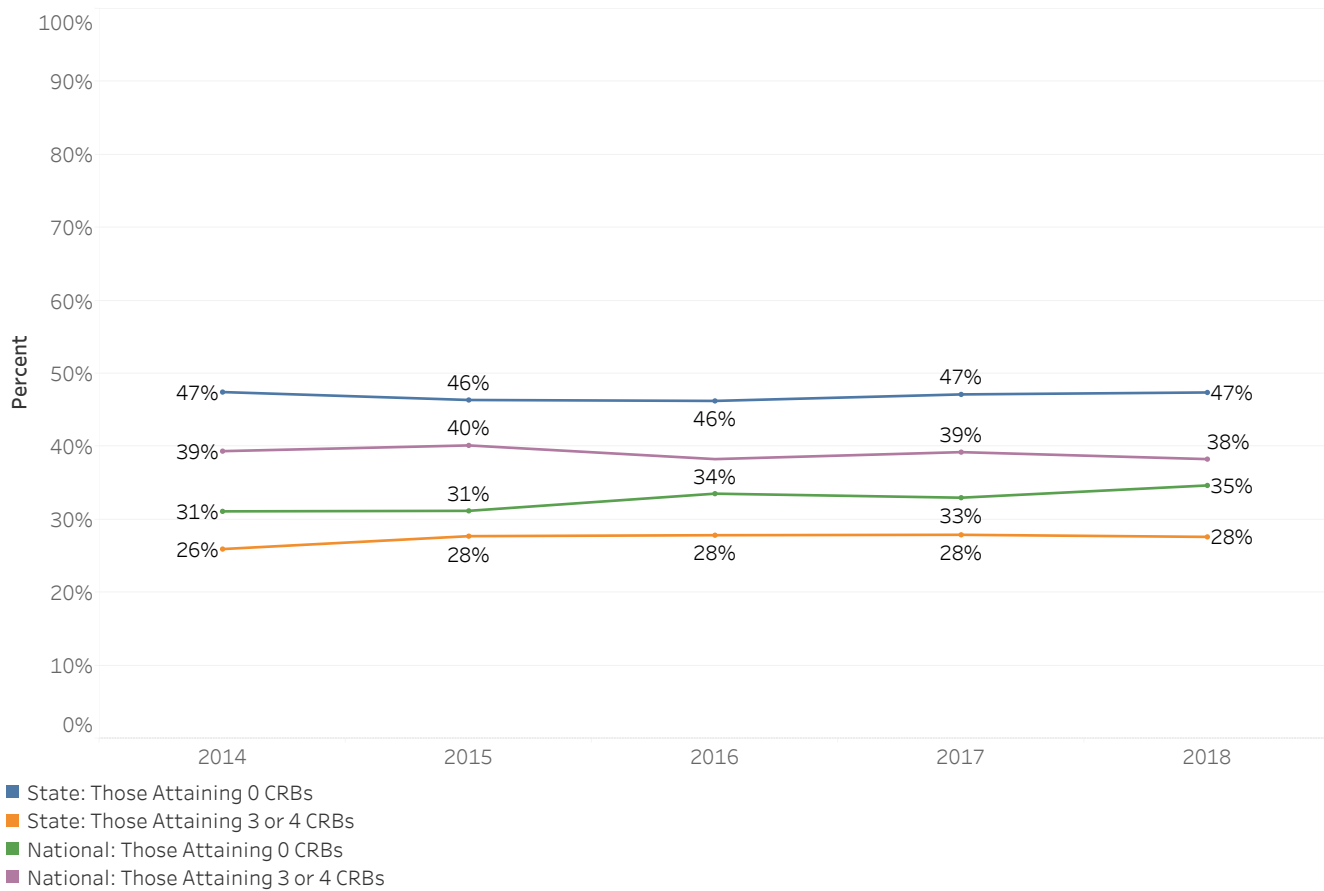
	Below Benchmark by 3+ points	Within 2 points of Benchmark	Met Benchmark
English	42%	11%	46%
Math	61%	8%	31%
Reading	54%	10%	35%
Science	62%	13%	25%

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# NORTH CAROLINA College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Percent of 2014–2018 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks\*



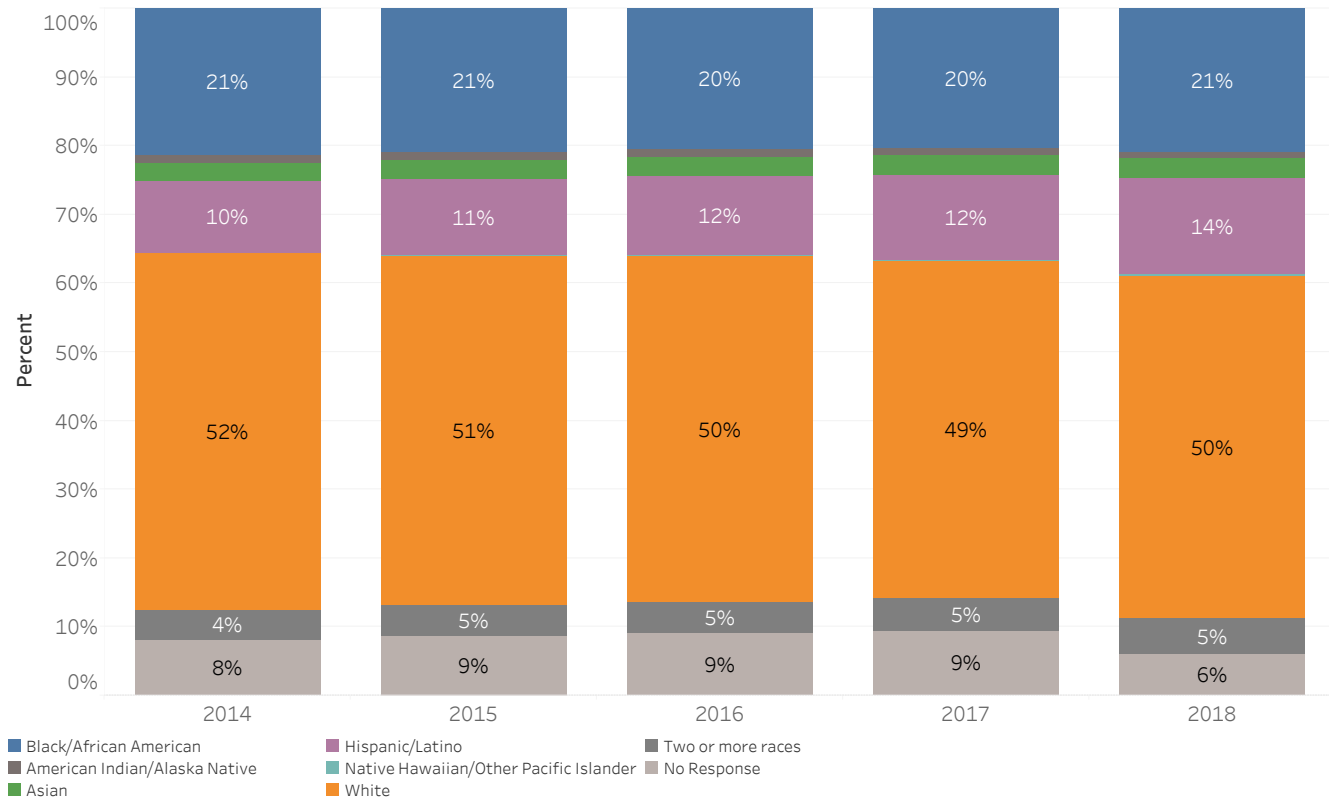
## Data from Graph Above

	State: Those Attaining 0 CRBs	State: Those Attaining 3 or 4 CRBs	National: Those Attaining 0 CRBs	National: Those Attaining 3 or 4 CRBs
2014	47%	26%	31%	39%
2015	46%	28%	31%	40%
2016	46%	28%	34%	38%
2017	47%	28%	33%	39%
2018	47%	28%	35%	38%

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# NORTH CAROLINA College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

## Percent of 2014-2018 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity



### Data From Graph Above

	Black/African American	American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian	Hispanic/Latino	Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	White	Two or more races	No Response
2014	21%	1%	3%	10%	0%	52%	4%	8%
2015	21%	1%	3%	11%	0%	51%	5%	9%
2016	20%	1%	3%	12%	0%	50%	5%	9%
2017	20%	1%	3%	12%	0%	49%	5%	9%
2018	21%	1%	3%	14%	0%	50%	5%	6%

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# NORTH CAROLINA College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

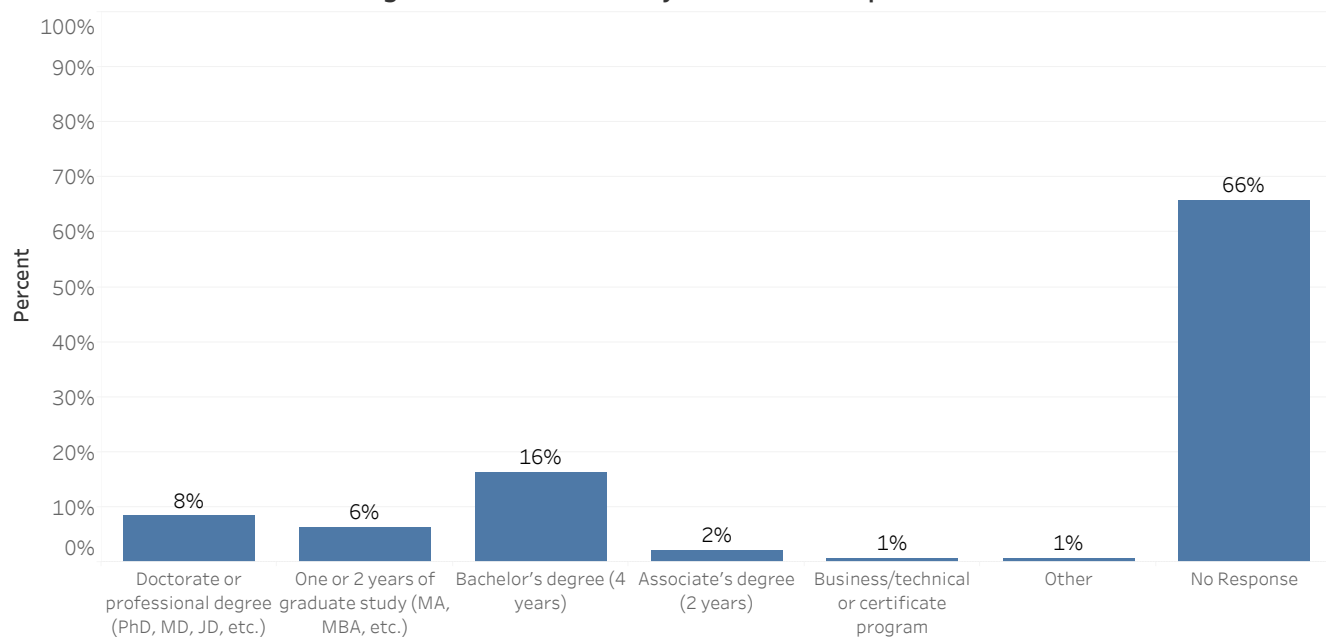
## Student Data Trends: 2014-2018, State vs. Nation

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
State N-count	97,443	100,557	103,902	106,210	109,256
National N-count	1,845,787	1,924,436	2,090,342	2,030,038	1,914,817
Average ACT English Score - State	17.5	17.6	17.8	17.8	18.0
Average ACT English Score - National	20.3	20.4	20.1	20.3	20.2
Average ACT Reading Score - State	19.0	19.2	19.5	19.6	19.5
Average ACT Reading Score - National	21.3	21.4	21.3	21.4	21.3
Average ACT Math Score - State	19.6	19.5	19.4	19.3	19.3
Average ACT Math Score - National	20.9	20.8	20.6	20.7	20.5
Average ACT Science Score - State	18.9	19.0	19.2	19.3	19.2
Average ACT Science Score - National	20.8	20.9	20.8	21.0	20.7
Average ACT Composite Score - State	18.9	19.0	19.1	19.1	19.1
Average ACT Composite Score - National	21.0	21.0	20.8	21.0	20.8

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# NORTH CAROLINA College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Percent of 2018 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Educational Aspirations



## Data From Graph Above

	% of Graduates
Doctorate or professional degree (PhD, MD, JD, etc.)	8%
One or 2 years of graduate study (MA, MBA, etc.)	6%
Bachelor's degree (4 years)	16%
Associate's degree (2 years)	2%
Business/technical or certificate program	1%
Other	1%
No Response	66%

Note, missing data points in tables and graphs reflect insufficient data for reporting.