College Eligibility in California

**What It Is**
On kidsdata.org, college eligibility is measured by the number and percentage of high school graduates completing all coursework required for University of California or California State University admission with a grade of C or better. These data also are provided by race/ethnicity.

**Why This Topic Is Important**
Higher educational attainment generally leads to more employment opportunities, higher earning potential, and even better health. However, college preparatory resources—such as quality curricula, teaching, advising, and test preparation—are not available equally to all students, and certain groups are consistently underrepresented in higher education, including Latinos, African Americans, and low-income students. While progress has been made in narrowing these gaps, substantial disparities remain.

The benefits of college readiness, access, and completion extend beyond individuals to society overall. For example, California is projected to have a shortage of skilled workers in the near future, falling at least 1 million bachelor’s degrees short of demand by 2030. Improving college access and completion could also benefit society by increasing tax revenue while reducing economic inequality, unemployment, poverty, incarceration, and demand for safety net programs.

**How Children Are Faring**
In 2017, 47% of California’s graduating 12th graders had completed the coursework required for University of California (UC) and/or California State University (CSU) admission with a grade of C or better. This figure remained lower than 40% between 1998 and 2013 and has risen steadily in recent years. Among regions with data in 2017, percentages ranged from 13% to 59% for counties and from less than 12% to more than 90% for school districts.

Inequities persist in college eligibility across racial/ethnic groups. In 2017, more than half of Asian American (74%), Filipino (65%) and white (52%) graduates statewide completed the course requirements for UC or CSU entrance, compared with fewer than 40% of their Hispanic/Latino, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and African American/black peers, and fewer than 30% of American Indian/Alaska Native graduates.
Definition: Percentage of Grade 12 graduates completing all courses required for University of California or California State University admission with a grade of C or better (e.g., among California public school students graduating from high school in 2017, 46.8% completed college preparatory courses).

Data Source: California Dept. of Education, Graduates by Race and Gender (May 2018).

Percentage of High School Graduates Completing College Preparatory Courses, by Race/Ethnicity: 2017

View references for this text and additional research on this topic:
https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/20/college-eligibility/summary

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