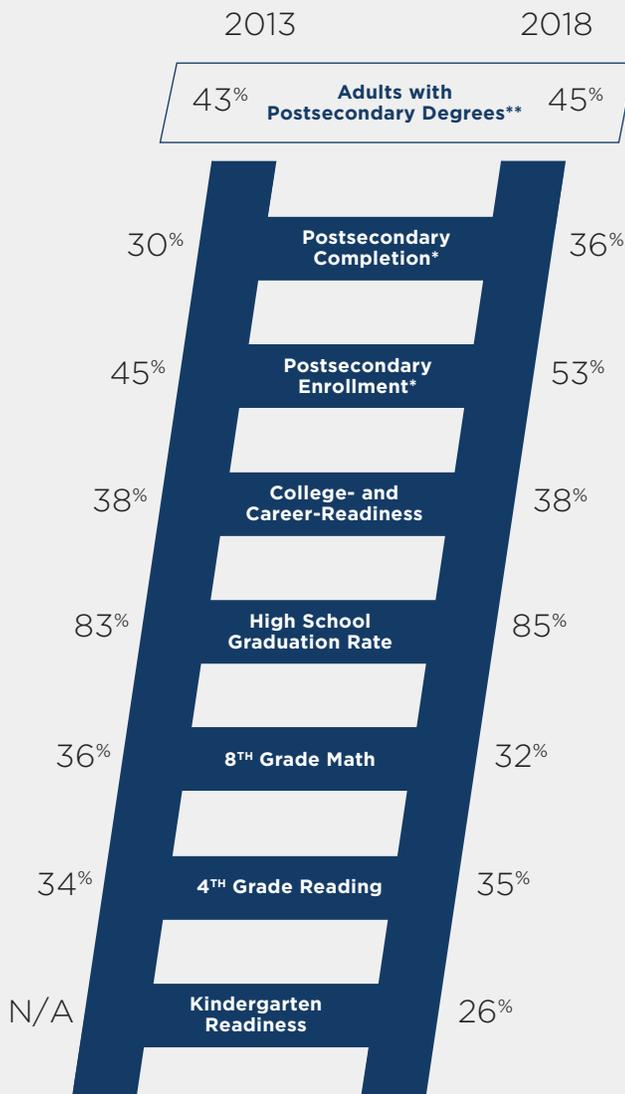


Where does Illinois stand on the steps to readiness?

WHERE ILLINOIS NEEDS TO GO BY 2025

Illinois aims to ensure that 60 percent of adults attain a postsecondary degree or credential by 2025.



*These measures reflect a starting point in 9TH grade. That is, they are estimates based on the cohort of Illinois' 2003 and 2008 9TH graders who graduated high school within 4 years. Please see end note ³ for additional information on methodology.

** This metric only includes adults with associates degrees or higher. The Illinois 60x25 goal includes both postsecondary degrees and credentials. Beginning in 2015, the Lumina Foundation began providing estimates of the percent of adults with a non-degree credential. In 2018, 6 percent of Illinois adults are estimated to have a non-degree credential, for a total of 51 percent of adults with a postsecondary degree or credential in 2018. We chose to only include adults with degrees in order to compare consistent data across the last five years.

By 2025 Illinois aims to ensure that at least 60 percent of adults attain a high-quality postsecondary credential. This goal drives our work as an education system because we know that a college degree—be it a technical certificate or an advanced degree—paves pathways to employment in an increasingly competitive and interconnected economy. College graduates are more likely to be employed, and those who work full time earn \$25,000 more annually than their peers with only a high school diploma, on average.⁴

To achieve this goal, we must focus on the entire education continuum, birth through career, and work to ensure that all students are on track across the critical academic milestones that mark their road to postsecondary completion. Over the past decade we have seen some success at each step, but we know we have significant work to do. Consider this:

- For the first time, we have the data to assess kindergarten readiness, and the results convey a clear sense of urgency. Only a quarter of Illinois children demonstrate kindergarten readiness across developmental domains.
- Illinois exceeds the national average in student academic growth but still trails the nation in 4TH grade reading and 8TH grade math proficiency. Unacceptable achievement gaps persist.
- More Illinois students are graduating high school and enrolling in higher education, and degree attainment in Illinois is on the rise. However, we are seeing growing gaps in attainment by race.
- Overall, our outcomes are improving despite insufficient state investment in programs and schools. We must build on the progress of K-12 funding reform and ensure our early childhood and postsecondary programs are fully and equitably funded so students and families have access to the resources they need to thrive.

ANNUAL WAGES RISE AND UNEMPLOYMENT RATE DROPS WITH EDUCATION



SOURCE: AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 1-YEAR ESTIMATES, 2017

How Illinois ranks

Early Education



Today, fewer children in low-income homes participate in preschool and childcare services than a decade ago. In fact, roughly 50 percent of children in economically challenged homes are served by public early childhood programs from birth to age 5.⁵ This figure improves when you consider 3- and 4-year-olds in childcare and pre-kindergarten, and suffers when you consider children birth through age 2 in home visiting and childcare. Furthermore, access depends on where you live. Significant portions of the state lack public services entirely.

To put children on a path to college and career readiness, we must do more to reach them early. While we cannot rank ourselves nationally on kindergarten readiness (as comparison data is unavailable), it is hard to imagine anyone is satisfied with just 26 percent of kindergartners demonstrating readiness across developmental domains.

K-12



On average, Illinois is near the top of the nation in academic growth, with 4 out of 10 Illinois school districts reporting higher student growth in reading and math than the national average. We also have seen marked progress for Latinx students in 8TH grade math and reading proficiency in the last 10 years, with their growth in proficiency outperforming most other states' Latinx student populations and contributing to Illinois' overall progress in these areas. Yet, the progress is uneven. Overall improvement on 4th grade reading—a powerhouse indicator of later success—has been modest, and achievement gaps remain significant. The state's new K-12 funding formula has begun to turn the tide on how our districts are resourced, but with roughly 50 percent of districts below 70 percent of funding adequacy and ongoing academic hills to climb, we still have real work ahead. It will take time for districts to translate greater funding into stronger results.

Postsecondary



Enrollment rates of Illinois high school students in postsecondary institutions continue to improve. That's news worth cheering. That said, overall enrollment at Illinois institutions of higher education is down across all sectors. This is having a marked impact on the Illinois higher education system and on who is going to college locally. For example, between 2013 and 2017, enrollment in Illinois public institutions fell by 13.5 percent, and black undergraduate student enrollment at Illinois public institutions fell 25.9 percent.⁶ This challenge undoubtedly reflects some combination of a strong economy and systemic disinvestment by the state. In addition, the affordability issue is acute in Illinois. The cost of college excludes many students, with Illinois families spending a higher percentage of their income on college than two-thirds of the country. While Illinois college completion rates are up, we are lower than needed to get us to our 60 by 25 state goal. In fact, today only half of Illinois residents have a postsecondary degree or certification.