

**STATE OF IOWA**

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**POSTSECONDARY  
READINESS REPORTS**

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**TECHNICAL GUIDE**

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## BACKGROUND

The Iowa Postsecondary Readiness Reports are a result of a federal grant to create a Statewide Longitudinal Data System with data partnerships between the Iowa Department of Education, the Iowa Board of Regents, and Iowa College Aid. These reports join Iowa public high school graduates to postsecondary outcomes, providing information on postsecondary enrollment and remedial course trends to help enhance data-driven decisions for K-12 improvement. Reports are available for individual public high schools and include comparisons to state averages. Some reports also provide comparisons by district and Area Education Agency level. Stakeholders, including the state partnering agencies, Area Education Agencies, and several school districts provided recommendations and feedback in the development of the Postsecondary Readiness Reports.

### REPORT UPDATES

The data used in the Postsecondary Readiness Reports are updated annually in the spring with an additional academic year of high school graduates as well as an additional year of longitudinal data in the progress report (showing up to six years after high school).

# REPORT METHODOLOGY

## DATA SOURCES

The Postsecondary Readiness Reports use public high school data from the Iowa Department of Education's Student Reporting in Iowa system. These data are then matched using a unique student State ID to enrollment, remediation, and award data from the three Regent universities (University of Northern Iowa, Iowa State University, University of Iowa) and the 15 Iowa community colleges. High school data are also matched to enrollment and award data from the National Student Clearinghouse using student name and date of birth. National Student Clearinghouse provides data for postsecondary institutions other than an Iowa community college or Regent university. While workforce training programs offered at colleges are included in these data, these reports do not include participation in employer training program or registered apprenticeships.

## HIGH SCHOOL DATA

The Postsecondary Readiness Reports include all students who graduate from a public Iowa high school and are grouped by the academic year in which they graduated. This methodology is new as of the November 2018 data update. Prior to that, students were grouped by the year in which they started 9th grade and the reports only included those who graduated high school within six years.

## POSTSECONDARY CALCULATIONS AND DE-DUPLICATION

The Postsecondary Readiness Reports are generated by combining the data sources that are described in the Data Sources section above. This section outlines some of the key processes and definitions on the way the raw K-12 and postsecondary data are combined to create the aggregate tables that are then used to generate the reports themselves.

All of the data in the Postsecondary Readiness Reports are grouped into "years after high school." The enrollment and remedial course reports include data for the first year after high school graduation (data for the first fall after high school graduation is also available in the Trends reports to provide data on more recent high school graduates), while the Postsecondary Progress Chart conveys multiple years after high school graduation. Enrollment and remedial courses are classified into years after high school using the enrollment start date.

For spring high school graduates, if the enrollment start date falls between May of the year of high school graduation and May of the following year, that

enrollment/remedial class is counted in the first year after high school (December through December for fall high school graduates). Awards are classified slightly differently due to differences between institutions in the time frames that spring/summer postsecondary awards are counted. For spring high school graduates, if the postsecondary award falls between May of the year of high school graduation and August of the following year, that award is counted in the first year after high school (December through December for fall high school graduates, just like enrollment).

In order to ensure that individuals are counted only once, multiple records of enrollment within the same year must be reduced down to one. This is first done within each data source (e.g. for multiple enrollments at the same institution, multiple institutions within National Student Clearinghouse, etc.). The process occurs again after the data from the three different sources of postsecondary data are merged. If there are records from more than one institution, the record with the "higher" enrollment status is kept, using the following hierarchy:

1. Award
2. Full-Time
3. Less than Full-Time
4. Other

Students who are enrolled at more than one institution in the same year and have the same enrollment status at both institutions are combined into one "More than One Category" record. For example, if a student attended a four-year public and a two-year public institution (both in Iowa) less than full-time in the same year, they would be reported as having an institution type of "More than One Category" and an enrollment location of "Iowa."

## 2023 DATA UPDATE

Two changes were introduced in May 2023. First, Iowa's community colleges updated a small number of student records from the high school graduating Classes of 2012 through 2021 to reflect their Iowa community college enrollment and/or awards. This change resulted in an increase of around one percentage point in postsecondary enrollment overall for the Classes of 2018 through 2021 and a less than one percentage point increase for the Classes of 2012 through 2017.

Second, a non-binary gender option was added to the state data collection for the Class of 2022, although many districts did not immediately add that category to their student information systems.

### PRIVACY PROTECTION AND SUPPRESSION

After records were matched across agency systems, personally identifiable information was removed. The data were then summarized for reporting purposes to ensure that no users can access information that identifies individual students. Additional steps have been taken to further protect individual information, such as redacting data in the reports for groups whose numbers are so small that they could potentially identify a student by age, race, or other characteristics.

Below are the business rules that determine how Postsecondary Readiness Reports data are suppressed:

- Suppression Rule #1: Suppress cell if total number of enrolled individuals in cell is greater than zero but less than six.
- Suppression Rule #2: If the sum of enrolled individuals across all suppressed subgroups is less than six, suppress the next smallest subgroup (to ensure the number of suppressed individuals is six or greater).
  - Rule #2 is applied to reports that display data by different demographics to reduce the risk of constructively identifying individual students.

## REPORT DESCRIPTIONS

### POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT TRENDS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

These reports provide information on public high school graduates who enrolled in a college or college-based training program within one year of high school graduation. Due to the variation of high school graduation dates and postsecondary term start dates, the one-year search period extends to the end of the graduation month. For example, this report looks to see if students graduating in May have enrolled in a college by May 31st of the following year. Student credits that are earned and course completion data are not reflected in these reports; only enrollment and initial attendance after high school are considered.

The Enrollment Trends report displays aggregate counts for high school graduates who enrolled in a college or college-based training program and can be filtered to show enrollment rates for full-time/less than full-time attendance, institution type (2-Year Public, 2-Year Private, 4-Year Public, 4-Year Private), and whether the student attended college in Iowa or out of state. Enrollment in the first fall after high school graduation is also available to provide more immediate feedback to schools.

The Enrollment Demographics report combines the most recent three years of student cohorts to display aggregate demographic grouping. This is done to minimize suppression of small subgroups. The report shows students enrollment in one of the following categories:

- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Race/Ethnicity (Grouped)
- Free & Reduced Lunch (FRL)
- English-Language Learners (ELL)
- Individual Education Program (IEP)
- On-Time High School Graduation Status

Note that gender and race/ethnicity reflect the student's status at the time of high school graduation, while the FRL, ELL, and IEP indicators reflect the student's association with those programs at any point in the four years leading up to high school graduation.

### POSTSECONDARY REMEDIAL COURSE TRENDS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

These reports provide information on public high school graduates who enrolled in an Iowa public college and took remedial coursework (referred to as developmental coursework by the colleges) within one year of graduation. Remedial class credits do not count toward a degree and usually must be completed prior to attempting college-level courses. Remedial course information is not available for Iowa private or out-of-state colleges.

The Remedial Course Trends report counts students for each remedial course taken and provides filters to show remedial math or English courses taken by subgroups within institution type. Remedial course enrollment in the first fall after high school graduation is also available to provide more immediate feedback on recent high school graduates.

The Remedial Course Demographics report combines three years of student demographic information and counts students once who took at least one math or English remedial course. Data from the three most recent high school graduating classes are combined to minimize suppression.

### POSTSECONDARY PROGRESS CHART

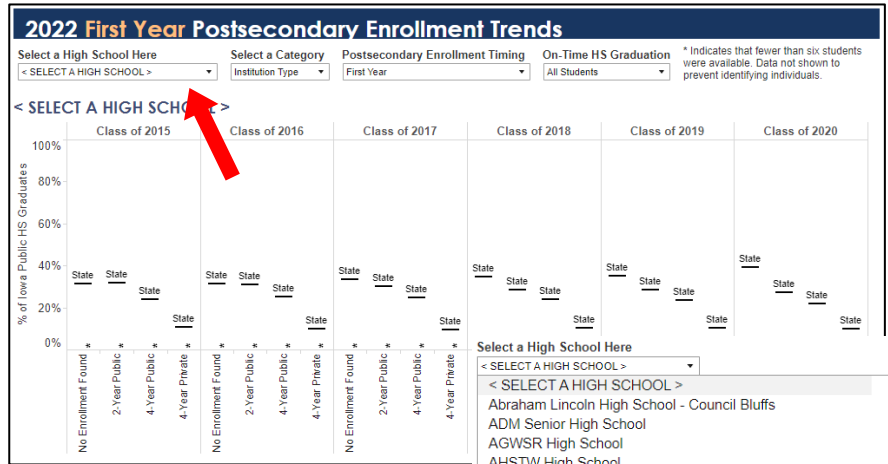
This report provides information on public high school graduates and their enrollment, retention, and first award earned across all postsecondary institutions. By default, the oldest available high school cohort is shown in the report as it provides the most available postsecondary years of reporting.

The report shows students' status each year after graduation in one of the following categories:

- No Enrollment Found – No postsecondary enrollment found in this year or any previous year
- No Longer Enrolled – No postsecondary enrollment found in this year, but enrolled in at least one prior year
- Enrolled – postsecondary enrollment found in this year
- Award – Received any postsecondary award in this year or any prior year, including awards earned prior to high school graduation (trumps any enrollment status).

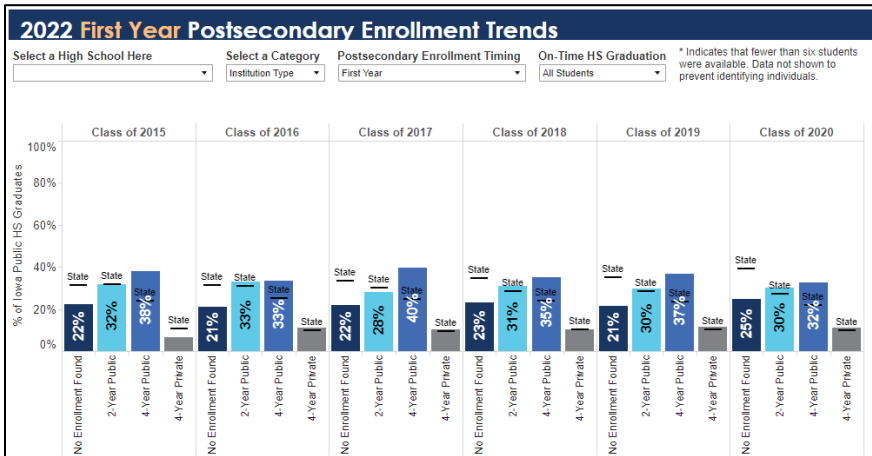
# REPORT NAVIGATION

**STEP 1:** When you first open one of the Postsecondary Readiness Reports, the reports will either appear empty (as in the example to the right) or only show statewide data. This is because a high school has not yet been selected. The first step is to select a high school from the dropdown menu indicated by the red arrow.

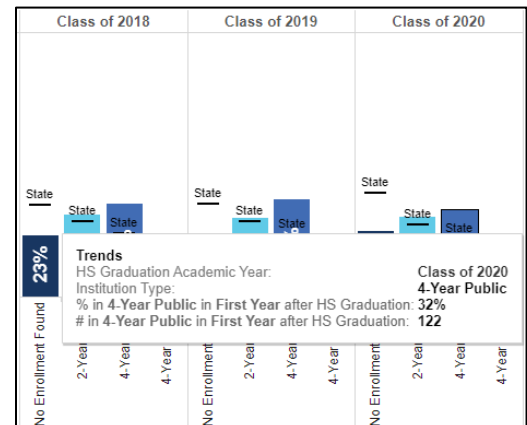
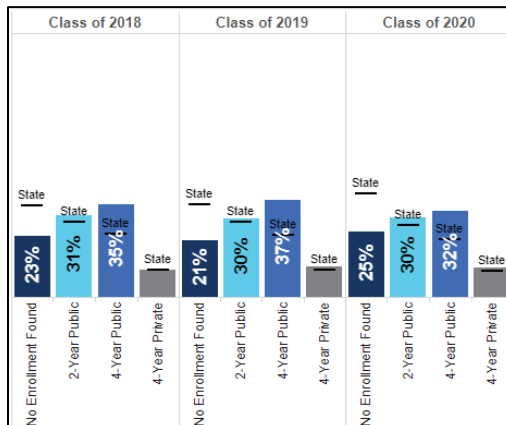


**STEP 2:** The dropdown menu (right) includes all current public Iowa high schools in alphabetical order. High schools that share a common name (for example, there are two Thomas Jefferson High Schools) are distinguished by the addition of each school's city location.

Once a high school has been selected, all five reports will be populated with data for that high school until another high school is selected. You can change high schools within any of the five reports.



**STEP 3:** You can obtain additional information about a report when you move your mouse over different parts of graphs. This function works for both the high school data (as shown in the colored bars below) and the State of Iowa averages (shown in the black lines with "State"). There is no "mouse over" function within the data tables at the bottom of each report.



[DOWNLOAD](#) → [PDF](#):

## HOW TO PRINT

1. Click the Download button in the bottom right corner of the chart
2. Click PDF
3. Change any settings you wish, and click Download
4. Once the window stating "The PDF file has been generated." appears click Download again
5. Print the PDF that you downloaded

### DOWNLOAD → IMAGE:

1. Click the Download button in the bottom right corner of the visualization
2. Click Image
3. Change any settings you wish, and click Download
4. Once the window stating "The image file has been generated." appears, click Download again
5. Print the .png file that you downloaded

### PRINT SCREEN:

1. Scroll to the portion of the webpage that you would like to print
2. Hold down Alt, and press PrtScn to copy the contents of the web browser window (Command-Shift-4 on Mac OS)
  - a. Alternative: Use the Snipping Tool in Windows, or the Grab tool in Mac OS
3. Paste (Ctrl-V in Windows, Command-V in Mac OS) the screenshot into an image editor or document
4. Print the screenshot using the print dialogue of the software program you pasted into