

STATE OF IOWA

**POSTSECONDARY
READINESS REPORTS**

TECHNICAL GUIDE

CONTENTS

BACKGROUND.....	2
REPORT UPDATES	2
REPORT METHODOLOGY.....	3
DATA SOURCES	3
MATCHING	3
YEARS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL	3
DEDUPLICATION	3
2023 DATA UPDATE	4
2025 DATA UPDATE	4
PRIVACY PROTECTION AND SUPPRESSION	4
REPORT DESCRIPTIONS.....	5
POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT TRENDS AND DEMOGRAPHICS.....	5
POSTSECONDARY PROGRESS CHART.....	5
PREP TRENDLINES	5
REPORT NAVIGATION	6
HOW TO PRINT	6



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 (College Aid, Community Colleges and K-12), the Iowa Board of Regents and Iowa Workforce Development. These reports join Iowa public high school graduates to postsecondary outcomes, providing information on postsecondary enrollment and awards 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 include all students who graduate from a public Iowa high school within a given academic year. Public high school student data come from the Iowa Department of Education's Student Reporting in Iowa data collection.

These data are then matched to enrollment and award data from four sources: the three Regent universities (University of Northern Iowa, Iowa State University and University of Iowa), the 15 Iowa community colleges, National Student Clearinghouse, and the Iowa Office of Apprenticeship.

The Iowa Board of Regents provides data on for-credit enrollment and awards from the three Regent universities.

The Iowa Department of Education's Bureau of Community Colleges provides data on both for-credit and noncredit enrollment as well as for-credit awards from Iowa's 15 community colleges.

National Student Clearinghouse provides for-credit enrollment and award data for postsecondary institutions other than an Iowa community college or Regent university, including Iowa private institutions and out-of-state institutions.

The Iowa Office of Apprenticeship provides data on participation in and completion of registered apprenticeships in Iowa.

MATCHING

Data on public high school graduates are matched to data from the Regent universities, community colleges, and the Iowa Office of Apprenticeship using Iowa's unique student State ID system, which relies on student name and data of birth to identify matches. The National Student Clearinghouse also uses name and date of birth but performs matching in-house. Matching approaches and algorithms change over time, resulting in some variation from year to year.

YEARS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

All of the data in the Postsecondary Readiness Reports are grouped into "years after high school." The enrollment 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 is 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 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 places where postsecondary awards are reported (the Progress Chart and PREP Trendlines), postsecondary awards earned prior to high school graduation are counted.

DEDUPLICATION

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 steps involved in combining the raw K-12 and postsecondary data to create the aggregate tables that are then used to generate the reports themselves. In order to ensure that individuals are counted only once, multiple records of enrollment within the same year must be reduced 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 four different sources of postsecondary and registered apprenticeship data are combined. If there are records from more than one data source, the record with the "higher" enrollment status is kept, using the following hierarchy:

1. Credit Award or Registered Apprenticeship Completion
2. Credit Enrollment: Full-Time or Registered Apprenticeship participation
3. Credit Enrollment: Less than Full-Time
4. Credit Enrollment: Other
5. Noncredit Enrollment

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.

2025 DATA UPDATE

Two new types of enrollment were added to all high school graduating classes in the 2025 Postsecondary Readiness Reports: registered apprenticeship data and Iowa community college noncredit data.

Registered apprenticeship data were incorporated into both enrollment and awards for the first fall and the first year. Those who participated in a registered apprenticeship after high school graduation were considered to have enrolled, and the timing of that enrollment determined whether they were counted as enrolled in the first fall or in the first year. Those who completed a registered apprenticeship were counted as earning an award.

Iowa community college noncredit enrollment data were also added. Students who enrolled in noncredit Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses totaling at least 32 contact hours within the first year after high school graduation were counted as enrolled. Unlike other types of enrollment, noncredit enrollment data are only available for the first year; first fall enrollment was not tracked. Completion of noncredit programs is not included. For more information on noncredit course-taking, see the [Iowa Community Colleges Noncredit Program Outcomes report](#). Although other institutions offer noncredit coursework, the Regents universities and National Student Clearinghouse data used in these reports do not contain noncredit enrollment as of 2025.

In addition to these two types of enrollment, an indicator of whether a student participated in work-based learning during high school was added to the PREP Trendlines reports. This is a new data element added to the state data collection for the class of 2024; no data are available for the classes of 2023 and earlier.

PRIVACY PROTECTION AND SUPPRESSION

After records are matched across agency systems, personally identifiable information is removed. The data are 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 Iowa public high school graduates who enrolled in a college, college-based training program, or registered apprenticeship 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. Postsecondary enrollment, credits earned and courses completed during high school are not reflected in these reports; only enrollments that occur after high school graduation are considered.

The Enrollment Trends report displays aggregate counts for high school graduates who enrolled in a college, college-based training program, or registered apprenticeship and can be filtered to show enrollment rates by enrollment status (full-time, less than full-time, noncredit, or other), institution type (2-Year Public, 4-Year Public, 4-Year Private or Registered Apprenticeship), 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 by Demographics report combines the most recent three years of student cohorts to display aggregate demographic grouping. This is done to minimize suppression of small student groups. The report shows student enrollment by the following categories:

- College-Level Coursework
- Completed FAFSA
- English Learner (EL)
- Gender
- Gifted & Talented
- Low Socio-Economic Status (FRL)
- On-Time HS Graduation
- Race/Ethnicity
- Race/Ethnicity (Grouped)
- Section 504 Status
- Students with Disabilities (IEP)

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

POSTSECONDARY PROGRESS CHART

This report provides information on Iowa 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 (six). The Progress Chart includes, in the award category, those awards earned prior to high school graduation. Enrollment prior to high school graduation is not included in the Progress Chart.

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

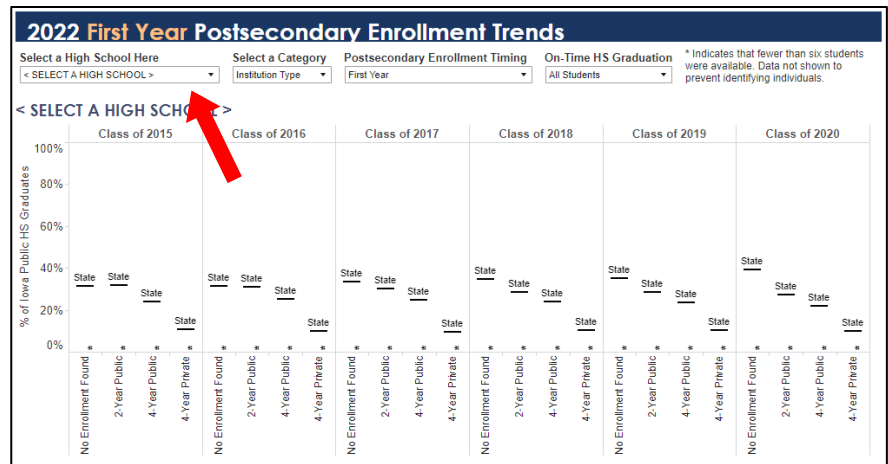
- No Enrollment Found – Students who did not enroll in postsecondary education or training or receive any postsecondary award in the given year or previous years
- No Longer Enrolled, No Award – Students who enrolled in a previous year, but not in the given year and have received no degree/award
- Enrolled – Students who enrolled in the given year
- Award – Students who received any postsecondary degree/award (i.e., degree, certificate, diploma, registered apprenticeship completion, etc.) in the given year or a previous year (including awards earned prior to high school graduation)

PREP TRENDLINES

This report presents data on selected outcome measures over time, which provides a visual representation of the overall trend. Users can select different or additional measures from the drop-down menu to see and compare data points over time. Work-based learning data was first collected for the class of 2024 so trendline data for that measure is not available prior to 2024.

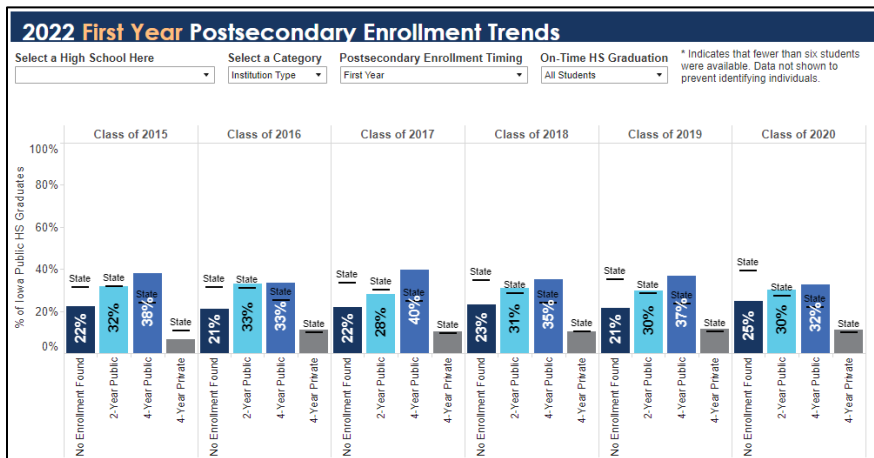
REPORT NAVIGATION

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.

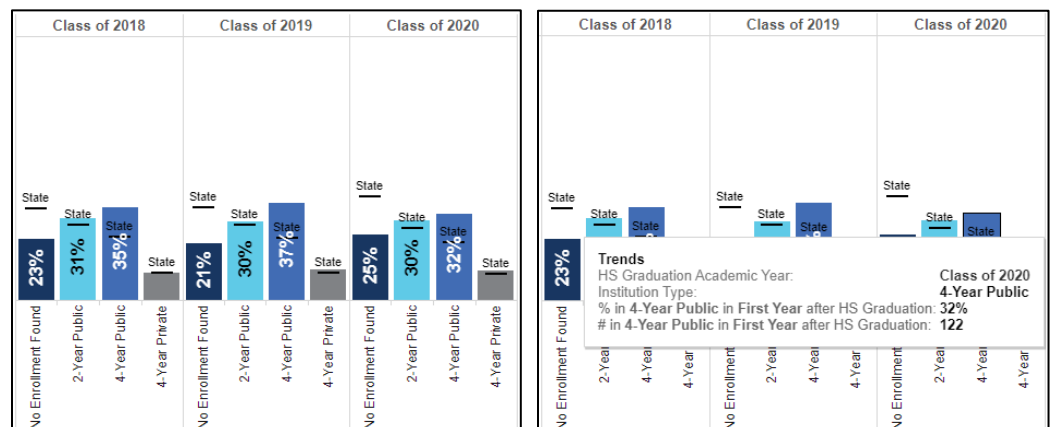


STEP 2: The dropdown menu (right) includes all current public Iowa high schools in alphabetical order. High schools that share a common name (for example, there are two Thomas Jefferson High Schools in Iowa) are distinguished by the addition of each school's city location.

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 four 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.



HOW TO PRINT

DOWNLOAD → PDF:

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