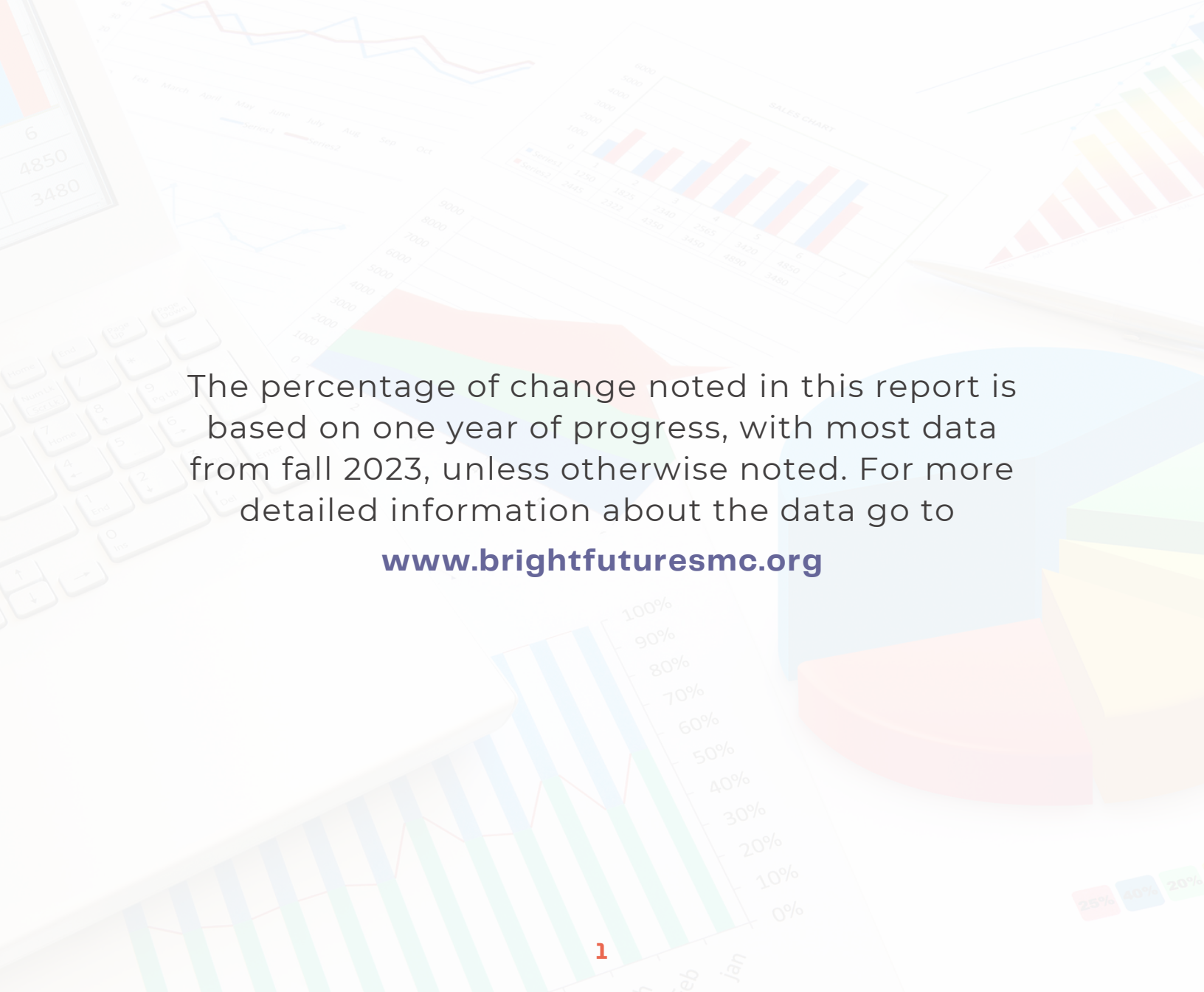




2025 Annual Report

CRADLE TO CAREER

The background is a collage of various financial and data-related images. It includes a calculator in the top left corner with a display showing '6', '4850', and '3480'. There are several line graphs with different colored lines (blue, red, green) plotted against axes. A bar chart titled 'SALES CHART' is visible in the upper right, showing data for two series across seven categories. A 3D pie chart is on the right side, divided into three segments of blue, yellow, and orange. Another bar chart with green bars and a red line is at the bottom. The overall theme is data analysis and finance.

The percentage of change noted in this report is based on one year of progress, with most data from fall 2023, unless otherwise noted. For more detailed information about the data go to

www.brightfuturesmc.org

OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE

The collage consists of 18 individual photographs arranged in a grid-like fashion. The images depict a variety of community activities and achievements:

- Top Left:** A group of people sitting around a long table in a meeting room, engaged in discussion.
- Top Center:** A young man with a backpack interacts with two women at an outdoor table displaying informational materials.
- Top Right:** A large group of men and women, some in suits, posing for a formal group photo outdoors.
- Middle Left (Top):** A group of people holding up certificates or awards, smiling for the camera.
- Middle Left (Bottom):** A panel discussion with four men seated on a stage, with a backdrop for the 'Vivian R. ...' event.
- Middle Center:** A large group of people, mostly women, posing for a group photo in front of a backdrop that reads 'Community Schools Collaborative 2025'.
- Middle Right:** A group of people posing for a photo in a room with a 'HARTNELL COLLEGE' sign.
- Bottom Left (Top):** Three young women standing together, smiling, in front of a 'HARTNELL COLLEGE' backdrop.
- Bottom Left (Bottom):** A group of people seated at tables in a dining or meeting area.
- Bottom Center:** Five young men standing outdoors, holding up small items, possibly awards or certificates.
- Bottom Right:** Two women standing in front of a backdrop featuring the '2025 every four counts' logo.
- Bottom Center (Large):** A large banner for 'CalKIDS' scholarship information, featuring the text 'RECEIVE UP TO \$1,500 FREE SCHOLARSHIPS TAKES 3-5 MINUTES CALKIDS.ORG' and 'RECIBE HASTA \$1,500 BECAS GRATIS TOMA DE 3 A 5 MINUTOS'.



OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE



“ We want every family to
celebrate the milestones
and successes of their
children from cradle to
career. ”



HARTNELL COLLEGE
FOUNDATION



ADVANCING EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

Who We Are

Bright Futures is a diverse community partnership fostering progress in education outcomes for local students, from cradle to career. We bring people and organizations together across sectors throughout the county to align our efforts to close equity gaps and improve educational outcomes.

Our Challenge

We want all students to have the opportunities that allow them to achieve their full potential. Unfortunately, we see low levels of achievement overall and huge disparities in student outcomes at each of the seven junctures we track from cradle to career.

Our Solution

We support collaborative efforts with youth, parents, and local organizations to identify challenges and implement solutions that enhance outcomes for all students while working to eliminate group-based equity gaps.

Our Community Partners

Our work is possible because of a diverse coalition of local and regional leaders, educators, researchers, investors, parents, and youth working together to build a brighter future for our community.



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends and Partners,

As we reflect on the past year, we are proud to celebrate a time of incredible progress and transformation for the Bright Futures Monterey County Educational Partnership. This year marked key milestones that will shape and strengthen our work for years to come.

One of our most significant accomplishments was our successful transition to a new anchor institution, a shift that has deepened our foundation and expanded our ability to serve children, youth, and families across Monterey County. With the addition of a committed backbone team, we've gained the leadership and capacity needed to drive our mission forward.

Already, we are seeing real impact. Bright Futures has become a statewide leader in advancing the CalKIDS program, helping more families access this vital resource for their children's educational futures. We've also launched a new five-year strategic planning process to guide our work, grow our reach, and strengthen the systems that support success from cradle to career.

Our engagement in initiatives like Mi Vida Mi Futuro and the School Readiness Report led by First 5 Monterey County reflects our dedication to collaboration and data-driven decision-making. These partnerships provide critical insight and direction as we work to close opportunity gaps and create pathways to upward mobility for all children in our region.

We are excited to move forward with our strategic plan, our roadmap for deepening impact, expanding initiatives, and strengthening partnerships that help every child thrive. With your support, we will continue building momentum and creating meaningful opportunities for success.

Thank you for your continued commitment to Bright Futures. Together, we are shaping a brighter, more equitable future for the children and families of Monterey County.

Warmly,
The Bright Futures Team



Tony Amezcua
Director of Bright Futures

OUR EXTENDED BACKBONE



Bright Beginnings is a countywide early childhood development initiative that brings the community together to ensure young children, from prenatal to age 8, have what they need to succeed. It is grounded in a shared vision: *All children in Monterey County living in safe, nurturing homes and communities, being healthy, valued, successful in school, and achieving their full potential.*

Using a collective impact approach, Bright Beginnings coordinates community efforts through capacity building, empowerment, and strategic action. The Backbone Team supports this work by convening partners, mobilizing resources, and advancing policy change. Together, we are working to double the number of children who are holistically supported and reduce kindergarten readiness gaps across income levels.

STAFF + CORE CONVENERS

BACKBONE STAFF



TONY AMEZCUA

Director, Bright Futures Educational Partnership



MICHAEL APPLEGATE

Data and Research Analyst,
Bright Futures Educational Partnership



LAUREN COLE

Project Manager, Bright Futures Educational Partnership



DR. JACKIE CRUZ

Executive Director,
Hartnell College Foundation



DULCE SILVA

Associate Project Manager,
Bright Futures Educational Partnership



TERRI UGALET

Executive Assistant,
Hartnell College Foundation



IRIS GAMEZ

Bright Beginnings



SONJA KOEHLER

Bright Beginnings

CORE CONVENERS



DAN BALDWIN

Community Foundation for
Monterey County



SONIA DE LA ROSA

County of Monterey



DR. MARSHALL FULBRIGHT III

Monterey Peninsula College



DR. DENEEN GUSS

Monterey County Office
of Education



MICHAEL GUTIERREZ

Hartnell College



DR. VANYA QUIÑONES

California State University,
Monterey Bay

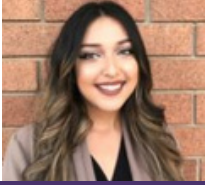


BRUCE TAYLOR

Taylor Farms

“Bright Futures remains committed to building cradle to career pathways for every student in Monterey County. We know we cannot do this work alone. Without our incredible partners, dedicated staff, and strong backbone support, we would not be able to move the needle forward.”

STEERING PARTNERS



REYNA ALCALA
Sun Street Centers



DR. REBECA ANDRADE
Salinas City Elementary
School District



RANDY BANGS
Soledad Unified School District



BEN BRUCE
Community Partnership
For Youth



SUSIE BRUSA
Community Leader



DAN BURNS
Salinas Union High School District



MARGARET D'ARRIGO
Salinas City Council Member



**DR. CATHI DRAPER
RODRIGUEZ**
California State University,
Monterey Bay



DAVID DOBROWSKI
Monterey County Office of
Education



SHANNON GRAHAM
Salinas Valley Health



**JOEL HERNANDEZ
LAGUNA**
Center for Community Advocacy



ELSA JIMENEZ
Monterey County Health Department



DR. CARYN LEWIS
Monterey County Office of Education



JOSHUA MADFIS
United Way Monterey County



YVETTE PADILLA
North Monterey County
Unified School District



DR. GAYLE PITMAN
Hartnell College



FRANCINE RODD
First 5 Monterey County



JANET SHING
Community Foundation for
Monterey County



RICHARD VAUGHN
County of Monterey

OUR LOCAL PARTNERS



**MUJERES
EN ACCIÓN**



Community
Partnership
for Youth



United Way
Monterey County

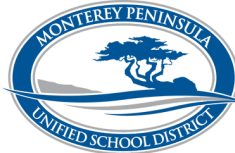
StriveTogether®

Every child. Cradle to career.



HARTNELL COLLEGE

Cal State
Monterey Bay



MAOF

Mexican American Opportunity Foundation
Empowering Families from Child to Senior



BLUE ZONES PROJECT

Monterey County



MONTEREY COUNTY
CHILDREN'S COUNCIL



MONTEREY COUNTY
CHILD CARE
PLANNING COUNCIL

Here for Good



Partners For Peace
Building strong families!



Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo
Indígena Oaxaqueño



COUNTY OF MONTEREY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Nationally Accredited for Providing Quality Health Services

OUR NATIONAL PARTNER



StriveTogether is a national network of community partnerships that bring together neighbors, including youth and families, nonprofits, businesses, schools and more, to work toward a future where youth can thrive in their communities.

Cradle to Career Network members change the way their communities work together by building connections, sharing resources and using data to put more young people on a path to economic mobility.

Our work helps young people meet seven key life milestones so that they have the opportunities they need to reach their goals, and, ultimately, thrive.

ABOUT BRIGHT FUTURES

Our North Star for our community is that every child is prepared for school, succeeds in and out of school, completes a post-high school credential, and enters a promising career.

Knowing Our Number: The 2030 Goal

A key milestone for Bright Futures is placing 18,000 more Monterey County children and youth on the pathway to economic mobility by 2030.

Mission

Because we believe lives are transformed by education, Bright Futures fosters progress in local education outcomes, from cradle to career, with a priority focus on closing equity gaps. We do this by engaging people in pursuit of shared improvement goals and by supporting change makers across the community as they create measurable results.

Vision

We envision a future for Monterey County with vibrant, local talent; where young people succeed in education and see a bright future for their lives; where adults believe in the promise of youth, and where employers find abundant, quality candidates locally.



ABOUT BRIGHT FUTURES

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Bright Futures initiative fosters progress and community action in four primary ways:

Shared Vision + Goals

We agree on a shared vision for education in our community and goals across multiple organizations. We work to achieve those goals using shared action plans, resources and measures of success. This requires high levels of collaboration across various organizations and community sectors that often work independently.

Data We use data, research and evidence-based practices to discover and measure what works. We use and share data and feedback from students and the people most vested in their learning to produce clear insights about their needs and root causes of challenges they face.

Data in this report, and all data shared by the Bright Futures Education Partnership for Monterey County, is for the sole purpose of constructive, continuous improvement around shared community goals. As such, the data is used to foster insights about opportunities to improve and should not be used in ways that are divisive or place blame. When used appropriately, the data and related insights will lead to solutions that enable more local children, youth and young adults to thrive in their education, for the benefit of the whole community.

Innovation We use innovation and design methods to envision future systems and approaches that meet the unique needs of local students. We promote adoption of innovative practices that rethink the way things are and open new potential.

Solutions Together with many partners and investors, we collect and promote a growing portfolio of solutions that work. We shed light on existing practices that yield results and we also cultivate new solutions from diverse community members.

MEASUREMENT

What gets measured gets done so we will track our progress toward achieving our goals over time. We invite all community members and organizations who can create positive change toward achieving these goals to do so in the spirit of shared accountability. Together we will track collective progress with a community scorecard that tells how we are doing and inspires us to improve continuously.

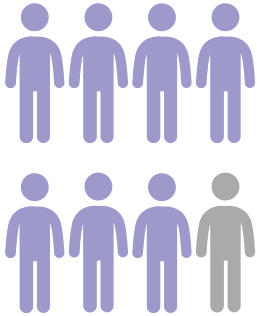
HOW MANY ACHIEVE?

ESTIMATED COLLEGE COMPLETION FORECAST

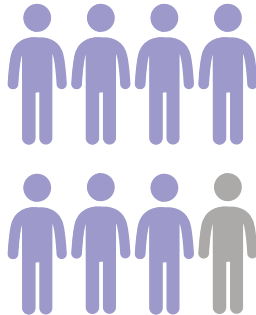
CRADLE TO CAREER PIPELINE FOR KINDERGARTEN CLASS OF 2025

6,800 ENTER ⁵

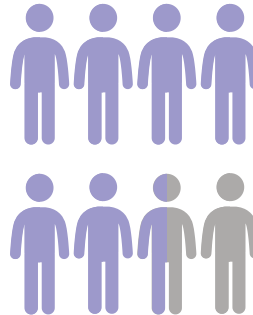
KINDERGARTEN



6,700 START ⁵

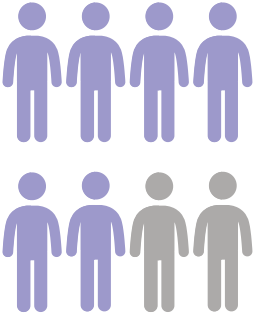
9TH GRADE

6,500 START ⁶

12TH GRADE

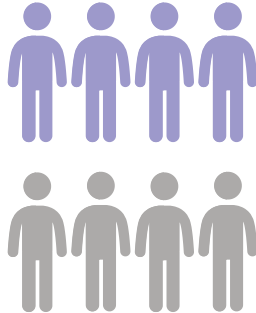
5,900 GRADUATE⁷

HIGH SCHOOL



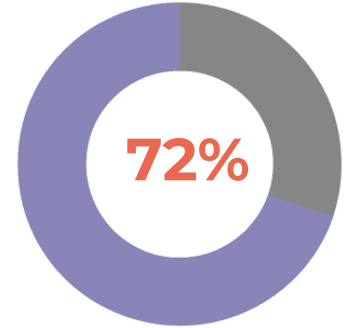
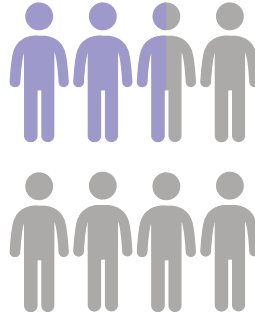
3,900 ENTER⁸

POST-SECONDARY

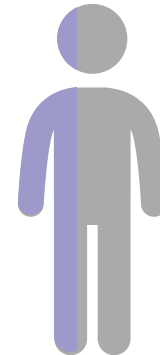


2,500 COMPLETE ¹⁹

A DEGREE



IT IS ESTIMATED THAT **72 PERCENT** OF JOBS WILL REQUIRE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION BY **2031**.¹⁷



WITHOUT A CHANGE
OF COURSE, AN
ESTIMATED

3 of 7

MONTEREY COUNTY
CHILDREN WILL
MAKE IT FROM
KINDER TO CAREER
READINESS.¹⁷

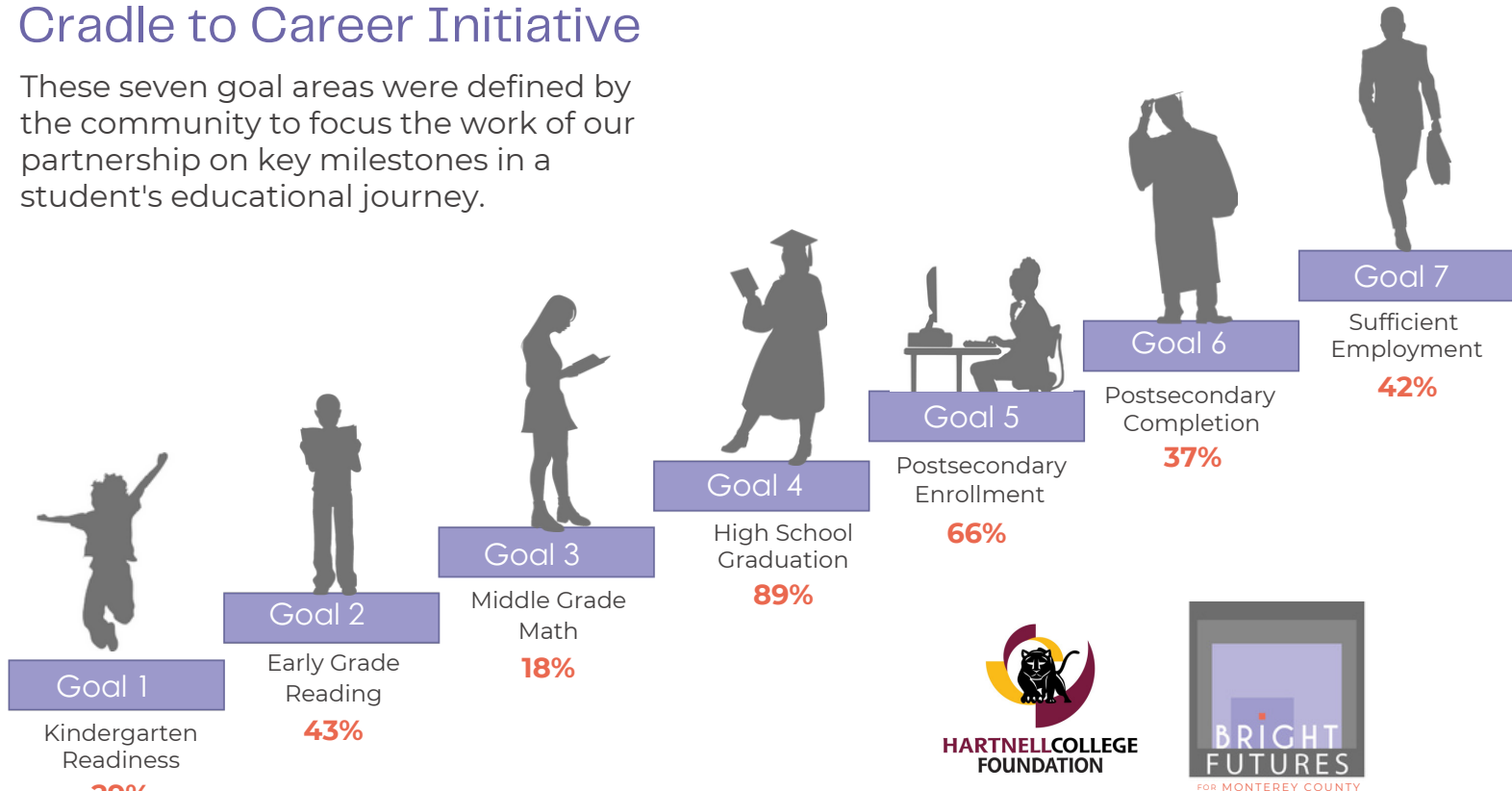
1 PERSON  = 1,000 STUDENTS

* RECENTLY RELEASED DATA LED TO A REVISION OF THE PREVIOUS FORECAST.

7 COMMUNITY GOALS

Monterey County Cradle to Career Initiative

These seven goal areas were defined by the community to focus the work of our partnership on key milestones in a student's educational journey.



We collect, use, and share data to produce clear insights about student needs and the root causes of the challenges they face.

Advancing Educational Equity for All

As a community deeply committed to ensuring bright futures for all children and youth, we believe that every child is born with unlimited potential, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic background, or ability. However, we recognize that not all children have access to the same opportunities.

We are committed to closing opportunity gaps and achieving equitable outcomes across our education and community systems. We define equity as ensuring that every child has the resources, support, and opportunities they need to thrive from cradle to career.

To do this, we will:

- Identify and address opportunity gaps using data-informed approaches.
- Ensure leadership and decision-making bodies reflect the diversity of our community.
- Create inclusive and welcoming spaces that value diverse perspectives, lived experiences, and community voices.
- Understand and address systemic barriers—including those related to race, language, income, disability, and other intersecting identities.
- Develop and implement solutions that prioritize students and families experiencing the widest disparities in educational outcomes.

While equity gaps can arise due to many factors—such as learning differences, language barriers, and socio-economic challenges—our data shows that disparities related to race and ethnicity are among the most persistent and far-reaching. Therefore, we are committed to understanding and addressing these complex and interrelated issues with care, collaboration, and a solutions-oriented mindset.

We believe that achieving equitable outcomes requires intentional and sustained efforts across planning, policies, programs, and partnerships—and we pledge to do this work alongside our community.

1 Kinder-Ready

CORE INDICATOR



% of children socially and emotionally ready for kindergarten **29%**¹⁵

CONTRIBUTING INDICATORS



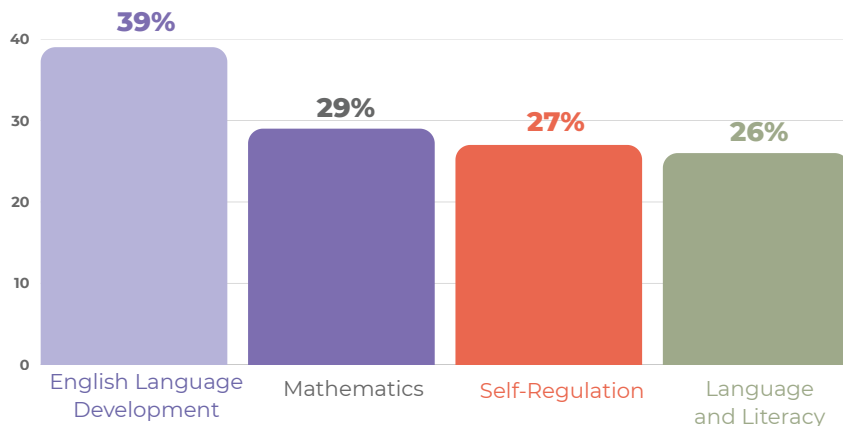
% of 0-5 Year Olds who have access to Transitional Kindergarten or a licensed space: **31%**^{10, 11, 13}



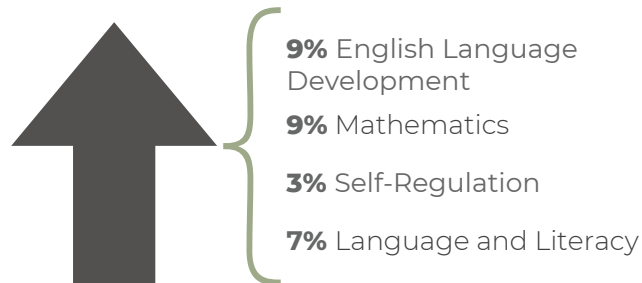
% of births with adequate prenatal care: **83%**¹²

GAPS TO CLOSE¹⁵

Children socially and emotionally ready for kindergarten



CHANGE OVER ONE YEAR¹⁵



2 Early Grade Reading

CORE INDICATOR



% of English Fluent 3rd Graders who Read and Write on Grade-Level: **43%**¹

CONTRIBUTING INDICATORS



% of Students Learning English who are Reclassified by 5th Grade: **24%**⁹

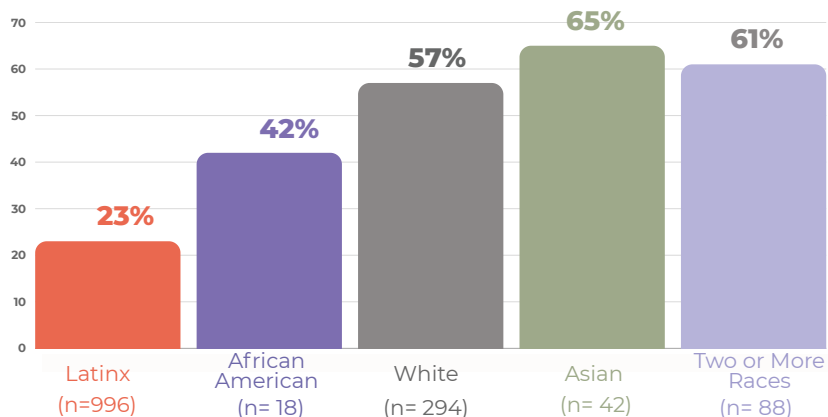


% of 5th Grade Students Formerly Classified as English Learners (Reclassified) who Read and Write on Grade-Level: **57%**¹

GAPS TO CLOSE¹

3rd Grade Reading and Writing

n= number of students meeting or exceeding the 3rd grade ELA standard.



CHANGE OVER ONE YEAR¹

3rd Grade Reading and Writing

+12% Two or More Races



-2% Asian
-3% African American
-4% Latinx
-2% White

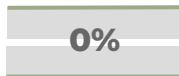
3 Middle Grade Math

CORE INDICATOR

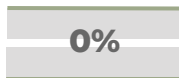


% of 8th Grade Students on Grade Level in Math: **18%**¹

CONTRIBUTING INDICATORS



% of 7th Grade Students on Grade Level in Math: **21%**¹

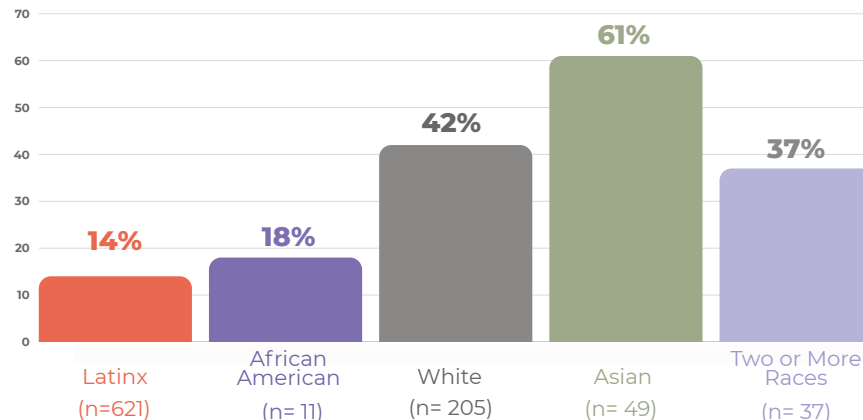


% of 6th Grade Students on Grade Level in Math: **22%**¹

GAPS TO CLOSE¹

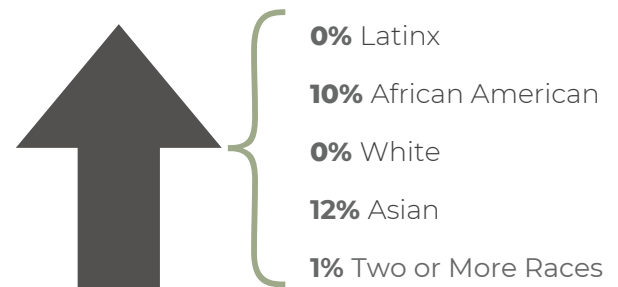
8th Grade Math

n= number of students meeting or exceeding the 8th grade math standard



CHANGE OVER ONE YEAR¹

8th Grade Math



4 High School Graduation

CORE INDICATOR



% of High School Graduates: **89%** ²

CONTRIBUTING INDICATORS



% of High School Graduates who Completed the A-G Courses: **47%** ²

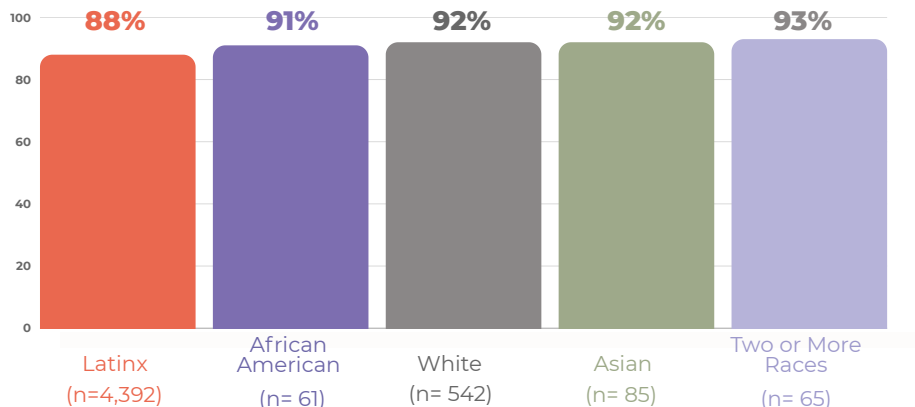


% of High School Students who Completed a Financial Aid Application: **64%** ¹⁴

GAPS TO CLOSE ²

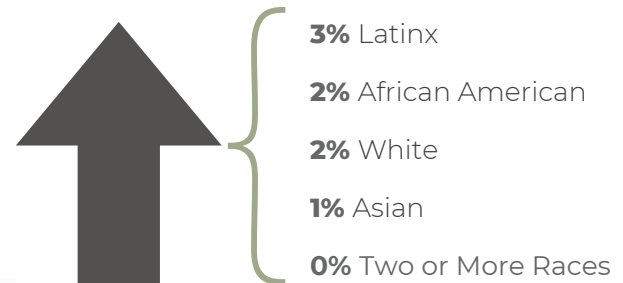
High School Graduates

n = number of high school graduates



CHANGE OVER ONE YEAR ²

High School Graduates



5 Post Secondary Enrollment

CORE INDICATOR

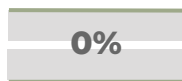


% of 2021-22 high school graduates who enrolled in college within 16 months (i.e., enrolled by 2023-24): **66%**³

CONTRIBUTING INDICATORS



% of above 2021-22 college attendees who enrolled at California State University (CSU) or University of California (UC): **23%**⁴



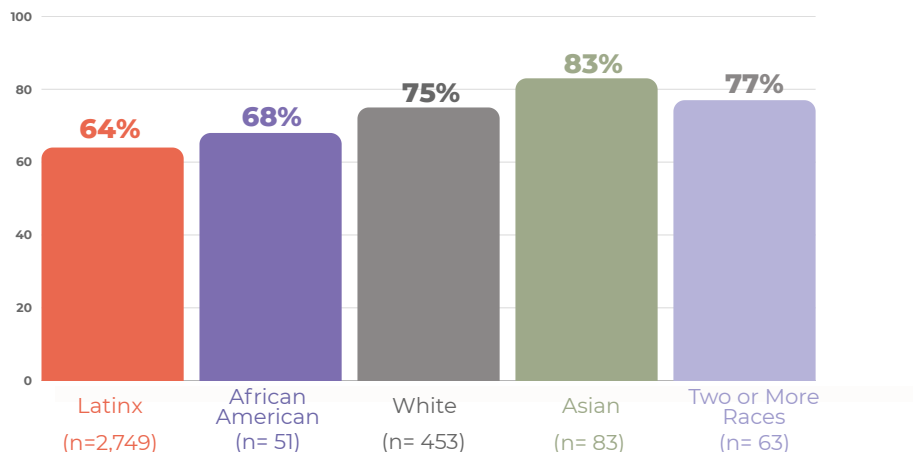
% of above 2021-22 college attendees who enrolled at California Community College (CCC): **70%**⁴

*The remaining 7% enrolled at a private or out-of-state college.

GAPS TO CLOSE³

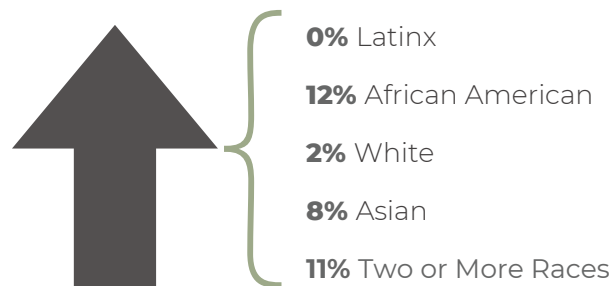
High School Graduates Enrolled in College

n= high school completers who enrolled in college



CHANGE OVER ONE YEAR³

High School Graduates Enrolled in College



6 Post Secondary Completion



CORE INDICATOR

% of 25 to 34- year olds who have an associates degree or higher: **37%**¹⁹



CONTRIBUTING INDICATORS

% of the above 25 to 34 year olds with a degree whose highest degree is a bachelor's degree: **58%**¹⁹



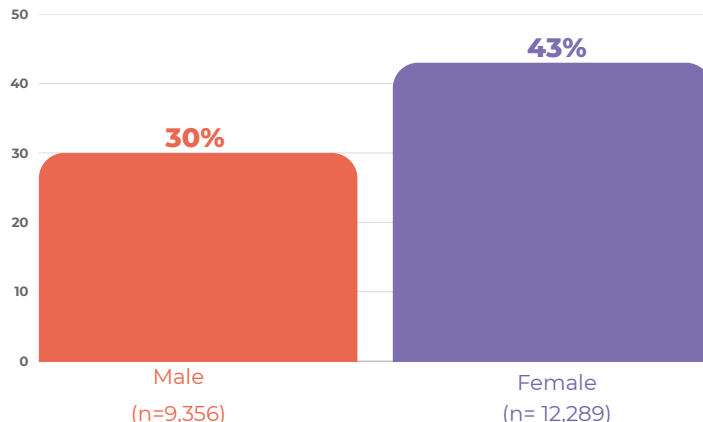
% of the above 25 to 34 year olds with a degree whose highest degree is an advanced degree: **18%**¹⁹

*The highest degree for the remaining 24% is an associate's degree.

GAPS TO CLOSE¹⁹

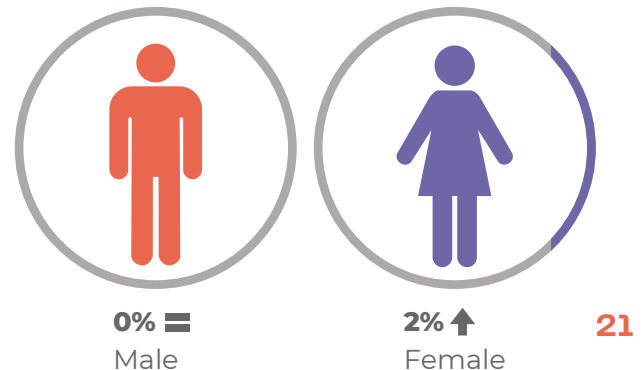
25 to 34-year-olds with at least an associate degree

n= number of 25- to 34-year olds with an associates or higher



CHANGE FROM PRIOR YEAR¹⁹

25 to 34-year-olds with at least an associate degree



7 Employment



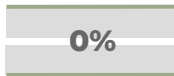
CORE INDICATOR

% of 25 to 34-year-old householders who have self-sufficient employment: **42%**¹⁶



CONTRIBUTING INDICATORS

% of jobs in the county that are "quality" or "promising" jobs: **34%**¹⁸

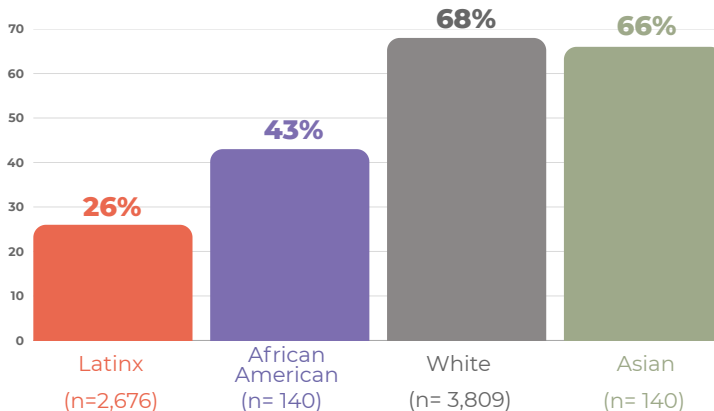


% of children in families without secure employment: **34%**²¹

GAPS TO CLOSE¹⁶

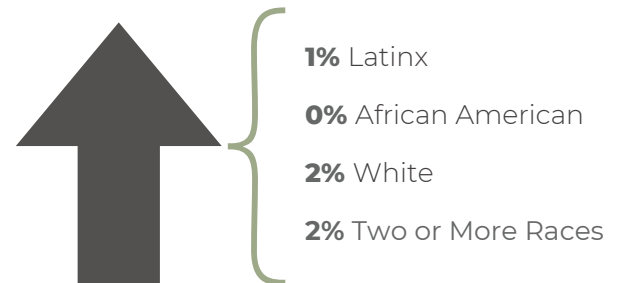
25 to 34-year-olds householders with self-sufficient employment

n = number of 25 to 34-year-old self-sufficient householders



CHANGE OVER ONE YEAR¹⁶

25 to 34-year-olds householders with self-sufficient employment





“ Progress through
partnerships and
persistence. ”

SOURCES

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3 California Department of Education. (2025, April). 2021–22 college-going rate for California high school students. Retrieved from <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/page2.asp?level=County&subject=CGR&submit1=Submit>

4 California Department of Education. (2025, June). 2021–22 college-going rate for California high school students by postsecondary institution type. Retrieved from <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/DQCensus/CGR.aspx?cds=27&agglevel=County&year=2020-21&initrow=&ro=y>

5 California Department of Education. (2025, May). Enrollment multi-year summary by grade (24–25 Monterey County Report). Retrieved from <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/EnrGrdYears.aspx?cds=27&agglevel=county&year=2024-25>

6 California Department of Education. (2025, May). 2023–24 adjusted cohort outcome (Monterey County Report). Retrieved from <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/CohOutcome.aspx?cds=27&agglevel=county&year=2023-24>

7 California Department of Education. (2025, May). 2023–24 adjusted cohort graduation rate (Monterey County Report). Retrieved from <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/CohOutcome.aspx?cds=27&agglevel=county&year=2023-24>

8 California Department of Education. (2025, May). 2021–22 college-going rate for California high school students (Monterey County Report). Retrieved from <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/DQCensus/CGRLoc.aspx?agglevel=County&cds=27&year=2021-22>

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