

Understanding College Access and Completion for Bay Area Students

Each year, nearly 400,000 young people graduate from California public high schools, and the majority of them seek to further their education. Yet, too many of them do not complete a degree.

Numerous state and local efforts aim to improve the postsecondary outcomes of California youth. At the state-level, efforts include the adoption of college readiness standards and assessments, and school accountability metrics. District and school efforts include improving academic preparation through greater access to the A-G course requirements necessary for admission to the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) and to academically rigorous courses, such as Advanced Placement (AP) and dual enrollment. Some schools have also enhanced college advising and increased the availability of information about financial aid.

The lack of readily available information about students' postsecondary trajectories makes it difficult to evaluate these efforts and for education leaders to monitor outcomes and make informed decisions. This report fills some of the void in information on students' college outcomes at a regional and county level, exploring measures of college eligibility, application patterns for admissions to California's 4-year public universities, and college enrollment and completion across public and private 2-year and 4-year colleges.

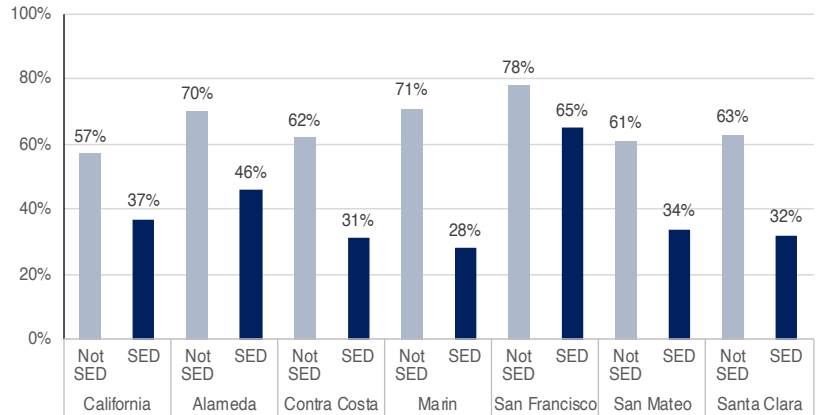
KEY FINDINGS

- The overall rates of college eligibility, application, enrollment, and completion for students from high schools in the Bay Area is remarkably higher than the statewide rates.
 - San Francisco County exceeds the statewide college eligibility and application rates by more than 25 percentage points.
 - Marin County demonstrates the highest rates of college enrollment and completion in Bay Area Counties.
- Yet, notable disparities in college eligibility, application, enrollment, and completion exist between subgroups of students across the Bay Area.
 - Black and Latinx students are eligible for college, apply to a UC or CSU, enroll in a 4-year college, and attain a Bachelor's degree at lower rates than their Asian and White peers.
 - Fewer socioeconomically disadvantaged (SED) students are eligible for college, apply to a UC or CSU, enroll in 4-year college, or attain a Bachelor's degree in six years than more economically advantaged students.
- Importantly, eligibility for admission to UC and CSU via completion of A-G course requirements is a substantial, yet malleable, barrier to college application, enrollment, and completion.

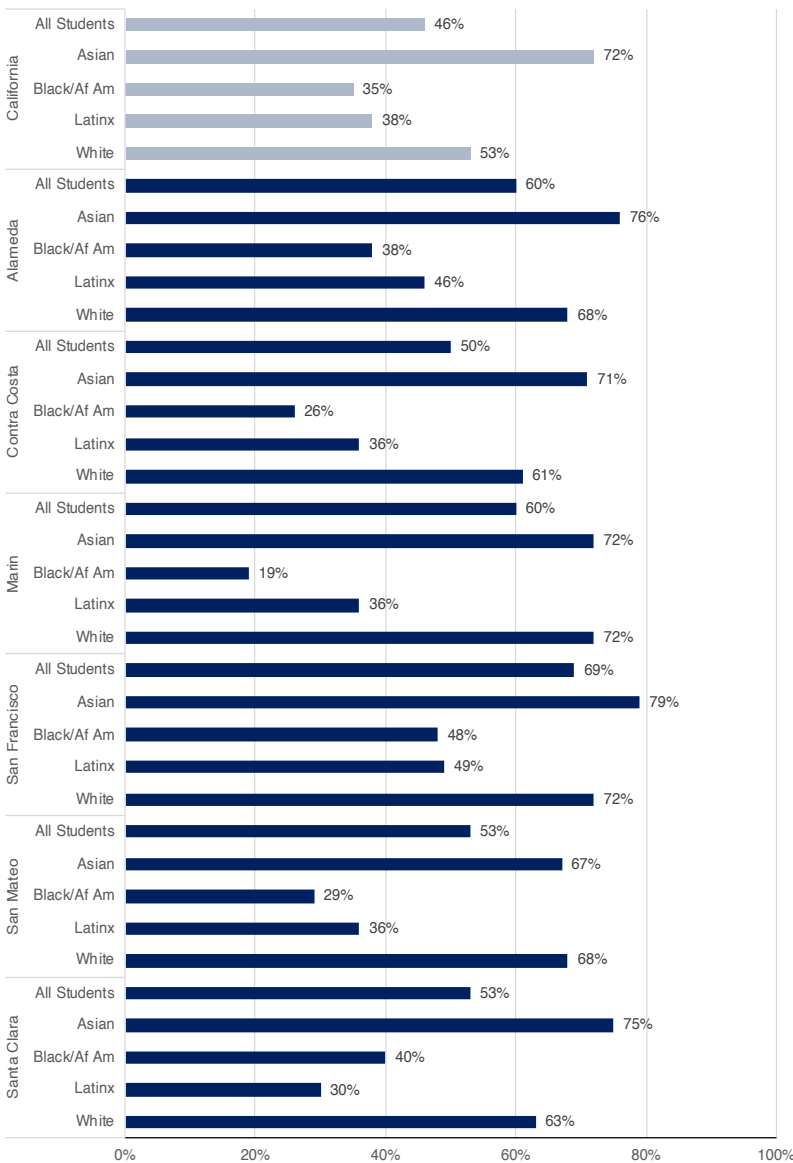
This report is part of a broader project aimed at understanding the college and career readiness of students in California. This report is possible through the generosity of the Tipping Point Community, College Futures Foundation, Stupski Foundation, and the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, through Grant R305E150006 to the Regents of the University of California. This report is also the result of partnerships between researchers at University of California, Davis, and California's public education segments: the California Department of Education, the California State University Chancellor's Office, and the University of California Office of the President. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent the views of supporting philanthropies, the Institute of Education Sciences or the U.S. Department of Education, or of state agencies providing the data.

COLLEGE ELIGIBILITY

A-G eligibility varies by socioeconomic background. Less than ½ of California public high school graduates complete the A-G course requirements necessary for admission to the CSU or UC. SED students complete A-G coursework at lower rates than their more advantaged peers, a gap of 20 percentage points statewide. In Bay Area Counties, the gap in A-G eligibility between SED and non-SED students is even larger, except in San Francisco County.



A-G eligibility rates for SED & non-SED students



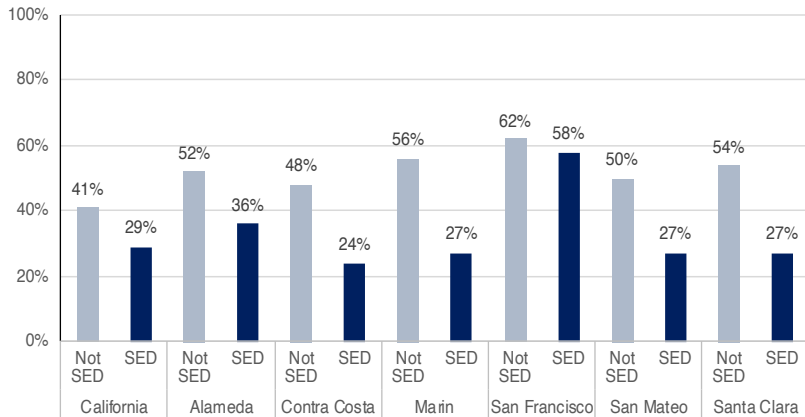
A-G eligibility rates by student race/ethnicity

A-G eligibility varies by student race/ethnicity. Asian and White students complete A-G course requirements at substantially higher rates than Black and Latinx students, a statewide pattern that persists across all six Bay Area Counties. Black students in Alameda, San Francisco, and Santa Clara Counties attain A-G eligibility at greater rates than do Black students statewide, as do Latinx and SED students from Alameda and San Francisco Counties.

A-G eligibility is a key factor in students' college outcomes. A-G eligibility is a decisive gate-keeper, or roadblock, for many students in their pathway to college. In fact, A-G eligibility explains most of the differences in college application, enrollment, and completion rates that we observe between student subgroups. Yet, A-G eligibility rates are malleable and may be improved through school programming. Schools may increase access to A-G courses for all students through scheduling practices. Schools may also ensure student success in these rigorous courses through academic and social-emotional supports. Such efforts are likely critical levers in improving and equalizing postsecondary outcomes.

Data: College eligibility rates reported for 11th grade students in 2014-15, who were expected to graduate high school in the spring of 2016 and who applied to one of California's public 4-year universities (UC or CSU) for enrollment in 2016-17. These rates do not account for students applying to private or out-of-state colleges.

COLLEGE APPLICATION



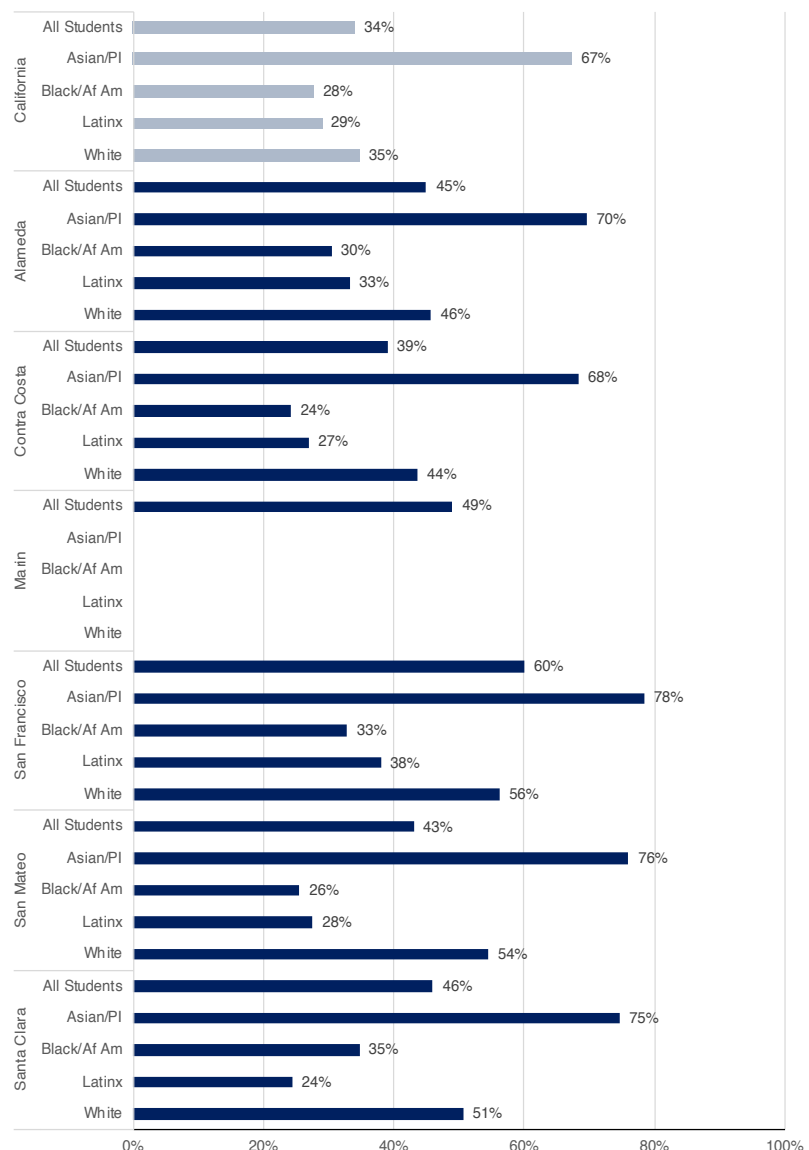
UC/CSU application rates for SED & non-SED students

SED students apply to UC/CSU at substantially lower rates than non-SED students. Statewide, only 29% of SED students apply for admission to a UC or CSU compared to 41% of non-SED students. In the Bay Area, similar application rates are observed for SED students, while application rates for non-SED students are substantially higher. Remarkably, SED students from San Francisco County high schools apply at a rate nearly 30 percentage points greater than the statewide rate.

The rates of application to UC/CSU vary by student race/ethnicity.

Statewide, 34% of public high school students apply to at least one California public 4-year university. Of those who apply, 54% apply to a UC, 88% apply to a CSU, and 42% apply to both. The rates of UC/CSU application for Bay Area students range from 39% in Contra Costa County to 60% in San Francisco County.

Mirroring the trends observed with A-G eligibility, college application rates vary across racial subgroups, with Asian students applying at the highest rates statewide (67%) compared to 35% of White students, 29% of Latinx students, and 28% of Black students. In all six Bay Area Counties, Asian and White students apply to a UC or CSU at higher rates than the statewide average; in San Francisco County, Asian students exceed the statewide rate by more than 10 percentage points. The highest rates for Black students are observed in Santa Clara County, where 35% apply to a UC or CSU compared to only 28% of this subgroup statewide. In Contra Costa and San Mateo Counties, Black students apply at lower rates than the statewide average. For Latinx students, the highest UC and CSU application rates in the Bay Area are observed in San Francisco County.



UC/CSU application rates by student race/ethnicity

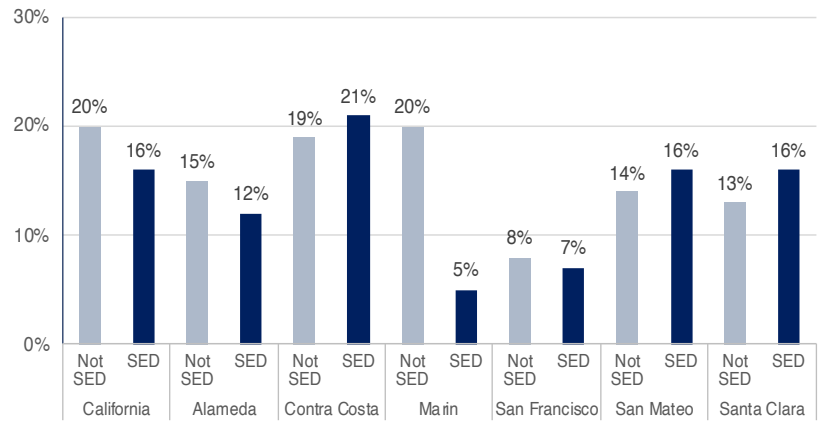
COLLEGE MATCH

The idea of “college match” is important to policymakers and education leaders who seek to improve the college outcomes of students. College match refers to the alignment of a student’s ability and skills (typically defined by standardized assessments or high school course requirements for admission) to the average levels of those characteristics at a college. Students may be considered “undermatched” if their academic characteristics are considerably higher than those of the average students at the college to which they apply or attend and “overmatched” if their academic skills are observed to be weaker than those of the typical student at a college.

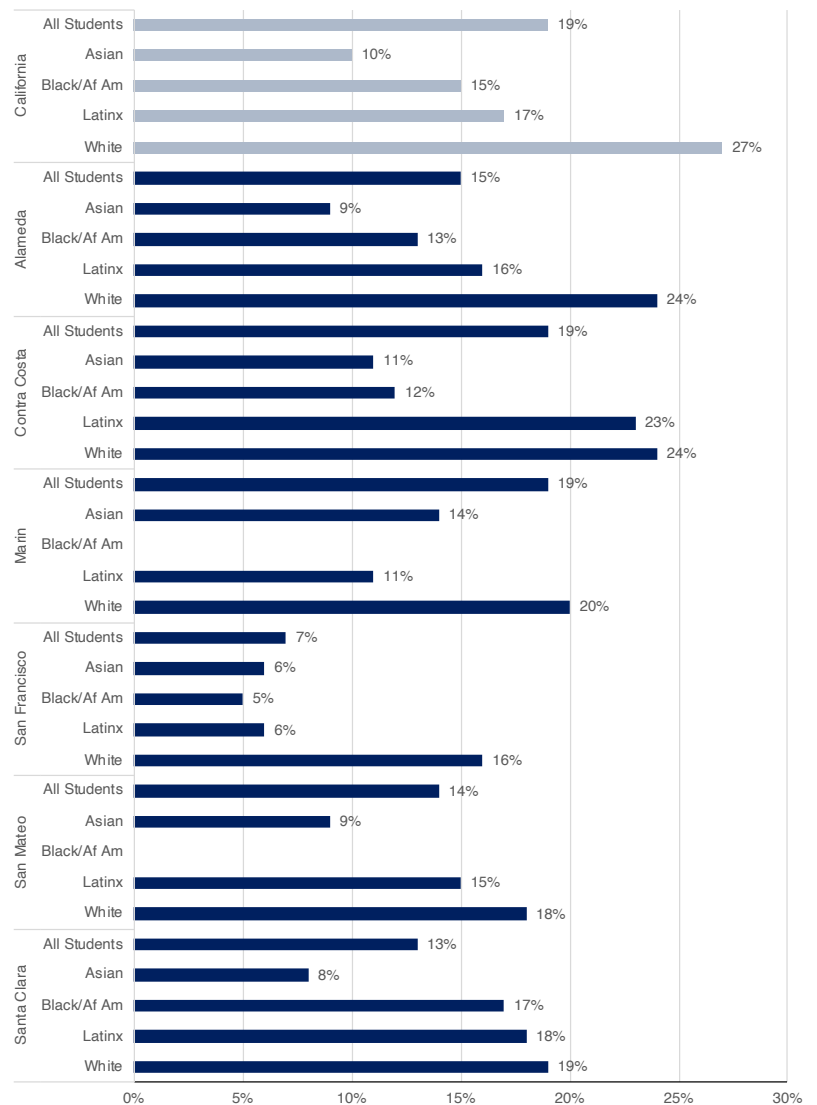
In this report, we present the rates of undermatch based on the application behavior of A-G eligible and academically high-achieving students (earning *Level 3 – Standard Met* on the 11th grade standardized assessment in both math and English) and who did not apply to a UC or CSU.

Substantial variation in undermatch is evident across subgroups of high-achieving students. Statewide, 19% of A-G eligible and high-achieving students do not apply to any UC or CSU, and may be considered undermatched; these rates are similar or slightly lower in the Bay Area. San Francisco County has an undermatch rate less than half the statewide rate.

There are notable differences in undermatching by student subgroup. One noteworthy difference is the variability in undermatch for SED and non-SED students. Statewide, and in some Bay Area Counties, non-SED students have the greatest rates of undermatch, possibly a function of their higher rates of out-of-state and private school application, compared to SED students. A similar pattern is observed for White students compared to other racial subgroups.



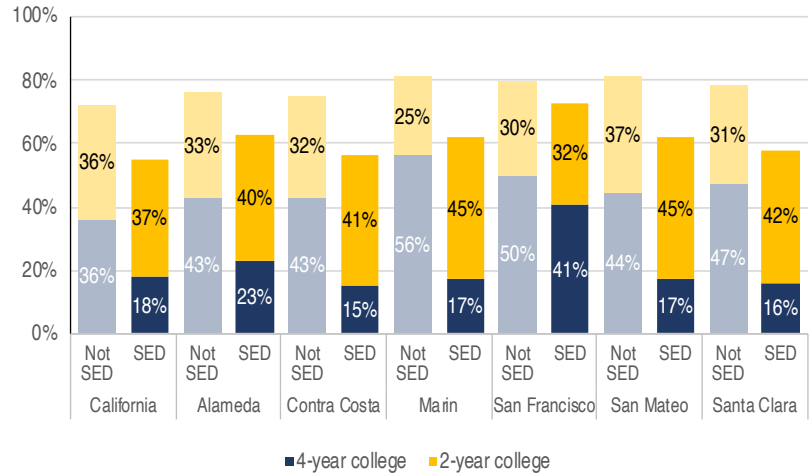
High-achieving students who do not apply to UC/CSU



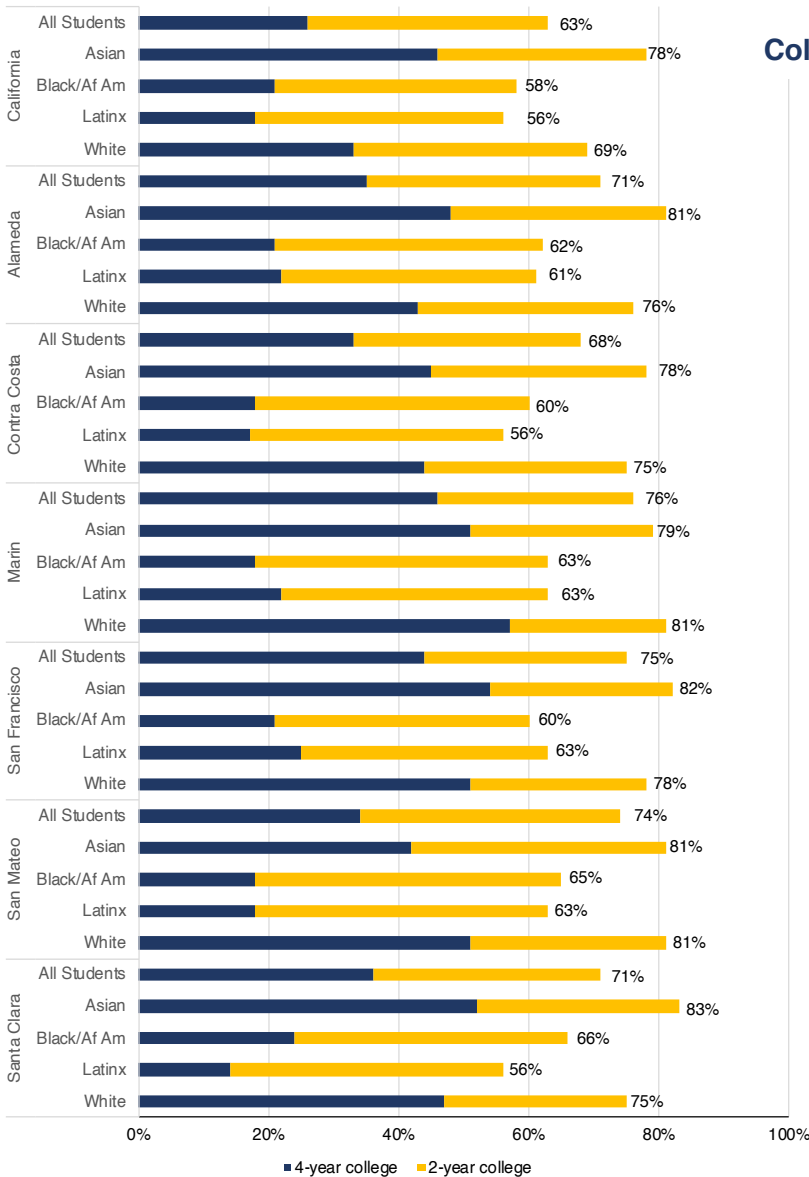
High-achieving students who do not apply to UC/CSU

Data: Undermatch rates reported for high-achieving and A-G eligible 11th grade students in 2014-15, who were expected to graduate high school in the spring of 2016 and who applied to one of California’s public 4-year universities (UC or CSU) for enrollment in 2016-17. These rates do not account for students applying to private or out-of-state colleges. Results omitted for subgroups in Marin County due to cell size restrictions.

SED students enroll in 4-year colleges at lower rates than non-SED students, with gaps of more than 20 percentage points statewide and in most Bay Area Counties. This lower enrollment in 4-year colleges by SED students is partially offset by higher enrollment in 2-year colleges. One notable exception is observed in San Francisco County where the difference in college enrollment rates for SED and non-SED students is only 7 percentage points.



College enrollment rates for SED & non-SED students



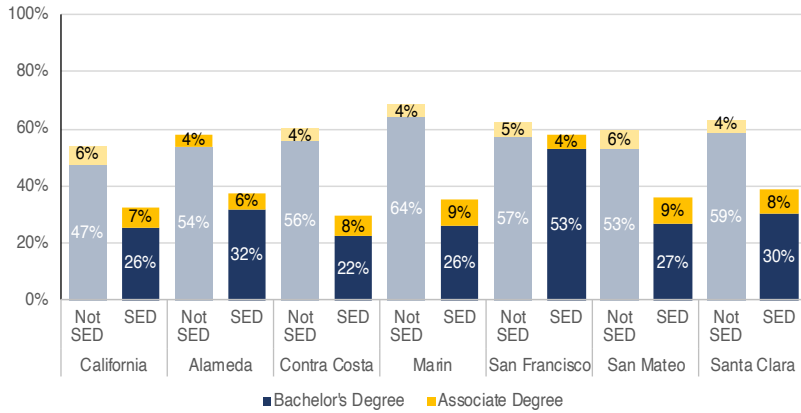
College enrollment rates vary across student racial subgroups.

Across California, 63% of students enroll in college within a year and a half following high school graduation. In the Bay Area, college enrollment rates range from 68% in Contra Costa County to 76% in San Francisco County. The higher rates of college enrollment in Bay Area Counties are driven by higher enrollment in 4-year colleges (including public, private, and out-of-state).

Substantial disparities in college enrollment exist by student race/ethnicity. In all six Bay Area Counties, Asian and White students attend college at substantially higher rates than Black and Latinx students. Moreover, Asian and White students attend 4-year colleges at rates nearly 20 percentage points higher than Black and Latinx students, who are more likely to enroll in 2-year colleges.

College enrollment rates by student race/ethnicity

COLLEGE COMPLETION



Rates of degree attainment are notably lower for SED students.

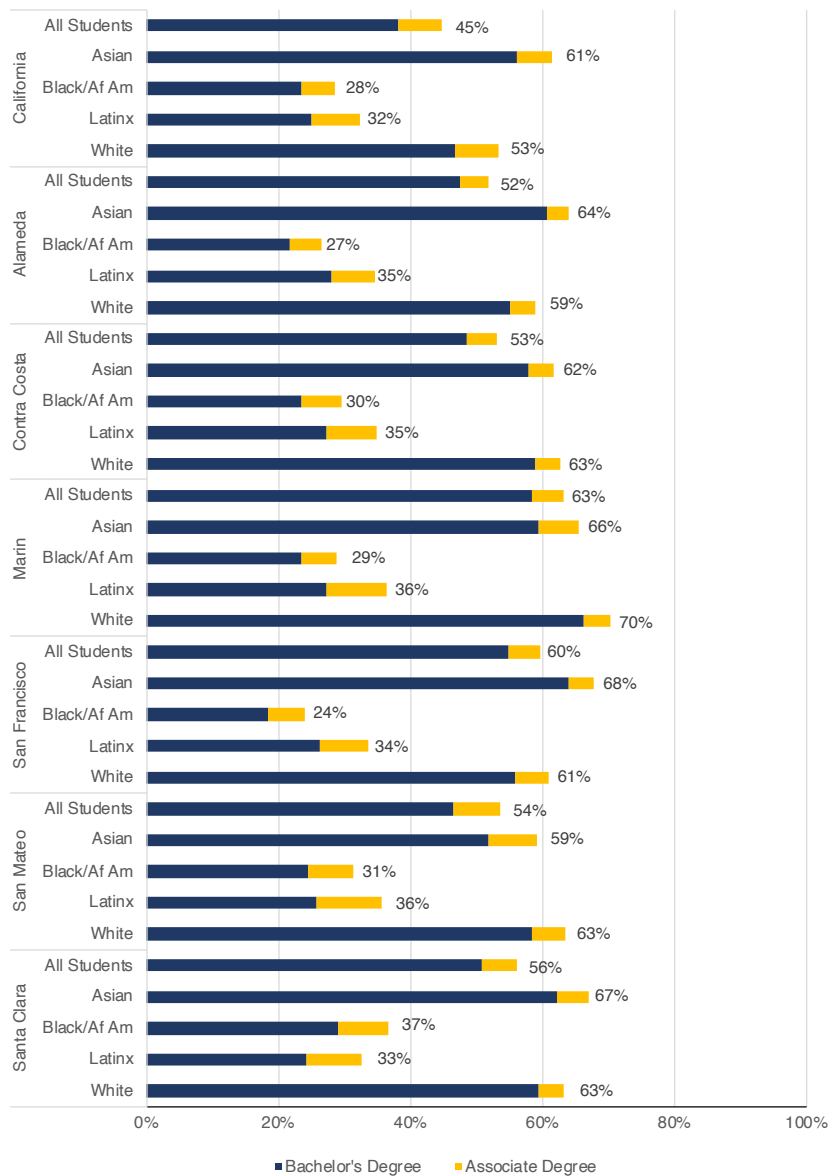
Across California, 33% of SED students complete college within six years of high school graduation, compared to 53% of non-SED students, a difference driven primarily by Bachelor's degree attainment. The gaps between SED and non-SED students in the Bay Area are slightly greater than the statewide gap, the result of higher rates of 4-year degree completion by non-SED students in the Bay Area.

Degree attainment rates for SED & non-SED students

Large disparities exist in college completion rates by student subgroup.

In California, 38% of students who enrolled in college within a year and a half of high school graduation completed a bachelor's degree and 7% completed an associate degree within six years. The higher rates of degree attainment by students from Bay Area high schools are driven by receipt of Bachelor's degrees, which range from 47% in San Mateo County to 58% in Marin County.

Following persistent patterns, Asian and White students, across California and the Bay Area, complete college at higher rates than their Black and Latinx peers. While most Bay Area Counties have similar rates to those statewide, Black students from Santa Clara finish college at a rate almost 10 percentage points higher than their peers from the same racial subgroup across the state and in other Bay Area Counties.



Degree attainment rates by student race/ethnicity

Data: College completion reported for 11th grade students who were expected to graduate high school in the spring of 2010, 2011, and 2012 and enrolled in college within the first 16 months following high school graduation. College completion is based on National Student Clearinghouse data and includes public and private colleges and in-state and out-of-state institutions. Associate degrees are only counted if students did not also complete a Bachelor's degree.