

S T A N I S L A U S

CRADLEtoCAREER

P A R T N E R S H I P



Powered by Partnership: Community in Action

A Path, A Plan, and A Purpose for All



2
A Letter to The Community

3
Stanislaus County

4
Our Story

6
Impact Areas



12
Data

15
Stanislaus Youth Empowerment Alliance

16
Stanislaus Parent Network

17
Looking Ahead



19
The Backbone Team

20
Data Sources

Cover Photo Credit: Roberto Chavez Photography, Dad Photoshoot in partnership with Sierra Vista Child & Family Services and Stanislaus Cradle-to-Career Partnership.

A LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY

Dear Partners and Community Members,

Welcome to **Powered by Partnership: Community in Action**, our 2026 report to the community.

True change happens when a community decides to move together. As a place-based partnership, we bridge the gaps across the cradle-to-career continuum, proving every day that **we are stronger together than we are apart.** We remain fiercely committed to **keeping community voices at the center of our work.** Education does not begin and end at the schoolhouse door; **achieving improved outcomes is a collective responsibility.** Because this work is generational, it demands **our sustained, shared commitment.**

We are profoundly grateful for our partners who refuse to lower the bar, holding fast to the belief that **ALL children can thrive.** Together, we align our resources to champion a bold vision: that **every single young person in Stanislaus County discovers a path, a plan, and a purpose.**

Our **strategic outcomes** serve as our guiding North Star. From ensuring **kindergarten readiness** and boosting **third-grade reading**, to fostering **a joy for math** and driving **postsecondary completion**, our goal is clear: **sustainable career attainment and economic mobility for the next generation.**

Inside this report, you will find the **data, stories, and partner insights** that define our collective progress. **Thank you for your unwavering partnership.**

In gratitude,

Megan Lowery

Stanislaus Cradle to Career Partnership Director



STANISLAUS COUNTY



Stanislaus County is located in the **Northern part of San Joaquin Valley**, the **geographical center of California**. The county, with an **economy** and **heritage** deeply rooted in agriculture, is quickly becoming one of the **fastest growing regions** in the state. With **low educational attainment** and **high poverty**, Stanislaus County's regional economy is not strong enough to create the **volume and type of opportunities** needed to **break the cycle of economic distress**.



\$115,357



\$140,296

\$105,601 median income for family of 4

Livable Wage -
2 Working Adults
2 Children

Livable Wage -
1 Working Adult
3 Children

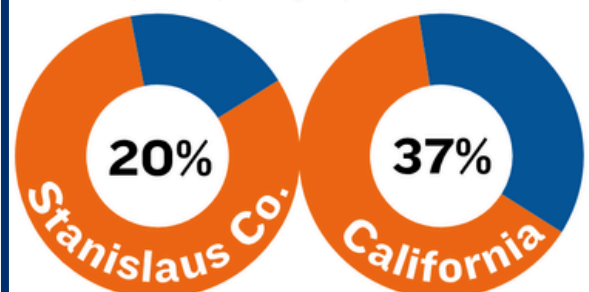
General Population of Stanislaus County Race and Ethnicity

Hispanic or Latino	50.0%	
White	36.3%	
Asian	5.9%	
Two or More Races May also include Hispanic	4.0%	
Black	2.6%	
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	1.0%	
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.3%	



Population with a 4-Year College Degree

percent of persons age 25 years and older



OUR STORY

“

*Schools can't do it alone.
- Scott Kuykendall, Stanislaus
County Superintendent of
Schools, reflecting on why Cradle
to Career (C2C) remains one of
his top priorities.*

”

The Stanislaus Cradle to Career Partnership believes that **all children** can reach their **full educational potential** regardless of their **zip code**. Every student deserves a chance to earn a **postsecondary certificate, credential, or college degree** with the opportunity to enter a **meaningful self-sustaining job** in **early adulthood**.

Key Milestones

2018

Stanislaus County Office of Education (SCOE) and Stanislaus Community Foundation collectively establish StanC2C

2020

Stanislaus Youth Empowerment Alliance established

2021

SCOE becomes Backbone for StanC2C

2023

StanC2C 2.0 Reorganized; Stanislaus Parent Network established

2026

StanYEA 2.0, Blueprint v.2

Since our **launch in spring 2018**, the Partnership has worked hard to develop and adapt the **civic infrastructure** necessary to support and sustain a variety of **collective impact efforts** aimed at **improving educational outcomes** across **Stanislaus County**.

Systems change does not happen overnight. In order to see **meaningful community-level results**, our **systems and institutions** must adapt. This requires a **cultural shift** among the people who manage our systems - a shift in **how we collectively approach complex problems, how we engage with each other across institutions, how we approach data** to make better policy decisions, and **how we show up**.

Our Vision

A healthy and thriving community built on educational success and economic well-being for all.

Our Mission

Align sectors and systems in Stanislaus County to ensure improved outcomes from cradle to career.

TURNING VISION INTO ACTION

We believe a **healthy community** thrives when **education and career pathways** are aligned. By **uniting sectors and resources** around **shared goals**, we ensure **every young adult** is on a path to **economic mobility**. By **uniting partners** across **education, healthcare, government, non-profit, business, and the community**, we power **initiatives** that help **children and families thrive** and **maximize their educational potential**.

“
At the heart of this effort is the Stanislaus Cradle to Career Partnership, a trusted neutral convener that brought these cross-sector leaders together to co-design the path forward. We're not just piloting a program—we're building a system.
- **Ruben Imperial, Director of Stanislaus County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services**”

Role of Stanislaus Cradle to Career

- Convener for learning and action
- Network builder
- Neutral facilitator
- Capacity building
- Data collection and alignment
- Accountability support

Backbone Staff



The **backbone staff** provide the foundational support needed to help partners develop authentic ownership of each initiative, foster shared accountability, and keep the work moving forward. The **Stanislaus County Office of Education** proudly serves as the **Backbone organization** for **StanC2C**.

Our Initiatives Include:

- 6 Cups to College/ Career Mentoring Program
- Counselor and Clinician Network
- Data Support for Partners
- English Learner Workforce Initiative /Universal Pre-Kindergarten Early Education
- Imagination Library
- Policy Priorities and Agenda (emerging)
- Stanislaus Parent Network
- Stanislaus Youth Empowerment Alliance
- Whole Student/ Whole Child Mental Health System of Care

Stanislaus County children enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

A **strong start** in kindergarten shapes a child's entire future. **Early readiness** directly impacts **third-grade reading levels, high school graduation rates, and future earning potential.** To support this, **StanREADY** focuses on **aligning early learning systems** and **expanding access** to high-quality early childhood education. This means ensuring families have **adequate supply of excellent programs** and **highly qualified staff** to lead them. Because learning begins long before the first day of school, this work requires **seamless partnership** between **families, educators, and community service providers.**

Thank you, receiving the books from Dolly Parton Imagination Library in the mail has been a great pleasure for the entire family!

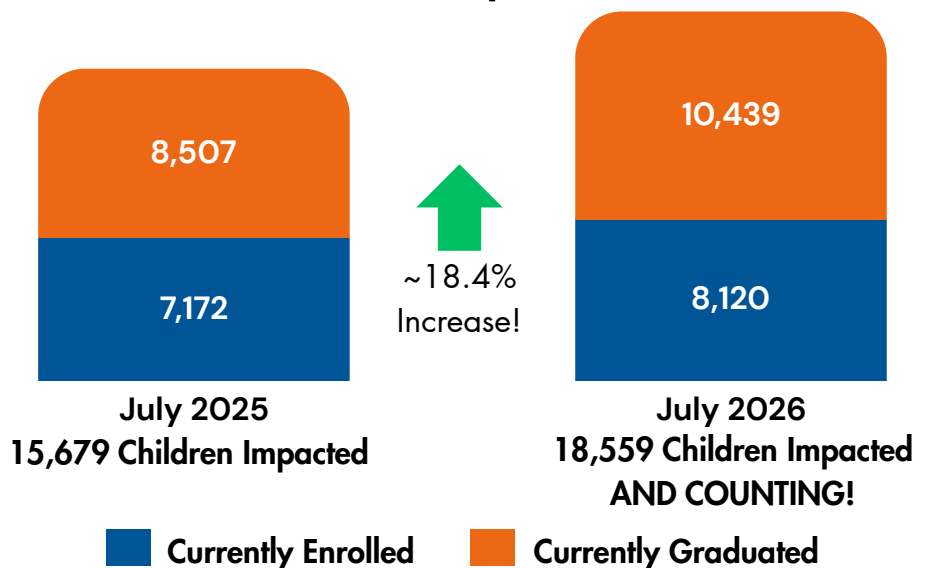
-Parent from the Imagination Library

Through our local enrollment in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, we are actively transforming early childhood literacy across our region. This program helps ensure children, from birth to age five, have access to books in the home, fostering early literacy and school readiness, at no cost to families. Thanks to the immense generosity and continued donations from our various local donors in Stanislaus County, we can provide these books at absolutely no cost to families. By filling home libraries and promoting early language development, we are making a measurable investment in our community's future academic and economic health, ensuring children enter school ready to learn.



A Grandfather reading a book from the Imagination Library to his grandchild.

1 Stanislaus County Imagination Library Children Impacted



Stanislaus County children read at grade level by the end of the third grade.

Reading proficiency by the end of third grade is a critical milestone that strongly influences a child's future academic success. In Stanislaus County, only **33% of boys** and **35% of girls** met third-grade reading standards, indicating that nearly **two-thirds of students** are **not reading at grade level** at this **foundational stage**. Students who struggle with **reading proficiency by third grade** are more likely to face **challenges in later grades**, as the transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" begins during this period.

These results highlight the need for **continued investment** in **early literacy programs**, **family engagement**, and **targeted academic support**. Improving **reading outcomes** for **young learners** can help strengthen **educational achievement**, increase **high school graduation rates**, and create **better long-term opportunities** for children throughout **Stanislaus County**. Ensuring that **all students** develop **strong literacy skills** early in their education remains a **key priority** for building a **thriving community**.

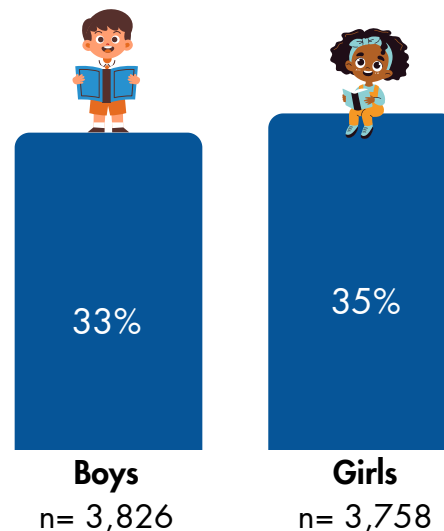
“They truly listen without judging me. They have helped me in so many ways by teaching me about the importance of mental health, offering school readiness resources for my child, and connecting me with family support classes.
 -Sierra Vista Hughson Family Resource Center Parent”



A mom and her children read books at the Literacy Parent Cafe at a local elementary school.

2

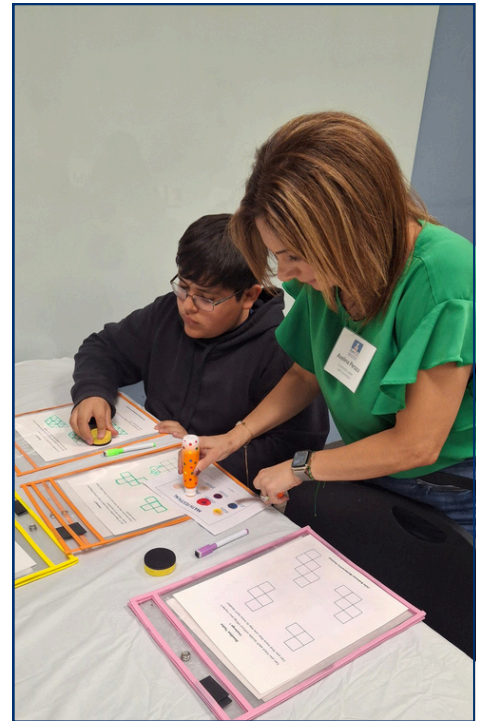
3RD GRADE READING STANDARD MET 2024-2025



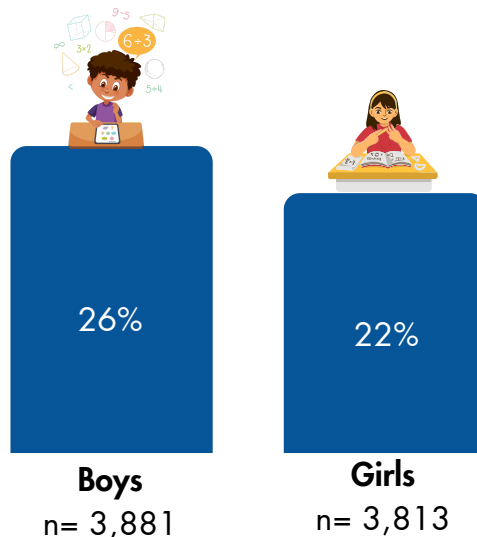


Stanislaus County students of all ages demonstrate confidence, success, and joy in math.

Math achievement remains a **focus across the Cradle-to-Career continuum**. While fifth-grade proficiency is one important indicator, similar trends are seen across multiple grade levels, reinforcing the need for a **coordinated, community-wide approach to mathematics**. At the same time, many students and adults continue to carry the belief that some people are simply "good" or "bad" at math. **Changing this mindset is essential**. Every child is capable of developing **mathematical confidence, problem-solving skills, and a positive relationship with math** when given meaningful opportunities to learn and practice. To support **StanMATH's goal** of helping students experience **confidence, success, and joy in mathematics**, the **Parent Network** empowered families to become **active partners in math learning** through a series of community-led **Math Festivals**. Parent leaders organized and facilitated **interactive events** in neighborhoods across Stanislaus County, using family **"Math Kits"** filled with **hands-on games and activities** that encouraged children and caregivers to solve problems, think critically, and **learn together**.



3 5TH GRADE MATH STANDARD MET 2024-2025



A team of **seven Stanislaus Parent Network leaders** hosted **free Math Festivals** at the Ceres Family Resource Center, Patterson Library, Sierra Vista in Modesto and Waterford Resource Center, engaging **more than 20 families at each event**. Using the Stanislaus County Office of Education's **Math Festival toolkit**, families explored **hands-on math activities** while discovering the **joy of learning together**.

Stanislaus County students graduate high school postsecondary ready.
 Postsecondary students successfully complete their certificate or degree.

“

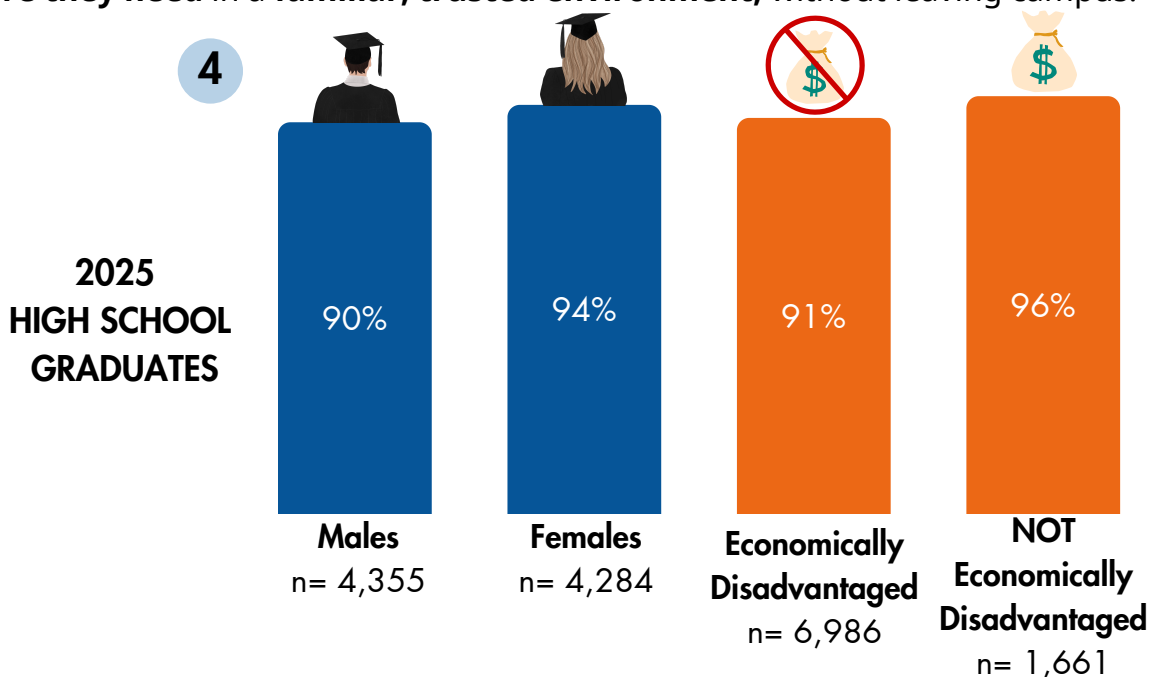
The most pressing challenges facing youth and families are closely connected- mental health concerns are rising, shaped by economic pressures and limited access to career opportunities.

**-Nancy Martinez,
 CEO Debrief**

”

StanFUTURES focuses on ensuring that all **Stanislaus County high school graduates** are **ready for postsecondary education** and can successfully complete their **degree or certificate programs**. A **vibrant economy** is key to building a **healthy community** and a better **quality of life** for all residents. The **higher the education level** of a region's residents, the **greater the impact on the regional economy**. It is essential that all students **graduate high school prepared** to enter the **workforce** or pursue a **higher education degree or trade school certificate**. This will ensure that residents are on a path to **economic mobility**.

Barriers to accessing education have been identified, including the need for **additional mental health supports** and the need for **coordinated efforts** to **engage and empower youth**. The **whole student/whole child system of care mental health working group** has been focused on the delivery of **mild to moderate mental health services** on **school campuses**, provided by **managed care plans**, with the support of **community service providers** and other partners. This **collaborative model** ensures that students can **access the care they need** in a **familiar, trusted environment**, without leaving campus.





Stanislaus County job seekers are ready to enter self-sustaining employment.

StanCAREERS sits at the end of our **cradle-to-career continuum**, with our vision of ensuring that **every individual in Stanislaus County finds sustainable employment** and finds themselves on a **path to economic mobility**. To make this possible, we focus on providing **individualized support through mentoring**, aligning workforce needs by sector within initiative focus areas, and **understanding the needs of young people entering the workforce** in Stanislaus County.

The **6 Cups to College/Career Mentorship Program** is designed to **turn career aspirations into reality** through the power of human connection. By **pairing students directly with local professional community mentors**, the program removes the guesswork from future planning, offering participants **tailored guidance over informal, meaningful conversations**, the symbolic "six cups." This relational approach not only **expands our students' professional networks** but provides the foundational knowledge necessary to successfully **explore post-secondary educational options** and **navigate local career landscapes**, transforming mentorship into a **powerful engine for future career success**.

5

108 Active Students

"My Mentor is actually related to the industry that I want to major in, so this program has been of a tremendous help for me. As it actually helped me to understand what the work experience is like in that field... it gave me a little

head start on my career."

— Student



99 Active Mentors

"I wanted to thank you and your team for all the work you've done to help kids in our area. I get so much from this mentoring program. It is very satisfying to help a young lady see there are so

many opportunities."

— Mentor



A local professional shares insights and encouragement with their mentee over coffee.



StanC2C is organized around promising high impact, high leverage strategies that will contribute to progress across our outcome areas.

Every **population-level outcome** we target is driven by **specific, measurable initiatives**. To ensure **data-driven decisions**, we track **key metrics** for each initiative, with the work directly led by **cross-sector partners and community experts**. Our **backbone team** provides continuous structural support.

Beyond these core initiatives, our partnership actively builds and **strengthens vital community networks**, including the **Counselor and Clinician Network** supporting our local school district partners and bringing a **Central Valley region English Learner perspective** to our local **Universal Pre-Kindergarten Mixed Delivery Grant Network**, elevating the voices and unique needs of **English Learners and their families**.

We also serve as an **accountability partner** for the county. By providing **data support and technical assistance**, we are helping guide the **redesign of a whole-student/whole-child system of care**, specifically focusing on delivering **mild-to-moderate mental health services directly on school campuses**.

Ultimately, this progress belongs to our partners, who are deeply dedicated to **transforming systems** and creating better support for children and families across **Stanislaus County**.



The true value of the Stanislaus Cradle to Career Partnership lies in its ability to build trust, shared ownership, and coordinated action. By bringing diverse perspectives together, the partnership helps organizations move beyond individual efforts toward collective solutions that advance equity and resilience.

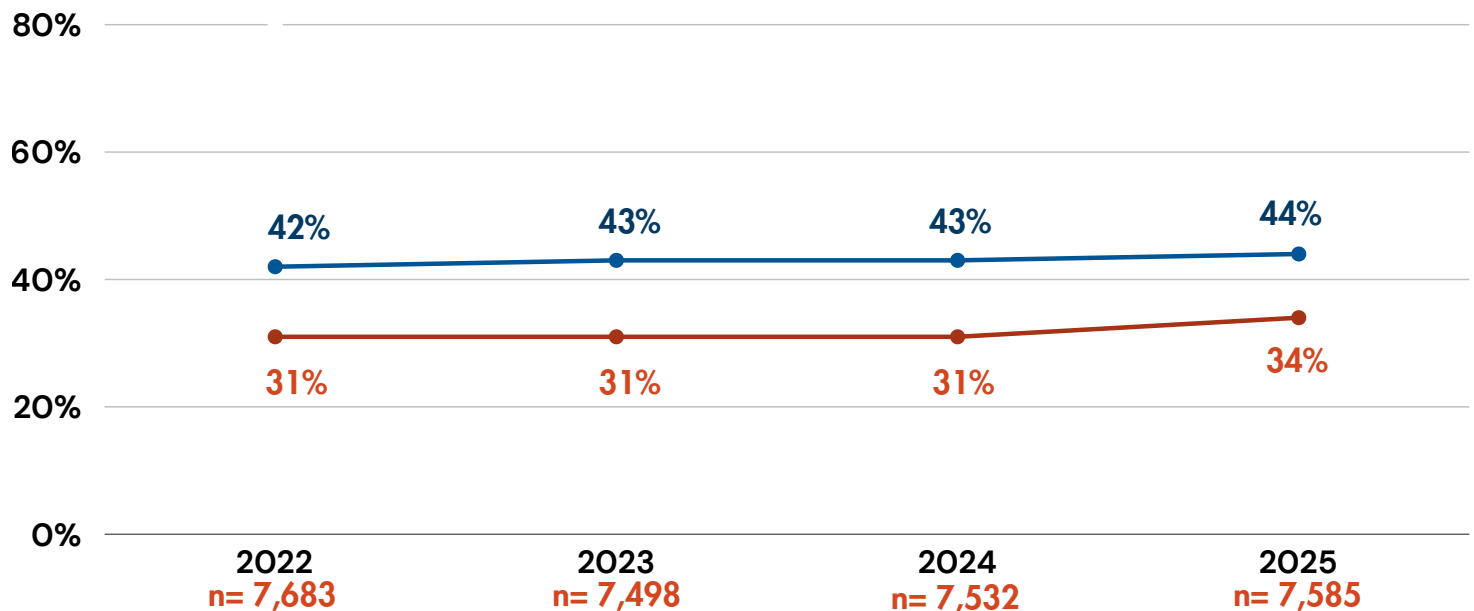
-Yamilet Valladolid, Director of Community and Government Affairs, Golden Valley Health Centers



Partners at a Universal Pre-Kindergarten Mixed Delivery Grant Network Quarterly Meeting.

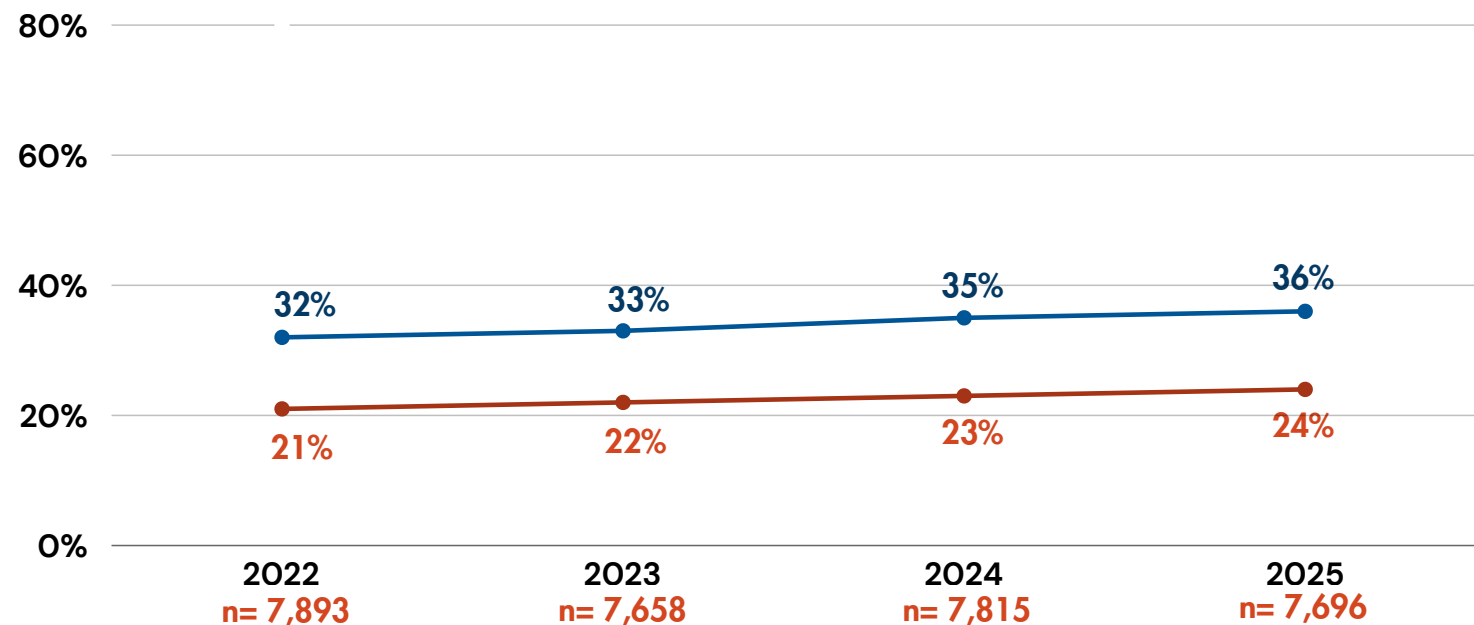
11

3rd Grade Reading Standard Met



12

5th Grade Math Standard Met



n-size = Number of Students with Scores

DATA OVERVIEW



California

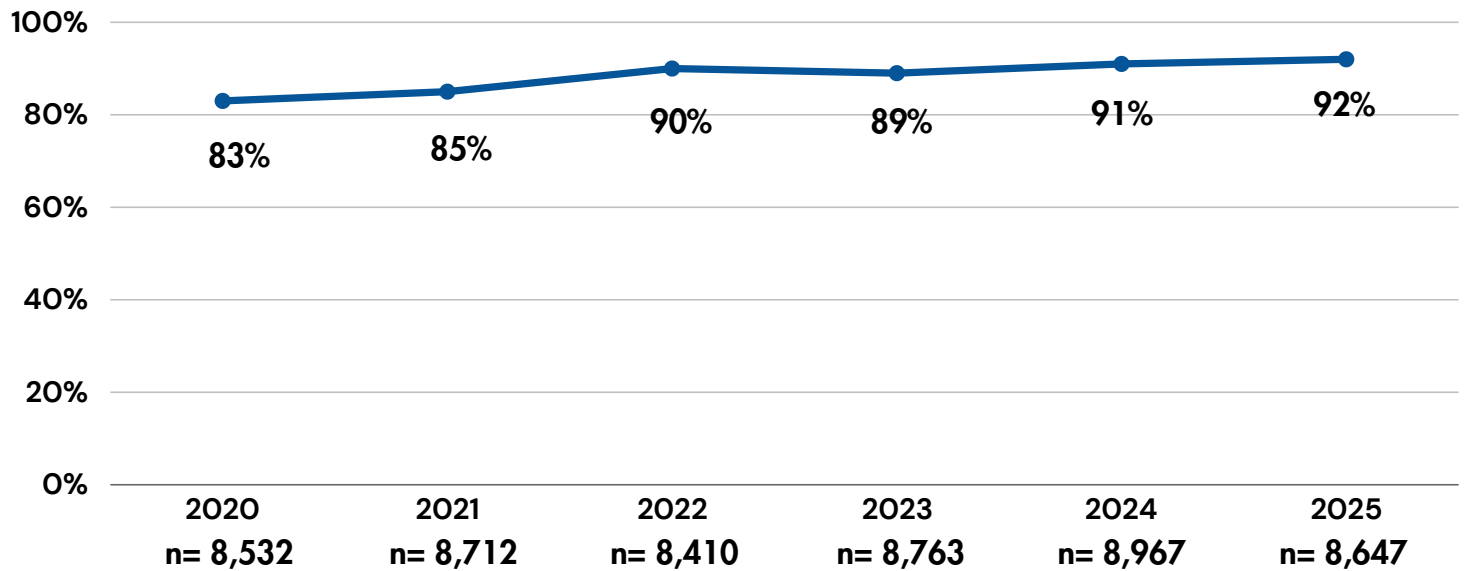


Stanislaus County

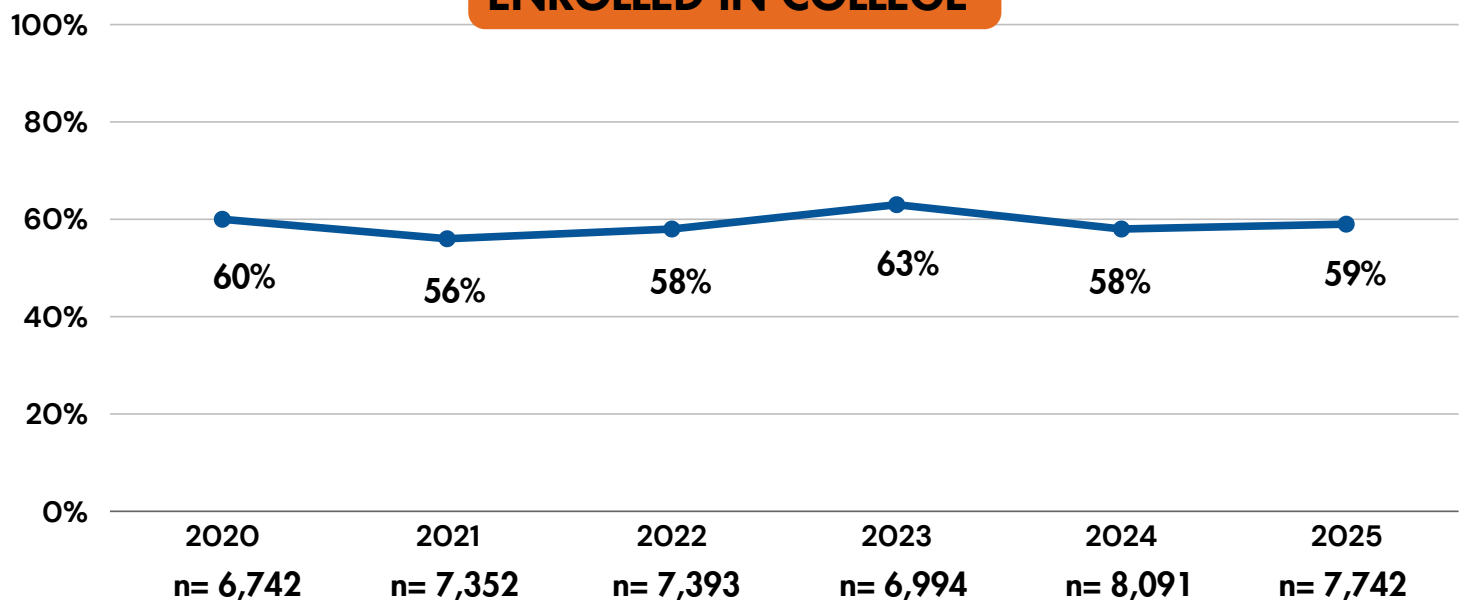
The data shows clear progress for **younger students**, with both **3rd-grade reading scores** and **5th-grade math scores** on the rise.

13

PERCENT OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES



14

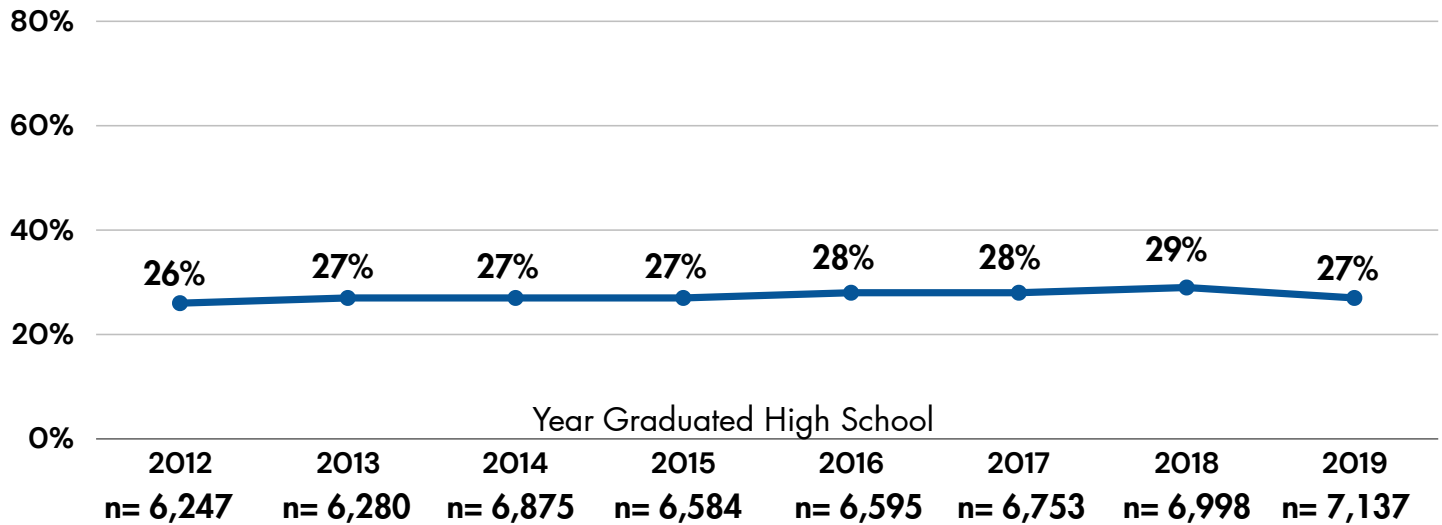
PERCENT OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WHO
ENROLLED IN COLLEGE

DATA OVERVIEW

High school graduation rates are excellent, **nearing 100%**. However, college enrollment tells a different story. The number of students going to college has **hovered around 60% for 5 years**.

15

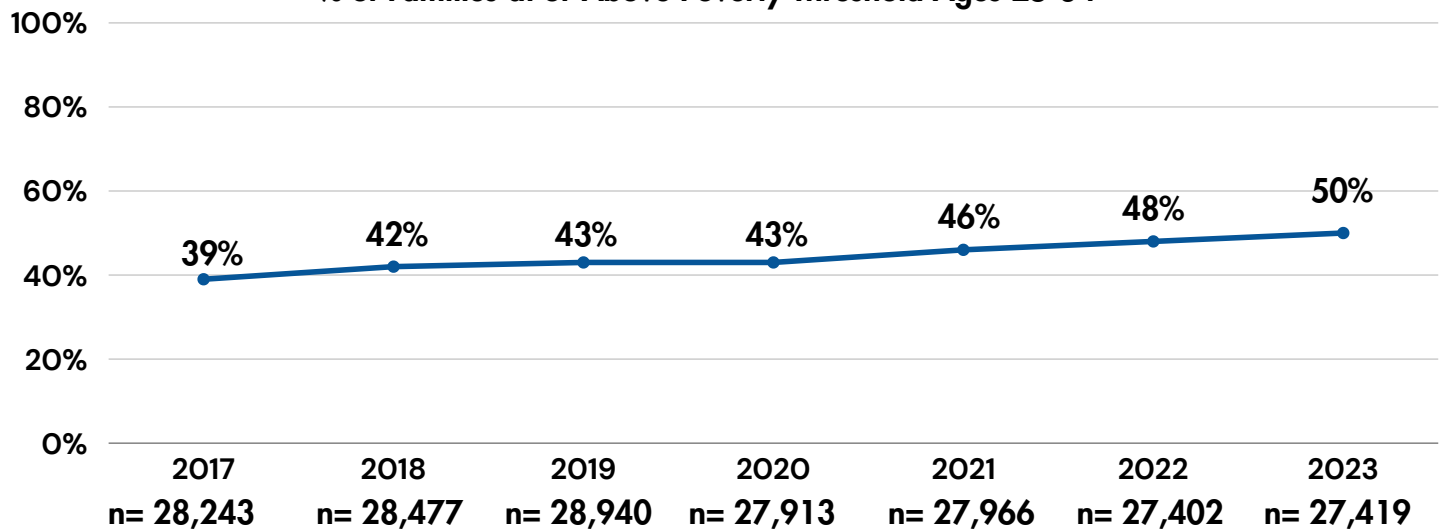
PERCENT OF COLLEGE COMPLETION WITHIN 6 YEARS



16

SELF-SUFFICIENCY STANDARD

% of Families at or Above Poverty Threshold Ages 25-34



DATA OVERVIEW

This data tracks how many **high school graduates in Stanislaus County** finish college with either a **two-year or a four-year degree**.

Data from 2023 shows a major challenge for **young families (ages 25 to 34)**. **Half of them are underemployed**. This means that even though many parents are working full-time, their jobs **do not pay enough to cover the basic cost of living**.



StanC2C is aligned and **works closely with the STATS team** at SCOE.

STANISLAUS YOUTH EMPOWERMENT ALLIANCE

The *Stanislaus Youth Empowerment Alliance* (StanYEA) partners with schools, organizations, and local youth to elevate young people as decision-makers and co-creators of community solutions. This year, StanYEA launched the Youth Empowerment Blueprint V.2, a framework that helps youth-serving organizations shift from basic youth participation to authentic, systems-level partnership.

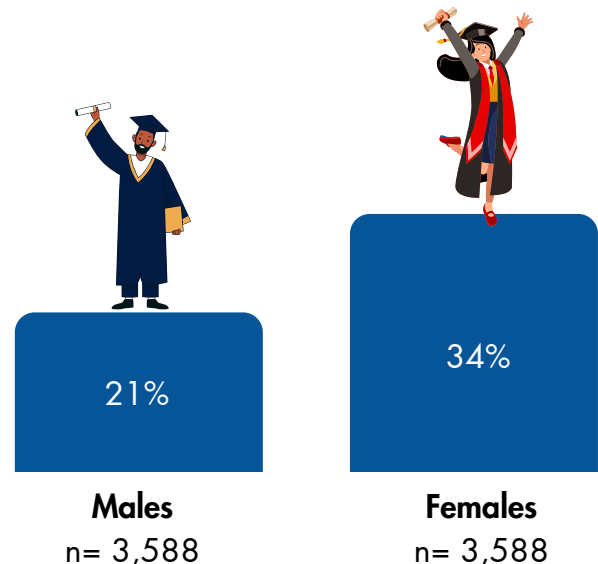
From the Blueprint v. 2, youth serving organizations are focusing on a Youth Matter Campaign, identifying additional funding opportunities, creation of a communications hub, aligning efforts and exploring a county wide youth commission.

Through listening sessions and focus groups, StanYEA elevated youth perspectives on education, well-being, workforce readiness, belonging, and advocacy. These youth-driven insights directly shaped upcoming pilot strategies across Stanislaus County, including youth-led storytelling initiatives aligned with the Youth Matter campaign and a Young Adult Leadership Retreat in partnership with StanC2C, focusing on personal growth, expert mentorship, networking, and community celebration.



10

COLLEGE COMPLETION WITHIN 6 YEARS



6-9

2024- 2025 Stanislaus County

- 92% of 12th graders graduated on time.
- 20% of graduates were ready or conditionally ready for college-level math courses.
- Approximately 83% of ages 17 and younger live at or above the poverty line.
- 62% of youth ages 18-25 were registered to vote.

STANISLAUS PARENT NETWORK

In **its fourth year** we continue to **empower parent voices** across our county through **The Stanislaus Parent Network (SPN)** which provides opportunities for parents to **learn, lead, and support** one another. This year, parents participated in **training sessions** on topics such as **computer literacy skills for parents, nutrition, and parenting teens**. Future topics scheduled include **tobacco prevention and substance use**, an introduction to **social-emotional learning practices, mental health awareness** and **wellness strategies** that strengthen both personal well-being and family relationships. All topics are selected and informed by our **10 parent leaders**.

Our Parent Leaders come from **various communities** around our county. Every parent leader **plans and co-facilitates** at least **one project of their choice** in their own community for other parents. Through these trainings, **community conversations, and leadership development** opportunities, parents **gain confidence, build connections, and strengthen their ability to advocate** for their families and communities. By **investing in parent leadership and voice**, we are building **stronger families, stronger communities, and better outcomes for children** throughout Stanislaus County.



Parents who attended the computer literacy skills for parents session.

We are getting left behind...even the doctors require forms through the computer and I need my child to help me. She asks me what I am going to do when she isn't here. That's why I am here.
-Parent who attended Computer Literacy Skills for Parents



Stanislaus Parent Network Parent Leaders after a planning session.

-  **467** parents developed their leadership skills through the Stanislaus Parent Network
-  **142** hours of training were completed in leadership, facilitation, advocacy, and mental health
-  **8** parent Led community projects were hosted across multiple cities in Stanislaus County serving **104** parents within **6 months**
-  **571** parents were reached through trainings and events

LOOKING AHEAD: OUR NEXT CHAPTER OF BOLD CHANGE

As we turn our focus to the future, the **Stanislaus Cradle to Career Partnership** is stepping into a **more active, intentional role**. We are expanding beyond our foundational work to actively explore how **policy can accelerate the positive outcomes** we want to see for our children and families.

By keeping a close watch on **key policy priorities**, we aim to **advocate for systemic changes** that **remove barriers** and set students of all ages on a clear, sustainable path toward **economic mobility**.



Moving forward, our work will focus on three key pillars:

Strengthening Our Civic Infrastructure

Elevating Policy and Advocacy

Activating Our Core Priorities

Strengthening Our Civic Infrastructure

To drive **lasting systems change**, our community partners need **robust, reliable tools**. We are committed to continuing the build-out of our **shared civic infrastructure**, focusing heavily on:

- **Shared Governance:** Aligning our leadership to make collective decisions that benefit the entire county
- **A Common Agenda:** Ensuring all partners are rowing in the same direction with **shared, clear goals**
- **Integrated Data Systems:** Centering our decisions in **real-time data** so we can **measure what works** and pivot where needed



Elevating Policy and Advocacy



We are **shifting from tracking progress to actively shaping it**. The partnership is **identifying and monitoring key regional and state policies** that directly impact **educational equity, family support systems, and economic development** in Stanislaus County.

Activating Our Core Priorities

As we execute this next phase, **we promise to remain bold**. We will not shy away from the hard conversations or the complex shifts required to see **true systems change**. Our daily focus remains locked on:

- **Improving educational milestones** from early childhood through career entry
- **Providing deep, structural support** to our network of community partners
- **Meaningfully engaging youth and parents** to ensure those closest to the challenges are **leading the design of our solutions**



Our Promise:

We will remain **grounded in data, collaborative in our approach, and unapologetically bold** in our **pursuit of a Stanislaus County** where **every young person can thrive**.

THE BACKBONE TEAM



Megan Lowery
StanC2C Partnership Director



Jane Venn
Stan C2C Partnership Specialist



Jennifer Rangel
Project Coordinator



Olivia Ogilvie
Data & Information Analyst



Anthony Boatner
College/Career Specialist



Ninfa Smith
StanC2C Partnership Coordinator

DATA SOURCES

STANISLAUS COUNTY- PAGE 3

Stanislaus County Population-

U.S. Census Bureau. (2026, July 12) QuickFacts (Stanislaus County, CA)
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/stanislauscountycalifornia/>

Stanislaus County Median Income-

(median income) US Census. (2026, July 12) American Community Survey 2024 five-year estimate, Stanislaus County.

(livable wage) MIT Living Wage Calculator. (2026, July 12) January 2024, Stanislaus County.

General Population of Stanislaus County-

U.S. Census Bureau. (2026, July 12) QuickFacts (Stanislaus County, CA)
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/stanislauscountycalifornia/>

Average household size in Stanislaus County-

U.S. Census Bureau. (2026, July 12) QuickFacts (Stanislaus County, CA)
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/stanislauscountycalifornia/>

Percent of Children Living in Poverty-

U.S. Census Bureau. (2026, July 12) Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months of Related Children Under 18 Years by Family Type by Age of Related Children Under 18 Years (2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table B17006).

<https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2024.B17006>

Population with a 4-year College Degree-

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5. Stanislaus County 6 Cups to College. (2026, July 10) 6 Cups to Career internal database.
6. California Department of Education. (2026, July 10) DataQuest. Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates & Outcomes data 2024-2025 <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>
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- 14.-15. [National Student Clearinghouse. \(2026, July 12\) Reports for Stanislaus County internal database.](#)
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S T A N I S L A U S
CRADLEtoCAREER
P A R T N E R S H I P



Stanislaus County Office of Education proudly serves as the backbone organization for StanC2C.

StriveTogether
Every child. Cradle to career.

StriveTogether is a national movement with a clear purpose: helping every child succeed in school and in life from cradle to career, regardless of race, ethnicity, zip code or circumstance.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Amy Peterman, Ed.D., Superintendent, Ceres Unified School District

Brian Sanders, Ed.D., President, Modesto Junior College

Brit Rios-Ellis, Ph.D., President, Stanislaus State University

Gina Machado, Chief Executive Officer, Center for Human Services

Doris Foster, Executive Director, Stanislaus County Workforce Development

Marian Kaanon, President and CEO, Stanislaus Community Foundation

Nancy Martinez, Chief Executive Officer, Debrief

Rich Ogle, Ph.D., Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Stanislaus State University

Ruben Imperial, MBA, Director, Stanislaus County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services

Scott Kuykendall, Superintendent of Schools, Stanislaus County Office of Education

Shammy Karim, Ed.D., Executive Director, First 5 Stanislaus

Yamilet Valladolid, MPH, Director of Community and Government Affairs, Golden Valley Health Centers