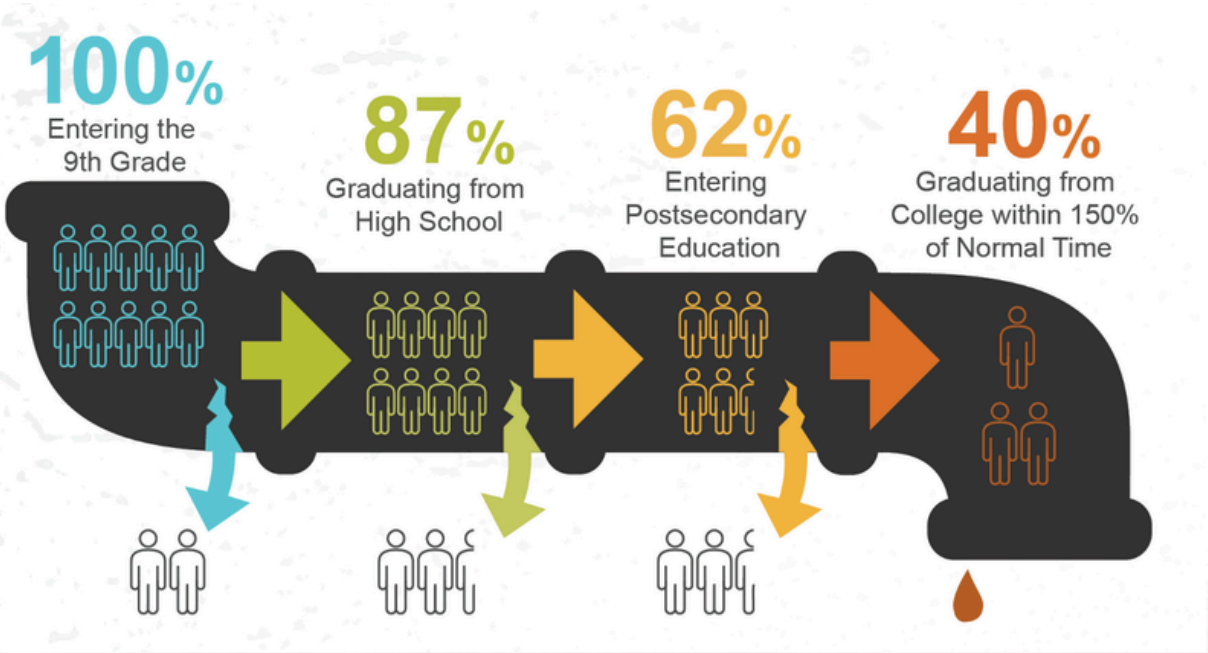
4 Redefine What It Means to Be Career Ready

Measuring High School Success Beyond College Enrollment

For decades, college enrollment has served as one of the most visible measures of success for America's secondary education system. But higher education is not the only path to a successful career. In fact, out of every student who enters 9th grade, only 40% of them graduate with a 4 year degree within 150% of the normal time, as seen in the below graphic.

If the purpose of secondary education is to prepare young people to succeed in their careers, then college enrollment alone is an incomplete measure of that success. For the majority of students, a four-year degree simply isn't the outcome, whether by choice or circumstance. Success for secondary education needs to be redefined around the outcomes students actually pursue, not just the ones the system has traditionally counted.



WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

- **Measure career readiness and successful transitions into multiple postsecondary pathways . . . not simply college enrollment.**
- **Recognize and reward high-schools, community colleges, and 4-year colleges for preparing students with the skills, credentials and experiences needed to succeed in the workforce.**

Read all 7 recommendations in the 2026 update to Restoring the Dignity of Work
Find the full report at www.NCCER.org/research/

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