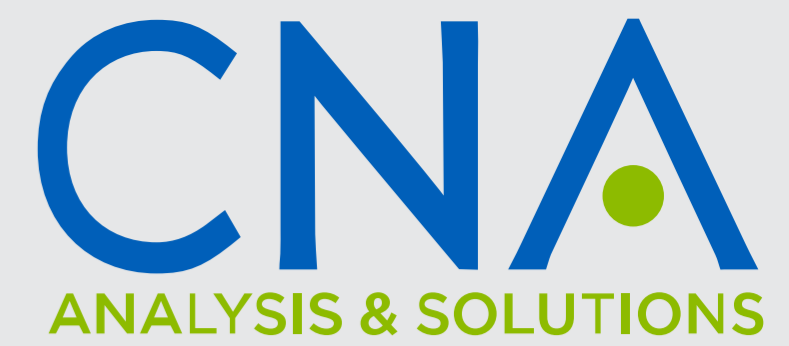


COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS IN APPALACHIA'S CENTRAL SUBREGIONS

A systematic review of research published between 1995 and 2015 shows that postsecondary readiness in Appalachia's central subregions (referred to collectively as middle Appalachia) has improved. However, challenges remain in providing students with the high-level skills they are likely to need in a changing economy.



ABOUT THE REGION

The term "middle Appalachia" refers to the mostly contiguous portions of Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia in the heart of the Appalachian Mountains.

238 Appalachian counties/
independent cities **371** school districts



MEDIAN INCOME:
\$42,000 middle Appalachia
\$53,000 nationwide

70% of adults are in the workforce
vs. 78% nationwide



68 of the 90 Appalachian counties designated as distressed by the Appalachian Regional Commission are in this region.

STUDENT POPULATION

86% of students are White (not Hispanic)



vs. 51% nationwide

55% of students are eligible for free/reduced-price lunch



vs. 46% nationwide

COMMON CULTURAL VALUES



Community



Family

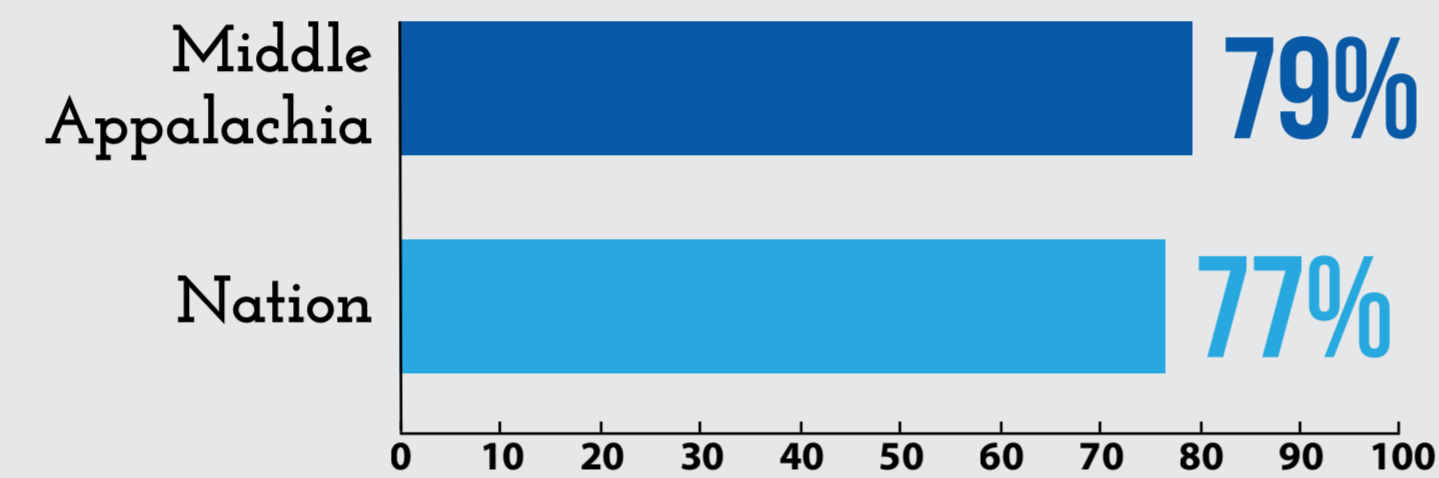


Egalitarianism

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

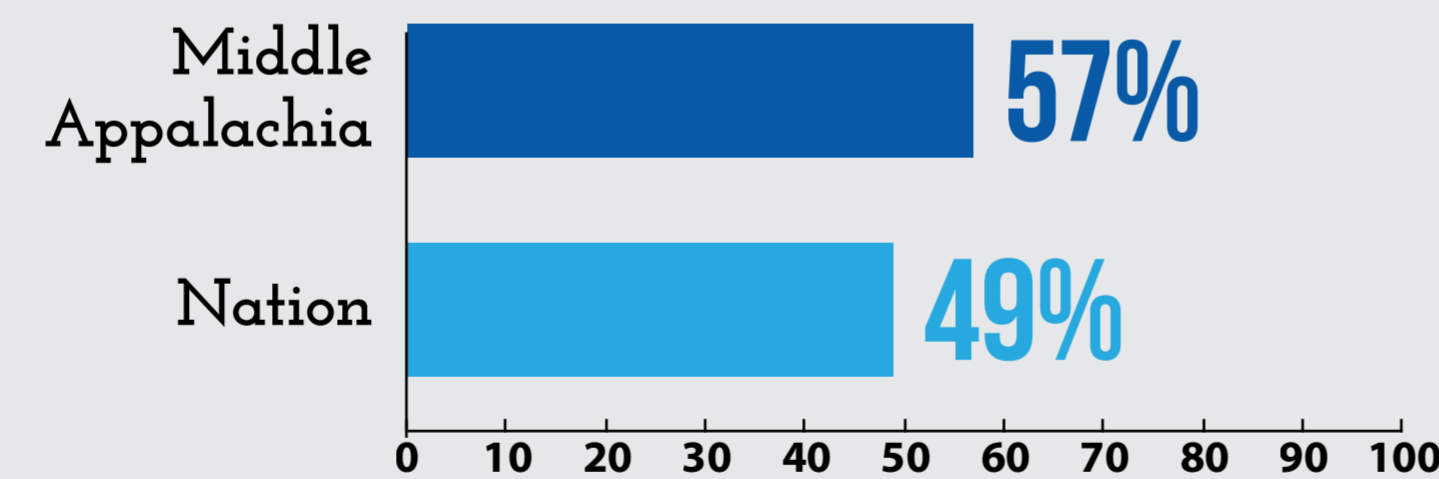
Research indicates that college and career readiness in middle Appalachia is improving.

High school graduation rates exceed the national average.

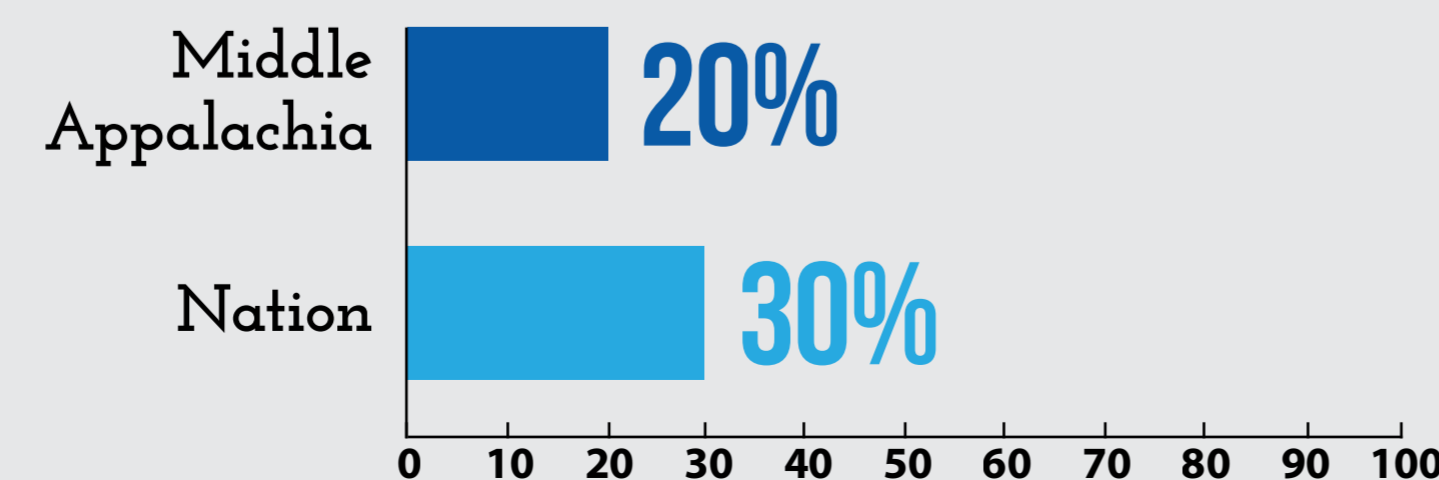


Between 1979 and 1999, high school graduation rates in middle Appalachia rose by **20 PERCENTAGE POINTS**

Greater percentages of adults have only a high school diploma.



Lower percentages of adults have a bachelor's degree or higher.



CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

ECONOMIC HISTORY

Historically, the region's geography has fostered an economy reliant on coal and other extraction industries, none of which require high levels of formal schooling.

COMMUNITY ATTITUDES AND EDUCATION

Parents' lack of experience with and understanding of higher education may limit their ability to support their children in pursuing a college education.

ATTACHMENT TO PLACE AND FAMILY

Strong connections to family, community, and place among middle Appalachian youth create a strong commitment to the region, but may hinder students' willingness to pursue a college degree, especially if they must leave home to do so.

OPPORTUNITIES

SUPPORTING POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETION

High schools and colleges can support postsecondary enrollment and completion in various ways, including ACT preparation, campus visits, college application process assistance, postsecondary transition programs, and college learning communities.

LEVERAGING COMMITMENT TO THE REGION

High schools and colleges could leverage students' desire to remain in or return to Appalachia by offering place-based education that engages students in projects to improve or transform their communities.

These findings were taken from a larger CNA research review, *Appalachia Rising*:

Kannapel, P., Flory, M., Cramer, E., Carr, R. (2015). *Appalachia Rising* (Report No. CRM-2015-U-011063). Retrieved from CNA website: https://www.cna.org/cna_files/pdf/CRM-2015-U-011063.pdf

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CURRENT INITIATIVES

RACE TO THE TOP

The U.S. Department of Education's Race to the Top (RTTT) program, launched in 2009, supports reform in four areas, including college and career readiness.

Several RTTT grants focus on middle Appalachian areas or states that encompass portions of Appalachia. Many of these reform initiatives include components aimed at improving college and career readiness.

\$1.5 BILLION

The total amount 9 middle Appalachian states and agencies received through RTTT grants.

INVESTING IN INNOVATION

The U.S. Department of Education's Investing in Innovation (i3) program provides funds to expand innovative practices that improve student outcomes, including increasing college enrollment rates. Many i3 projects in middle Appalachia focus on college and career readiness goals.

\$211 MILLION

The total amount 17 agencies in middle Appalachia received through i3 grants.

SHAPING OUR APPALACHIAN REGION (SOAR)

This Kentucky initiative, launched in 2013, seeks to diversify the economy and improve the quality of life in Appalachian Kentucky. SOAR organizes public meetings and workgroups, including an education and retraining workgroup that has developed 17 recommendations in three areas:

- Equipping the workforce with skills to support a revitalized region.
- Connecting education and training to the workplace and increasing access to education.
- Ensuring effective educational and regional leadership.