Education in Hampton Roads

Figure 10.1  Graduation Rates in Hampton Roads and Virginia ........................................ 3
Figure 10.2  Enrolled Students in Hampton Roads .......................................................... 3
Figure 10.3  Percent of Population Attaining High School Equivalency or Greater ........ 4
Figure 10.4  High School Equivalence Attainment in Hampton Roads and Reference Metro Areas ................................................................. 4
Figure 10.5  College Attainment in Hampton Roads and Reference Metro Areas .......... 5
Figure 10.6  Population with Professional and Advanced Degrees in Hampton Roads and Reference Metro Areas ......................................................... 5
Figure 10.7  Early Childhood Enrollment ......................................................................... 6
Figure 10.8  Number of Enrolled Students at Regional Colleges and Universities ......... 6
Figure 10.9  Percentage First Year Students who Require Remedial Coursework .......... 7
Figure 10.10 Distribution of K-12 Education Financing in Hampton Roads ................. 7
Figure 10.11 Inflation-Adjusted Per Pupil Expenditures in Hampton Roads and Virginia .............................................................................................. 8
Education in Hampton Roads

The quality of education provided in Hampton Roads will determine future economic success in this region. Improved educational outcomes enable a higher quality of life for the residents of Hampton Roads.

High school education is important to individual residents, as workers with high school equivalence have lower unemployment rates and higher wages than those who do not attain that level of education. Furthermore, concentrated pockets of low education achievement have a negative impact when localities fail to effectively educate residents. Over the past decade, Hampton Roads’ graduation rate has steadily grown, reflecting progress in the region’s school systems. In 2019 and 2020, Hampton Roads outpaced the Commonwealth with higher graduation rates.

College education plays a strong role for the entire region’s growth prospects. The share of college educated workers is closely related to income growth, so Hampton Roads needs to continue to support educational institutions in the region and work with them to ensure that each locality’s high school graduates are ready to pursue post-secondary education.

The final two figures in this section examine government financing, as the financial burden of education has been spread among the federal, state, and local governments for many years. That burden has shifted, as the state’s contribution for education funding has fallen from 58% regionally in 2000, to 41% in 2020, while the local burden has increased from 34% to 40% over that same time period. The slight rebound of real education funding per pupil observed in 2015 has persisted throughout the region and state over the past five years, signaling a move in the direction of pre-recession levels for the students of the Commonwealth.

Several of the indicators in this section include data from the first year of the COVID pandemic, which heavily impacted public school enrollment in Fall of 2020. There were steep declines, especially in early childhood education enrollment, but graduation rates remained high, signaling parents keeping their high-school aged children enrolled but behaving more cautiously with pre-K and kindergarten aged students.
Figure 10.1 Graduation Rates in Hampton Roads and Virginia

**Why is it important?**
Graduation rates are a reflection of a school system’s ability to retain and educate students. High graduation rates prevent uneducated residents from becoming a social burden and contribute to a more educated workforce and an increased quality of life.

**How are we doing?**
In 2020, the Hampton Roads’ on-time graduation rate was 92.9%, rising above that of the Commonwealth for the second year in a row. 2020 saw the highest on-time graduation rates in both Hampton Roads and Virginia in 20 years.

Source: Virginia Department of Education, HRPDC

![Graduation Rates Chart](image)

Figure 10.2 Enrolled Students in Hampton Roads

**Why is it important?**
The number of enrolled students serves as one method of measuring population change. The trend of school enrollments also helps identify future education needs in the region.

**How are we doing?**
While public school enrollment in the state has slowly grown, the region has seen a gradual decline in the number of students enrolled in public schools, starting in the 2005-2006 school year. COVID-19 had a significant impact on Fall 2020 enrollment, declining regionally by 4.6% from the previous Fall; 3.5% statewide.

Source: Virginia Department of Education, HRPDC
Figure 10.3 Percent of Population Attaining High School Equivalency or Greater

**Why is it important?**
An educated workforce has proven to be an excellent path to economic growth and allows for greater flexibility in the regional labor market.

**How are we doing?**
The region’s population has always outperformed the nation’s as a whole in terms of achieving basic levels of education. A greater share of the region’s population has attained at least high school equivalency as a result of the military, as well as strong employment opportunities that bring educated individuals to Hampton Roads.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, HRPDC

---

Figure 10.4 High School Equivalence Attainment in Hampton Roads and Reference Metro Areas

**Why is it important?**
Measuring education attainment in Hampton Roads as compared to the region’s reference metro areas gives an indication of its economic performance. Where there are concentrations of individuals with low levels of educational attainment, there is often urban decline and lower home values.

**How are we doing?**
Hampton Roads ranks eleventh in high school equivalence attainment among metropolitan areas with populations between 1 and 4 million.

Source: American Community Survey, HRPDC
**Figure 10.5 College Attainment in Hampton Roads and Reference Metro Areas**

**Why is it important?**
College attainment in a region has been shown to have an impact on income within that region, with higher levels of college attainment causing faster income growth for the entire population.

**How are we doing?**
Roughly 33% of the Hampton Roads population has at least a college degree, equal to the general U.S. population. Hampton Roads ranks 27th among the 39 metro areas with populations between 1 and 4 million.

![College Attainment, 2019](image)

**Figure 10.6 Population with Professional and Advanced Degrees in Hampton Roads and Reference Metro Areas**

**Why is it important?**
Graduate degrees are often used as a proxy for both productivity and innovation and indicate a region's capacity for high level growth.

**How are we doing?**
Hampton Roads ranks 21st among its 39 reference MSAs in terms of population with a graduate or professional degree, and 13.3% of the region's residents have obtained advanced degrees—slightly higher than the national average of 12.8%.

![Graduate or Professional Degree Attainment, 2019](image)
**Figure 10.7 Early Childhood Enrollment**

**Why is it important?**
Early childhood education has been identified by several groups as an area traditionally under-invested in by local and state governments. Tracking pre-kindergarten public enrollment measures the focus placed on this age group in the region.

**How are we doing?**
The number of students enrolled in public preschool expanded rapidly in 2007-2008 at both the state and regional level, but since has gradually declined in the region, following the declines in total enrollment. Pre-K enrollments in 2020 were significantly lower than recent years due to COVID.

![Graph showing early childhood public education enrollment](image)

Source: Virginia Department of Education, HRPDC

**Figure 10.8 Number of Enrolled Students at Regional Colleges and Universities**

**Hampton Roads Higher Education Enrollment, 2020**

**Why is it important?**
The share of college educated individuals in a region has been shown to have a strong correlation to income growth and economic development in the region. Robust educational opportunities in the region help to introduce motivated students from around the country to this region, as well as providing opportunities to local students.

**How are we doing?**
This region has a diverse selection of public and private colleges, as well as a strong community college system.

![Graph showing higher education enrollment](image)

Source: State Council for Higher Education for Virginia, HRPDC
**Figure 10.9 Percentage of First Year Students who Require Remedial Coursework**

**Why is it important?**
This measure examines the percentage of students less than 12 months out of Virginia high schools who have to take at least one remedial class at regional community colleges. This is a measure of college preparedness for regional high schools, as it is likely the majority of these students attended high school in Hampton Roads.

**How are we doing?**
A high percentage of 1st year students at regional community colleges require remedial course work in math, reading, or writing within the first year of enrollment.

![1st Year Students Requiring Remedial Course Work (2018-2019)](image)

Source: Virginia Department of Education, HRPDC

---

**Figure 10.10 Distribution of K-12 Education Financing in Hampton Roads**

**Why is it important?**
It is important to see the range of funding sources that support the region’s schools. In Virginia, the local, state, and federal governments all share the burden of funding education.

**How are we doing?**
In 2020, 40% of all education spending comes from local sources, marking an increase from 2000 when local financing constituted 34% of education financing. During that time period, state support has shrunk considerably. In the rest of the Commonwealth, the localities contribute an average of 51% of education funding, and the state’s share is only 34%.

![Source of Hampton Roads School Funding](image)

Source: Virginia Department of Education, HRPDC
Figure 10.11 Inflation-Adjusted Per Pupil Expenditures in Hampton Roads and Virginia

Why is it important?
Figure 10.11 illustrates the cost of education in the region per public school pupil, as well as the relative priorities of the region.

How are we doing?
Per pupil education expenditures declined in real (inflation-adjusted) terms after 2009, as the recession placed the budgets of local government throughout the Commonwealth under pressure, but per pupil spending recovered slightly in the region over the past few years.

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Bureau of Economic Analysis, HRPDC