



Education in Shasta County

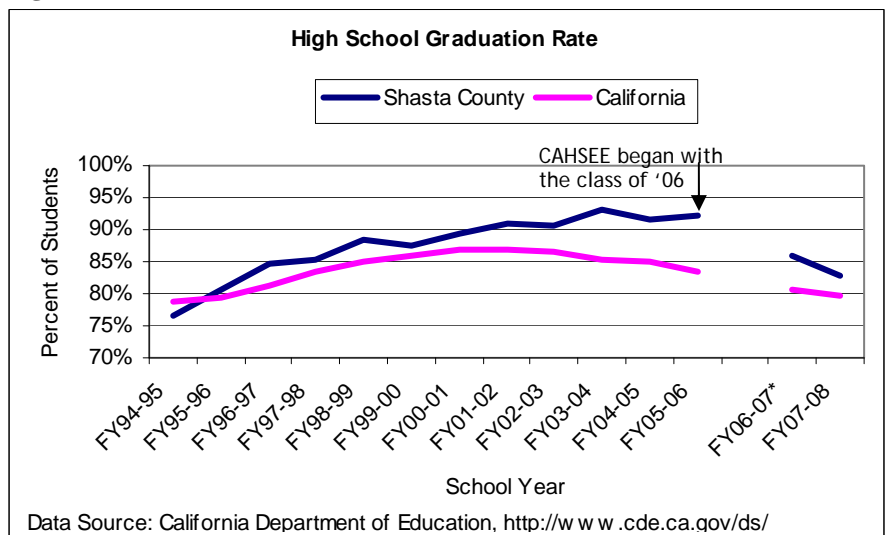
Introduction

Education is an important predictor of health because it both shapes and reflects so many other factors that affect people's life circumstances. Education matters because it can provide us with the knowledge, skills, confidence, connections and opportunities we need to negotiate the world and exert greater control over our lives. Education can reduce inequalities, create tolerance, build social cohesion, and boost the health of entire communities. Education also improves quality of life by helping people get better paying jobs and reducing financial worries. How well we do and how far we get in our schooling impacts not only our future earning potential but also our mastery of our environment and our ability to navigate institutions and gain access to power - all of which are consequential to success and wellbeing. This report will look at education both by assessing educational measures among high school students and educational attainment among adult populations.

High School Completion

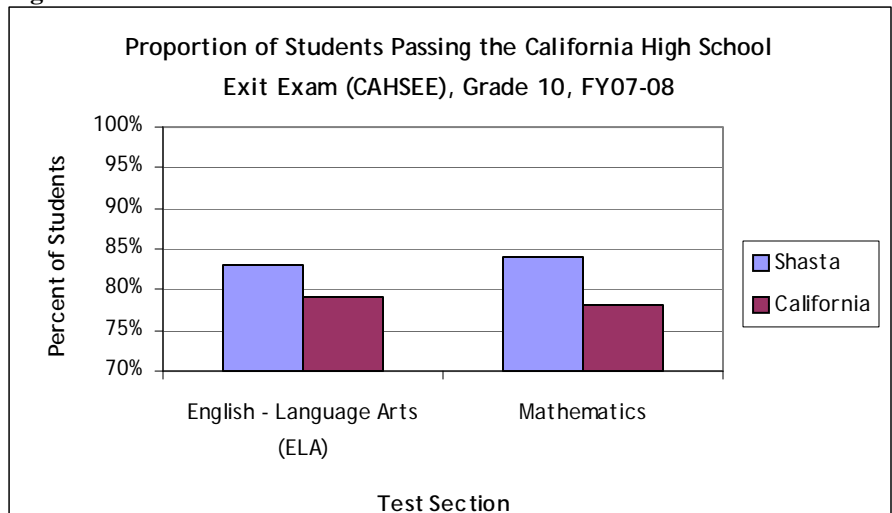
The High School Graduation Rates (Figure 1) are based on the National Center for Education Statistics definition. The formula for calculating the rate is (the number of students who graduated with a regular diploma + the number of students who were alternative completers) / (the number of students who graduated with a regular diploma + the number of students who were alternative completers + the number of students who dropped out of the 12th grade in that year, grade 11 in the previous year, grade 10 the year before, and grade 9 the year before that). So it divides the number of graduates by the total who should have graduated that year. Shasta County's High School Graduation Rate is higher than the state and has been since the 1995-1996 school year. Students start taking the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) in the 10th grade and must pass it in order to graduate. They can retake the test up to 8 times. Shasta County's percent of students passing the CAHSEE in Grade 10 was higher than the state in both sections of the exam (Figure 2).

Figure 1



* Beginning in 2006-07 Statewide Student IDs began to be used to track graduates and dropouts, making comparison to prior years inappropriate.

Figure 2





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College Readiness

Since a lot of colleges require students to take the SAT Reasoning Test or the ACT and consider these scores when making admission decisions, they are a good indicator of both intention to attend and preparation for college. The percent of Shasta County high school seniors taking the ACT is equivalent to the state percent, but less Shasta County seniors take the SAT Reasoning Test (18%) than California seniors (36%) (Figure 3). This suggests that high school students in Shasta County might be less likely to attend a 4-year university right after high school compared to students in the rest of California. While the percent of SAT Reasoning Test takers in Shasta County is lower, the average scores for those who do take the test are higher in Shasta County than California (Figure 4). The same is true of the ACT, with 71% of Shasta County test takers scoring at least 21 (the average score) compared to 59% of California test takers.

Figure 3

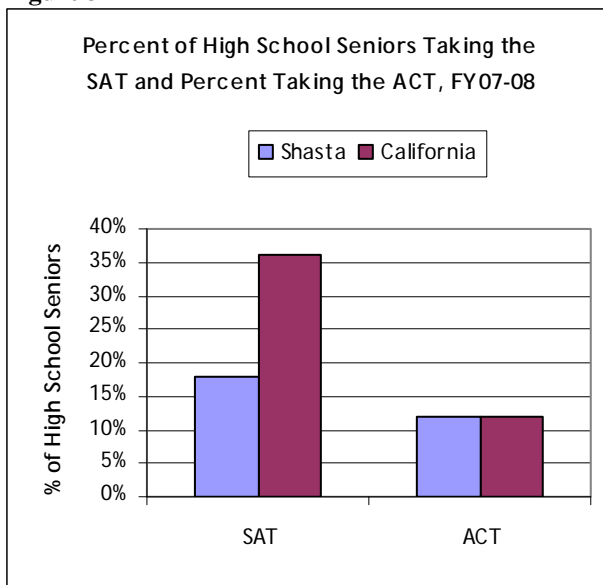
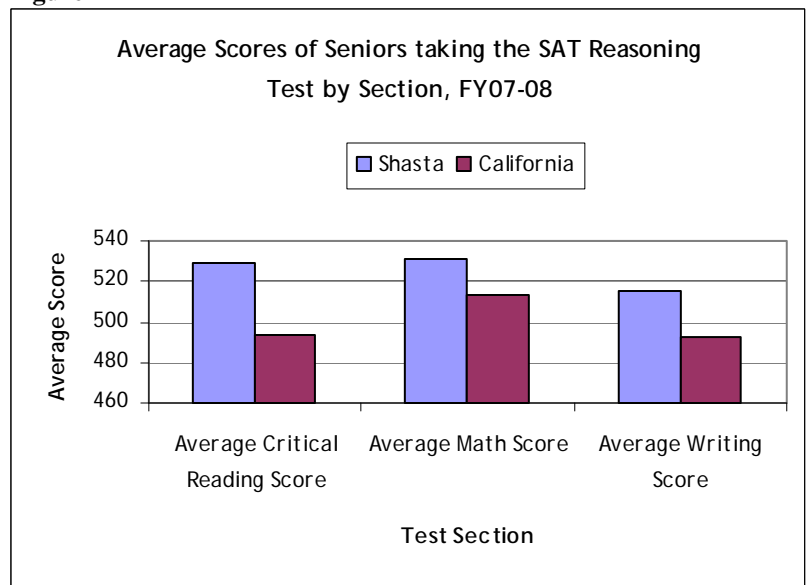


Figure 4

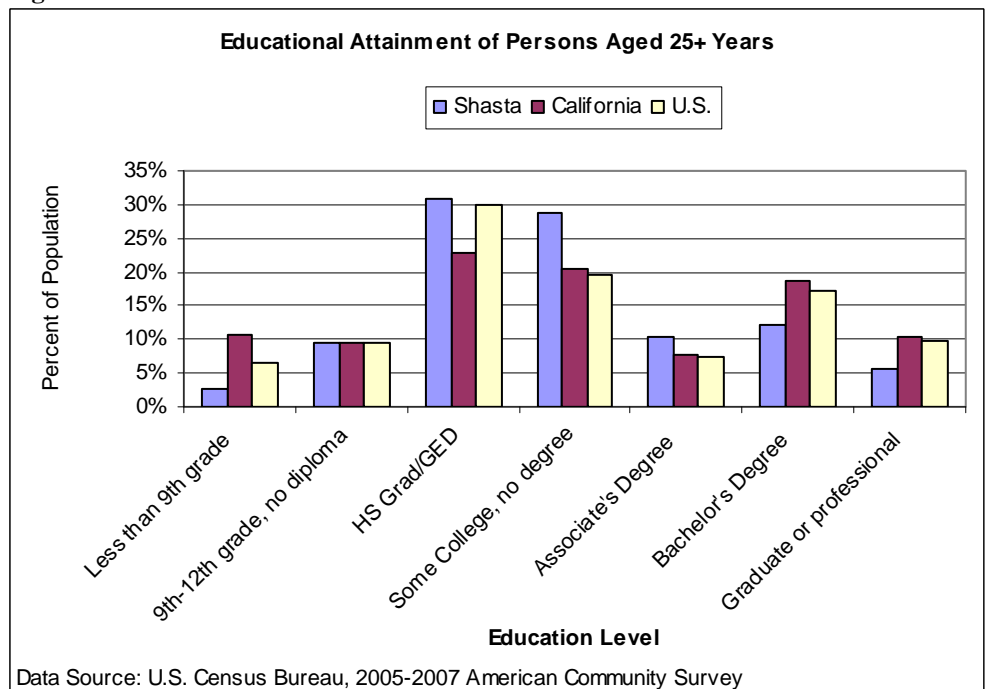


Data Source: California Department of Education, Data & Statistics, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/>

Educational Attainment Among Adults

Shasta County adults (25 years or older) are more likely to have at least a high school diploma (88%) than adults in all of California (80%) or adults in the United States (84%) (Figure 5). However, Shasta County has a much smaller proportion of adults with at least a Bachelor's Degree (18%) as compared to California (29%) or the United States (27%).

Figure 5



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2007 American Community Survey



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Education and Poverty

Data has shown that educational attainment is linked to income and financial stability. Individuals with a higher education typically get jobs with higher pay and more benefits than those individuals with less education. Figure 6 shows a direct, positive relationship between educational attainment and median income in Shasta County, California, and the United States. This shows that, at every level, as one's educational attainment increases, so does their income. Shasta County adults make less money than adults in California at every level of educational attainment except those with less than a high school degree. This might indicate that Shasta County's economy has fewer opportunities for those with at least a bachelor's degree than other parts of the state and the country. The lack of earning potential, or jobs, for people with a Bachelor's Degree or higher, may be one contributing factor to the lack of people with this level of education living in Shasta County. According to the California Employment Development Department's projections, between 2006 and 2016 23% of jobs in California will require at least a bachelor's degree, compared to only 17% in Shasta County.⁴

Education and Race

In Shasta County, whites (88%) have the highest rate of high school completion while 'Other Races' (66%) have the lowest (Table 1). The category of 'Other Races' implies that an individual does not consider themselves as White, Black, Hispanic, American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, or Multirace. Shasta County adults have a higher high school graduation rate than adults in California and the United States among each racial group except Asians.

Figure 6

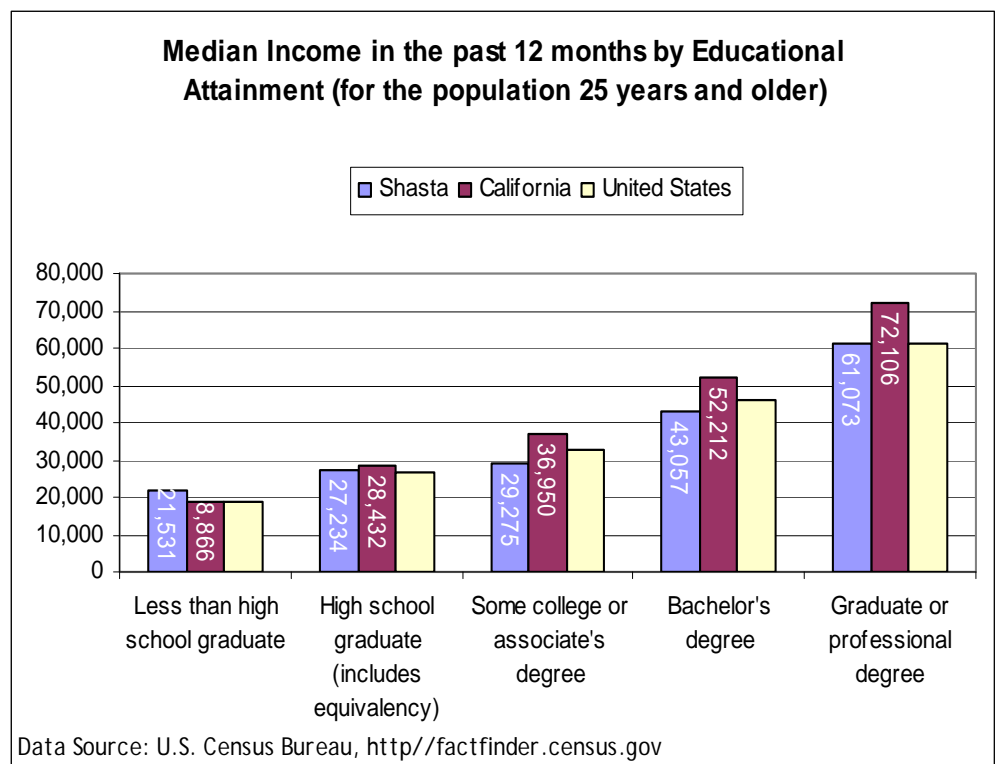


Table 1

Proportion of Population Completing High School, 2005-2007 Estimates (25 Years of Age and Over)			
	Shasta County	California	U.S.
By Race			
White	88.3%	83.8%	86.5%
Black	***	85.7%	79.3%
American Indian/Alaska Native	85.6%	76.7%	75.7%
Asian	83.3%	85.4%	85.4%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	***	83.5%	83.9%
Other	66.2%	55.1%	57.6%
2 or More Races	83.8%	83.8%	83.4%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	78.9%	55.5%	59.9%

*** Small numbers in this population prevent rates from being estimated.

Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Note: Data is not available by race and Hispanic ethnicity combined, so each racial group includes both Hispanics and Non-Hispanics within that group.



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In Shasta County, Asians (25%) are most likely to have a Bachelor's degree or higher, while American Indian/Alaska Natives (4%) are least likely (Table 2). A lower percentage of Shasta County adults have a Bachelor's degree or higher than adults in California and the United States among each racial group except Hispanics and 'Other Races'.

Table 2

Proportion of Population with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, 2005-2007 Estimates (25 Years of Age and Over)			
	Shasta County	California	U.S.
By Race			
White	18.2%	31.2%	28.6%
Black	***	20.7%	16.8%
American Indian/Alaska Native	4.4%	13.9%	12.8%
Asian	25.2%	46.8%	48.8%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	***	14.4%	14.8%
Other	9.1%	8.4%	9.9%
2 or More Races	9.0%	25.4%	23.1%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	12.1%	9.6%	12.3%

*** Small numbers in this population prevent rates from being estimated.

Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Note: Data is not available by race and Hispanic ethnicity combined, so each racial group includes both Hispanics and Non-Hispanics within that group.

Conclusions

Compared to California, Shasta County has a higher rate of high school graduation and a higher proportion of students passing the CAHSEE, but a lower proportion of students taking college admission tests. While Shasta County has more students graduating from high school, it has less adults with at least a bachelor's degree. This is most likely due to what is commonly known as "brain drain," the tendency for Shasta County residents who do go to college not to return. This may be due to the lack of jobs requiring a college degree in Shasta County. Shasta County also does not currently have a four year public university which compounds the "brain drain" and the lack of job opportunities for those with a higher level of education. Local parent culture has also been known to reduce the number of high school graduates continuing their education in a four year university because parents believe their child may not return to the area if they leave. This also contributes toward the low number of Shasta County adults with education beyond a high school diploma.

Recommendations

Education is a strong determinant of socioeconomic status and health outcomes. Steps taken to increase the educational level in a population can decrease poverty and improve population health. It is known that those with more than 12 years of education have a higher life expectancy and higher incomes on average than those with 12 or fewer years of education. Those with less education often have less income and worse access to health insurance and health services.

Increasing educational attainment, job readiness and job opportunities will improve the economic and health status of communities. Increasing educational attainment for those living in Shasta County will allow our adult community to be better prepared and more competitive for the jobs that are available. As educational opportunities increase, job opportunities in Shasta County for people with Bachelor's Degrees or higher may increase as outside employers assess workforce preparedness. Adding a four year public university in Shasta County, which can start by locating a satellite campus here for an existing California State University such as Chico, will increase the educational opportunities of Shasta County residents and other local counties which will increase job opportunities.

References:

1. Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?, Education http://www.unnaturalcauses.org/resources.php?topic_id=3
2. California Department of Education, Data and Statistics, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/>
3. American Fact Finder, <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?lang=en>
4. California Employment Development Department, LabortMarketInfo <http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/?pageid=145>