

Most Ohio High School Students Are Not Prepared for College

A [college education](#) continues to be a sound investment. However, many Ohio high school seniors are not academically prepared for college-level academic work (**Figure 1**). These challenges were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which negatively impacted recent high school graduates' [academic success](#) and [feelings of preparedness](#).

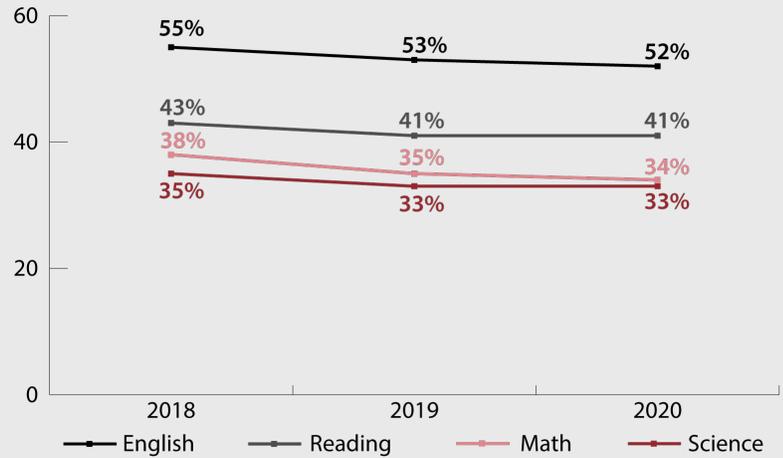
The Challenges of Remediation

One in five students at independent and public four-year institutions enter with a high school GPA below a B average, demonstrating that both sectors serve students who struggled in high school (**Figure 2**). Some institutions use remedial courses, also known as [developmental education](#), to adequately prepare these students for the college curriculum. One [recent survey](#) found that less than half of independents used any type of developmental education, compared to over 80 percent of four-year publics. [Several studies](#) have found that taking remedial courses lowers students' probability of graduating. Reforms to remediation, such as offering supplementary education alongside traditional college courses, have [produced](#) positive results. However, these reforms are difficult to [implement on a large scale](#) and often do not address [underlying issues](#) of self-esteem and confidence.

How Do Independent Colleges Support Underprepared Students?

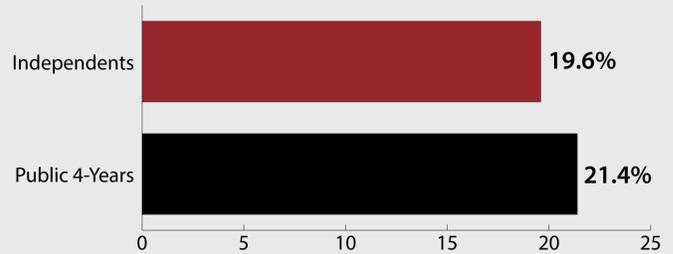
Instead of using traditional remediation, independents largely focus on [holistic supports](#) to support underprepared students. Smaller [student to faculty](#) ratios and more [full-time faculty](#) allow independents to provide personalized support. [Academic advising](#) is also imperative for students with academic struggles; [a recent study](#) found that students at independents met with advisers 19 percent more often than students at public institutions. Freshmen at independents are also more likely to participate in co-curricular High Impact Practices ([HIPs](#)), such as service learning or first-year seminars (**Figure 3**). HIPs particularly facilitate [on-time graduation](#) for historically underrepresented student groups. By providing these supports, independent institutions efficiently build both competency and confidence in underprepared students.

Figure 1: College Preparedness of Graduating Students in Ohio
Percent of Ohio graduating class meeting ACT college readiness benchmarks



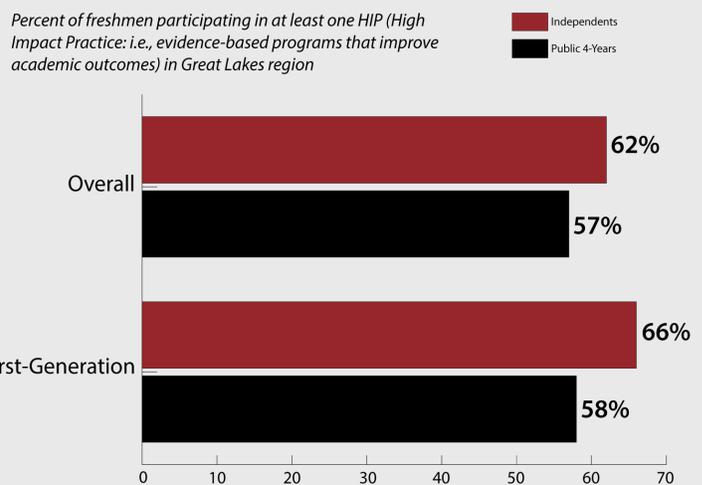
Note: All high school students attending public schools are required to take the ACT in their senior year.
Source: ACT. (October 2020). *US High School Graduating Class Trends*.

Figure 2: Percent of Freshmen Class with High School GPA Below 3.0 (Below B Average)



Note: Data from the National Postsecondary Aid Survey are reported every four years by region only (i.e., no state-level data are available). The presented data are from the freshmen class of 2016 in the Great Lakes region, comprised of Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin.
Source: National Postsecondary Aid Survey. Created August 2021 using NCES TrendStats.

Figure 3: High Impact Practice (HIP) Participation in Freshmen Year



Note: Data from the National Survey of Student Engagement are reported by region only (i.e., no state-level data are available).
Source: National Survey of Student Engagement. (2020). *HIP Participation*.