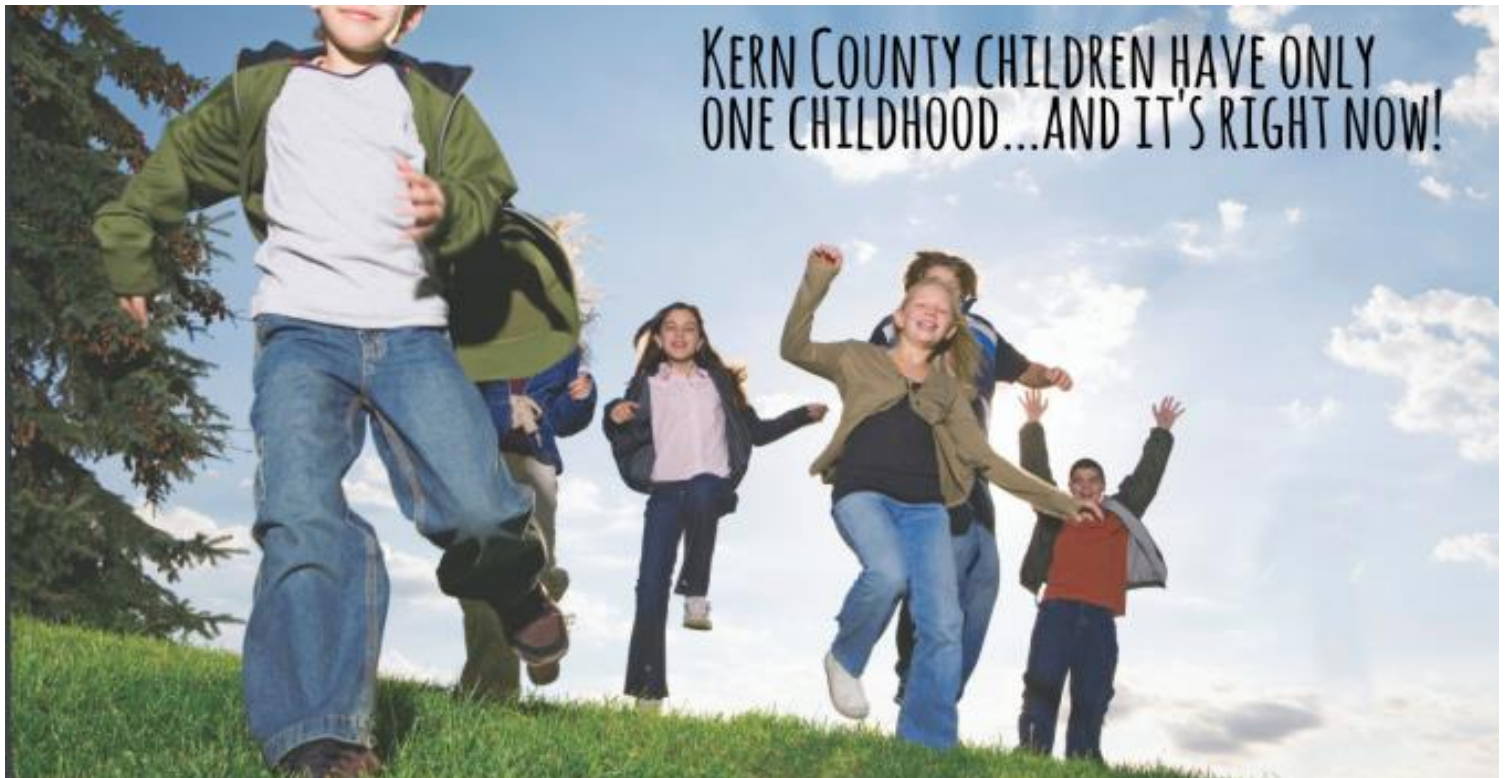




Kern County Network for Children

Our Children. Our Community.

Important Facts About Kern's Children 2018



For More Information Go To:

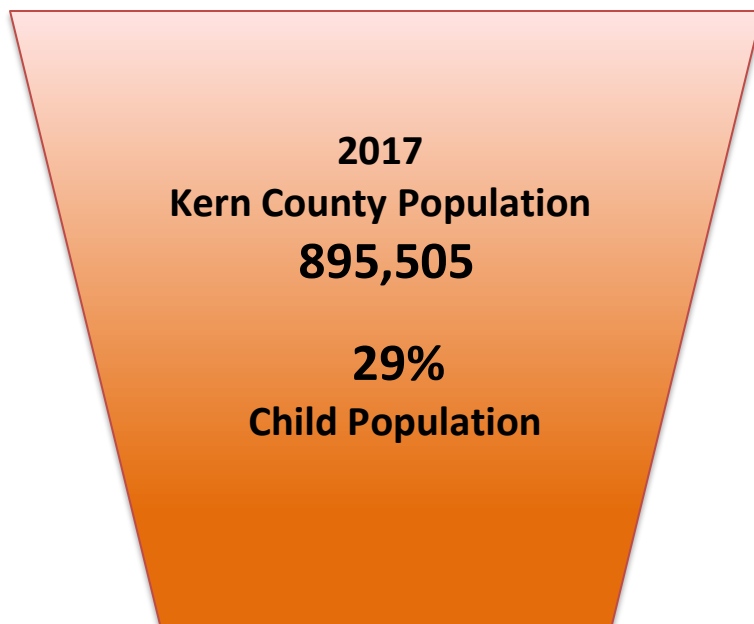
kidsdata.org

A Program of  Lucile Packard Foundation
for Children's Health

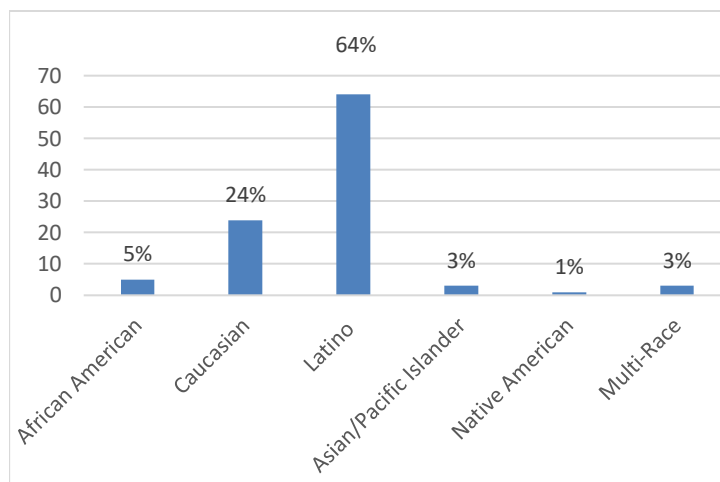
Kern County Children & Families

Tracking child population helps project a community's potential needs for education, child care, health care, and other services for children. The diversity of Kern County's population continues across a range of factors, including age, race/ethnicity, language, and family type. Understanding the demographic composition of the child population can guide investments that will best support Kern County children and youth in the future.

- **Kern County continues to be one of the youngest counties in the state.** Kern County's child population in 2017 was 258,992. Children represented 29% of the county population—the 2nd highest child population percentage in the state (behind Tulare County). 28% of Kern County children were under age 6 years old.
- **Latino children made up the largest racial/ethnic group among Kern's child population.** In 2017, 64% of Kern County children were Latino and 24% were Caucasian. According to 2017 population data, 5% of Kern's children were African American, 3% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 3% were multi-cultural and less than 1% were Native American.
- **A small percentage of Kern County children were born outside the United States.** In 2016, 5.4% of children under age 18 living in Kern County were born outside the United States.
- **Students in Kern County public schools are linguistically diverse.** During the 2016-17 academic year, 38,825 students (20% of total county enrollment) were English Learners – a total of 43 languages or dialects. Spanish was the most commonly-spoken language after English.
- **Nearly half of all Kern County households were raising children in 2016.** In Kern County, 46% of all Kern County households had children under age 18 years. This figure includes married-couple households 69% and 21% of children are in households were single mothers raising children and 10% were being raised by single fathers.
- **In 2016, 42% of Kern County children ages 0-17 lived with one or more foreign-born parents.**
- **According to 2016 estimates, 9,267 Kern County children lived in the care of their grandparents with their parents not in the home.**



**Child Population by Race/Ethnicity
Kern County, 2017**



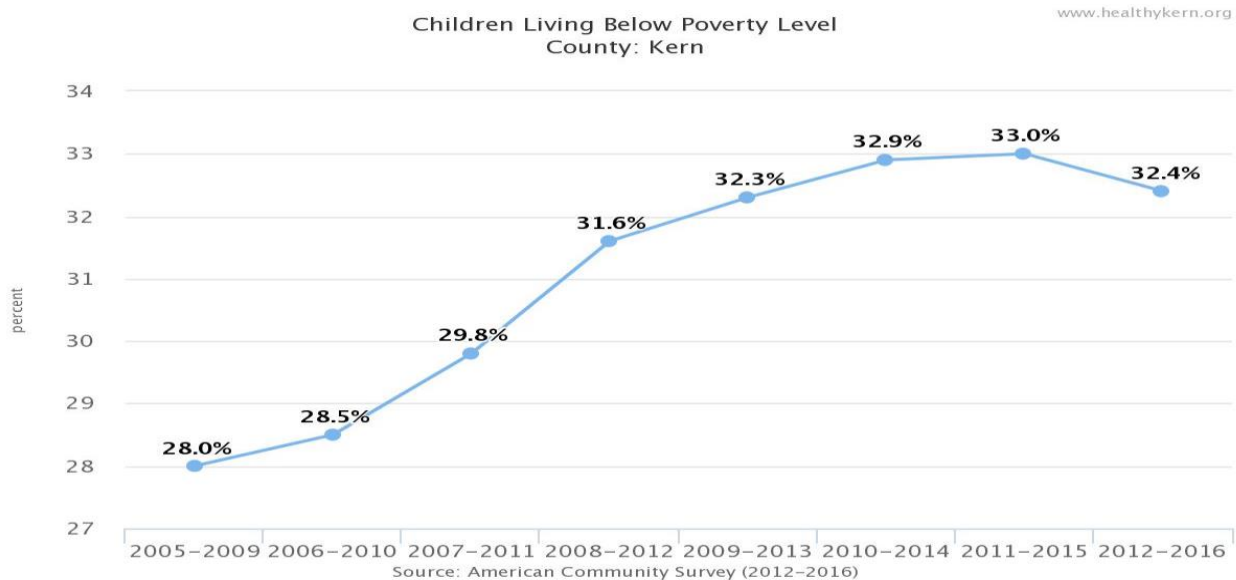
**Percent in Population Change in Kern:
210 to 2018
6.65%**



Children Live in Economically-Secure Families

Kern County has made some improvements in reducing rates of unemployment and poverty in recent years. However, too many Kern County families raising children struggle to earn the income needed to support basic family and personal needs. Poverty is a powerful factor in child development and a child's likelihood of living in poverty varies by age, race/ethnicity, and family structure.

- **Kern County's average annual unemployment rate decreased last year but remains above pre-recession levels.** Kern County's average annual unemployment decreased slightly from 10.23% in 2016 to 9.2% in 2017. Kern's 2017 unemployment rate is still higher than the County's 8.2% rate before the Great Recession.
- **Median family income in Kern County rose in 2016, but remains far below the state level.** The median income of Kern County families raising children increased to \$49,903 in 2016, but was 31% less than the state (\$67,739). Median family income varies by family structure.
- **One out of every four Kern families were poor, with single-mother families the most vulnerable.** In 2016, 34.6% of Kern County families were raising their children with incomes below the poverty line, compared to 21.9% in California.
- **Nearly one in three Kern children lived in poverty during 2016; 7th highest rate in state.** An estimated 81,230 children in Kern County lived below the poverty line during 2015, a rate of 32%. By comparison, California's 2016 child poverty rate was at 19.9%.
- **More than one out of every three Kern County children lived in households on Federal Aid Programs.** During 2015, 35% of Kern County children live in households with Supplemental Security Income (SSI), cash public assistance income, or Food Stamp/SNAP benefits, compared to 27% of California children. Rates of Kern County children living in households on Federal Aid were highest in single-mother households (58%).
- **More than half of Kern County renters were cost burdened.** In 2015, 52% of renters spent 30% or more of their income on housing costs in Kern County. According to 2017 estimates, Kern renters must earn \$16.23/ hour working a 40-hour week to afford a two-bedroom apartment. A minimum wage worker in Kern County must work 65 hours per week to afford rent for a two bedroom rental unit.
- **More than 131,852 Kern County students were eligible for free or reduced price meals at their schools.** During the 2016-17 school year, 7 out of 10 Kern County students participated in their school's free/reduced meal program. Kern had the 8th highest percentage of student eligible for this food assistance program among California counties during the 2016-17 academic school year.

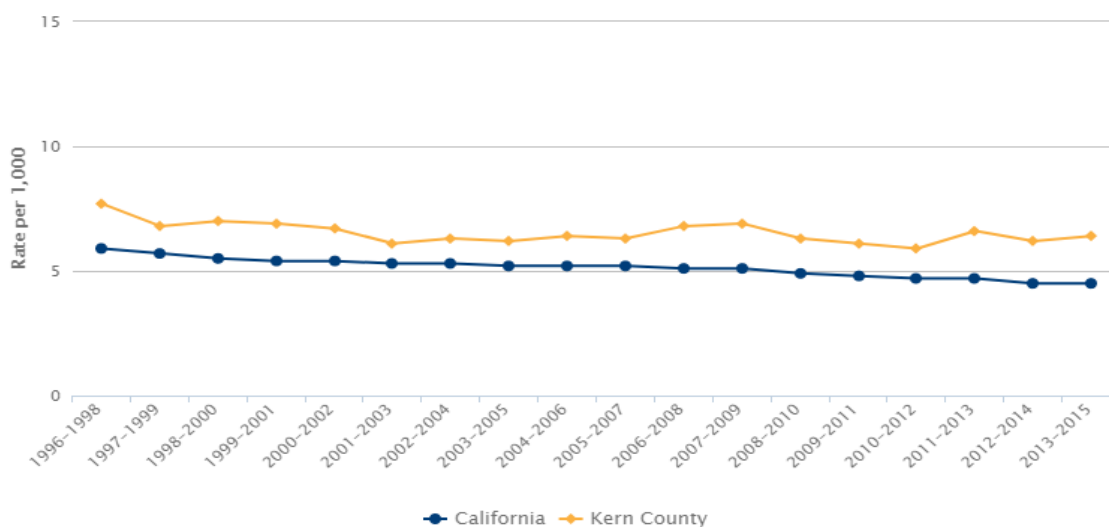


Children Have Healthy Beginnings

Children's health status is a valuable indicator of a community's overall well-being. Even before birth, the health status of a child can have long term consequences on his or her growth, safety and development.

- **More Kern County women received prenatal care in the first trimester.** The percentage of Kern County women receiving prenatal care in their first trimester increased slightly from the three year average 76.2% in 2013-15 to 76.8% in 2014-16. By comparison, California's 2014-16 rate was 83.3%.
- **A higher rate of babies were born with a low birth weight.** The percent of Kern County babies born with a low birth weight increased slightly from a three year average of 7.2% of all live births in 2013-15 to 7.3% in 2014-16. This important infant health indicator for Kern County was higher than California's overall average which was 6.8%.
- **Kern's three year average infant mortality rate increased from the previous year average.** Kern's three-year (2013-15) average infant mortality rate increased slightly to 6.8 infants per 1,000 live births from the 2012-14 average of 6.2. Kern's rate was higher than California's overall rate of 4.6 infants per 1,000 live births.
- **Sleep environment can mean life or death for Kern County infants.** In 2016, the Kern County Child Death Review Team reported there were 7 infant deaths that were linked to an unsafe sleeping environment.
- **The percentage of Kern kindergartners receiving all required immunizations continues to remain in line with California's rate.** In the 2016-17 school year, 95% of Kern County kindergartners entered school with all required immunizations. The California average was 95.6%.
- **9 out of every 10 Kern children had health insurance.** In 2016, 97.7% of Kern's children under age 18 had health insurance, a figure higher than the State rate of 96.1%.
- **Just 56% of Kern County students in grade seven scored at the highest levels of physical fitness, called the Healthy Fitness Zone in the 2016-17 school year.** This represents levels of fitness that offer protection against diseases resulting from sedentary living.

Infant Mortality Rate: 1996-1998 to 2013-2015



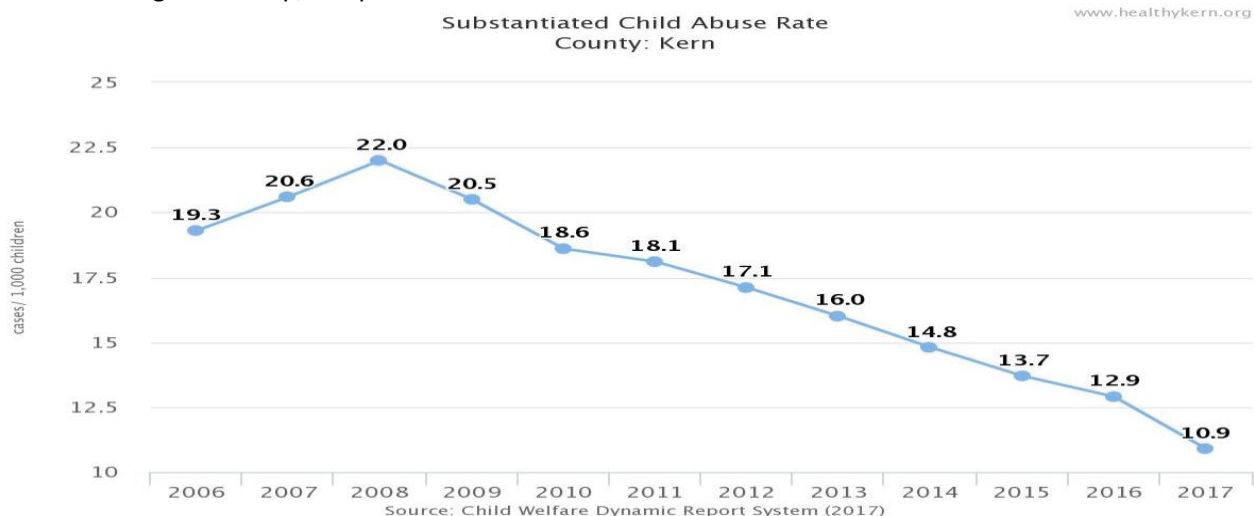
Source: California Department of Public Health

Definition: Number of deaths among children under age 1 per 1,000 live births (e.g., in 2013-2015, there were 4.5 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in California).

Children Live in Safe and Stable Families

Safety is a critical part of a child's healthy growth and development. Children who grow up in safe and stable homes are more likely to be healthy, successful in school, and successful in life. Children who face challenges in their home environments such as abuse, neglect, and family violence are more likely to leave school early, become part of the criminal justice system, and in need of public assistance as adults.

- **During 2017, 49 children each day were referred to CPS with allegations of child abuse and neglect in Kern County.** Kern County recorded allegations of abuse and neglect for 17,928 children in 2017, a rate of 70.3 children per 1,000 children, compared to California's rate of 54.1 children.
- **Kern's substantiated abuse/neglect rate falls for 9th straight year, however, an average of 8 Kern County children were victims of maltreatment each day during 2017.** In 2017, 2,779 children, ages 0-17, were victims of abuse or neglect in Kern County. Kern's substantiated child maltreatment rate fell to 12.9 per 1,000 children in 2016, to 10.9 in 2017. Despite its sustained improvement, Kern's substantiated child abuse/neglect rate remains well above the California's rate of 7.5 per 1,000 children.
- **As in prior years, neglect is still the most common form of maltreatment in Kern County. Among substantiated victims, 90% were neglected - meaning a caretaker failed to provide for the child's basic needs, 3% were physically abused, 2% were sexually abused, and 5% in several other categories.**
- **Children of all ages experience abuse and neglect, but the youngest children are the most vulnerable.** In 2017, 522 infants were the victims of child abuse or neglect in Kern County, a rate of 38.0 per 1,000 infants. When compared to other race/ethnic groups, African-American children experienced the highest rate of child maltreatment in Kern County with 42.2 per 1,000 African-American children.
- **The highest rate of fatal child abuse/neglect continue to be among the youngest children in Kern County.** In 2016, 3 Kern County children died, 1 nearly died, and 8 suffered severe injuries as result of abuse and/or neglect. All three Kern County children who died in 2016 from abuse were young children under age 3 years.
- **The rate of Kern County children entering foster care due to abuse or neglect decreased from previous year.** During 2017, 873 children were removed from their family home and placed in an out-of-home placement in order to ensure child safety. The rate of children entering foster care was 3.4 per 1,000 children in 2017, a decrease from the previous year's 3.7 per 1,000.
- **Number of Kern County children and youth living in foster care decreased in 2017.** The number of children and youth in foster care decreased by 29 children from 2016, to 1,602 in 2017.
- **Fewer Kern children who exited the Kern County foster care system re-enter into foster care after a year.** Of all Kern County children exited from foster care during 2015, 86.9% did not re-enter foster care 12 months from the date of the earliest discharge to reunification or guardianship, compared to 88.6% statewide.



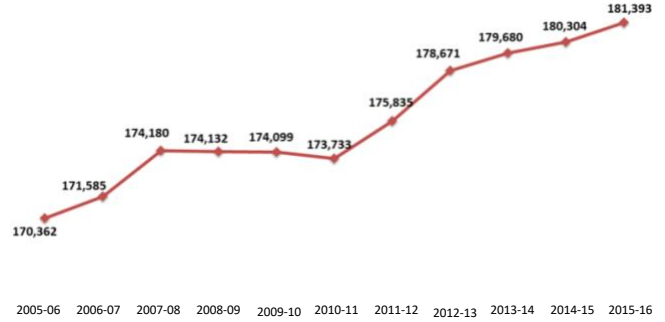
Students Succeed in School

Education is one of the best opportunities a community has to positively impact a child's life into adulthood. Most educational achievement indicators are closely linked with college readiness and economic advancement. Education indicators for Kern County students have improved, however, certain segments of the county's student population excel while others struggle.

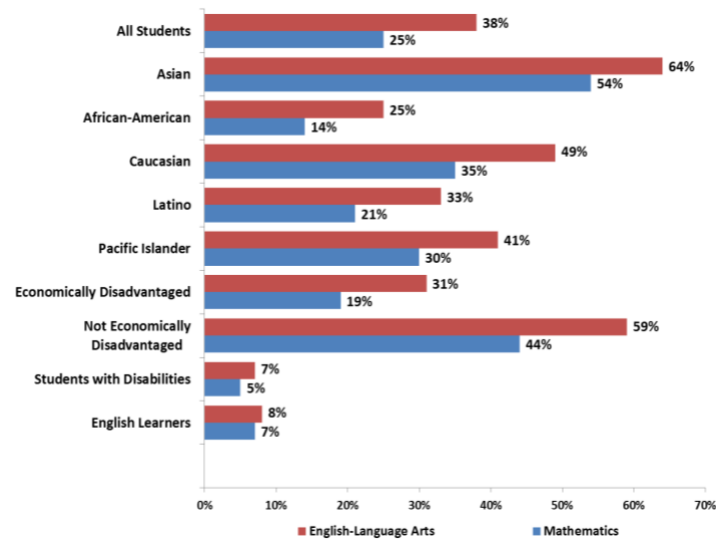
Source: California Department of Education

- **Kern's K-12 public school enrollment hit an all-time high during the 2016-17 academic year.** Public school enrollment countywide was 1,885,236 students in the 2016-17 school year. The County's 264 public schools enrolled 3,843 more students than the previous year's count.
- **Nearly three-fourths of Kern's K-12 public school enrollment were considered economically disadvantaged.** During the 2015-16 school year, 73% of Kern students were considered economically disadvantaged. These students showed lower rates of academic performance and graduation.
- **Kern County California Assessment of Student Performance & Progress Scores on the rise.** Across all grades, 38% of Kern County students in 2016, compared to 33% in 2015, met or exceeded the English language arts/literacy standard and 25% met or exceeded the mathematics standard compared to California's overall rates of 49% and 37%, respectively. As with past standardized tests, sharp differences emerged in county scores of students from low-income families, English learners, Special Education students, and African-American and Latino students compared to other students.
- **More Kern County students graduating on time; fewer dropping out.** Kern County is seeing sustained improvement in its high school graduation and dropout rates. Kern's graduation rate for the 2015-16 school year was 84.0%, which is up from 82.5% in 2014-15. For the 2nd consecutive year, Kern County's graduation rate exceeded the statewide rate 83.2%. From 2015-2016 the dropout rate decreased for Kern students from 11.0% to 10.8% with the State average being 9.7%. The County dropout rate has improved for 5th straight year.
- **Despite improvement, some student populations continue to experience above average dropout rates.** Kern County students with the highest dropout rates included foster youth students 33.3%, special education students 23.2%, African-American students 17.3%, English Learner students 17.1%, and other 9.1%.
- **1 out of every 3 Kern County high school graduates met entrance requirements for UC/CSU systems last year.** In the 2015-16 school year, 33.0% of students graduated with all "A-G" classes completed, a figure higher than the previous school year rate of 30.7%. In comparison, 45.4% of students graduated with UC/CSU entrance requirements statewide.

**Public School Enrollment
Kern County, 2005-06 – 2015-16**



**Students (Grades 3-11) Meeting/Exceeding Grade Level Standard on CAASPP English Language Arts & Math
Kern County, 2016**



**High School Graduation & Dropout Rates
Kern County, 2009-10 – 2015-16**

For more information go to: