



NATIONAL  
FFA ORGANIZATION

PURDUE  
UNIVERSITY

## NATIONAL FFA ORGANIZATION AND PURDUE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COLLABORATION

# Exploring the Employability Skills and Academic Success of the National FFA Membership

A collaborative study between the National FFA Organization and Purdue University<sup>1</sup> in 2018-19 explored the relationship between involvement in FFA and college and career readiness, representing the largest sample of FFA members to date in all existing published research on FFA members.

### KEY POINTS

The results of this study with Purdue University indicate that FFA members are high achievers in the classroom and in terms of their future careers.

- Involvement in FFA is correlated with academic success.
- Involvement in FFA is correlated with higher career readiness.
- FFA members have specific plans for after high school.
- FFA members have the desire to stay involved in agriculture as they go into their careers.

### TESTING SCORES

	National Average	FFA Members
ACT	20.8	23.5
SAT	1068	1152

### Involvement in FFA is correlated with academic success.

The three-component model of school-based agricultural education revolves around the integral relationship between classroom instruction, work-based learning through a supervised agricultural experience program, and membership in FFA. FFA does not exist without classroom instruction and school-based agriculture programs, in which student academic success is of high importance. This study provided the first baseline of FFA members' academic success and revealed that FFA members possess academic scores that are higher than the national average. FFA members show higher ACT and SAT scores on average than the 2018 high school graduating class average. FFA members have a collective average ACT score of 23.5, compared to the national average of 20.8. FFA members have a collective average SAT score of 1152, compared to the national average of 1068. Additionally, the average high school grade point average of FFA members is a 3.69 out of 4.0 on an unweighted grade point average scale, which also means that 96 percent of members represented in this study are either A or B students.

### Involvement with FFA is correlated with higher perceptions of career readiness.

FFA prepares members for career success through agricultural education by ensuring that members are career-ready when they graduate from high school. Results of the study conducted in collaboration with Purdue University reveal that FFA members possess skills and competencies typically associated with career readiness. FFA members scored a 73.1 out of 90 on a scale<sup>2</sup> measuring their communication skills, decision-making skills, skills in getting along with others, learning skills, management skills, skills in understanding themselves and skills working with groups. On an assessment<sup>3</sup> measuring their engagement, cognitive maturity, and innovativeness, FFA members scored a 109.8 out of 130. FFA members assigned themselves an average score of 85.2 out of 100 on a scale<sup>4</sup> measuring their ability to communicate in a variety of settings, including in public, a meeting, a group, a dyad, and with acquaintances, strangers, and friends. These results support the idea that FFA members possess the competencies that are critical in today's workforce.

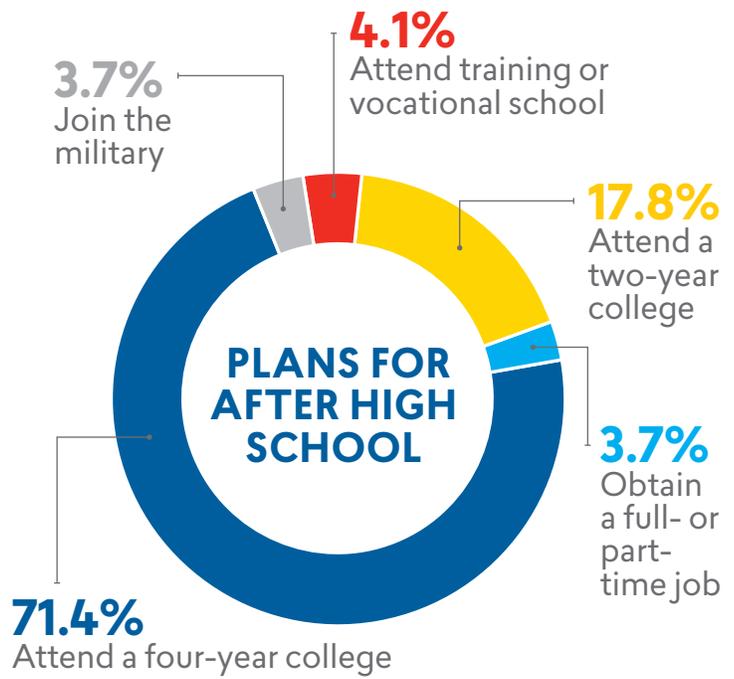
## FFA members have specific plans for after high school.

Ninety-three percent of the FFA members surveyed plan to continue their education in some way after high school. Seventy-one percent plan to attend a four-year college after high school, while 18 percent plan to attend a two-year college. Four percent plan to attend a training or vocational school, 4 percent plan to join the military, and 3 percent plan to obtain a full-time or part-time job.

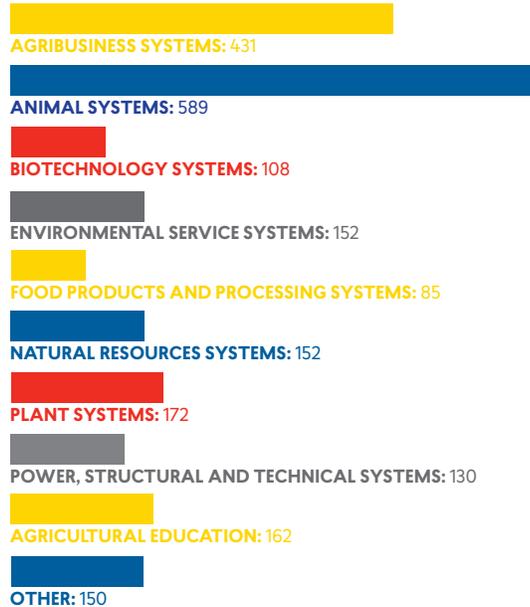
## FFA members have the desire to stay involved in agriculture as they go into their careers.

Sixty-seven percent of FFA members surveyed in the study indicated that their plans would include agriculture. Among the most popular Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (AFNR) career focus areas were animal systems and agribusiness systems, closely followed by plant systems; agricultural education; environmental service systems; natural resource systems; power structural and technical systems; biotechnology systems; and food products and processing systems.

FFA members demonstrated interest in all AFNR career focus areas, while some indicated interest in other agriculturally related careers not represented by one of the pathways. This suggests creativity and innovativeness on behalf of FFA members who plan to make a career for themselves within the evolving field of agriculture.



## AGRICULTURE CAREER FOCUS AREAS



### THE FFA VISION

FFA is growing the next generation of leaders who will change the world.

### THE FFA MISSION

FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

### THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MISSION

Agricultural education prepares students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems.

The National FFA Organization is a resource and support organization that does not select, control, or supervise state association, local chapter or individual member activities. Educational materials are developed by FFA in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education as a service to state and local agricultural education agencies.

The National FFA Organization affirms its belief in the value of all human beings and seeks diversity in its membership, leadership and staff as an equal opportunity employer.

© NATIONAL FFA ORGANIZATION 2019 The letters "FFA," the FFA emblem, Future Farmers of America and Forever Blue are registered trademarks of the National FFA Organization and cannot be used without permission.

1 Copeland, Britt A. (2019). *Exploring the employability skills and academic success of the National FFA membership*. Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.

2 Youth Leadership Life Skills Development Scale (Seevers, Dormody & Clason, 1995).

3 EMI: Critical Thinking Disposition Assessment (Ricketts & Rudd, 2005).

4 Self-Perceived Communication Competence Scale (Tevon, Richmond, McCroskey & McCroskey, 2010).