

# 2009

# Regional

# Report Card



United Way  
of Danville -  
Pittsylvania County



Future of the Piedmont Foundation

A Joint Publication of the Danville Regional Foundation, United Way of Danville-Pittsylvania County, and the Future of the Piedmont Foundation, compiled by Tyler Laughinghouse and Carlethia Smith.

*The following report presents detailed information on the Dan River Region's cultural and economic trajectory in five key dimensions of community status. Each dimension is presented separately with descriptions of statistical indicators, source of information, importance of assessment criterion, yearly progress statements, and general recommendations. Where available, the data provides findings for Danville City, Pittsylvania County, Virginia; and Caswell County, North Carolina. This report is a supplement to the summary report card.*

## *Regional Report Card*

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### **Background and Purpose**

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Three organizations—Future of the Piedmont Foundation, United Way of Danville & Pittsylvania County, and Danville Regional Foundation—share a commitment to improving the region in ways that will benefit all. The three also believe we need the clearest picture of how we are doing and where we need more progress.

So together we have created the 2009 Regional Report Card. We plan to annually develop and share a similar report. The Regional Report Card uses data collected by others—federal, state, and local governments. We have provided the most recent data available as of December 15, 2009 and, whenever possible, comparable data from five years earlier. There are 21 variables reported in this report. We report on each variable at the Danville, Pittsylvania County, and Virginia levels. We also show the direction of the trend at a combined level--positive, negative or inconclusive.

We hope that people and institutions throughout this region will use this information to better understand changes occurring, target opportunities for additional investments of time and energy, and to change the conversations in our region to focus on how we make the Region a better place for all. This data is intended to achieve the following:

Introduce the collaborative, research-based community report card for the Dan River Region to our community, targeting both a broad reach and certain specific target audiences for the following purposes:

1. Provide a tool for keeping critical community issues top-of-mind.
2. Provide a catalyst for community leaders, organizations, etc. to set action plans in motion around improving quality of life for our region.
3. Provide baseline data that will facilitate strategy planning, program design, and assessment of progress toward long-term community goals.

Our values:

1. Meaningful data that can lead to action strategies
2. Face Value – Not Judgmental or Editorial
3. Credibility and Accuracy
4. Ability to track long-term trends (sustainable data)

## *Regional Report Card*

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### **Executive Summary**

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Easily accessible and up-to-date statistical information for the Dan River Region regarding the regional and state-wide trends in educational quality, financial stability, economic vitality, health status, and civic capacity is provided in this report card. It is a tool for the widespread dissemination of information, so the region's citizens can access information concerning regional trends for community development.

**The region's educational and civic capacities show incremental progress toward achieving states' averages. In the assessed educational and civic sectors, percentages have positively increased. While the region has yet to reach state averages, the trajectory of these two areas remains on track. With such movement forward, an increasing regional competitiveness becomes imminent. One caveat exists, however, with regard to Danville's early childhood scholastic preparedness; because Danville remains in the bottom percentile of the state assessment, ranking 125 out of 129.**

While educational quality and civic capacity have positively increased, this report cannot conclusively determine the influential scope of these sectors. Specifically, methods used in this report fail to review non-traditional aspects of educational quality. For example, the report card does not measure the educational system's ability to foster innovation nor meet the occupational demands of the region. Thus, the report may unintentionally present an overly positive depiction of the region's educational system.

**With regard to civic capacity, the quality of non-profits has been measured in terms of number of organizations and their respective revenues. While these are adequate assessment criteria, the impact of non-profits on the region cannot be conclusively determined from these static figures. The report card does not capture volunteer hours or faith-based activities in the region. As a result, the quality of non-profit organizations may actually be higher than presented in the report. Because of these factors, subsequent reviews of the region should employ more holistic forms of assessment.**

From the gathered data, the Dan River Region currently remains below the state average in numerous assessments. Furthermore, during the assessment period, the region has not made significant progress in certain assessment areas. While achieving the state average remains a long-term goal, yearly progress in each domain remains paramount to community-wide transformation. Of particular importance, the report creators found differences between Danville and Pittsylvania County in a number of assessments. As a result, the region's leadership should seek to increase cooperation and communication to promote regional progress of the city and the county toward achieving the state average within the same time frame.

**For this assessment period, community-wide health status remains in contrast with regional transformation. Specifically, obesity rates remain higher than the state average, infant mortality percentages of both Danville and Pittsylvania County remain unstable and unpredictable, incidence of heart attacks and strokes have failed to significantly decrease, and teen pregnancy rates remain above the state average. Because health regionally is negative in these specific areas, the region's leaders should direct interventions at improving residents' health. Industries evaluate a community's health status in choosing an area in which to relocate, thus health status remains instrumental in the cultivation of a competitive advantage.**

Additionally, the economic vitality of the region remains a point of concern. The region's weekly wages, unemployment rates, and non-dependent population distribution place the region at odds with state averages, lowering the possibility of creating a self-sustaining community. Furthermore, the economic vitality of the region inevitably affects the financial stability of the area. While the increasing regional stability deserves attention, this report recommends interventional strategies that target improving regional economic conditions.

### ***Mission***

To provide the community with the most up-to-date statistical information regarding the region's economic and cultural trajectory.

### ***Goal***

Design a report card that employs easily discernible and highly accurate information in five key dimensions of community status. The information provided in the Report Card should be accessible to the general public and should originate from continuously updated sources.

### ***Recommendations***

This report advocates four recommendations for future community development.

- 1. The leaders of the Dan River Region should focus intervention efforts on increasing both the health status and economic vitality of the region, because these two areas dramatically impact community development.** Though judged separately on this report card, these two sectors are often interdependent. Thus, intervention strategies should simultaneously incorporate both regional aspects.
- 2. Cross-regional communication should be established and maintained, so the region can progress at equal intervals across all assessments.** Given the discrepancies between Danville and Pittsylvania County on a number of researched criteria, the region currently displays less than advantageous communicative relationships.

3. **Designers of subsequent Report Cards should investigate alternative means to assess the region’s educational quality and civic capacity.** While the investigated aspects provide empirically valid and imperative information, the inherently transformative nature of these sectors cannot be conclusively determined. Thus, it is the opinion of the writers of this report that the region’s education system may show less influence when assessed by non-tradition measures of success. Furthermore, the civic capacity may be more influential than presented in this report.
4. **Future community reports should compare the region’s trend with similar geographic areas.** While comparing to the state average is informative, the most applicable assessments may be ascertained from comparing the Dan River Region to localities with similar economic situations. Because an already existing community-wide report card is lacking, this report compared the region to the state average as a means to establish an initial assessment database. Future report cards should build upon this framework and incorporate other regions of interest.

### ***Impact***

Potential impacts from the Report Card remain diverse. Specifically, the Report Card can serve as a point of collective information dissemination by which community leaders, organizers, and citizens can remain informed concerning regional trends in community development. Furthermore, annual progress reports can relay information regarding the efficacy of various interventions, allowing community organizers to reorient strategies to appropriately meet the region’s demands. Finally, the production of a yearly report card can impart imperative information to citizens, allowing citizens to become involved in the progress of their community.

## ***Danville-Pittsylvania County Regional Report Card***

In the following sections, detailed information is provided for five key dimensions of community status. Each dimension is presented separately with descriptions of statistical indicators, source of information, importance of assessment criterion, yearly progress statements, and general recommendations. For an easily accessible profile of the Dan River Region, see <http://virginiascan.yesvirginia.org/Admin/CommunityProfiles/Profiles/CityCounty51590.pdf>.

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### **Educational Quality**

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In this section, this report card provides statistical information regarding the educational quality for the City of Danville, Virginia, and the surrounding Pittsylvania County. The comprehensive community educational quality is assessed over a two-year period from trends in P.A.L.S. scores, higher educational attainment levels, third-grade reading proficiency, high school drop-out rates, eighth-grade math scores, and rates of on-time high school graduation.

***Findings***—Educational quality in the Dan River Region has made incremental progress toward achieving state-wide competitiveness. In the assessed period, the community’s level of

educational attainment has risen; third-grade reading proficiency has remained stable; high-school dropout rates have decreased; and eighth grade math abilities have shown improvement. While educational quality has improved, the region remains below the average state levels of achievement. Importantly, Danville remains particularly behind in early childhood scholastic readiness, ranking 125 of 129 regions statewide.

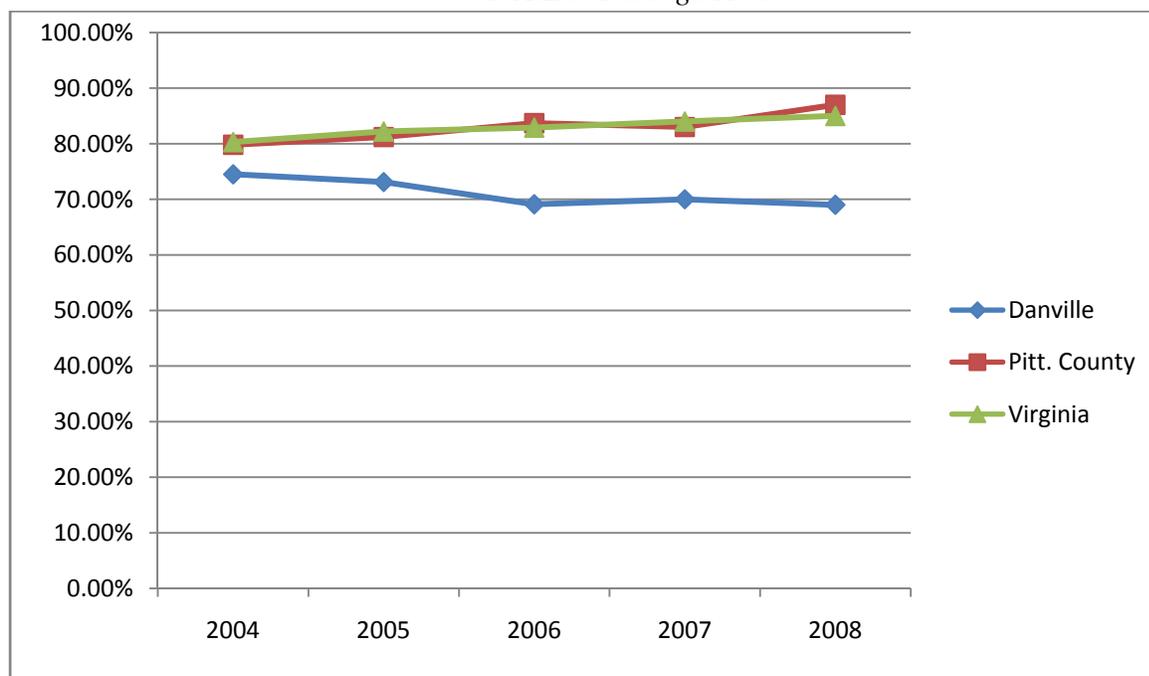
***Recommendations***—The region’s leadership should continue interventional strategies in pursuit of achieving the state average. In particular, Danville should focus interventional strategies on increasing early childhood scholastic preparedness. Beyond these new strategies, subsequent regional assessments should employ more holistic measures of success to fully judge the scope of the educational system. Possible dimensions should include the ability of the educational system to adequately prepare students for higher education along with its ability to meet and foster occupational demands.

In the following section, a detailed description of the analysis is provided. Any U.S. Census data maintains “estimation” classification.

### ***P.A.L.S. Assessment***

#### **Description of Indicator**

The following figures were obtained from the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for Kindergarten children. The PALS-K assessment measures literacy skills before matriculation into kindergarten. The following rates identify the percentage of students who were identified as needing assistance upon matriculation, because these students were not adequately prepared to enter the public school system. The PALS-K assessment is given annually to each school district in Virginia.

*P.A.L.S. Passage Rate*

### **Why is the PASL-K important?**

These measurements inform the school system's leaders of potential challenges, identify at-risk children, and provide community feedback on early childhood intervention strategies. Early childhood educational offerings impact future academic success and engagement in the education system. In fact, 80 percent (80%) of students who enter school significantly behind their peers experience negative educational outcomes, including dropping out, antisocial behavior, and increased contact with the juvenile justice department.<sup>1</sup> Ensuring the readiness of the region's children will inevitably improve the overall school system's performance on subsequent SOLs and raise educational attainment levels.

### **How is the region performing presently?**

In the assessed period, the PALS-K results displayed a decrease in prepared children in the Danville Public Schools district, falling from 74.5 percent to 69 percent from the previous assessment. However, over the same period, students in the Pittsylvania County school district became better prepared with successfully prepared children reaching 87 percent. Concurrently, the state's unprepared levels dropped from 16 percent to 15 percent. As a result, DPS's average remains double the state average, or ranked as 125 out of the 129 assessed regions in Virginia, while PCS's children remain better prepared for kindergarten than the state average.

Source: *KidsCount* Data Center

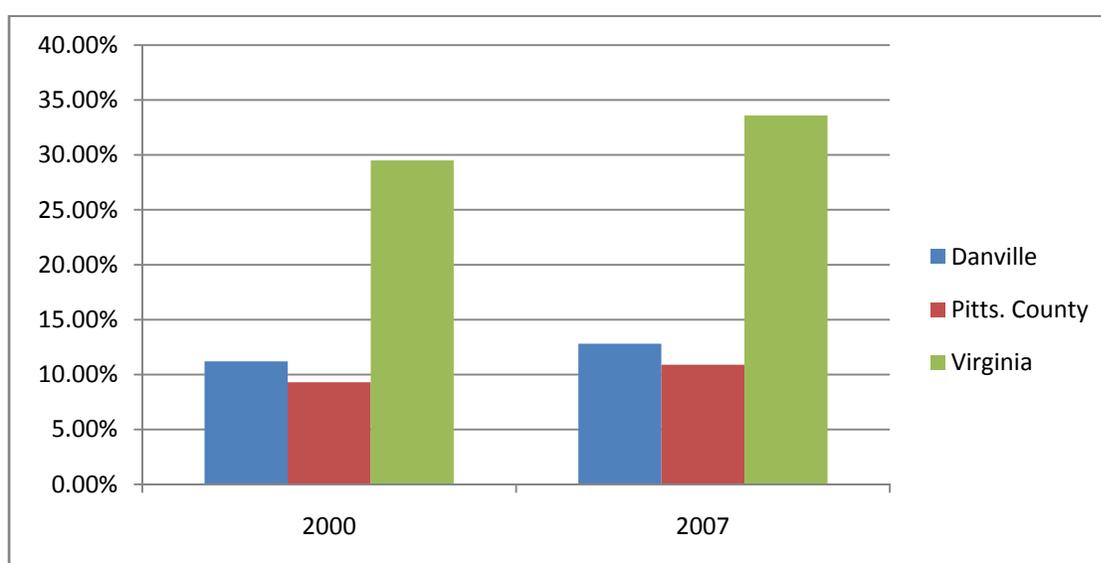
<sup>1</sup> [http://www.vakids.org/pubs/Archives/ECE/pals\\_k\\_final.pdf](http://www.vakids.org/pubs/Archives/ECE/pals_k_final.pdf)

## *Higher Education Attainment*

### **Description of Indicator**

Higher educational attainment data was acquired from the *U.S. Census*. Higher educational attainment was defined as achieving at least a bachelor's degree. Danville's figures were obtained from the *Discover Danville* database.<sup>2</sup> Virginia data was obtained from <http://vaperforms.virginia.gov/indicators/education/edAttainment.php>. Pittsylvania estimates are the 2008 numbers. The 2008 Pittsylvania County statistics were obtained from the Economic Development Intelligence System; they are projected estimates.

### *Higher Educational Attainment – Bachelor's Degree (% of total populations)*



### **Why is higher educational attainment important?**

Higher educational attainment remains impactful for both individuals and communities. For individuals higher education increases the breadth of employment options while increasing the propensity for higher economic earnings. For communities an increased average of educational attainment raises the potential tax revenues. Furthermore, higher educational attainment levels may attract more diverse businesses. Additionally, higher educational achievements impact the cultural conceptions of the region.

### **How are we doing?**

Over the assessed period, community-wide educational attainment levels rose for both Danville and Pittsylvania County. Specifically, Danville's average increased from 11.2 percent to 12.8 percent; Pittsylvania County's percentage rose from 9.3 percent to 10.9 percent. Concurrently,

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.discoverdanville.com/data.asp?questions=2186&target=articles>

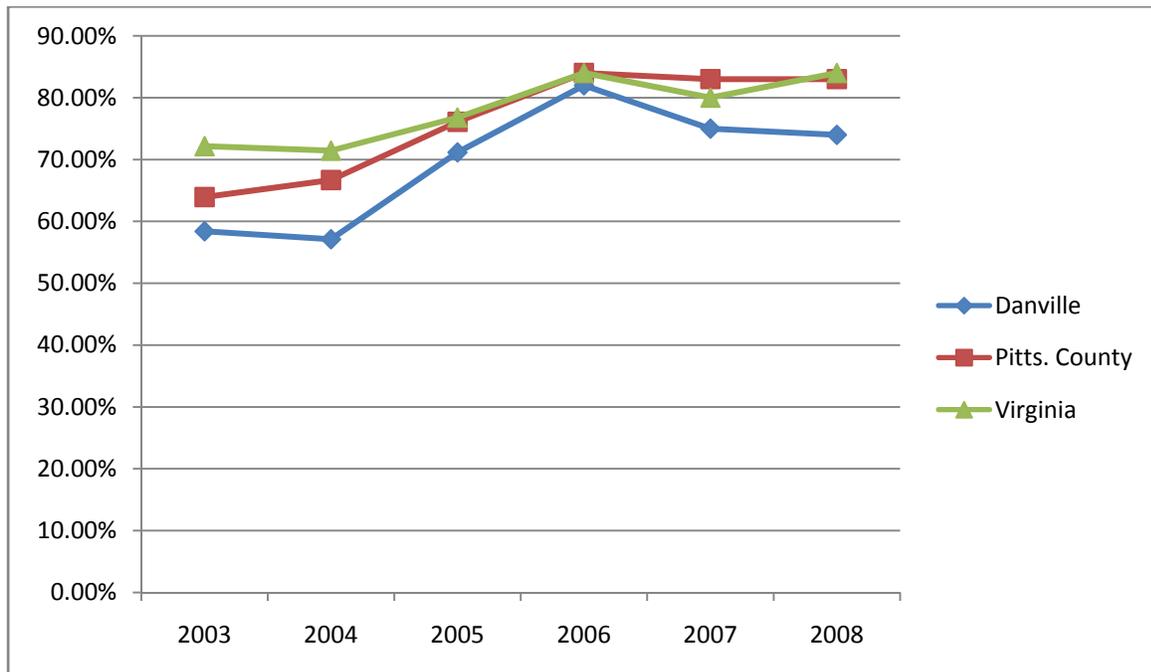
the state average increased from 29.5 percent to 33.6 percent. Despite increases, both areas remain below the state average; additionally, they rose at slower rates as compared to the state's average increase.

### *Third-Grade Reading Proficiency*

#### **Description of Indicator**

Third-grade reading proficiency was determined by the percentage of passing scores on the Standard of Learning examination in Reading for both Danville Public Schools and Pittsylvania County School district. The SOLs are administered annually to third grade students in every public school district. The SOLs remain an applicable measurement of reading proficiency, because these tests meet federal reporting standards delineated in the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

*Third-Grade Reading Proficiency*



Source: Virginia Department of Education

[https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/datareports/assess\\_test\\_result.do](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/datareports/assess_test_result.do)

2003-2005 data: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/src/SOLassessments.shtml>

**Why is third-grade reading proficiency important?**

Third-grade reading levels predict future academic success. Specifically, third-grade reading levels correlate with on-time graduation rates and higher educational attainment. Furthermore, third-grade reading levels predict propensity for incarceration and/or contact with the criminal justice system. As a result, numerous school districts across the county are working toward increased reading performance by third grade students.<sup>3</sup>

**How are we doing?**

Over the assessed period, third-grade reading proficiency for Danville Public Schools has increased from 58.24 percent to 80 percent. Concurrently, the average reading proficiency for Pittsylvania County Schools increased from 63.92 percent to 83.0 percent. Over the assessed period, the state average passage percent has risen from 72.17 percent to 84 percent. As a result, DPS and Pittsylvania County have increased at greater intervals than the state's average. Despite this increase, DPS remains behind the state average by eight percentage points while Pittsylvania County maintains a similar trajectory with the state's average.

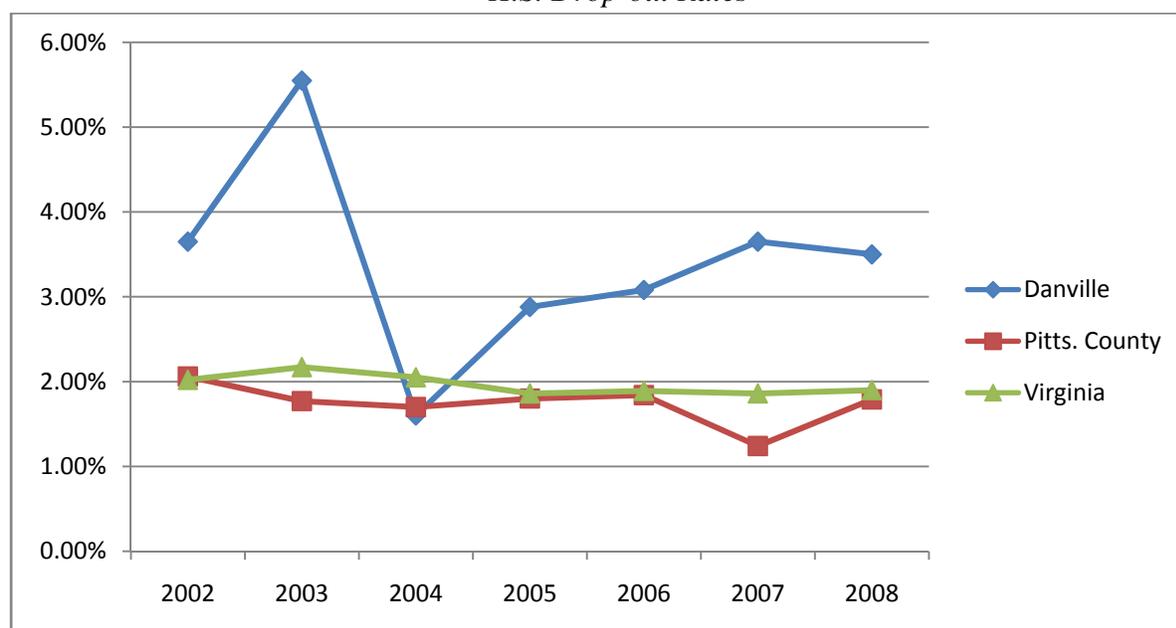
### *High School Drop-out Rates*

**Description of Indicator**

High school dropout rates were obtained from the Virginia Department of Education statistical database. These rates are total annual dropout percentages; however, these rates are not from cohort data. For specific details regarding what constitutes “dropping out” please see [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/src/ontime\\_grad\\_rate/otgr\\_faq.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/src/ontime_grad_rate/otgr_faq.pdf)

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<sup>3</sup><http://www.k12.wa.us/earlylearning/earlylearningtoolkit/developingstrategies/thirdgradereadinggoal.pdf>

*H.S. Drop-out Rates*

### **Why are high school dropout rates important?**

High school dropout rates inevitably affect the workforce capacity of the region. Research indicates a statistically significant effect upon future economic earnings of both individuals and the entire community for residents lacking a high school diploma. Individuals routinely earn \$300,000 less in their lifetime incomes, have an 8 percent increased propensity for contact with the criminal justice system, and are twice as likely to experience poverty. Additionally, annual tax revenue from dropouts remains significantly lower in communities with lower educational attainment levels.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, dropout rates reflect the condition of the educational system in a specific community. Specifically, research explains dropout rates as personal beliefs of impracticality associated with the educational offerings in a specific area. The school system's leaders must address students' perceptions of educational curricula relative to the students' present and future life pursuits. They must provide practical applications to students who need to be actively involved educationally instead of passively attentive. Beyond the need for practical applications aimed at luring students into active educational attainment, attention must be focused on the climbing dropout rates as a warning of failure of the community's educational system to address an area's workforce needs.<sup>5</sup>

Source: Virginia Department of Education: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Publications/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122455013168452477.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.civcenterprises.net/pdfs/thesilentepidemic3-06.pdf>

### How are we doing?

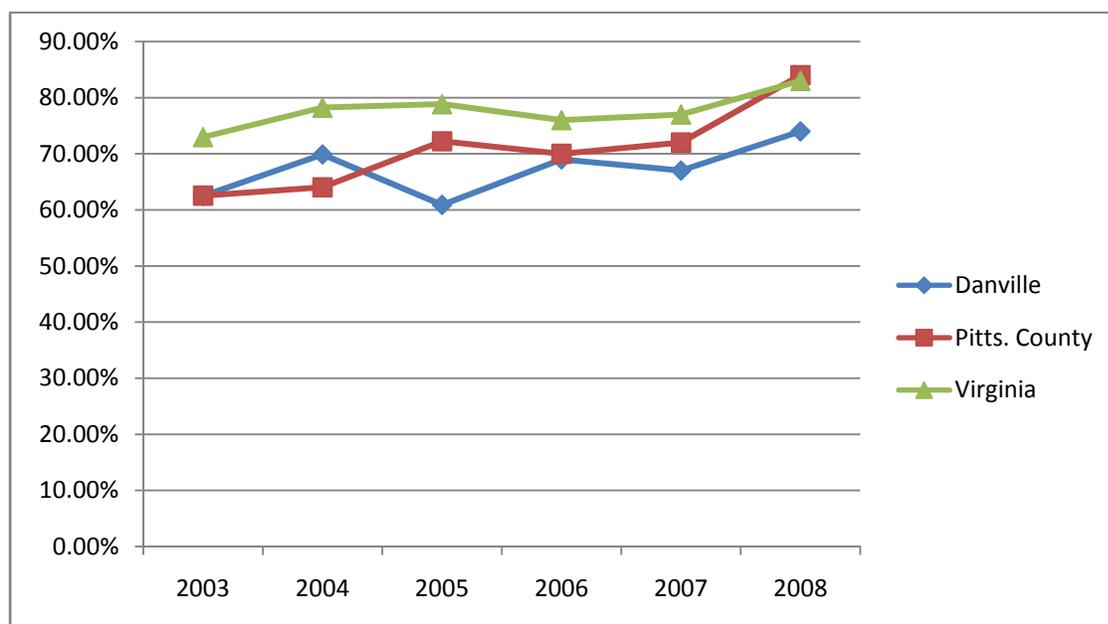
Over the assessed period, high school dropout rates for the Danville Public Schools remained unpredictable. However, from 2002 to 2008, the rate fell from 3.65 percent to 3.5 percent or from 128 to 108 students. Over the same period, the Pittsylvania County Schools reported a slight decrease in dropout rates from 2.06 percent to 1.79 percent, totaling 80 dropouts in 2008. Concurrently, Virginia experienced a decrease in dropout rate, falling from 2.17 percent to 1.90 percent. Despite district fluctuations, DPS maintained higher dropout rates as compared to the state average, while PCS remained below the state average in 2008.

## *Eighth Grade Math Ability*

### Description of Indicator

Eighth grade math ability was determined from passage rates of the Virginia SOL tests. These tests maintain validity, because these tests meet the standards delineated in the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

*S.O.L. Passage Rates (% of total students)*



Source: [https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/datareports/assess\\_test\\_result.do](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/datareports/assess_test_result.do)

### Why is math ability important?

Math ability maintains predictive value for future economic earnings as well as occupational sector employment. Specifically, increased math abilities in high school are correlated with higher economic earnings. Furthermore, increased math abilities in high school predict

propensity for higher educational attainment. Among college students, high school math abilities are also predictive in graduate educational attainment with higher math proficiency correlated with increased propensity to pursue a post-bachelor's degree. Furthermore, math abilities, as measured in high school, are predictive of employment type, with increased math proficiency correlated with higher paying jobs and job security.<sup>6</sup> As a result, eighth-grade math abilities remain imperative to the future cultivation of a productive and economically sustainable workforce in the Dan River Region.

### **How are we doing?**

Over the assessment period, the math scores for the DPS rose from 62.46 percent to 74 percent passage rates. Concurrently, PCS raised its passage rate from 62.53 percent to 84 percent. Over the same period, the state's average increased from 72.97 percent to 83 percent. Thus, while both districts made improvements, only PCS remains above the state average. In contrast, DPS remains deficient in relation to the state average by nine percentage points (9%). Importantly, both districts maintained similar starting points in 2003; however, PCS has made more progress as compared to DPS.

## ***On-Time Graduation Rates***

### **Description of Indicator**

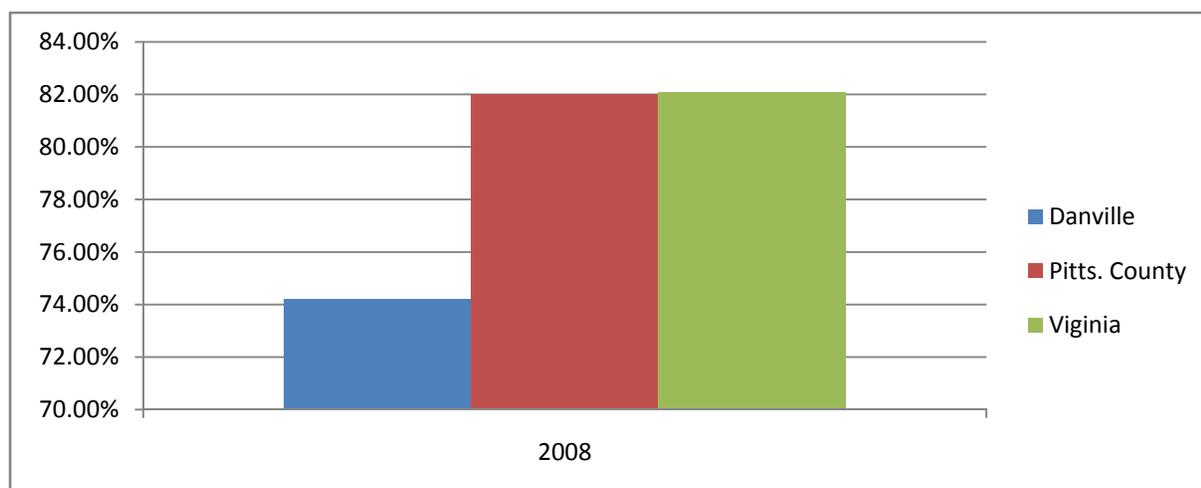
Employing a cohort design, the following data provides the percentage of students who complete the graduation requirements set forth by Virginia's Department of Education in the traditional four-year framework. The following results provide the first-time assessment of cohort data from the class entering high school in the fall of 2004. Subsequent assessment will be available annually from the Virginia Department of Education. *Source: Virginia Dept. of Education.*

<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Publications/>

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/rb/RB\\_701JBRB.pdf](http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/rb/RB_701JBRB.pdf)

### *H.S. On-time Graduation Rates*



#### **Why is on-time graduation important?**

According to the Virginia Department of Education, assessing the on-time graduation rates provides a more accurate picture of educational quality in Virginia. By capturing a cohort's experience in high school, school districts can pinpoint specific problematic times in which "dropping out" often occurs.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, increasing on-time graduation affects subsequent educational pursuits, including college enrollment and graduation.

#### **How are we doing?**

In the assessment, Danville remains below both the state and Pittsylvania County. In contrast, Pittsylvania County remains competitive with the state average. Subsequent assessment should provide trajectory data for the region.

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#### **Financial Stability**

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Statistical analysis of the financial stability of the Dan River Region is provided in this section. Specifically, this report tracks changes in percent of financially stable families, students qualifying for free or reduced lunch, per capita income, persons at/or below the poverty line, TANF caseloads, EITC claims, average household net worth, and homeowner rates in the region.

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/src/ontime\\_grad\\_rate/otgr\\_faq.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/src/ontime_grad_rate/otgr_faq.pdf)

**Findings**—Financial stability of the region remains a concern. Over the assessed period, percentages of students on free/or reduced lunch have increased, per capita income has increased at a slower rate than the state, and persons at poverty level remain largely unchanged. However, progress has been made on EITC claims. In fact, the entire region remains above state average in the percentage claiming available funds. Additionally, homeowner rates have risen substantially, placing the region at the state average. However, recent shocks to the housing market are not yet reflected in this assessment.

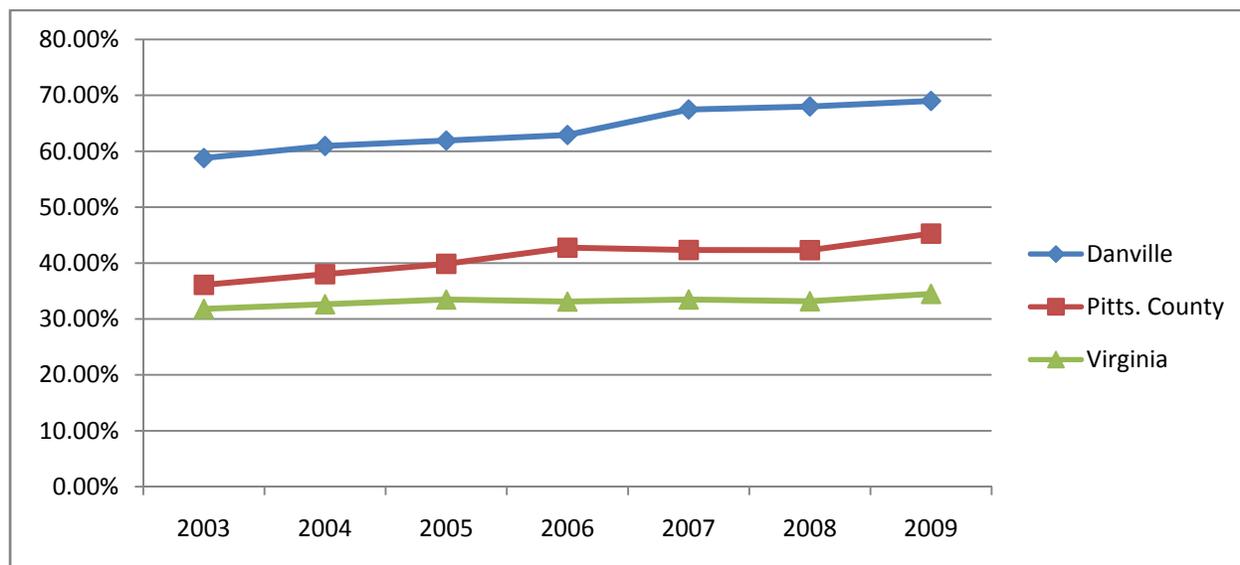
**Recommendations**—This proposal views the region’s decreasing financial stability as a result of decreasing economic vitality. Thus, the majority of interventions attempting to raise the financial stability should be directed at improving the economic vitality whereby financial stability would be indirectly improved. Furthermore, individualized interventions should be initiated to increase EITC claims, improve individual financial competence, and establish community-wide awareness of social assistance programs.

### *Percentage Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch*

#### **Description of Indicator**

The percent of students eligible for free or reduced lunch was gathered from the Virginia Department of Education. Free or reduced lunch eligibility is based on family income levels. This statistic is provided annually from every school district in the state.

*Percent of Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch*



Source: Virginia Department of Education

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/ss\\_services/nutrition/resources/statistics.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/ss_services/nutrition/resources/statistics.shtml)

**Why is the percentage on free or reduced lunch important?**

The percentage of students on free and reduced lunch serves as another assessment of the economic situation in the region, because eligibility is determined from family income levels. Furthermore, it displays the effects of the region's economic conditions upon children and families, providing information beyond individual economic earnings. Additionally, more funds needed for free and reduced lunch inevitably reduce available funding for other district needs. Importantly, the goal is not to reduce the number of students eligible; rather, the goal is to improve or add to economic conditions that increase average family income.

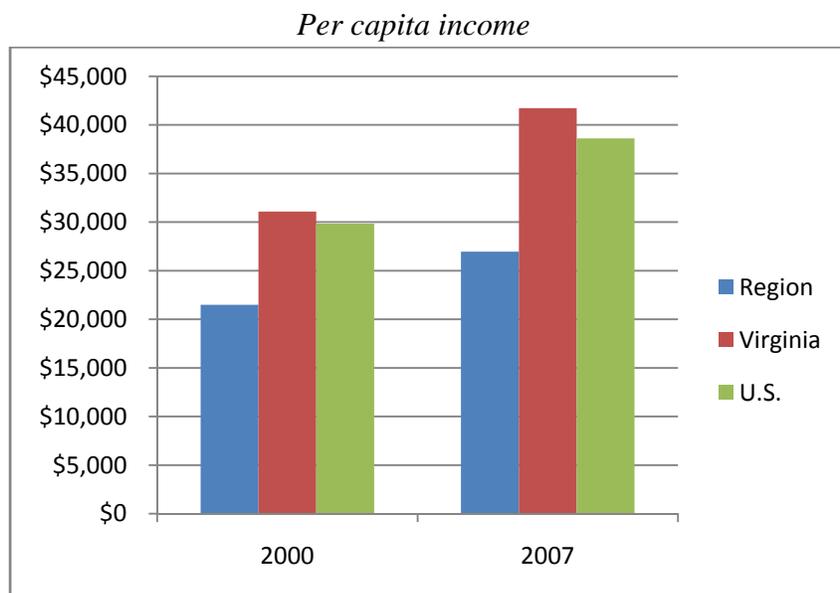
**How are we doing?**

Over the assessment period, both Danville Public Schools and Pittsylvania County Schools experienced an increased enrollment in the free/reduced lunch program. DPS increased from 58.78 percent to 69 percent, while PCS increased from 36.01 percent to 45.28 percent. Concurrently, the state average increased 31.81 percent to 34.45 percent. While the state's average also increased in the assessed period, PCS increased at a higher percentage, as compared to the average state growth in enrollment. However, more drastic, DPS maintains rates nearly double the state average with an increasing trend. These increases ultimately reflect the unstable economic conditions found in the region.

### *Per Capita Income*

**Description of Indicator**

Per capita income was acquired from the Bureau of Economic Analysis annual report. Per capita income is calculated by the total income divided by the total population of a given area. Statistics were provided for the Danville-Pittsylvania County Metropolitan Statistical Area, showing both the county and the city reflected in the provided statistic.



Source: <http://www.bea.gov/regional/reis/>  
[http://www.bea.gov/scb/pdf/2006/05May/0506\\_LAPI.pdf](http://www.bea.gov/scb/pdf/2006/05May/0506_LAPI.pdf)

### **Why is per capita income important?**

Per capita income is a statistical measure of the potential relative cost of labor in the area. Changes in per capita income indicate trends in a region's standard of living or the availability of resources for an individual, family, or society. Per capita income tends to follow the business cycle, rising and falling accordingly.<sup>1</sup> Thus, increases in per capita income are a reflection of the economic vitality of the region leading to an increased standard of living, which implies increased occupational opportunities. Higher per capita income inevitably increases the competitiveness of the region when leadership is seeking to attract business as well as recruit and retain residents.

### **How are we doing?**

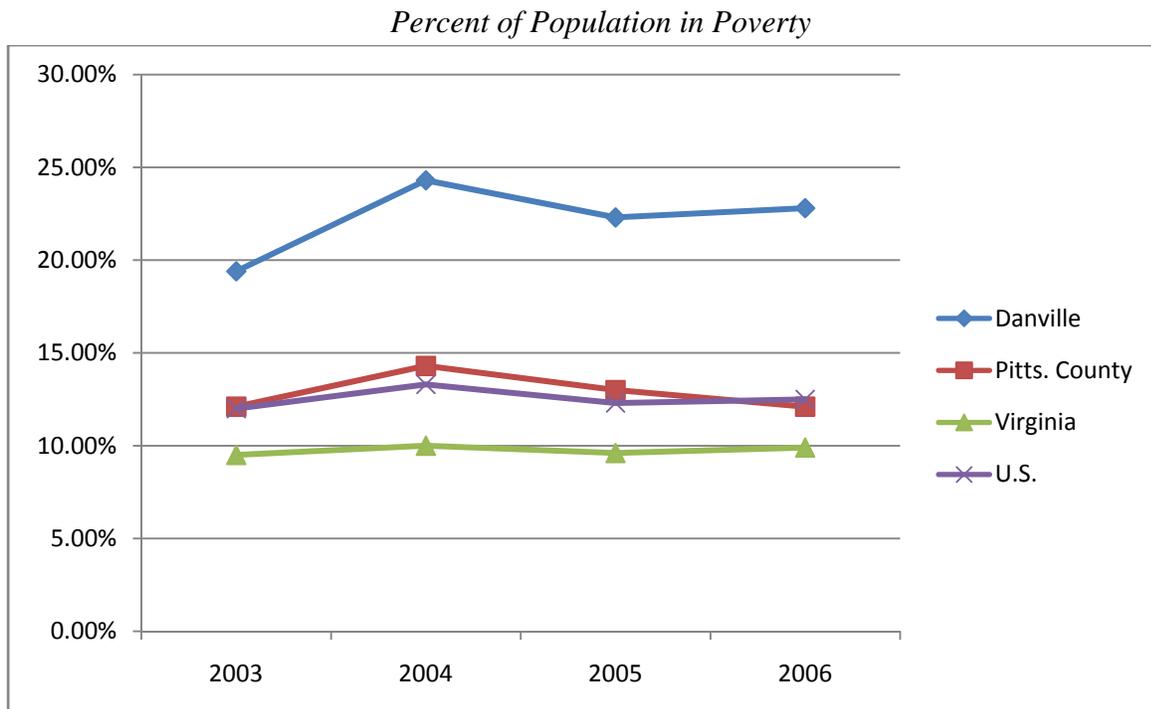
While the region remains below both the state and national averages, the region's per capita income increased 25.4 percent while the state average increased 34.2 percent. Thus, the region experienced increases in per capita income; however, the region did not increase at a competitive level.

## *Poverty Level*

### **Description of Indicator**

The percent of the population at/or below the poverty line was ascertained from the U.S. Census annual report. "Poverty" is objectively determined from calculating the pre-taxed income levels minus the estimated need of a family. If the family's income falls below the threshold of need, the family is determined to subsist in poverty. The threshold is adjusted annually for inflation.

The following statistics encompass all individuals in poverty, including families and children. This data is based on population estimates.



Source: <http://www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/data/summary/2007.html>

### **Why is the poverty rate important?**

Poverty has far reaching implications for both individuals and entire communities. Exposure to poverty negatively affects, among other things, psychological well-being, educational attainment, propensity for contact with the criminal justice system, and political engagement. For

community development, higher rates of poverty decrease a region's marketability in attracting businesses. Furthermore, it represents decreased tax revenues and more increased public welfare expenditures. Poverty rates and economic competitiveness maintain an inverse relationship with increases in widespread poverty diminishing the sustainability of a particular region.

### **How are we doing?**

Over the assessed period, rates of poverty remained relatively stable across the region. However, Danville experienced an increase in poverty from 19.4 percent to 22.8 percent. Concurrently, Pittsylvania County experienced a slight reduction from 12.4 percent to 12.1 percent, placing Pittsylvania County at the national average. The state average decreased slightly from 10.0 percent to 9.9 percent. In sum, Pittsylvania County remains above the state average by two points and below the national average; however, Danville maintains substantially higher rates of poverty as compared to the state, national, and regional averages.

## ***Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)***

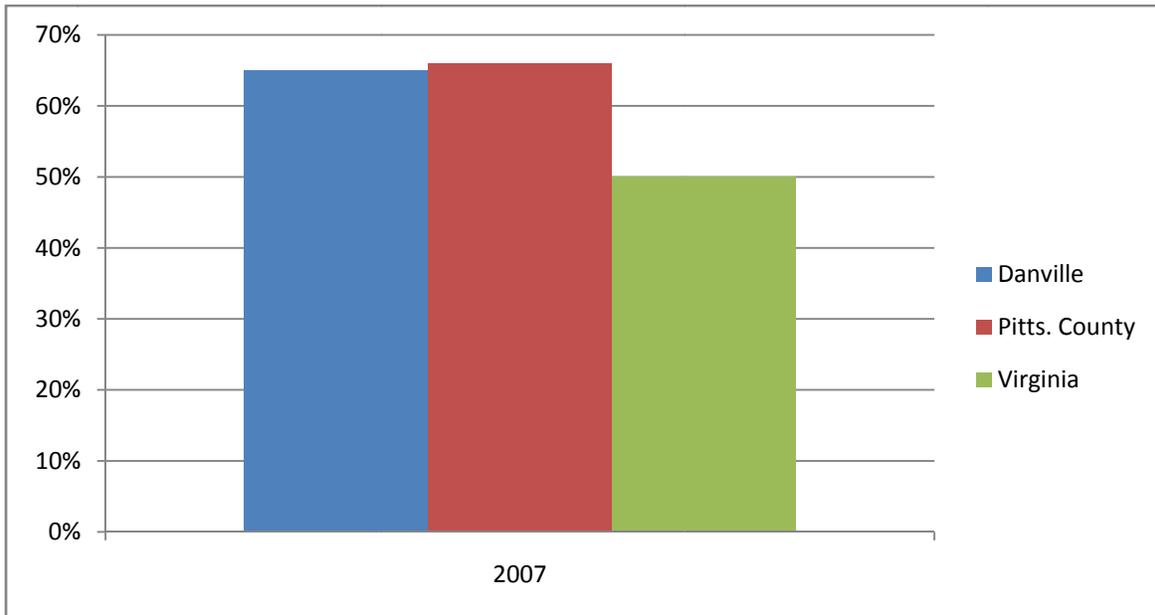
### **Description of Indicator**

The Earned Income Tax Credit is a Federal tax refund for low-income populations. Maximum refunds total \$4,824 per family. Eligibility is calculated based on income and accompanying dependent expenditures.

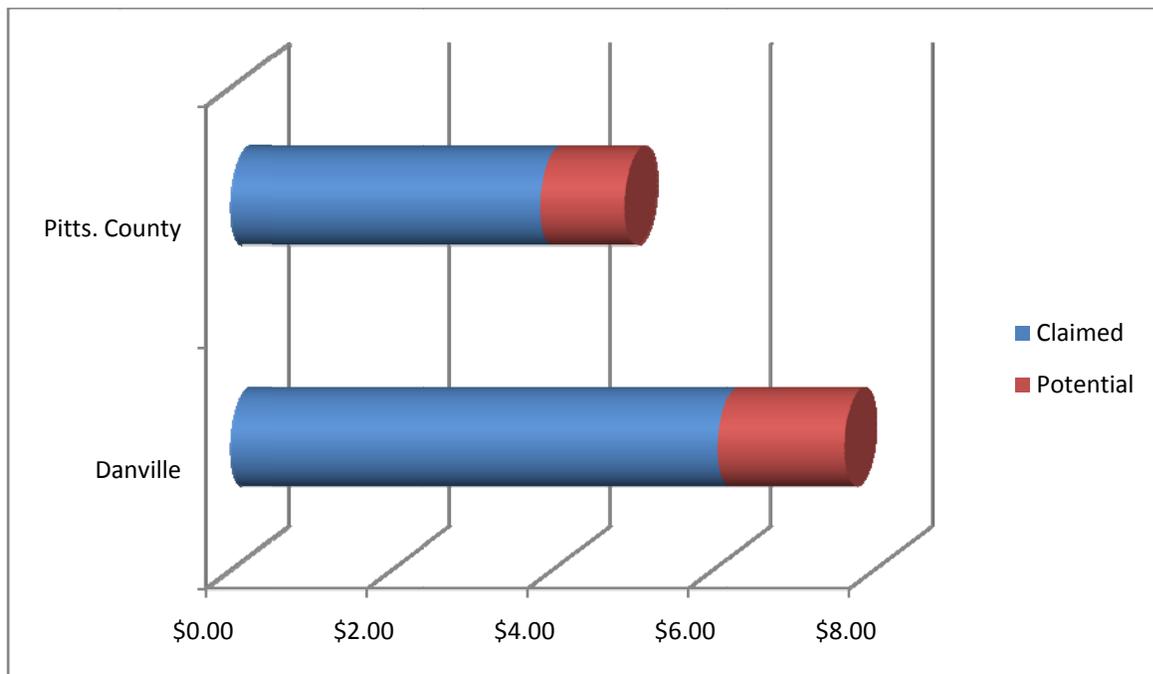
*Source: Virginia Department of Human and Social Services*

[http://www.dss.virginia.gov/geninfo/reports/financial\\_assistance/eitc.cgi](http://www.dss.virginia.gov/geninfo/reports/financial_assistance/eitc.cgi)

*Percent of Eligible Funds Claimed*



*Amount Claimed of Potential Eligibility (Millions)*



### Why is EITC important?

The EITC has been hailed as the most successful anti-poverty measure in U.S. social policy. Nationally, 21 million families receive refunds that total \$36 billion annually. Thus, the EITC refund alone has lifted five (5) million families above the poverty line. Importantly, economists reason that the EITC refund has a “multiplier” effect, because it has a double-dollar value impact for local and regional economies. However, it is estimated that 15 to 25 percent of eligible families do not claim the credit.<sup>8</sup> Increasing EITC claims remains important, because full claiming capacity would increase the regional revenue by upwards of \$12 million annually.

### How are we doing?

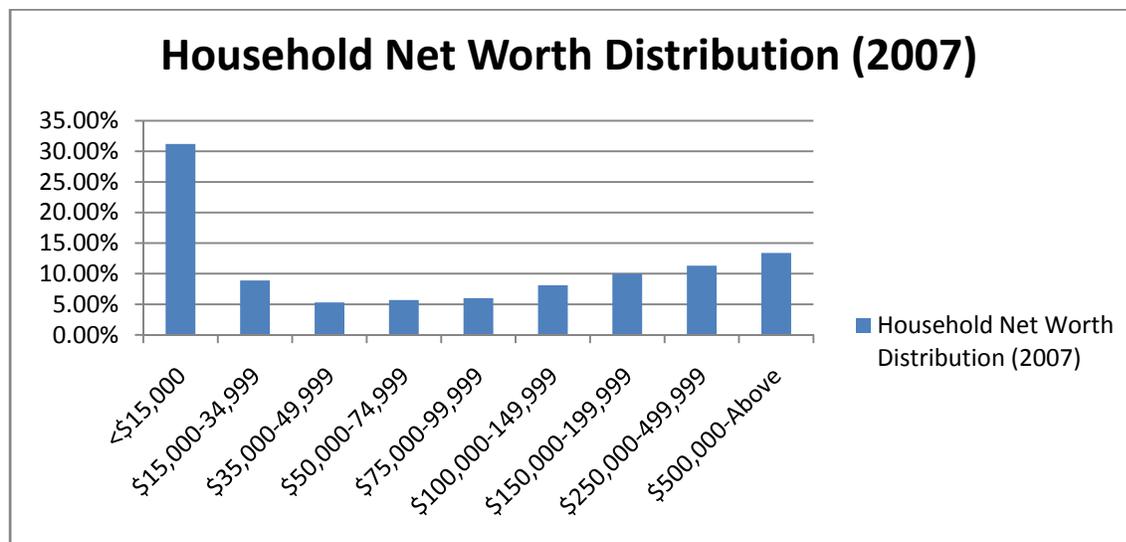
In 2007 the Department of Human Services released the first report of EITC claims. For the assessment period, Danville and Pittsylvania County claimed higher eligible percentages as compared to the state average. Specifically, 65 percent of Danville’s eligible families claimed and received the EITC refund; P.C. maintained a 66 percent claim rate. Concurrently, the state average maintained a 50 percent claim rate. Thus, Danville saw a revenue influx of almost \$6 million while P.C. had a \$3.8 million influx.

## *Average Household Savings (Net Worth)*

### Description of Indicator

The household net worth distribution represents average household savings. Estimates are determined by taking personal income and subtracting personal debt. *Source:*

<http://www.discoverdanville.com/data.asp?questions=2213&target=articles>



<sup>8</sup> <http://www.nashvilleafi.org/Files/ImpactStudy.pdf>

**Why is net worth important?**

Personal savings reflect individuals' financial stability. Increased savings allow families to better deal with economic hardships, including unemployment, death in the family, and annual fluctuations in the national market (i.e. interest rates and loan rates). Increasing the average net worth distribution would inevitably increase the competitiveness and sustainability of the region.

**How are we doing?**

As displayed in the graph above, income distribution in the region is skewed toward the lower end of the income spectrum. Over 30 percent of the population maintains net savings under \$15,000. Furthermore, the second largest point of income distribution is \$500,000 and above, hovering at 13.4 percent. Thus, the region suffers from an income disparity in which the region maintains a very small middle class. Thus, the majority of the population remains unprepared, placing it at financial risk in the event of foreseeable economic hardships.

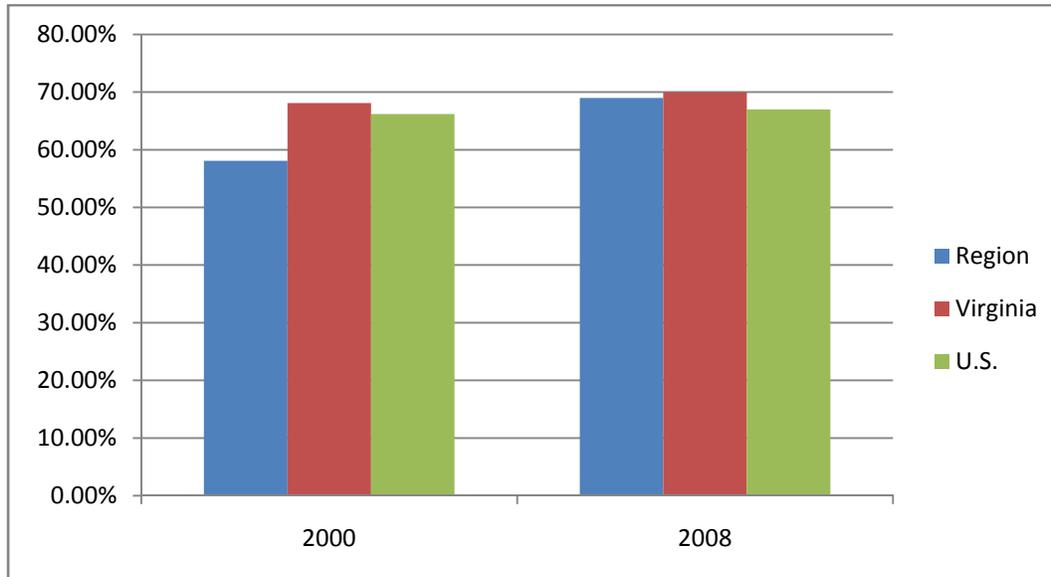
## *Home Ownership Rates*

**Description of Indicator**

The rate of home ownership was obtained from the Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) 2008 report. Furthermore, the 2000 rate was provided from the U.S. Census. *Source:*

<http://www.vaservice.org>

*Percentage of Homes Owned by Dwellers*



### **Why is home ownership important?**

Home ownership is one of the most substantial long term investments. It adds to household net worth and provides borrowing opportunities when owners experience unexpected financial burdens. Beyond these short-term positives, home ownership is crucial in the creation of inter-generational wealth. Home ownership is also sociologically important, for increases in family stability, community engagement, and home upkeep all correlate with home ownership.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, home ownership strengthens neighborhoods by increasing stability, keeping capital in the community, attracting outside investment, and raising property values.<sup>10</sup>

### **How are we doing?**

Over the assessment period, the region experienced significant growth in home ownership rates, rising from 58 percent to 70 percent. As a result, the region approaches the state average and surpasses the national average. However, the effect of the home mortgage crisis is not represented in this data.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.thda.org/singlefamily/hbe/impho.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.consumerlaw.org/initiatives/sustainable\\_home/](http://www.consumerlaw.org/initiatives/sustainable_home/)

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## Economic Vitality

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The following section delineates statistical data on the economic vitality of the region. Specifically, yearly assessments are provided for average weekly wages, new firm startup rates, unemployment figures, population distributional changes, and tourism revenue.

**Findings**—Over the assessment period, the economic vitality of the Dan River Region remains in a less than competitive situation. Overall, the region remains below state percentages in average weekly wages. Furthermore, new firm growth has decreased while unemployment rates have increased. Danville also experienced a decrease in non-dependent population size while simultaneously increasing its dependent population size. Revenues from tourism, however, saw growth for the entire region.

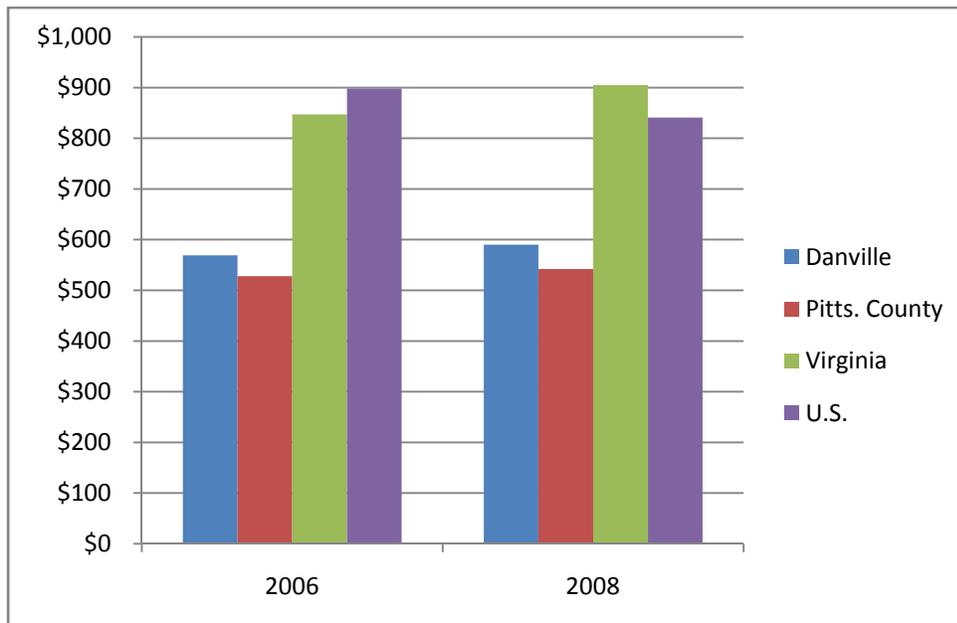
**Recommendations**—Community interventions should target increasing the economic vitality of the region. This area of focus remains highly impactful for future regional success. Without a competitive economic advantage, the region can expect continued population decreases, revenue losses, and financial instability. As a result, the region’s leaders should target increasing the non-dependent population distribution, attracting living wage jobs to the region, encouraging new firm startups, and fostering entrepreneurships.

### *Average Weekly Wage*

#### **Description of Indicator**

Average weekly wages were acquired from the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics. Subsequent figures will be available annually. Weekly wages are defined as pre-taxed income across the total population. *Source:* [http://www.bls.gov/ro3/ro3\\_va.htm#wages](http://www.bls.gov/ro3/ro3_va.htm#wages)

### *Average weekly wages*



#### **Why are average weekly wages important?**

Average weekly wages are directly related to the economic vitality of the region. Higher incomes denote a higher standard of living. Importantly, the region's leadership should try to achieve a larger percentage of "living wage" jobs. Defining living wage jobs is difficult; however, the Department of Human Services defines the cutoffs for self-sustainability, taking into account cost of living in an area in addition to the individualized family expenses associated with size of the family. Increasing wages increases community-wide revenue through increased tax revenue and increased sales tax income from higher rates of spending. Furthermore, average weekly wages are the first determinant for acquiring wealth and reducing poverty.

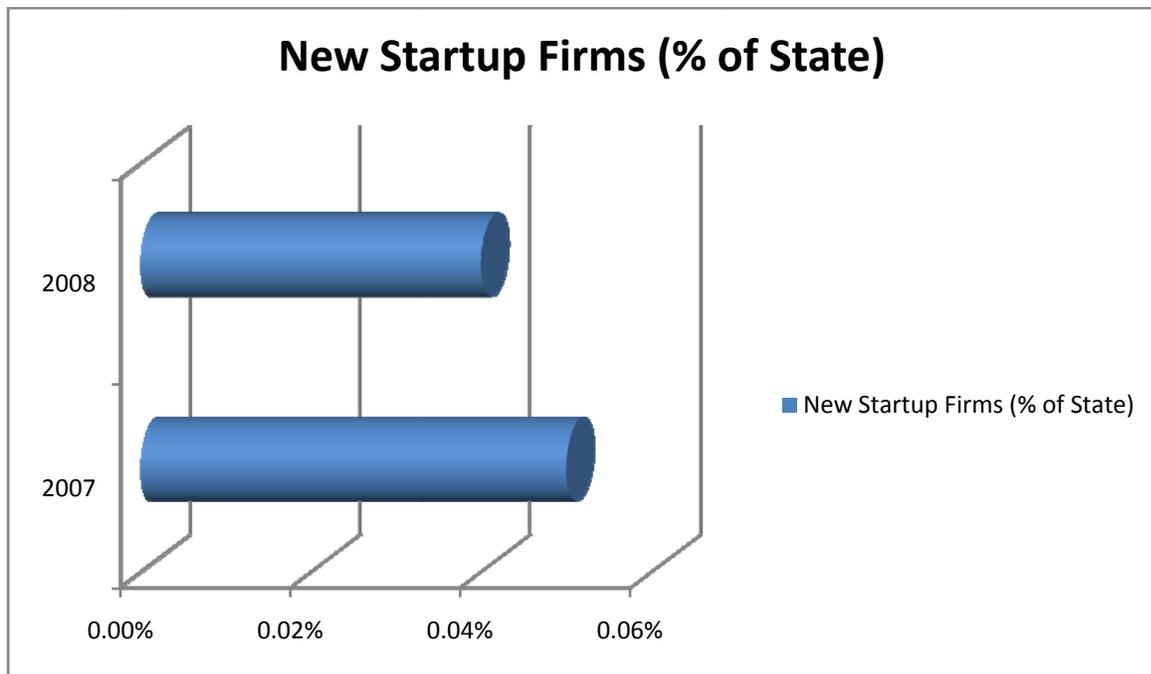
#### **How are we doing?**

Over the assessed period, the average weekly wages for Danville rose from \$569 to \$590 while Pittsylvania County increased from \$528 to \$542. Both areas are below the state average of \$901. Furthermore, the entire region progressed at similar intervals as the state's average.

## Startup Firms

### Description of Indicator

Start-up firms are defined as newly created business and/or industries within the past year. Data was obtained from the Danville Office of Economic Development which reports annually on start-up firms. The following graph denotes the growth in the region's industries as a function of the entire state's new growth. *Source: Virginia Department of Employment Statistics.*



### Why are the number of new start-ups important?

The number of new start-up firms reflects growth of the market in the region. Development of new firms remains particularly important within the region given current downsizing from previously dominate industries (tobacco, textile, etc). Increasing the number of new firms displays the innovative fervor within the region, which is likely to remain an influential part of the region becoming economically competitive.

### How are we doing?

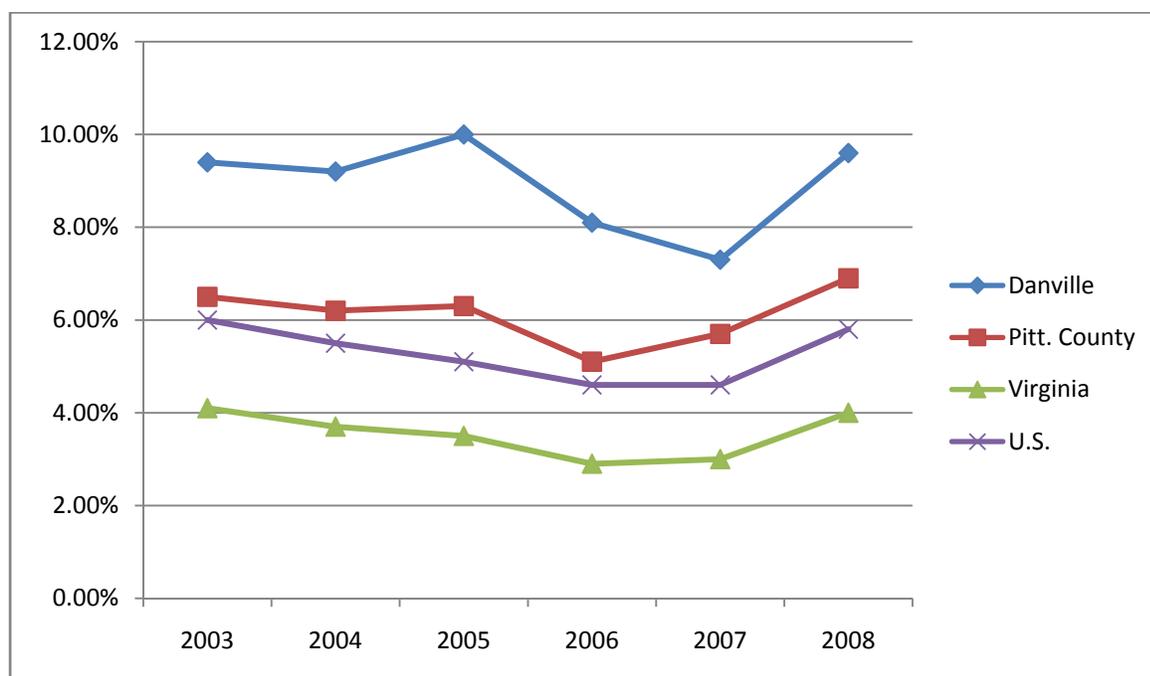
During the assessed period, the growth of the region's firms decreased as a function of the percentage of the state's growth, falling from .05 percent to .035 percent. Additionally, the growth in the region maintains percentages of state growth under one percent.

## *Unemployment Rates*

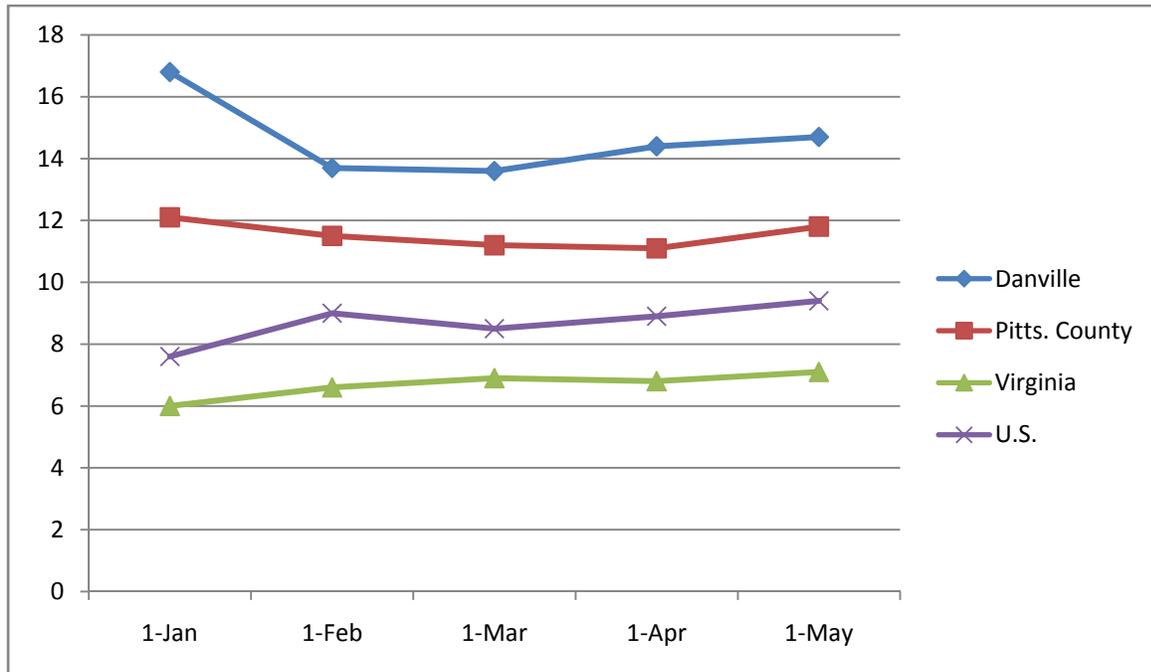
### **Description of Indicator**

Unemployment statistics were acquired from the Virginia Department of Employment Statistics, which are updated monthly. The statistics are determined by the percentage of persons who are actively seeking employment as a function of the region's total population. Excluded in the figures are disabled persons, currently employed persons, persons in prison, and dependent populations, including children and the elderly. *Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Economic Profile: Danville, Virginia.* <http://www.bls.gov/lau/#tables>

*Unemployment Rates (Annual Averages)*



*Unemployment (past 4 months)*



**Why is the unemployment rate important?**

Unemployment rates are indicative of the current economic status of the Dan River Region. The economic situation inevitably affects the overall economic competitiveness of the region in terms of attracting businesses and recruiting potential residents. Unemployment rates also inevitably affect both individual and community levels of financial stability.

**How are we doing?**

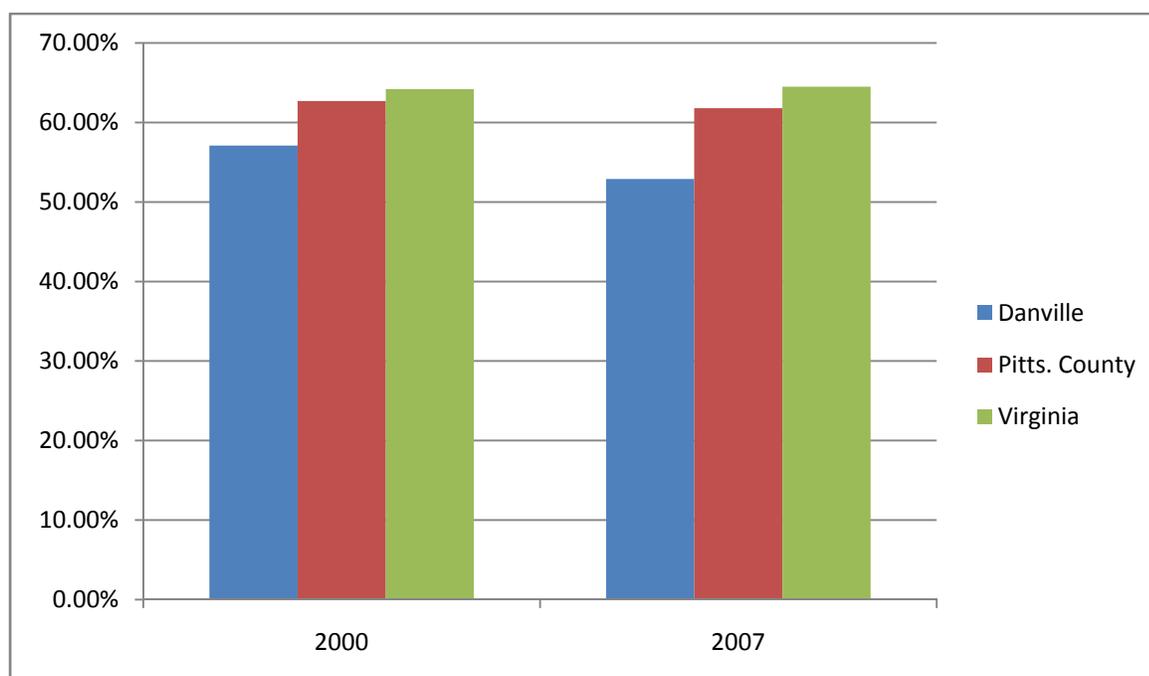
Regional unemployment rates remain significantly higher than both the state and national averages. Specifically, the unemployment rate in Danville has increased from 9 percent to just 10 percent in the assessment period. Concurrently, the unemployment rate in Pittsylvania County has increased at similar intervals. Furthermore, the last four months have also shown substantial increases in unemployment, with the latest figures topping 14 percent in Danville and 12 percent in Pittsylvania County, placing the region at higher rates of unemployment than both the state and national averages.

## *Non-Dependent Population Distribution*

### **Description of Indicator**

Population distributions were obtained from the U.S. Census. These figures are statistical estimates. Non-dependent population distribution refers to persons over the age of 18 and under the age of 65. Non-dependent implies working populations not receiving parental or governmental assistance, respectively.

*18-64 Population (Percent of Total)*



### **Why is population distribution important?**

Population distribution is important for the self-sustainability of the region. Maintaining an increasing working-age population positively impacts community revenues and progress. Additionally, attracting and retaining a younger population hinges on the population distribution. Working-age populations attract businesses and sustain the higher educational systems. To remain competitive in the continuously re-inventive economic system, the region must maintain a large, highly competent working-class population.

### **How are we doing?**

Over the assessment period, the non-dependent population distribution decreased for Danville City and Pittsylvania County. Over the same time period, the state's distribution of 18-64 year olds increased slightly. Danville appears to drive the region's current trajectory, experiencing the larger decrease in non-dependent, population-aged persons.

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## Community Health Status

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The following section delineates the community-wide health status, as judged by rates of obesity, infant mortality, heart attack, stroke, teen pregnancy, and uninsured persons.

**Findings**—Over the assessed period, obesity rates increased, placing the region above the state average. Infant mortality rates decreased for Danville while increasing for Pittsylvania County. Heart attack rates decreased while stroke rates increased. Overall, teen pregnancy fell in the region; however, it remained significantly higher than the state average. HIV/AIDS rates increased at a slower rate than the state average while Pittsylvania County reduced its HIV/AIDS cases. Uninsured percentages dropped significantly in Danville while increasing for Pittsylvania County.

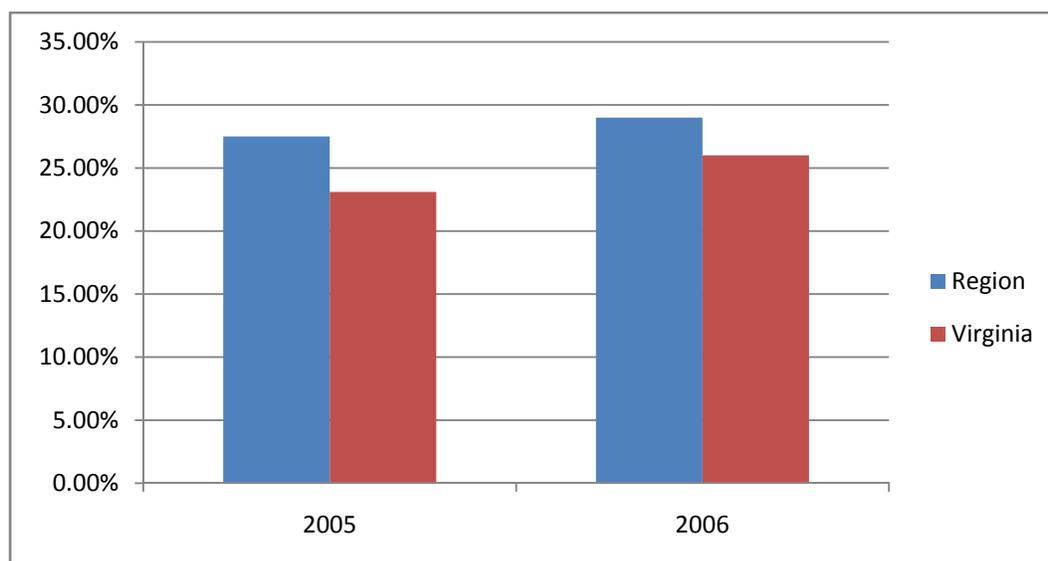
**Recommendations**—Health status remains an integral need for community transformation. While progress was made, the intra-regional differences and fluctuations remain substantial, evidenced by diverging trajectories between Danville and Pittsylvania County. Given the interconnected aspect of stroke rate, heart attack rate, and obesity, interventions should target the creation of a “healthy lifestyle” in the area. By the adoption of a “healthy lifestyle” campaign, the region can attempt to reduce unhealthy behaviors including teenage sexual activity. A “healthy community” is important for generating positive attitudes within the populace, attracting businesses to the areas (as higher health care costs for potential employees serve as a deterrent to relocating to Danville), and providing a more productive and motivated community.

### *Obesity Rates*

#### **Description of Indicator**

Obesity statistics were obtained from the Virginia Performs Program website (<http://vaperforms.virginia.gov/indicators/healthFamily/obesity.php>). Rates indicate individuals who reach clinical levels of obesity as defined by Body Mass Index.

*Obesity Rates (% of total population)*



### **Why are obesity rates important?**

Obesity impacts both the health status of individuals and the productivity of an entire community. Higher rates of obesity can lead to higher incidence of other medical conditions, including (but not limited to) heart disease, stroke, and arthritis. In terms of economic impact, the “Virginia Performs Report”<sup>11</sup> links higher obesity rates with lowered productivity and lost work days. Furthermore, medical costs incurred from obesity remain higher in communities with increased prevalence of obesity, straining state and local government health budgets. Beyond higher medical costs, higher rates of obesity decrease the region’s competitiveness. Businesses are less likely to relocate to “unhealthy” communities, because of the increased health care expenditures they are likely to incur in an “unhealthy” workforce.

### **How are we doing?**

Over the assessed period, obesity rates increased throughout the entire region, continuing to place the region above the state average.

<sup>11</sup> <http://vaperforms.virginia.gov/indicators/healthFamily/obesity.php>

## *Infant Mortality*

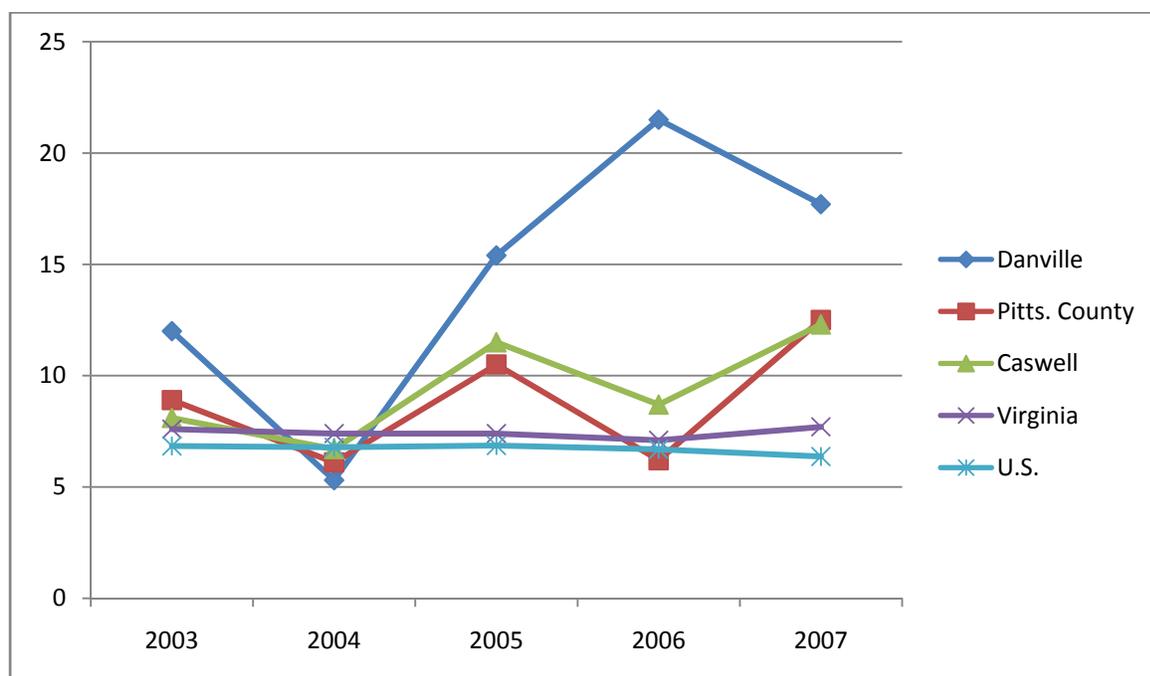
### **Description of Indicator**

Infant mortality rates were obtained from the Virginia Department of Health. Infant mortality is defined as death of a child in the first year after birth. The following statistics are presented as a rate of deaths per 1,000 live births.

Regional/State Data: <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/HealthStats/stats.asp>

National Data: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/nvsr.htm>

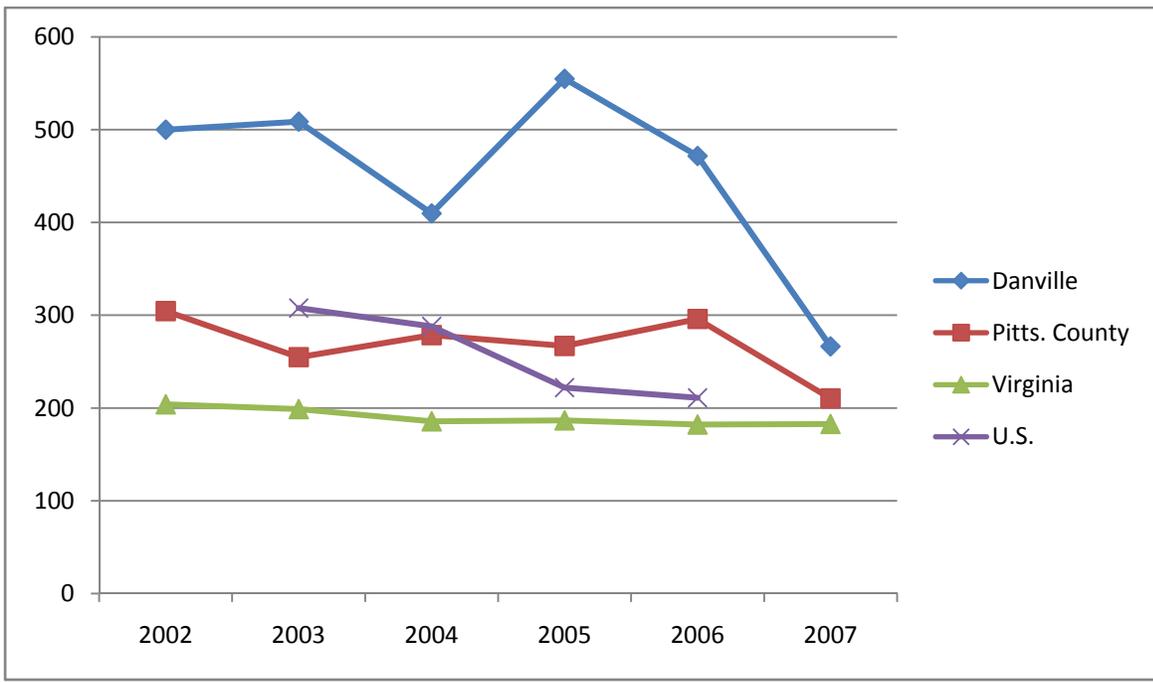
*Infant Mortality Rates (Rates per 1,000 Live Births)*



### **Why is this important?**

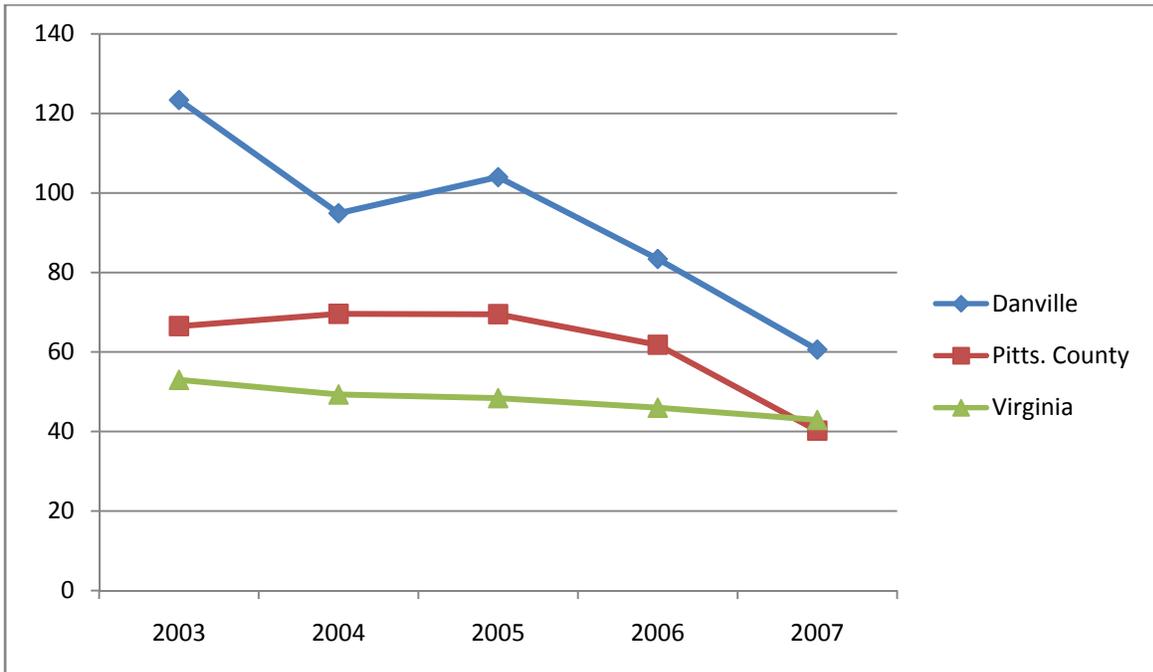
According to the VA Performs Program, infant mortality rates reflect overall health of the region. Specifically, they display both prenatal care for mothers and post-birth conditions for Virginia's youth. This figure indirectly indicates information regarding both medical care access and the overall medical care quality in the region.

*Heart Disease Death Rate (Per 100,000 population estimates):*

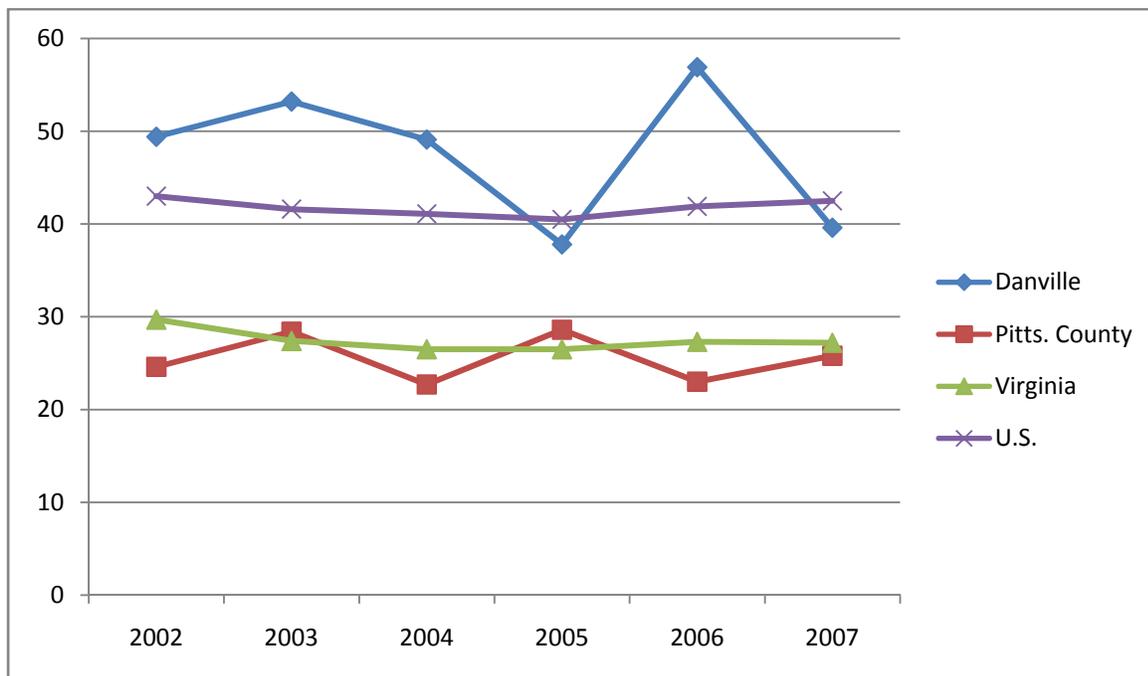


Source: <http://www.vdh.state.va.us/healthstats/stats.asp>

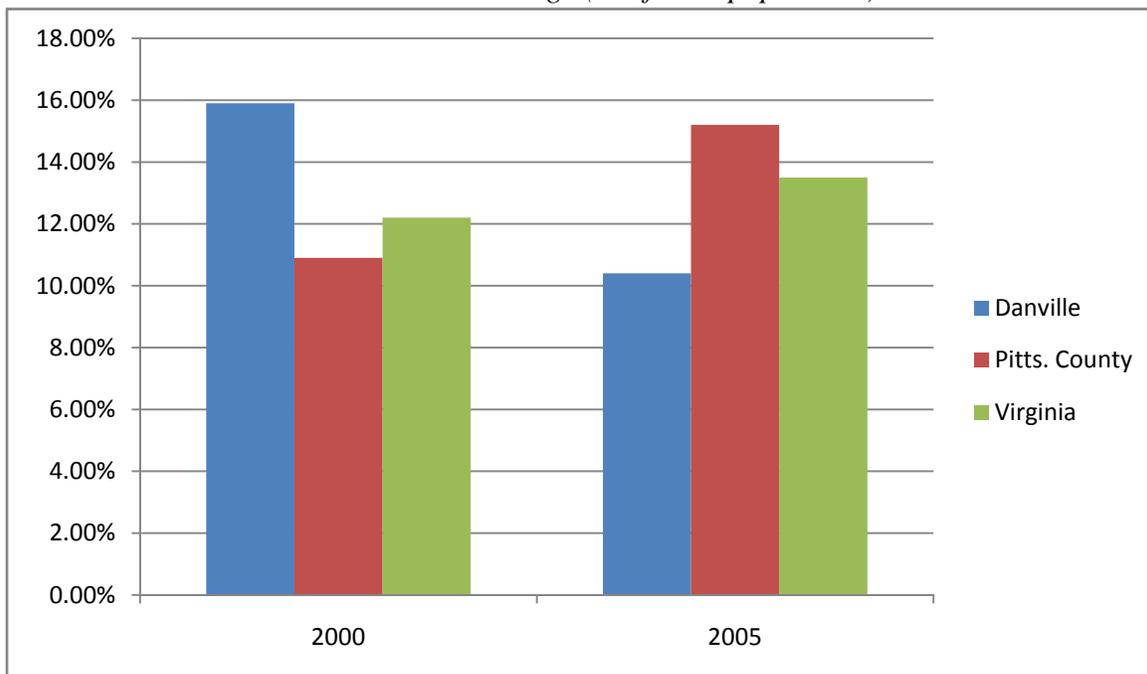
*Stroke Rate (per 100,000 persons)*



*Teen Pregnancy Rates (per 1,000 females)*



*Uninsured Percentage (% of total population)*



Source: <http://www.census.gov//did/www/sahie/data/2005/tables.html>

### **Why are these measures important?**

All of these measures create a holistic assessment of the community's health. Given the interrelatedness of obesity with incidence of heart attack and stroke rates and the relatedness of risky sexual behaviors with teen pregnancy and STD incidence, all of these assessments fail to be mutually exclusive. Thus, intervention strategies should simultaneously target all health areas. Rising rates in these areas deter businesses from locating in the area because of potential insurance payments and are instrumental in forming the cultural perceptions of a region. Furthermore, the rates of uninsured populations inevitably affect the scope of clinical intervention in the area. As a result, higher uninsured population rates lead to decreased area health because of limited access to high quality treatment. Furthermore, higher rates of uninsured citizens increase emergency-based costs and treatment.

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### **Civic Capacity**

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In the following section, the report provides information regarding the civic capacity of the region, as judged by non-profit organizations, charitable giving rates, and political engagement.

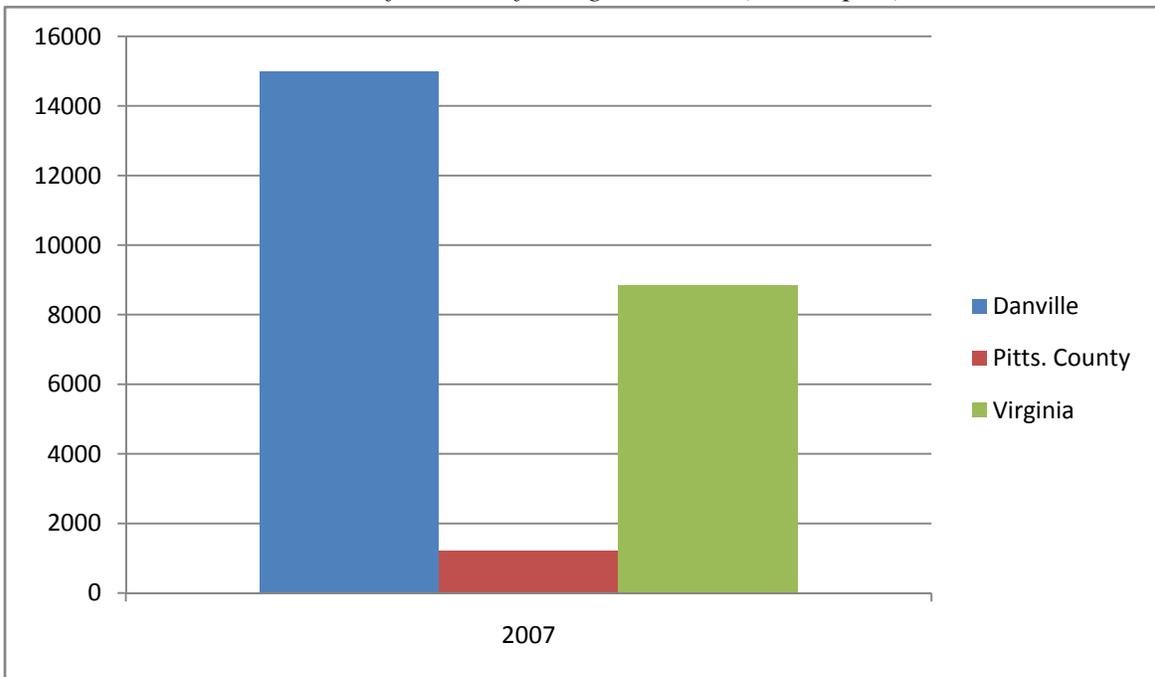
**Findings**—Over the assessment period, the number of non-profit organizations has increased in the area. Pittsylvania County increased its non-profit capacity by 6 percent, a significantly higher rate than the state. However, Danville did not expand at a comparable rate to either Pittsylvania County or the state average. Despite less growth in new non-profit organizations, Danville's non-profit revenue increased by rates higher than both the state and the surrounding region. In terms of charitable giving, as a percentage of adjusted gross income, both Danville and Pittsylvania County fell; however, both remain higher than the state average. It is likely this giving rate reflects the participation in faith-based organizations, given the 300 churches located in the region. Political engagement also increased. Of registered voters, turn out increased for the entire region; however, Danville remains slightly below the state average.

**Recommendations**—Subsequent designers of the community assessment should employ more holistic measures of civic capacity. Specifically, growth and revenues of non-profit organizations are important measures of non-profit quality; however, the effectiveness and scope of influence is not captured in these measurements. In other words, the transformative nature of the region's non-profits cannot be conclusively determined. Furthermore, charitable giving rates are measured in monetary allocations; the utilization of these funds is not assessed, and volunteer hours are not captured in this measurement. Furthermore, political engagement is measured in terms of voter turnout and not number of citizens registered. In total, this report card provides fundamental information; however, criteria should be expanded to encompass measures of influence.

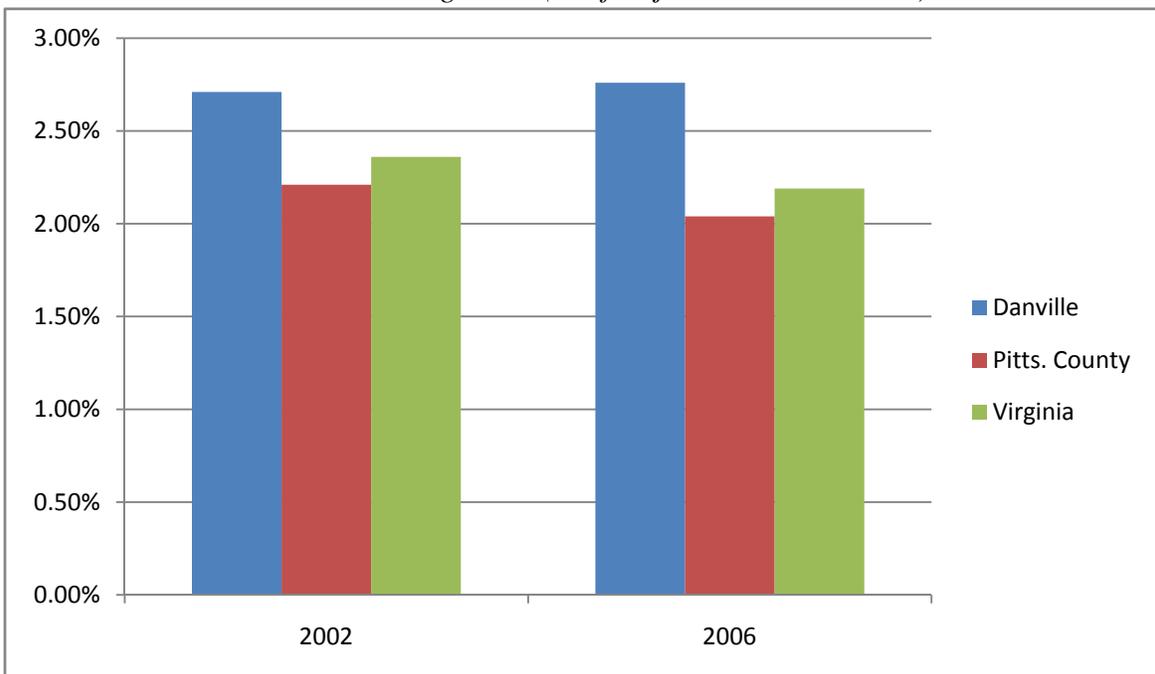
### **Description of Indicator**

All of the following information was provided from the National Center for Charitable Statistics.

*Revenue of Non-Profit Organizations (Per Capita)*



*Charitable Giving Rates (% of Adjusted Gross Income):*



### Why are non-profit organizations important?

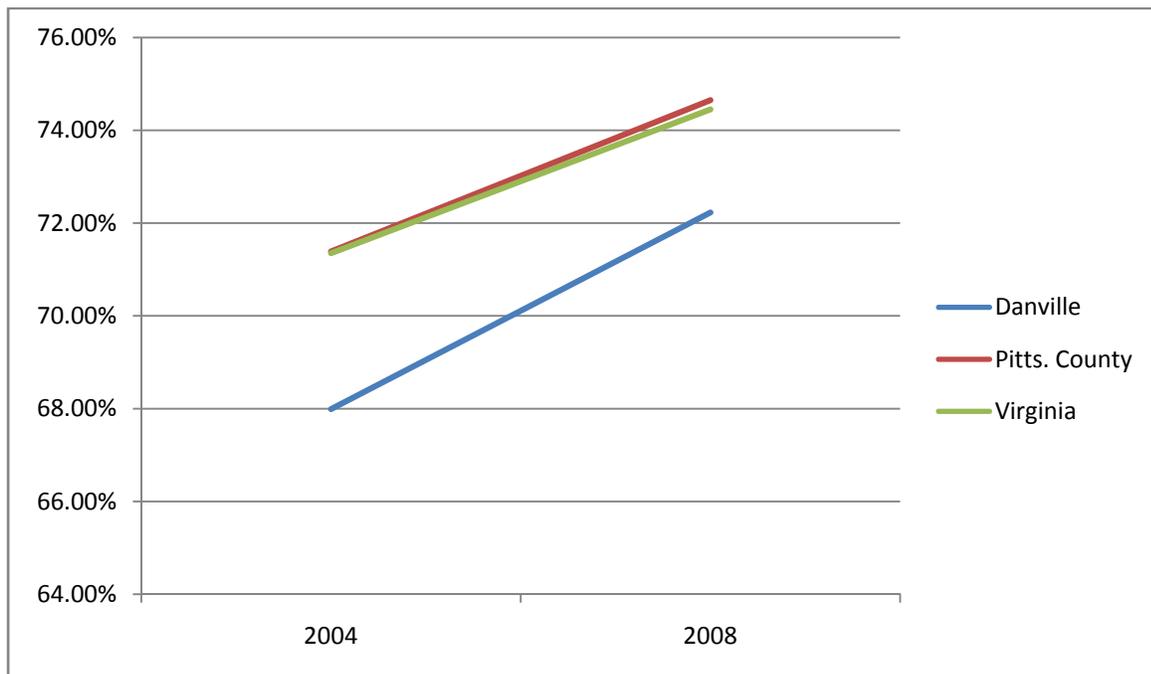
Non-profit organizations remain instrumental in community development. Non-profits are able to provide relief from impoverished conditions and poor economic situations. Non-profits also maintain the ability to fund initiatives to aid in community transformation. Furthermore, the charitable giving rate encompasses faith-based giving. This remains a salient indicator of the influence of faith-based organizations in the region, as the region has over 300 religious organizations. Increased rates of giving increase the potential scope of churches in community development.

## *Political Engagement*

### Description of Indicator

Rates of political engagement were obtained from the Virginia State Board of Elections. Voter turnout indicates the percentage of registered voters who successfully voted. The rates were obtained from the presidential election.

*Political Engagement (Presidential Election)*



### Why is political engagement important?

Political engagement is important in promoting governmental responsiveness. A large and active constituency receives more support from elected officials. Increased participation reflects a

civically engaged community in which the citizenry remains more informed and educated. As a by-product of political engagement, community awareness and engagement in regional improvement increases bringing beneficial political decisions from elected officials.

### **How are we doing?**

Danville significantly increased; however, it remains less engaged as compared to the state and regional average. In contrast, Pittsylvania County maintains higher engagement levels than the state.

## *Caswell County, NC, Regional Report Card*

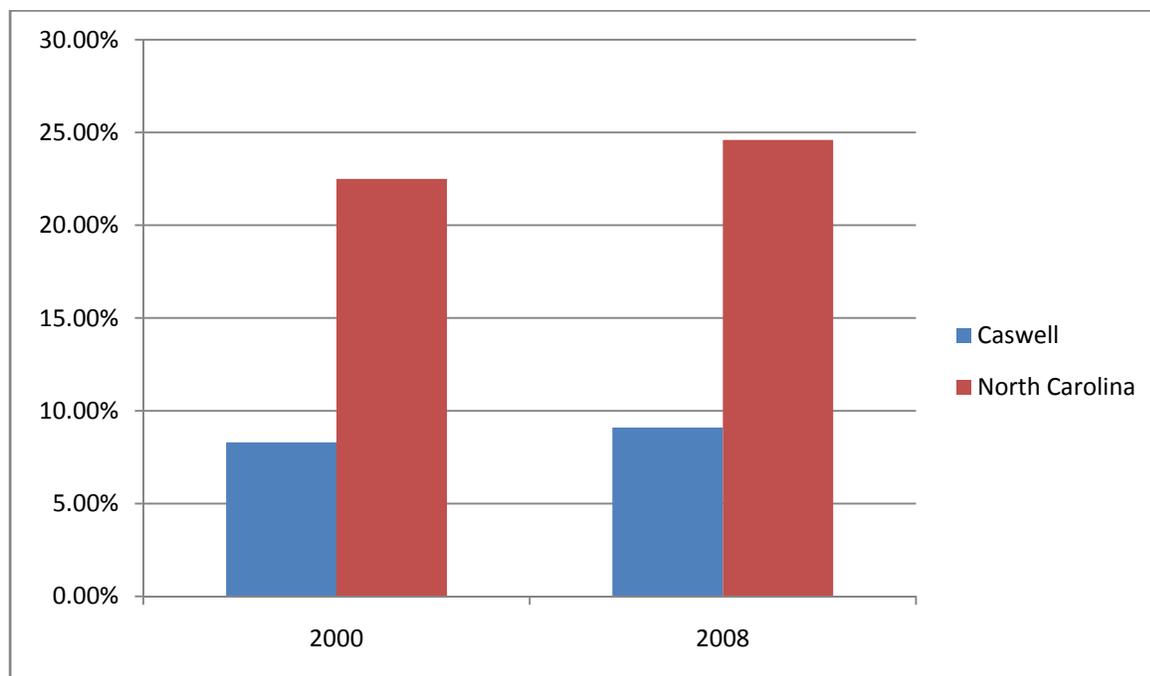
In the following sections, detailed information is provided in five key dimensions of community status. Each dimension is presented separately with descriptions of statistical indicators and source of information. The aforementioned recommendations are applicable for Caswell County, as the recommendations were formed from regional data. Additionally, the importance of each indicator remains similar for Caswell County.

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### **Educational Quality**

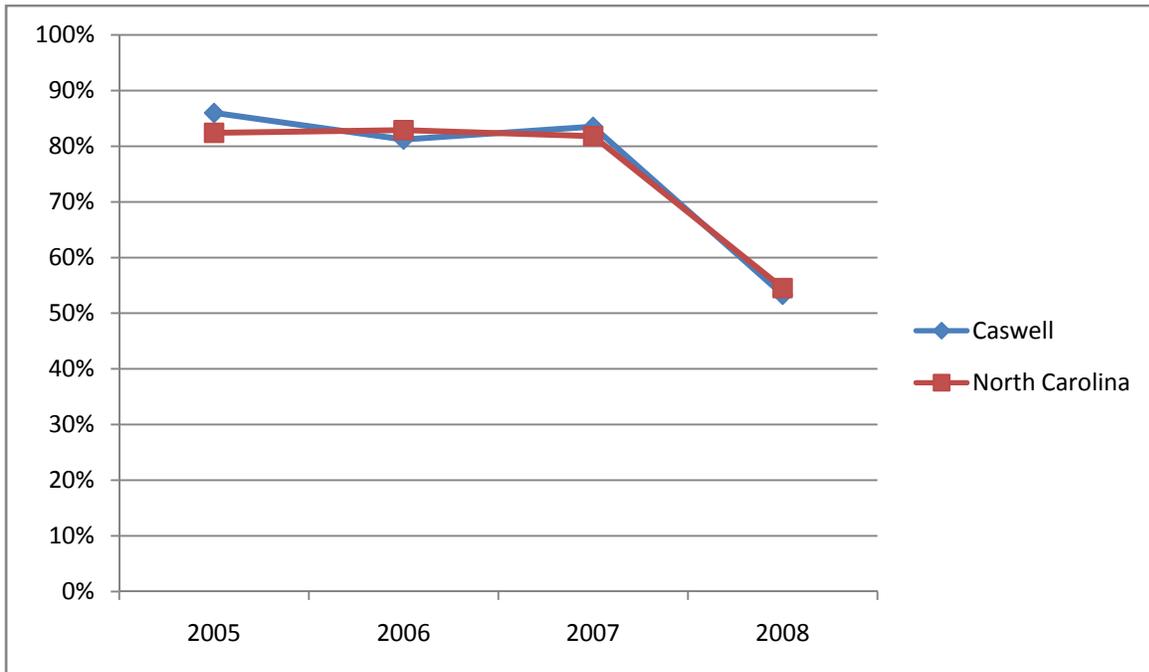
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#### *Higher Educational Attainment Levels (Bachelors and above)*



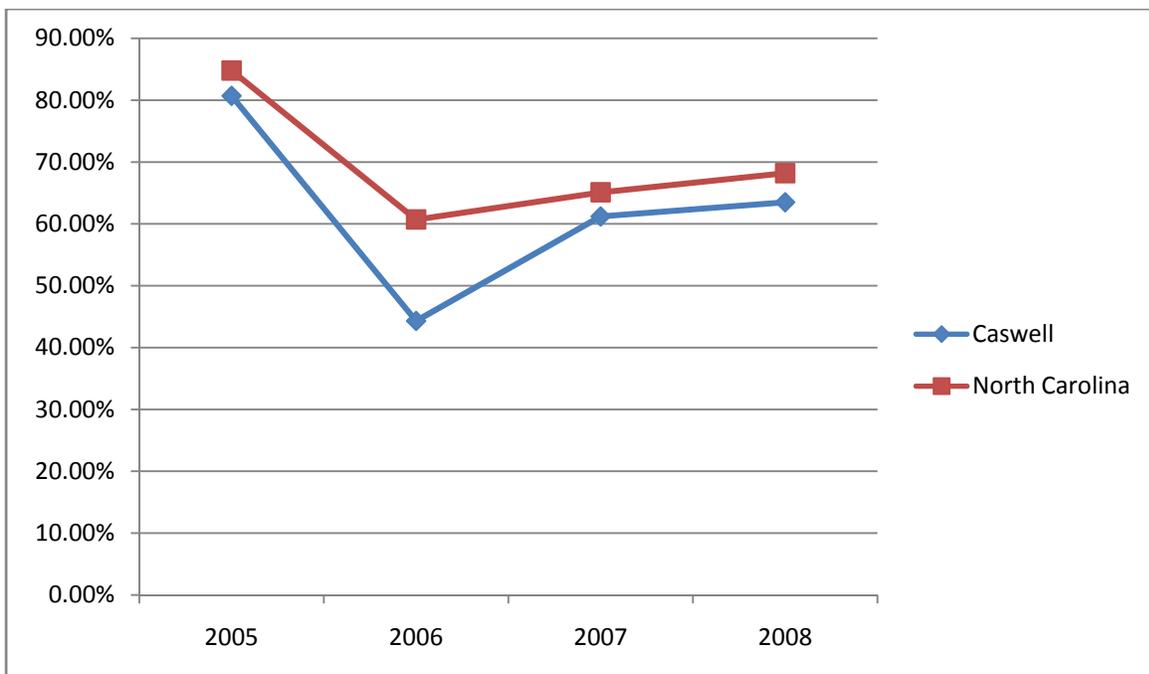
*Source: U.S. Census*

### Third-Grade Reading Proficiency



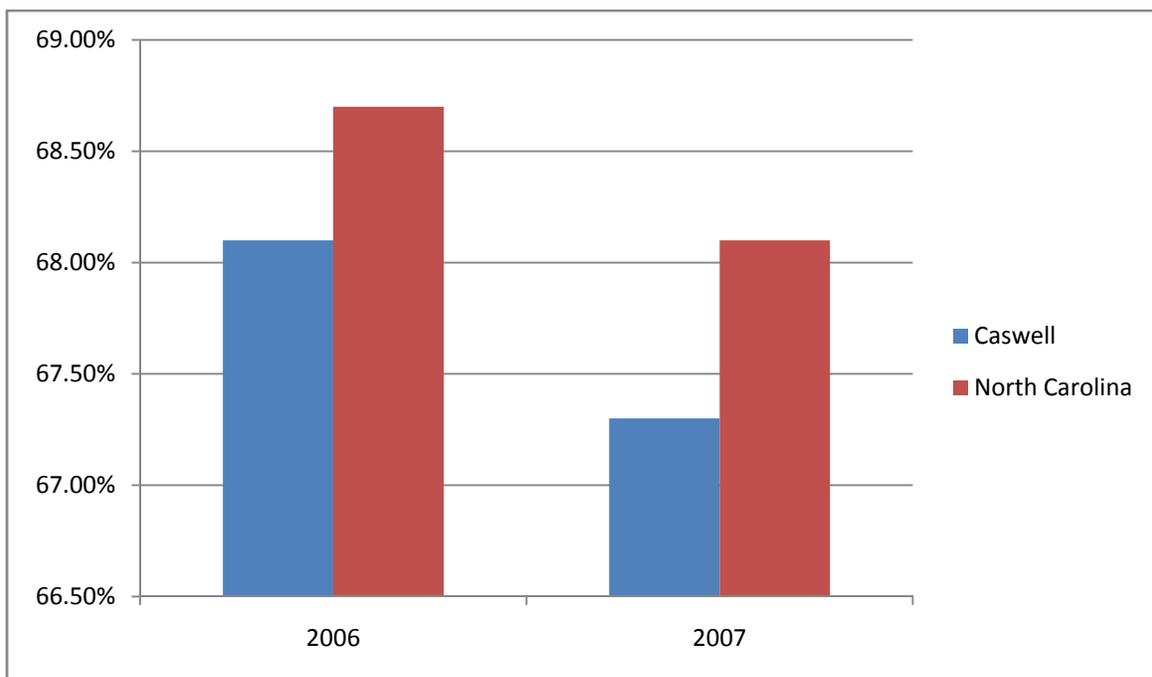
Source: KidsCount Data Center

### Eighth-Grade Math Ability



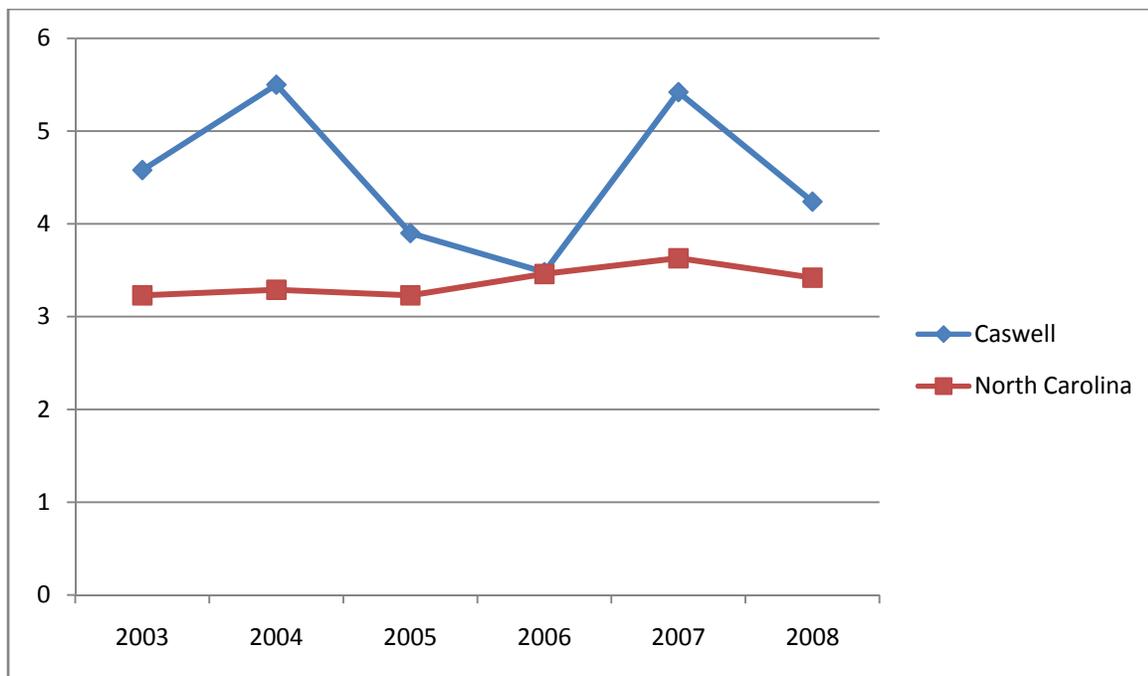
Source: KidsCount Data Center

*H.S. On-time Graduation Rates*



Source: KidsCount Data Center

*H.S. Dropout Rates*

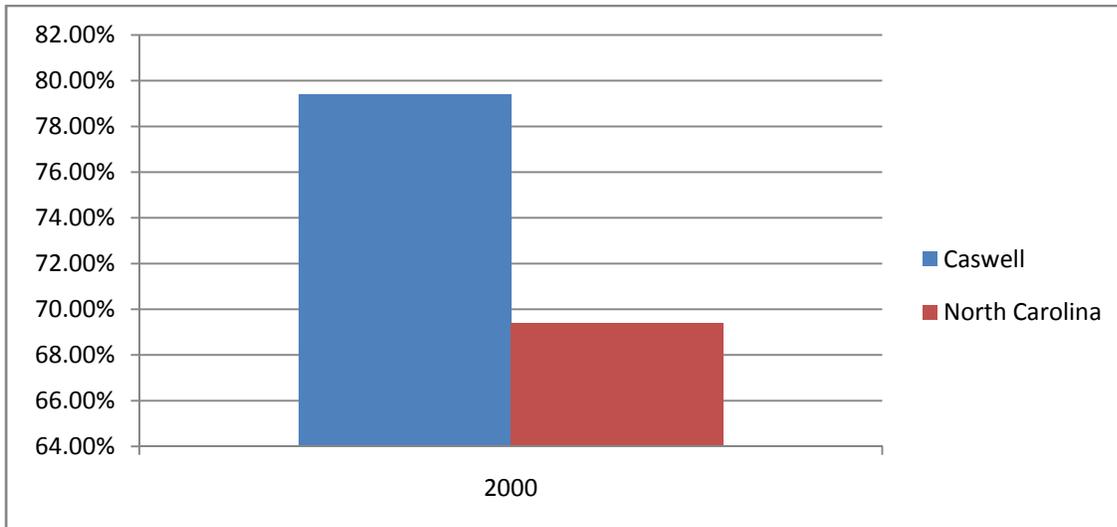


Source: North Carolina Department of Education

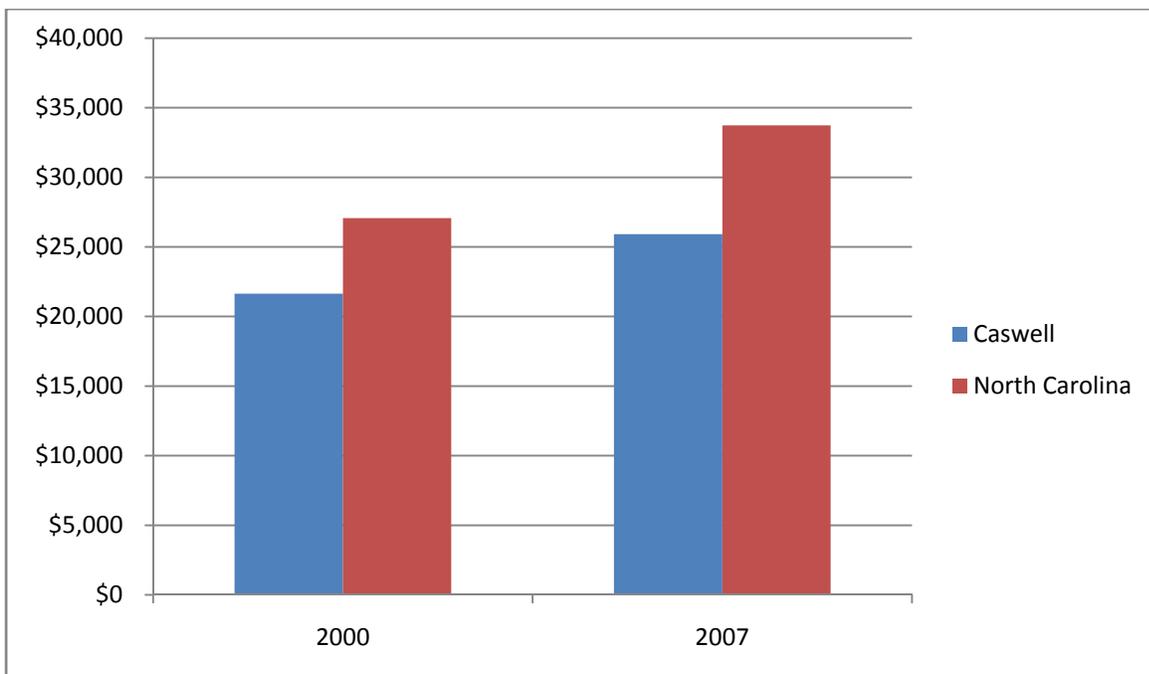
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**Financial Stability**

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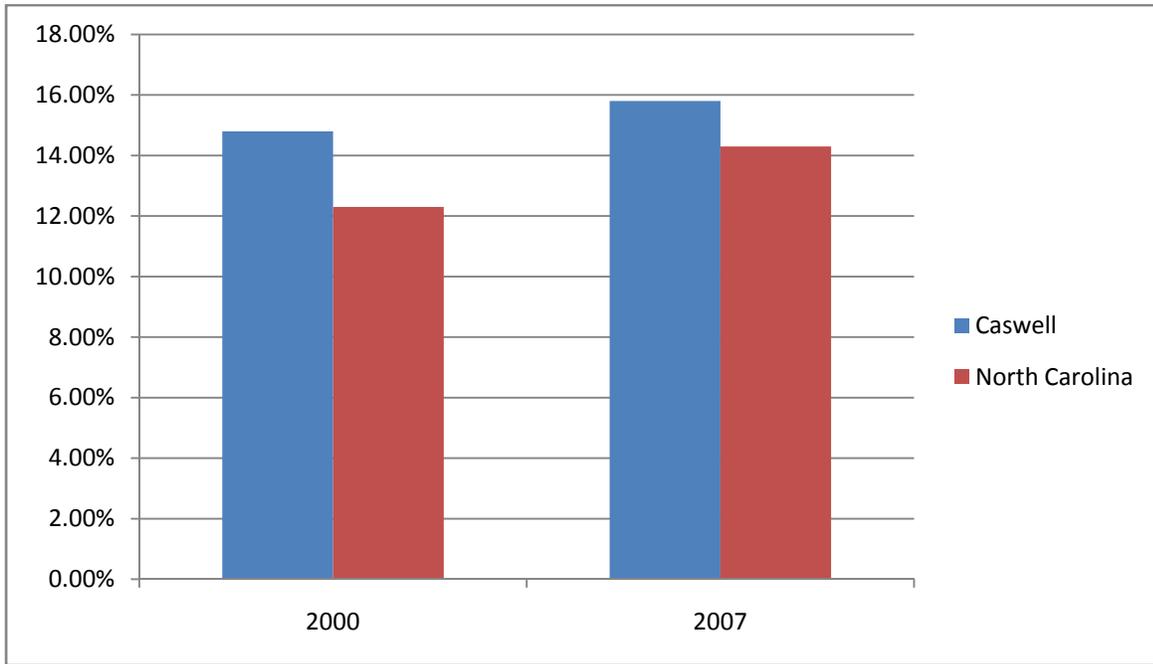
*Home Owner Rates (% of population)*

Source: U.S. Census

*Per Capita Income*

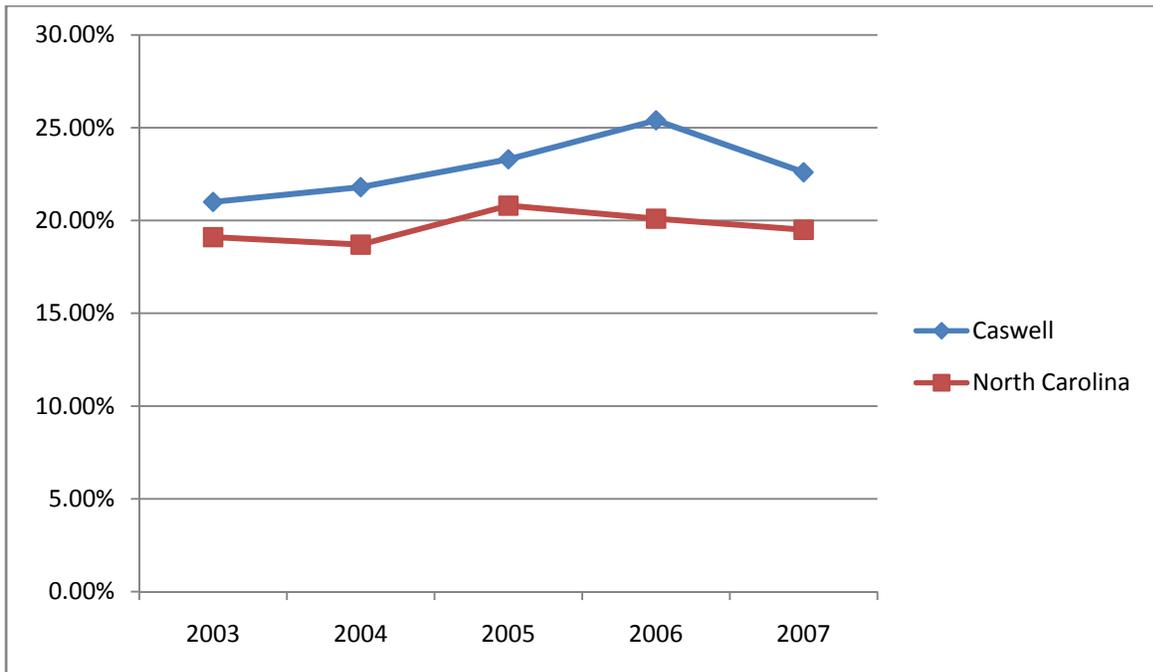
Source: U.S. Census

*Percent of Population in Poverty*



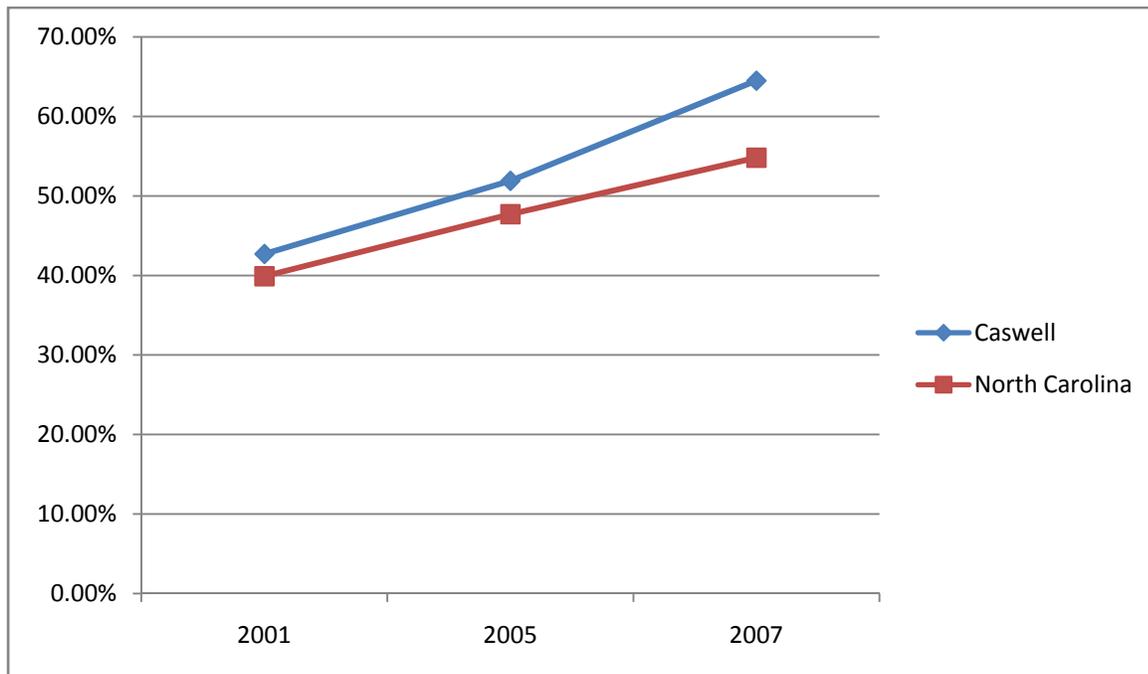
Source: U.S. Census

*Percent of Children in Poverty*



Source: KidsCount Data Center

*Percent of Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch*



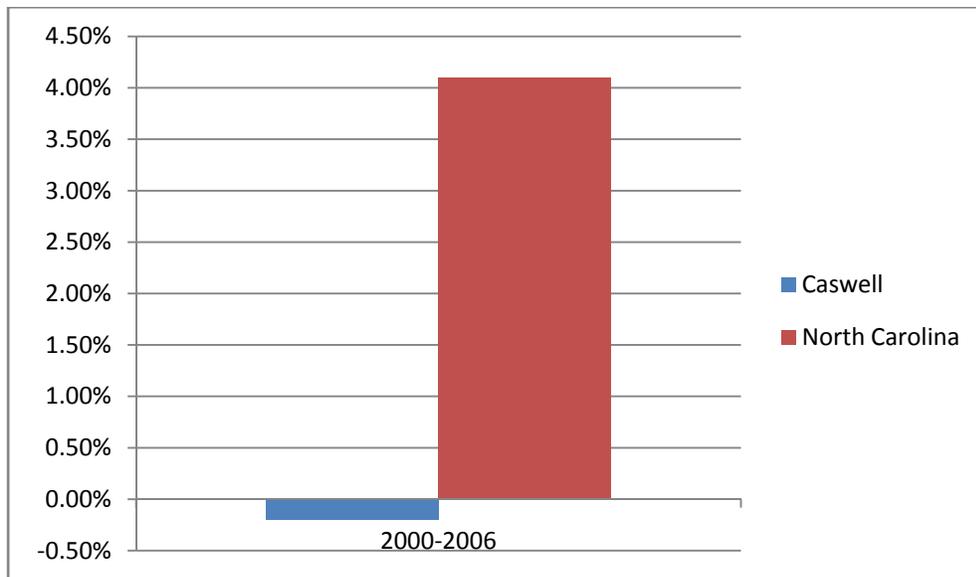
Source: KidsCount Data Center

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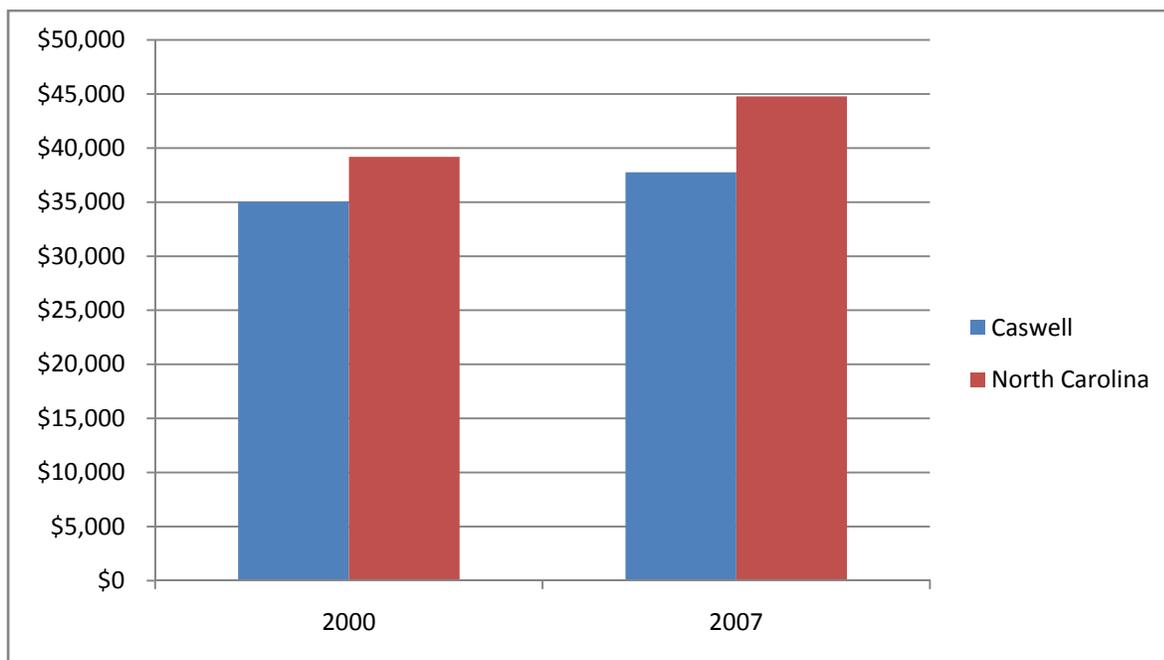
**Economic Vitality**

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*New Industry Employment (% change from 2000-2006)*

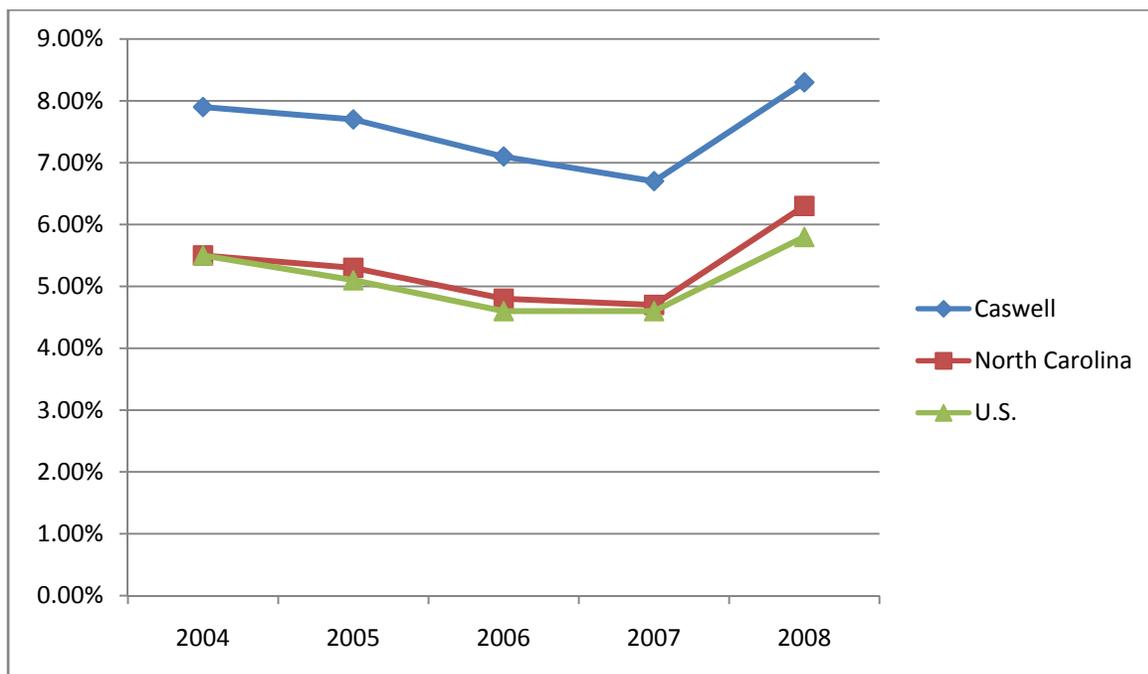


### Median Family Income



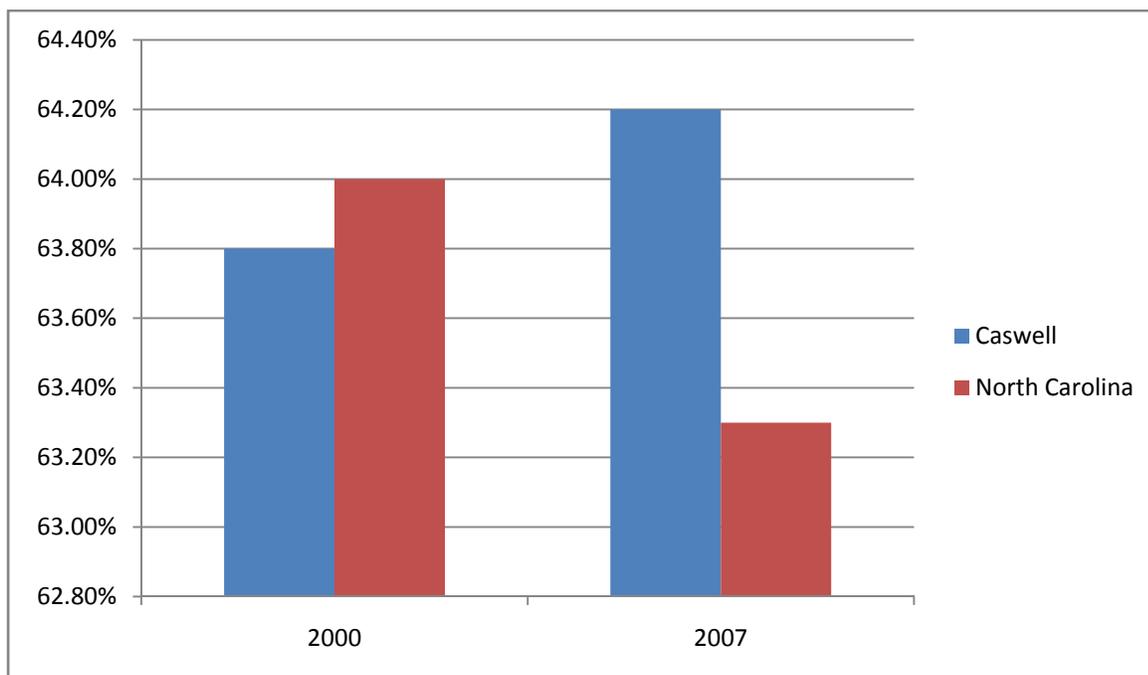
Source: U.S. Census

### Unemployment Rate



Source: U.S. Department of Labor Statistics

*Population Distribution (% of population 18-64 years old)*



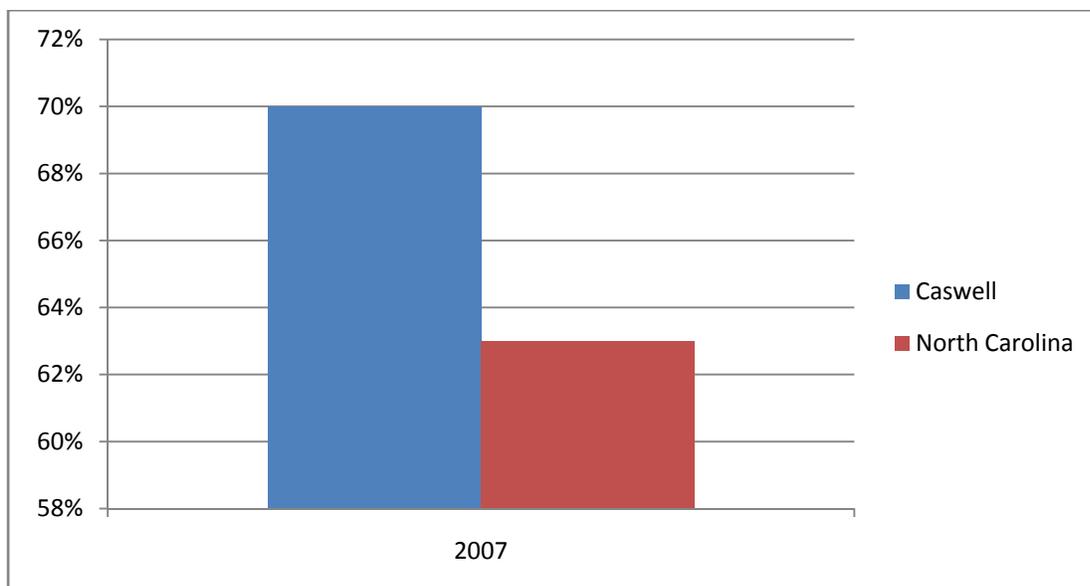
*Source: U.S. Census*

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## Health Status

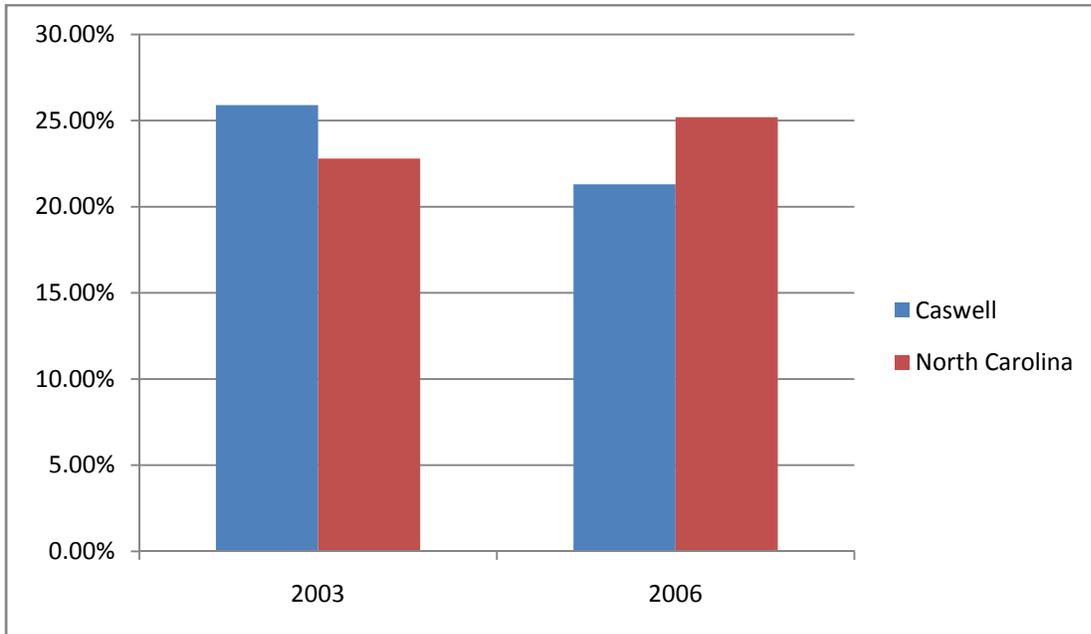
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*Percent of Population Overweight/Obese*



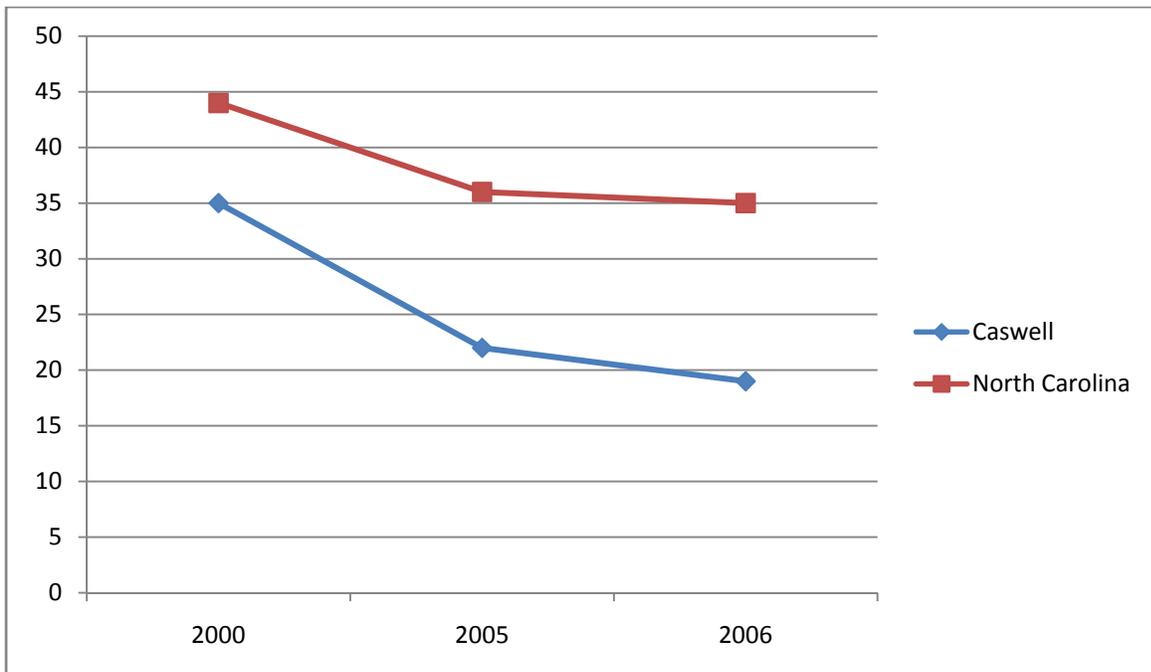
*Source: KidsCount Data Center*

*Percentage of Children Classified as Obese*



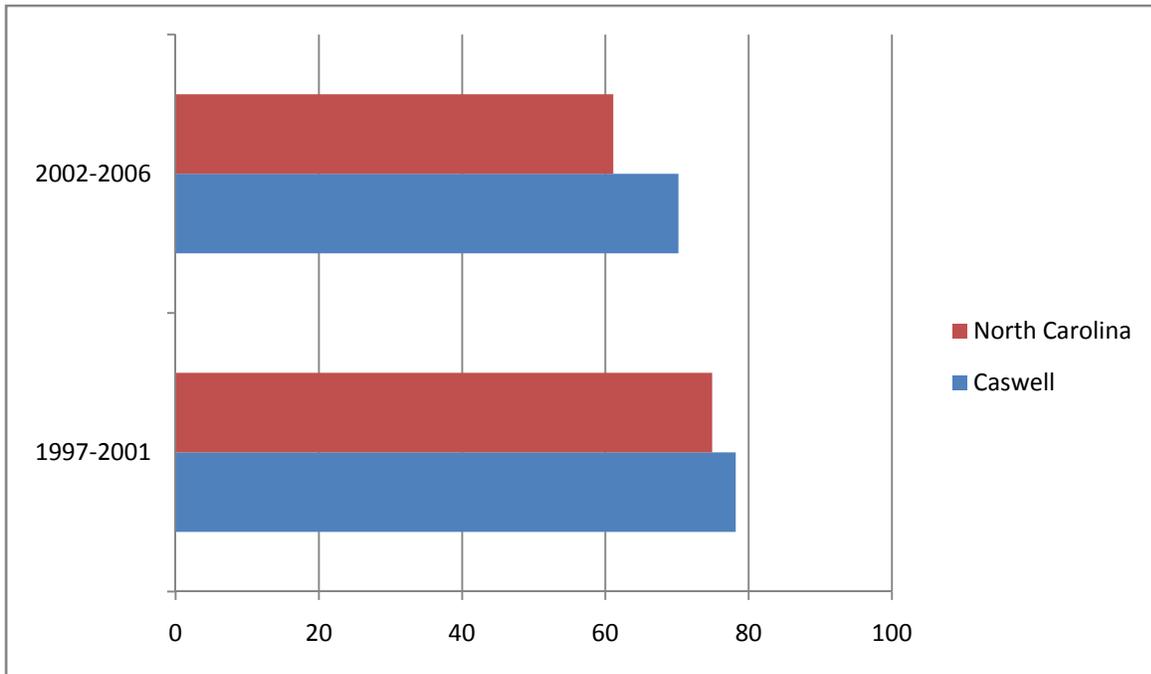
*Source: KidsCount Data Center*

*Teen Pregnancy Rate (per 1,000 Females)*



*Source: Kids Count Data Center*

*Trends in Stroke Death Rate (per 100,000 persons)*

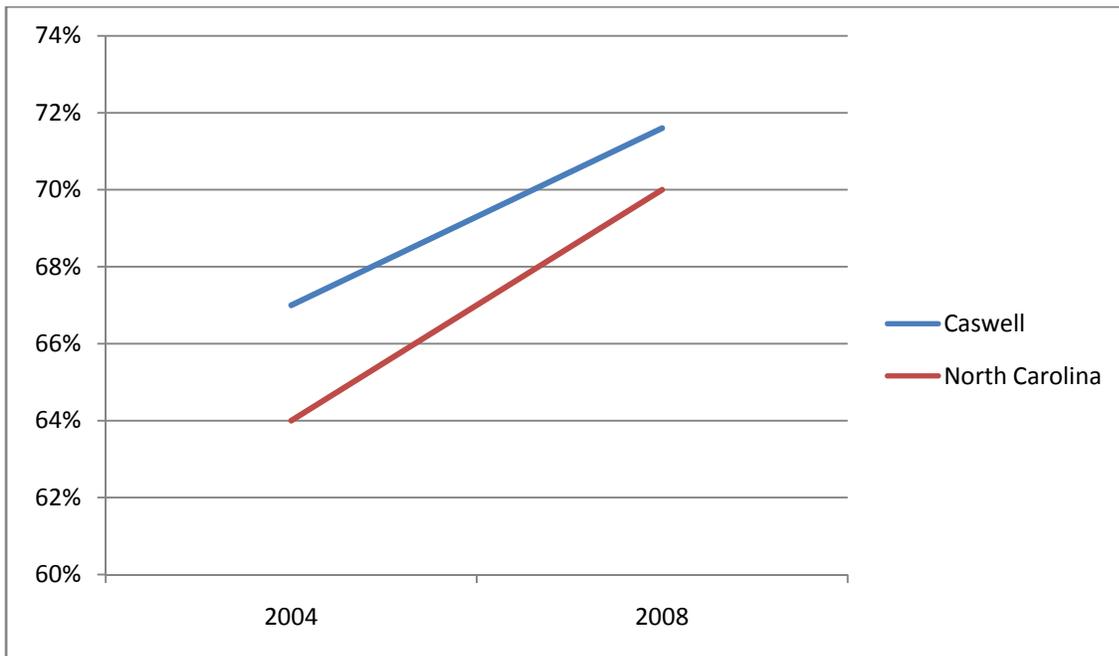



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**Civic Capacity**

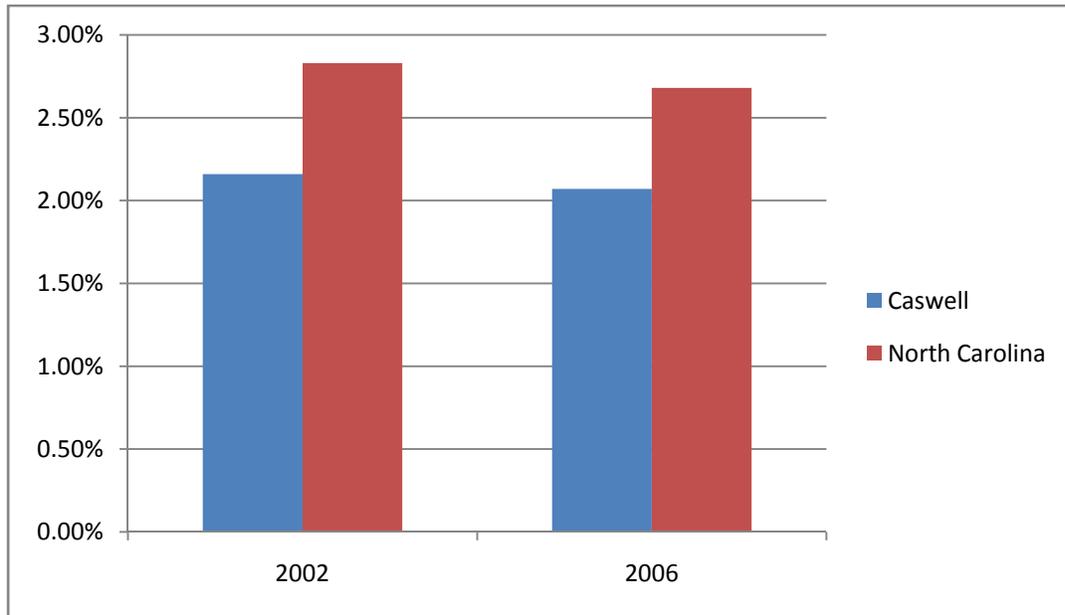
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*Voter Turnout – General Election (% of registered voters)*



Source: N.C. Board of Elections

*Charitable Giving Rate (% of AGI)*



*Source: National Center for Charitable Statistics*

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.yubacounty.org/Demographics/3\\_Income%20&%20Salesa.htm](http://www.yubacounty.org/Demographics/3_Income%20&%20Salesa.htm)