

## PIC-CLMS Longitudinal Study of BPS Graduates

### *Enrollment, Completion, Persistence*

#### Selected Highlights

The Boston Private Industry Council (PIC) and the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University (CLMS) have integrated data from the National Student Clearinghouse, the Boston Public Schools (BPS), and annual PIC follow-up survey data to produce a second set of reports on the postsecondary education experiences of BPS graduating classes up to nine years after high school graduation. The reports capture college enrollment, completion, and persistence information through the fall semester of 2009.

This brief provides highlights in four areas:

- an update on the BPS Class of 2000, nine years after high school graduation,
- college completion data on the BPS Class of 2003, the first MCAS class, disaggregated by two year / four year college enrollment and by exam school / other high school,
- disaggregated data on the BPS Class of 2003 by race, by gender, and by race/gender group,
- one and two year college persistence data on the BPS classes of 2001, 2003, 2007 and 2008.

**1) Nine years after high school graduation, the college graduation rate for the BPS class of 2000 increased to 41.5% of those who enrolled in college. A significant number of students attained degrees eight and nine years after high school graduation.**

The nine year graduation rate for college enrollees from the BPS Class of 2000 is 3.6 percentage points higher than the seven year rate (73 additional graduates). As a result of improved reporting practices, the seven year graduation rate of 37.9% for college enrollees is 2.4 percentage points higher than the 35.5% rate we reported in November of 2008. (As a percentage of high school graduates, the nine year college graduation rate for the Class of 2000 was 28.6%.)

**2) The six year graduation rate for college enrollees from the BPS Class 2003, the first students subject to the MCAS graduation requirement, is 41.3%. The MCAS graduation requirement appears to have led to a significant increase in BPS college graduation rates.**

This 41.3% rate is 4.7 percentage points higher than the six year graduation rate of 36.6% for college enrollees from the Class of 2000, an increase of over twelve percent. College graduation rates actually dipped slightly for the pre-MCAS Classes of 2001 and 2002, as compared to the Class of 2000. The Classes of 2004 and 2005 appear to be holding onto the MCAS boost experienced by the Class of 2003, based on their four and five year results. (As a percentage of high school graduates, the six year college graduation rate for the Class of 2003 was 29.3%.)

Most of this improvement was due to higher graduation rates among those who initially enrolled in four year colleges – from 48.7% for the class of 2000 to 54.9% for the Class of 2003. The rate for those initially attending two year colleges rose from 13.6% to 14.2%.

Very different graduation rates prevail between college enrollees from the three exam schools as compared to enrollees from the other BPS high schools. The exam school rate was 69.3% versus 27.7% for all other BPS high schools. For those enrolling in two year colleges, the difference was 33.7% versus 10.8%. For those enrolling in four year colleges, the difference was 74.3% versus 42.8%.

**3) The disparities in college enrollment and graduation rates – by gender, by race, and by race/gender group – remain disturbingly high for the Class of 2003.**

- The Class of 2003 had an enrollment rate of 70.9% over the first six years. The enrollment rate for women was more than 10 percentage points higher than the rate for men – 75.5% versus 65.1%. Asian and White graduates had higher enrollment rates (78.2% and 76.9%) than Black and Hispanic graduates (69.2% and 63.7%). White women had a college enrollment rate advantage over Hispanic men of almost 30 percentage points (83.6% versus 54.9%).
- Women who enrolled in college from the Class of 2003 have a six year graduation rate that is 9.4 percentage points higher than the rate for men (45.1% versus 35.7%). Even larger disparities prevailed across the four major race-ethnic groups – from lows of 30.3% and 33.4% among Hispanic and Black enrollees to highs of 60.6% and 62.3% among Whites and Asians. Asian and White college enrollees were more than twice as likely to graduate as Hispanics.
- For the Class of 2003, 230 Black women attained college degrees or postsecondary certificates for every 100 Black men – 211 Hispanic women for every 100 Hispanic men – more than double the number for each group. The gender gap in the number of college graduates from the Class of 2003 is the compounded result of higher high school graduation, college enrollment, and college graduation rates for women.

**4) There has been significant improvement in the one and two year persistence rates for two year college enrollees from the BPS Classes of 2007 and 2008, as compared to two year college enrollees from the Classes of 2001 and 2003. Though the one year persistence rate for those enrolling in four year colleges has remained steady at approximately 87%, the two year persistence rate has climbed steadily.**

- The one year persistence rate for those entering two year colleges increased by 5.6 percentage points for the Class of 2003 as compared to the Class of 2001, from 55.4% to 61.0%. It remained the same for the class of 2007 – then it jumped remarkably by 6.0 percentage points for two year college enrollees from the Class of 2008, from 61.3% to 67.3%.

- The two year persistence rate for two year college enrollees jumped 10.3 percentage points for the Class of 2003 as compared to the class of 2001 – 47.9% versus 37.6%. The rate increased by another 5.6% for the Class of 2007 as compared to the Class of 2003 – from 47.9% to 53.5% – a remarkable increase of 15.9 percentage points in persistence for the Class of 2007 as compared to the Class of 2001.
- Much of this information points to increased persistence among BPS graduates going into the fall semester of 2009. Possible factors include: a weaker economy that reduced the opportunity cost of staying in college, the ramp up of the Achieving the Dream initiative, and the increased attention on persistence among BPS graduates following the release of the first longitudinal study and the announcement Mayor Menino's goal of doubling the college graduation rate for BPS graduates.

*Note:* For the purposes of this report, one year persistence equals the percentage of BPS graduates who enroll in college in the fall immediately following high school graduation and who remained enrolled in college the following fall. Two year persistence equals the percentage of students who enroll in college in the fall immediately following high school graduation and who remained enrolled in college in the fall semester two years later. This is a measure of attachment, not continuous enrollment, though these rates are very close to one another.