



BOSTON PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL

Persisting Through the Pandemic and Beyond: *Trends in the College Enrollment and Completion Experiences of Recent BPS Graduates*

Prepared for:

Boston Public Schools

and

The Boston Foundation

Prepared by:

Joseph McLaughlin

Erik Barajas

Boston Private Industry Council

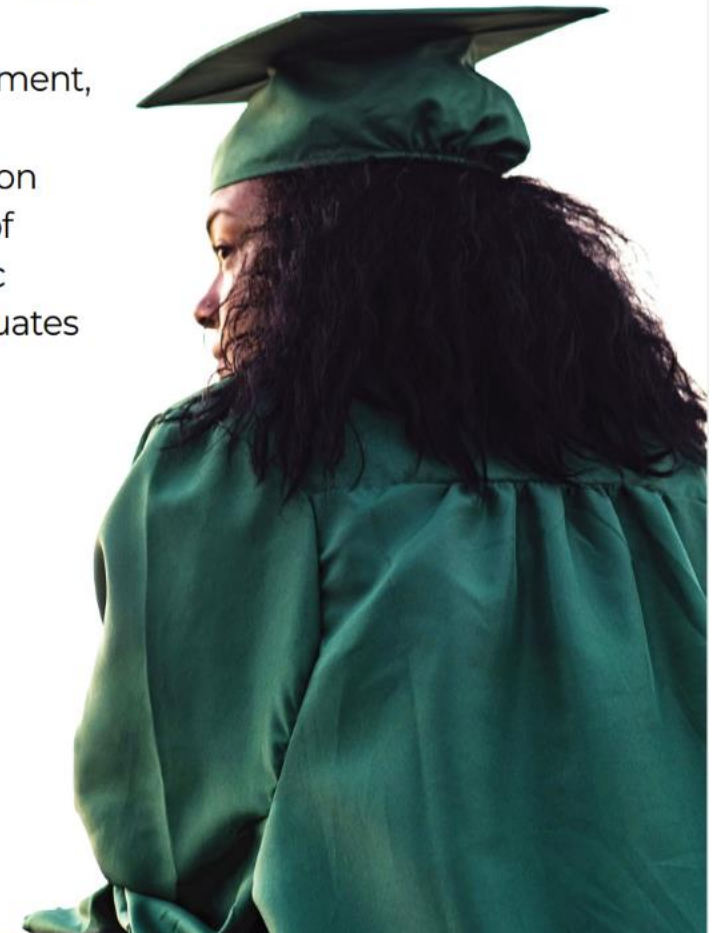
June 16, 2026

Postsecondary Longitudinal Studies of BPS Graduates

- 2008: *Getting to the Finish Line*: Class of 2000
- 2010: *Trends in College Completion*: Class of 2003
- 2013: *Getting Closer to the Finish Line*: Class of 2005/06
- 2016: *Reaching the Cap and Gown*: Class of 2009
- 2019: *Staying the Course*: Class of 2011
- 2023: *Trends in BPS College Enrollment and Completion: Classes of 2014 and 2015*
- **2026: Persisting through the Pandemic and Beyond**

Persisting Through the Pandemic and Beyond:

Trends in the college enrollment, persistence, and completion experiences of Boston Public Schools graduates



The Boston
Foundation



BOSTON
PRIVATE
INDUSTRY
COUNCIL

Data Sources for Measuring College Outcomes of BPS Graduates

Boston Public Schools (BPS)

Student-level data of graduates:

- Gender
- Race/ethnic group
- Graduating high school
- Selected characteristics:
 - English language learner
 - Students with disabilities
 - Economically disadvantaged

National Student Clearinghouse (NSC)

Student-level enrollment records reported by colleges nationwide:

- Semester of enrollment
- Level of college (2yr/4yr)
- Public/Private status
- Students' full-time / part-time statuses
- Degrees and fields of study

College enrollment and completion measures

- **First-year enrollment:** the number and percentage of BPS graduates who enroll in a postsecondary institution during the immediate fall or winter/spring semesters following high school graduation.
- **Six-year college completion:** the number and percentage of first-year enrollees who earn a certificate, 2-year, or 4-year degree within six years.
 - BPS Class of 2019 followed through spring/summer 2025

Key Findings

College enrollment

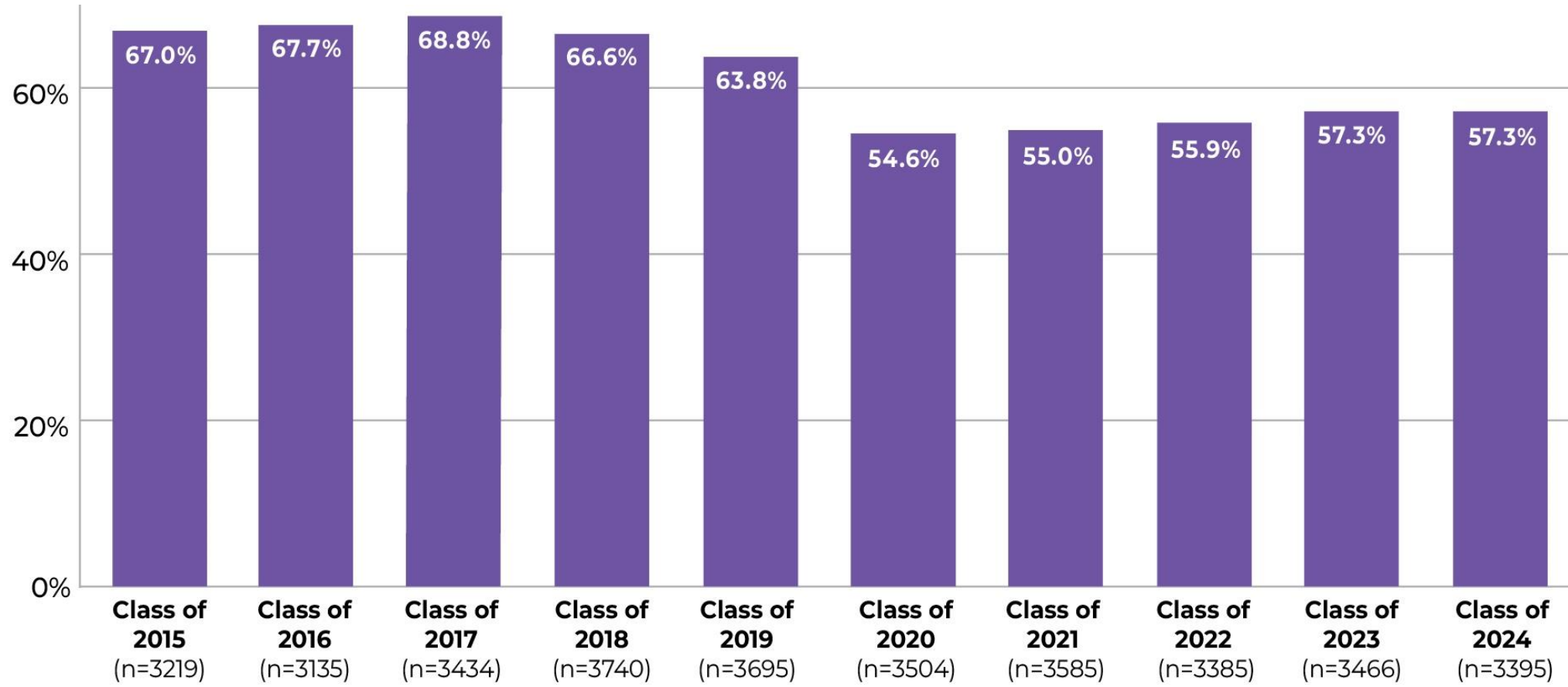
- College enrollment rates of recent BPS graduating classes (Classes of 2023 and 2024) were trending up from pandemic-era lows but remain 10 percentage points below pre-pandemic highs.
- Among the four major race-ethnic groups, the enrollment declines from pre-pandemic levels are largest for Black and Latino BPS graduates.

College completion

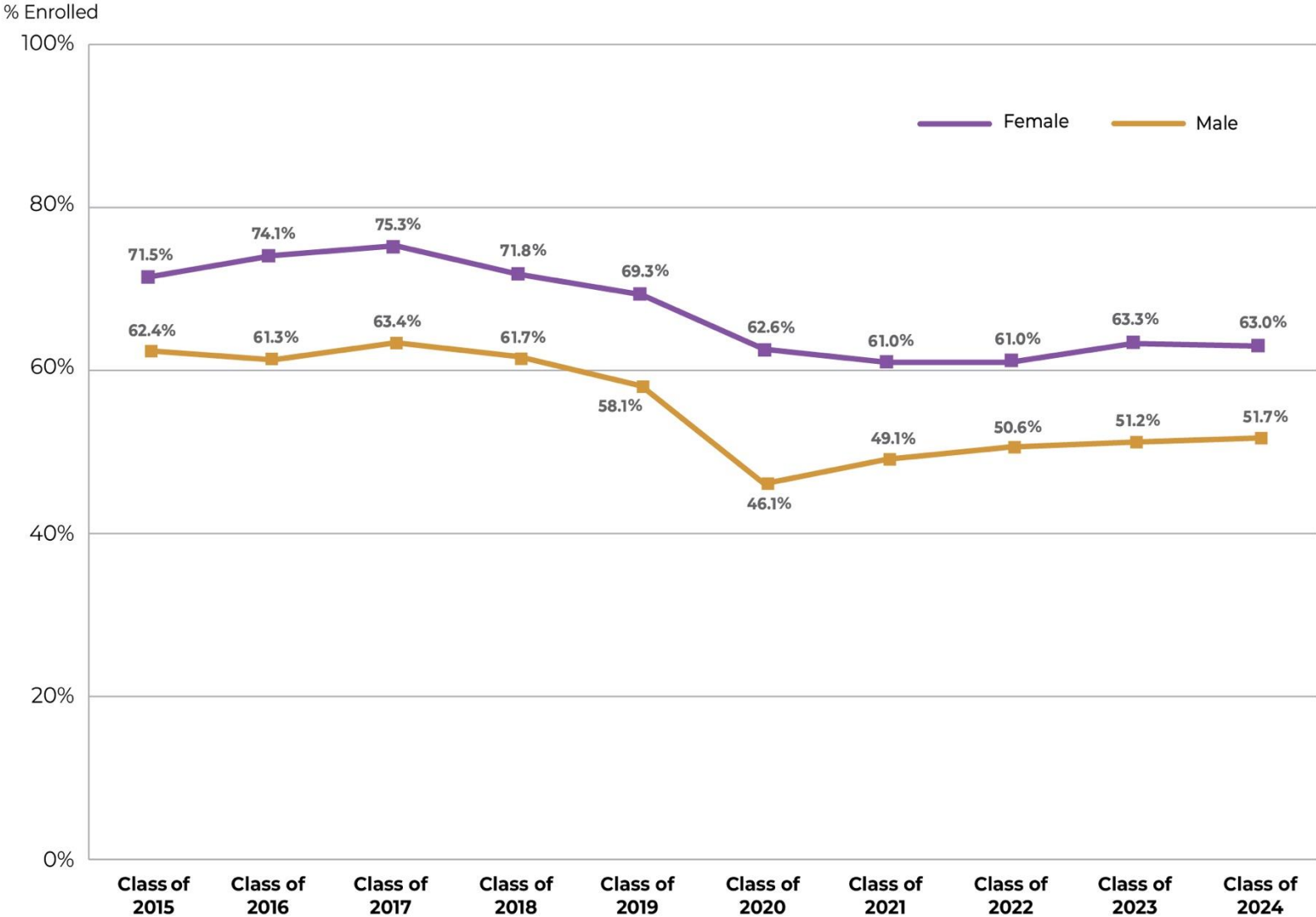
- Six-year college completion rates dipped slightly for the BPS high school classes that started college just before the pandemic (Classes of 2018 and 2019) but are close to recent trends.
- The gender and race-ethnic gaps in college completion rates of BPS graduates persist and mirror national trends.
- There are large differences in college completion rates across exam and non-exam high schools.
- One in five BPS graduates from the Class of 2019 who attended a two-year public college completed within six years. Completion rates are much higher for those starting a four-year institutions.

College Enrollment: Trends in First-year enrollment

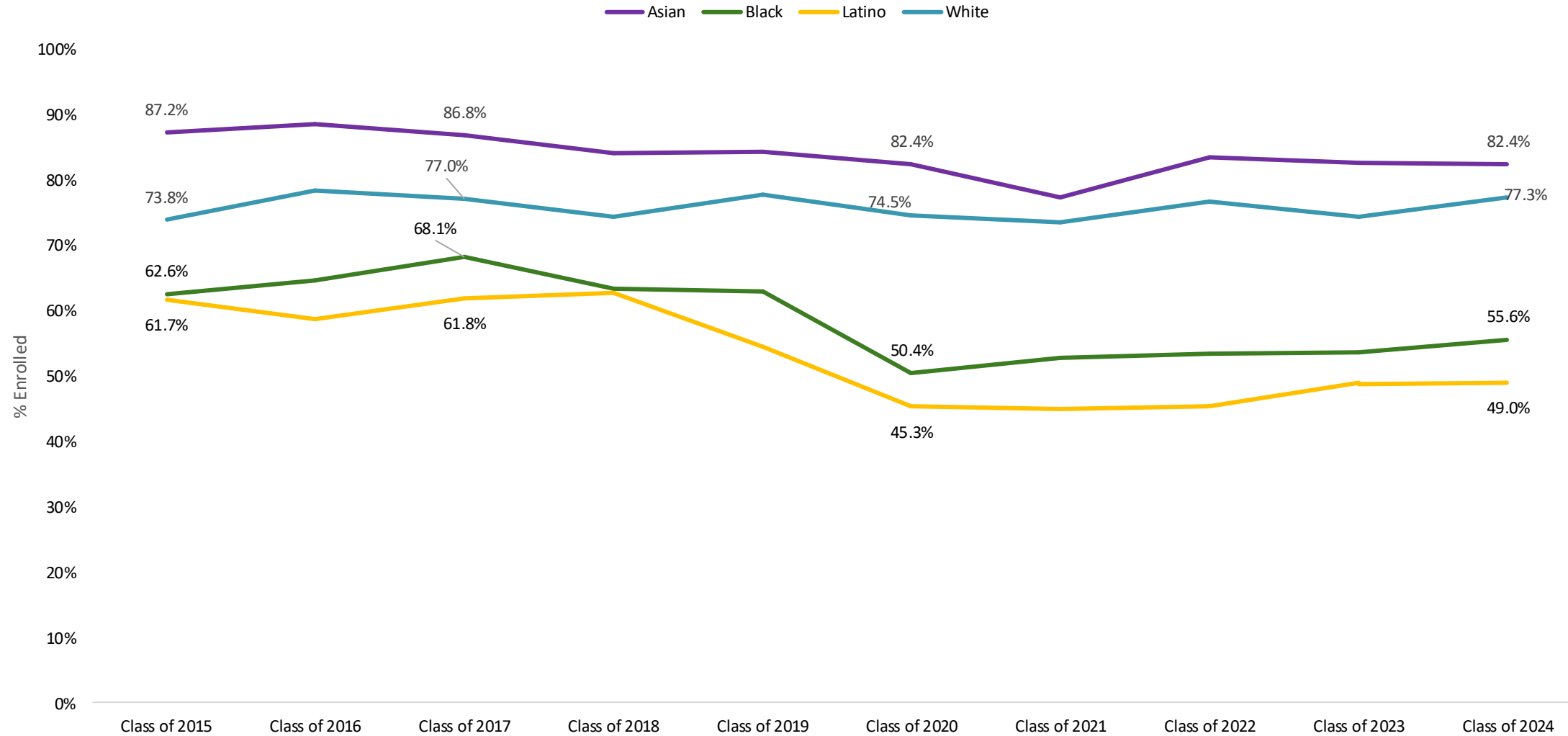
Trends in the First-Year College Enrollment Rates, BPS Classes, 2015-2024



Trends in the First-Year College Enrollment Rates by Gender, BPS Classes of 2015–2024



Trends in First-Year College Enrollment Rates Race-Ethnicity, BPS Classes of 2015-2024



Community College Enrollment

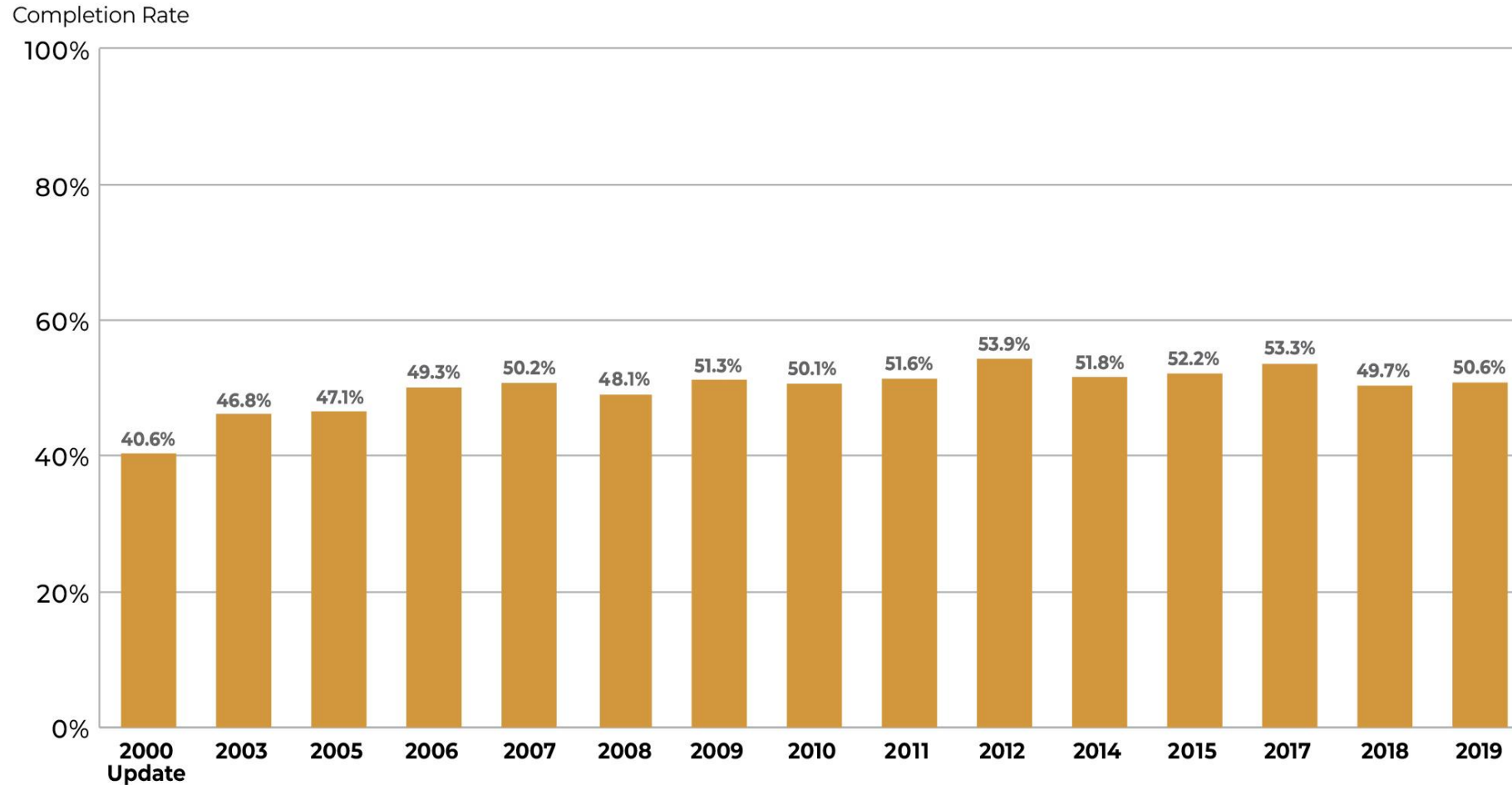
TABLE 1
**RECENT TRENDS IN THE NUMBER AND PERCENT
OF BPS GRADUATES ENROLLING IN TWO-YEAR
COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN THE IMMEDIATE FALL SEMESTER,
BPS CLASSES OF 2023-2025**

	Class of 2023	Class of 2024	Class of 2025
Fall Enrollees at MA Community Colleges	407	399	407
Number of BPS Graduates	3,466	3,403	3,654
Community College Enrollment Rate	11.7%	11.7%	11.1%

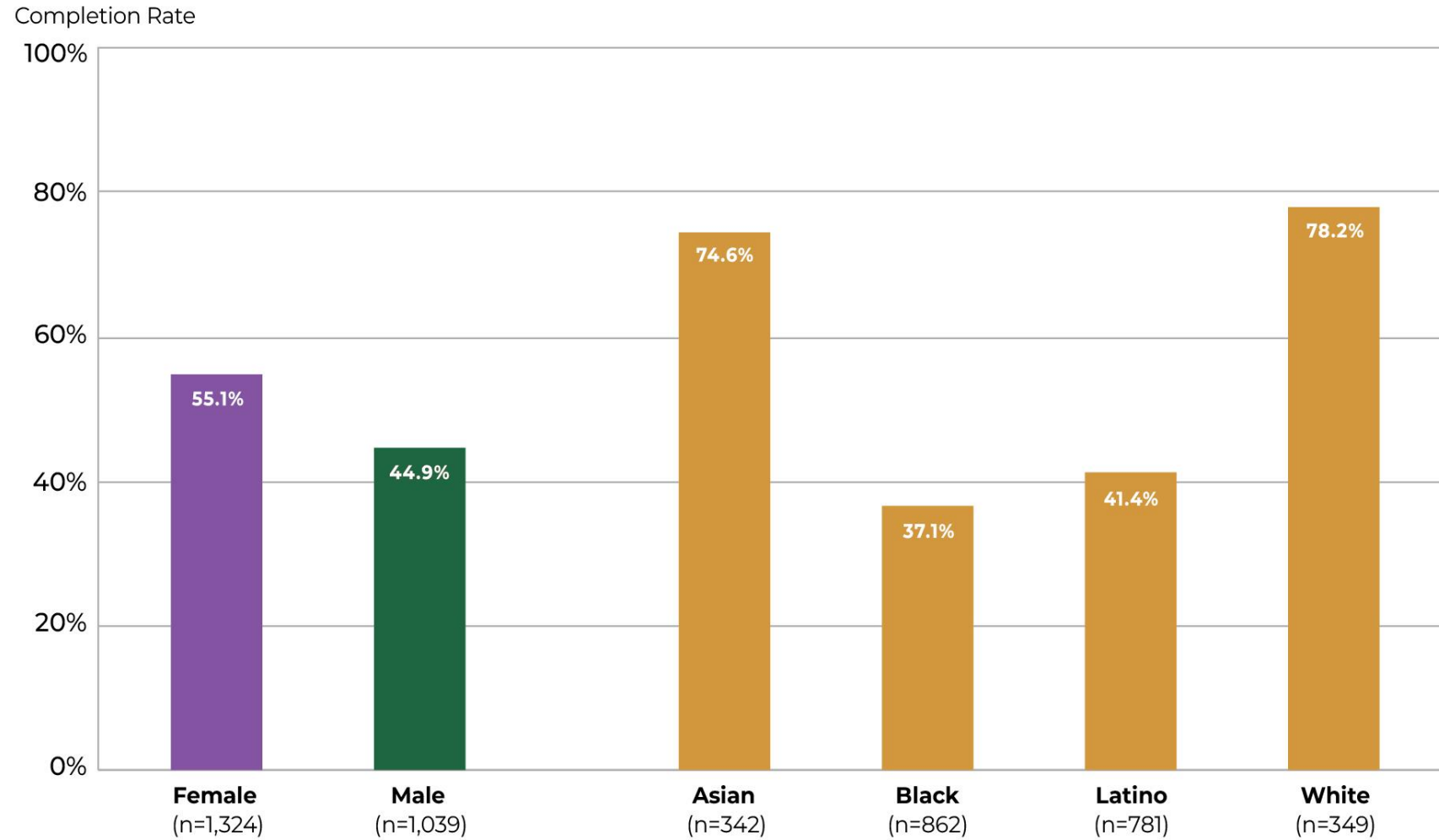
Source: PIC analysis of NSC records

College Completion: Six-Year Completion Rates of First-Year Enrollees from BPS Classes

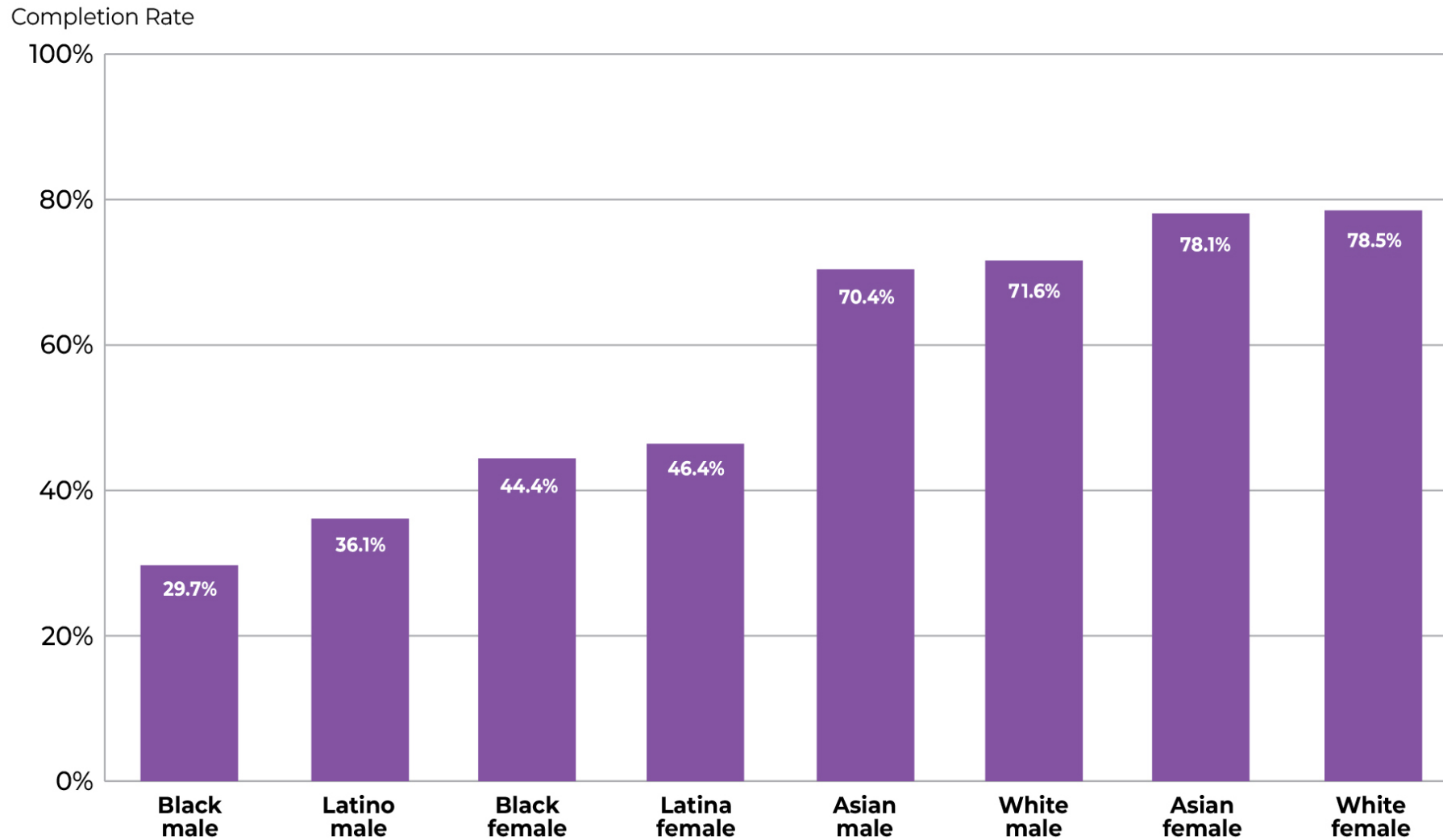
Trends in the Six-Year College Completion Rates of First-Year Enrollees (Selected BPS Classes, 2000-2019)



Six-Year College Completion Rates of First-Year Enrollees by Gender and Race-Ethnicity, BPS Class of 2019



Six-Year College Completion Rates of First-Year Enrollees By Gender and Race-Ethnic Subgroup, BPS Classes of 2018 and 2019 Combined



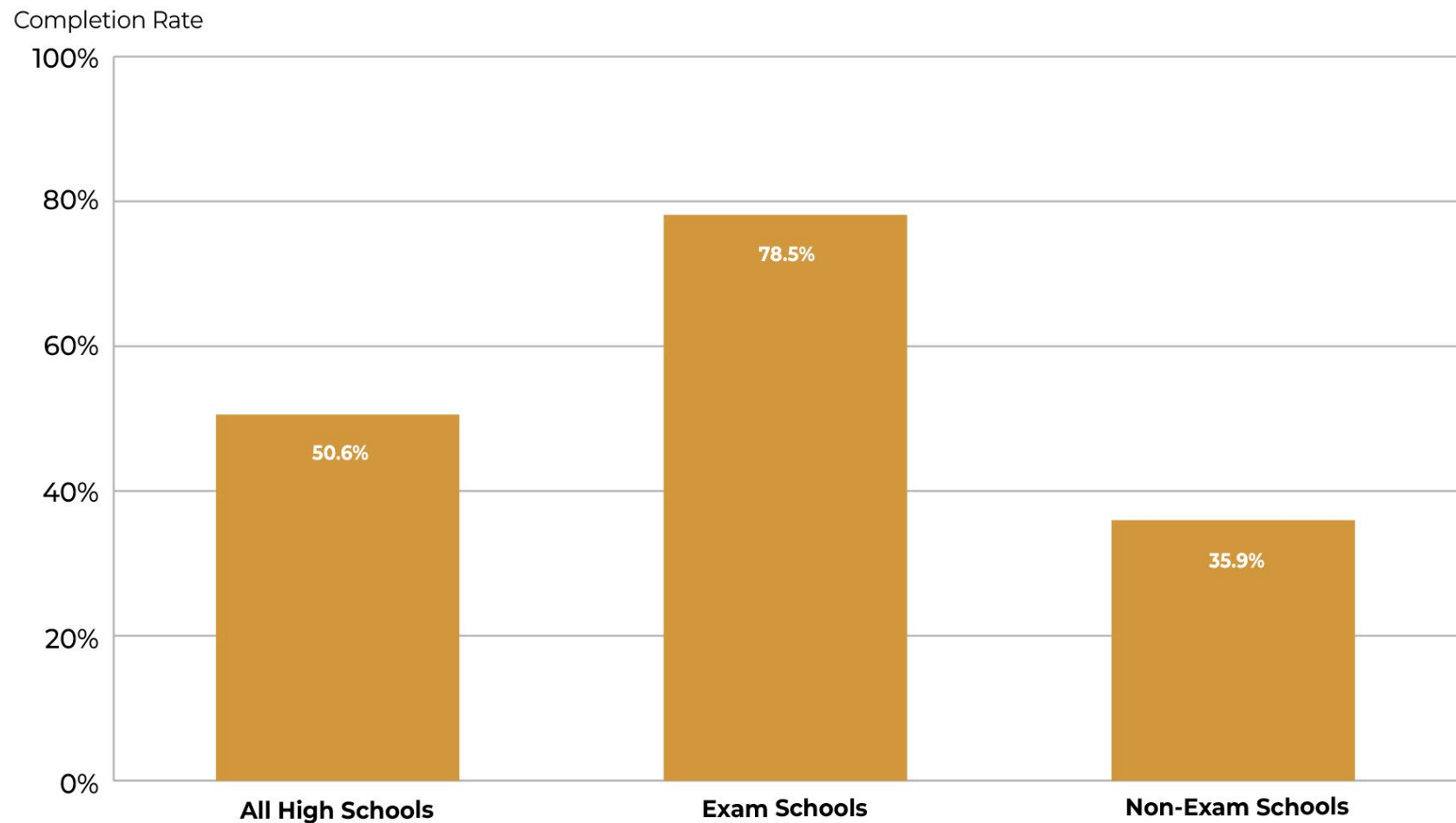
Six-year College Completion Rates by:

Type of High School Attended

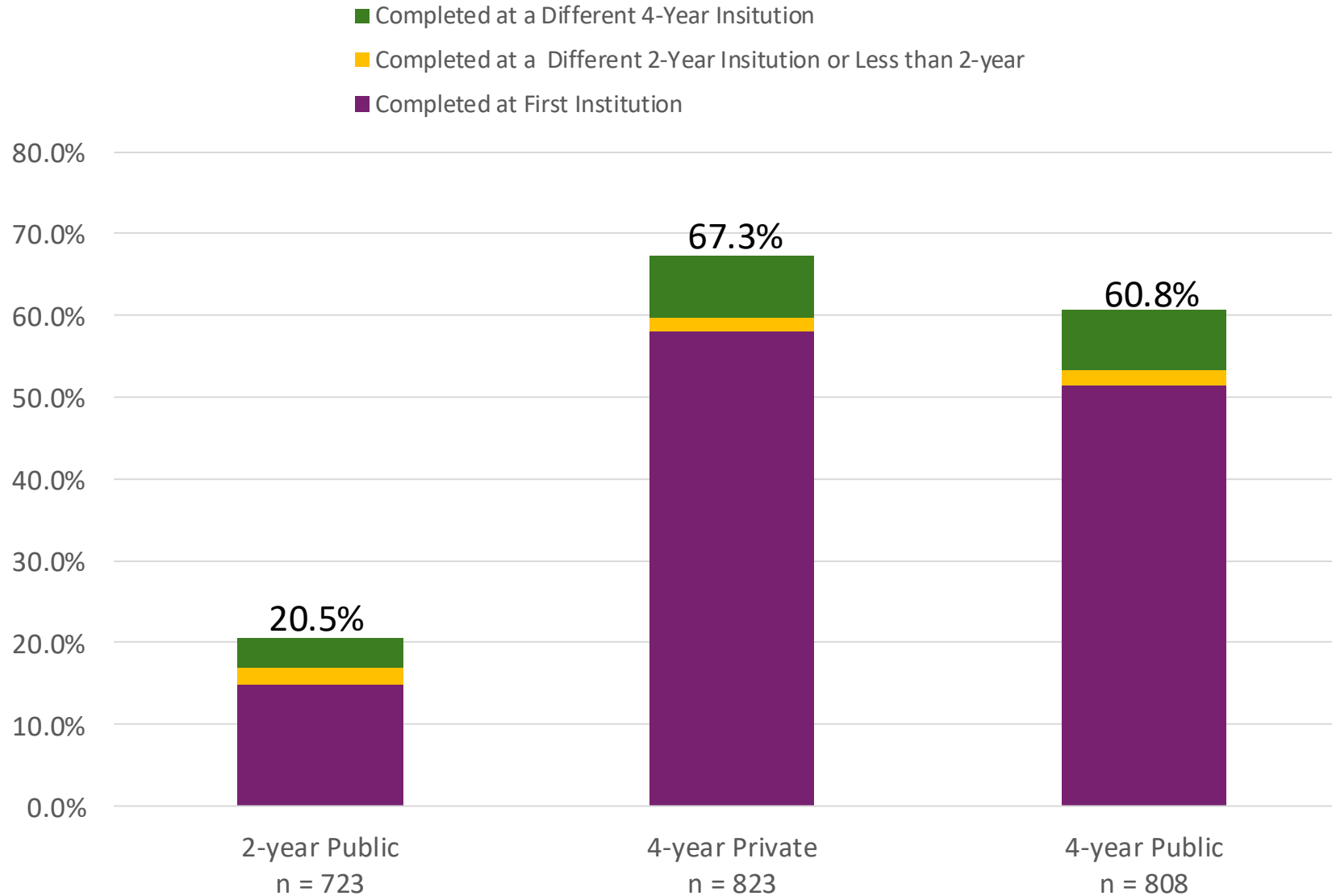
Type of College First Attended

Note: The selectivity of the schools attended and student's academic and socioeconomic background strongly influence completion rates. This is not intended to be a comparative performance analysis across schools.

Six-Year College Completion Rates of First-Year Enrollees by High School Type, BPS Classes of 2019



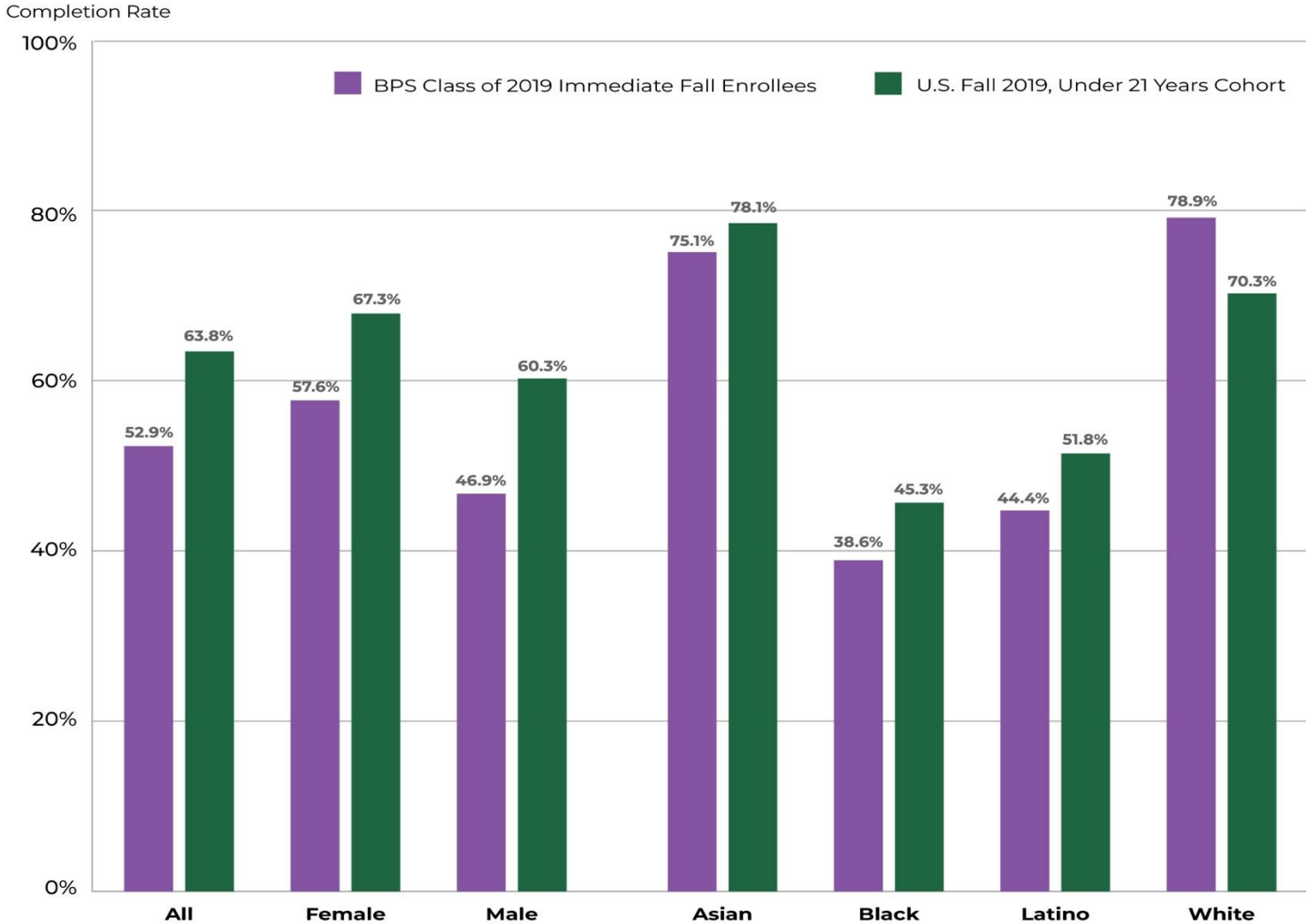
Six-Year College Completion Rates of First-Year Enrollees By Type of College First Attended, BPS Class of 2019



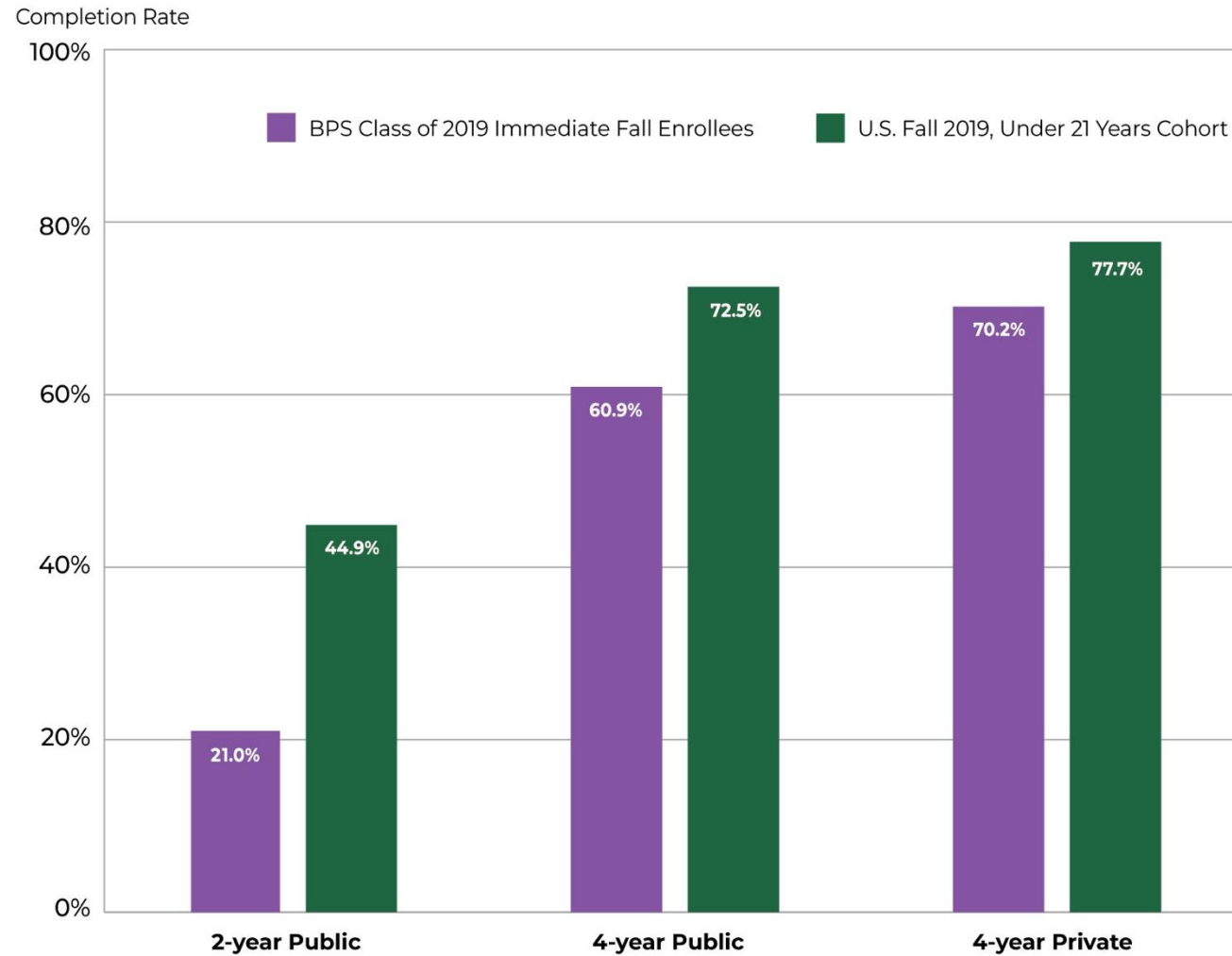
National Comparisons

Comparing the college completion experiences of immediate fall enrollees from the BPS Class of 2019 to national fall 2019 first-time college enrollees.

Comparison of Six-year College Completion Rates of BPS First-time, Fall College Enrollees to the National Cohort of First-time, Fall Enrollees, Under 21 Years of Age, Fall 2019 Cohorts



Six-year College Completion Rates of BPS Class of 2019 Fall Enrollees by Type of Institution Compared to U.S. Averages for First-time, Fall 2019 Enrollees (under 21 Years of Age)



Summary and Discussion

- Over the time period for this study, the district's high school graduation rate climbed substantially. At the same time, district experienced growth in student populations that are historically under-represented in college. This means that more students that are at marginally-higher risk of not completing college are enrolling than previously.
- BPS and its partners have expanded several initiatives to prepare graduates for both college and career, including new Early College and career pathways.
- Several states and local areas also have piloted new initiatives and programs to close socioeconomic disparities in college completion and improve outcomes for first-generation college students.
- We'll now look at some of the evidence of what works for boosting college completion based on research conducted in other states.