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Latinos in Massachusetts Public Schools Taunton

by Michael Berardino, MS

June, 2013

THE MAURICIO GASTON INSTITUTE
FOR LATINO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND PUBLIC POLICY

Taunton

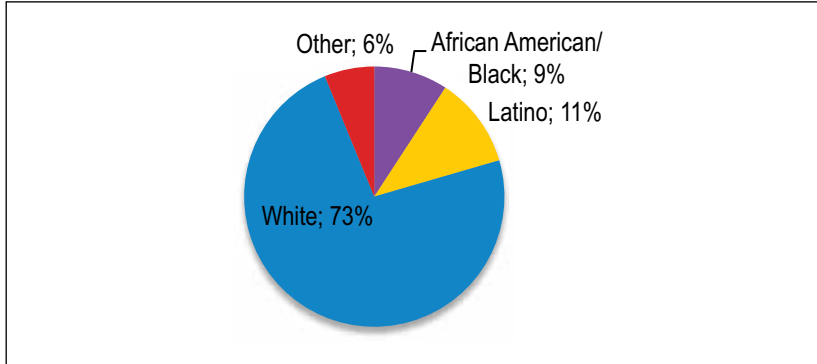
This report provides a snapshot of current educational outcomes of Latino students in the town of Taunton. It is based on publically available data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MADESE) that has been analyzed by the Gastón Institute for the 2013 *Latinos in Massachusetts Regional Meeting* in New Bedford. This report uses the ethno-racial categories assigned by MADESE. It focuses on the evolving demographic trends and the most recent educational outcomes of Latino students relative to other ethno-racial groups in the school district. The first section illustrates the demographic shift occurring in the Taunton Public Schools, with a growing Latino and African-American/Black student population and a shrinking White student population. The second section compares the performance of Latino students in Taunton on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests with the performance of all students statewide and other ethno-racial groups in Taunton. The third section shows Latino graduation and dropout rates, and college enrollment rates, relative to White students in the district and to all students statewide. The second and third sections show that there are disparities in outcomes between Latino and White students in Taunton and between Latino students and all students statewide. Specifically of concern is that as compared to Latino students in other school districts, Latino students in Taunton have one of the highest dropout rates and lowest college enrollment rates in the state. Still, there have been improvements in outcomes over recent years. The achievement gap between Latino and White students in Taunton has narrowed, with especially large improvements on the Grade 3 Reading, and Grade 10 ELA and Math MCAS tests.

Notes

¹ While analyzing and presenting the data using MADESE's ethno-racial categories, we use the term "Latino" rather than "Hispanic."

Demographics

Figure 1: Taunton Ethno-Racial Composition, SY2013

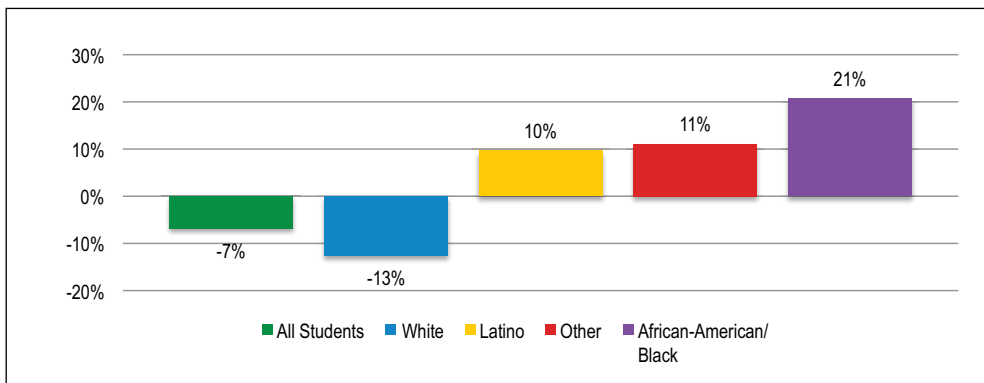


Source: MADESE. (n.d.). *Enrollment Data*.

The Taunton Public School District is the fifteenth largest school district in Massachusetts, with an enrollment of 7,681 students in SY2013. While becoming more diverse, Taunton is still a predominantly White school district with White students accounting for 73% of all students in SY2013. Latinos are the second largest ethno-racial group, constituting 11% of all students. African-American/Black students are the next largest group at 9%, with all other ethno-racial groups accounting for 6% of the enrollment. Of the 868 Latino students in Taunton, approximately 8% are classified as Limited English Proficient (accounting for 50% of all LEP students in Taunton). The Latino student population is a highly mobile group with 20% of all Latino students changing schools and 11% leaving the district during SY2012 (both far above the district rates of 11% and 6% respectively).

As demonstrated in Figure 2 below, Taunton has experienced a demographic shift in recent years. Since SY2006, the overall student enrollment has decreased by 7%, with the White student enrollment decreasing by 13%. On the other hand the number of Latino students has increased by 10% and the number of African-American/Black students has grown by 21%.

Figure 2: Percentage Change in Enrollment, SY2006 to SY2013



Source: Author's calculations based on MADESE (2012) Enrollment

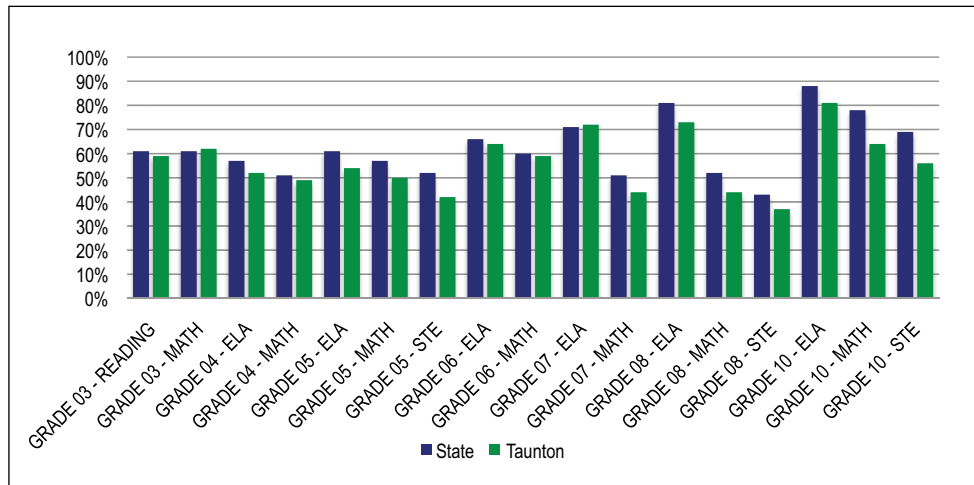
² SY refers to the ending year of the school year. For example SY2013 is the school year that began in September of 2012 and ends in June of 2013

³ This report uses the ethno-racial categories assigned by MADESE: African-American/Black; Asian; Hispanic; Native American; White; Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander; and Multi-race, non-Hispanic. The "other" category includes: Asian, Native American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Multi-race, non-Hispanic students. The "other" category is omitted from further comparisons.

⁴ SY2006 was the first year MADESE reported the Multi-race, non-Hispanic and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander categories

MCAS Performance

Figure 3: Percentage of All Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher, MCAS by Grade and Subject, SY2012

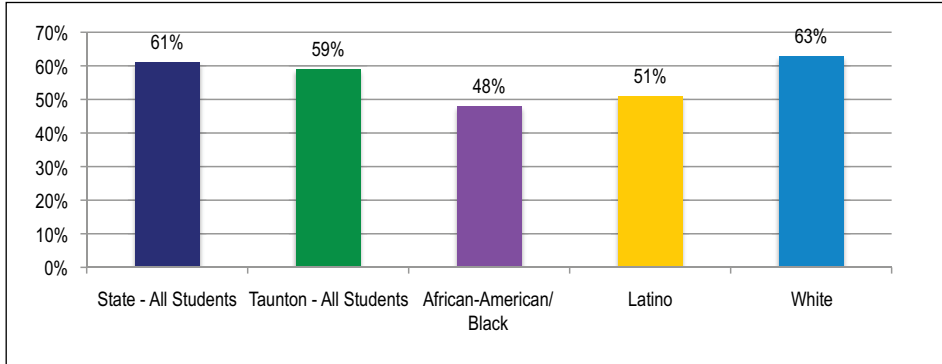


Source: MADESE (2012). 2012 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject.

Taunton as a district performs slightly below the state on the various MCAS subject tests, with a lower proportion of all students scoring “Proficient” or higher on the tests on all subjects at all grades, with the exception of Grade 3 Math. As the Figure 3 above shows, the performance gap is largest in Grades 8 and 10, which is of particular concern considering that the 10th grade MCAS tests are graduation requirements for all students. There is a similar pattern of MCAS performance when looking at Latino students in Taunton as compared to Latino students statewide. In SY2012 Latino students in Taunton had higher pass rates than Latino students statewide on most MCAS tests from Grade 3 to Grade 7, but had lower pass rates than Latino students statewide on all Grade 8 and 10 MCAS tests.

This section highlights the performance by Latino students in Taunton on the Grade 3 Reading and Grade 10 English Language Arts (ELA), Math, and Science/Technology/Engineering (STE) tests, all important performance measures. Grade 3 Reading is considered an important time when students go from learning how to read to learning from reading. The Grade 10 MCAS tests are crucial for students: all students in Massachusetts are required to pass the Grade 10 ELA, Math, and STE MCAS tests in order to qualify for a high school diploma.

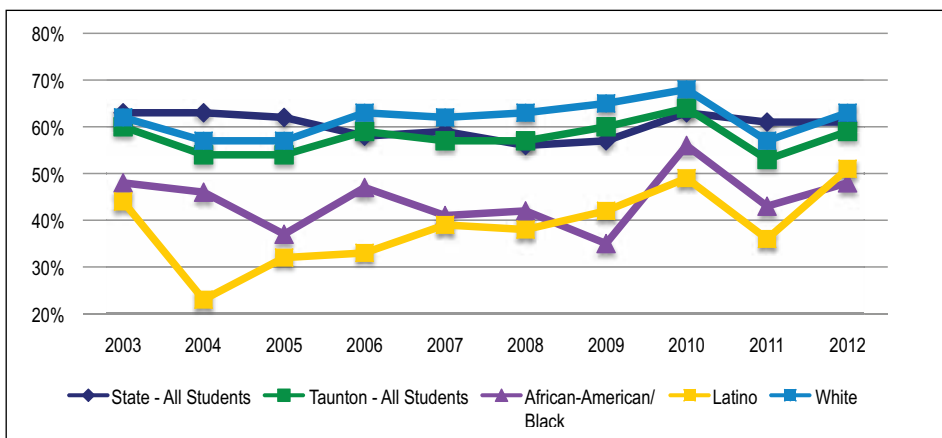
Figure 4: Percentage of Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher, Grade 3 Reading MCAS by Race/Ethnicity, SY2012



Source: MADESE (2012). *2012 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject.*

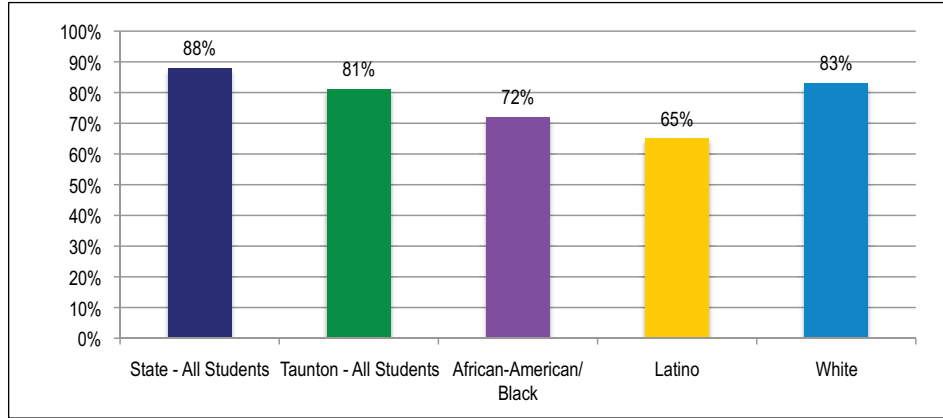
In SY2012, 51% of Latino students in Taunton were assessed as reading at grade level at the end of third grade. Figure 4 above shows that this rate was slightly higher than the rate for African-American/Black students, but 12 percentage points lower than the rate for White students. Of additional concern is the 13% of Latino students (the highest among all ethno-racial groups in the district) who scored in the “Warning” category. Figure 5 below shows that while the percentage of Latino students scoring “Proficient” or higher on the Grade 3 MCAS is below the rate for White students, this rate for Latino students has increased steadily over recent years. In SY2012 the rate was 7 percentage points higher than in SY2003 (and 28 percentage points higher than SY2004), with the result that the gap between Latino and White students was only half as big in SY2012 as in SY2003.

Figure 5: Percentage of Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher, Grade 3 Reading MCAS by Race/Ethnicity, SY2003-SY2012



Source: MADESE (2012). *2012 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject.*

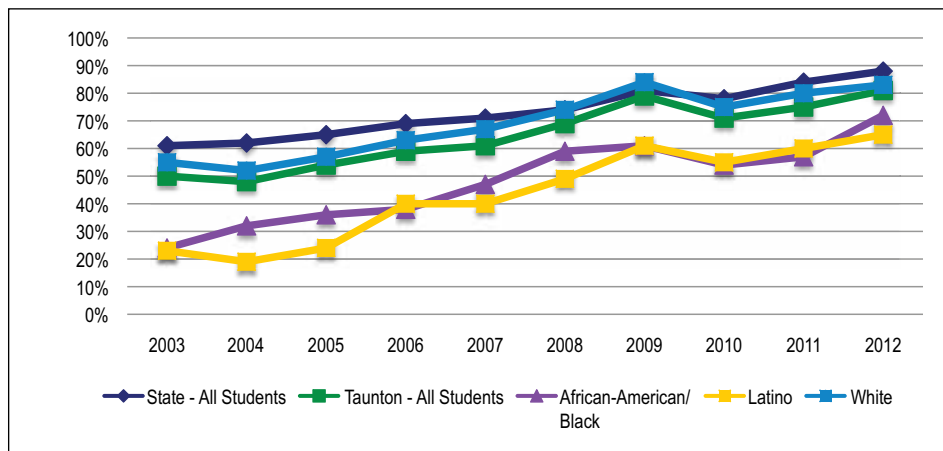
Figure 6: Percentage of Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher, Grade 10 ELA MCAS by Race/Ethnicity, SY2012



Source: MADESE (2012). *2012 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject.*

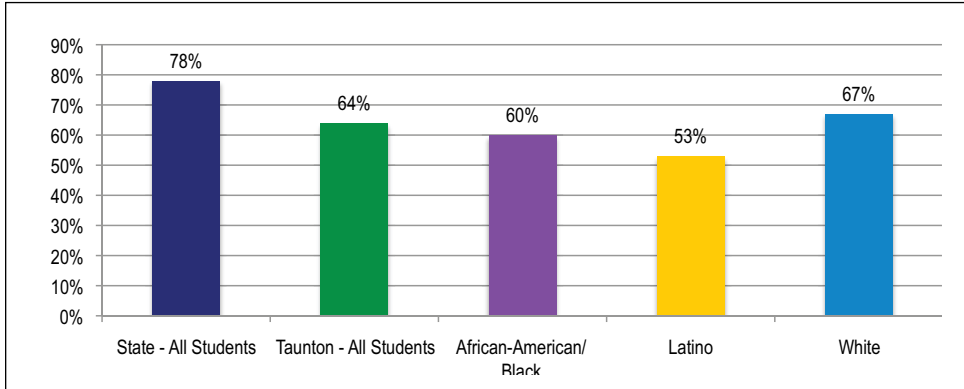
As seen in Figure 6 above, in SY2012, 65% of Latino students in Taunton scored “Proficient” or higher on the Grade 10 ELA MCAS. This was the lowest rate among all ethno-racial groups in the district, most notably 20 percentage points below the pass rate for White students. Figure 7 below shows that while there is a substantial gap, the Grade 10 ELA pass rates for Latino students in Taunton have improved steadily over the past ten years, increasing by 42 percentage points since SY2003. This improvement has narrowed the achievement gap with White students in Taunton by over 50% and the gap with all students statewide by 47%.

Figure 7: Percentage of Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher, Grade 10 ELA MCAS by Race/Ethnicity, SY2003-SY2012



Source: MADESE (2012). *2012 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject.*

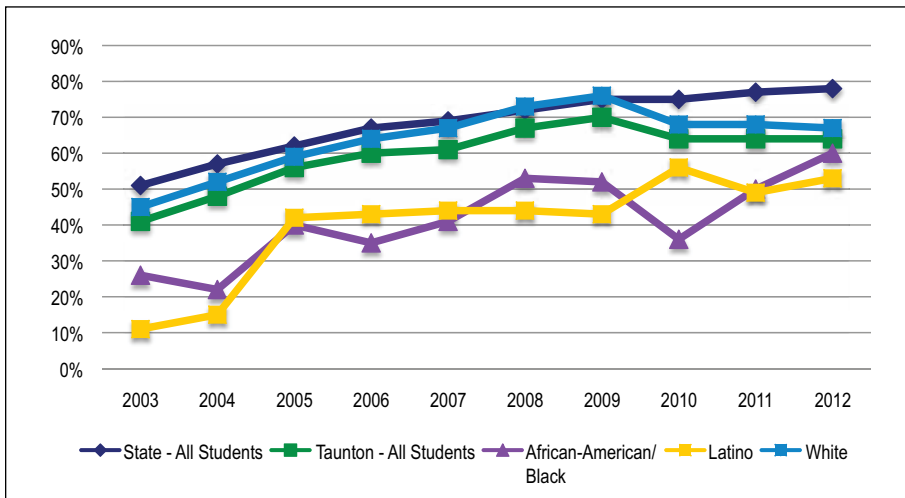
Figure 8: Percentage of Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher, Grade 10 Math MCAS by Race/Ethnicity, SY2012



Source: MADESE (2012). *2012 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject*.

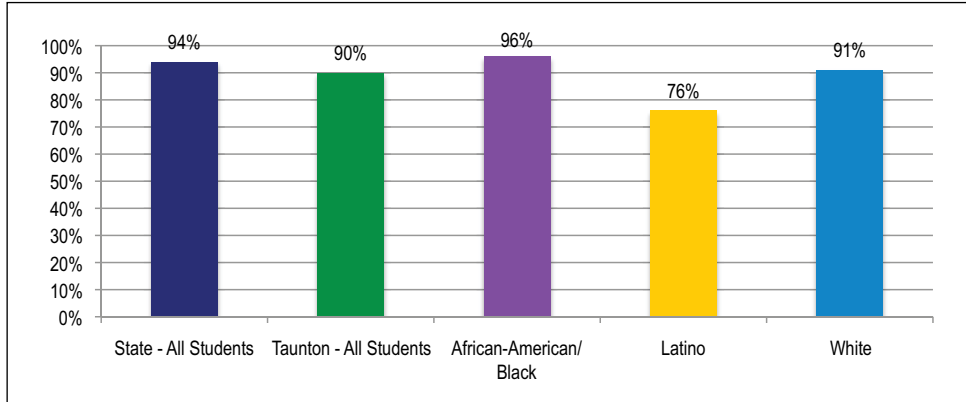
As seen in Figure 8 above, 53% of Latino students in Taunton passed the Grade 10 Math test in SY2012, 7 percentage points below the pass rate for African-American/Black students and 14 percentage points below the pass rate for White students. Notably, however, the 53% Latino pass rate represented a dramatic improvement over the 11% rate in SY2003, narrowing the achievement gap with White students in Taunton by almost 70% and the achievement gap with all students statewide by almost 38%.

Figure 9: Percentage of Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher, Grade 10 Math MCAS by Race/Ethnicity, SY2003-SY2012



Source: MADESE (2012). *2012 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject*.

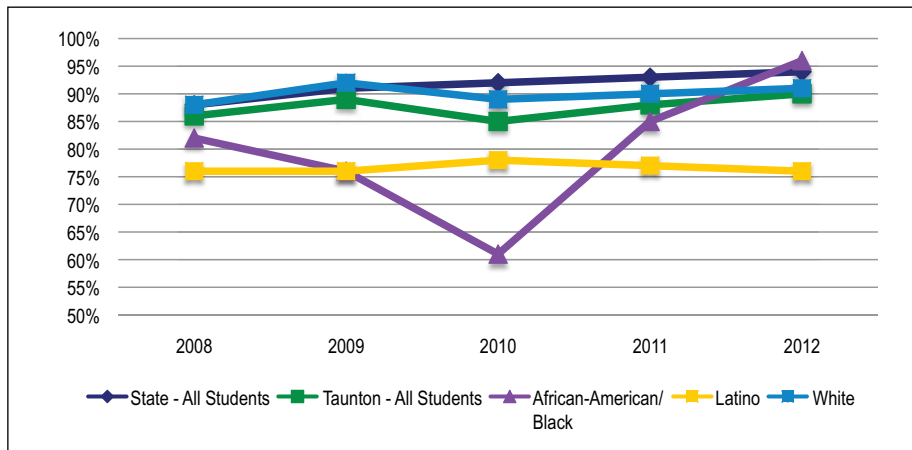
Figure 10: Percentage of Students Scoring “Needs Improvement” or Higher, Grade 10 STE MCAS by Race/Ethnicity, SY2012



Source: MADESE (2012). *2012 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject.*

Figure 10 illustrates that in SY2012, Latino students in Taunton had the lowest Grade 10 STE MCAS pass rate among all ethno-racial groups in the district, with 76% passing the STE tests (i.e., scoring at “Needs Improvement” or higher). This pass rate was 15 percentage points below the pass rate for White students and 20 percentage points below the pass rate for African-American/Black students. As seen in Figure 11 below, unlike improvements on the Grade 10 ELA and Math, the Grade 10 STE pass rates for Latino students in Taunton have been stagnant since the test was first administered in SY2008. During this period, the gap with African-American/Black and White students in Taunton and all students statewide increased slightly.

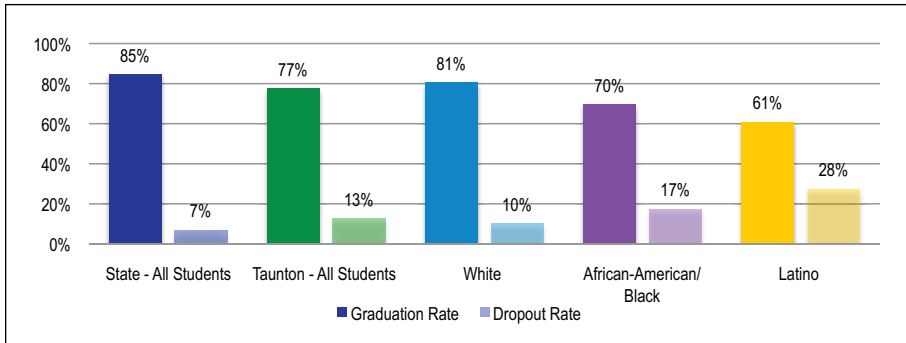
Figure 11: Percentage of Students Scoring “Needs Improvement” or Higher, Grade 10 STE MCAS, SY2008-SY2012



Source: MADESE (2012). *2012 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject.*

Graduation and Dropout Rates

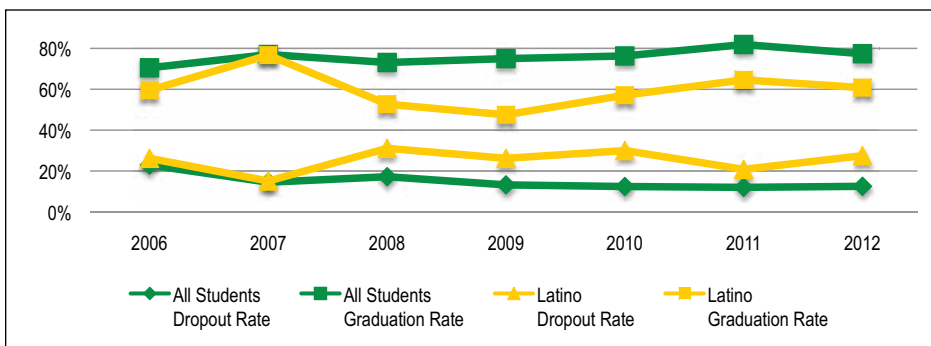
Figure 12: Four-Year Cohort Graduation and Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity, SY2012



Source: MADESE (n.d.). *Cohort 2012 Graduation Rates*.

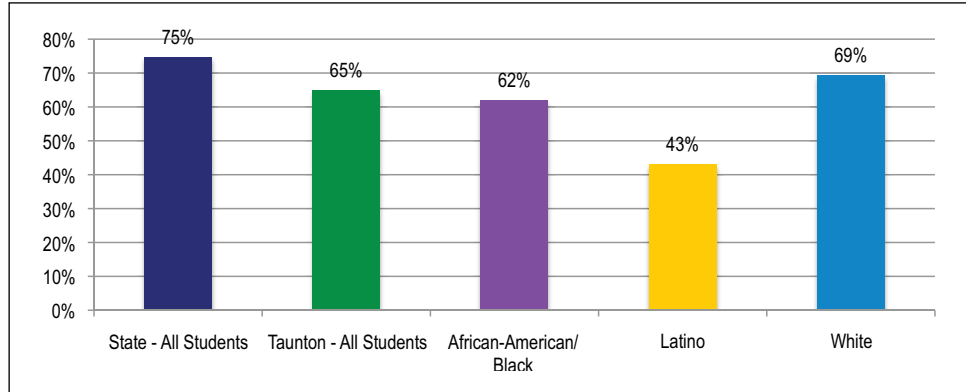
As illustrated in Figure 12 above, in SY2012, 77% of all students in Taunton graduated within four years of beginning high school and 12% dropped out, slightly worse than the statewide rates of 85% and 7% respectively. Within the district, Latino students have the lowest graduation rate and highest dropout rate among all ethno-racial groups. In SY2012, 61% of Latino students graduated within four years of starting high school, as compared to 81% of White students and 70% of African-American/Black students. Similarly, 28% of Latino students in Taunton dropped out within four years, as compared to 10% of White students and 17% of African-American/Black students. These 4-year cohort outcomes for Latino students in Taunton are worse than the graduation and dropout rates for Latino students statewide of 66% and 18% respectively. Latino students statewide have the lowest graduation rates and highest dropout rates among all ethno-racial groups. The SY2012 the four-year cohort dropout rate for Latino students in Taunton was the eleventh highest Latino student dropout rate among all school districts in the state especially troubling considering the high Latino dropout rates across the state. Figure 13 below demonstrates that the four-year cohort graduation rate for Latino students in Taunton has improved slightly since SY2006, but that the four-year cohort dropout rate is higher than it was in SY2006. Over this same period the overall graduation and dropout rates in Taunton have improved, thereby increasing the gaps in graduation and dropping out.

Figure 13: Four-Year Cohort Graduation and Dropout Rate, SY2006-SY2012



Source: MADESE (n.d.). *Cohort 2012 Graduation Rates*.

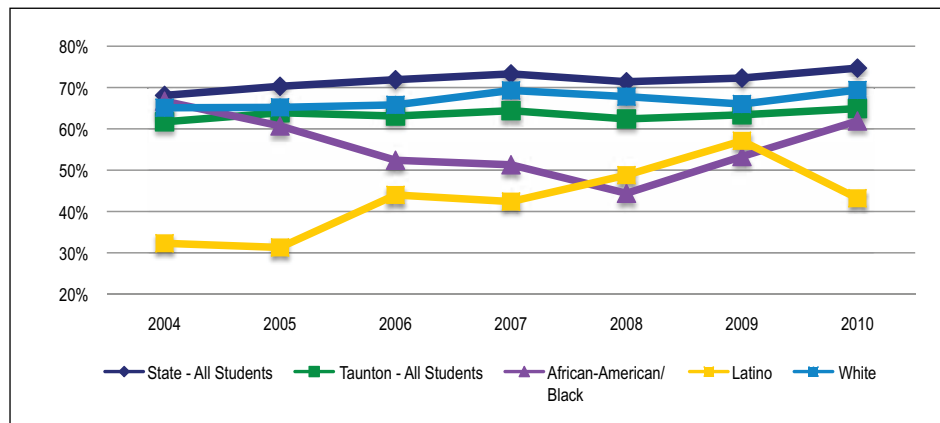
Figure 14: Percentage of High School Graduates Attending Higher Education Institutions within 16 Months of Completing High School, SY2010



Source: MADESE. (n.d.). *2009-10 Graduates Attending Institutions of Higher Education All Colleges and Universities.*

As illustrated in Figure 14, Latino students in Taunton have the lowest percentage of high school graduates attending higher education among all ethno-racial groups. In SY2010, 43% of Latino students enrolled in some form of higher education institution within 16 months of completing high school, almost 20 percentage points lower than the rate for African-American/Black students and 26 percentage points lower than for White students. This Latino student college attendance rate was the tenth lowest rate for districts with more than 15 Latino students completing high school. This rate is also 18 percentage points below the rate for Latino students statewide, which is the lowest among all racial-ethno groups statewide. Furthermore, 63% of these college-attending Latino students are attending public two-year colleges (community colleges), a higher rate than for all other ethno-racial groups in Taunton. Still, the Latino college enrollment rate in Taunton has increased over recent years. Between SY2004 (when the state began tracking this information) and SY2010 the rate increased by 11 percentage points, decreasing the gap in college enrollment rates between Latino and White students by 21%.

Figure 15: Percentage of High School Graduates Attending Higher Education Institutions within 16 Months of Completing High School, SY2004 - SY2010



Source: MADESE. (n.d.). *2009-10 Graduates Attending Institutions of Higher Education All Colleges and Universities.*

The Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy conducts research on and for the Latino population in New England. Our goal is to generate the information and analysis necessary to develop more inclusive public policy, and to improve Latino participation in the policy making process. As part of its effort to present vital information about Latinos to diverse audiences, the Gastón Institute has produced this series of demographic and educational profiles for selected cities and towns. Reports can be downloaded from www.gaston.umb.edu.

Latinos in Public Schools is a series of reports based on publicly available data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (www.profiles.doe.mass.edu). The public school system in Massachusetts reflects the demographic shift in the diversity of the entire population. The total student enrollment has decreased over the past ten years, but during this period the state has witnessed a growing population of Latino students both in terms of overall enrollment and in proportion of total enrollment. Since the SY2006 school year, the number of Latino students in Massachusetts has increased by 25% (from 125,436 to 156,883

students) representing almost a 4-percentage-point increase in the proportion of total student enrollment (from 12.9% to 16.4% of all students) (MDESE, 2012, MA Enrollment). In contrast, during the same period the number of White and African-American/Black students has decreased by 14% and 5% respectively. This growing Latino population in the state is experiencing an achievement gap as compared to White students. They face persistently lower pass rates on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), the state-required standardized tests. In addition, Latino students experience the highest dropout rate and lowest graduation rate as compared to other ethno-racial groups in the state. The growing Latino student population in many Massachusetts school districts presents these districts with a changing configuration of students and with new challenges and opportunities. We hope that this series of reports will be helpful, both to school officials and to the Latino communities of these cities and towns.

About the Author

Michael Berardino holds a M.S. in Public Policy from University of Massachusetts Boston and is currently a Research Associate at the Gastón Institute and a doctoral candidate in Public Policy at UMass Boston's McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies. His research focuses on the impacts of language instruction and high-stakes testing policies on English Language Learners, with special attention to Latino student outcomes, school discipline, and civic engagement.

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