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Latinos in Massachusetts Public Schools: Pittsfield

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Latinos in Massachusetts Public Schools Pittsfield

by Michael Berardino and Valerie Watson

June, 2014

THE MAURICIO GASTÓN INSTITUTE
FOR LATINO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND PUBLIC POLICY

Pittsfield

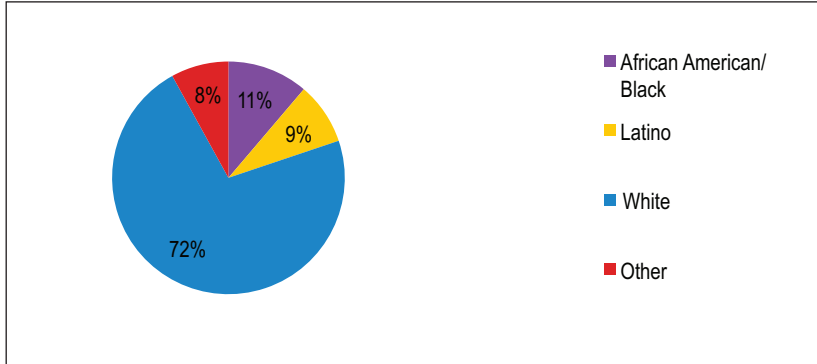
This report provides a snapshot of current educational outcomes of Latino students in the city of Pittsfield. It is based on publicly available data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MADESE) that has been analyzed by the Gastón Institute for the 2014 *Latinos in Massachusetts Regional Meeting* in Pittsfield. 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 and to students statewide. The first section illustrates the demographic shift occurring within the Pittsfield Public Schools, with a growing Latino student population and a shrinking White student population. The second section compares the performance of Latino students in Pittsfield on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests with the performance of all students statewide and other ethno-racial groups in Pittsfield. These comparisons show that large disparities exist in certain subjects, but that the Grade 10 ELA achievement gap between Latino and White students has been shrinking over recent years. The third section highlights Latino student suspension rates, graduation and dropout rates, and college enrollment rates, relative to other ethno-racial groups in the district and to all students statewide. The data indicate that Latino students graduate and enroll in postsecondary education at much lower rates than White students in the district.

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. Ethno-Racial Composition of Pittsfield Public Schools, SY2014



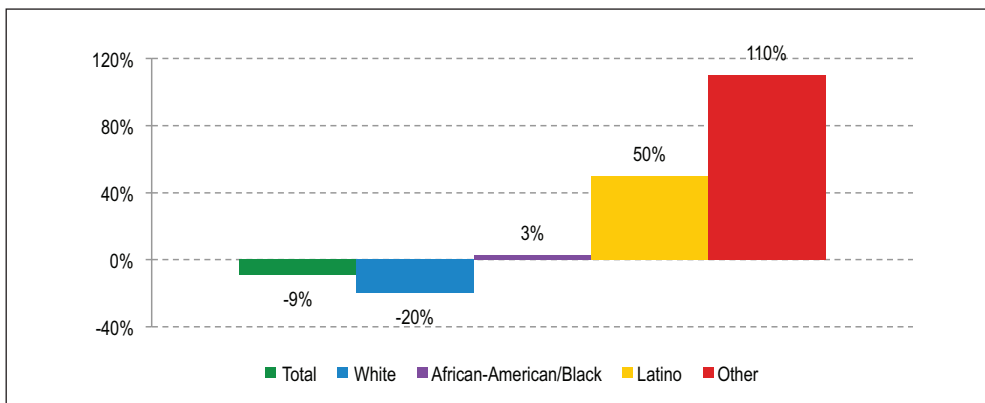
Source: MADESE (n.d.). *Enrollment Data*.

During SY2014, the Pittsfield, MA school district had an enrollment of 5,987 students, of whom 72% were White and 11% African/American/Black. Latino students are the third largest ethno-racial group accounting for 9% of the student population. The remaining 8% of the student body comprises students of other ethno-racial groups including Native American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic, and Asian students. As seen in Figure 2, the total enrollment in the district has dropped by 9% since SY2006. During that time, the number of White students has decreased by 20% and the number of African-American/Black students has increased slightly, while Latino student enrollment has increased by 50%. The number of students of “other” racial groups has more than doubled, with the growth occurring mainly among students classified as multiracial, non-Hispanic. Among the Latino students in Pittsfield, 30% are classified as English Language Learners. Latino students in Pittsfield are a highly mobile population with 21% changing schools and 14% leaving the district during SY2013, both substantially higher than the rates of 9% and 6% for White students.

² Prior to SY2005, there were insufficient numbers of Latino students to report on MCAS outcomes.

³ Prior to 2009, there were insufficient numbers of Latino students from Pittsfield who completed high school to produce a college enrollment rate.

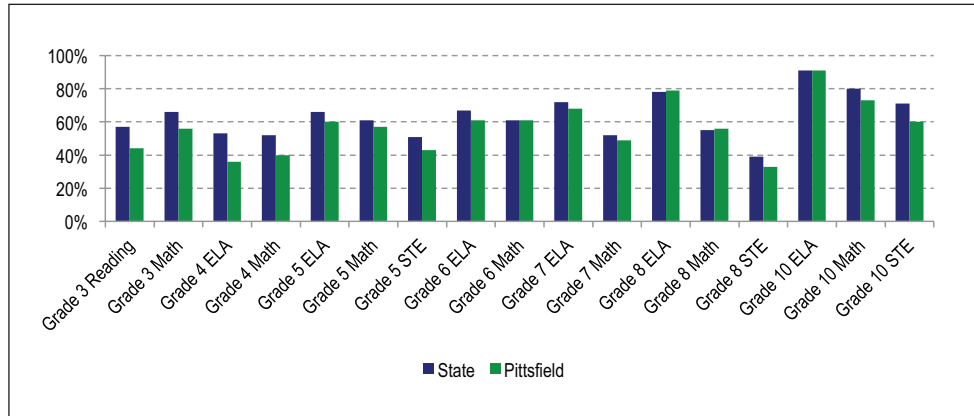
Figure 2: Change in Student Enrollment, Pittsfield Public Schools, SY2006 to SY2014



Source: Author's calculations based on MADESE (n.d.). *Enrollment Data*.

MCAS

Figure 3: Percentage of All Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher on MCAS by Grade and Subject, SY2013

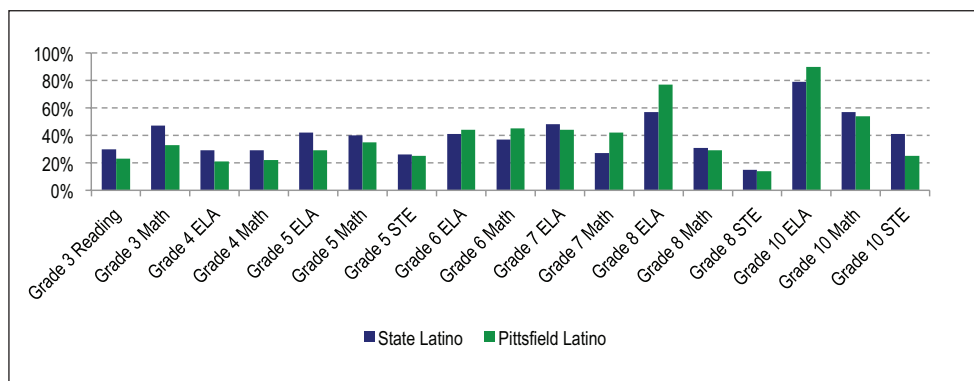


Source: MADESE (2013). *2013 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject.*

As a district, Pittsfield performs slightly below the statewide proficiency rates on most MCAS tests, but comparably on the Grade 10 English Language Arts (ELA) test and slightly higher on the Grade 8 ELA. The figure below shows the proficiency rates for Latino students statewide and for Latino students in Pittsfield. This figure illustrates that in early grades, Latino students in Pittsfield have a slightly lower proficiency rate than Latino students statewide, but by middle school the gap has narrowed and on several tests (Grade 7 Math, Grade 8 ELA, and Grade 10 ELA), Pittsfield Latino students have a higher pass rate than Latino students statewide.

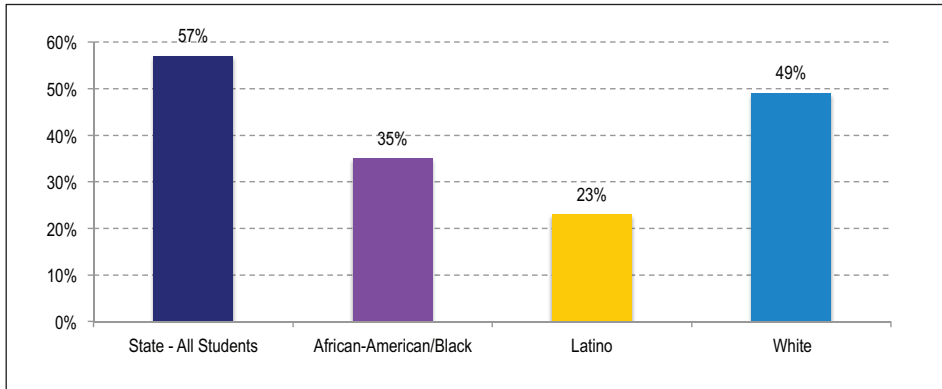
The following section shows the MCAS outcomes for Grade 3 Reading, an important metric for academic preparation, and for the Grade 10 ELA, Math, and Science/Technology/Engineering (STE) tests, which are graduation requirements.

Figure 4: Percentage of All Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher on MCAS by Grade and Subject, Latino Students Only, SY2013



Source: MADESE (2013). *2013 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject.*

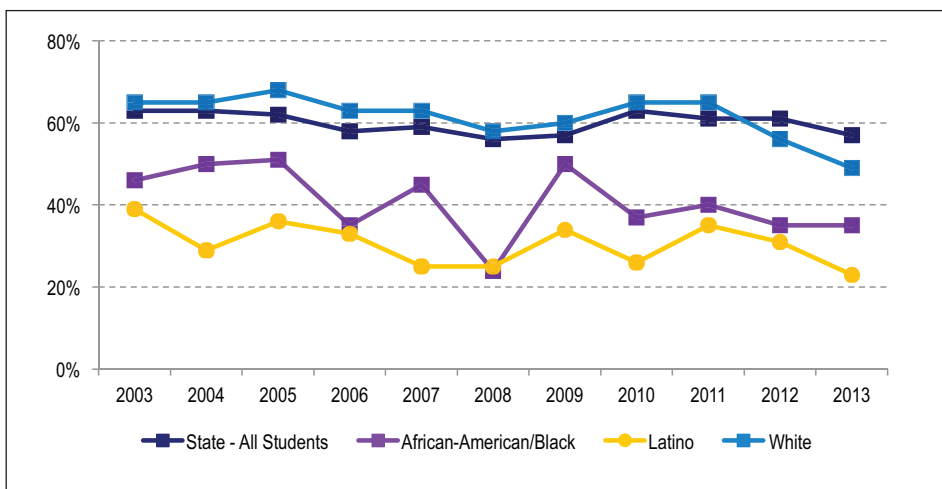
Figure 5: Percentage of Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher on Grade 3 Reading MCAS by Ethno-Racial Category, SY2013



Source: MADESE (2013). *2013 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject*.

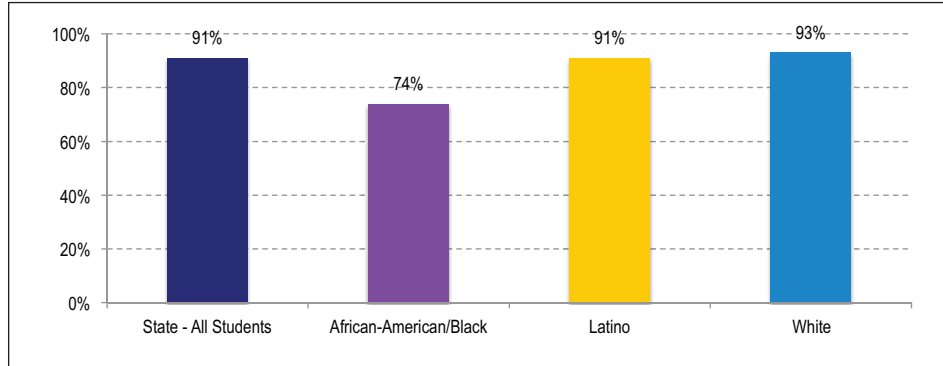
As seen in Figure 5, 23% of Latino students in Pittsfield scored “Proficient” or higher on the Grade 3 Reading exam in SY2013. This was 12 percentage points lower than the rate for African-American/Black students, 26 percentage points below the rate for White students, and 34 percentage points lower than the overall statewide rate. As seen in Figure 6 below, the percentage of Latino students passing the Grade 3 Reading test has decreased from 39% in SY2003. As a result, while the gap with White students in Pittsfield has remained unchanged, the gap with all students statewide has grown by 42%.

Figure 6: Percentage of Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher on Grade 3 Reading MCAS by Ethno-Racial Category, SY2003–SY2013



Source: MADESE (2013). *2013 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject*.

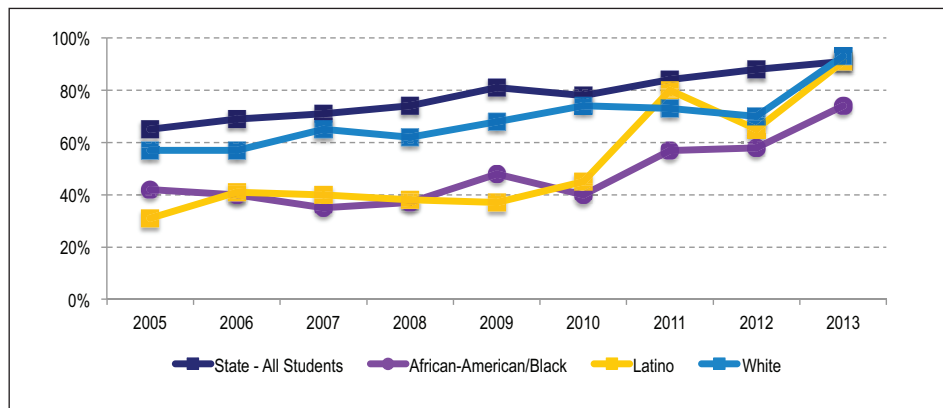
Figure 7: Percentage of Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher on Grade 10 ELA MCAS by Ethno-Racial Category, SY2013



Source: MADESE (2013). *2013 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject*.

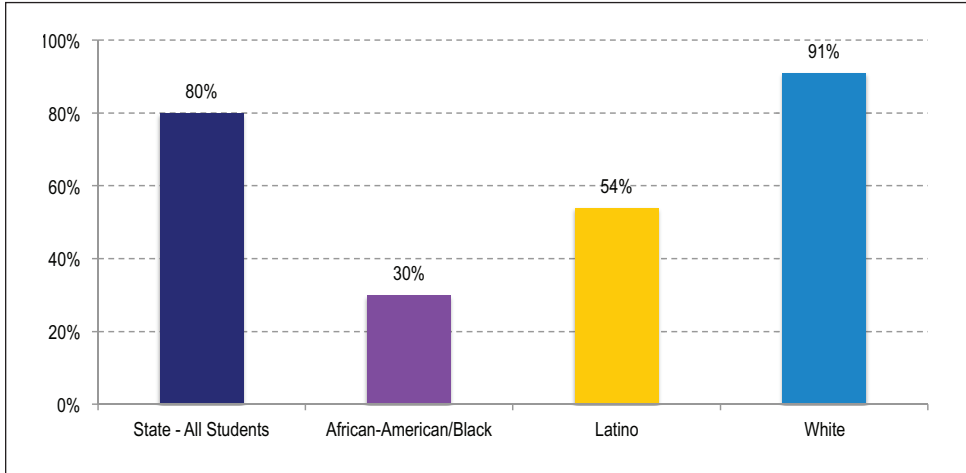
Figure 7 shows that in SY2013 91% of Latino students in Pittsfield scored “Proficient” or higher on the Grade 10 ELA test. This pass rate is the same as the state-wide rate, 2 percentage points lower than the rate for White students in Pittsfield, and 17 percentage points higher than the rate for African-American/Black students in Pittsfield. As seen in Figure 8 below, all student groups in Pittsfield have drastically improved pass rates over recent years. Latino students in Pittsfield have made the most dramatic improvements, increasing the pass rate by 60 percentage points since SY2005,² closing the gap with White students in Pittsfield by 92%, and entirely closing the gap with all students statewide.

Figure 8: Percentage of Students Scoring “Proficiency” or Higher Grade 10 ELA MCAS by Ethno-Racial Category, SY2005-SY2013



Source: MADESE (2013). *2013 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject*.

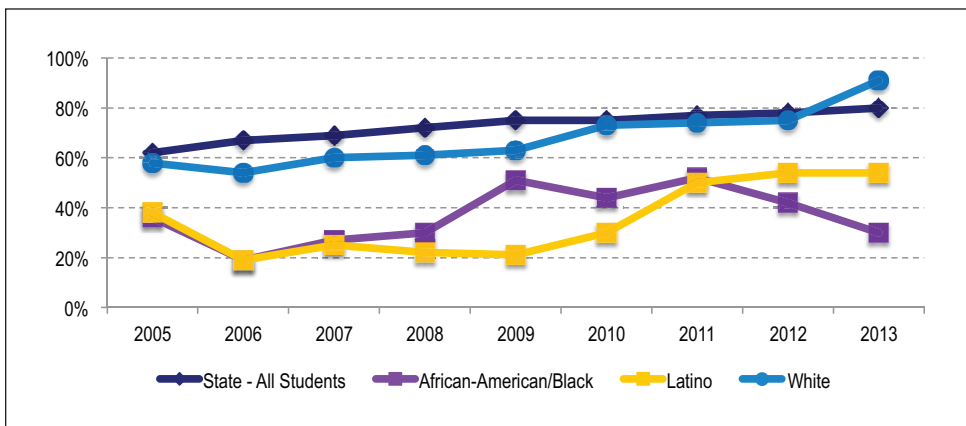
Figure 9: Percentage of Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher on Grade 10 Math MCAS by Ethno-Racial Category, SY2013



Source: MADESE (2013). *2013 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject*.

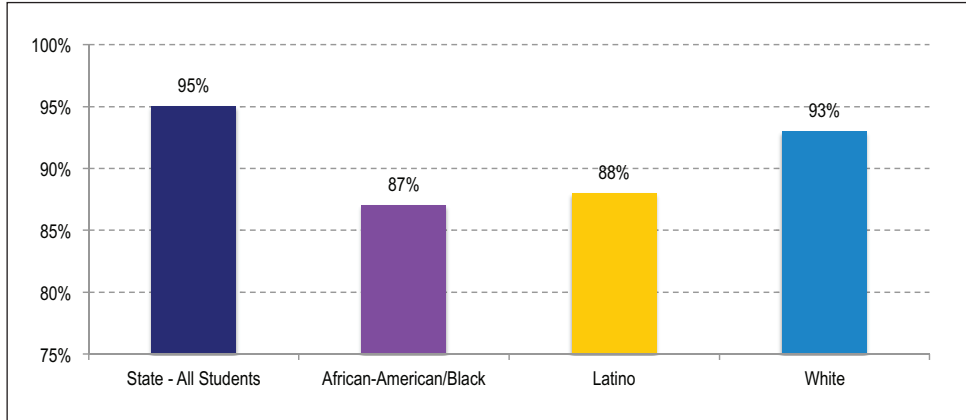
In SY2013, Latino students in Pittsfield had a pass rate of 54% on the Grade 10 Math MCAS tests, 24 percentage points higher than the African-American/Black proficiency rate, 37 percentage points lower than the rate for White students, and 26 percentage points lower than the statewide pass rate. As seen in Figure 10 below, following a drop in pass rates in SY2006, there has been steady improvement among Latino students in Pittsfield on the Grade 10 Math MCAS tests. Latino students in Pittsfield have improved pass rates by 16 percentage points since SY2005.

Figure 10: Percentage of Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher on Grade Math MCAS by Ethno-Racial Category, SY2005-SY2013



Source: MADESE (2013). *2013 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject*.

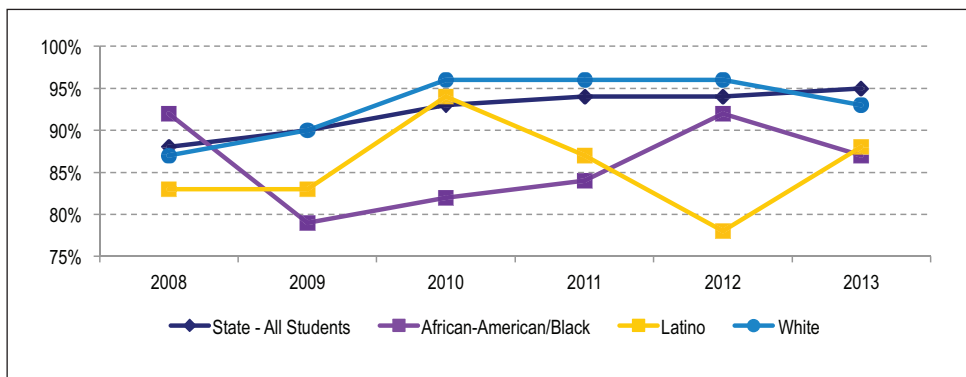
Figure 11: Percentage of Students Scoring “Needs Improvement” or Higher, Grade 10 STE MCAS by Ethno-Racial Category, SY2013



Source: MADESE (2013). *2013 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject.*

As seen in Figure 11, 88% of Latino students in Pittsfield who took the Grade 10 STE exams scored “Needs Improvement” or higher, the passing mark for the STE tests. This was 1 percentage point higher than the rate for African-American/Black students in Pittsfield, 5 percentage points lower than White students in Pittsfield, and 7 percentage points lower than the statewide score. Figure 12 below shows how the pass rates for Latino students in Pittsfield has fluctuated annually, with the pass rate improving by 3 percentage points since the introduction of the test in SY2008. Over this time, the gap with White students in Pittsfield and with all students statewide has increased slightly.

Figure 12: Percentage of Students Scoring “Needs Improvement” or Higher on Grade 10 STE MCAS by Ethno-Racial Category, SY2008-SY2013

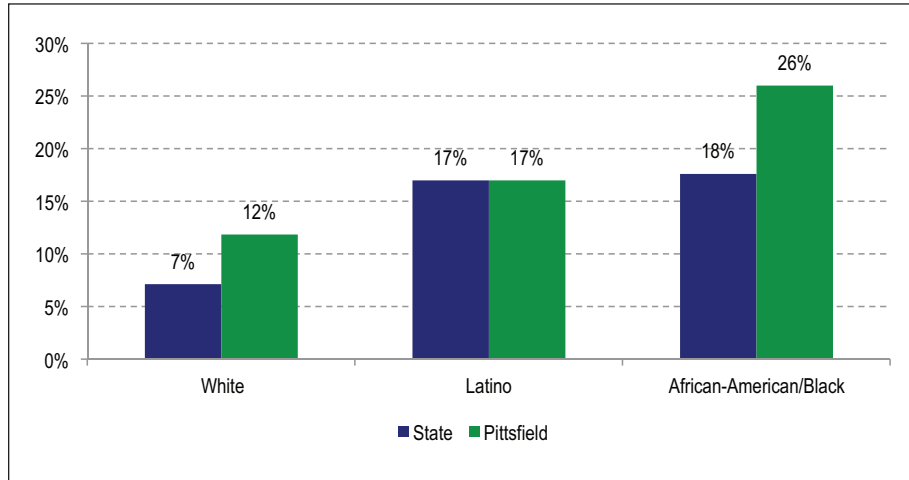


Source: MADESE (2013). *2013 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject.*

Academic Outcomes

Out-of-School Suspension

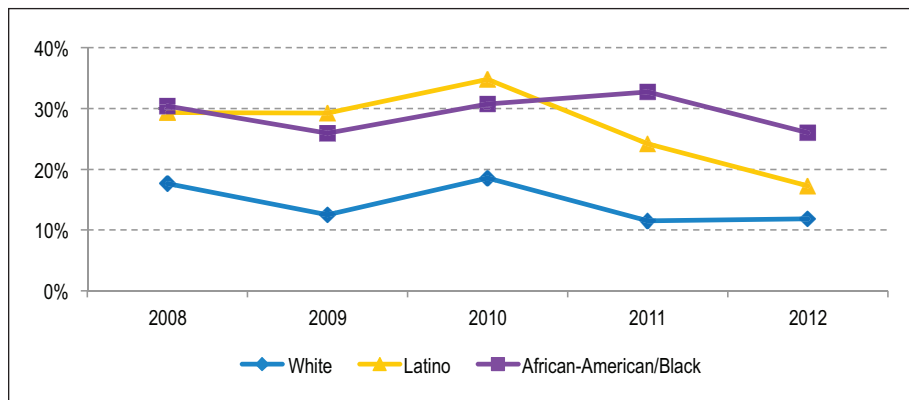
Figure 13: Percentage of Students Grade 9 through 12 Receiving at Least One Out-of-School Suspension, by Ethno-Racial Category, SY2013



Source: Author's calculations based on MADESE (2014). *DART Success After High School*.

Latino and African-American/Black students in Pittsfield are suspended at a higher rate than White students, similar to the statewide statistics. In SY2013, 8% of all Latino students and 12% of all African-American/Black students in Pittsfield received at least one out-of-school suspension as compared to 5% of White students in the district. These disparities are more acute at the high school level. Figure 13 illustrates the suspension rates for grades 9-12, showing that 17% of Latino students and 26% of African-American/Black students in Pittsfield received at least one out-of-school suspension as compared to 12% of White students in the district. Furthermore, the figure shows that the suspension rates for ethno-racial categories in Pittsfield are higher than for the racial/ethnic groups statewide. As seen in Figure 14 below, the high school out-of-school suspension rate has declined in recent years, but disparities persist.

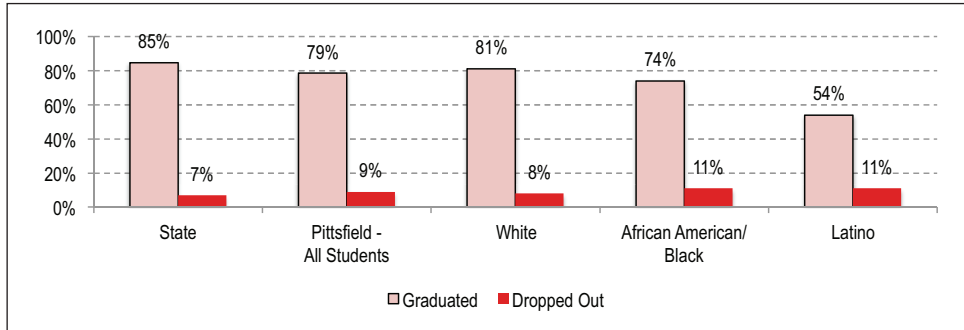
Figure 14: Percentage of Pittsfield Students Grade 9 through 12 Receiving at Least One Out-of-School Suspension, by Ethno-Racial Category, SY2008-SY2013



Source: Author's calculations based on MADESE (2014). *DART Success After High School*.

Graduation and Dropout Rates

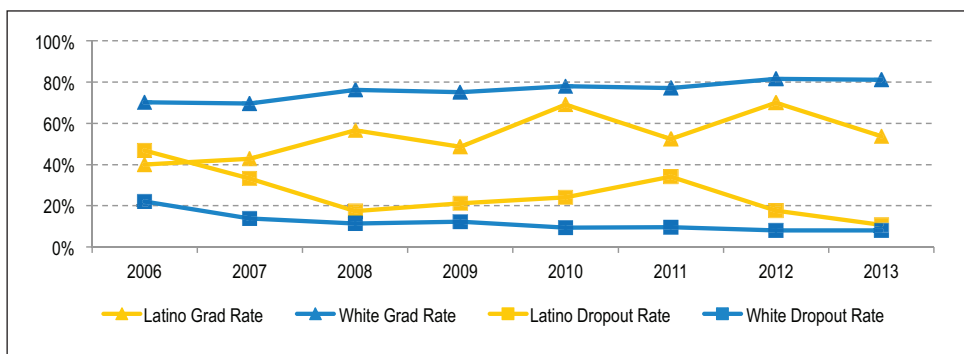
Figure 15: Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate and Dropout Rate by Ethno-Racial Category, SY2013



Source: MADESE (n.d.). *Cohort 2013 Graduation Rates*.

As seen in Figure 15, Latino students in Pittsfield have the lowest four-year cohort graduation rate and the highest four-year cohort dropout rate among all ethno-racial groups in Pittsfield. 54% of Latino students who started high school together graduated within the anticipated four years. This was 20 percentage points lower than the rate for African-American/Black students, 27 percentage points lower than the rate for White students, and 31 percentage points lower than the statewide four-year graduation rate of 85%. Similarly, 11% of Latino students who started high school together dropped out within four years, a comparable rate to African-American/Black students, 3 points higher than the rate for White students in the district, and 4 points higher than the statewide dropout rate. In SY2013, 18% of Latino students earned their GED and 14% of the Latino student cohort was still in school after four years. As seen in the figure below, the four-year cohort graduation rate for Latino students in Pittsfield has fluctuated annually, but shows an overall positive trend, with graduation rates increasing by 14 percentage points since SY2006. The four-year cohort graduation and dropout rates for White students in Pittsfield have improved steadily as compared to the fluctuation of the Latino student outcomes. The Latino four-year cohort dropout rate in Pittsfield has dropped by 36 percentage points since SY2006, almost entirely closing the 25-point gap with White students in the district.

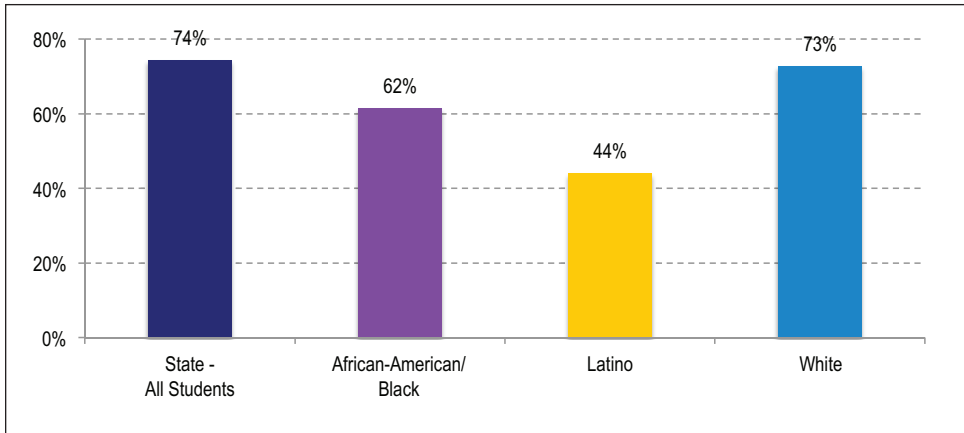
Figure 16: Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate and Dropout Rate by Ethno-Racial Category, SY2006 - SY2013



Source: MADESE (n.d.). *Cohort 2013 Graduation Rates*.

College Enrollment:

Figure 17: High School Completers Enrolled in an Institution of Higher Education with 16 Months of Completing High School by Ethno-Racial Category, SY2011



Source: MADESE (n.d.). *Plans of High School Graduates (2010-11)*.

As seen in the figure above, in SY2011, 44% of Latino students in Pittsfield who completed high school enrolled in an institution of higher education within 16 months of completing high school. This was 18 points below the rate for African-American/Black students in the district, 27 points below the rate for White students in the district, and 30 point below the statewide rate. Alarminglly, the Latino rate of 44% is much lower than the 72% Latino rate in SY2009.³ Over this same period, the college enrollment rate for White and African-American/Black students in Pittsfield have both increased.

Among these Latino students enrolling in college, 91% enrolled in public two-year colleges, higher than the figures of 75% for African-American/Black students in Pittsfield and 48% for White students in Pittsfield.

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 30% (from

125,436 to 162,475 students) representing a jump from 13% to 17% in the Latino proportion of all students). In contrast, during the same period the number of African-American/Black students has increased by 3%, while the number of White students has decreased by 12%. 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 the 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.

Valerie Watson holds a B.A in Political Science from Bridgewater State University and a Graduate Certificate from the University of Massachusetts Boston in Women in Politics and Public Policy. She currently works as a graduate intern at the Gastón Institute. Her interests include food policy, education policy, equality activism, and international affairs.

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