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Latinos in Massachusetts Public Schools: Framingham

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Latinos in Massachusetts Public Schools Framingham

by Michael Berardino and Priyanka Kabir

April, 2015

THE MAURICIO GASTÓN INSTITUTE
FOR LATINO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND PUBLIC POLICY

Framingham

This report provides a snapshot of current educational outcomes for Latino students in the city of Framingham. It is based on publicly available data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MADESE) that have been analyzed for the community by the Gastón Institute. Using the ethno-racial categories assigned by MADESE, the report focuses on 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.¹ The report has three sections:

The first section illustrates the demographic shift occurring in the Framingham Public Schools. The number of White students in the district has been steadily declining, while the number of Latino students has increased markedly.

The second section compares the performance of Latino students in Framingham on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests with the performance of all students statewide and other ethno-racial groups in Framingham. While disparities remain, the achievement gap between Latino and White students has been shrinking substantially in recent years. Latino students in Framingham have made especially large improvements on the Grade 10 English Language Arts test.

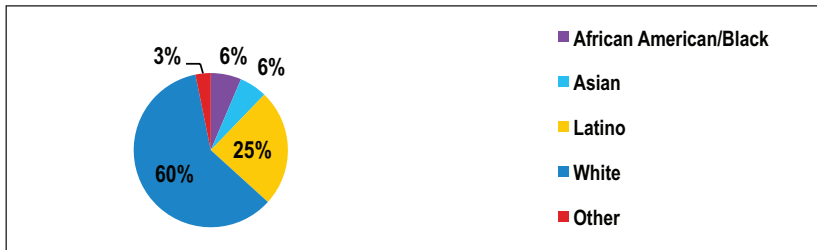
The third section shows Latino graduation, dropout, and college enrollment rates, relative to other students in the district and to all students statewide. Here too, the data show marked discrepancies between Latino and White students in Framingham.

Notes

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

Demographics

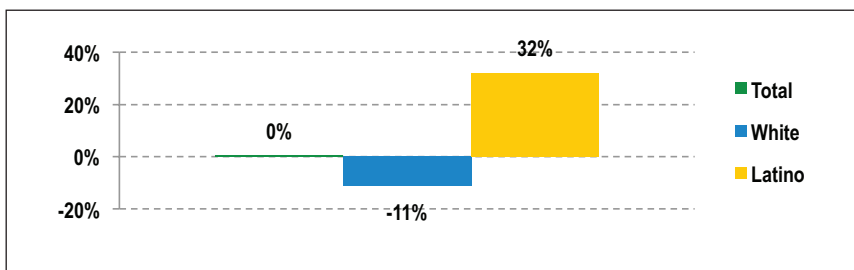
Figure 1. Ethno-Racial Composition of Framingham Public Schools, SY2015



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

Framingham is the twelfth largest public school district in the state with 8,153 students in SY2015.² Two-fifths (40%) of its students are classified as low-income. Thirty-nine percent of students in Framingham spoke a language other than English as their first language and 16% are classified as English Language Learners (ELLs), the twelfth and sixteenth highest proportions among all districts in the state.³ As seen in Figure 1, Latino students are the second largest student group in the district: the 1,997 Latino students represent 25% of the total enrollment in Framingham.⁴ White students are the largest ethno-racial group in the district, accounting for 60% of the students in the district. African-American/Black students comprise 6% of all students, Asian students 6%, and all other ethno-racial groups together 3%. As seen in Figure 2 below, from SY2006 to SY2015 the overall number of students in the district remained unchanged but the composition changed: a 32% increase in the number of Latino students offset an 11% decrease in the number of White students. For the students who are classified as Latino, more than one quarter (26%) are classified as English Language Learners (ELLs), as compared to 10% of the White population.

Figure 2: Change in Student Enrollment, Framingham Public Schools, SY2006 to SY2015



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

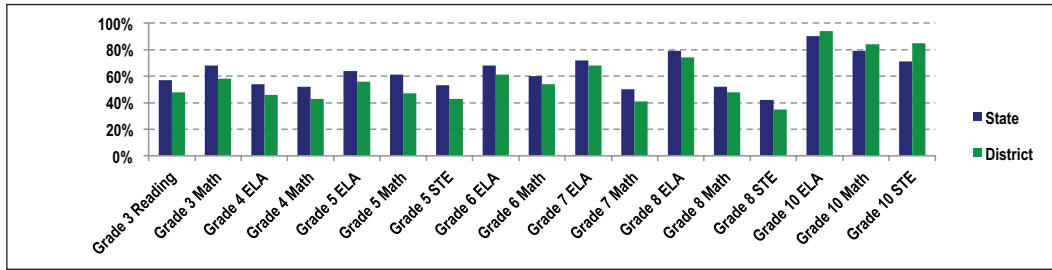
² SY refers to the ending year of the school year. For example, SY2014 is the school year that began in September of 2013 and ended in June of 2014.

³ As compared to all non-Charter school districts in Massachusetts

⁴ The publicly available MADESE data are silent on the specific ancestry of the Latino population in Framingham and therefore provide no way to know if the Latino label encompasses Brazilian students. According to MADESE, 45% of all ELLs in Framingham are Latino and 45% are White. However, according to the American Community Survey (2014), 32% of the foreign-born residents of Framingham are Brazilian, and 58% are from Latin America, which includes Brazil. These disparities suggest that Brazilian students are classified as non-Hispanic White.

II. MCAS Performance

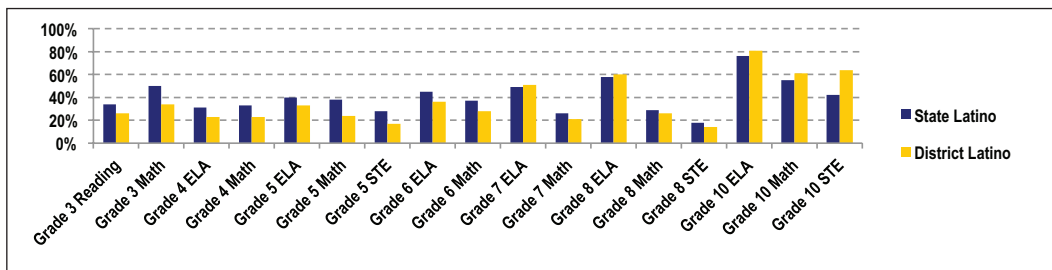
Figure 3: Percentage of All Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher on MCAS Tests by Grade and Subject, SY2014



Source: MADESE (2014). *MCAS Tests of Spring 2014, Percent of Students at Each Achievement Level for Framingham.*

Figure 3 above shows the percentage of all students in Framingham and all students statewide who scored “Proficient” or higher on the 2014 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests in English Language Arts (ELA), Math, and Science/Technology/Engineering (STE). On all tests in Grades 3 through 8, the proficiency rates in Framingham were slightly below statewide rates, but the proficiency rate in Framingham was higher than the statewide rate on the three Grade 10 tests. Comparing Latino students in Framingham to Latino students statewide, Figure 4 below shows a slightly different pattern, with lower proficiency rates among Latino students in Framingham in earlier grades but higher proficiency rates than the statewide Latino average on the Grade 7 and Grade 8 ELA tests as well as all three of the Grade 10 tests.

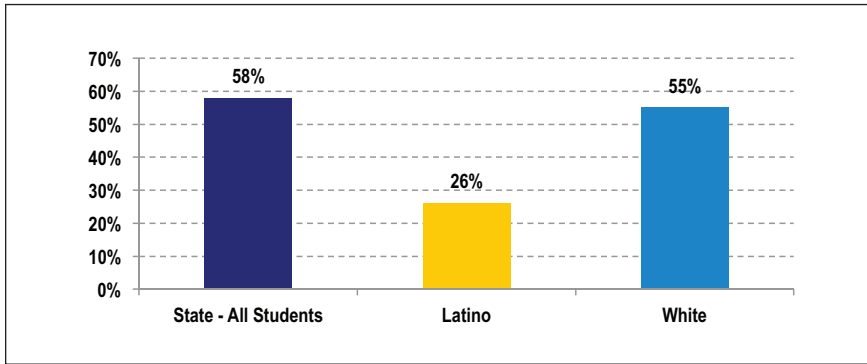
Figure 4: Percentage of Latino Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher on MCAS Tests by Grade and Subject, SY2014



Source: MADESE (2014). *MCAS Tests of Spring 2014, Percent of Students at Each Achievement Level for Framingham.*

The following section highlights the performance by Latino students in Framingham on the Grade 3 Reading and Grade 10 ELA, Math, and STE tests, all important performance measures. Grade 3 Reading is considered an important measurement for academic preparation, because the end of third grade marks the time when students go from “learning how to read” to “learning from reading.” The Grade 10 MCAS tests are also important as a metric of preparation for participation in post-secondary education. Furthermore, 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. Test results for Latinos in Framingham are compared to those for other ethno-racial groups in Framingham and for all students statewide.

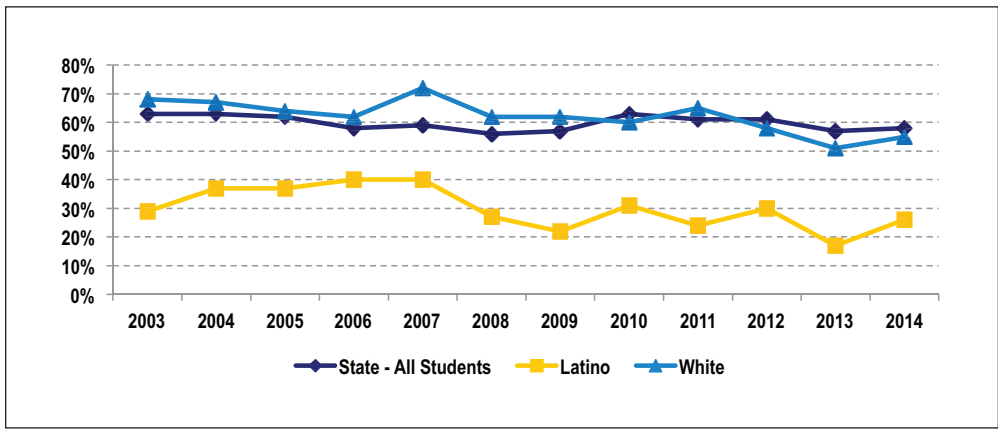
Figure 5: Percentage of Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher on Grade 3 Reading MCAS by Race/Ethnicity, SY2014



Source: MADESE (2014). *2014 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject*.

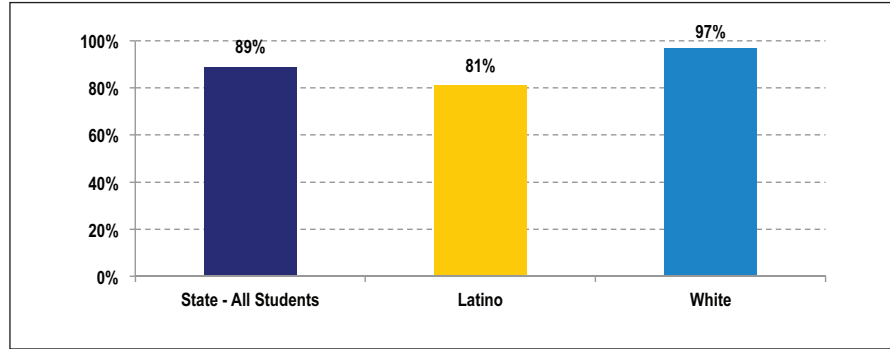
As seen in Figure 5 above, 26% of Latino students in Framingham performed at “Proficient” or higher on the Grade 3 Reading MCAS in SY2014. For Latino subgroups in Massachusetts, this rate was fifth lowest among districts with at least 100 Latino test-takers. The proficiency rate for Latino students in Framingham was 29 percentage points below the rate for White students in Framingham and 32 points below the rate for all students statewide. Figure 6 below illustrates that the proficiency rate for Latino students has fluctuated annually; it reached a high of 40% in SY2007, but dropped since then and as a result the rate was lower in SY2014 than in SY2003. Over this time, the proficiency rate among White students in Framingham and among all students statewide decreased at a steeper rate, and as a result Latino students closed 26% of the gap with White students in the district and 6% of the gap with the statewide average.

Figure 6: Percentage of Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher on Grade 3 Reading MCAS by Race/Ethnicity, SY2003-SY2014



Source: MADESE (2014). *2014 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject*.

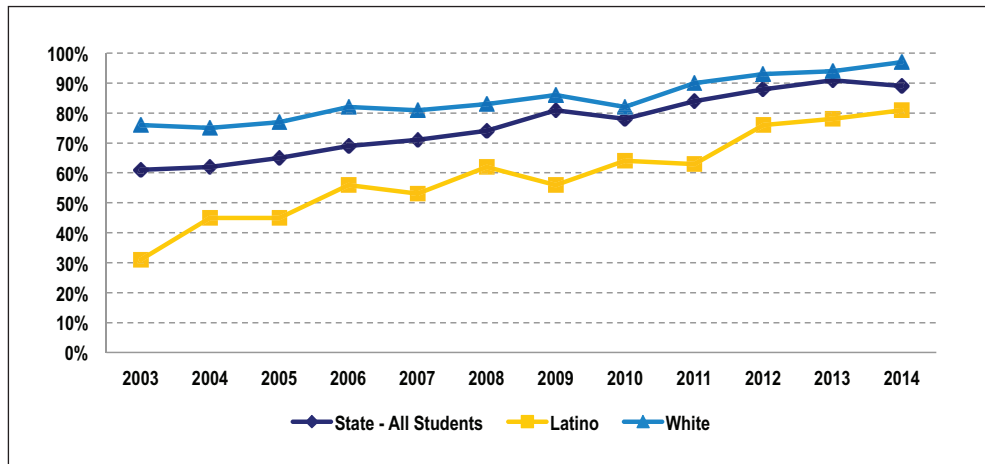
Figure 7: Percentage of Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher on Grade 10 ELA MCAS by Race/Ethnicity, SY2014



Source: MADESE (2014). 2014 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject

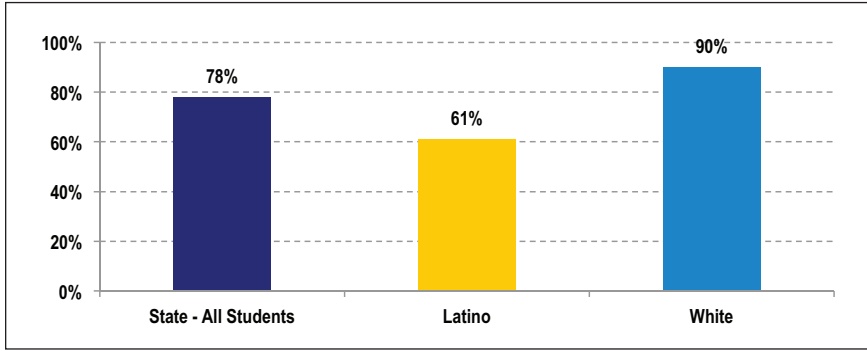
In SY2014, 81% of Latino students in Framingham scored “Proficient” or higher on the Grade 10 ELA MCAS test. The pass rate for Latino students in Framingham was 16 percentage points lower than the rate for White students in Framingham, but only 8 points below the pass rate statewide. As seen in Figure 8 below, the Latino pass rate in Framingham has improved dramatically since its figure of 31% in SY2003. From SY2003 to SY2014, in fact, Latino students eliminated 64% of the performance gap with White students in Framingham and a remarkable 73% of the gap with all students statewide.

Figure 8: Percentage of Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher on Grade 10 ELA MCAS by Race/Ethnicity, SY2003-SY2014



Source: MADESE (2014). 2014 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject

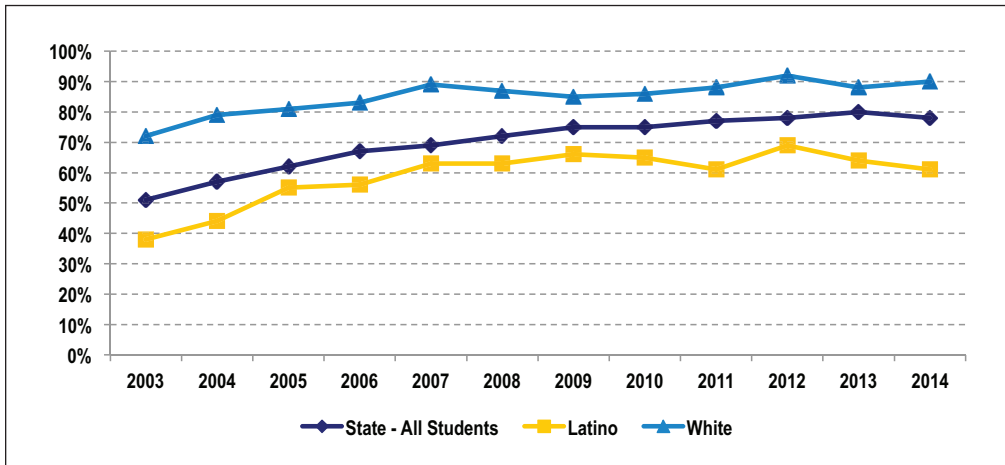
Figure 9: Percentage of Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher on Grade 10 Math MCAS by Race/Ethnicity, SY2014



Source: MADESE (2014). *2014 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject*.

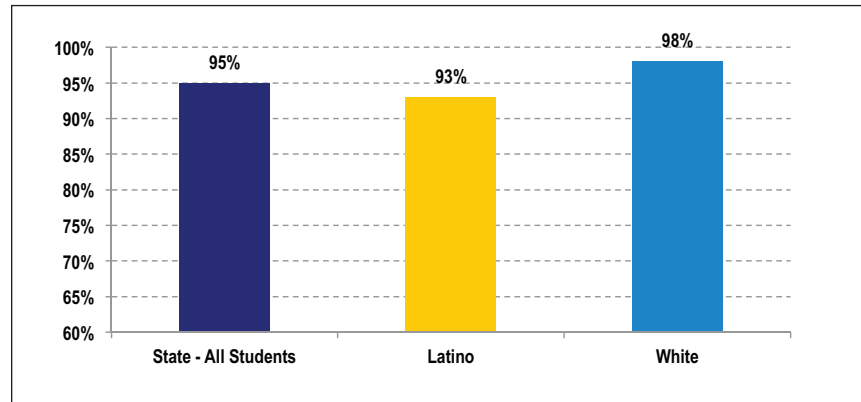
While 81% of Latino students in Framingham passed the Grade 10 ELA test in SY2014, only 61% passed the Grade 10 Math test. As seen in Figure 9 above, this pass rate was 29 points below the rate for White students in Framingham, and 17 points below the rate for all students statewide. Figure 10 below demonstrates that, overall, the pass rate for Latino students in Framingham improved since SY2003, but decreased since a high of 69% in SY2012. From SY2003 to SY2014, the gap with White students in Framingham decreased by 15% but the gap with all students statewide increased by 31%.

Figure 10: Percentage of Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher on Grade 10 Math MCAS by Race/Ethnicity, SY2003-SY2014



Source: MADESE (2014). *2014 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject*.

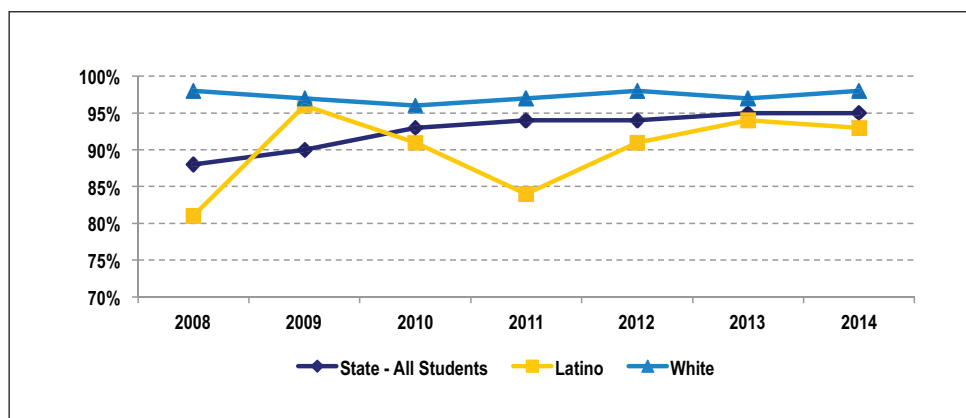
Figure 11: Percentage of Students Scoring “Needs Improvement” or Higher, Grade 10 STE MCAS by Race/Ethnicity, SY2014



Source: MADESE (2014). *2014 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject.*

Figure 11 illustrates that in SY2014, Latino students in Framingham had a pass rate of 93% on the Grade 10 Science, Technology, and Engineering MCAS tests (for the STE tests, passing requires a score of “Needs Improvement” or higher). The Latino rate was 5 points below the rate for White students in Framingham and 2 points below the rate for all students statewide. Figure 12 below shows that Latino students in Framingham made substantial progress on the STE tests since their introduction in SY2008. Between SY2008 and SY2014, the pass rate among Latino students improved by 12 percentage points, which resulted in closing 71% of the gap with White students in Framingham and with all students statewide.

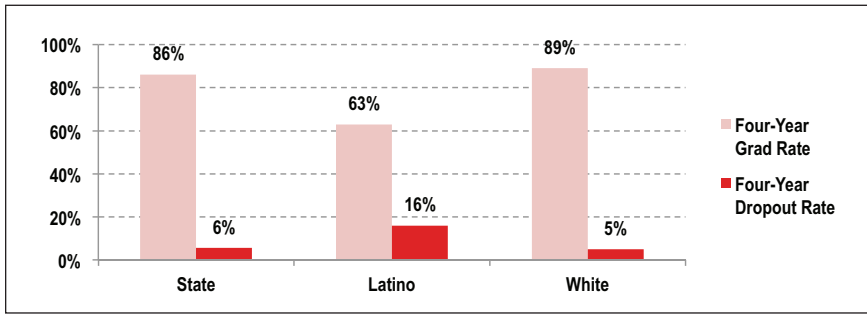
Figure 12: Percentage of Students Scoring “Needs Improvement” or Higher on Grade 10 STE MCAS by Race/Ethnicity, SY2008-SY2014



Source: MADESE (2014). *2014 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject.*

III. Graduation Rate, Dropout Rate, and College Enrollment Rate

Figure 13: Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate and Dropout Rate by Race/Ethnicity, SY2014

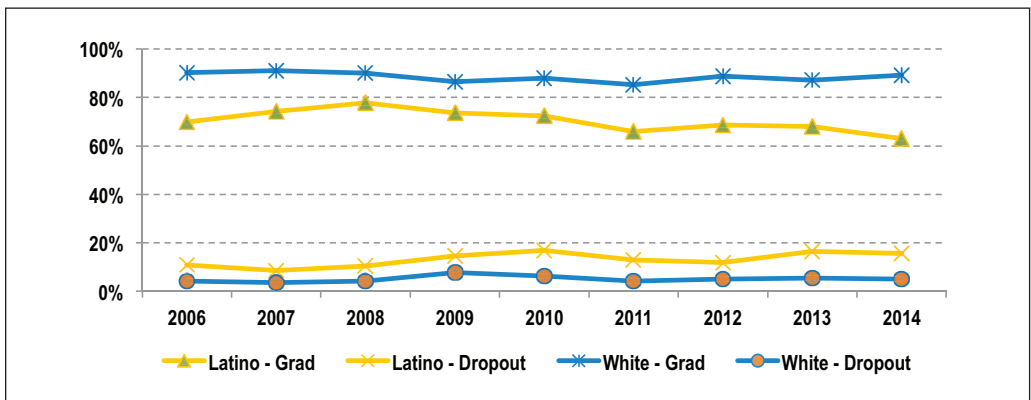


Source: MADESE (n.d.). *Cohort 2014 Graduation Rates*.

As shown in Figure 13 above, the SY2014 four-year graduation rate for Latino students in Framingham was 63% and the four-year dropout rate was 16%, far worse than the rates of 89% and 5% for White students in Framingham and 86% and 6% for all students statewide. One explanation for the low four-year graduation rates among Latino students in Framingham is the large proportion of students who are still in school four years after starting high school. For the class of 2013, 19% of Latino students were still in school after four years. As a result the five-year Latino cohort graduation rate was 76%, 13 points higher than the four-year graduation rate.

As seen in Figure 14 below, both the four-year graduation and dropout rates for Latino students in Framingham are worse than they were in SY2006. The rates for White students in Framingham have remained largely unchanged and as a result the White-Latino graduation gap increased by 30% and the dropout gap increased by 57%. Not shown in the figure below, the graduation gap with all students statewide more than doubled and the dropout gap is now nine times larger than in SY2006.

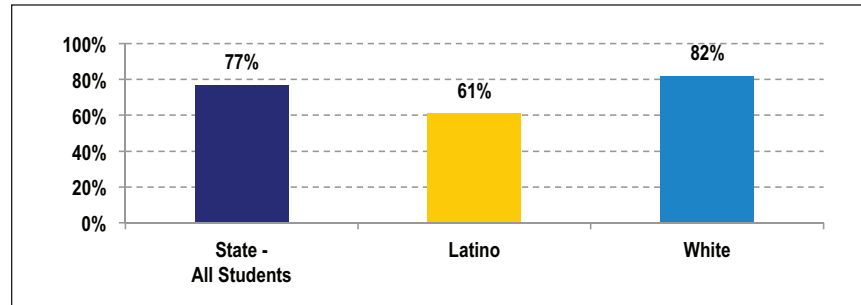
Figure 14: Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate and Dropout Rate, SY2006-SY2014



Source: MADESE (n.d.). *Cohort 2014 Graduation Rates*.

College Enrollment

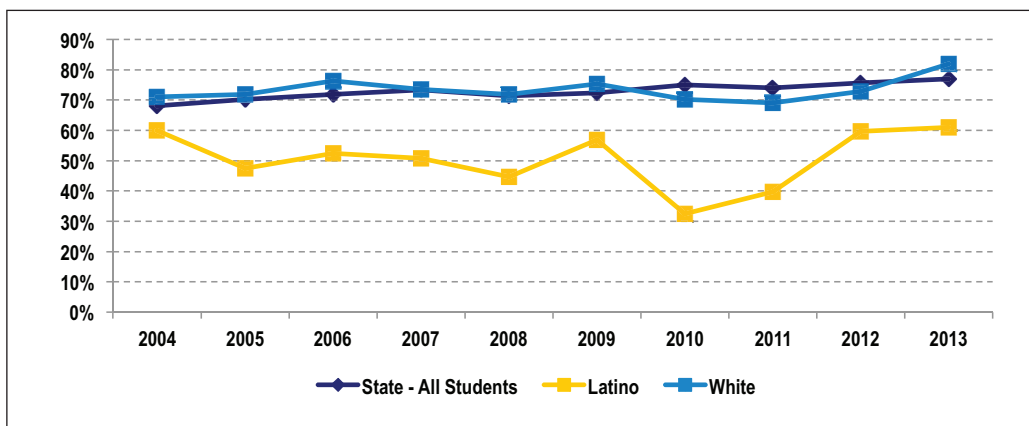
Figure 15: Percentage of High School Graduates Attending Institutions of Higher Education within 16 Months of Completing High School, SY2013



Source: MADESE (n.d.). *2012-13 Graduates Attending Institutions of Higher Education, All Colleges and Universities.*

Among all students in Framingham who completed high school in SY2013, 78% enrolled in an institution of higher education within 16 months of completing high school, one percentage point higher than the rate for all students statewide. As shown in the figure above, among Latino students in Framingham who completed high school in SY2013, 61% enrolled in an institution of higher education within 16 months of completing high school. This was 21 percentage points below the rate for White students in Framingham and 16 points below the overall statewide rate. As seen in Figure 16 below, the 61% Latino college enrollment rate was only one point higher than the rate in SY2004, but a marked improvement from a low rate of 32% in SY2010. Due to this meager improvement, from SY2004 to SY2013 the college enrollment gaps, both with White students in Framingham and with all students statewide, almost doubled.

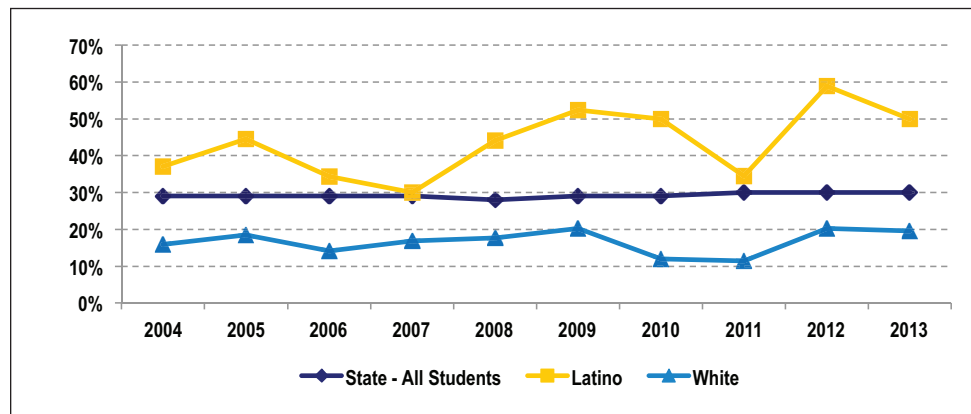
Figure 16: Percentage of High School Graduates Attending Institutions of Higher Education within 16 Months of Completing High School, SY2004-SY2013



Source: MADESE (n.d.). *2012-13 Graduates Attending Institutions of Higher Education, All Colleges and Universities.*

Not only is there a disparity in the proportion of Latino high school graduates who enroll in college, but there are also differences in the types of colleges attended. In SY2013, 50% of the Latino students who enrolled in college did so in a two-year college, as compared to 20% for White college enrollees in Framingham and 30% of all college enrollees statewide. As seen in Figure 17 below, since SY2007 the proportion of Latino students enrolling in two-year colleges has been substantially higher than the rate for White students in the district, reaching a peak of 59% in SY2012. Community colleges offer great opportunities to students, but completion rates at two-year colleges are much lower than at four-year colleges and universities. According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (2013), only 11% of first-time Latino students at Massachusetts two-year public colleges graduate within three years as compared to the 44% of Latino students at Massachusetts four-year public colleges who graduate within six years.

Figure 17: Percentage of Students Attending College Enrolling in a Two-Year College, SY2004-SY2013



Source: MADESE (n.d.). *2012-13 Graduates Attending Institutions of Higher Education, All Colleges and Universities*.

Sources

American Community Survey [ACS] (2014). U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey. Framingham, MA.

Chronicle of Higher Education (n.d.). *College Completion – Massachusetts Public Colleges*. Retrieved from http://collegecompletion.chronicle.com/state/#state=ma§or=public_two

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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 public schools has increased by 36% (from 125,436 to 171,096 students), rep-

resenting a jump from 13% to 18% in the 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 14%. 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 an 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..

Priyanka Kabir is a doctoral candidate in Public Policy at UMass Boston's McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies. Her research focuses on public perception of democracy - how perception varies across socio-economic classes and how it impacts public policy.

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