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### Latinos in Massachusetts Public Schools: Brockton

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#### Recommended Citation

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# **Latinos in Massachusetts Public Schools**

## **Brockton**

by Michael Berardino, MS

**June, 2013**

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THE MAURICIO GASTON INSTITUTE  
FOR LATINO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
AND PUBLIC POLICY

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# Brockton

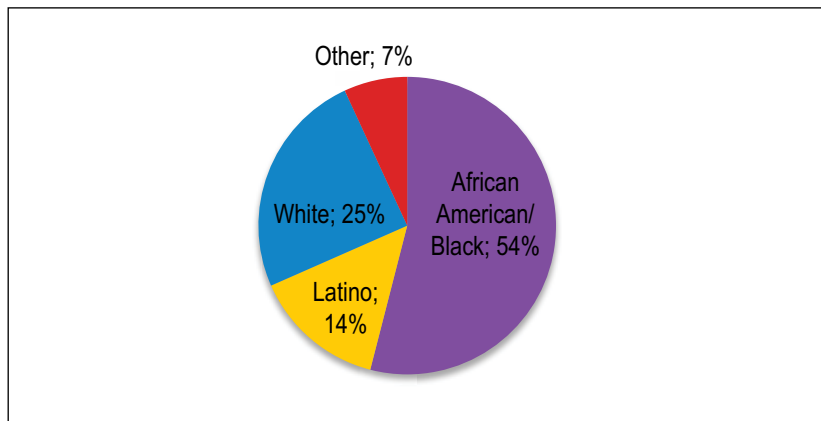
This report provides a snapshot of current educational outcomes of Latino students in the city of Brockton. It is based on publicly available data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MADESE) that has been analyzed by the Gastón Institute for the *2013 Latinos in Massachusetts 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.<sup>1</sup> The first section illustrates the demographic shift occurring in the Brockton Public Schools, with a growing Latino and African-American student population and a shrinking White student population. The second section compares the performance of Latino students in Brockton on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests with the performance of all students statewide and other ethno-racial groups in in Brockton. 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 despite disparities in outcomes, the achievement gap between Latino and White students has been shrinking over recent years. Latino students in Brockton have made especially large improvements on the Grade 10 ELA and Math tests. Furthermore, the MCAS, graduation, and college enrollment outcomes for Latino students in Brockton are superior to the outcomes for Latino students statewide.

## Notes

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

## Demographics

**Figure 1: Brockton Ethno-Racial Composition, SY2013**



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

Brockton is the fourth largest school district in Massachusetts with 16,595 students. This school district is highly diverse, as seen in Figure 1 above. In SY2013<sup>2</sup> the district comprised 54% African-American/Black students, 25% White students, 14% Latino students, and 7% “other” students.<sup>2</sup> Approximately 25% of these 2,390 Latino students are classified as Limited English Proficient (accounting for 18% of the total LEP population in the district). The Latino student population is highly mobile: as compared to other racial-ethnic groups in the district, Latino students were more likely to change schools (or leave the district altogether) during SY2012.

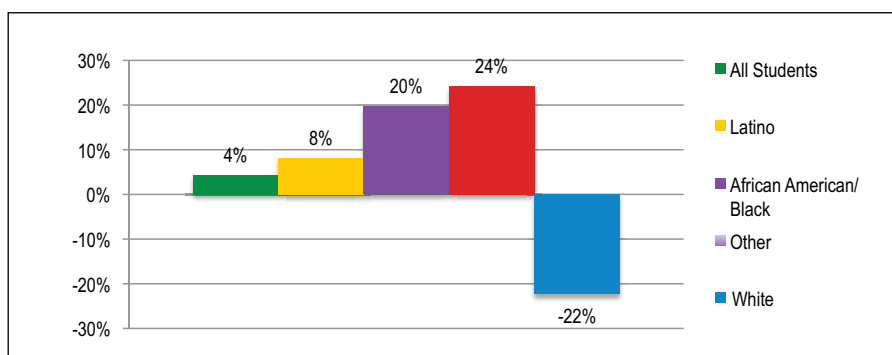
While many school districts across the Commonwealth are seeing a decreasing student enrollment, the student enrollment in Brockton has increased since SY2006,<sup>4</sup> as well as experiencing a demographic shift. As demonstrated in Figure 2 below, the number of students in Brockton has increased by 4%, with the largest growth among “other” students (specifically an 80% increase in the number of students classified as “Multi-race, Non-Hispanic”), African-American/Black students (20% increase), and Latino students (8% increase). Over this period the number of White students decreased by 22%.

<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>3</sup> 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.

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

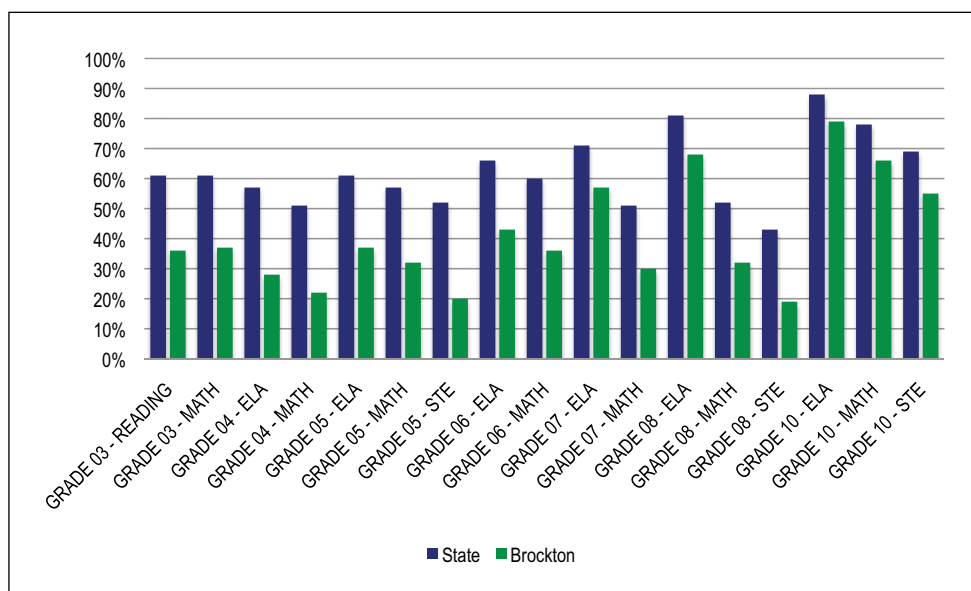
**Figure 2: Percentage Change in Enrollment, SY2006 to SY2013**



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

## MCAS Performance

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



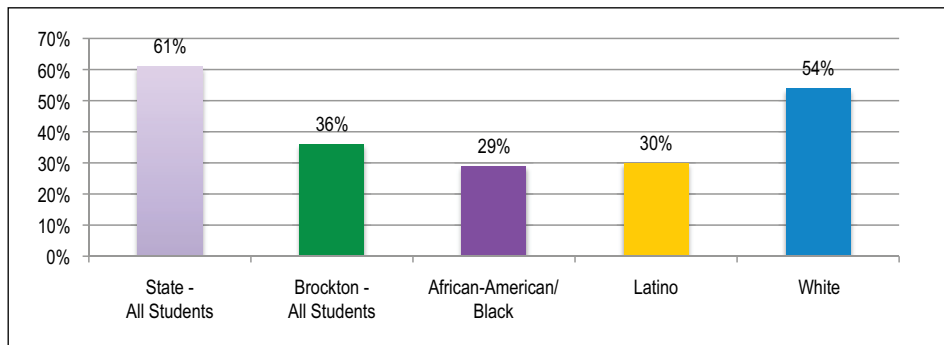
Source: MADESE (2012). 2012 MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject.

Brockton as a district performs slightly below the state on the MCAS tests, with a lower proportion of all students scoring “Proficient” or higher on all subjects at all grades in SY2012. As Figure 3 above shows, the performance gap is largest in early grades, and smallest for the three Grade 10 tests. The district has made dramatic improvements in pass rates for these Grade 10 tests, increasing the pass rates for ELA by 27 percentage points and the pass rate for Math by 33 percentage points since SY2003. The pass rate on the newer Science/Technology/Engineering (STE) test rose by 7 percentage points from SY2008 to SY2012.

Latino students in Brockton have similar or lower pass rates than Latino students statewide in early grades. On the other hand, Latino students in Brockton outperform Latino students statewide by 12 percentage points on both the Grade 10 ELA and Math tests and by 9 percentage points on the Grade 10 Science/Technology/Engineering (STE) MCAS.

This section highlights the performance by Latino students in Brockton 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.

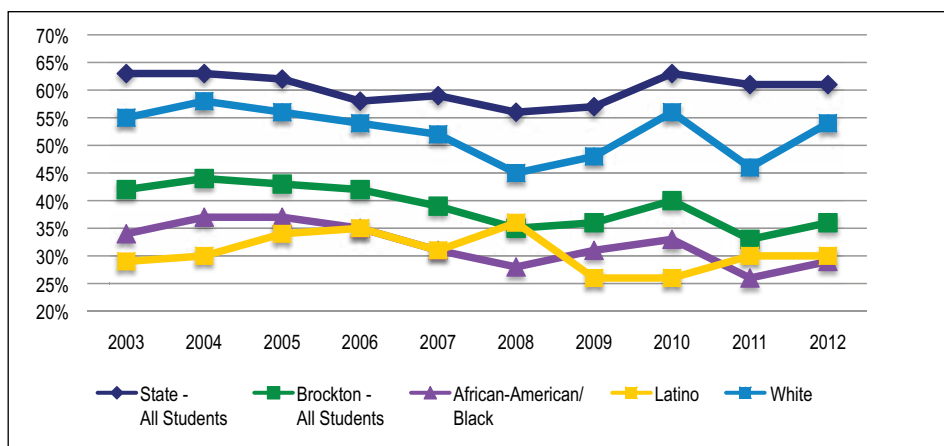
**Figure 4: Percentage of Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher, Grade 3 Reading MCAS by Race/Ethnicity, SY2012**



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

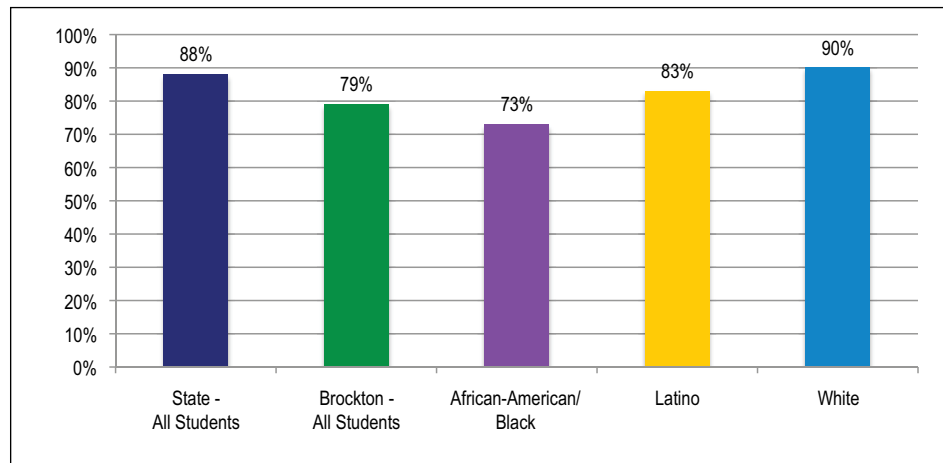
In SY2012, 30% of Latino students in Brockton performed at “Proficient” or higher on the Grade 3 Reading MCAS. Figure 4 above shows that this rate was slightly higher than the rate for African-American/Black students, but 24 percentage points lower than the rate for White students. These pass rates were far below the 61% pass rate for all students statewide. Of additional concern is the 22% of Latino students in Brockton who scored in the “Warning” category, 10 percentage points higher than the percentage for White students. In other words, not only are a higher proportion of Latino students than of White students below grade level, but a higher proportion are substantially below grade level. Furthermore, as seen in Figure 5 below, the pass rates for all students in Brockton, and Latino students specifically, have been stagnant since SY2003. As a result, the White-Latino performance gap remains unchanged over the past ten years.

**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*.

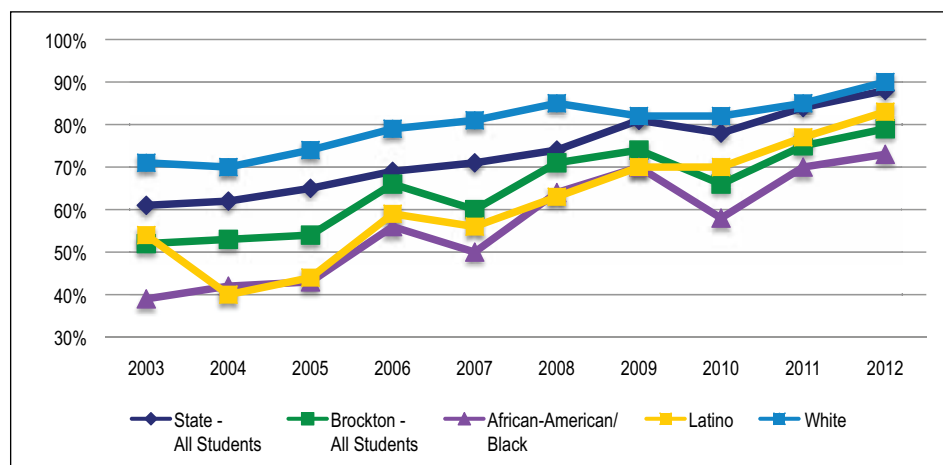
**Figure 6: Percentage of Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher, Grade 10 ELA MCAS by Race/Ethnicity, SY2012**



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

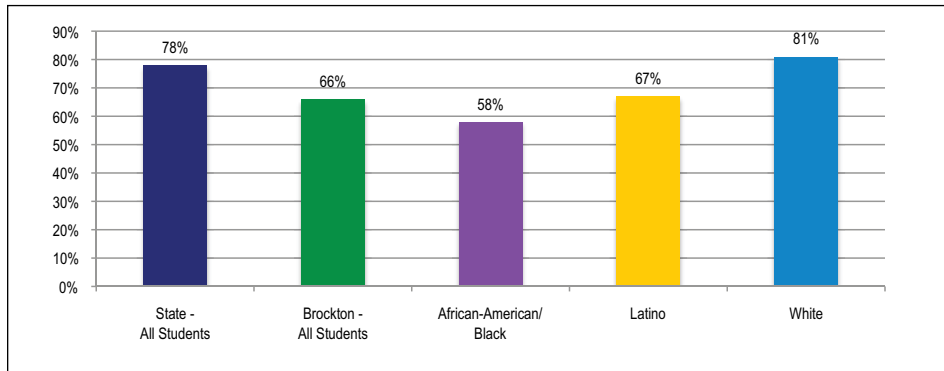
In SY2012, 83% of Latino students in Brockton scored “Proficient” or higher on the Grade 10 ELA MCAS, 10 percentage points higher than the pass rate for African-American/Black students but 7 percentage points below the pass rate for White students in Brockton. Figure 7 below shows the dramatic improvement in Grade 10 ELA pass rates for Latino students in Brockton, with an increase of pass rates of 29 percentage points since SY2003. This improvement has narrowed the achievement gap with White students in Brockton by almost 75% and decreased the small gap with all students statewide by almost 30%.

**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*.

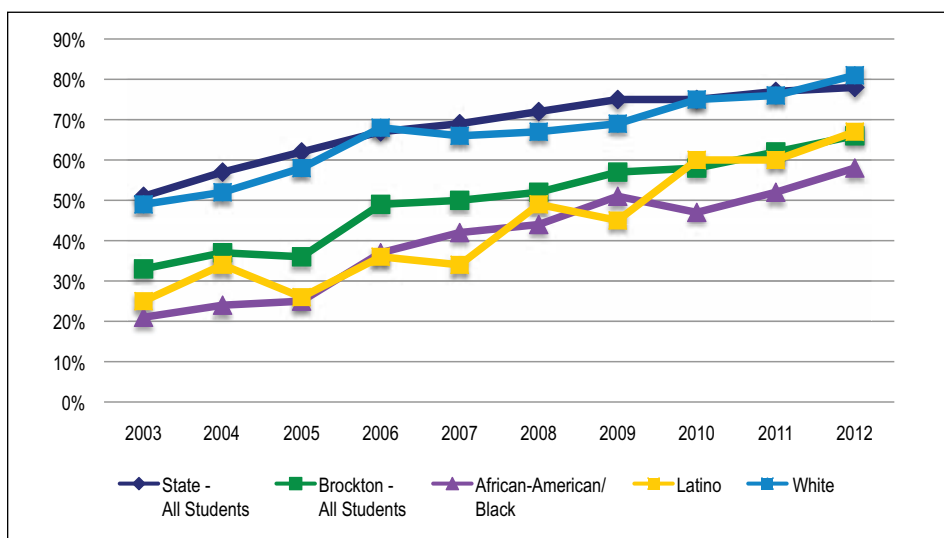
**Figure 8: Percentage of Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher, Grade 10 Math MCAS by Race/Ethnicity, SY2012**



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

As seen in Figure 8 above, 67% of Latino students in Brockton scored “Proficient” or higher on the Grade 10 Math MCAS in SY2012, 9 percentage points higher than the pass rate for African-American but 14 percentage points below the pass rate for White students. As seen in Figure 9 below, the pass rates for all students in Brockton, and specifically for Latino students, have improved dramatically over the past ten years. The Grade 10 Math MCAS pass rate for Latino students in Brockton has increased by 52 percentage points since SY2003, more than doubling the pass rate. This improvement has decreased the gap with White students in Brockton by 42% and the gap with all students statewide by 58%.

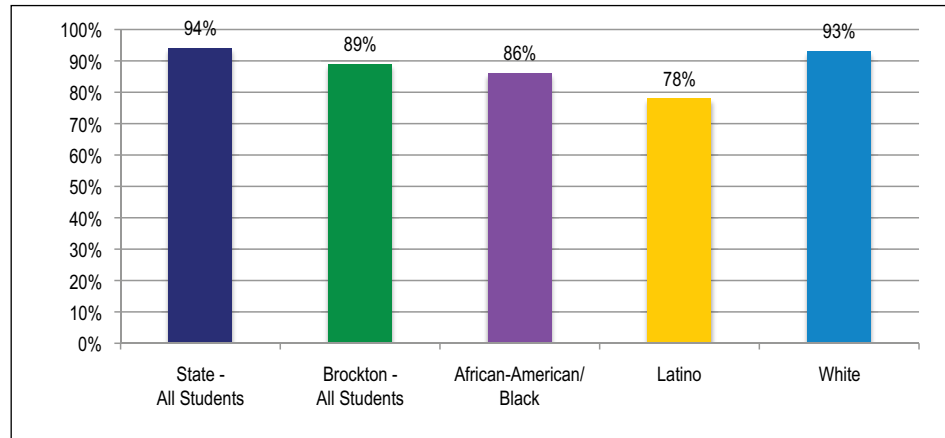
**Figure 9: Percentage of Students Scoring “Proficient” or Higher, Grade 10 Math MCAS by Race/Ethnicity, SY2003-SY2012**



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



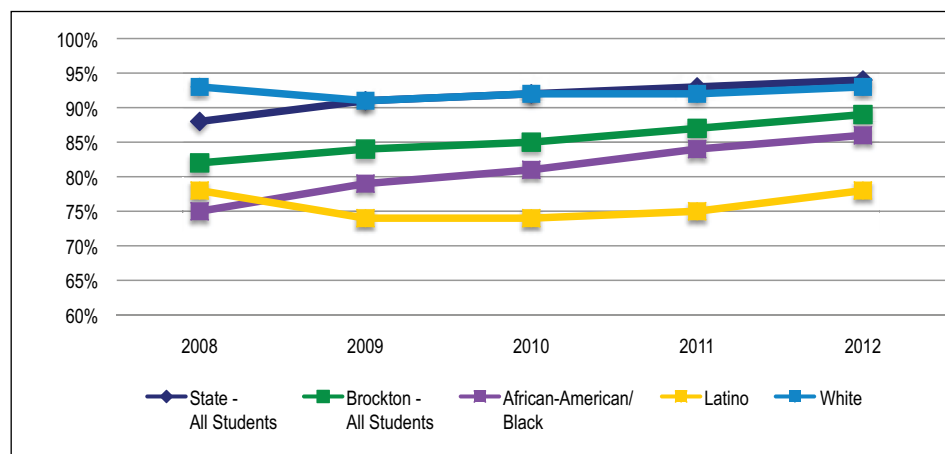
**Figure 10: Percentage of Students Scoring “Needs Improvement” or Higher, Grade 10 STE MCAS by Race/Ethnicity, SY2012**



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

Figure 10 illustrates that in SY2012, Latino students in Brockton had the lowest Grade 10 STE MCAS pass rate among all ethno-racial groups in the district, with 78% passing the STE tests (i.e., scoring at “Needs Improvement” or higher). This pass rate was 8 percentage points below the pass rate for African-American/Black students and 15 points below the pass rate for White students. As seen in Figure 11 below, the Grade 10 STE pass rates for Latino students in Brockton have been stagnant since the test was first administered in SY2008. During the period, the gap with African-American/Black students increased slightly, while the gap with White students remained unchanged.

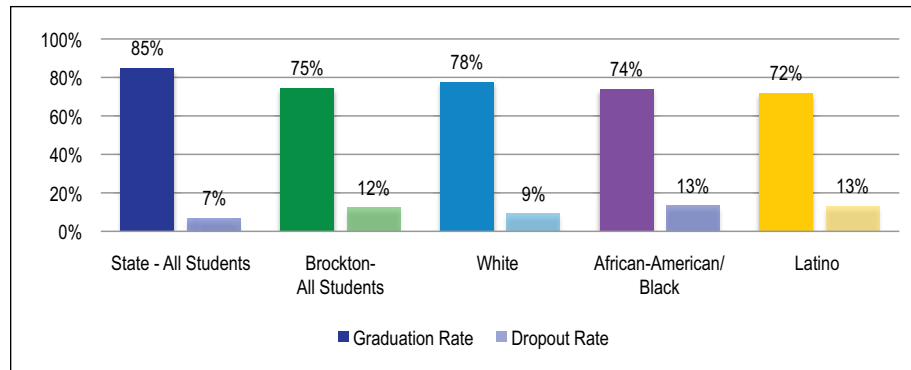
**Figure 11: Percentage of Students Scoring “Needs Improvement” or Higher, Grade 10 STE MCAS, SY2008-SY2012**



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

## Graduation and Dropout Rates

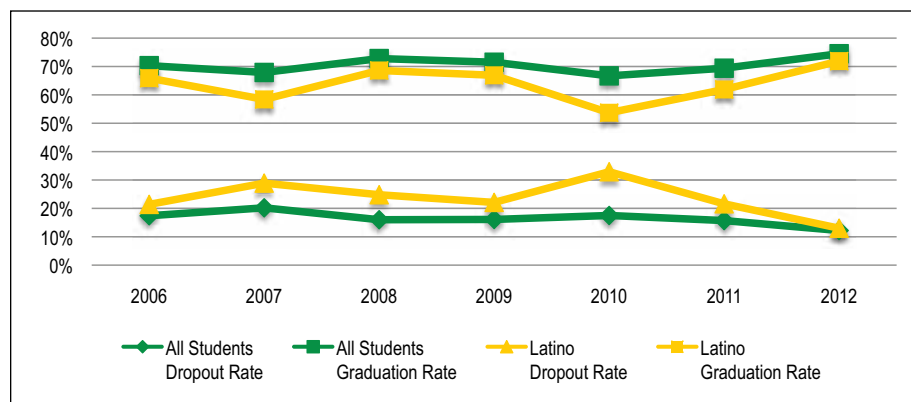
**Figure 12: Four-Year Cohort Graduation and Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity, SY2012**



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

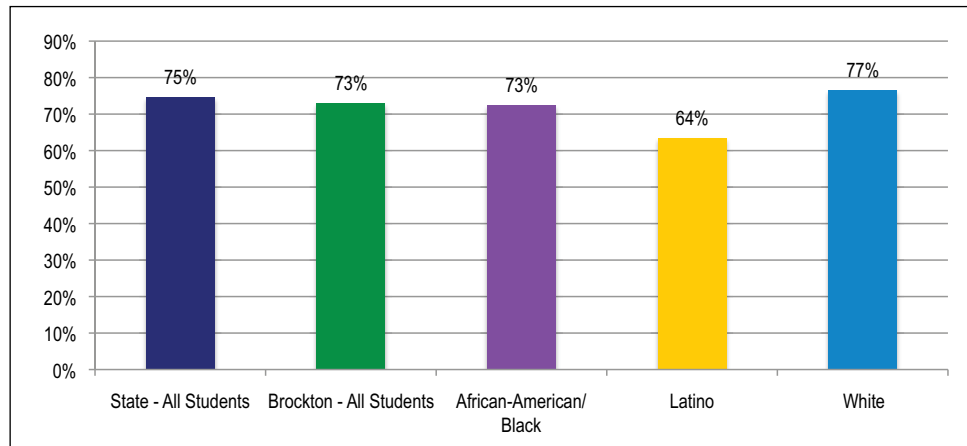
As illustrated in Figure 12 above, in SY2012, 75% of all students in Brockton graduated within four years of beginning high school and 12% dropped out, comparing unfavorably to the statewide rates of 85% and 7% respectively. Within the district, Latino students have a four-year graduation rate of 72%, 5-percentage points lower than the graduation rate for White students and 2 points lower than the graduation rate for African-American/Black students. Thirteen percent of Latino students in Brockton dropped out of high school within four years, a comparable rate to African-American/Black students and 4 percentage points higher than the dropout rate for White students. While these four-year cohort graduation and dropout rates for Latino students in Brockton are worse than those of other ethno-racial groups in Brockton, they are considerably better than the rates for Latino students statewide, where 66% graduate and 18% drop out within four years of starting high school. Figure 13 below demonstrates that the four-year cohort outcomes for Latino students in Brockton have improved over recent years. Since SY2006, the four-year Latino cohort graduation rate has increased by 6 percentage points while the dropout rate decreased by 8 percentage points, slightly narrowing the graduation and dropout gaps with the overall student population of Brockton.

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



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

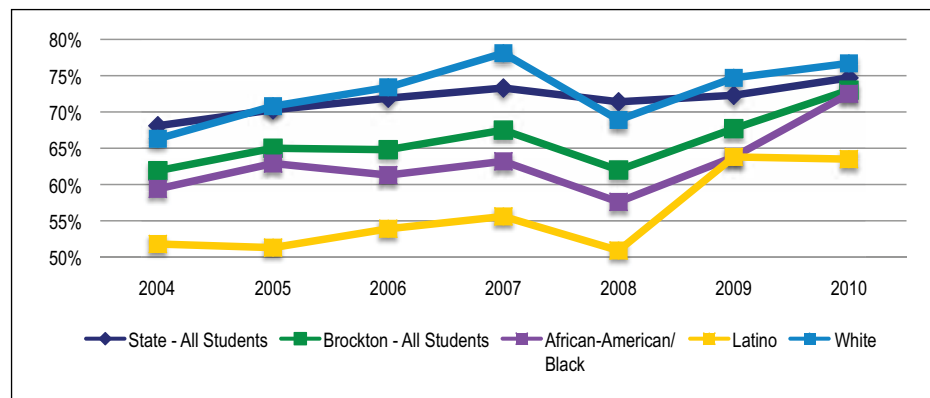
**Figure 14: Percentage of High School Graduates Attending Higher Education Institutions within 16 Months of Completing High School, SY2010**



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

As illustrated in Figure 14, Latino students in Brockton have the lowest percentage of high school graduates attending higher education among all ethno-racial groups. In SY2010, 64% of Latino students enrolled in some form of higher education institution within 16 months of completing high school, 9 percentage points lower than the rate for African-American/Black students and 13 percentage points lower than the rate for White students. The college enrollment rate for Brockton's Latino students rate is 2 percentage points higher than the rate for all Latino students statewide. Furthermore, 48% of the college-enrolling Latino students are enrolling in four-year colleges, 4 percentage points higher than the rate for all Latino students statewide. As illustrated in Figure 15 below, the college enrollment rate has improved over recent years, increasing by 12 percentage points since the state began to track this information in SY2004. Over this period, the gap with White students has remained unchanged.

**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](http://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](http://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.