

The Gender Gaps in High School Graduation, Post-Secondary Education/Training Program Enrollment, and Four Year College Enrollment Rates of Boston Public School Graduates, Class of 2007

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Introduction

Tracking the success of high school programs in adequately preparing students for college and the world of work is dependent upon knowledge of the post-high school college enrollment and persistence experiences of new high school graduates and their early labor market experiences. To improve the available information base on the early college enrollment and labor market experiences of each year's new high school graduates, the Boston Private Industry Council in cooperation with the Boston Public Schools has conducted an annual follow-up survey of new high school graduates from the Boston public high schools. The survey is conducted in the year following graduation from high school and tracks the actual experiences of these new high school graduates. Most public school districts simply collect data on post-graduation plans.

During the late winter and early spring of 2008 (February-May), career specialists employed by the Boston Private Industry Council made a good faith effort to conduct telephone and personal interviews with each of the 3,327 individual graduates from the Class of 2007.¹ Follow-up information was collected from the parents or guardians of the graduate if he or she was not available in the household for an interview. The follow-up survey questionnaire collected information on the college enrollment, post-secondary training program participation, employment, and military service status of each respondent at the time of the survey. For those persons enrolled in a college or post-secondary training program, information was collected on the name of the college attended, the type of educational/training institution (1 year, 2 year, or 4 year college), and the full-time or part-time status of their enrollment. College students also were asked about their major field of study and their financial aid status.

This research paper is primarily focused on the college enrollment experiences of Class of 2007 BPS graduates at the time of the follow-up surveys.² The emphasis is on gender differences in college enrollment rates, types of colleges attended, and the estimated numbers of

¹ Follow-up information was successfully collected from 70% of the BPS graduates from the Class of 2007. All results in this paper are weighted to reflect the distribution of high school graduates by race-ethnic group and high school.

² For an earlier overview of gender gaps in high school graduation rates and college attendance rates among BPS graduates, See: Ishwar Khatiwada and Andrew Sum, The College Enrollment Behavior of Class of 2005 Boston Public School Graduates Including A Multivariate Statistical Analysis, Report Prepared for the Boston Private Industry Council, Research Report on Boston Public School Graduates from the Class of 2005, Boston, September 2007.

men and women who were enrolled in two and four year colleges and universities at the time of the follow-up surveys. There were very large gaps between the number of Class of 2007 graduate men and women attending college at the time of the survey. For example, there were 153 women enrolled in college for every 100 men, and there were 166 women in four year colleges for every 100 men. The sources of the large gender disparities in overall college enrollments and four year college enrollments will be identified and analyzed,³ variations in these gender disparities in college enrollments across race-ethnic groups will be explored, and comparisons of these gender disparities in college enrollments for the Class of 2007 will be compared to those of earlier graduating classes in Boston.

National Trends on Gender Disparities in Two and Four Year College Diploma Awards

Nationally, the annual number of women obtaining associate's and bachelor's degrees had converged with those of men in the early 1980s.⁴ Since then, women have increased their lead over men on a near continuous basis for both types of academic degrees. During the 2006-2007 school year, women in the nation received 158 associate degrees for every 100 obtained by men, and women received 135 bachelor degrees for every 100 received by men.⁵ In the state of Massachusetts, the gender gaps in degree attainment are even slightly higher than they are in the country as a whole. In Massachusetts, 175 associate degrees were received by women for every 100 obtained by men, and 138 bachelor degrees were awarded to women for every 100 granted to men.⁶ Gender gaps in college degree attainment rates vary across major race-ethnic groups, being lowest among Asians and highest among Blacks and Hispanics.

There are a number of important and growing economic, social and fiscal consequences that flow from the below average college degree attainment rates of males across the country, in

³ These sources include large gender gaps in the number of students graduating from Boston public high schools for the Class of 2007. Gender disparities in high school graduation rates for the city will be compared to those for the state as a whole.

⁴ For a review of trends in college degree awards by type of degree and by gender in the U.S. from the late 1970s through 2001,

See: Andrew Sum, Neeta Fogg, Paul E. Harrington, et. al., *The Growing Gender Gaps in College Enrollment and Degree Attainment in the U.S. and Their Economic and Social Consequences*, Report Prepared for the Business Roundtable, Washington, D.C., 2003.

⁵ See: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Integrated Post-Secondary Educational Data System," web site, 2009.

⁶ The ratio of 175 associate degrees to women per 100 awarded to men in Massachusetts was tied for 17th highest among the 50 states during the 2006-2007 academic year.

the state of Massachusetts, and the city of Boston. First, the annual and lifetime hours of employment and earnings of college educated males are considerably above those of their peers with only a high school diploma.⁷ The higher levels of market employment and productivity of male college graduates adds to the real output of national, state, and local economies. Second, primarily due to their higher annual earnings, college educated males are more likely to marry, remain married, and live with the children they father. Their families and children are considerably less likely to be poor or low income. Third, due to their higher wages and salaries and property incomes and their lower dependence on cash and in-kind incomes (food stamps, rental subsidies, and Medicaid) to support themselves and their families, college educated males make substantially greater net annual contributions to the fiscal position of national, state, and local government budgets.

Given the large and often growing economic, social, and civic consequences of obtaining a high school and college education for males, we will analyze an array of educational experiences and outcomes for male and female graduates from the Boston public schools for the Class of 2007. Our analysis will begin with a review of the number of men and women who received regular diplomas from Boston public high schools during that academic year.

Gender Gaps in the Number of Boston Public High School Graduates, Class of 1997 to 2007

Gender disparities in educational outcomes between girls and boys in the Boston public schools exist at every level of performance:

- Girls who begin the ninth grade in the Boston public schools are more likely to graduate from high school than boys
- Of those who do graduate from high school, girls are more likely than boys to attend a two year or four year college in the first year following graduation from high school
- Of those attending a post-secondary educational institution, women are more likely than men to enroll in a four year college or university. As a consequence of the above

⁷ For a detailed review of key differences in labor market, income, and social outcomes for adults with varying levels of formal schooling in Massachusetts, See: Andrew Sum, Ishwar Khatiwada, and Joseph McLaughlin, The Labor Market, Income, Social, Civic, Health and Political Consequences of Dropping Out of High School: Findings for Massachusetts Adults in the Twenty-First Century, Report Prepared for the Boston Youth Transitions Group, Boston, 2007.

three outcomes, there were many more women than men (166 women per 100 men) from the Class of 2007 who were attending a four year college or university at the time of the 2008 follow-up survey.

- Of those attending college, women are more likely than men to persist in college and obtain an academic degree. This true of BPS graduates in two and four year colleges and universities.⁸

The large gaps in the number of women and men from the Boston public schools' graduating Class of 2007 attending four year colleges have their origins in the substantial differences in the number of men and women who graduated from high school. There were 3,327 graduates from the Boston public schools for the Class of 2007. Of that total 1,902 were women and only 1,425 were men. There were 133 female high school graduates for every 100 males from that graduating class (Table 1). The ratio of women to men among high school graduates has risen sharply over the past two years, increasing from 117 for the Class of 2005 to 133 for the Class of 2007. The ratio of 133 women to men for the Class of 2007 was the highest in the past 11 years, exceeding the previous high of 129 for the Class of 2003, the first graduating class that had to pass the state MCAS exams to graduate.

⁸ Longitudinal evidence on this issue for BPS graduates from the Class of 2000 is available in the following publication:
Center for Labor Market Studies, Getting to the Finish Line: College Enrollment and Graduation, Report Prepared for the Boston Private Industry Council and the Boston Public Schools, Boston, November 2008.

Table 1:
Number of Male and Female Graduates from
Boston Public High Schools, Classes of 1997 to 2007

Graduating Class	Females	Males	Females per 100 Males
1997	1,453	1,217	119
1998	1,685	1,390	121
1999	1,670	1,321	126
2000	1,591	1,340	119
2001	1,708	1,513	113
2002	1,916	1,600	120
2003	1,656	1,282	129
2004	1,696	1,334	127
2005	1,687	1,443	117
2006	1,786	1,455	123
2007	1902	1425	133

Source: Boston public schools.

The high ratio of female high school graduates to male high school graduates from the Boston public schools in recent years (123 per 100 for the Class of 2006 and 133 per 100 for the Class of 2007) does not reflect any excess initial enrollment of women in the Boston public high schools at the beginning of their high school years, but rather the result of sharply higher on-time high school graduation rates for women. For the high school graduating Class of 2007, there were only 93 women enrolled in the 9th grade for every 100 men three years earlier. The higher number of men attending 9th grade was influenced in large part by the greater tendency of first time male, freshmen to be held back in grade for academic reasons. Students held back in grade especially for two years, however, are considerably more likely to withdraw from high school prior to graduation.

Women in Massachusetts, the city of Boston, and other large cities across the state are more likely to graduate from high school on-time; i.e., in four years, than their male peers. The state of Massachusetts has been one of the leaders in collecting uniform data on on-time graduation rates from high schools using an individual student based, longitudinal tracking system. Since 2006, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has generated findings on both four year, on time and five year graduation rates for the state as a whole, for school districts, individual high schools, and an array of demographic and socioeconomic groups of high school students, including gender and race-ethnic groups.

Across the state as a whole, the four year on time graduation rate for women from the Class of 2006 was 83.5%, which was seven percentage points above that of males from the same graduating class (Table 2). In Boston and nearly all other large city school districts, the gender gaps in four year graduation rates were considerably larger than they were in the more affluent suburban school districts. In Boston, just under 66 percent of female high school students graduated on-time in 2006 versus only 52% of the men, a gender gap of close to 14 percentage points in on-time graduation rates. Findings for the five year graduating rate of BPS graduates from the Class of 2006 revealed a slight narrowing of the gender gap in the fifth year.

Table 2:
Comparisons of the Four Year On-Time Graduation Rates of Male and Female
Class of 2006 High School Students in Massachusetts and the City of Boston
(in %)

	(A)	(B)	(C)
Geographic Area	Men	Women	Women – Men (in Percentage Points)
Massachusetts	76.4	83.5	+7.1
City of Boston	52.3	65.8	+13.5

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, SIMS Data, 2007.

Gender gaps in four year, on-time graduation rates in favor of women prevailed within each major race-ethnic group in the city of Boston for the Class of 2006. The size of these gaps ranged from slightly under seven percentage points among Asians to highs of 15 to 16 percentage points among Black and Hispanic high school students (Table 3). Only 43 of every 100 Hispanic males and 48 of every 100 African-American males from the Class of 2006 managed to graduate from high school on-time. The large gender gaps in high school graduation rates among Black and Hispanic high school students contribute in an important way to the very large disparities in four year college enrollments between Black women and men and Hispanic women and men who attended the Boston public schools.

Table 3:
Gender Differences in Four-Year Graduation Rates of Boston High School
Students by Major Race-Ethnic Group, Class of 2006
(in %)

	(A)	(B)	(C)
Race-Ethnic Group	Men	Women	Women – Men (in Percentage Points)
Asian	79.5	86.1	+6.6
African American	47.7	63.3	+15.6
Hispanic	42.9	58.3	+15.4
White, not Hispanic	65.9	75.6	+9.7

The four year, on-time graduation rates for male and female high school students from the Class of 2007 in Massachusetts and the city of Boston are displayed in Table 4. For the state as a whole, the on-time graduation rate of women exceeded that of men by six percentage points (84% vs. 78%). For the city of Boston, the gender gap in high school graduation rates for the Class of 2007 was a considerably greater 17 percentage points (66% vs. 49%). Only slightly under one-half of the boys from the freshman class three years earlier had graduated on-time although another 23 percent were still attending high school at the end of the school year in 2007.

Table 4:
The Four Year On-Time Graduation Rates for Male and Female
High School Students in Massachusetts and the City of Boston, Class of 2007
(in %)

	(A)	(B)	(C)
Geographic Area	Men	Women	Women – Men
Massachusetts	77.9	84.1	+6.2
Boston	48.9	66.0	+17.1

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The Early Transition of BPS High School Graduates to College and the Post-Secondary Training World: Findings for the Class of 2007

The annual PIC-sponsored follow-up survey of Boston public school graduates collects information on all enrollment activities in post-secondary educational and training programs.⁹ Findings from the winter/spring 2008 follow-up survey of BPS graduates from the Class of 2007 were used to generate estimates of the percent of graduates who were enrolled in a post-secondary education or training program at the time of the follow-up surveys.¹⁰

Just under 78% of all BPS graduates from the Class of 2007 were estimated to be attending a two or four year college or some other type of post-secondary training or education program at the time of the follow-up survey (Chart 1). This 77.8% post-secondary education/training enrollment rate exceeded the all time high of 77.2% for the Class of 2005 and was 8 to 9 percentage points higher than the estimated college/training enrollment rates for the city's graduates from the Classes of 2000, 2001, and 2002. The post-secondary enrollment rate was ten percentage points higher for women than for men (82% vs. 72%) and ranged from a low of about 71% for Hispanics to a high of slightly over 94% for Asians (Chart 2).

⁹ These activities include enrollment in one year business colleges, office skills training, programs, computer training schools, vocational/technical programs, and Job Corps training programs but exclude apprenticeship training and formal training from employers. The latter two types of job training are tracked separately on the employment segment of the survey.

¹⁰ The sample cases were assigned weights based on their race-ethnic status and the high school attended.

Chart 1:
Trends in Post Secondary Education and Training Enrollment Rates for
Boston Public High School Graduates, Classes of 2000 to 2007

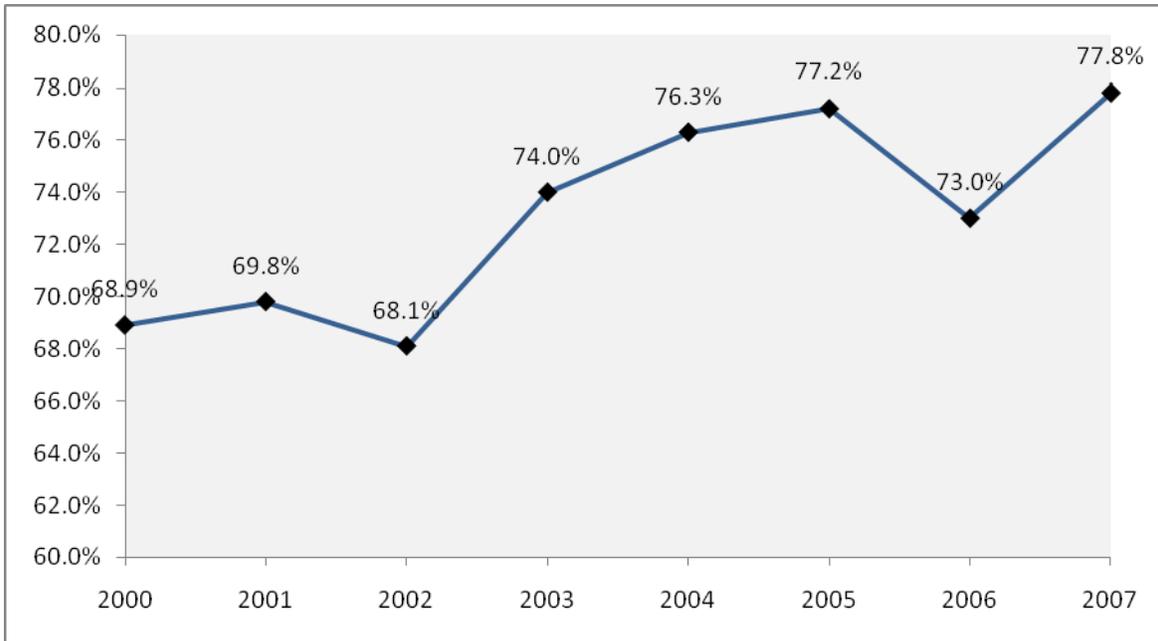
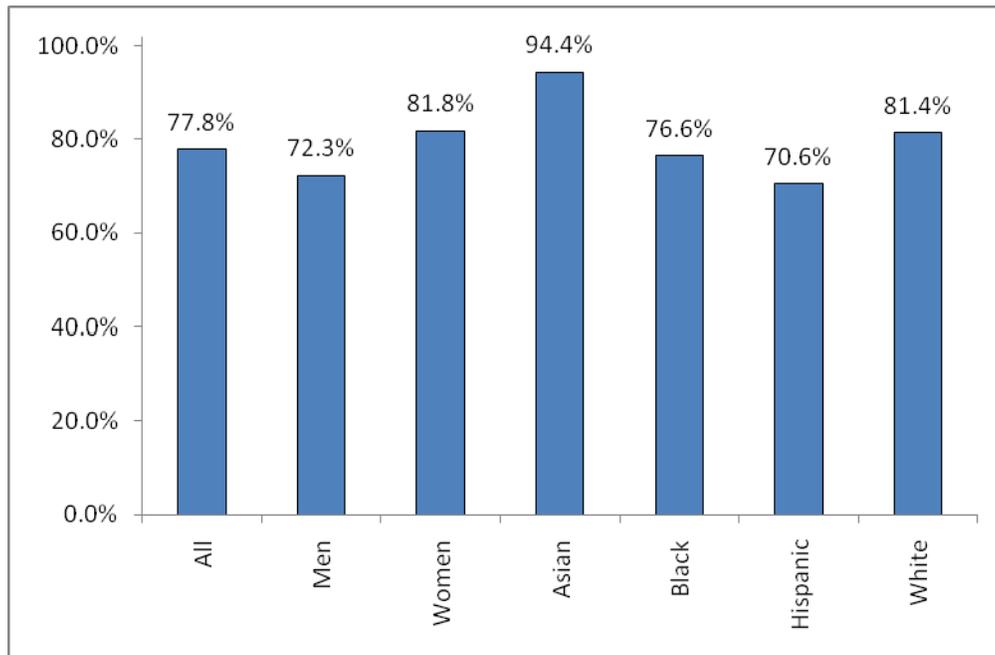


Chart 2:
College/Training Program Enrollment Rates of Class of 2007
Boston Public High School Graduates, Total and by Gender and Race-Ethnic Group

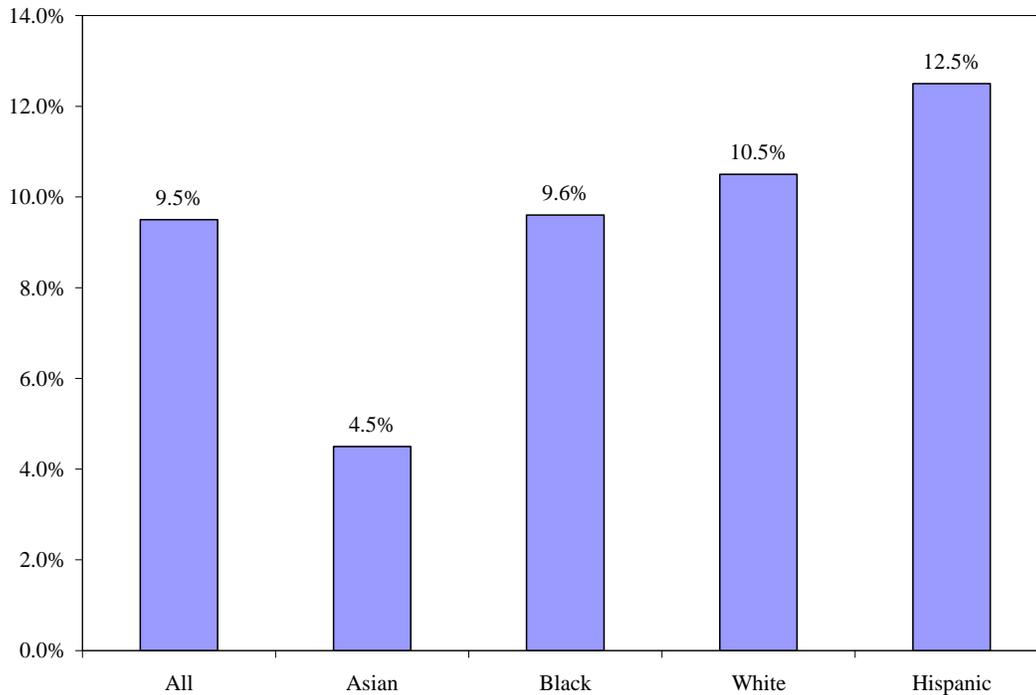


Gender gaps in post-secondary education and training enrollment rates prevailed in all four race-ethnic groups and were at or above the double digit level for all groups except Asians, where a smaller five percentage point gap in favor of women existed (Table 5). Among graduates of the three exam high schools (Boston Latin, Latin Academy, and O’Bryant Technical High Schools), males were equally as likely as women to attend college or a training program after graduation (97% vs. 96%). There were, however, many more women than men who graduated from the city’s three exam high schools. Among graduates of the district, pilot, and alternative high schools, the gender gap in college/training program enrollment rates was a substantial 12 percentage points in favor of female graduates (Table 5).

Table 5:
Gender Gaps in College/Post-Secondary Training Enrollment Rates of Boston Public High School Graduates by Race/Ethnic Group and Type of High School, Class of 2007
 (Numbers in Percent)

Group	Women	Men	Percentage Point Gap (Men-Women)
All	81.8	72.3	-9.5
Asian	96.4	92.0	-4.5
Black	80.5	70.9	-9.6
Hispanic	75.8	63.3	-12.5
White	86.1	75.6	-10.5
Exam School	96.0	97.2	1.2
District/Pilot/Alternative School	77.1	64.9	-12.2

Chart 3:
Gender Gaps in Post Secondary Educational and Training Program Enrollment Rates Among
Class of 2007 Boston Public High School Graduates by Race-Ethnic Group



The types of colleges and post-secondary training institutions attended by Class of 2007 graduates tended to vary somewhat across gender groups. The fraction of graduates attending post-secondary training programs at the time of the 2008 follow-up surveys was nearly identical for men and women (5.2% vs. 5.0%). Male graduates were slightly more likely than women to attend two year colleges (primarily public community colleges) (Table 6). Slightly more than 20 percent of the male graduates were enrolled in community colleges versus slightly under 19 percent of the women. However, a sharply high share of female graduates than males were attending four year colleges and universities at the time of the follow-up survey (58.0% vs. 47.0%), an 11 percentage point gap.

Table 6:
The Percent of Male and Female High School Graduates from the Class of 2007
Who Attended Post Secondary Training Programs, 2-Year Colleges, and 4-Year Colleges at the
Time of the Follow-up Survey

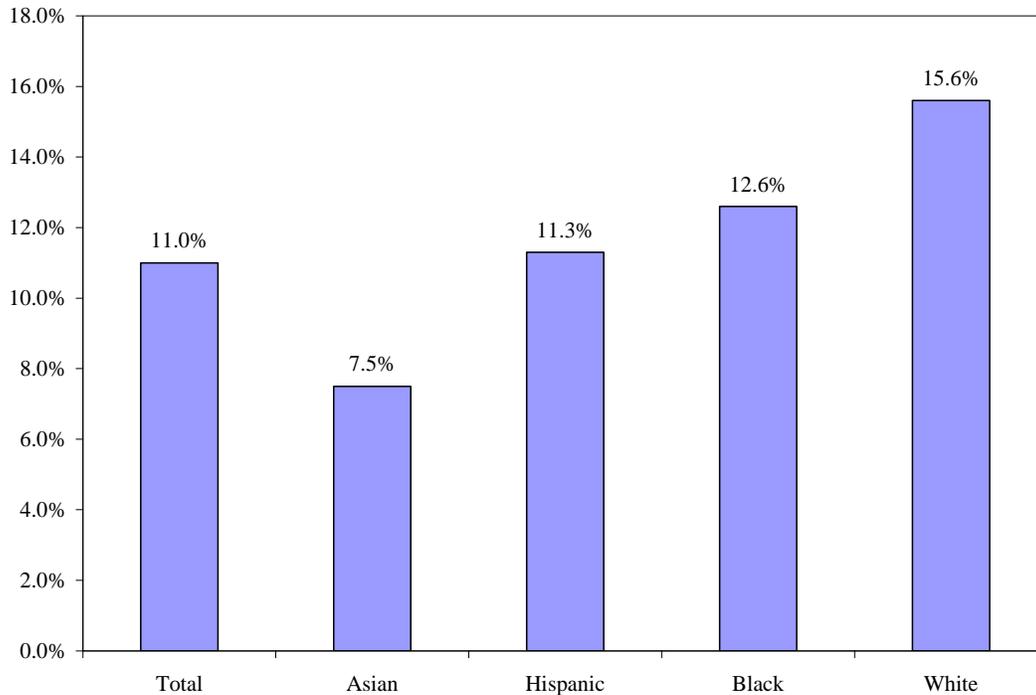
Type of Post Secondary Education or Training Program	Men	Women	Women - Men
Any	72.3	81.8	9.5
Post-Secondary Training	5.2	5.0	-0.2
2 Year Colleges	20.1	18.8	-1.3
4 Year Colleges	47.0	58.0	11.0

In each major race-ethnic group, in the late winter and early spring of 2008, there were a higher share of female than male BPS graduates from the Class of 2007 attending four year colleges and universities. The size of the gender disparities in four college enrollment rates ranged from approximately 8 percentage points among Asians to highs of 13 percentage points among Blacks and 16 percentage points among White, non-Hispanics (Table 7 and Chart 4). The gaps in four year college enrollment rates among BPS graduates varied widely across the combinations of gender and race-ethnic groups. Among Hispanic and Black male graduates, only 36 to 40 percent were enrolled in four year colleges and universities. Among White women, nearly 78 of every 100 graduates were attending a four year college and university, and at the top of the distribution were the 80 and 88 percent four year college enrollment rates of Asian men and women. Asian, female graduates from the Class of 2007 were two and one half times as likely to be attending a four year college or university as Hispanic male graduates from the Class of 2007.

Table 7:
Class of 2007 Boston Public School Graduates, Gender Gaps in the Share of Male and Female
Attending 4-Year Colleges and Universities by Race/Ethnic Group

Race/ Ethnic Group	Number of Males Attending	Percent of Males Attending 4 year colleges	Number of Females Attending	Percent of Females Attending 4 year colleges	Percentage Point Difference
Asian	144	80.6	184	88.4	-7.8
Black	241	39.7	459	52.7	-13.0
Hispanic	125	35.6	220	46.1	-10.5
White	149	61.1	228	77.5	-16.4

Chart 4:
Gender Gaps in 4-Year College and University Enrollment Rates,
Class of 2007 Boston Public High School Graduates by Race-Ethnic Group



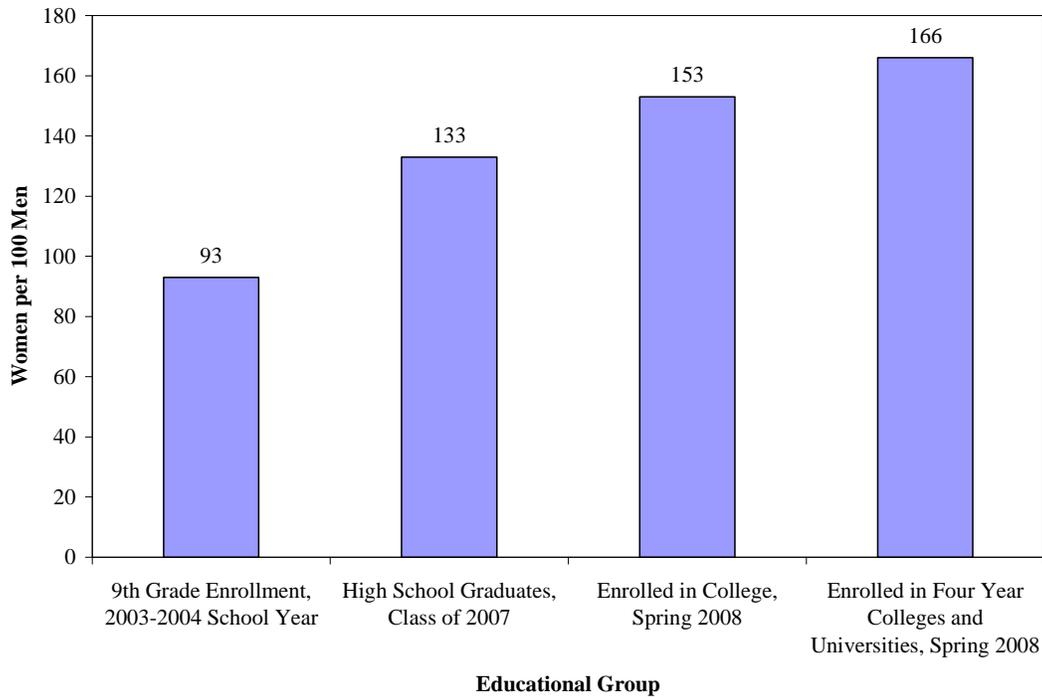
The findings on the numbers of men and women graduating from the Boston public schools in 2007, and those attending a two or four year college in the spring following graduation can be combined to calculate gender disparity ratios for each educational outcome (See Table 8 and Chart 5). The ninth grade class of high school freshmen included more boys

than girls. There were only 93 girls per 100 boys in the freshman class. Yet, as a result of the much higher high school graduation rate for girls, there were 133 women for every 100 boys in the BPS graduating Class of 2007 (Table 8 and Chart 5). Since female graduates from the Class of 2007 were more likely than their male counterparts to attend college in the spring following graduation, the gender disparity in college enrollments was even greater: 153 women enrolled in college per 100 men. Finally, those women attending college in the spring of 2008 were more likely than their male counterparts to attend a 4 year college or university. Thus, in the spring of 2008, there were 166 women attending four year colleges and universities for every 100 males from the BPS graduating Class of 2007.

Table 8:
Number of Women Per 100 Males Attending 9th Grade in the 2003-2004 School Year,
Graduating from High School in the Class of 2007, Attending College, and Enrolled in Two and
Four Year Colleges in the Spring of 2008

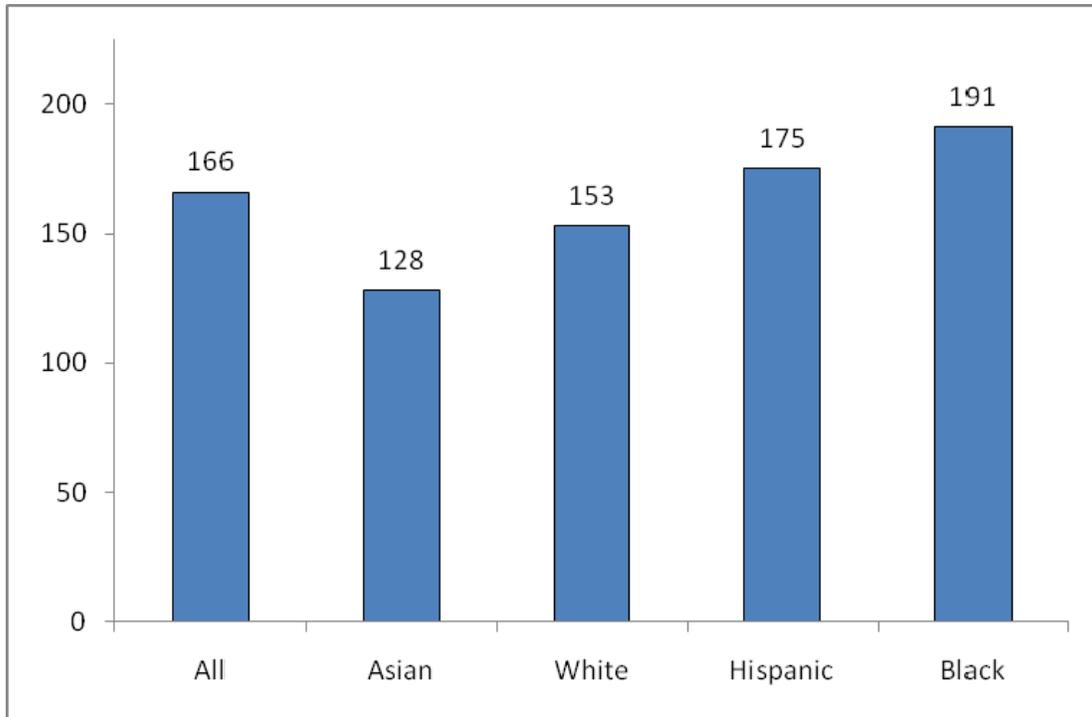
Educational/ Demographic Group	# of Men Enrolled	# of Women Enrolled	Ratio of Women to Men
9th Grade Enrollment	3,184	2,965	93/100
High School Graduates, Class of 2007	1,425	1,902	133/100
Attending 2 & 4 Year Colleges	940	1,440	153/100
4 Year Colleges	659	1092	166/100
Asian	144	184	128/100
Black	241	459	191/100
Hispanic	125	220	175/100
White	149	228	153/100
2 Year Colleges	281	349	124/100
Asian	18	14	79/100
Black	156	184	118/100
Hispanic	89	131	148/100
White	19	21	110/100

Chart 5:
Number of Women Per 100 Men in Selected Educational Enrollment, and
High School Graduation Groups, BPS Class of 2007



The relative size of the gender disparities in college enrollments varied widely across type of colleges and the race-ethnic groups of graduates (Table 8). Among those attending two year colleges, the gender disparity was only 124 women per 100 men versus a disparity of 166 women per 100 men among four year college enrollees. Among the two year college attendees, the gender ratios ranged from a low of 79 women per 100 men among Asians to a high of 148 per 100 among Hispanics. Among those enrolled in four year colleges and universities, the gender gaps were much larger, both overall and in each of the four major race-ethnic groups. The gender disparities ranged from a low of 128 women per 100 men among Asians to highs of 175 per 100 among Hispanics and 191 per 100 among Black graduates (Chart 6). The larger gender disparities in four year college enrollments among both Blacks and Hispanics reflect a combination of large gender disparities in high school graduation rates, initial college attendance rates among high school graduates, and a greater tendency for Black and Hispanic women to enroll in four year colleges and universities than men when they do attend college.

Chart 6:
Number of Females Per 100 Males Enrolled in Four-Year Colleges and Universities, Class of 2007 Boston Public High Schools, Total and by Race-Ethnic Group



One of the underlying sources of the high gender disparity in four year college enrollments among recent BPS graduates is the considerably greater number of women that attend and graduate from the city's three exam high schools: Boston Latin, Latin Academy, and O'Bryant Technical. For the graduating Class of 2007, there were 479 females from the three exam schools versus 324 males, a ratio of 148 women per 100 men. While both gender groups from the exam schools had an equally very high rate (95-96%) of college enrollment following graduation from high school, women were somewhat more likely than men to attend four year colleges and universities in the spring (93% vs. 90%). The gender disparity in the number of four year college enrollees from the exam schools was 153 women per 100 men. If males had graduated from the city's exam schools in the same numbers as women and matched the four year college enrollment rate of men from the exam schools, the overall gender disparity in four year college enrollments across the city would have been reduced from 166 women per 100 men to 146 women per 100 men. Increasing men's access to and persistence in the intellectually more

challenging exam schools would help reduce the large and growing gender disparities in four year college enrollments.

Projecting Gender Disparities in Ultimate College Degree Attainment

The above findings from the Spring 2008 follow-up survey of Class of 2007 graduates from the Boston public schools have revealed a large gender disparity in initial college enrollments (153 women per 100 men) and an even larger disparity in enrollments in four year colleges and universities (166 women per 100 men). The degree to which these initial large enrollment differences lead to differences in ultimate degree attainment will be dependent on both the persistence of these students in college through graduation and the future college enrollment behavior of those high school graduates who did not enroll in college in the winter/spring period of the year immediately following their graduation from high school.

Over the past two years, the Center for Labor Market Studies of Northeastern University in cooperation with the Boston Private Industry Council and the Boston Public Schools has been conducting longitudinal research on the college enrollment behavior and graduation rates of BPS graduates from the Classes of 2000 and 2001, generating estimates of college degree attainment and persistence for up to seven years after graduation.¹¹ Estimates of the share of college attendees from the graduating Class of 2000 who obtained a college degree by June 2007, seven years after their date of graduation from high school, are displayed in Table 9. Overall, slightly under 36% of the college attendees had obtained an Associate's or Bachelor's degree by June 2007. College attendees who graduated from the three exam high schools were two and one-half times as likely as their peers in the district, magnet and alternative high schools to have obtained a college degree by mid-2007 (60% vs. 24%). Female college attendees in the aggregate were modestly more likely to have obtained a college degree than their male peers (36.6% vs. 33.9%) (Table 9). There were even larger gender gaps (8 to 9 percentage points) in college attainment rates among Asian, Black, and Hispanic graduates; however, among White, non-Hispanics, males were somewhat more likely than females to have obtained a college degree by June 2007.

¹¹ For a review of the findings for the Class of 2000, See: Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, Getting to the Finish Line: College Enrollment and Graduation.

Table 9:
Percent of Female and Male College Attendees from the BPS Graduating Class of 2000
Who Obtained A College Degree by Mid-2007, All and by Major Race-Ethnic Group

	(A)	(B)	(C)
Race-Ethnic Group	Men	Women	Women – Men (in Percentage Points)
All	33.9	36.6	+2.7
Asian	47.6	56.9	+9.3
Black	23.6	31.1	+7.5
Hispanic	19.0	26.8	+7.8
White, not Hispanic	55.1	51.6	-3.5

Source: Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, Getting to the Finish Line...

At the end of the June 2007 reporting period, 391 of the 2,964 graduates from the Class of 2007 were reported to be still enrolled in college of whom about one-third already held a college degree (associate's or bachelor's). The number of high school graduates enrolled in college but without a degree was 267, which was equal to 9.5% of all high school graduates from the Class of 2000. Again, we find that women were more likely than men to be enrolled in college at the end of this period (10.8% vs. 6.9%) (Table 10). If we combine these two groups (those graduates with a formal degree and those without a degree but still enrolled), then we find that 47.4% of female college attendees either had a degree or were still actively working on a degree versus only 40.8% of the men, a difference of 6.6 percentage points or 16% in relative terms.

Table 10:
Percent of Female and Male BPS Graduates from the Class of 2000
Who Either Obtained a College Degree by Mid-2007 or Were Still in College in Mid-2007

	(A)	(B)	(C)
College Group	Men	Women	Women – Men (in Percentage Points)
Obtained a Degree by Mid-2007	33.9	36.6	+2.7
No Degree, But Still in College in Mid-2007	6.9	10.8	+3.9
Sum of Above Two Groups	40.8	47.4	+6.6

We have conducted a set of relatively simple projections of likely gender disparities in college degree attainment rates seven years after graduation from the BPS Class of 2007 under two alternative scenarios (Table 11). Under Scenario A, we assume that the seven year graduation rates of college attendees in both gender groups will match those for college attendees from the Class of 2000. Under this first scenario, the number of female college graduates (two and four year degrees) will exceed male degree holders by 166 to 100. At the time of the 2008 follow-up survey, the number of women enrolled in any type of college was 153 per 100 men.

Table 11:
Number of BPS Female and Male Graduates from the Class of 2007 Who Will Obtain A Formal College Degree in Seven Years Under Two Alternative Scenarios

Scenario	(A)	(B)	(C)
	Female Graduates	Male Graduates	Females Per 100 Males
A: Both groups graduate at same rate as peers from Class of 2000	527	318	166
B: Both groups graduate from college at same rates as peers from 2000 plus those still enrolled in college	683	384	178

Under our second scenario, we assume that the college degree attainment rates for each gender group will be equal to the sum of those with college degrees and those still working on their degrees in June 2007. Under this scenario, the number of female graduates from the Class of 2007 with a college degree seven years later would be 683 versus only 384 men, a relative difference of 178 women per 100 men (Table 8). If the same gender differences in seven year graduation rates prevailed among those attending four year colleges and universities at the time of the spring 2008 follow-up, then there would be 193 female graduates with a BA degree for every 100 men by June 2014. Among Black and Hispanic graduates, the ratio of female BA holders to men would range from 204 to 223. Clearly, there are likely to be very large gender disparities in BA degree attainment rates among Class of 2007 graduates unless new policies are developed to substantially boost men’s access to and persistence in four year colleges and universities.

A Summary of Key Research Findings and Their future Public Policy and Research Implications

This research paper on the high school graduation and early college enrollment experiences of Class of 2007 Boston public school graduates has focused on gender disparities in high school graduation rates, college/post-secondary training program enrollment rates, and attendance in four year colleges and universities. For the BPS Class of 2007 graduates as a whole, the enrollment rate in colleges and post-secondary training institutions reached a new all time high. Just under 78% of all graduates from the Class of 2007 were estimated to be enrolled in a 2 or 4 year college/university or a post-secondary training school at the time of the late winter/spring 2008 follow-up interviews.

While both males and females enrolled in college at high rates, there were many more women attending college than men (153 per 100), and among four year college students the gender gap was even larger, 166 women per 100 men. The large and growing gender gap in four year college enrollments reflects a variety of differences in the school behavior and educational performance of men and women including the following:

- Women were much more likely than men to graduate from high school on-time; i.e. in 4 years. Both Black and Hispanic males have been characterized by the lowest high school graduation rates in recent years.
- Upon graduation, women are more likely than men to attend college. These gender gaps in college attendance persist in each of the four race-ethnic groups of BPS graduates. Part of this gender disparity is due to the much larger number of women that graduate from the city's three exam schools. Over 95% of the graduates from the three exam schools were attending college at the time of the 2008 follow-up survey.
- Of those enrolled in college or a post-secondary training institution, women were more likely than men to attend a 4 year college or university.
- Earlier longitudinal research on the Class of 2000 revealed that those graduates attending four year colleges, especially private colleges and universities, were considerably more likely to graduate than their peers attending two year colleges. If this trend continues, female graduates from the Class of 2007 will substantially outnumber men in the ranks of those receiving BA degrees.

Large gender gaps in college attendance and degrees awarded also prevail across the state as a whole, but they are much larger in Boston and in other large cities than in many of the more affluent, suburban school districts. Substantially narrowing these gender gaps should be a major goal of the city's and state's educational system in the years ahead. Recently, Boston's Mayor Menino announced a set of ambitious goals for college graduation rates of future BPS graduates, including a 50% increase in the college graduation rate for high school graduates from the Class of 2009 and a doubling of the college graduation rate for graduates from the Class of 2011.¹²

Achievement of these far reaching goals will require a substantial increase in high school graduation rates, college enrollment rates, and college persistence rates among existing high school students and recent graduates, especially Black and Hispanic males. To achieve the ultimate goal of a major increase in college graduates, future research and evaluation activities should focus on the following issues:

- What educational strategies, including an expansion of pilot schools, alternative high schools, and enriched academic/social support services within existing schools, are most effective in increasing male high school graduation rates?
- What strategies, including early joint academic remediation and dual enrollment between high schools and community colleges/four year colleges, can help improve BPS graduates' access to college and their persistence in college?
- Can stronger links between colleges and local employers through paid and unpaid internships, cooperative education programs, and work-based mentoring help BPS graduates persist in college through graduation and gain access to jobs in their chosen fields of study shortly after graduation from college? Such efforts can help the city obtain a well qualified work force that is committed to remaining in the local area.

¹² See: City of Boston, Office of the Mayor, Mayor Menino to Double the College Graduation Rate for Boston Students, Boston, November 17, 2008.