

# RESEARCH BRIEF

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, INNOVATION, AND ACCOUNTABILITY  
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION – DECEMBER 7, 2017



## Postsecondary Enrollment, Persistence, and Degree Attainment

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### ABSTRACT

This brief summarizes the results from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) postsecondary data reports. Each year, data regarding Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) graduates are provided to the NSC which is then matched to university enrollment records at participating institutions across the nation. The reports provided by the NSC document the number and percentage of VBCPS graduates who enrolled in college immediately after high school, during the first year after high school, and during the first two years after high school. It also provides information on postsecondary persistence from freshman to sophomore year and degree attainment trends for VBCPS graduates. When available, demographic information is also provided for students who enrolled in a postsecondary institution. The results show that between 56 and 61 percent of VBCPS graduates from the 2007 to 2017 graduating classes enrolled in a postsecondary institution immediately after high school. The range of percentages for VBCPS graduates who enrolled in a postsecondary institution two years after graduation increased to 68 to 72 percent. More VBCPS students enrolled in a four-year institution compared to a two-year institution, and approximately 38 percent of 2011 VBCPS graduates obtained a postsecondary degree within six years. Generally, higher percentages of females, Asian students, and non-economically disadvantaged students enrolled in postsecondary institutions compared to other subgroups.

### INTRODUCTION

This brief is based on data reports provided by the NSC. The NSC collects data on roughly 98 percent of all students enrolled in a postsecondary institution from over 3,600 colleges and universities that participate in the educational reporting service. This information enables schools and school divisions to track their graduates as they continue through the educational pipeline. The school division began subscribing to the NSC service in 2004 and has provided the NSC with graduation data from the Class of 2001 through the most current Class of 2017.

### METHOD

Each fall VBCPS provides the NSC with a list of all combined term graduates.<sup>1</sup> Based on the requirements of the NSC, this list contains graduates' first name, last name, date of birth, graduation date, diploma type, high school attended, and demographic information. Using this information, the NSC utilizes a proprietary algorithm to match these student records with data provided by each participating postsecondary institution. The end results are detailed reports which illustrate college enrollment trends for VBCPS alumni. The following sections summarize the data provided by the NSC based on trends in division- and school-level postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and completion.

#### KEY TOPICS

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<sup>1</sup> Data for students whose educational record indicates that they do not want their directory information released are not sent to the NSC.

**POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT**

**Immediately After High School**

The following figures illustrate the percentage of high school graduates who enrolled in a postsecondary institution during the fall semester immediately following high school graduation. In order to be included in this percentage, a student must have enrolled following graduation between August 15 and October 31. Figure 1 shows the overall division-level enrollment percentages for the graduating classes of 2007 through 2017. Additionally, the institution level (two-year or four-year) in which these students enrolled is illustrated. For the Class of 2017, 60 percent of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution immediately following high school graduation. With regard to institutional level, a consistently higher percentage of graduates enrolled in four-year institutions immediately after graduation compared to the two-year institutions. Enrollment in a four-year postsecondary institution has ranged from 33 to 40 percent, whereas enrollment in a two-year postsecondary institution has ranged from 18 to 25 percent. For the Class of 2017, the percentage of students enrolling in a four-year institution immediately after graduation increased to 40 percent. Enrollment in a two-year institution was maintained for the Class of 2017 (20%).

**Figure 1: Division Postsecondary Enrollment by Year and Level - Immediately After High School**

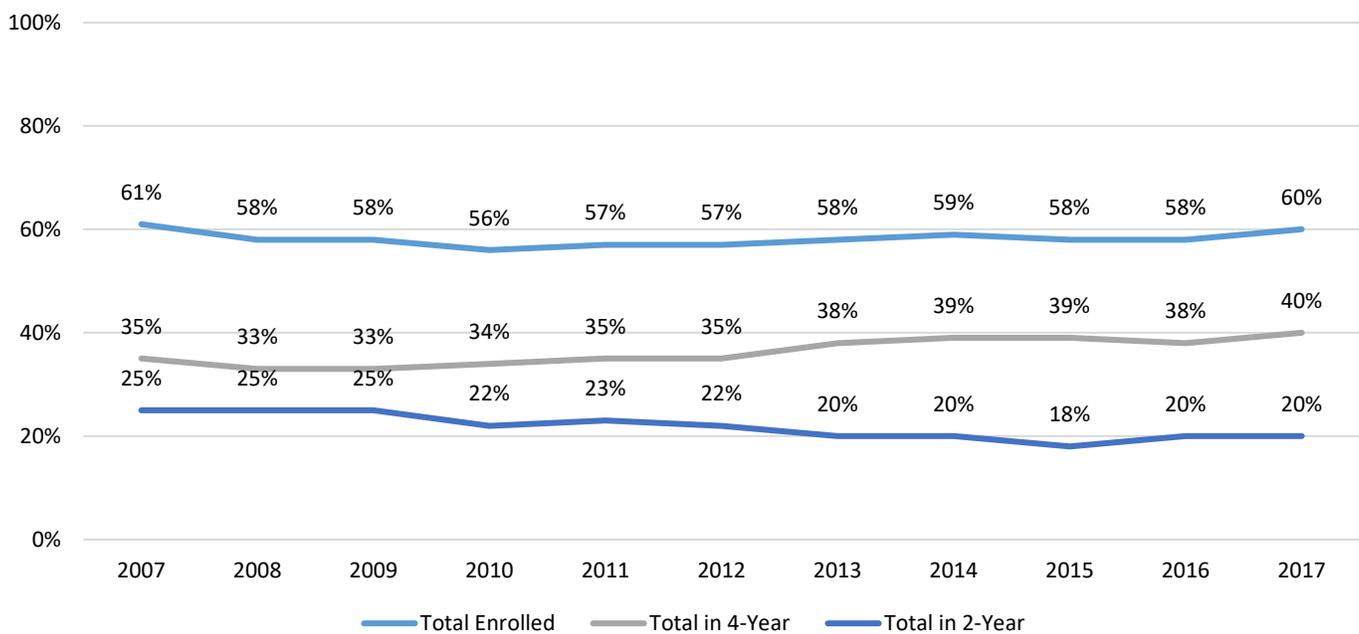
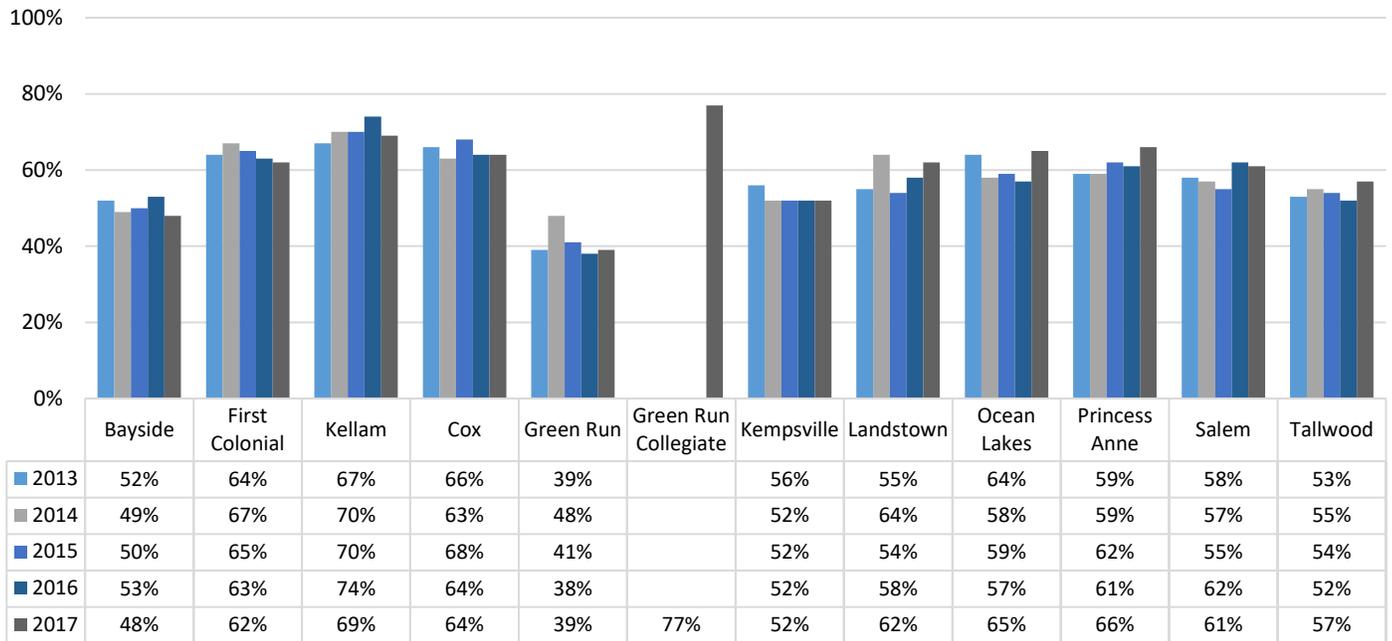


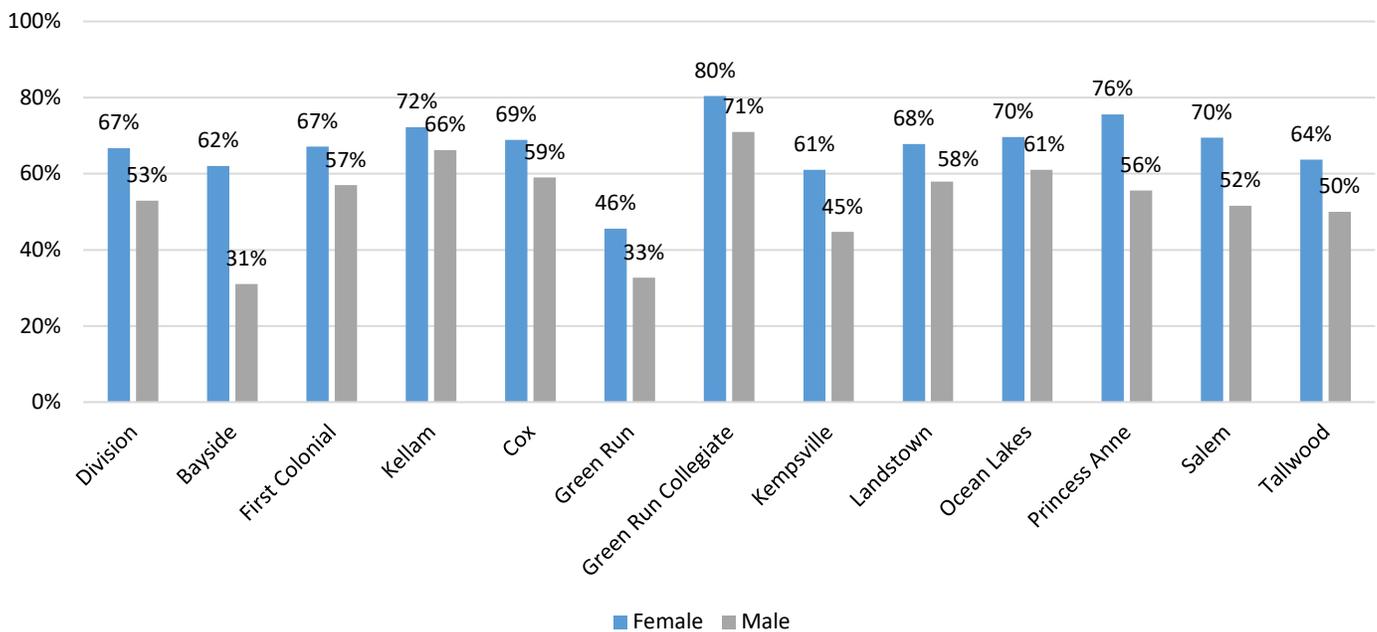
Figure 2 contains the school-level total enrollment percentages for the graduating classes of 2013 through 2017. For the Class of 2017, Green Run Collegiate had the highest college enrollment rate immediately after high school (77%) compared to all other VBCPS high schools. There were seven other schools that met or exceeded the division’s college enrollment rate for the 2017 graduating class (60%) including Kellam (69%), Princess Anne (66%), Ocean Lakes (65%), Cox (64%), First Colonial (62%), Landstown (62%), and Salem (61%) high schools.

**Figure 2: Postsecondary Enrollment by School and Year - Immediately After High School**



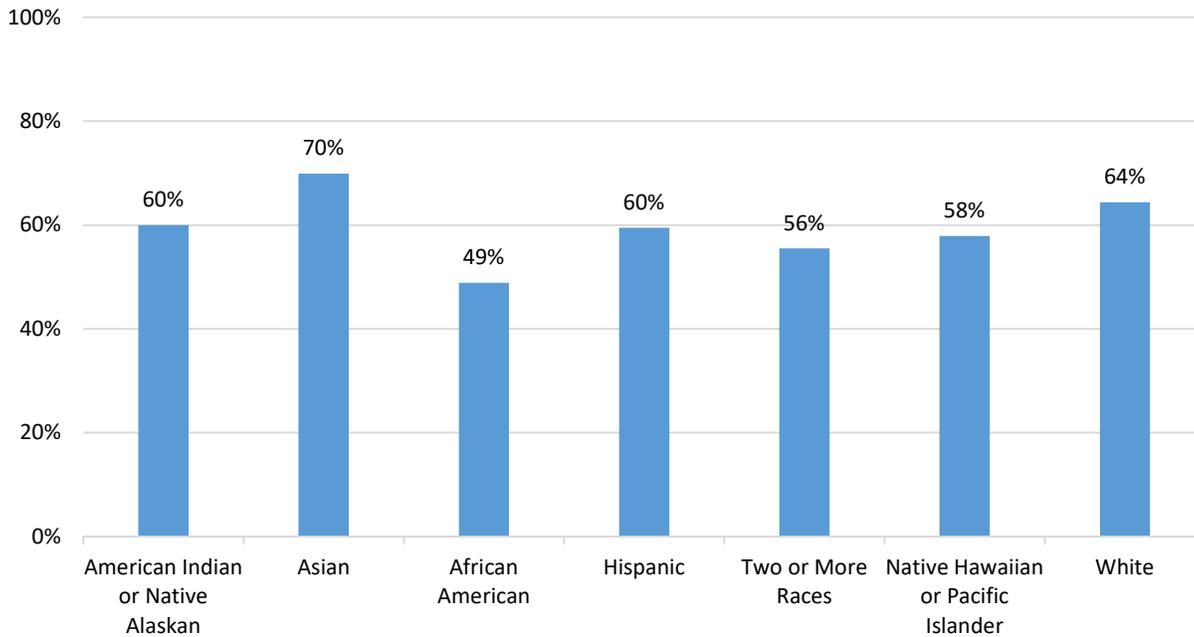
Gender and race/ethnicity data were provided to the NSC to be included in the enrollment reports. It is important to note that the NSC reports these percentages based on the number of students in the graduating class. If a student did not enroll in a postsecondary institution, he/she is still included in the denominator. As can be seen in Figure 3, the percentage of female students from the entire Class of 2017 that enrolled immediately after high school was higher compared to male students at the division level and across all schools. Between 46 and 80 percent of female students in the Class of 2017 enrolled immediately following graduation depending on their school. The largest gender enrollment gap occurred at Bayside High School (31%), while the smallest gap was at Kellam High School (6%).

**Figure 3: Postsecondary Enrollment by School and Gender - Immediately After High School**



With regard to the ethnicities of the students in the Class of 2017, the subgroup with the largest percentage of graduates who enrolled immediately following graduation were Asian (70%) followed by White students (64%) (see Figure 4). The subgroup with the smallest percentage of students enrolling were African American students in the graduating class (49%). Additionally, the school-level percentages for the two largest ethnic groups based on enrollment can be found in Appendix A for the Class of 2017.

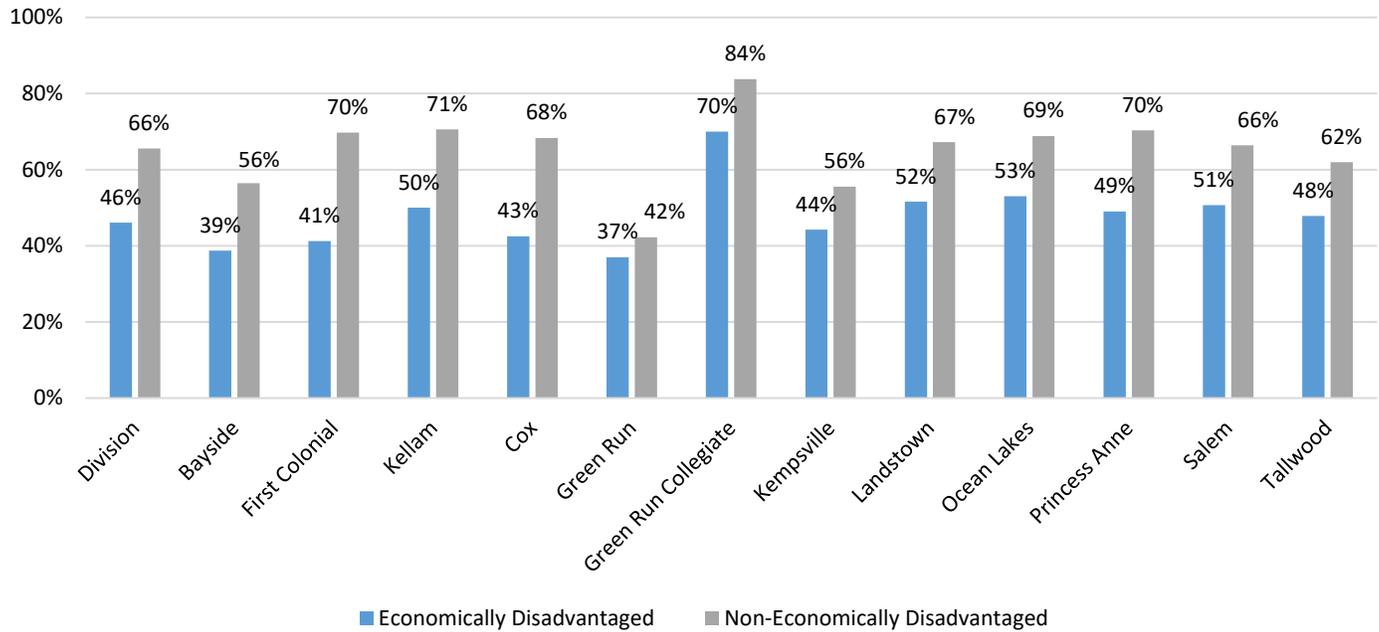
**Figure 4: Division Postsecondary Enrollment by Ethnicity - Immediately After High School**



Displayed in Figure 5 are the division- and school-level enrollment percentages for the economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged graduates from the Class of 2017.<sup>2</sup> At the division level, 46 percent of the students who were identified as economically disadvantaged from the Class of 2017 enrolled in a postsecondary institution immediately following graduation. As expected, a higher percentage (66%) of the Class of 2017 who were not identified as being economically disadvantaged enrolled in a postsecondary institution. All VBCPS high schools had a higher percentage of non-economically disadvantaged students from the graduating classes enrolled immediately following graduation ranging from 42 to 84 percent.

<sup>2</sup> Data regarding each student’s economic status are not provided to the NSC. The percentages displayed are based on demographic data extracted from the VBCPS Data Warehouse which was then combined with the NSC enrollment records.

**Figure 5: Postsecondary Enrollment by School and Economic Status - Immediately After High School**



**Any Time During the First Year After High School**

This section of the brief shows the division- and school-level figures for the high school graduates who enrolled in a postsecondary institution at any time during the first academic year following graduation (August 15 to August 14). Figure 6 shows the overall division-level enrollment percentages for the graduating classes of 2007 through 2016 along with the institution level. At the division level, the percentage of students who enrolled in a postsecondary institution within the first year following graduation decreased from 66 to 63 percent across the ten cohorts. For the Class of 2016, the percentage of students enrolled anytime during the year after graduation was 63 percent.

**Figure 6: Division Postsecondary Enrollment by Year and Level - During the First Year After High School**

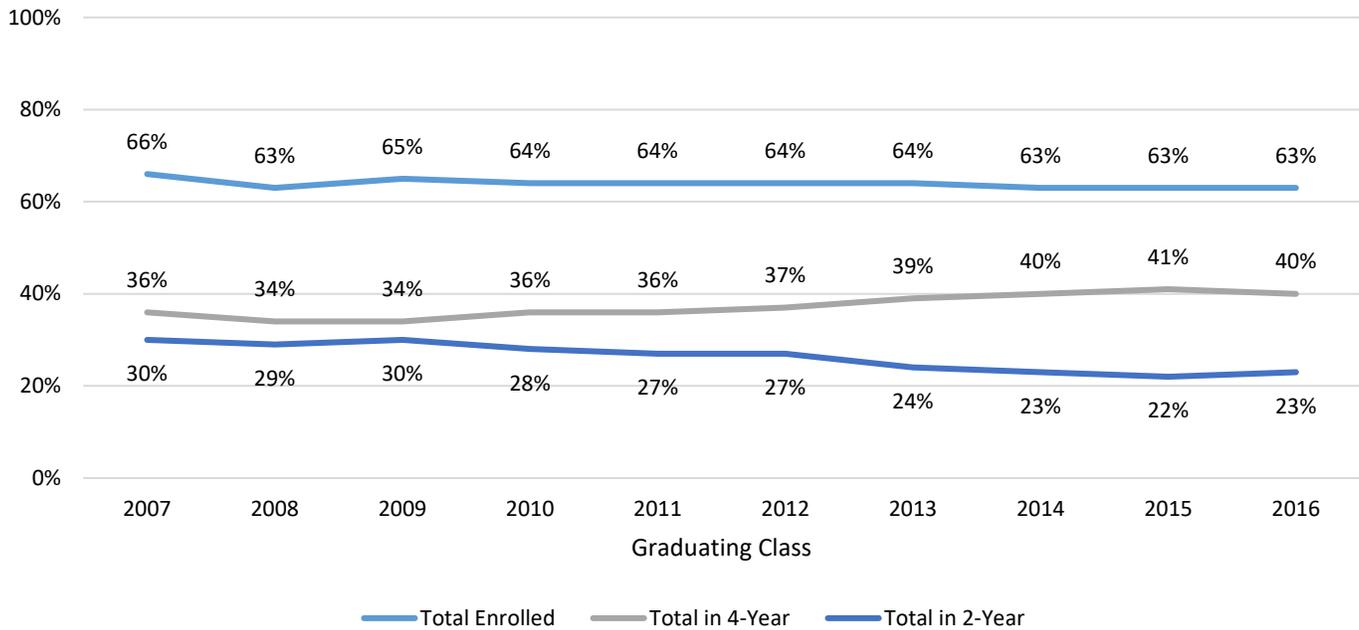
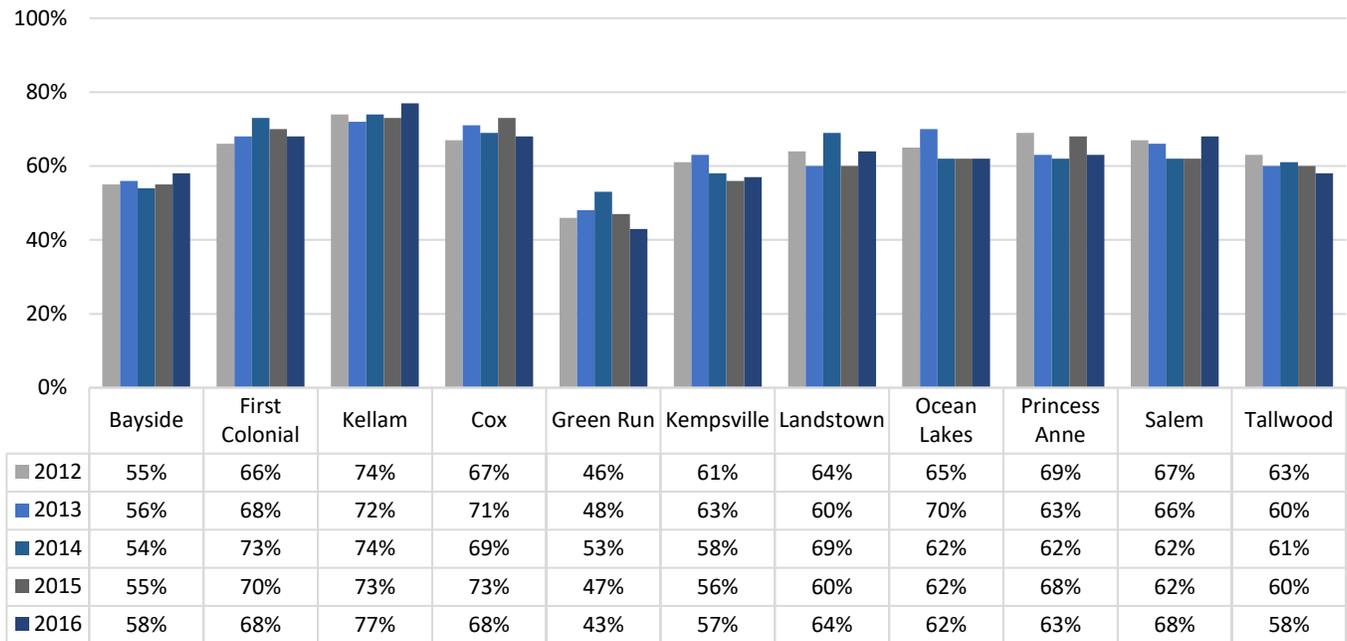


Figure 7 contains the school-level enrollment percentages for the graduating classes of 2012 through 2016. Within one year following graduation, between 43 and 77 percent of 2016 VBCPS graduates at each school enrolled in a postsecondary institution. Compared to immediate enrollment (Figure 2) for the Class of 2016, Landstown, Salem, and Tallwood high schools experienced the largest increases in the percentage of students enrolled during the year following graduation, which was 6 percentage points.

**Figure 7: Postsecondary Enrollment by School and Year - During the First Year After High School**

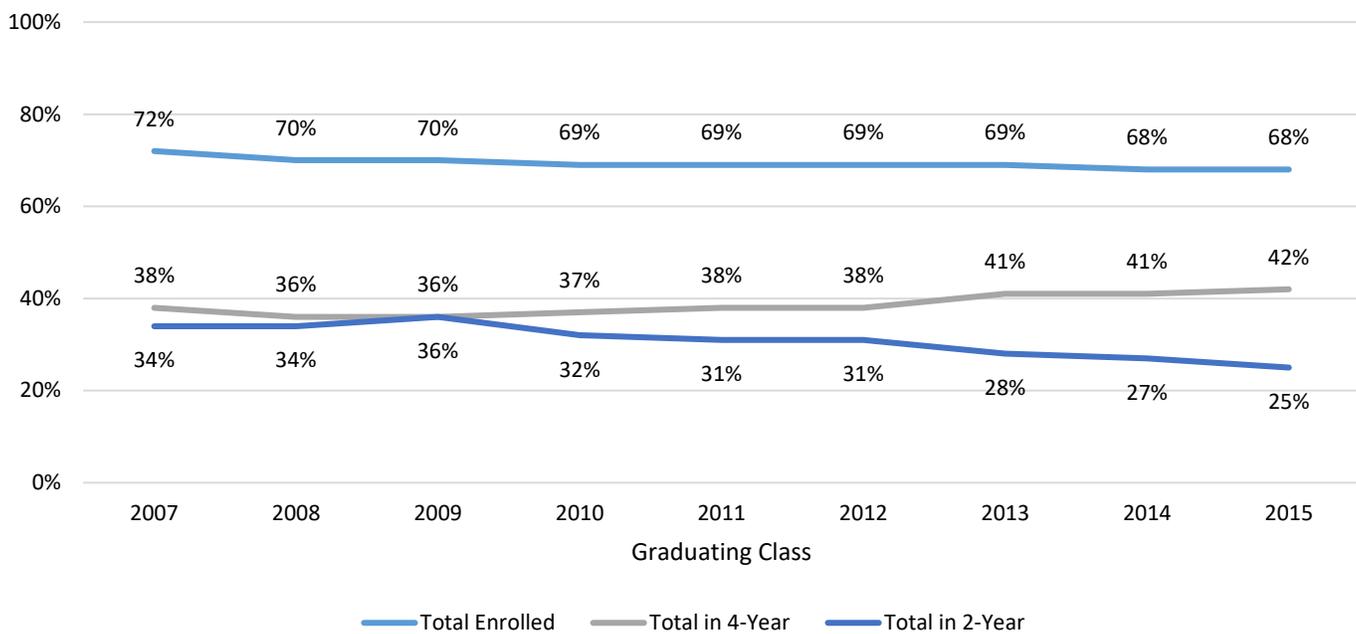


**Within Two Years After High School**

This section describes the overall division-level percentage of graduates who enrolled in a postsecondary institution within two years following high school graduation. Based on this enrollment window, Figure 8 displays the percentages for the classes of 2007 through 2015 along with the institution level in which these students enrolled. Within two years after graduation, 68 to 72 percent of VBCPS graduates from the classes of 2007 to 2015 enrolled in a postsecondary institution. Between 36 and 42 percent enrolled in a four-year institution and 25 to 36 percent enrolled in a two-year institution within two years after graduation.

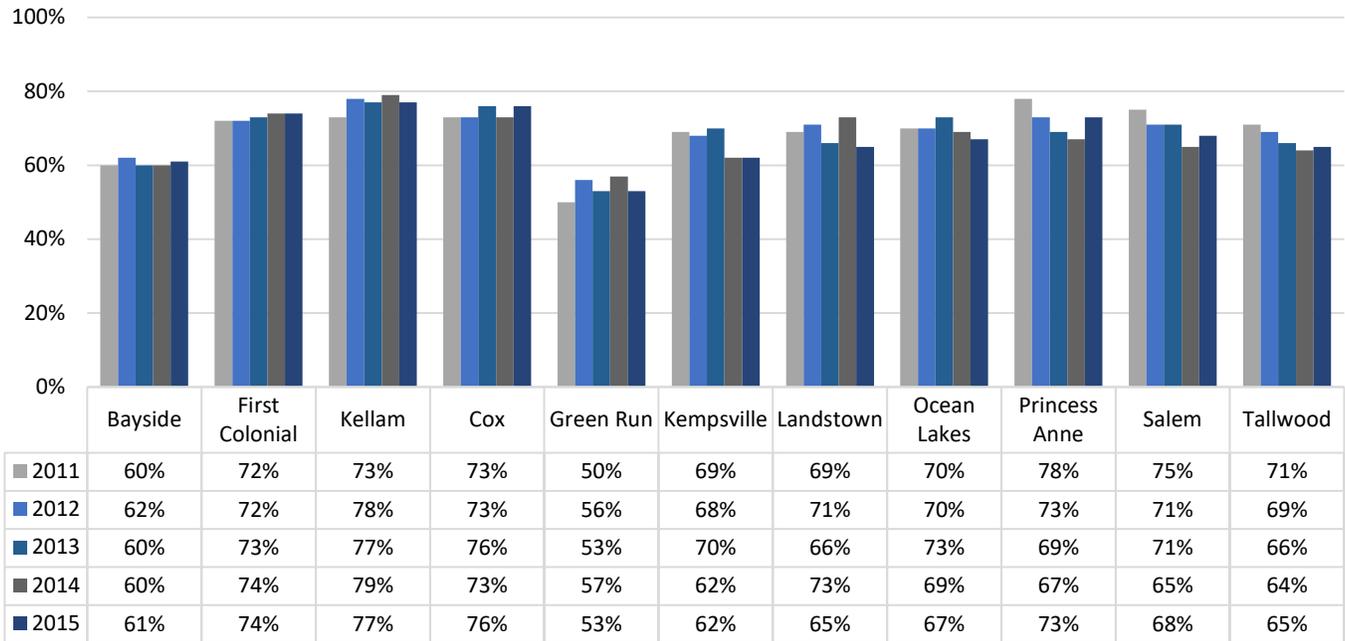
Compared to immediate enrollment during the fall after graduation (Figure 1), the overall percentage of Class of 2015 graduates who enrolled in postsecondary education within two years increased by 10 percentage points. The percentage of students enrolled in a two-year institution increased by 7 percentage points, and the percentage of students enrolled in a four-year institution increased by 3 percentage points.

**Figure 8: Division Postsecondary Enrollment by Year and Level - Within Two Years After High School**



Provided in Figure 9 are the school-level enrollment percentages for students who enrolled within two years of graduation in 2011 through 2015. For the Class of 2015, 64 percent of high schools increased or maintained the percentage of students enrolled in 2- and 4-year institutions from the prior class, while 36 percent of high schools decreased. From the Class of 2011 to the Class of 2015, the percentage of students enrolled within two years following graduation has increased or been maintained for five schools (45%) and decreased for six schools (55%). Kellam High School had the largest percentage of students enrolled within two years after graduation (77%) for the Class of 2015.

**Figure 9: Postsecondary Enrollment by School and Year - Within Two Years After High School**



### POSTSECONDARY PERSISTENCE

This section focuses on the percentage of students who remained enrolled in a postsecondary institution from the first year to the second year. It is important to note that the values in the figures represent the percentage of students who remained enrolled at any postsecondary institution and not necessarily retained at the same institution. Figure 10 shows the total student percentages for the overall division and by institution level for the graduating classes of 2007 through 2015. Between 82 and 87 percent of VBCPS graduates who enrolled in a postsecondary institution returned for a second year.

For students who enrolled in a four-year institution, between 93 and 95 percent returned for a second year, which was noticeably higher compared to students attending a two-year institution (67% to 77%). For the Class of 2015, the persistence rate for students attending a four-year institution was 25 percentage points higher compared to the students attending a two-year institution. Persistence of VBCPS students at two-year institutions was lowest for the Class of 2011 (67%), increased to 73 percent for the Class of 2014, and then decreased to 68 percent for the Class of 2015.

**Figure 10: Division Postsecondary Persistence From Freshman to Sophomore by Year and Level**

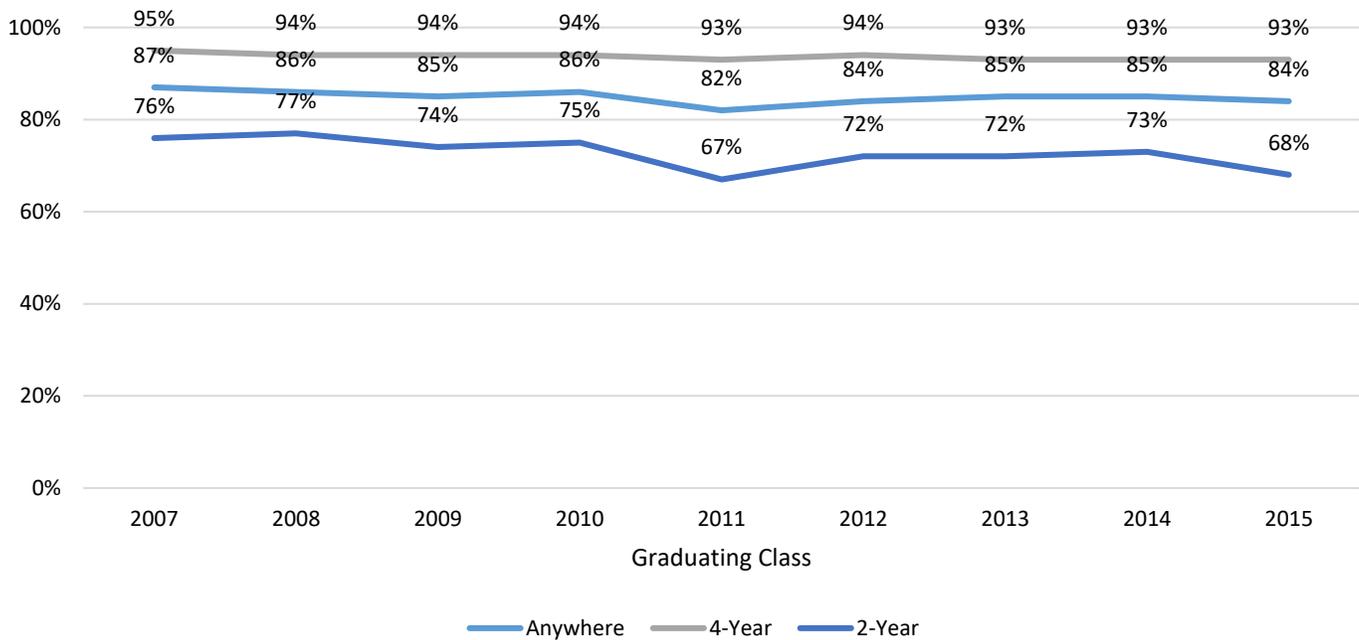
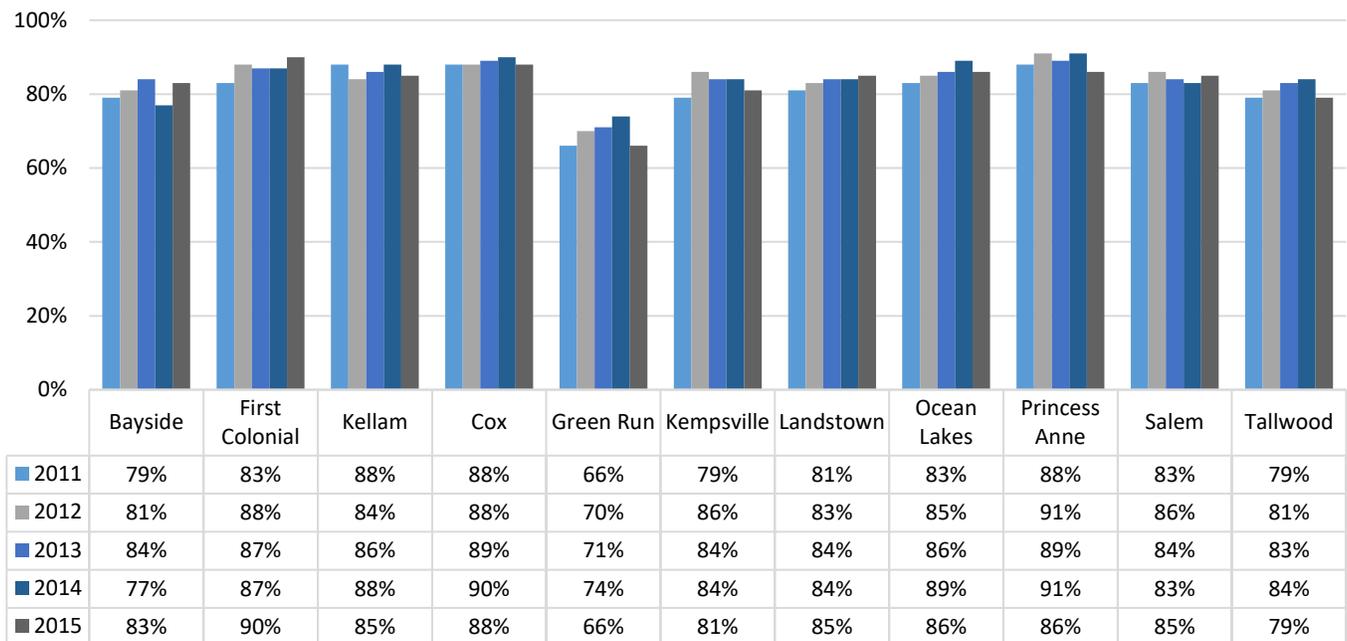


Figure 11 includes the student persistence percentages at the school level for 2011 through 2015 graduates. For the Class of 2015, the school with the highest persistence rate was First Colonial (90%), and the school with the lowest persistence rate was Green Run (66%). Based on the Class of 2015, 64 percent of high schools exceeded the division percentage of 84 percent. From the Class of 2011 to the Class of 2015, the percentage of students persisting has increased or been maintained for nine schools (82%) and decreased for two schools (18%).

**Figure 11: Postsecondary Persistence by Year and School**

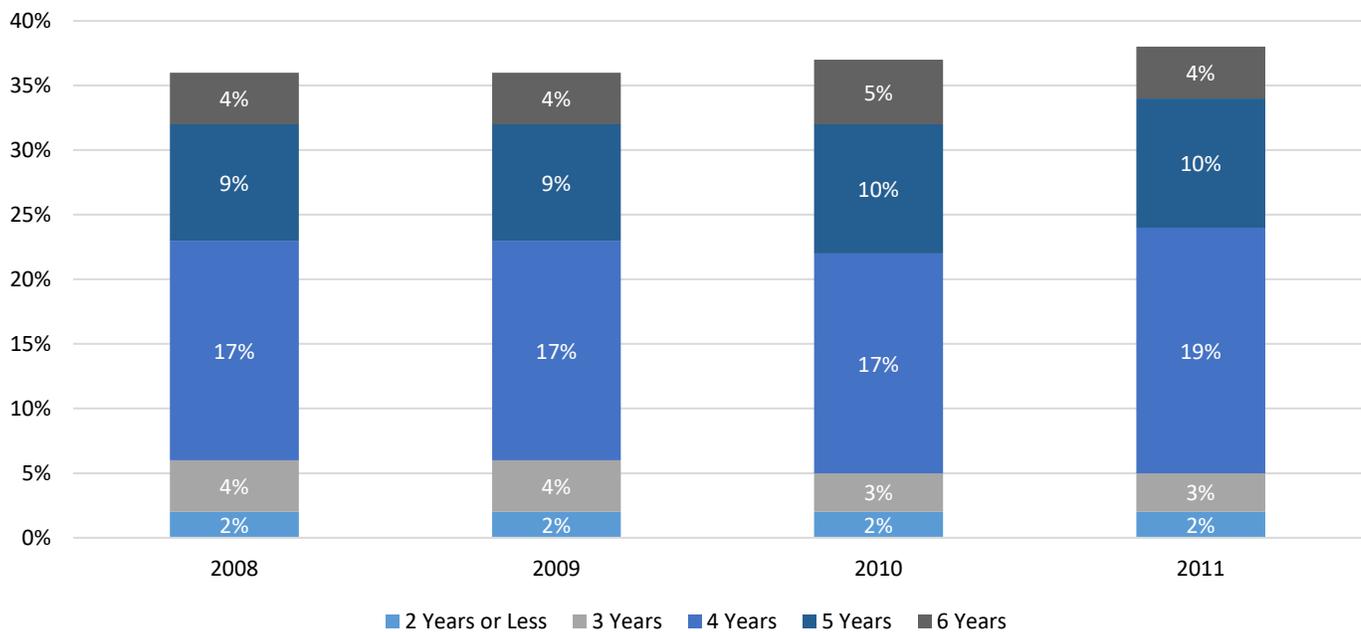


**DEGREE ATTAINMENT**

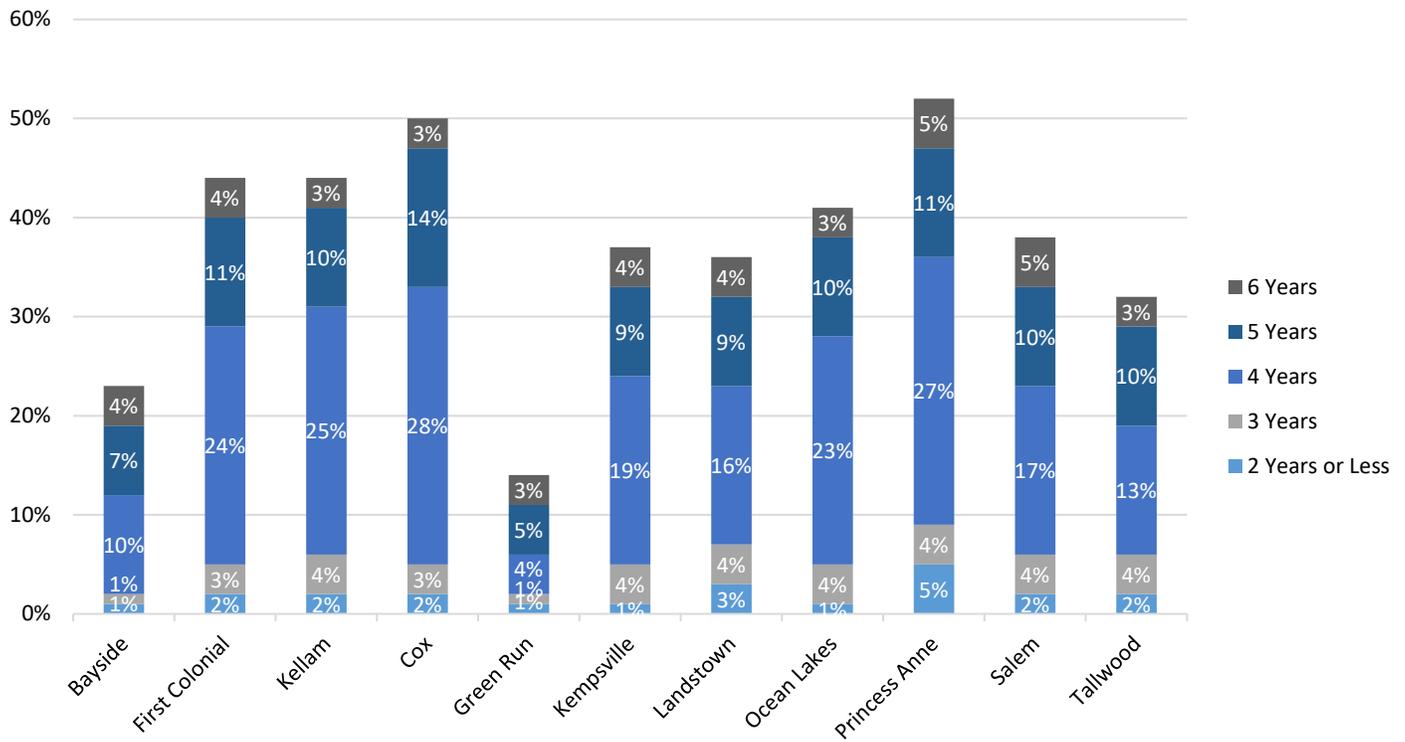
The percentage of students who completed a degree at a postsecondary institution is illustrated in Figure 12 for the 2008 through 2011 graduating classes. In order to be included, a student must have earned either an associate's, bachelor's, or advanced degree within six years following enrollment. This information for each school is also provided in Figure 13 for the Class of 2011. Of 2011 VBCPS graduates, 38 percent obtained a postsecondary degree within six years. Figure 12 also shows that 24 percent of 2011 VBCPS graduates obtained a postsecondary degree within four years.

In looking at degree attainment by school for the 2011 graduating class, Princess Anne High School (52%) had the highest six-year college degree attainment rate compared to all other high schools followed by Cox High School (50%) and then Kellam and First Colonial (44%) high schools. Rates of degree attainment in two years were the highest for students from Princess Anne High School (5%). Princess Anne High School (36%) also had the highest percentage of students completing a postsecondary degree within four years. Degree completion at all other high schools ranged from 6 to 33 percent in four years and 14 to 50 percent after six years.

**Figure 12: Division Postsecondary Time to Graduation**



**Figure 13: Postsecondary Time to Graduation by School – Class of 2011**



**SUMMARY**

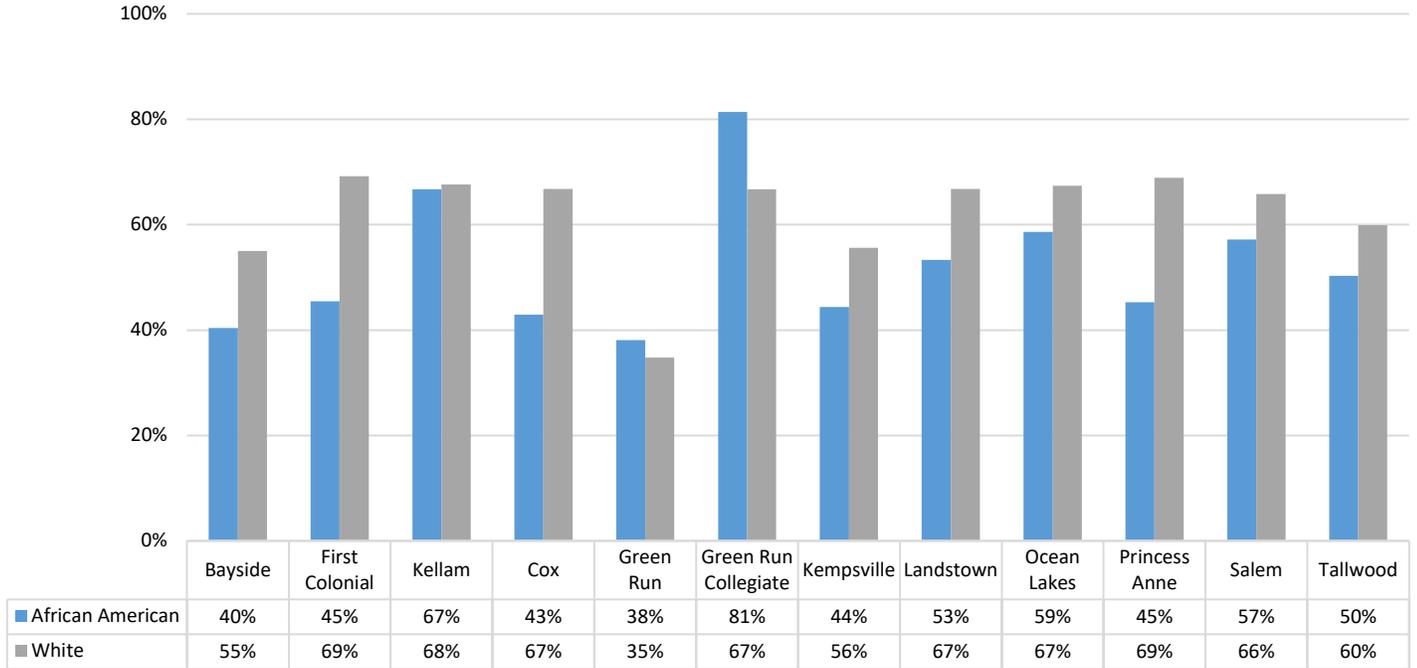
The data provided by the NSC allow schools and school divisions to track the progress of their students and answer questions about postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and degree attainment. It also allows for the examination of enrollment choices that students make based on institutional level (i.e., 2 year and 4 year). Additionally, the data provide a picture of the postsecondary enrollment rates based on students’ gender, ethnicity, and economic status.

Over the last 11 graduating classes, between 56 and 61 percent of VBCPS graduates continued their education immediately following high school. These enrollment percentages continued to increase over the course of two years after high school to between 68 and 72 percent. The largest percentage of VBCPS graduates who enroll in a postsecondary institution chose to attend a four-year program. Of these students, between 93 and 95 percent persisted into their second year, whereas only 67 to 77 percent persisted into the second year at a two-year institution. Based on the available demographic data for the Class of 2017, female students (67%) were more likely to continue their education compared to males (53%) at the division level. Asian graduates (70%) were the most likely to enroll immediately after high school and African American graduates (49%) were the least likely to enroll. At the division level, a larger percentage of non-economically disadvantaged graduates (66%) enrolled in a postsecondary institution compared to economically disadvantaged students (46%).

Approximately 24 percent of 2011 VBCPS graduates obtained a degree within four years of enrolling in a postsecondary institution. This percentage increased to 38 percent after six years. Across all VBCPS high schools, Princess Anne High School had the highest percentage of students completing a degree within four years (36%) and also within six years (52%). Degree completion for the Class of 2011 at all other high schools ranged from 6 to 33 percent in four years and 14 to 50 percent after six years.

APPENDIX A

Postsecondary Enrollment by School and Select Ethnicities – Immediately After High School



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