

# RESEARCH BRIEF

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, INNOVATION, AND ACCOUNTABILITY  
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## 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 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 55 and 61 percent of VBCPS graduates enroll in a postsecondary institution immediately after high school. The range of percentages for VBCPS graduates who enroll in a postsecondary institution two years after graduation increases to 69 to 72 percent. More VBCPS students enroll in a four-year institution compared to two-year institutions, and approximately 36 percent of 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.

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### INTRODUCTION

This brief is based on data reports provided by the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). The NSC collects data on roughly 96 percent of all students enrolled in a postsecondary institution from over 3,300 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 2015.

### 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.

<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 2015. Additionally, the institution level (two-year or four-year) in which these students enrolled is also illustrated. For the Class of 2015, 55 percent of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution immediately following high school graduation. The Class of 2015 represents the lowest percentage of college enrollment since 2010. 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 39 percent, whereas enrollment in a two-year postsecondary institution has ranged from 18 to 25 percent. For the Class of 2015, the percent of students enrolling in a four-year institution immediately after graduation declined to 37 percent. Enrollment in a two-year institution also declined for the Class of 2015 (18%).

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

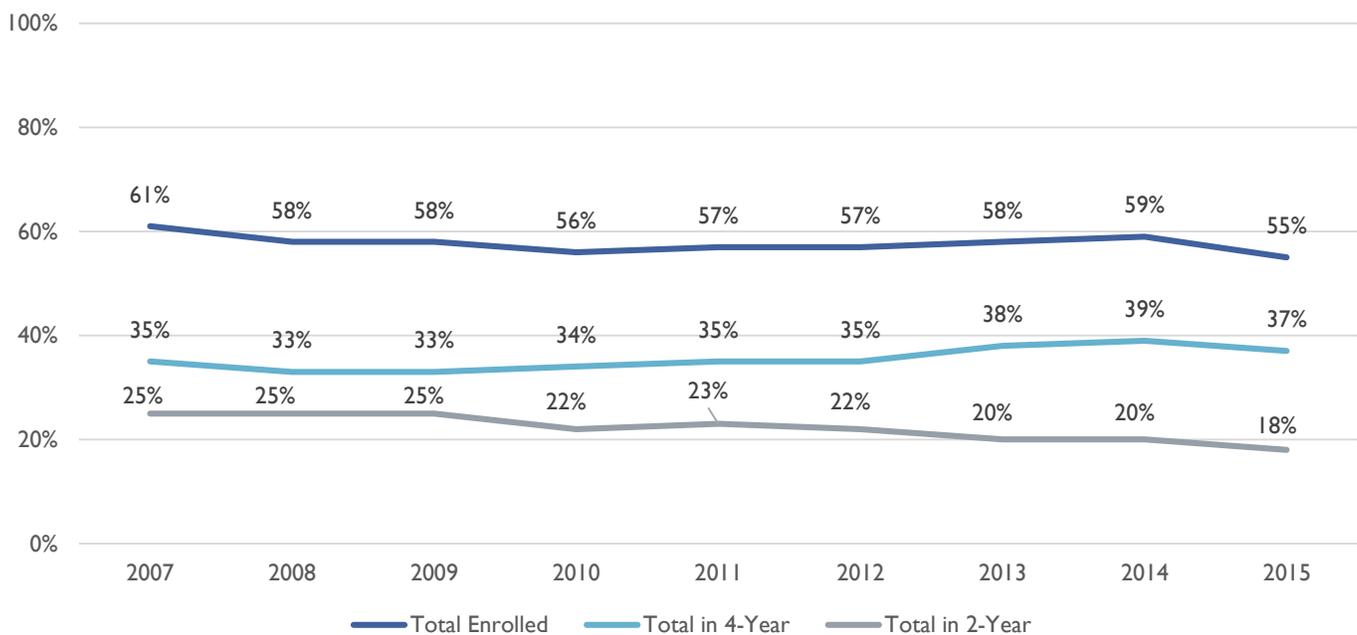
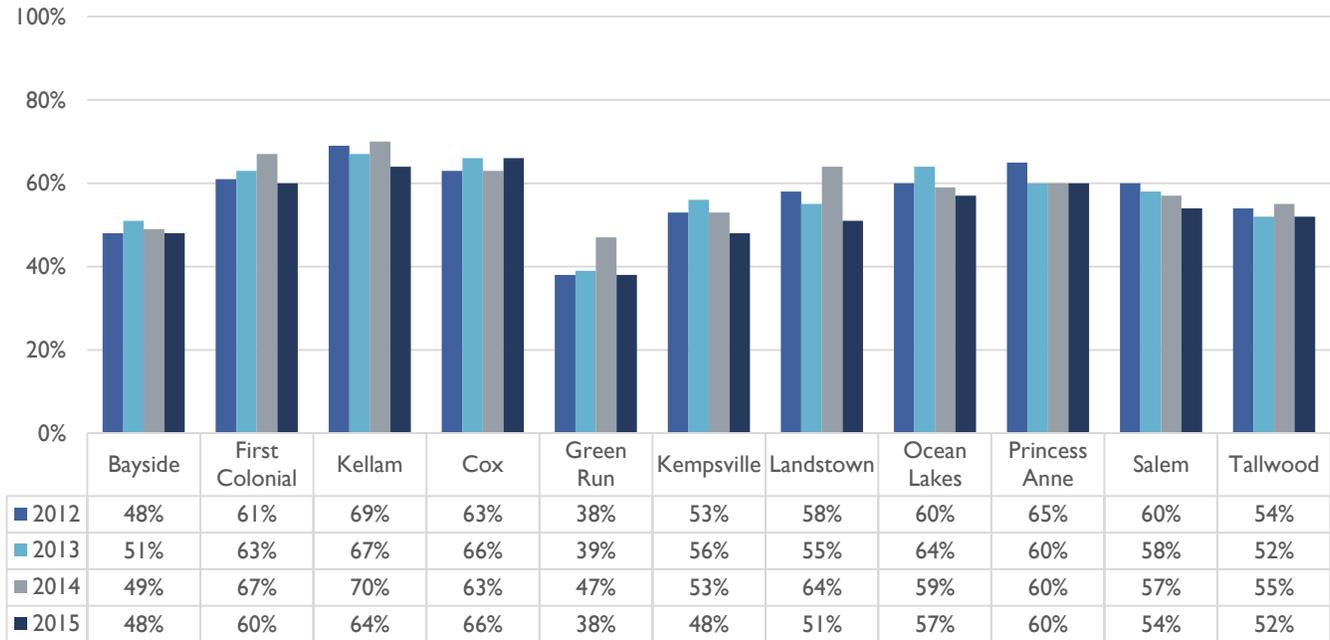


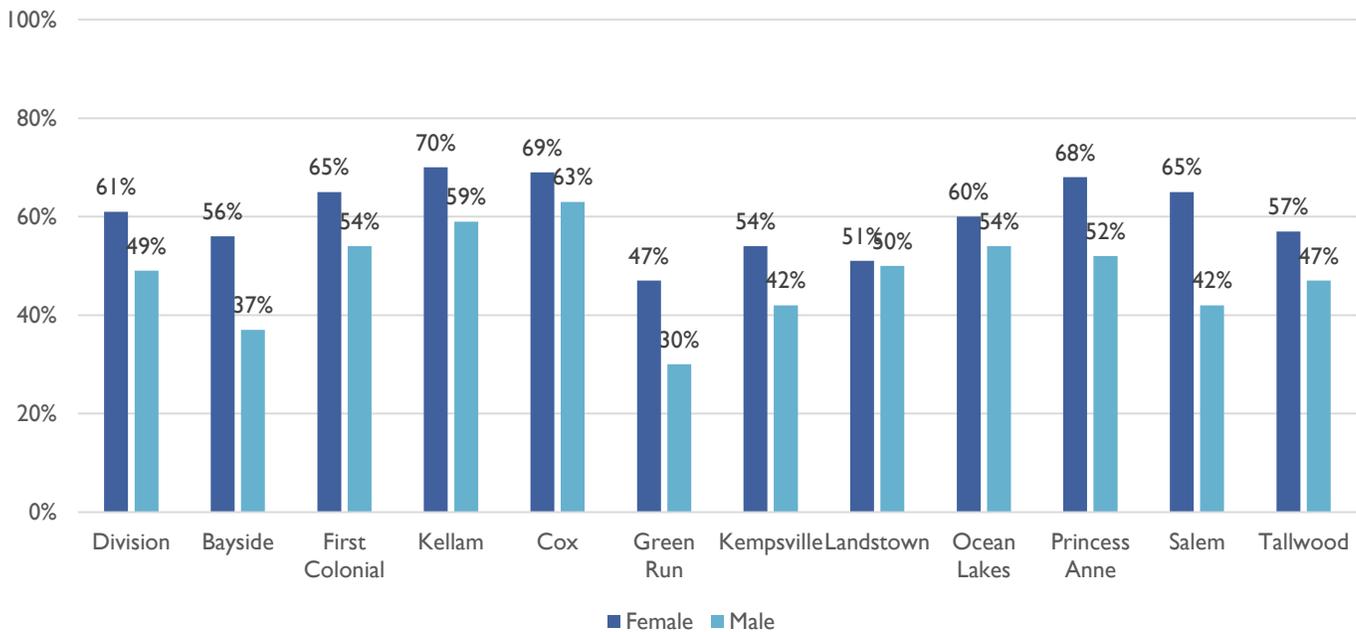
Figure 2 contains the school-level total enrollment percentages for the graduating classes of 2012 through 2015. For 2015, Cox High School had the highest college enrollment rate immediately after high school (66%) compared to all other VBCPS high schools. There were five schools that met or exceeded the division’s college enrollment rate for the 2015 graduating class including Cox (66%), Kellam (64%), First Colonial (60%), Princess Anne (60%), and Ocean Lakes (57%) high schools.

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



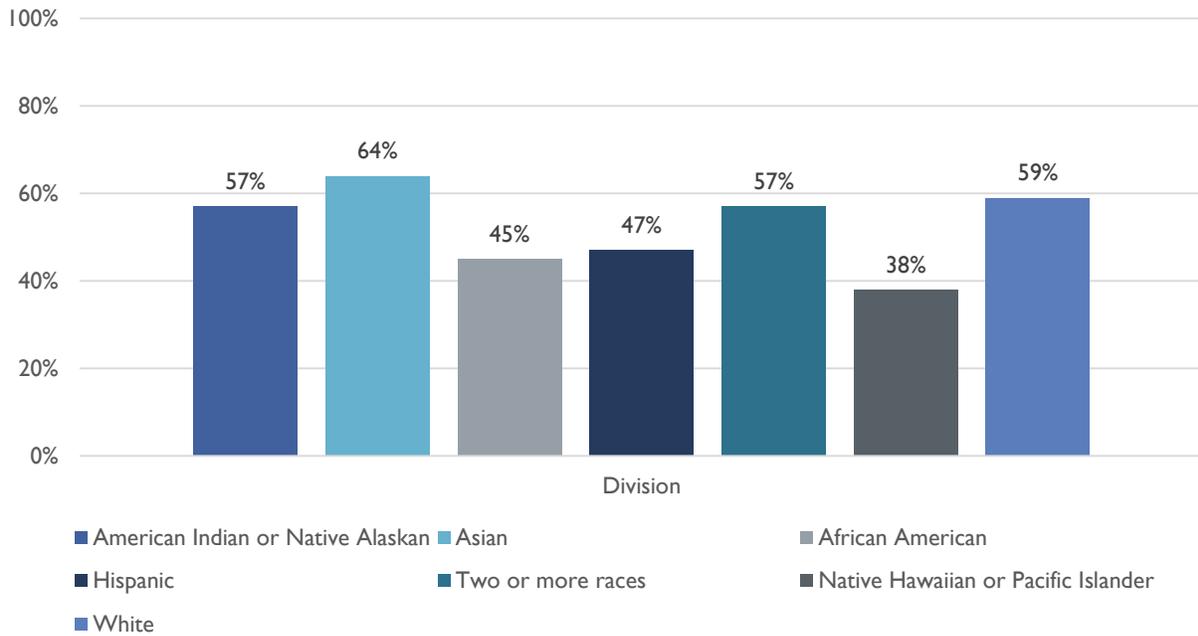
Starting with the Class of 2014, gender and race/ethnicity data were provided to the NSC to be included in the enrollment reports. As a result, enrollment percentages for each subgroup are only available for the Class of 2014 who enrolled immediately after graduation. It is important to note that the 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 2015 that enrolled immediately after high school was higher compared to male students at the division level and across all schools. Between 47 and 70 percent of female students in the Class of 2015 enrolled immediately following graduation. The largest gender enrollment gap occurred at Salem High School, where the smallest gap was at Landstown High School.

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



With regard to the ethnicities of the students in the Class of 2015, the subgroup with the largest percentage of graduates who enrolled immediately following graduation were Asian (64%) followed by White students (59%) (Figure 4). Roughly half of the graduating class who were American Indian or Native Hawaiian (57%) or those students who identified as being two or more races (57%) enrolled immediately following graduation. The subgroup with the smallest percentage of students enrolling were the Native Hawaiian students in the graduating class (38%). Additionally, the school-level percentages for the two largest ethnic groups can be found in Appendix A.

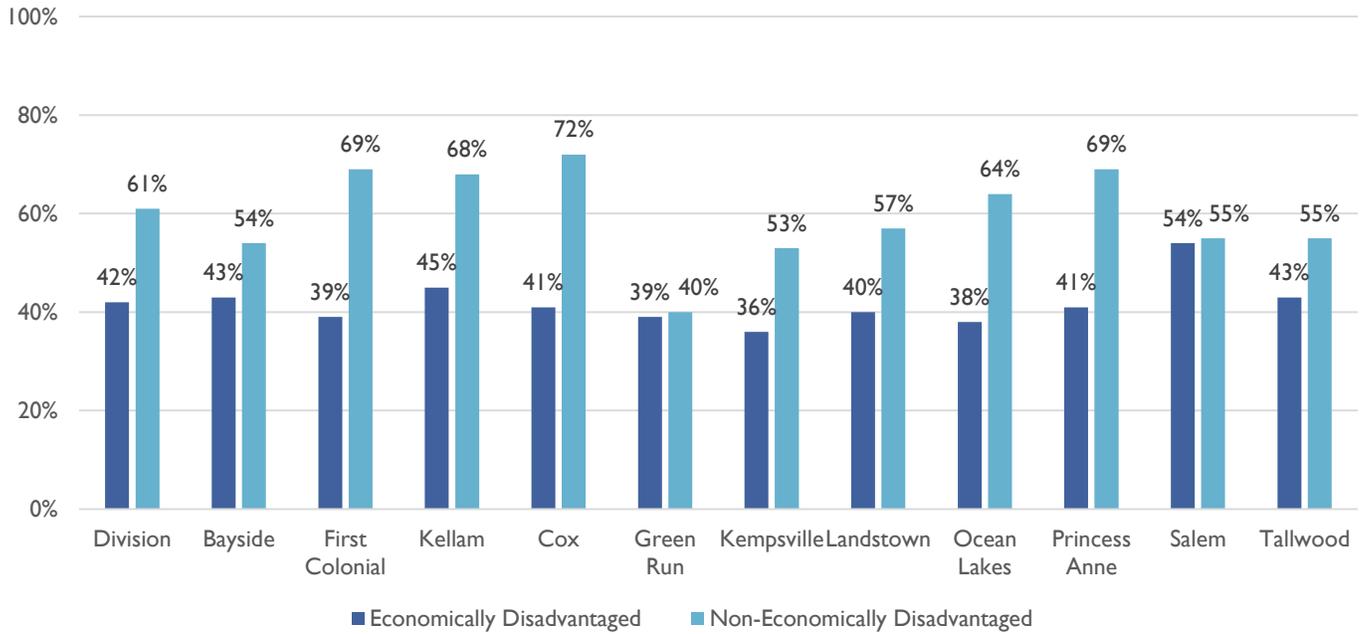
**Figure 4: Postsecondary Enrollment by Ethnicity - Immediately After High School**



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 2015.<sup>2</sup> At the division level, 42 percent of the students who were identified as Economically Disadvantaged from the Class of 2015 enrolled in a postsecondary institution immediately following graduation. As expected, a higher percentage (61%) of the Class of 2015 who were not identified as being Economically Disadvantaged enrolled in a postsecondary institution. For VBCPS high schools, a higher percentage of Non-Economically Disadvantaged students from the graduating classes enrolled immediately following graduation ranging from 40 to 72 percent. Green Run and Salem high schools had similar percentages of Economically Disadvantaged graduates and Non-Economically Disadvantaged students enrolling immediately after high school.

<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 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 2014 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 seven years. For the Class of 2014, the percent 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**

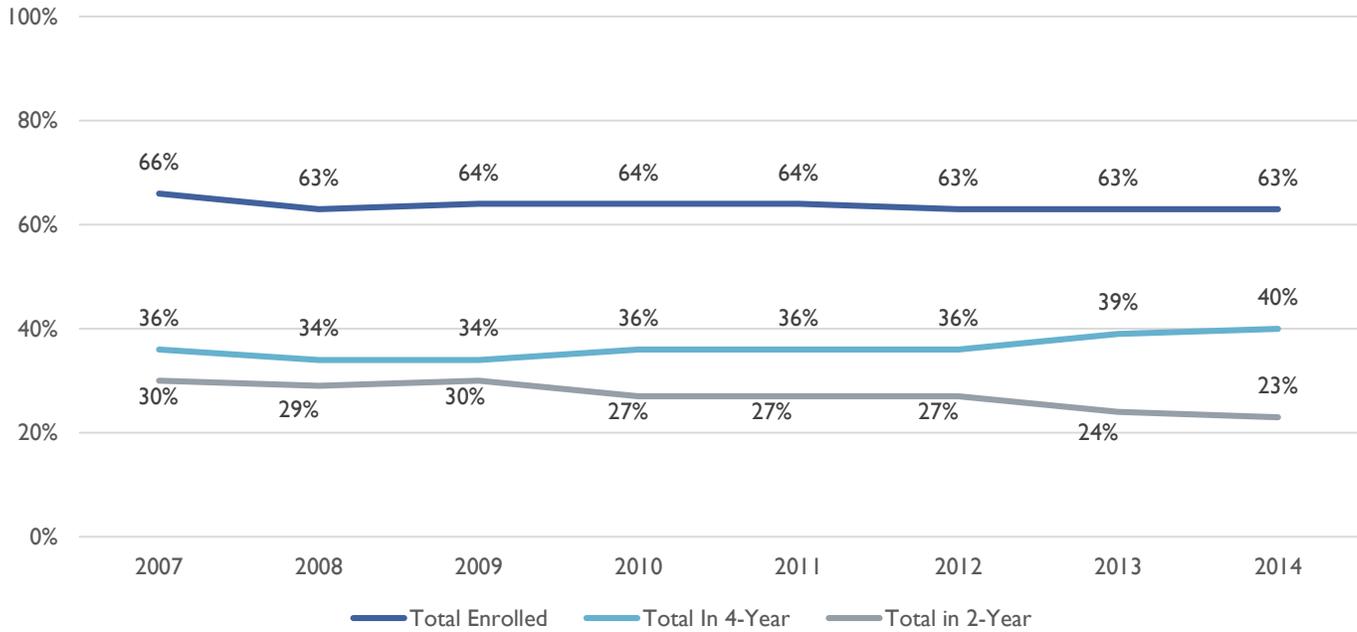
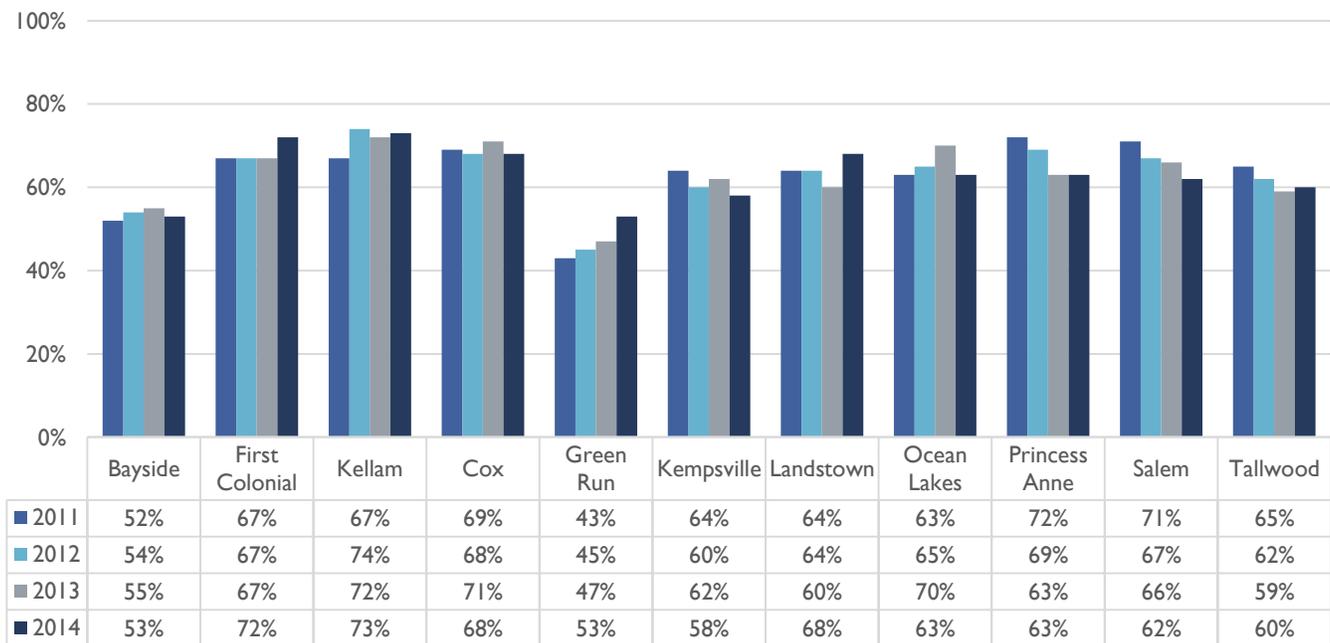


Figure 7 contains the school-level enrollment percentages for the graduating classes of 2011 through 2014. Within one year following graduation, between 53 and 73 percent of 2014 VBCPS graduates at each school enrolled in a postsecondary institution. One high school (Green Run) experienced an increase each year from 2011 to 2014, while one school (Salem) experienced a decline each year. Compared to immediate enrollment (Figure 2) for the Class of 2014, Green Run High School experienced the largest increases in the percent of students enrolled during the year following graduation, which was 6 percentage points.

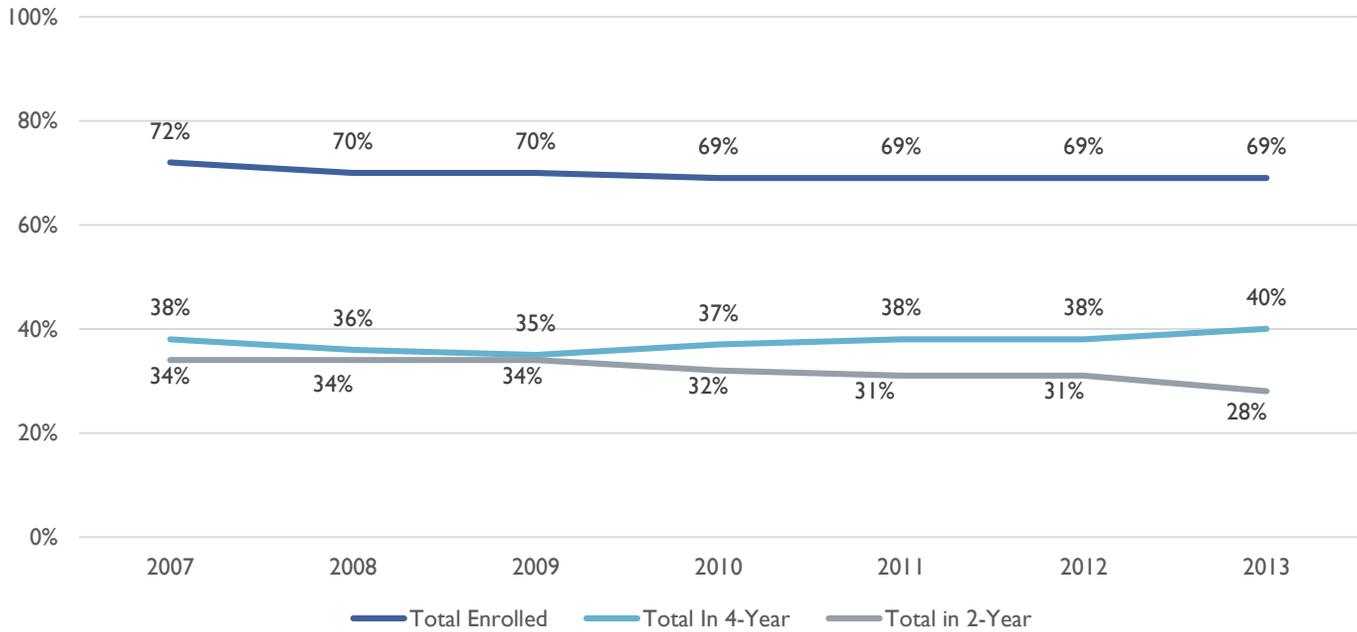
**Figure 7: Postsecondary Enrollment by School and Year - During the First Year After High School**



### Within Two Years After High School

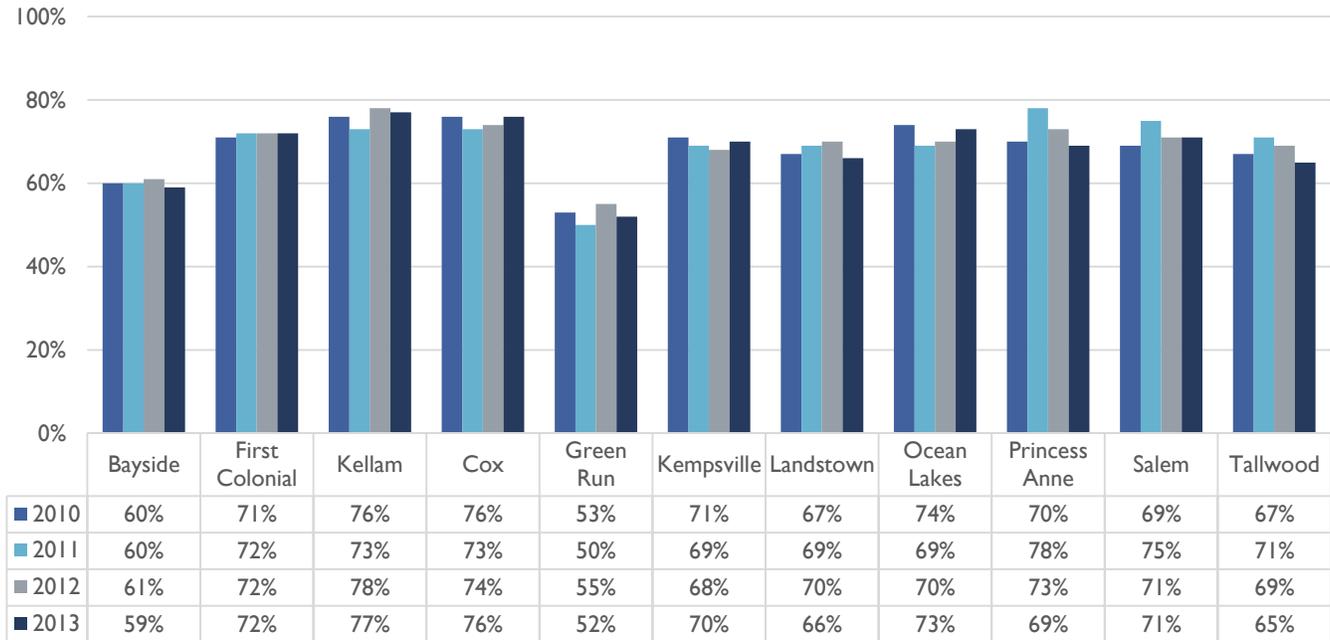
This section describes the overall division-level percentage of graduates who enrolled in a postsecondary institution within two years following high school graduation. Based on this enrollment window, Figure 8 displays the percentages for the classes of 2007 through 2013 along with the institution level in which these students enrolled. Within two years after graduation, 69 to 72 percent of VBCPS graduates from the classes of 2007 to 2013 enrolled in a postsecondary institution. Between 35 and 40 percent enrolled in a four-year institution and 28 to 34 percent enrolled in a two-year institution within two years after graduation. Compared to immediate enrollment during the fall after graduation (Figure 1), within two years of graduation, the percentage of students enrolled increased between 11 and 13 percentage points.

**Figure 8: Division Postsecondary Enrollment by Year and Type - 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 2010 through 2013. The schools with the largest percent of students enrolled within two years after graduation for the years indicated were Kellam and Cox high schools (76% each) in 2010, Princess Anne High School (78%) in 2011, Kellam High School (78%) in 2012, and Kellam High School (77%) in 2013. From the Class of 2010 to the Class of 2013, the percentage of students enrolled within two years following graduation has increased or maintained for four schools (36%) and decreased for seven schools (64%).

**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 2013. 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 (68% to 77%). For the Class of 2013, the persistence rate for students attending a four-year institution was 21 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 (68%) but increased over the last two years to 72 percent for the Class of 2013.

**Figure 10: Division Postsecondary Persistence by Year and Level**

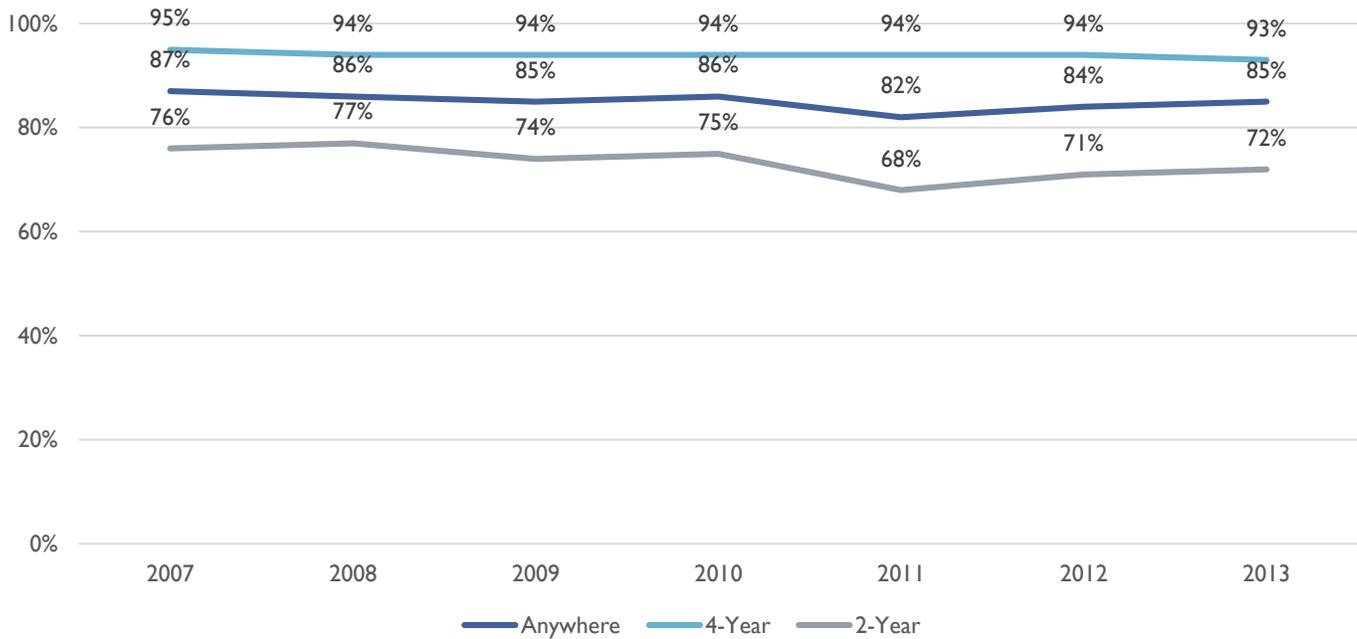
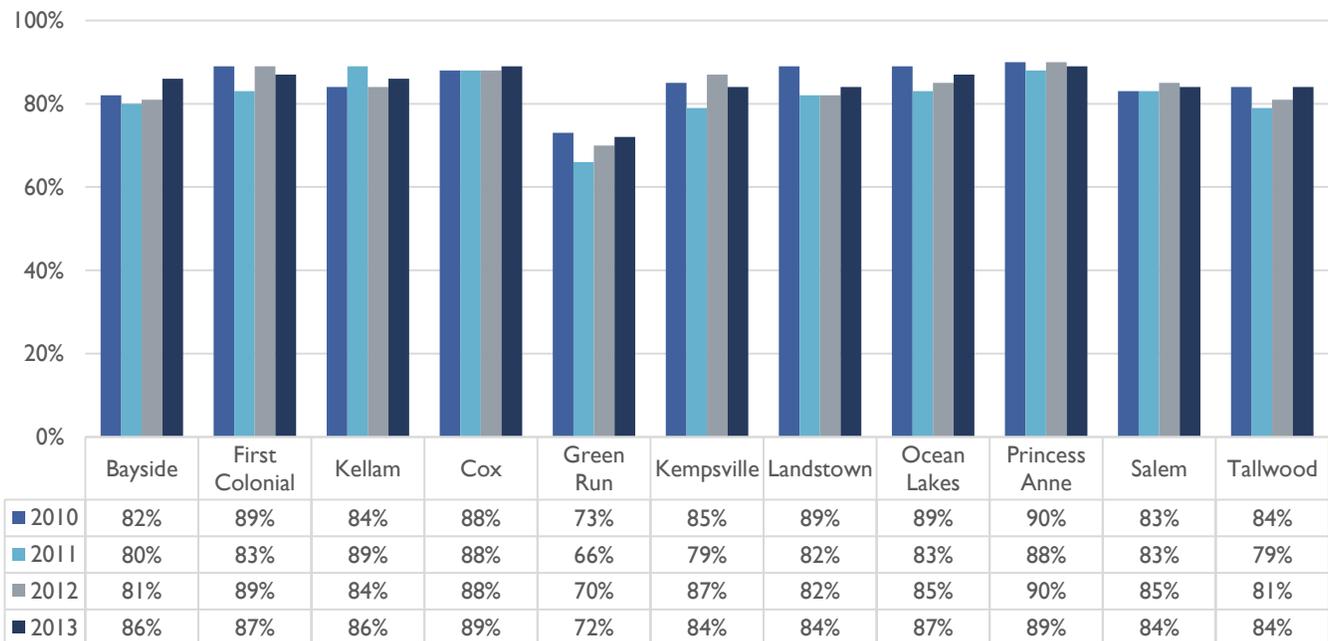


Figure 11 includes the student persistence percentages at the school level for 2010 through 2013 graduates. For the Class of 2013, the schools with the highest persistence rate were Princess Anne and Cox (89%), and the school with the lowest persistence rate was Green Run (72%). Based on the Class of 2013, the majority of schools (55%) exceeded the division percentage (85%). Across the four graduating classes displayed, the Class of 2011 has had the lowest postsecondary persistence for all schools with the exception of Kellam (89%), Cox (88%), Landstown (82%), and Salem (83%).

**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. In order to be included, a student must have earned either an associate's, bachelor's, or advanced degree between two and six years following enrollment. This information for each school is also provided in Figure 13 for the 2008 and 2009 graduating classes. Of 2009 VBCPS graduates, 36 percent obtained a postsecondary degree within six years. Based on postsecondary degree attainment within four years, 23 percent of 2009 VBCPS graduates completed a postsecondary education.

In looking at school-level degree attainment, Princess Anne High School (45%) had the highest six-year college degree attainment rate compared to all other high schools followed by Kellam (42%) and Cox (42%) high schools. Rates of degree attainment in two years were the highest for students from Kempsville (4%) High School. Princess Anne High School (33%) had the highest percent of students completing a postsecondary degree within four years. Finally, only 17 percent of Green Run High School students who enrolled in postsecondary education completed a degree within six years.

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

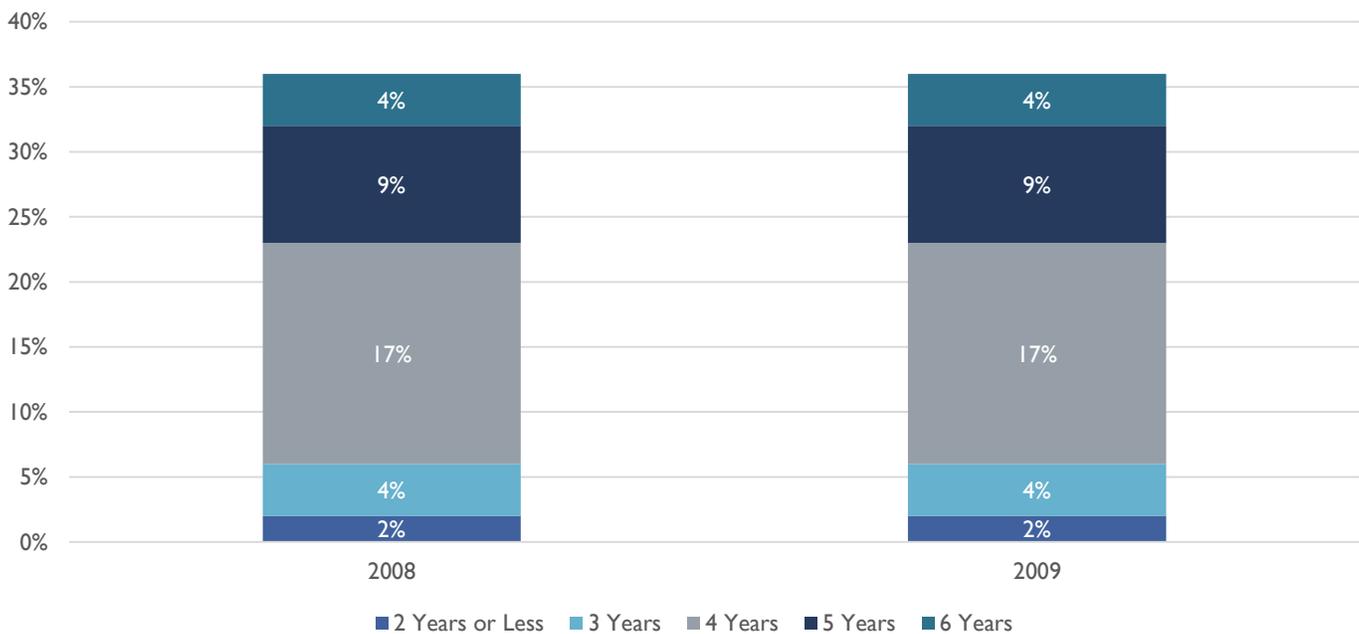
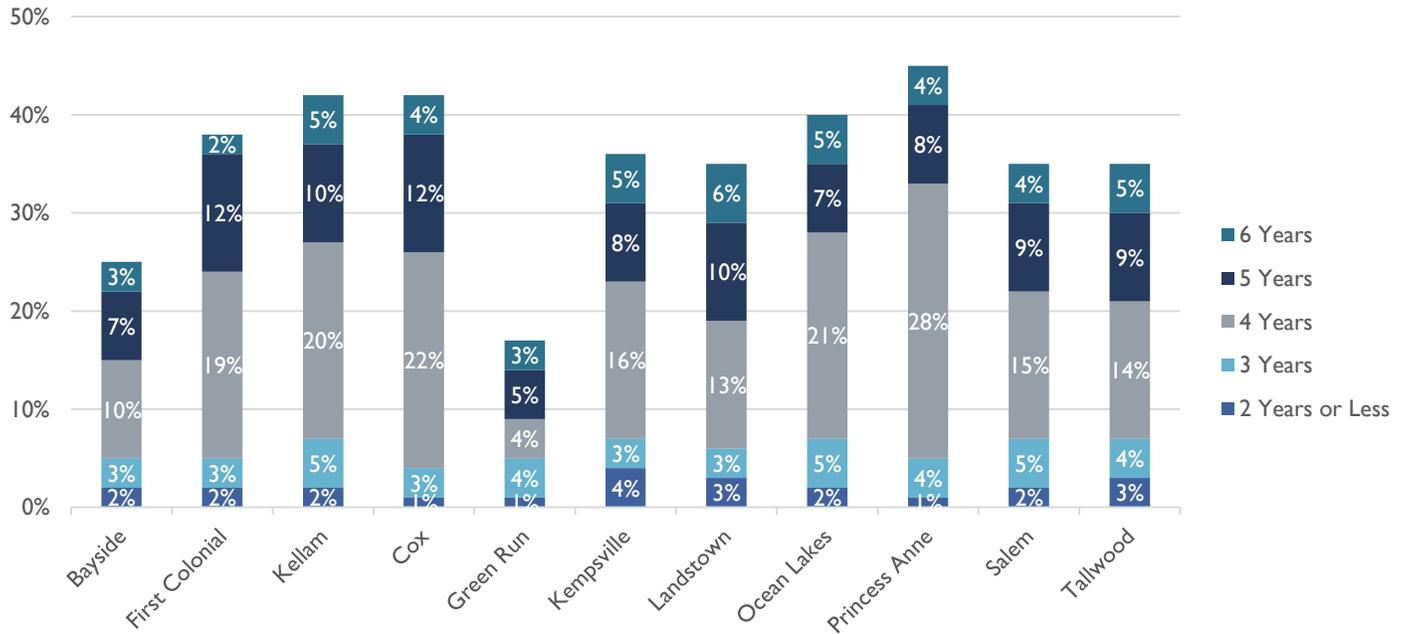


Figure 13: Postsecondary Time to Graduation by School



**SUMMARY**

The data provided by the NSC allows 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 the institutional level enrollment choices that students make. Additionally, the data provide a picture of the postsecondary enrollment rates based on students’ gender, ethnicity, and economic status.

Over the last nine graduating classes, between 55 and 61 percent of VBCPS graduates continue their education immediately following high school. These percentages continue to increase over the course of two years to between 69 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 persist into their second year, whereas only 68 to 77 percent persist into the second year at a two-year institution. Based on the available demographic data for the Class of 2015, female students (61%) were more likely to continue their education compared to males (49%) at the division level. Also, the percentage of female Kellam students (70%) who enrolled in college was the highest percentage across all schools. Asian graduates (64%) were the most likely to enroll immediately after high school and Native Hawaiian (38%) graduates were the least likely to enroll. At the division level, a larger percentage of Non-Economically Disadvantaged graduates (61%) enrolled in a postsecondary institution compared to the Economically Disadvantaged students (42%).

Approximately 23 percent of VBCPS graduates obtained a degree within four years of enrolling in a postsecondary institution. This percentage increased to 36 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 (33%) and also within six years (45%). Degree completion at all other high schools ranged from 9 to 28 percent in four years and 17 to 42 percent after six years.

APPENDIX A

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

