

RESEARCH BRIEF

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 Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) graduates are provided to the NSC that 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. The reports also provide information on postsecondary persistence from freshman to sophomore year and degree attainment trends for VBCPS graduates. Postsecondary education data are provided for the division overall, by student group, and by school. The results show that between 54 and 61 percent of VBCPS graduates from the 2007 to 2019 graduating classes enrolled in a postsecondary institution immediately after high school. The percentage of VBCPS graduates enrolling in college immediately after graduation for the Class of 2019 was the lowest it has been over the last 13 cohorts at 54 percent. The percentage of VBCPS graduates who enrolled in a postsecondary institution two years after graduation ranged from 67 to 72 percent. Once enrolled in college, 82 to 87 percent reenrolled for their sophomore year. Approximately 39 percent of 2013 VBCPS graduates obtained a postsecondary degree within six years. Higher percentages of females, Asian students, non-economically disadvantaged, and non-special education students enrolled in postsecondary institutions compared to other student groups. Additional analysis of Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) data showed that the percentage of VBCPS students who enrolled in college within 16 months of graduation was higher than all local school divisions and the state, the same as the percentages for Stafford and Chesterfield, and less than percentages for Fairfax, Prince William, Loudoun, and Henrico school divisions.

INTRODUCTION

This brief is based on data reports provided by the NSC. The NSC collects data that represents approximately 97 percent of all students enrolled in a postsecondary institution from over 3,600 colleges and universities that participate in the educational reporting service.¹ 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 2019.

METHOD

Each fall VBCPS provides the NSC with a list of all combined term graduates.² 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 results are provided in reports that 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.

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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 2019. Additionally, the institution level (two-year or four-year) in which these students enrolled is illustrated. For the Class of 2019, 54 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 41 percent, with a trend of increasing four-year enrollment from the Class of 2012 to the Class of 2018. For the Class of 2019, the percentage of students enrolling in a four-year institution immediately after graduation declined to 37 percent. Enrollment in a two-year postsecondary institution has ranged from 17 to 25 percent. Enrollment in a two-year institution declined 1 percentage point to 17 percent for the Class of 2019.

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

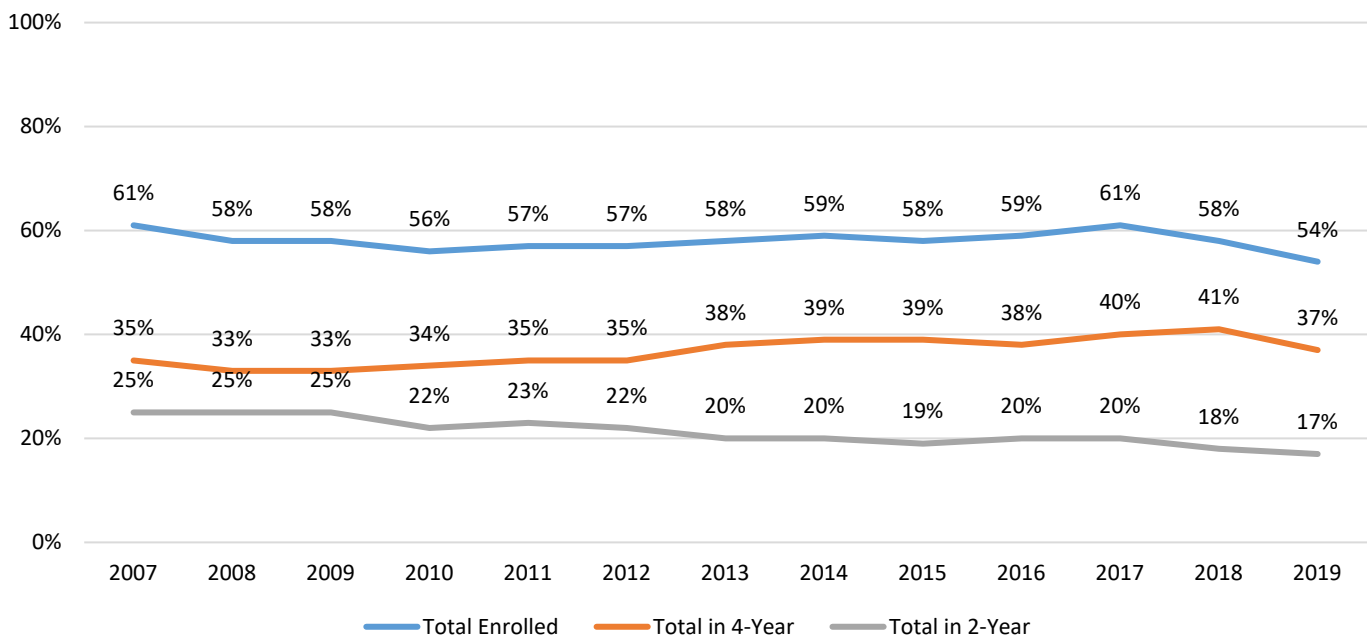
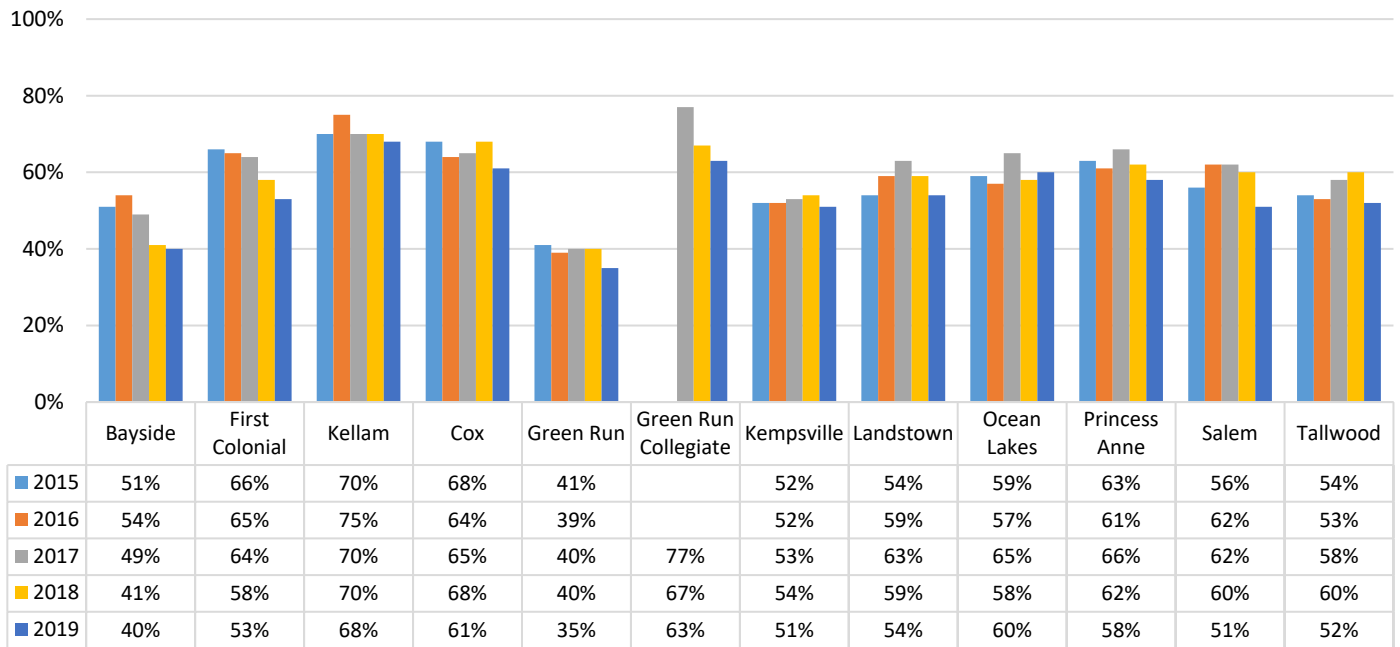


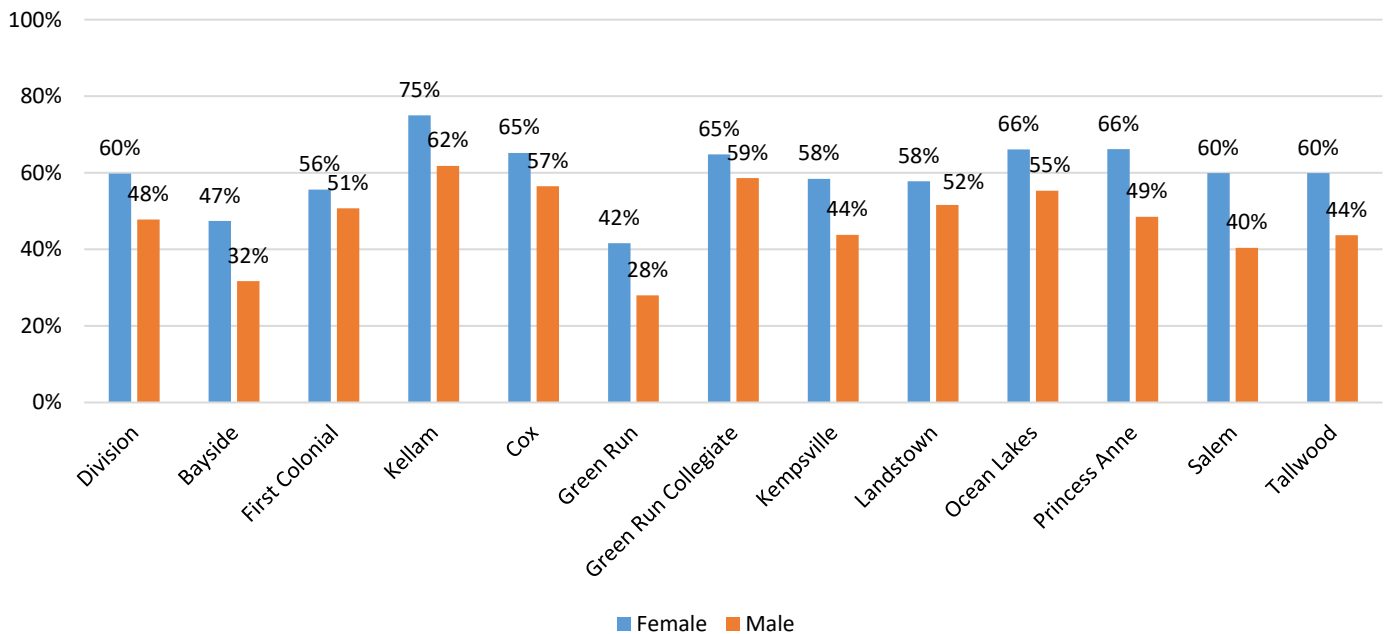
Figure 2 contains the school-level total enrollment percentages for the graduating classes of 2015 through 2019. College enrollment rates ranged from 35 to 68 percent for the Class of 2019 depending on school. Half of Virginia Beach high schools met or exceeded the division’s college enrollment rate of 54 percent for the 2019 graduating class. Only one school, Ocean Lakes High School, had a higher college enrollment rate for the Class of 2019 compared to the prior year’s graduating class.

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. The NSC bases these percentages on the number of students within the student group who enrolled in college out of the total number of students in that student group who were in the graduating class. As can be seen in Figure 3, the percentage of female students from the entire Class of 2019 who enrolled immediately after high school was higher compared to male students at the division level and across all schools. From 42 to 75 percent of female students in the Class of 2019 enrolled immediately following graduation depending on their school, and from 28 to 62 percent of male students in the Class of 2019 enrolled immediately following graduation depending on their school.

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



With regard to the race/ethnicities of the students in the Class of 2019, the student group with the largest percentage of graduates who enrolled immediately following graduation was Asian (61%) followed by White students (59%) (see Figure 4). The student groups in the graduating class with less than 50 percent of students enrolling in a postsecondary institution were African American (45%), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (46%), and Hispanic (47%). The school-level percentages for the two largest ethnic groups based on enrollment in Virginia Beach City Public Schools (African American and White) can be found in Figure 5 for the Class of 2019. While African American graduates at the division level were less likely to enroll in college than White graduates were, this was not the pattern at every school. A higher percentage of African American graduates at Green Run, Salem, and Tallwood high schools enrolled in college immediately after high school than White graduates, and at Kempsville High School the percentages were the same.

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

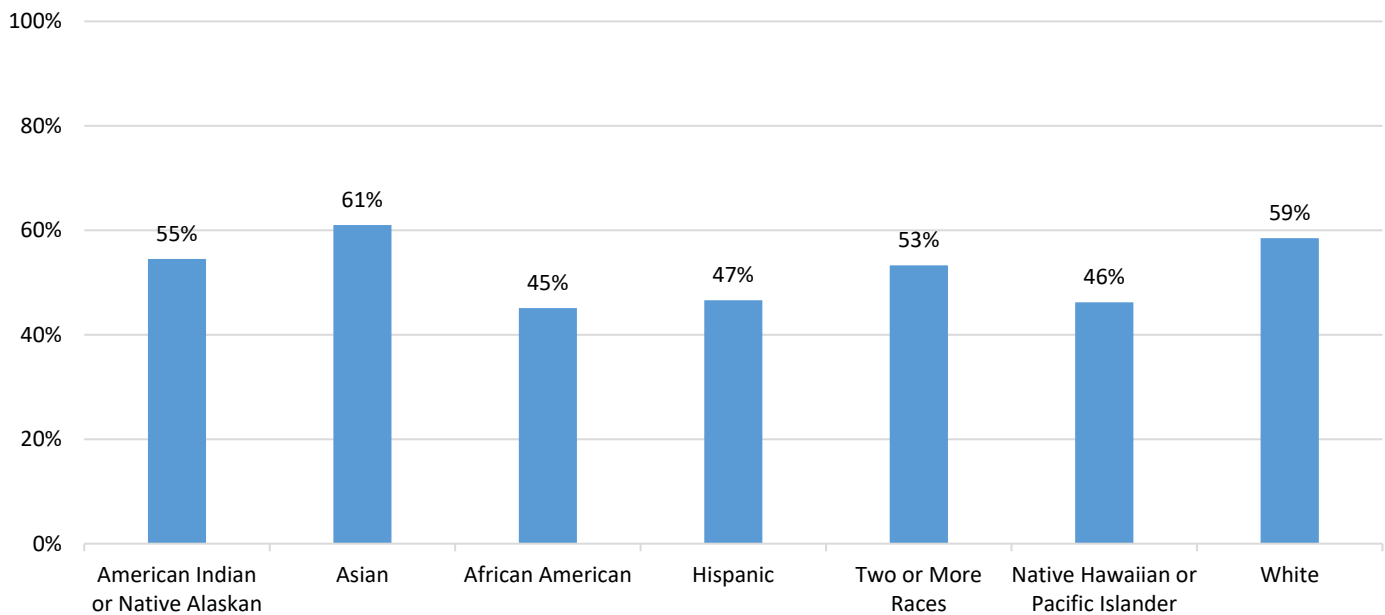
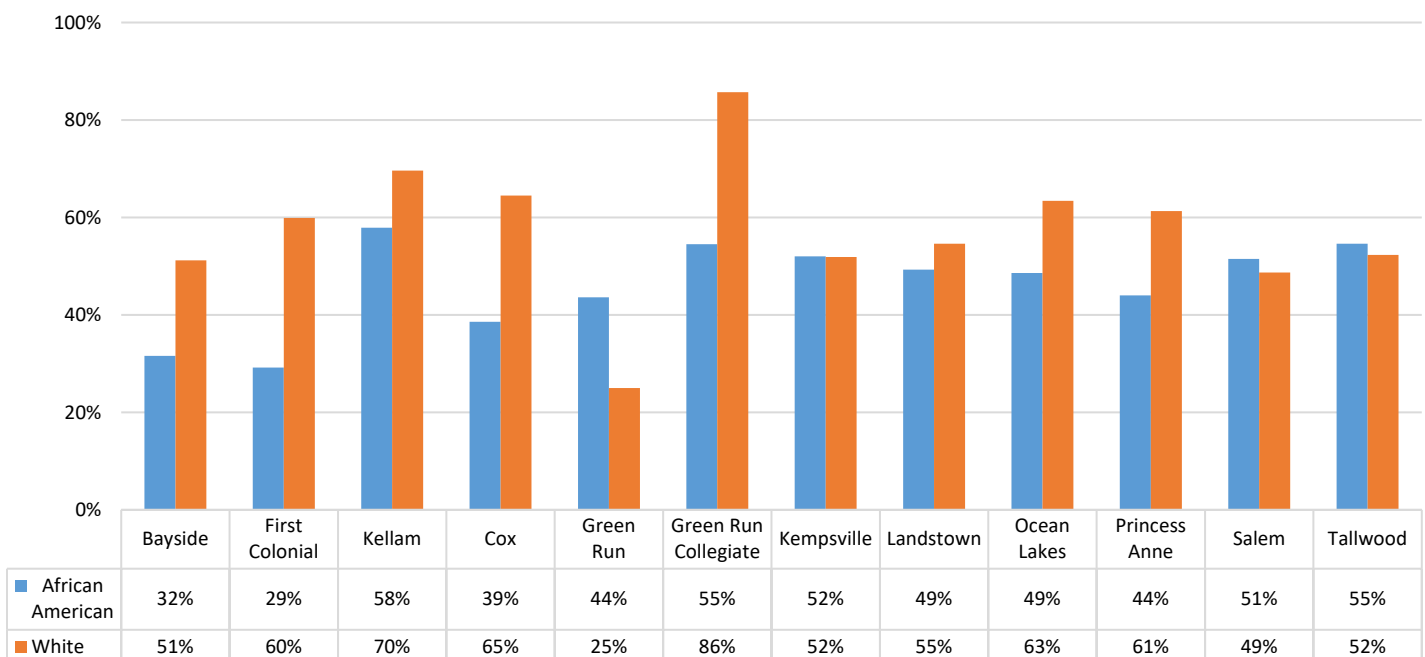
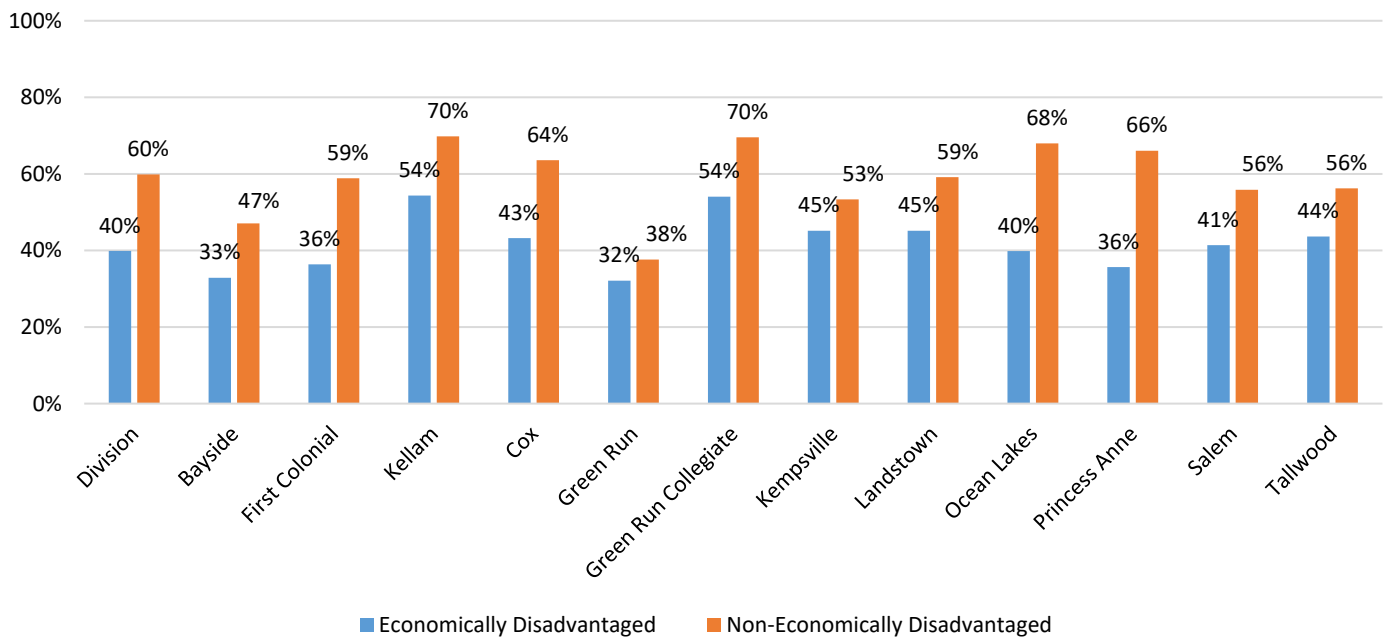


Figure 5: Postsecondary Enrollment by School and Select Ethnicities – Immediately After High School



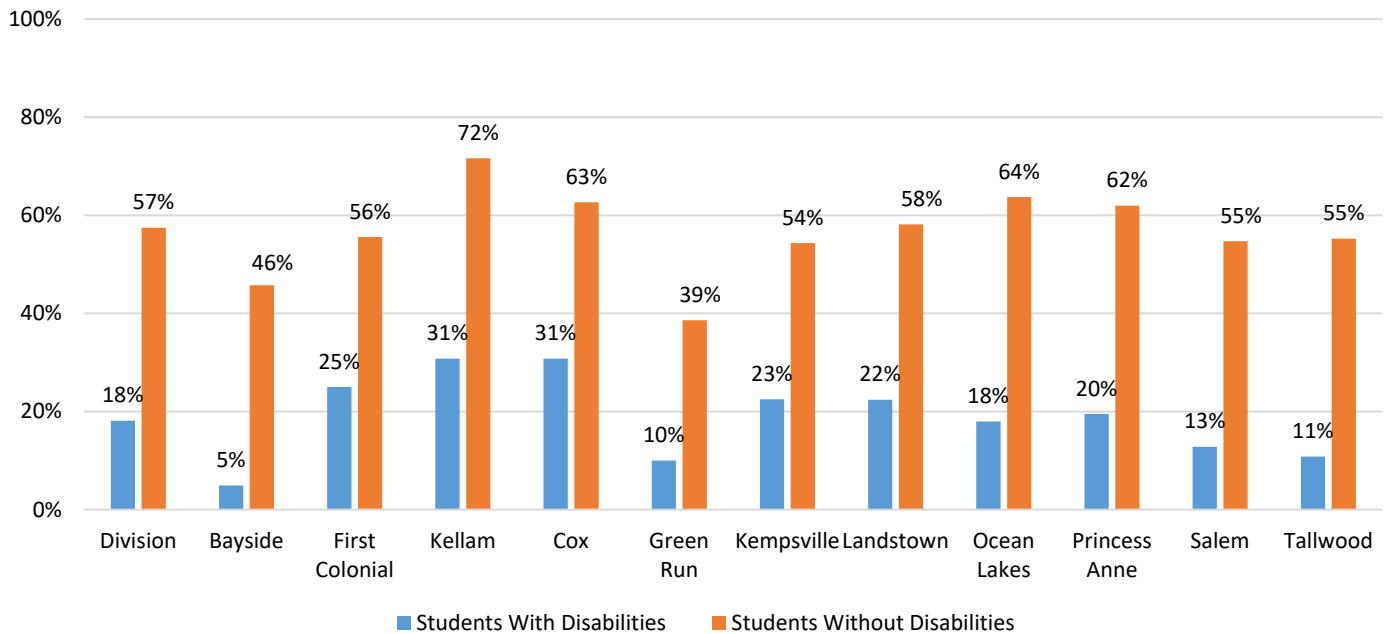
Displayed in Figure 6 are the division- and school-level enrollment percentages for the economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged graduates from the Class of 2019.³ At the division level, 40 percent of the students who were identified as economically disadvantaged from the Class of 2019 enrolled in a postsecondary institution immediately following graduation. A higher percentage (60%) of the Class of 2019 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 38 to 70 percent.

Figure 6: Postsecondary Enrollment by School and Economic Status - Immediately After High School



Displayed in Figure 7 are the division- and school-level enrollment percentages for the students with disabilities and students without disabilities from the Class of 2019.⁴ At the division level, 18 percent of the students with disabilities from the Class of 2019 enrolled in a postsecondary institution immediately following graduation. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of the Class of 2019 who were not identified as students with disabilities enrolled in a postsecondary institution. All VBCPS high schools had a higher percentage of non-special education students from the graduating classes enroll in college immediately following graduation ranging from 39 to 72 percent. Green Run Collegiate is not represented in this chart due to having a special education population below 10 students for this measure.

Figure 7: Postsecondary Enrollment by School and Special Education 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 8 shows the overall division-level enrollment percentages for the graduating classes of 2007 through 2018 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 ranged from 62 to 66 percent across the 12 cohorts. For the Class of 2018, the percentage of students enrolled anytime during the year after graduation was 62 percent, which was 4 percentage points higher than the percentage enrolled immediately after high school graduation.

Figure 8: Division Postsecondary Enrollment by Year and Level - During the First Year After High School

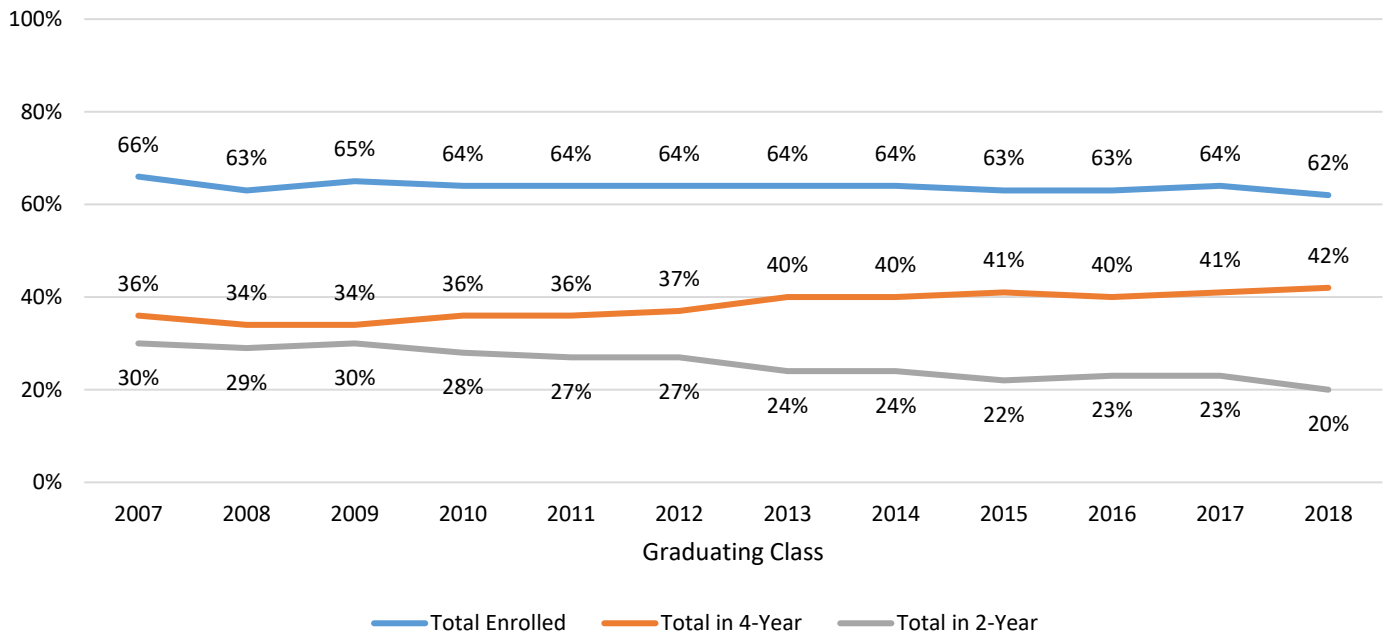
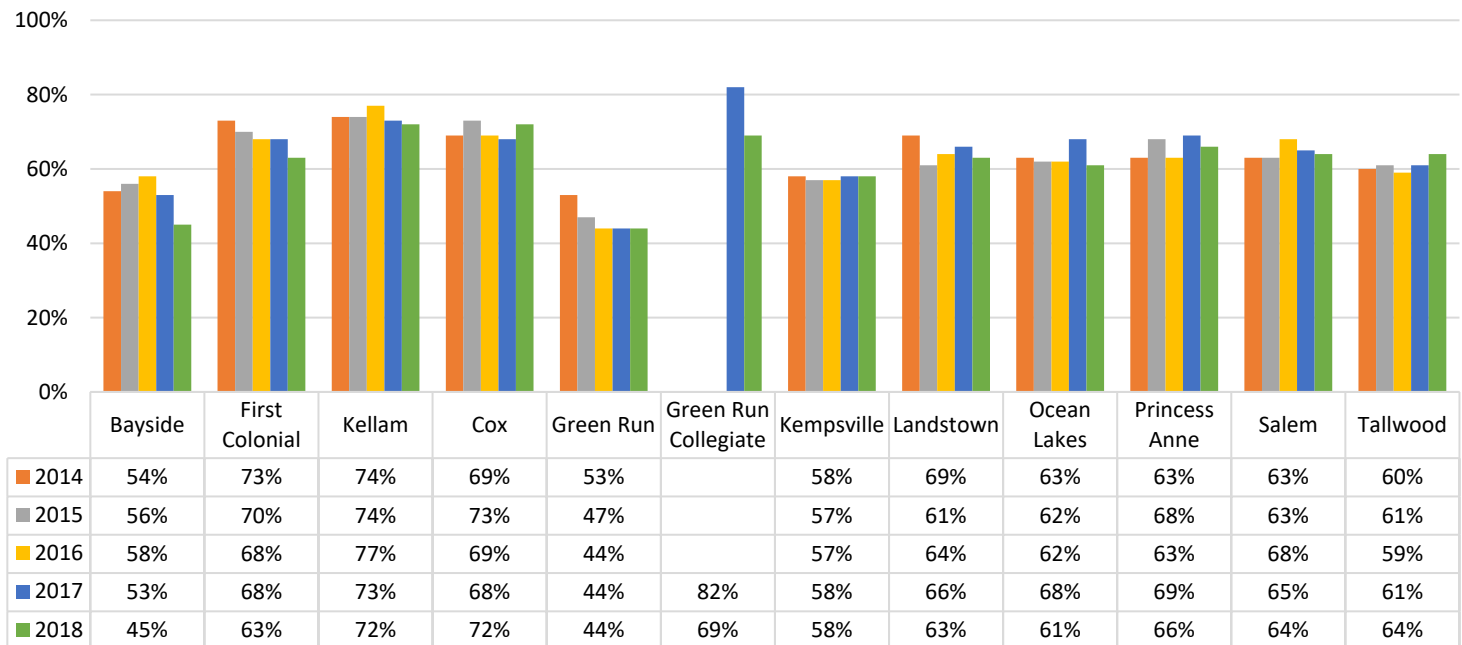


Figure 9 contains the school-level enrollment percentages for the graduating classes of 2014 through 2018. Within one year following graduation, from 44 to 72 percent of 2018 VBCPS graduates at each school enrolled in a postsecondary institution. Compared to immediate enrollment (Figure 2) for the Class of 2018, First Colonial High School experienced the largest increase in the percentage of students enrolled during the year following graduation, which was 5 percentage points.

Figure 9: Postsecondary Enrollment by School and Year - During the First Year After High School

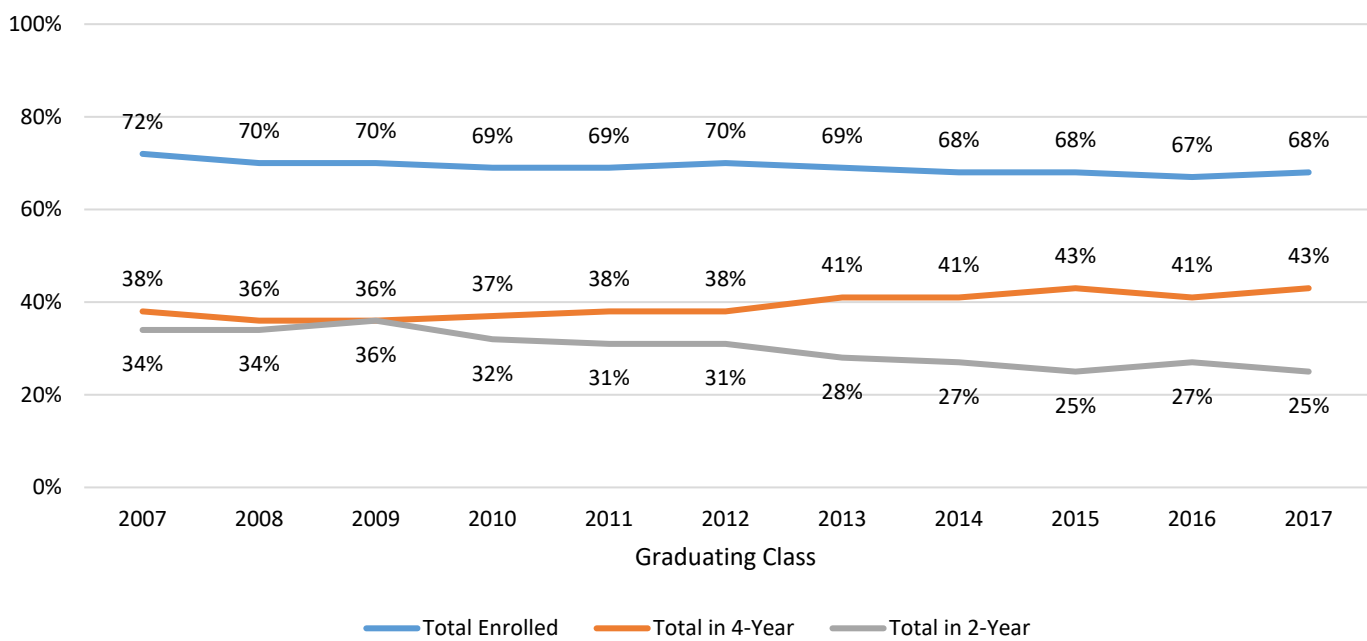


Within Two Years After High School

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 10 displays the percentages for the classes of 2007 through 2017 along with the institution level in which these students enrolled. Within two years after graduation, 67 to 72 percent of VBCPS graduates from the classes of 2007 to 2017 enrolled in a postsecondary institution. From 36 to 43 percent enrolled in a four-year institution and 25 to 36 percent enrolled in a two-year institution within two years after graduation.

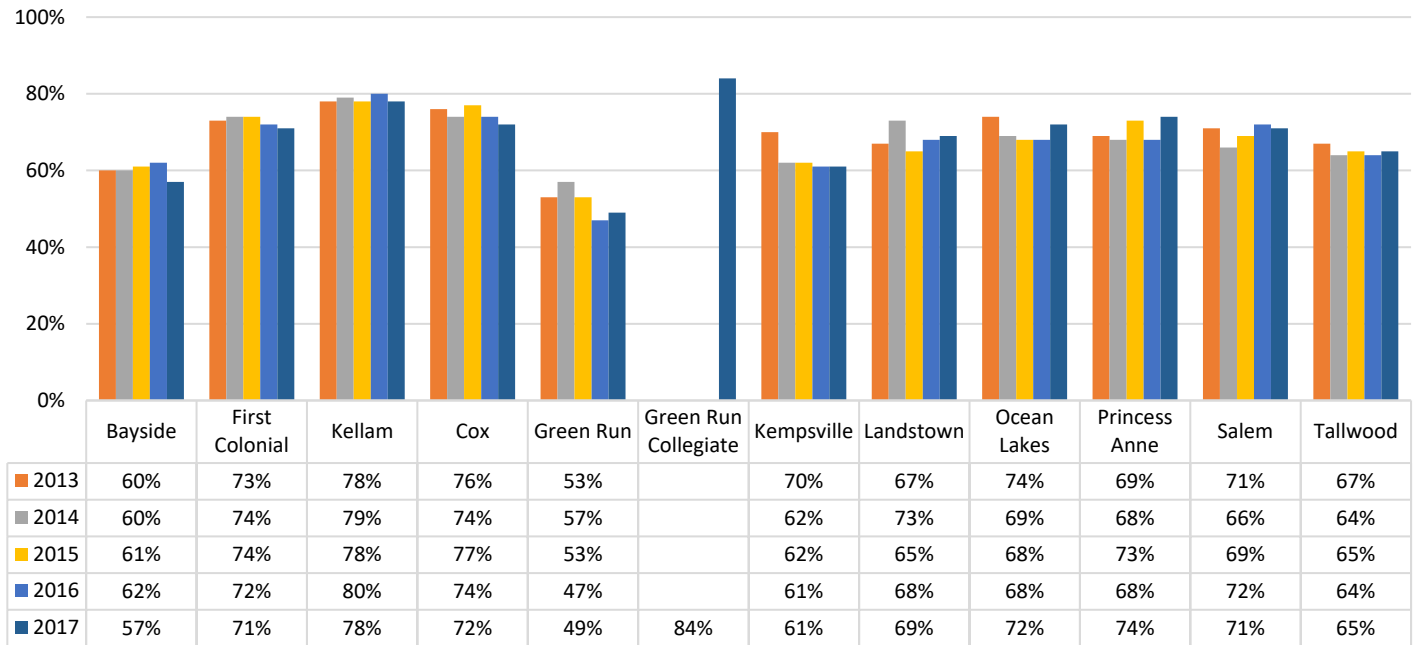
Compared to immediate enrollment during the fall after graduation (Figure 1), the overall percentage of Class of 2017 graduates who enrolled in postsecondary education within two years increased by 7 percentage points. The percentage of students enrolled in a two-year institution increased by 5 percentage points, and the percentage of students enrolled in a four-year institution increased by 3 percentage points.

Figure 10: Division Postsecondary Enrollment by Year and Level - Within Two Years After High School



The school-level enrollment percentages for students who enrolled within two years of graduation for the classes of 2013 through 2017 are provided in Figure 11. Within two years following graduation, from 49 to 84 percent of 2017 VBCPS graduates at each school enrolled in a postsecondary institution. Compared to immediate enrollment (Figure 2) for the Class of 2017, Green Run and Salem high schools experienced the largest increases in the percentage of students enrolled during the two years following graduation, which was 9 percentage points.

Figure 11: 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 in any postsecondary institution and not necessarily retained at the same institution. Figure 12 shows the division’s total student percentages by institution level for the graduating classes of 2007 through 2017. From 82 to 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, from 93 to 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 2017, the persistence rate for students attending a four-year institution was 25 percentage points higher compared to the students attending a two-year institution. The persistence rate for VBCPS students at two-year institutions decreased to 68 percent for the Class of 2015 and has remained relatively stable. The persistence rate of VBCPS students at four-year institutions has remained stable at 93 percent.

Figure 12: Division Postsecondary Persistence From Freshman to Sophomore by Year and Level

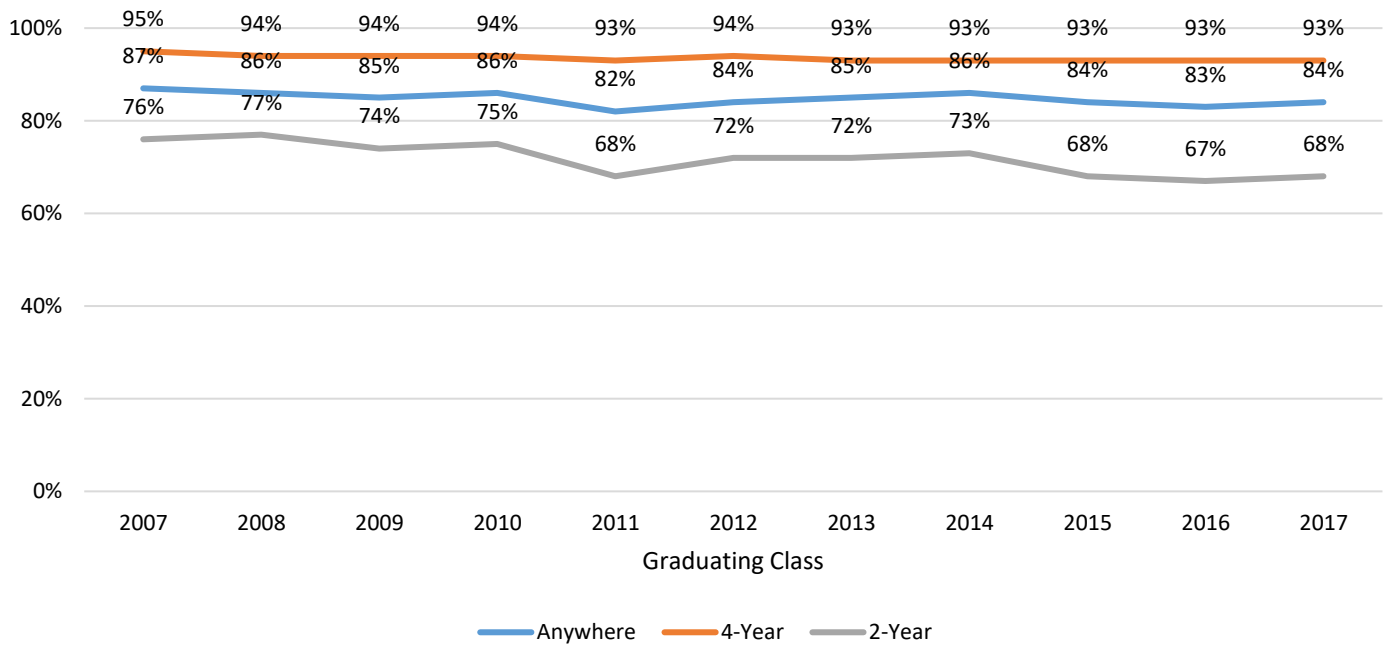
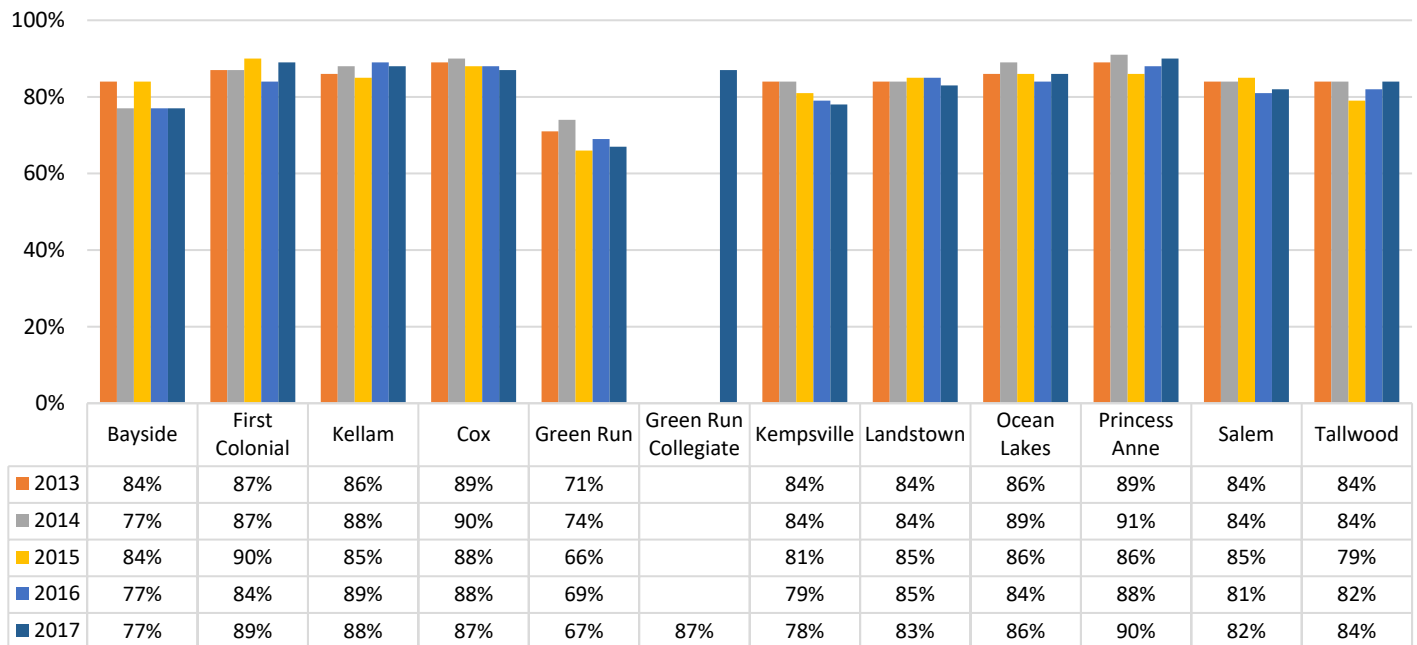


Figure 13 includes the student persistence percentages at the school level for 2013 through 2017 graduates. College persistence rates ranged from 67 to 90 percent for the Class of 2017 depending on school. Seven out of twelve schools (58%) met or exceeded the division’s persistence rate of 84 percent for the 2017 graduating class. Five schools, including First Colonial, Ocean Lakes, Princess Anne, Salem, and Tallwood, had higher persistence rates for the Class of 2017 compared to the prior year’s graduating class.

Figure 13: Postsecondary Persistence by Year and School



DEGREE ATTAINMENT

The percentage of students who completed a degree at a postsecondary institution is illustrated in Figure 14 for the 2008 through 2013 graduating classes. In order to be included, a student must have earned either an associate degree, bachelor's degree, or advanced degree within six years following enrollment. Overall, 27 percent of 2013 VBCPS graduates obtained a postsecondary degree within four years and 39 percent obtained a degree within six years.

Figure 14: Division Postsecondary Time to Graduation

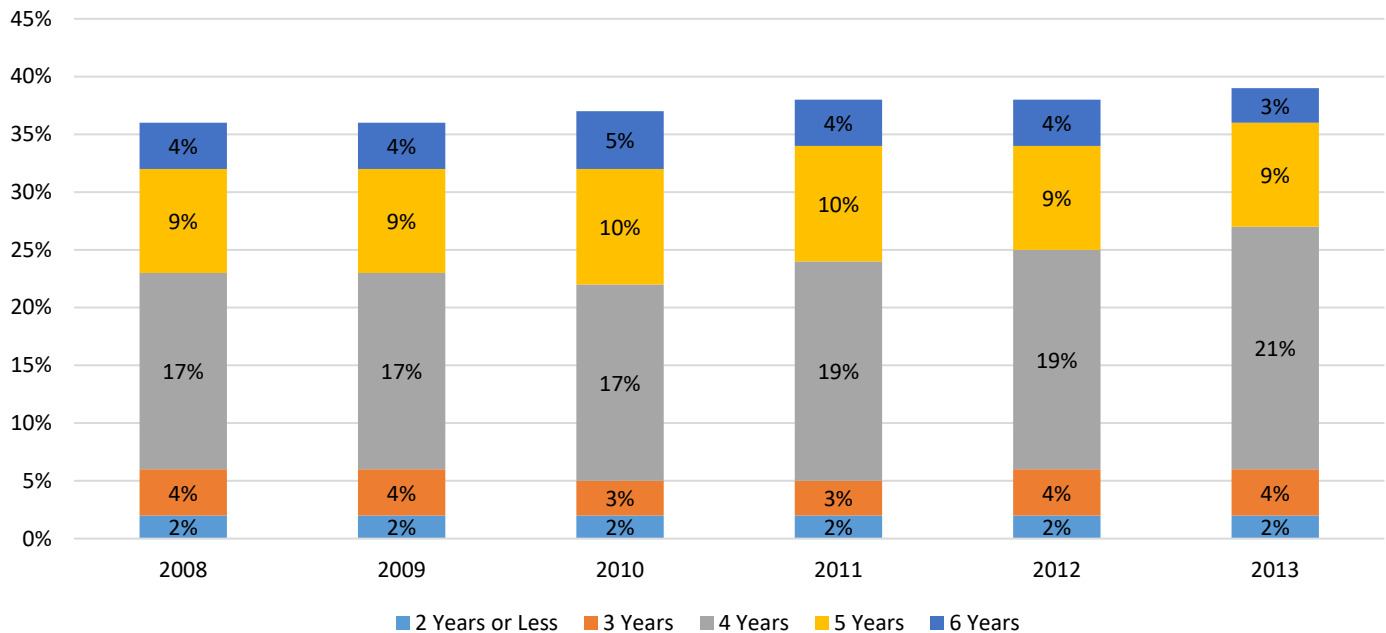
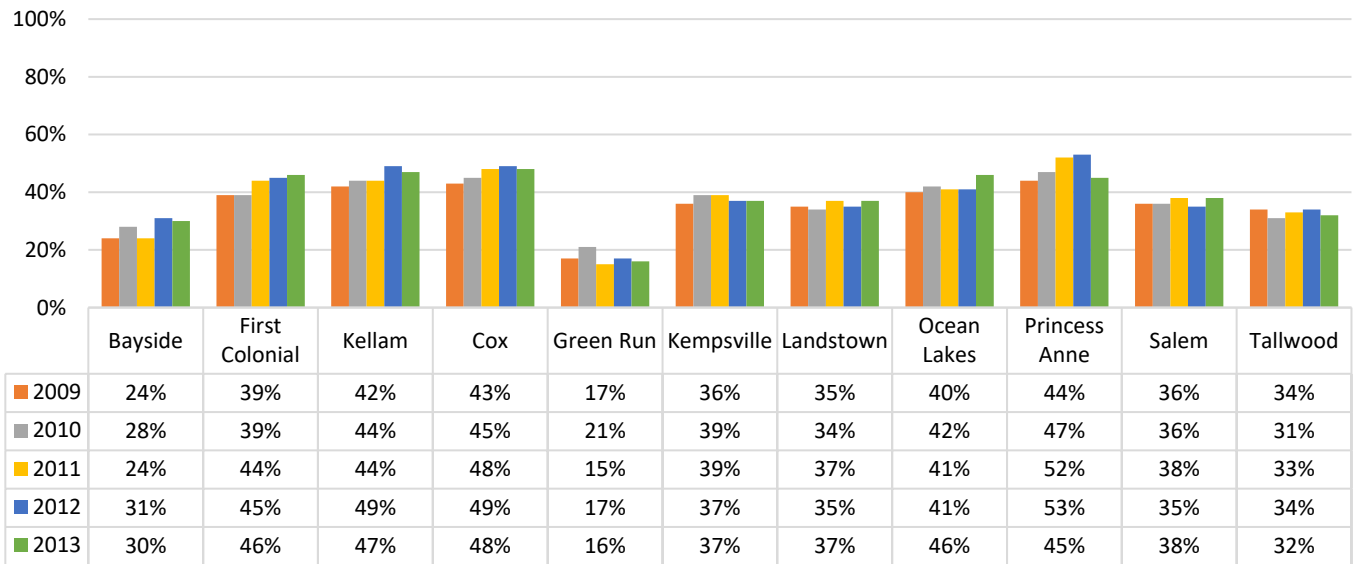


Figure 15 displays the percent of VBCPS graduates earning a degree within six years by school for the 2009 through 2013 graduating classes. College degree completion for all high schools ranged from 16 to 48 percent after six years for the most recent Class of 2013. Forty-five percent (45%) of schools met or exceeded the division’s degree attainment rate of 39 percent for the 2013 graduating class. Four schools, including First Colonial, Landstown, Ocean Lakes, and Salem, had higher degree attainment rates for the Class of 2013 compared to the prior year’s graduating class.

Figure 15: Degree Attainment Within Six Years by School

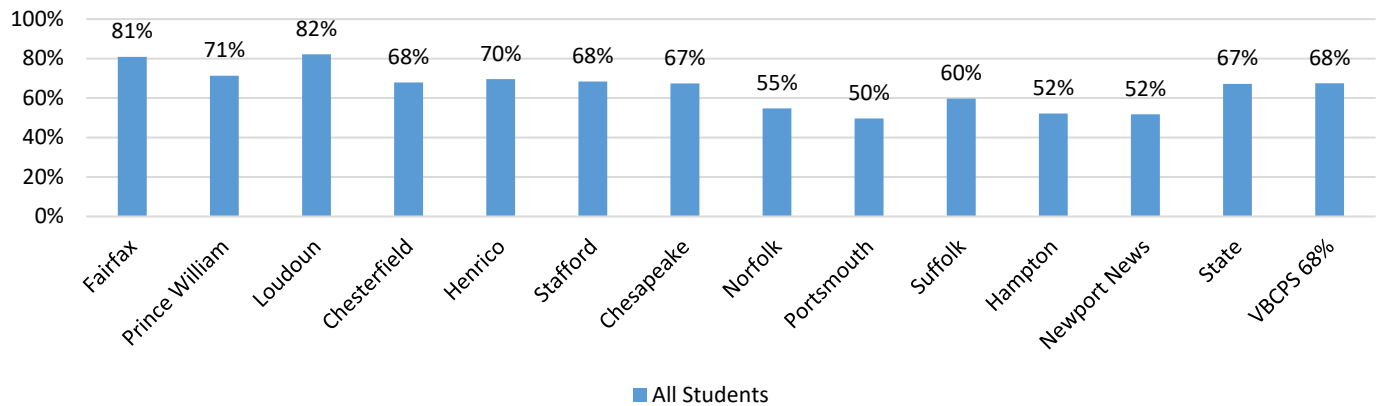


STATE AND REGIONAL COMPARISON

The Virginia Department of Education participates in NSC reporting at the state level and reports the percentage of students from each school division that enrolled in college in the 16 months after their graduation from high school.⁵ Figure 16 displays the percentage of standard or advanced studies diploma graduates from local and similar divisions in the state that enrolled in college within 16 months of graduating high school from the Class of 2018. Overall, the VBCPS college enrollment rate was higher than all local school divisions and the state, the same as the percentages for Stafford and Chesterfield, and less than percentages for Fairfax, Prince William, Loudoun, and Henrico school divisions.

Further analysis was completed comparing the percentage of students from the Class of 2018 enrolling in college within 16 months of graduation by student group for the local and similar divisions in Virginia (see Appendix). When student group data were compared for the local divisions of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Hampton, and Newport News, VBCPS had percentages equal to or higher than other local school divisions for females, males, economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities. Chesapeake had slightly higher percentages of African American and Caucasian students enrolling in college within 16 months after high school (1% higher). Additionally, VBCPS college enrollment data were compared to similar divisions in Virginia. Fairfax, Prince William, Loudoun, and Henrico had higher rates of students enrolling in college within 16 months overall and for the female, male, African American, and Caucasian student groups when compared to VBCPS.

Figure 16: Percentage of Graduates That Enrolled in College Within 16 Months of Graduation - Class of 2018



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 schools). Additionally, the data provide a picture of the postsecondary enrollment rates based on students' gender, ethnicity, economic status, and special education status.

Over the last 13 graduating classes, from 54 to 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 from 67 to 72 percent. The largest percentage of VBCPS graduates who enrolled in a postsecondary institution chose to attend a four-year program. Of these students, from 93 to 95 percent persisted into their second year, whereas 67 to 77 percent enrolled in a two-year institution persisted into the second year. Based on the available demographic data for the Class of 2019, female students (60%) were more likely to continue their education compared to males (48%) at the division level. Asian graduates (61%) were the most likely to enroll immediately after high school and African American graduates (45%) were the least likely to enroll. At the division level, a larger percentage of non-economically disadvantaged graduates (60%) enrolled in a postsecondary institution compared to economically disadvantaged students (40%). Additionally, non-special education graduates (57%) were more likely than special education graduates (18%) to enroll in a postsecondary institution.

Approximately 27 percent of 2013 VBCPS graduates obtained a college degree within four years of enrolling in a postsecondary institution. This percentage increased to 39 percent after six years. Degree completion for the Class of 2013 at each high school ranged from 16 to 48 percent after six years.

When analyses of VDOE NSC data were completed, the overall VBCPS college enrollment rate was higher than all local school divisions and the state, the same as the percentages for Stafford and Chesterfield, and less than the percentages for Fairfax, Prince William, Loudoun, and Henrico school divisions.

APPENDIX
Percentage of Graduates That Enrolled in College Within 16 Months of Graduation by Student Group - Class of 2018

	All Students	Female	Male	African American	Caucasian	Economically Disadvantaged	Students With Disabilities
State	67%	73%	61%	60%	70%	52%	45%
Local School Divisions							
VBCPS	68%	74%	61%	58%	71%	56%	49%
Chesapeake	67%	74%	60%	59%	72%	52%	44%
Hampton	52%	62%	41%	53%	50%	43%	22%
Newport News	52%	59%	43%	49%	56%	43%	30%
Norfolk	55%	62%	47%	50%	62%	47%	37%
Portsmouth	50%	55%	44%	48%	51%	43%	43%
Suffolk	60%	66%	53%	58%	66%	48%	35%
Similar School Divisions in VA							
Chesterfield	68%	74%	61%	64%	72%	52%	42%
Fairfax	81%	83%	78%	78%	85%	70%	62%
Henrico	70%	75%	64%	60%	78%	51%	43%
Loudoun	82%	86%	78%	83%	84%	64%	65%
Prince William	71%	76%	67%	74%	76%	60%	49%
Stafford	68%	75%	61%	66%	71%	52%	38%

ENDNOTES

¹ Source: <https://studentclearinghouse.info/onestop/wp-content/uploads/NSCFactSheet.pdf>.

² Data for students whose educational record indicates that they do not want their directory information released are not sent to the NSC.

³ 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.

⁴ Data regarding each student’s special education 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.

⁵ VDOE National Student Clearinghouse reports are based on Virginia’s Federal Graduation Indicator cohort and only includes students who earned Virginia’s standard or advanced studies diplomas.

Source: https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/postsec_public/postsec.do?dowhat=LOAD_REPORT_C11

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