

A Profile of Boston's Struggling Students and Disconnected Youth

**A Working Document
Prepared for the
Boston Youth Council**

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Introduction and Summary

Background

This report is a working document created for the Boston Youth Council to lay a foundation for its strategic planning process. It is intended to provide a profile of Boston's teen and young adult population, with an emphasis on patterns of disconnection from the educational system and the labor market. The age groups considered fall into two groups: 16-19 year olds and 20-24 year olds, as most studies tend to consider the two groups either separately or in combination.

The research gathered for this report focused on how many Boston youth are disconnected from either the educational system or the labor market, at what points they disconnect, and factors contributing to their disconnection.

The points at which we can identify disconnection include leaving high school without a secondary credential and lacking employment. These points of disconnection overlap for many young people; youth who are disengaged from both school and work form a considerable subset which this report also considers. Young people who are more severely disconnected, though somewhat smaller in number, are young single mothers, foster children and adjudicated youth.

Cutting across these definitions of disconnection are patterns that consistently find Latino and African American youth disproportionately represented in the disconnected groups, particularly young men. Poverty is also associated with being in the disconnected groups. To track these patterns in Boston, the report includes demographic information about Boston's youth, information on educational attainment levels and employment rates, along with information on national trends to highlight the significance of particular statistics.

Demographics

The youth and young adult population is growing, especially in the Latino and Asian communities, after a period in which this population actually shrank. (Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, Demographic Indicators for Teens and Young Adults in Massachusetts, prepared for Commonwealth Corporation, 2004).

At the time of Census 2000 (the most recent primary source that is readily accessible) 105,006 young people aged 16-24 were living in Boston, almost half of whom were minorities. A quarter of Boston's youth are raised in poverty. 74% of Boston's school age children attend public schools, with more minority children and poor children concentrated in the Boston Public Schools (BPS) than found in the general population. (Boston Center for Youth and Families, Boston 2003 Trend Report, Boston Public Schools, 2004)

Educational Attainment

Boston does well on outcomes for students who complete high school.

- Each year, close to 70% of Boston Public Schools graduates attend post-secondary educational or training programs and another 20% find employment.
- The 9-10% of graduates who remain disconnected, along with the estimated 30% who drop out, are largely young people of color.
(Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, Follow-up Studies of the Classes of 2001 and 2002)

To consider the cumulative effect of students exiting schools without a diploma, Census 2000 data was analyzed to estimate the number of 20-24 year olds without a high school credential.

The estimate for this number is 6,846 or 10% of the total population in that age group. (Boston Redevelopment Authority, Analysis of 5% PUMS Data, Census 2000)

Some argue that the large number of youth struggling with MCAS, the state's high stakes graduation requirement implemented in 2003, is increasing the drop-out rate, which means that the current number and proportion of young adults lacking a credential may be higher than it was in 2000 at the time of the Census (Boston Herald, 9/10/04).

Youth Employment

Unemployment, while elevated for adults, is at an all time high for teenagers. The combination of a growing young adult population and a tight labor market threatens to create protracted periods of unemployment for young people, particularly among minorities. This increases the likelihood of poor economic outcomes later in life, especially for young people with low educational attainment levels, who are disproportionately minority and male.

Labor market analysts usually consider youth unemployment more serious when it is combined with a lack of educational activity. In 2000, in Boston the number of youth neither working nor in school was 7,827 or 7.5% of 16-24 year-olds, with African Americans and Latinos constituting 72% of this group. (Commonwealth Corporation, Analysis of PUMS 5% Data, Census 2000)

Boston's Most Disconnected

The rate of single motherhood among 16-24 year olds has been on the increase in recent years. At the time of Census 2000, 78.7% of young adult Boston mothers were single (Commonwealth Corporation, Analysis of PUMS 5% Data, Census 2000). This is a concern for both the young women and their children, as these families are likely to struggle economically. The young women are less likely to complete high school or college and less likely to work than others in their age group. (Annie Casey Foundation, Kids Count, 2004)

Adjudicated youth and youth raised in foster care, are most at risk for poor educational and economic outcomes. In addition to a low likelihood of completing school or obtaining steady employment, these youth have a high incidence of mental illness. For example, estimates range from 50% to 75% on the incidence of mental illness for incarcerated youth. Both groups are more likely to be arrested or incarcerated in adulthood than other groups. (Casey, Kids Count, 2004; Hewlett, Connected by 25, 2003)

Youth in detention and jail are largely male and minority. Youth in foster care are largely minority (Annie Casey Foundation, Kids Count, 2004). There are currently 723 youth living in foster-care placements in Boston. There about 700 Boston youth committed to the Department of Youth Services each year and another 600-800 detained without being committed, which does not include young people processed through the adult corrections system.

Questions Remaining

There are questions remaining that can inform the direction the Youth Council takes in its strategic planning process. Some are questions about what groups or problems the Youth Council will prioritize. Others are questions about what information and research it will prioritize to answer the first set of questions.

Service Priorities

- The main question is: Which of the disconnected groups should the Youth Council prioritize? As the Youth Council members consider subsequent reports on Boston's youth services, the local Workforce Investment Board's priorities and national best practices, it

would be useful to keep in mind the various trends for youth at different levels of disconnection described in this report.

- One issue that touches all youth, though Latino and African American youth more intensely, is the dramatically low youth employment rate. The Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University (CLMS) suggests that this is due to both cyclical and structural factors (CLMS, *Still Young, Restless and Jobless*, 2004), which means that even when the economy improves, young people may not have the number of opportunities they need to make a successful transition to the labor market. An important question for the Youth Council is how to help youth successfully transition to the adult labor market in a context where secondary labor market jobs are not as readily available. This question is particularly important in considering youth with low skill levels.
- Another important question is why young men, particularly African American and Latino men, are disconnecting at higher rates. What interventions in our community—and others—have been successful at engaging this group?
- For a good segment of the disconnected populations, especially the most disconnected, it would seem that psycho-social supports need to accompany educational and work-force development strategies. What psycho-social supports do disconnected young people need to successfully connect with education and employment? What agencies provide these supports and what does that imply for coordination strategies with the workforce development and educational system that is the Youth Council's oversees?

Research

- Most of the Boston numbers on youth employment and educational attainment in this report were obtained from the US Census, conducted in 2000. Since national figures for youth unemployment and youth disengagement (neither working nor in school) have increased since 2000, it would be useful to know the current Boston figures for these measures, if more recent data is obtainable.
- Since there is some speculation that MCAS is increasing the dropout rate, it would also be helpful to have a more current estimate of the number of drop-outs.
- It would be useful to map or catalogue of the number and types of youth services that support education and career attainment in Boston. This would give the Youth Council a picture as to whether the services available in Boston match the needs of the population. The next step of the Youth Council's planning process will provide information about these services.
- The Youth Council will ultimately be comparing numbers of the different disconnected groups with numbers of seats in services available to identify underserved groups. In this context, it would be helpful, though difficult, to determine, to estimate the academic skill levels that prevail among the various disconnected groups. Skill levels often dictate which educational and training programs for which youth may be eligible.

Key Findings

- The youth and young adult population is growing, especially in the Latino and Asian communities. (Boston Redevelopment Authority, Analysis of PUMS 5% Data, Census 2000)
- 26% of Boston's youth are raised in poverty or in low-income households. Poor youth are concentrated in Boston Public Schools (BPS), where 66% qualify for free lunch. (Boston Center for Youth and Families, Boston 2003 Trend Report; BPS, 2004)
- Those who graduate from Boston Public Schools are likely to succeed. Close to 70% of Boston Public Schools graduates attend post-secondary educational or training programs and another 20% find employment. (Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, Follow-Up Studies of Boston Public Schools Graduates, 2002, 2003)
- The 9-10% of graduates who remain disconnected, and the 30% who drop out, largely young people of color, are cause for concern. This is especially true now, as the young population of color is growing.
 - The estimated number of dropouts among Boston's 20-24 year olds at the time of Census 2000 was 6,846 or 10% of the total in that age group, with African Americans and Latinos accounting for 71% of this group. (Boston Redevelopment Authority, Analysis of PUMS 5% Data, Census 2000)
 - Dropouts' future economic prospects are weak, and young male drop-outs are more likely to become involved with the justice system. (Hewlett Foundation, Connected by 25, 2003)
 - The large number of Boston youth struggling with MCAS, the state's high stakes graduation requirement implemented in 2003, may be increasing the dropout rate. Latino and African American students are over-represented in the failure category and under-represented in the advanced category. (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2004)
- Unemployment, while elevated for adults, is at an all-time high for teenagers. In Boston, the teen employment rate was only 35.3% in 2000. (Commonwealth Corporation, Analysis of PUMS 5% Data, Census 2000)
 - Youth unemployment is more serious when combined with a lack of educational activity. In 2000, in Boston the number of youth neither working nor in school was 7,827, 7.5% of 16-24 year-olds, with African Americans and Latinos constituting 72% of this group. (Commonwealth Corporation, Analysis of PUMS 5% Data, Census 2000)
- The rate of single motherhood among 16-24 year olds statewide has increased. At the time of Census 2000, there were about 3,167 single mothers, 16-24 years old in Boston, which accounted for 78.7% of all mothers of this age in Boston. (Commonwealth Corporation, Analysis of 5% PUMS Data, Census 2000).
 - Single-mother families are likely to struggle economically and young mothers are less likely to have the skills to improve their economic status than other young women. (CLMS, Demographic Indicators for Teens and Young Adults in Massachusetts, prepared for Commonwealth Corporation, 2004)

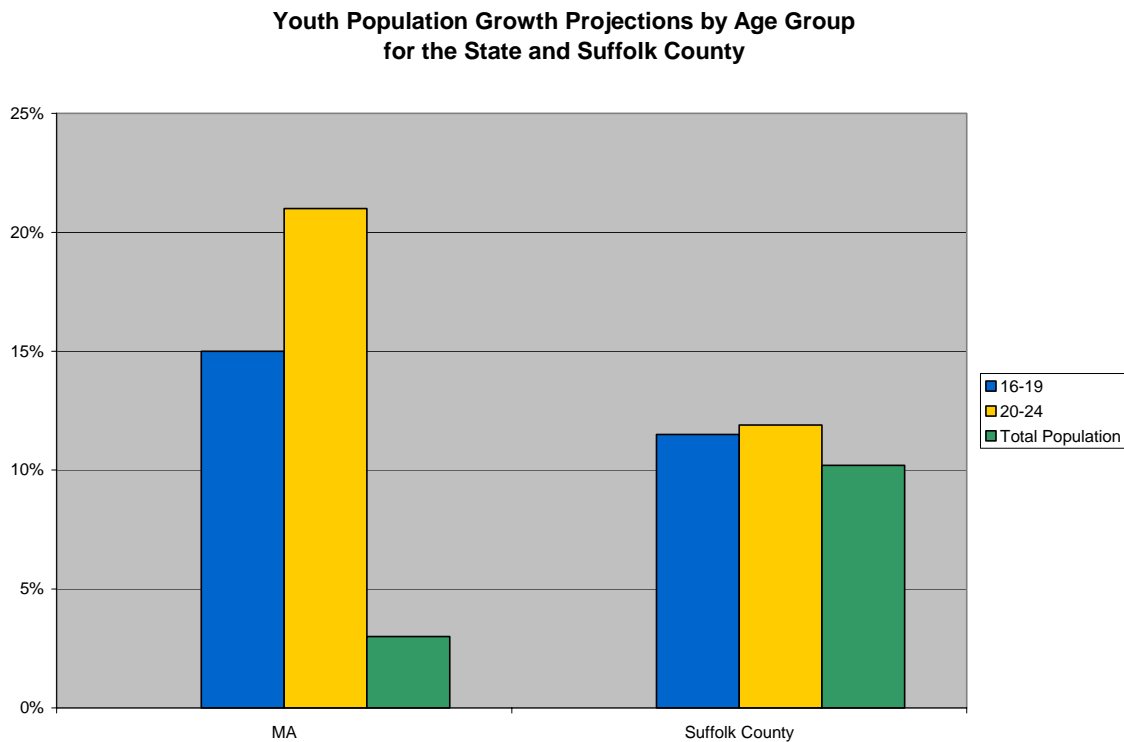
- Adjudicated youth and youth raised in foster care are most at risk for poor outcomes. In addition to a low likelihood of completing school or obtaining steady employment, they are more likely to have a mental illness or to be arrested than other groups. (Annie Casey, Kids Count, 2004)
 - Youth in foster care are largely minority. 40% of U.S foster children are African American, while African Americans account for less than 20% of the population. (Annie Casey, Kids Count, 2004)
 - There are currently 723 youth living in foster-care placements in Boston. (New England Home for Little Wanderers, 2004)
 - Youth in detention and jail are largely male and minority. A statewide study found that Latino and African American youth make up more than half of the Department of Youth Services (DYS) caseload. (Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, Racial, Ethnic and Social Inequities in Indicators, prepared for Commonwealth Corporation, 2004)
 - In Boston, there about 700 youth committed to DYS services each year and another 600-800 detained without being committed, not including young people processed through the adult corrections system. (Department of Youth Services, 2004)

1. DEMOGRAPHIC POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Youth Population Growth

The youth and young adult population is growing nationally and in Boston, which is due in large part to the growth of the immigrant population. At the national level, the number of 16-24 year olds increased by 6.3% between 1995 and 2000, and by 2010 is projected to rise by 21%. Two thirds of this increase is projected to stem from the growth of the Latino and other race-ethnic minority populations.

These trends also characterize Boston's population growth. Below is a graph showing state and local population projections for youth between 2000 and 2010.

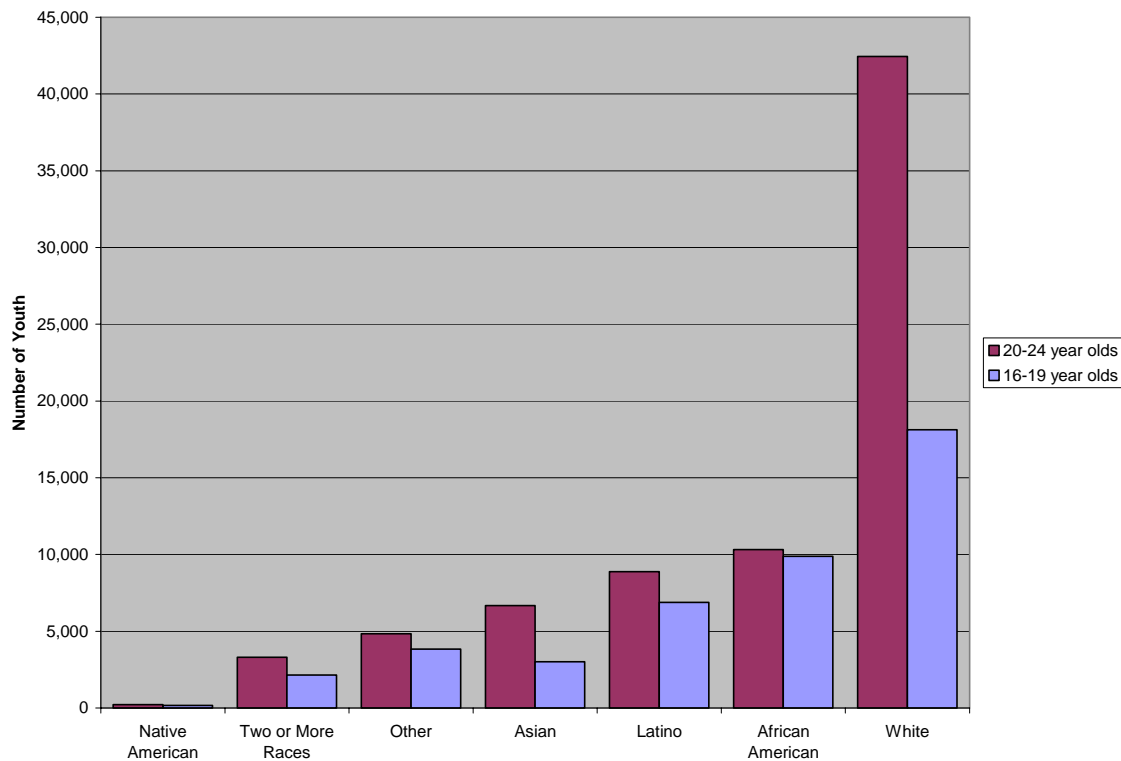


Source: Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University (CLMS), *Confronting the Youth Population Boom*, 2004; CLMS, *Indicators for Teens and Young Adults in Massachusetts*, 2004, US Census.

In Boston, there were 37,192 16-19 year-olds and 67,814 20-24 year-olds, for a total of 105,006 at the time of Census 2000. The White youth population was the largest, followed by the African American, Latino and Asian populations. It is important to note that Boston is a college town, and college students are counted in the Census. This elevates the number of White college-attending 20-24 year olds reported in the Census, which is reflected in the graph below.

Among 16-19 year-olds, more reflective of the permanent Boston population, White teenagers represented 49% of the 16-19 year-old population, African American teenagers represented 27%, Latino teenagers represented 19% and Asian teenagers represented 8%. Mixed race and Native American teenagers represented 6%.

Boston's Youth Population by Race-Ethnic Group



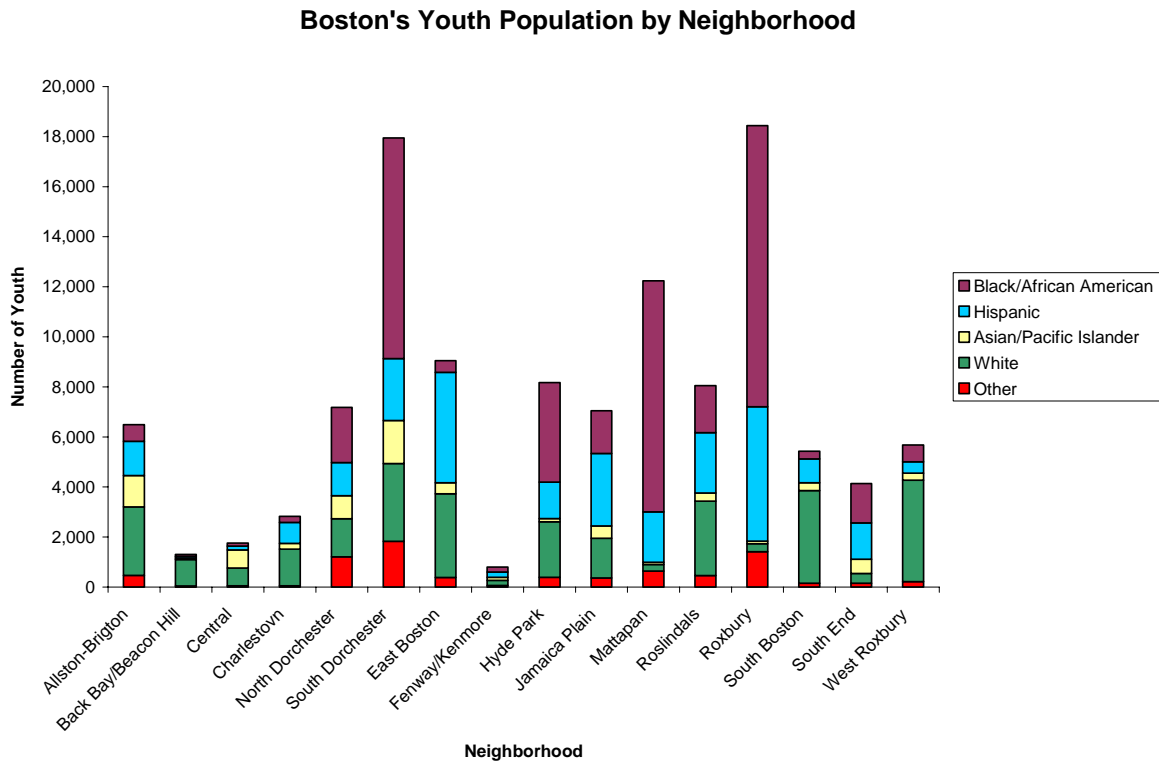
Source: Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), Analysis of 5% PUMS Data, Census 2000.

In Boston, Latino and Asian populations are growing faster than the general population. Between 1990 and 2000:

- the number of Latino children increased by 28%;
 - the number of Asian children increased by 22% .
- (BRA Analysis of 5% PUMS Data, Census 2000)

Youth Population Distribution in Boston's Neighborhoods

The distribution of Boston's children under 18 is charted by neighborhood below and includes information on the size of each ethnic group's population in these neighborhoods. Almost half of Boston's children live in Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan.

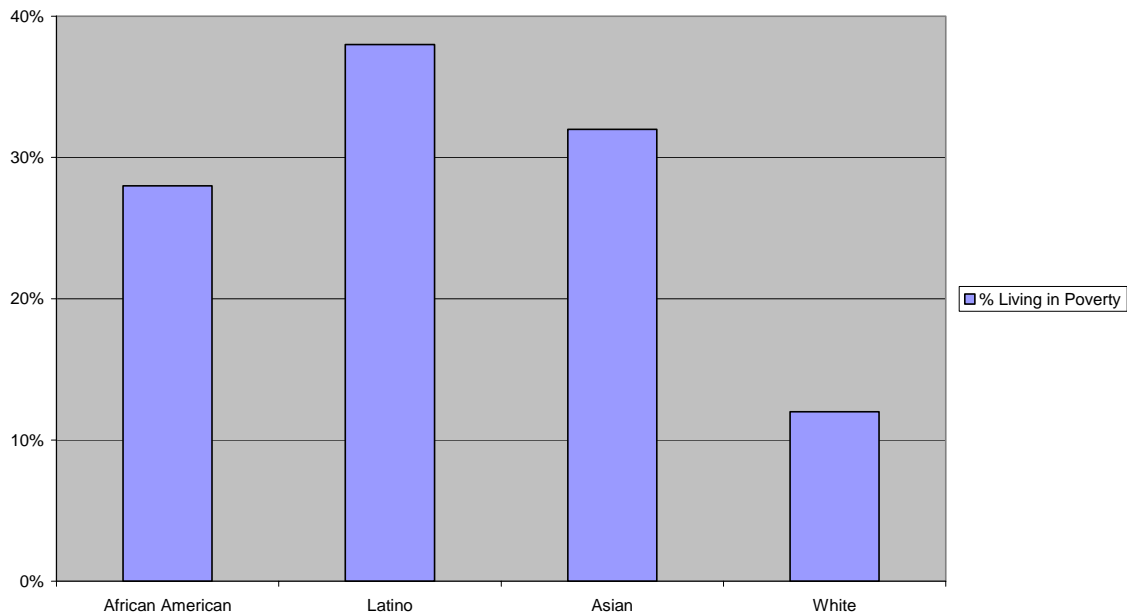


Source: Boston Center for Youth and Families, Boston 2003 Trend Report.

Income

26% of Boston children live at or below the poverty rate, according to the Boston Center for Youth and Families' (BCYF) 2003 Trend Report. Children raised in poor and low-income circumstances are more at risk for health and learning difficulties, are more likely to drop out of high school and less likely to work. The Commonwealth Corporation's Analysis of Census 2000 data showed that for 20-24 year olds, 30.6% lived in poverty and another 15% in low-income status.

**Poverty Rates Among Children in Boston
by Race-Ethnic Group**



Source: Boston Center for Youth and Families, Boston 2003 Trend Report.

2. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Lacking a secondary credential is a significant barrier to employment and earnings. The higher the educational attainment in youth and early adulthood, the better the economic outcomes in adulthood, as indicated by the measures listed below:

- Young adults 16-24 without a diploma are 3 times as likely to be unemployed, underemployed or working for very low wages as those with a college degree. (Annie E. Casey Foundation, Moving Youth From Risk to Opportunity, 2004)
- Between 1997 and 2001, more than 25% of all dropouts were unemployed for a year or longer, compared with 11% of those with a diploma or GED. (Casey)
- Over a lifetime, college graduates make more than \$900,000 than high school graduates; those with some college make \$300,000 more than high school graduates and \$500,000 more than dropouts. (Casey)
- According to Massachusetts Division of Career Services (DCS), by 2008, 65% of new jobs in Boston will require an Associate's Degree or higher.

Graduates of Boston Public Schools: Boston's Success Story

Boston's public high school graduates see strong post-secondary educational and employment outcomes, though the proportion of unengaged youth is a concern.

Each year, close to 70% of Boston Public Schools' graduates attend post-secondary educational or training programs and another 20% find employment. The 9-10% of graduates who remain disconnected, along with the estimated 30% who drop out, largely young people of color, are cause for concern. This is especially true now, as this population is growing.

The annual survey of Boston public high school graduates conducted nine months out by the Boston Private Industry Council and analyzed by Northeastern University Center for Labor Market Studies (CLMS), showed that for the class of 2002, students attained the following outcomes:

Post Secondary Outcomes for the Boston Public Schools (BPS) class of 2002

| In School | School Only | School & Work | Work Only | No Positive Activity |
|------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| 68.3% | 37.1% | 31.2% | 20.9% | 10.9% |

Source: CLMS, Follow-up Study of the Class of 2002.

The Dropout Problem

Of Boston's 82,000 school-aged children, 60,300, or 74%, were attending Boston Public Schools as of September 2004. The other 26% attend private, parochial, suburban, charter or private special education schools. Boston Public School students are disproportionately poor, with 66% qualifying for free lunch, and "majority minority," with the following breakdown of race-ethnic groups among students:

- 47% African American
- 30% Latino
- 14% White
- 9% Asian

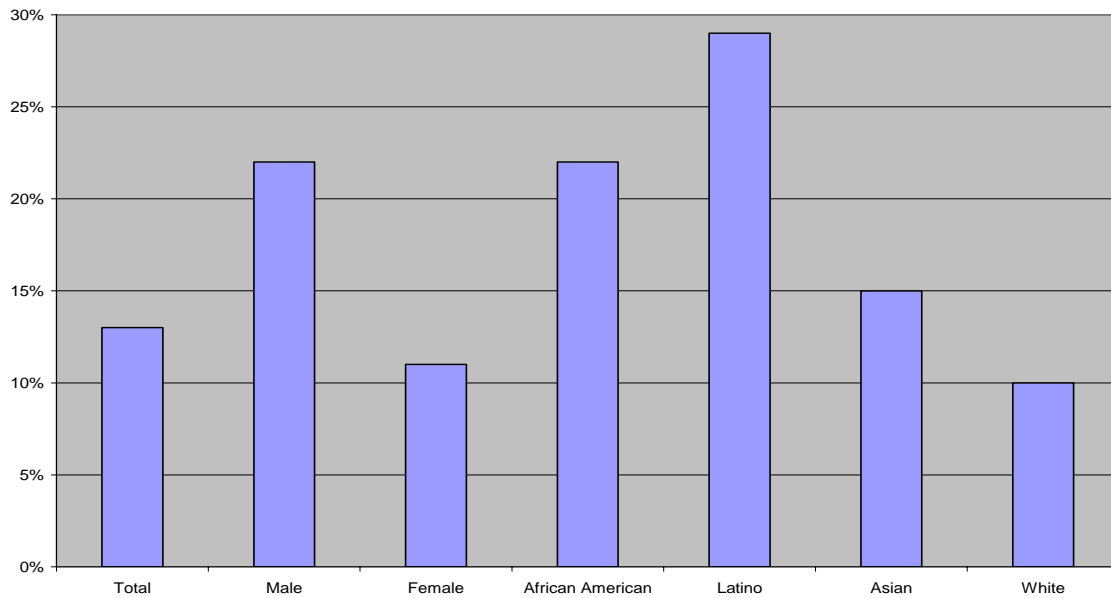
(Source: Boston Public Schools, 2004)

The current four-year drop-out rate for Boston Public Schools is 32% over four years. (Boston Center for Youth and Families, Massachusetts Department of Education, 2004)

- DoE and BPS estimates of Boston Public Schools' *annual* dropout rate between 2000 and 2002 range from 6.95-9.4%, compared with the statewide rate of 3.5-3.7%. (BPS, 2004; DoE, 2004)
- In Boston, this translates to 1,300-1,500 youth dropping out each year.
- The four-year dropout rate hovers around 30%, compared to a state average of 13% over the last 5 years. (DoE, 2004)
- In 2000, 10% (or an estimated 6, 846 out of 67,814) young adults living in Boston aged 20-24 did not have a diploma. (Boston Redevelopment Authority, Analysis of PUMS 5% Data, Census 2000)

Statewide, as it is nationally, the dropout rate is even higher for young men, and Latinos and African Americans, as indicated in the graph below. (Child Trends, Databank, 2004)

Massachusetts Dropout Rates For 2003 by Race-Ethnic Group



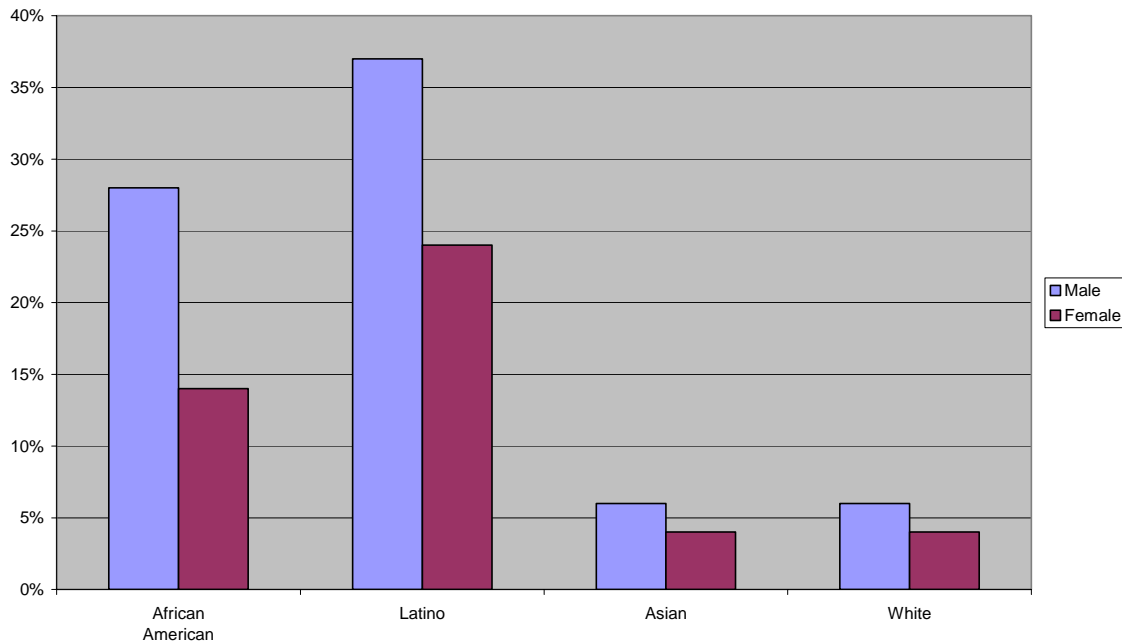
Source: Massachusetts Department of Education (DoE), 2004.

Gender and Race-Based Achievement Gaps Persist

The male dropout rate is of particular concern, since male high school dropouts are at high risk for negative outcomes. Approximately 16% of all males 18-24 without a diploma or GED are either incarcerated or on parole at any one point in time (as opposed to cumulative annual figures). For African American males, 18-24, the rate is 30%, with rates increasing as their age is projected out over 25 years. (Hewlett Foundation, Connected by 25, 2003)

The 2000 Census data for Boston shows that Latino men and women, and African American men were the least likely among Boston youth to have a high school diploma. The numbers in the graph below total 6,848 20-24 year olds without a diploma and include 1,511 young adults who were enrolled in some sort of education program at the time. Many of these were likely enrolled in the various “second chance” programs offered in the city. (Commonwealth Corporation, Analysis of PUMS 5% Data, Census 2000)

Percentage of Youth Population, Aged 20-24, with Less than a High School Credential, by Race-Ethnic Group

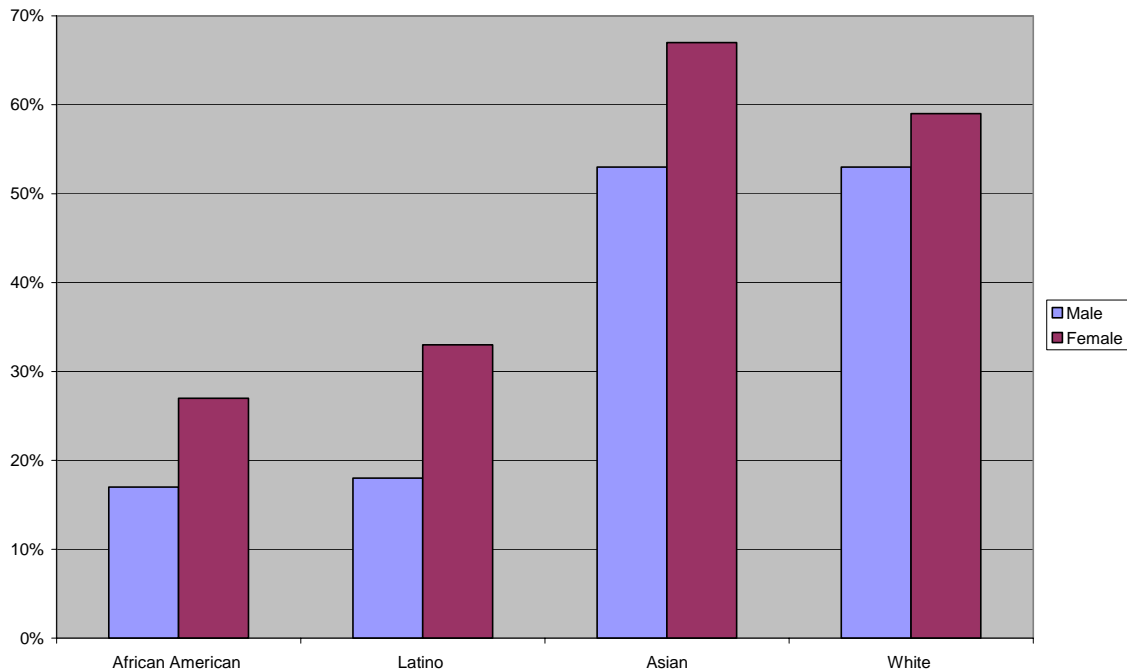


Source: Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), Analysis of 5% PUMS data, Census 2000.

Who Attends College?

According to the 2000 Census, approximately 50,800 or 48% of 16-24 year olds were attending college, the majority of which were White. As shown in the graph below, African American and Latino men were least likely to be in college, followed by African American and Latino women. As noted previously, Boston has a large White college-attending population due to the enrollment in local institutions by members of this sub-group primarily from other regions. As a result, White college attendance is over-represented in the Census data.

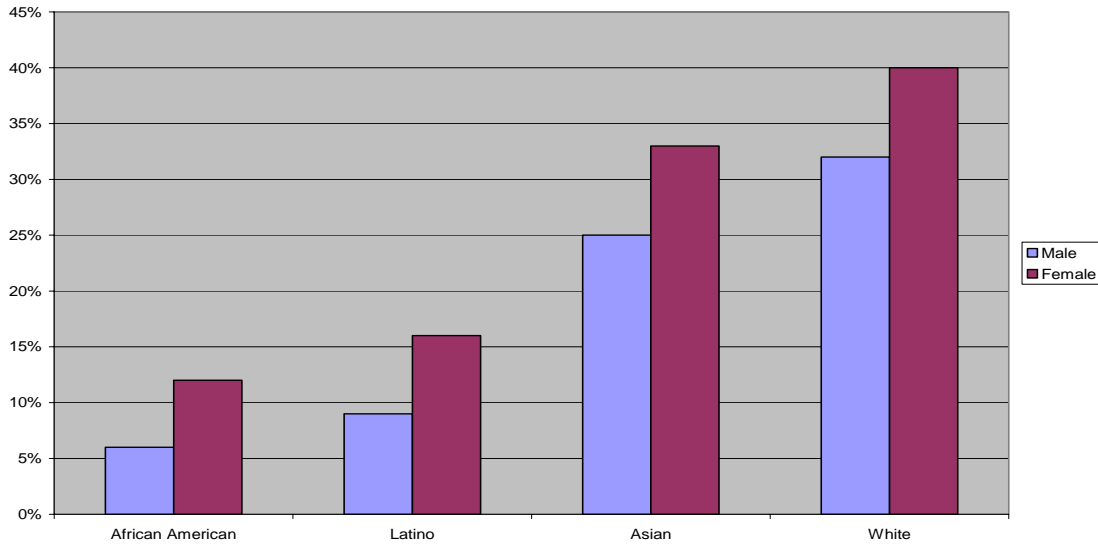
Percentage of 16-24 Year Olds Attending College by Race-Ethnic Group



Source: Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), Analysis of 5% PUMS data, Census 2000.

The achievement gap widens if we consider which race-ethnic and gender groups are more likely to attain an Associate's or Bachelor's Degree, with Latino and African American men in the single digit percentiles for attaining a Bachelor's Degree and with African American and Latina women at only 16 and 12% respectively. Though about twice as likely to have these degrees as their male counterparts, African American and Latina women were less than half as likely to have them as White women. The graphs below show college credential rates for the 20-24 year group by race-ethnic and gender cohorts.

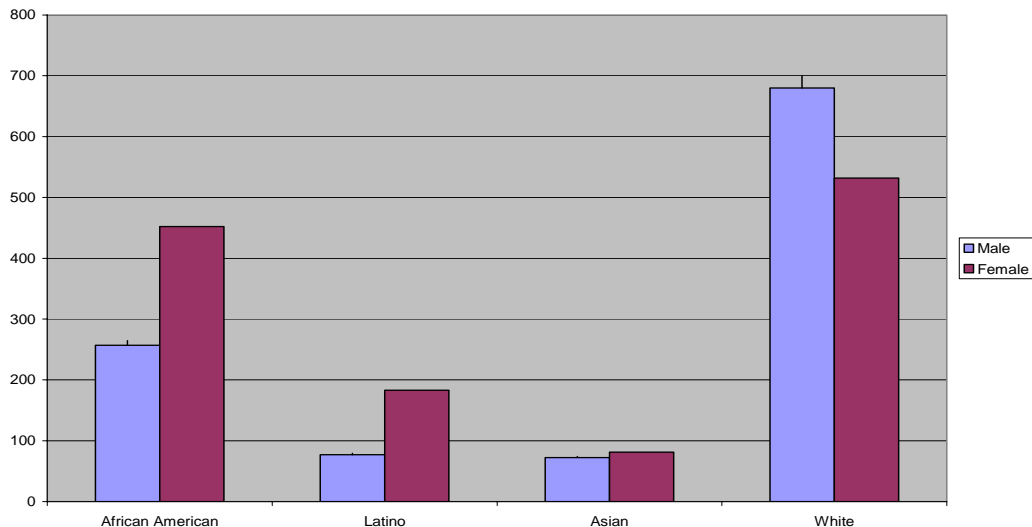
Percentage of Youth Aged 20-24 Attaining Bachelor's Degrees by Race-Ethnic Group



Source: Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), Analysis of 5% PUMS data, Census 2000.

Another trend is the low overall number of 20-24 year-olds in Boston who completed an Associate's Degree, which was estimated at 2,369, or 3% of that age group, compared with 18,912 young adults who completed a Bachelor's Degree. This estimate is down from 3,928 (5%) in 1990.

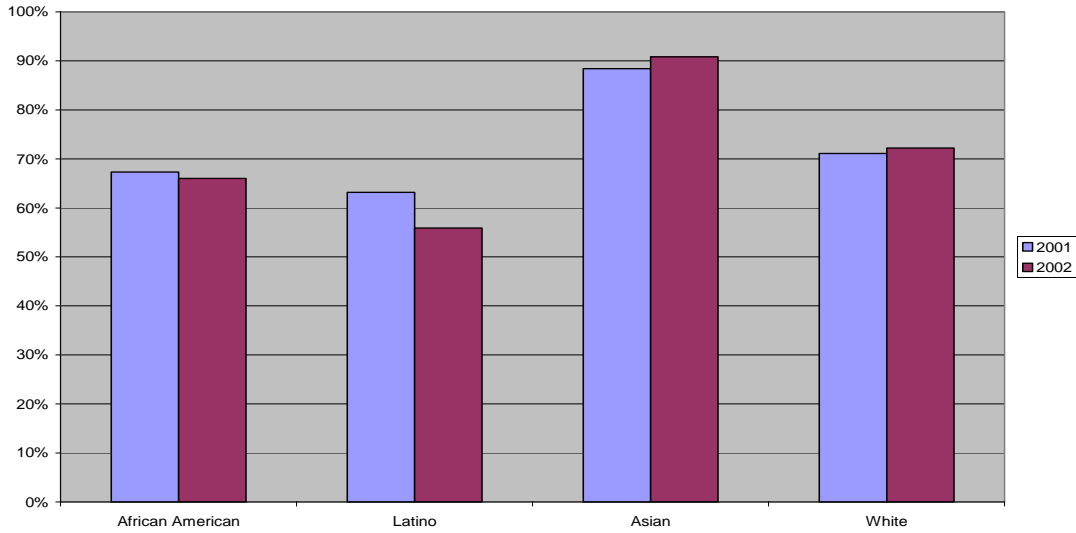
Number of Youth Aged 20-24 Attaining Associate's Degrees by Race-Ethnic Group



Source: Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), Analysis of 5% PUMS data, Census 2000.

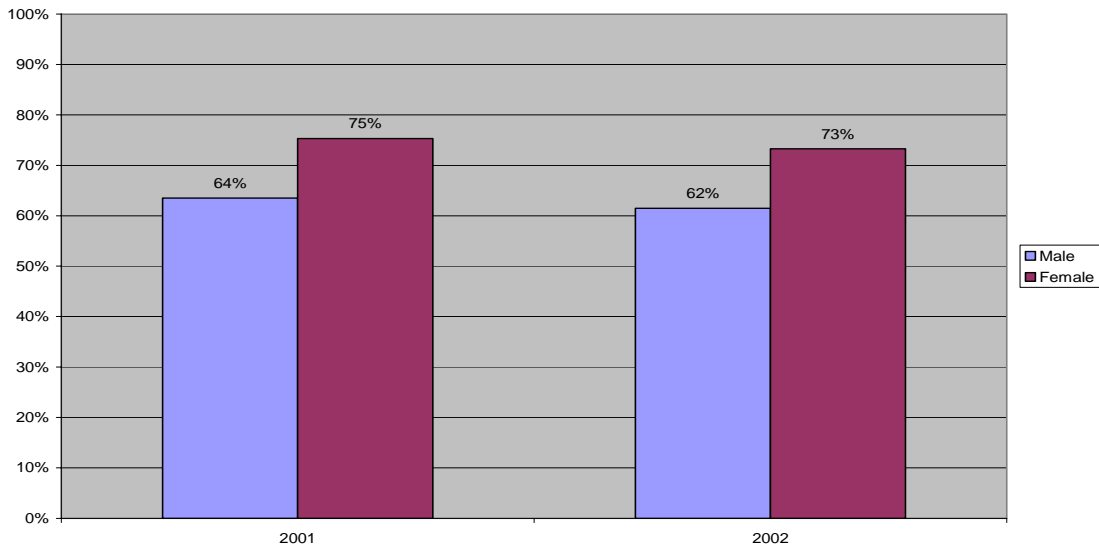
Since many of Boston's 20-24 year-olds include college students from other regions, it is useful to look at data on Boston Public Schools graduates' educational outcomes for a sample of youth coming from Boston. CLMS' annual post-graduate study of Boston Public Schools graduates shows race-ethnic group trends similar to those of the Census, but higher rates of college attendance overall. For the classes of 2001 and 2002, women were more likely to go to college than men. Latino and African American students' college-going rates were well over 50%, but still significantly lower than Asian and White students.

Percentage of BPS Graduates Attending College or Training for the Classes of 2001 and 2002 by Race-Ethnic Group



Source: CLMS, Follow-up Studies of the Classes of 2001 and 2002.

Percentage of BPS Graduates Attending College or Training or the Classes of 2001 and 2002 by Gender



Source: CLMS, Follow-up Studies of the Classes of 2001 and 2002.

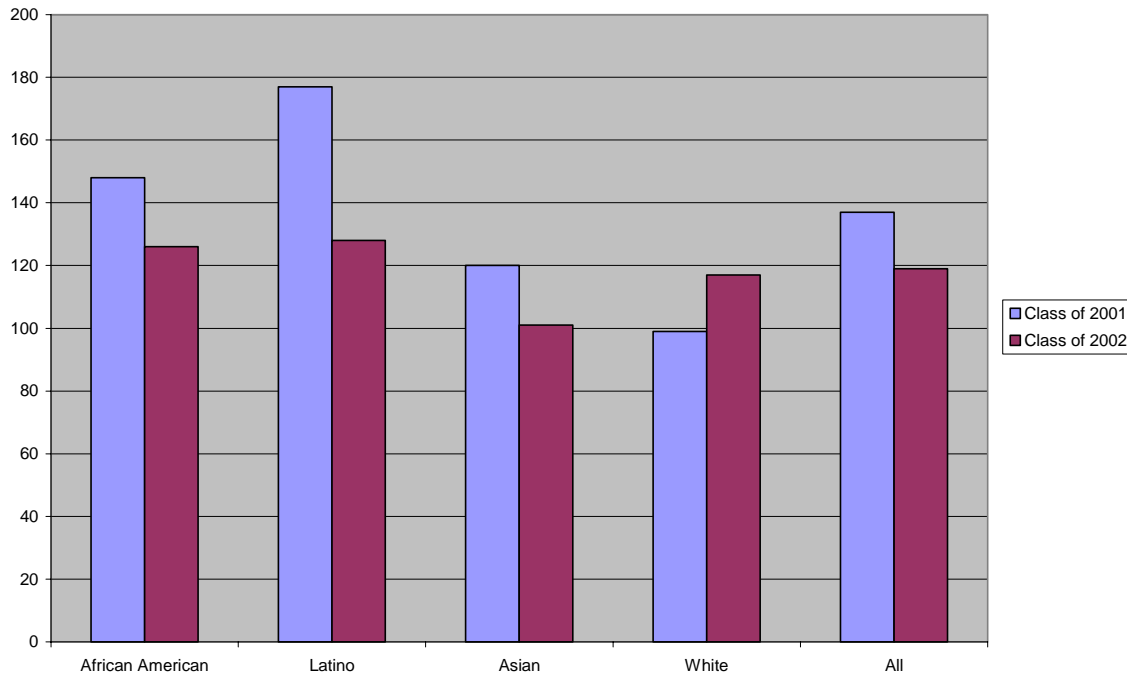
Within each race-ethnic group, BPS-graduated women were more likely to go to college than men, particularly in the case of Latino and African American students, which is consistent with the Census data. The chart below shows the number of women per hundred men among BPS graduates who attend college by race-ethnic group.

- The average was 137 women per 100 men for 2001;
- The average was down to 119 per 100 men for 2002 ;
- The highest ration was 177 Latina women per 100 Latino men in 2001.

These findings are part of a national trend. In the US, for example, in 1999-2000, African American women obtained 188 Associate’s Degrees and 192 Bachelor’s Degrees for every 100 comparable degree obtained by African American men, though overall they are still significantly less likely to attend college than White women or men. (CLMS, Trends in Black Male Joblessness)

Men tend to opt out of education more frequently than women at each transition point. They are more likely to drop out, less likely to attend college and less likely to complete college. The reasons for this trend and models for successful intervention to change this trend bear more investigation.

BPS Graduates: Number of Women Attending College or Training Per 100 Men by Race-Ethnic Group



Source: Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp), Analysis of PUMS 5% Data, Census 2000.

The Impact of MCAS

Many feel that the MCAS graduation requirement, implemented in 2003, is actually increasing the dropout rate, particularly among Latino and African American youth. *Latino and African American youth fail the MCAS at a disproportionately high rate.* For the tenth grade administration of MCAS in 2003, failure rates are listed below by race-ethnic group. *For detail on MCAS results, see the two tables that follow on pages 13 & 14.*

English Language Arts (ELA) Failure Rates

- 36% of African American students
- 37% of Latino students
- 13% of White students
- 11% of Asian students

Mathematics Failure Rates

- 46% of African American students
- 42% of Latino students
- 18% of White students
- 7% of Asian students

Students with learning disabilities and limited English skills fared particularly poorly, with 64% of learning-disabled students and 52% of limited English-speaking students failing the ELA and 74% of students with learning disabilities and 33% of limited English speaking students failed the math portion. Low income students were also more likely to fail, with 35% of that group failing the ELA portion and 39% failing the math portion

At the advanced end, the same groups over-represented in the failure category were under-represented.

ELA Advanced Score Rates

- 4% of Latino students
- 4% of African American students
- 21 percent of Asian students
- 25% of White students

Math Advanced Score Rates

- 8% of African American students
- 10% of Latino students
- 43% of White students
- 62% of Asian students

Some argue that an unintended effect of the state MCAS policy is an increase in the retention of ninth graders, as schools retain those who are not ready for the MCAS, and that this disproportionately affects African American and Latino students.

One news article cited a Harvard Civil Rights Project finding that 61% or 864 out of 1,410 Latino 9th graders in the Boston Public Schools were held back at the end of the 2002-2003 school year and argued that schools' policies of holding back those that are not ready for the MCAS will add upward pressure on the Latino drop-out rate. (Boston Phoenix 3/17/04) Another article, citing Boston College research, put the proportion of Latino 9th graders held back at 33% and the proportion of African American ninth graders held back at 25%. (Boston Herald 9/10/04)

2003 MCAS Results for BPS by Race, Gender, Special Education & Low Income Status – 10th Grade English Language Arts

| | Students Included | | % Of Students At Each Performance Level | | | |
|--|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------|------|------|
| | # | % of Total Taking Test | Adv | Prof | Warn | Fail |

| Student Status | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Regular | 2,789 | 68 | 13 | 34 | 35 | 18 |
| Disabled | 524 | 13 | 1 | 4 | 31 | 64 |
| Limited English | 770 | 19 | 1 | 15 | 32 | 52 |

| Gender | | | | | | |
|---------------|-------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Female | 1,987 | 49 | 13 | 29 | 34 | 24 |
| Male | 2,036 | 50 | 6 | 25 | 35 | 35 |

| Race/Ethnicity | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|----|----|----|----|----|
| African-American | 1,984 | 49 | 4 | 22 | 38 | 36 |
| Asian/Pacific Island | 417 | 10 | 21 | 39 | 29 | 11 |
| Latino | 1,017 | 25 | 4 | 21 | 39 | 37 |
| Native American | 15 | 0 | 0 | 60 | 27 | 13 |
| White | 633 | 16 | 25 | 43 | 19 | 13 |

| Eligible For Free or Reduced Price Lunch | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------|----|---|----|----|----|
| Yes | 2,480 | 61 | 4 | 22 | 38 | 35 |

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|--|-----|------|------|------|
| All Students | | | 9.5 | 27.0 | 34.5 | 29.6 |
|---------------------|--|--|-----|------|------|------|

Source: Massachusetts Department of Education, 2004.

2003 MCAS Results for BPS by Race, Gender, Special Education & Low Income Status – 10th Grade Mathematics

| | Students Included | | % Of Students At Each Performance Level | | | |
|--|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------|------|------|
| | # | % of Total Taking Test | Adv | Prof | Warn | Fail |

| Student Status | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Regular | 2,861 | 69 | 24 | 19 | 26 | 31 |
| Disabled | 525 | 13 | 2 | 5 | 19 | 74 |
| Limited English | 790 | 19 | 14 | 17 | 36 | 33 |

| Gender | | | | | | |
|---------------|-------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Female | 2,020 | 48 | 21 | 18 | 29 | 32 |
| Male | 2,088 | 50 | 19 | 16 | 26 | 39 |

| Race/Ethnicity | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|----|----|----|----|----|
| African-American | 2,035 | 49 | 8 | 15 | 31 | 46 |
| Asian/Pacific Island | 421 | 10 | 62 | 22 | 10 | 7 |
| Latino | 1,049 | 25 | 10 | 17 | 31 | 42 |
| Native American | 15 | 0 | 20 | 33 | 27 | 20 |
| White | 639 | 15 | 43 | 20 | 18 | 18 |

| <i>Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch</i> | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Yes | 2,519 | 60 | 13 | 17 | 32 | 39 |

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|--|------|------|------|------|
| All Students | | | 20.0 | 17.0 | 27.5 | 35.6 |
|---------------------|--|--|------|------|------|------|

Source: Massachusetts Department of Education, 2004.

3. TEEN AND YOUNG ADULT ENGAGEMENT WITH THE LABOR MARKET

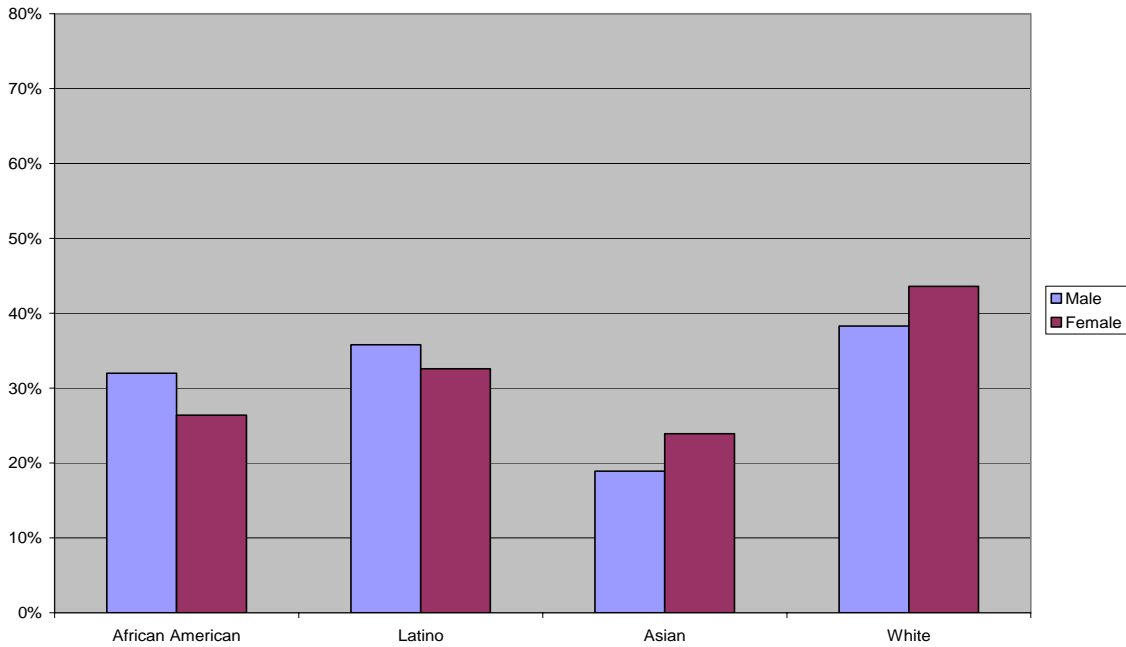
The continued growth of the teen and young adult population and the shrinking job market are causing concern among labor market analysts and employers. Nationally and locally the job market is at a cyclical low point for employment overall, with the national adult unemployment rate at 5.4%, compared with 3.9% in 2000 (Division of Career Services, 2004), with youth and young adult unemployment being extra sensitive to the labor market changes.

The national rate for teen employment, usually measured as the percentage of the total population that is working, is 36.8%. This rate is lower than it has ever been since it was first recorded in 1948, down from the most recent cyclical high of 45.2% in 2000, with male teens working at even lower rates (CLMS, Still Young, Restless and Jobless). The Center for Labor Market Studies (CLMS) attributes the particular severity of this trough in the employment cycle to structural forces, such as low rates of employment growth in the retail trade and to employers' evolving preference for hiring adult immigrants in for jobs formerly filled largely by teens and young adults.

Protracted periods of high youth unemployment are a problem because youth employment is not just an outcome, but a factor in future employment prospects. Lack of employment in young adulthood and inconsistent low-wage employment predict lower earnings in the near future and 8-10 years after leaving school. (CLMS, Still Young, Restless and Jobless, 2004)

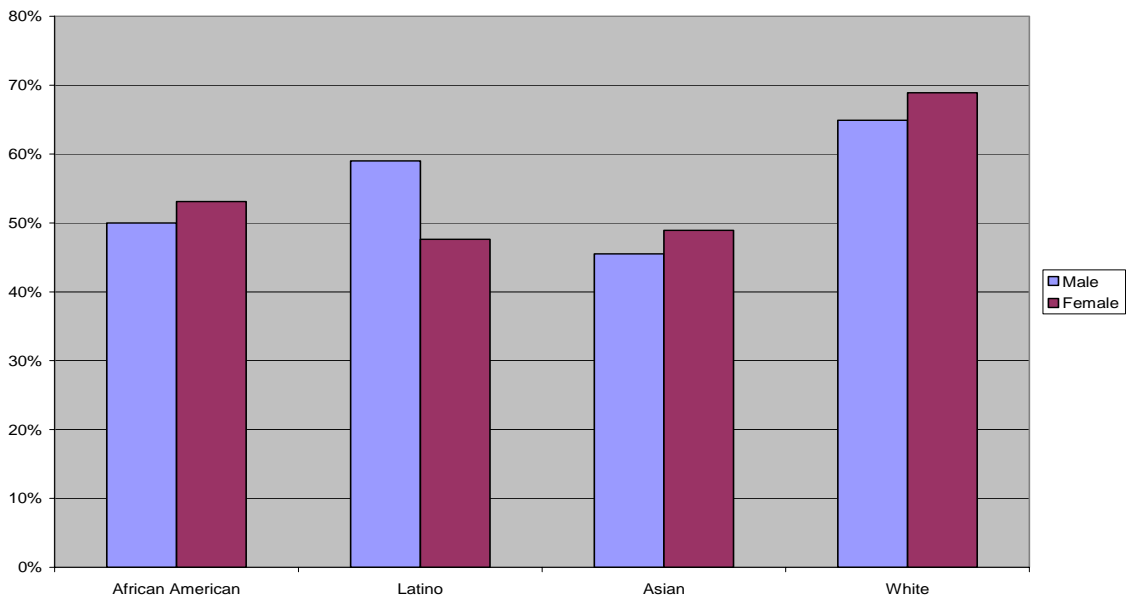
Below are graphs reflecting the employment rates for teens and young adults drawn from CommCorp’s analysis of the 2000 Census data. ***The overall employment rate in Boston in 2000 was 35.3% for 16-19 year-olds and 61.6% for 20-24 year-olds.***

Percentage of Boston Youth Aged 16-19 Employed by Race-Ethnic Group



Source: Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp), Analysis of PUMS 5% Data, Census 2000.

Percentage of Boston Youth Aged 20-24 Employed by Race-Ethnic Group



Source: Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp), Analysis of PUMS 5% Data, Census 2000.

In an increasingly pronounced national trend, particularly in central cities, African American youth, particularly young men, are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed for long periods of time. As idleness rates and underemployment is highest in adult African American men of all ages when compared with other men, especially those without credentials, unemployed African American male teens are at a higher risk for remaining unemployed and unengaged for long periods of time. (CLMS, Trends in Black Male Joblessness, 2004)

Asian men and women were least likely to work as teens, yet seem different from the African American and Latino groups in that this under-representation in labor market participation is accompanied by a high rate of success in educational participation and attainment, as described in pages 5-12 above. Asian youth also had a low rate of disconnection from the educational and labor market systems.

After Asian youth, as teens, African American men and women in Boston were least likely to work, followed by Latino women. As in national trends, the employment to population ratio for White and Latino men was similar, with White women working more than anyone, and Latino women working less than African American men.

In the older population of 20-24 year olds, as shown in the graph on the previous page, there is a slight shift in trends, with Latina women least likely to work, followed by African American men. White women were most likely to work, followed by White men, then African American women. At this point, there is a bigger gap between Latino men and women, and African American women have shifted to become more likely to work than African American men.

Out-of-School and Out-of-Work

An important group for consideration is youth that are neither in school nor working. Youth that are idle are at risk for a future of unemployment or underemployment, as they are not increasing their value to the labor market through either education or experience. (CLMS, Still Young, Restless and Jobless, 2004). The longer a youth remains idle, the harder the transition to either work or school and the less likely it is that she or he will engage with the labor market or educational system.

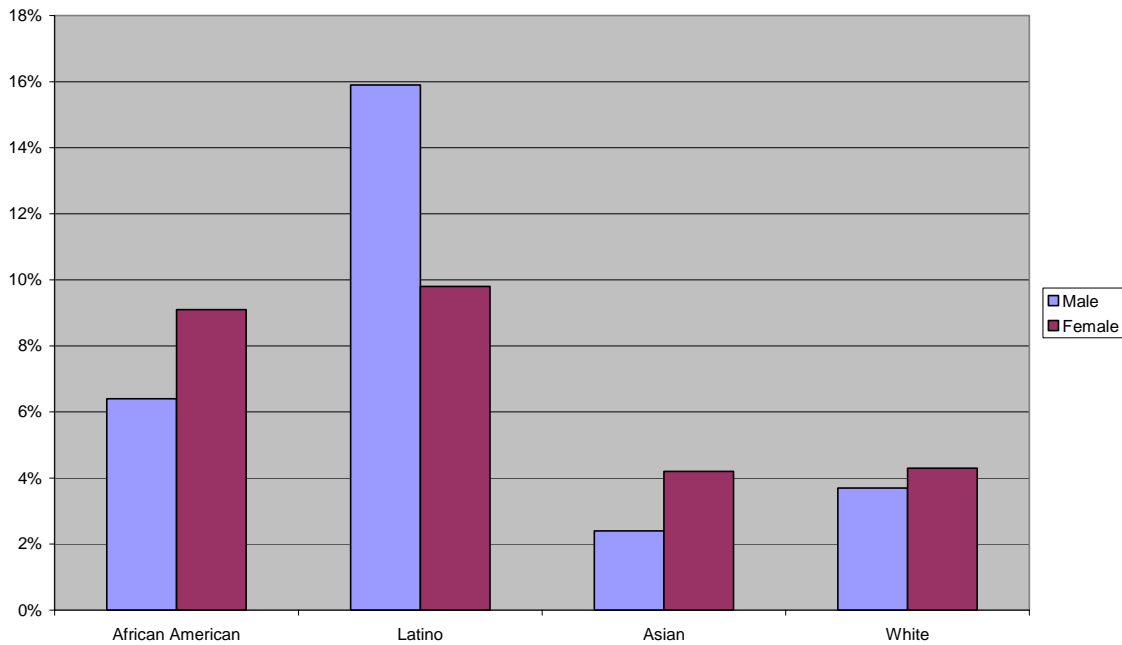
Nationally, the percentage of youth (16-24) neither in school nor working is estimated at about 13%. One study found that the number of disengaged youth rose 16% between 2000 and 2003. Though young men's disengagement rates are increasing more rapidly than young women's, young women were actually more likely to be neither in school or working. (Child Trends DataBank 2004; CLMS, Still Young Restless and Jobless, 2004)

The total estimated number of disengaged youth 16-24 years old in Boston was 7,827 at the time of Census 2000. 3,492 or 45% of these youth were drop-outs. As different race-ethnic groups are more affected at different ages, the following pages breaks down disengagement rates separately for 16-19 year olds and for 20-24 year olds.

The graph below outlines the disengagement rate of out-of-school youth (the percentage of youth that are neither working nor in school) for both the teen and young adult age ranges, using Census 2000 data. It shows the proportion of unemployed youth in the total age and race-ethnic cohort. The total of unengaged youth for the 16-19 year group is 2,179 or 5.9% of the whole age group.

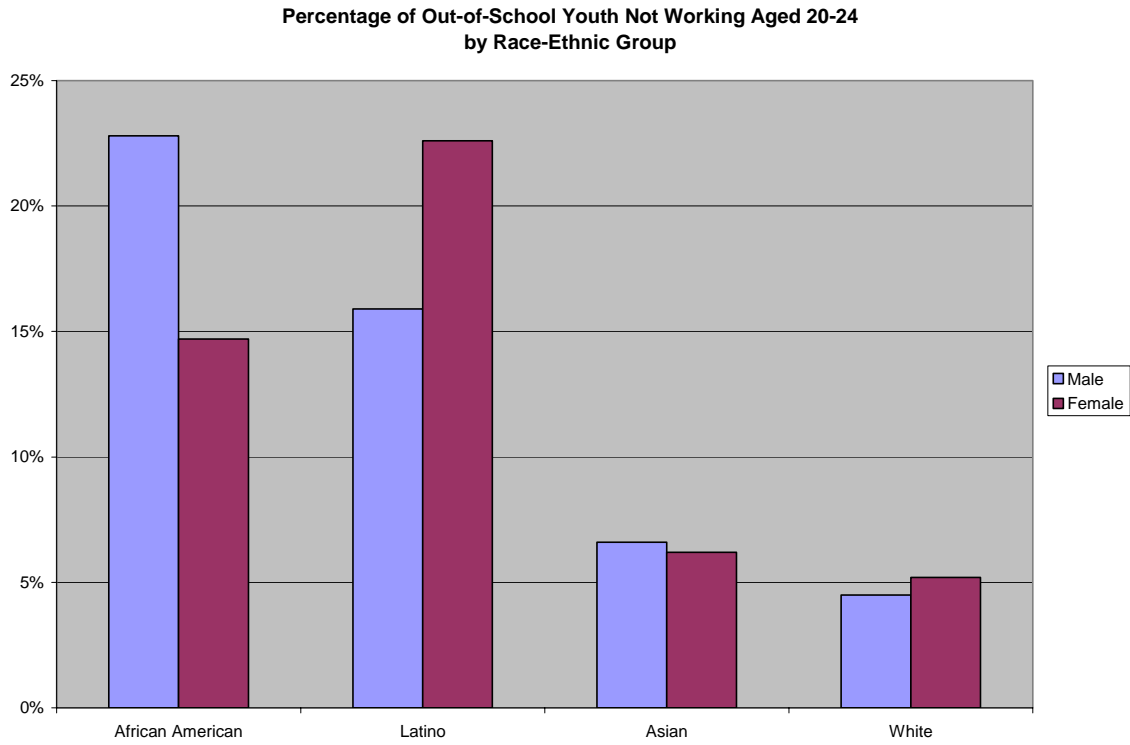
In the 16-19 year-old group, Latino males were most likely to be disengaged, with 534 or 15.9% of all Latino males in Boston being disengaged, the largest number and proportion among all cohorts in this age group. Latina women were next most likely to be disengaged, followed by African American women and men.

Percentage of Out-of-School Youth Aged 16-19 Not Working by Race-Ethnic Group



Source: Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp), Analysis of PUMS 5% Data, Census 2000.

In the 20-24 year old group, there is a shift in that African American men become most likely to be disengaged. 1,216 or 22.8% of African American men aged 20-24 were neither in school nor working, the highest number and proportion in this age group. After this, Latina women follow closely with 1,019 or 22.6% neither working nor in school. The rate for Latino men, the third highest group, has remained at 15.9%. What is different is that the disengagement rate for the other two groups is higher. In the case of Latina women, this may be linked to decisions to devote themselves full-time to parenthood.



Source: Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp), Analysis of PUMS 5% Data, Census 2000.

4. YOUNG SINGLE MOTHERS

Birth rates to young mothers are down nationally and locally. The rate of single motherhood, however, is on the rise for teens and young adults, with the growth of the youth population putting upward pressure on the numbers. Teen birth rates are highest in large cities like Boston. Teen single mothers are at risk for particularly poor outcomes, which put their children at risk for the same outcomes. They are often poor with low educational expectations to begin with, and unlikely to complete school and likely to be poor into adulthood once they have children.

Despite progress, the issue is still a problem. ***Young single mothers struggle with a higher incidence of poverty than even older single mothers.*** For example, a Massachusetts study found a 58% poverty rate for young single mothers in 2000 as opposed to a 25% poverty rate for single mothers over 25 years of age. (CLMS, Demographic Indicators for Teens and Young Adults in Massachusetts, prepared for the Commonwealth Corporation, 2004; Annie Casey, Kids Count, 2004).

On the national level, birth rates for unmarried women aged 10 and above continue to increase. (America's Children in Brief, 2004) According to one study, "teen-aged childbearing is far greater among young women who have low education expectations, have dropped out of school, and have weak academic proficiencies." (CLMS, Confronting the Youth Population Boom, 2003, p. 3) The combination of a tenuous skill level to begin with and the demands of motherhood put young women at risk for continued poverty:

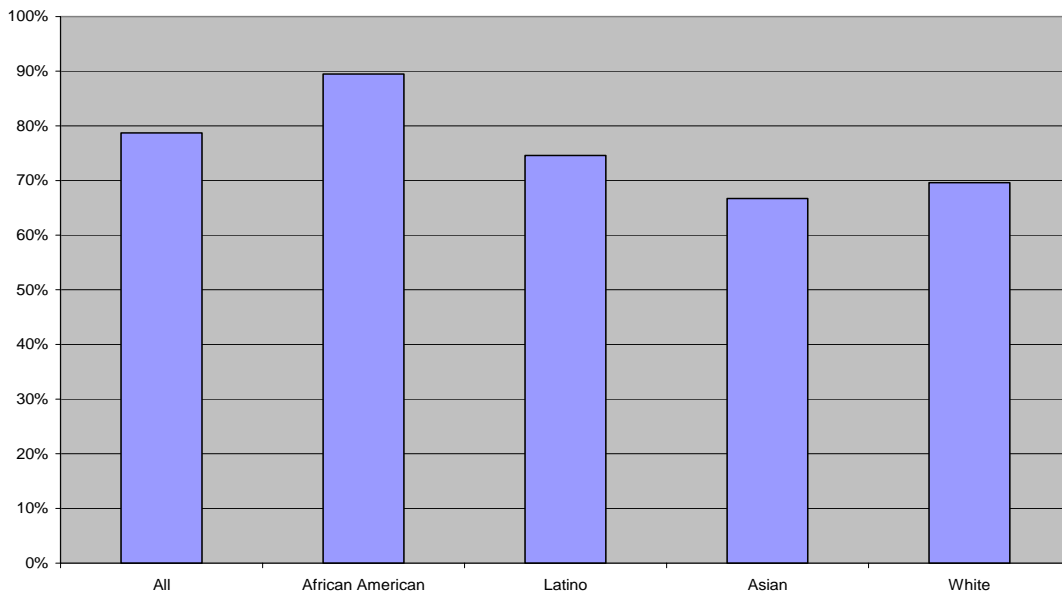
- Teen mothers are unlikely to complete their education. According to the Casey Foundation, "Even after controlling for race, ethnicity, and other personal and community characteristics, having a child before age 20 reduces academic attainment by almost 3 years." (Casey, Teen Parents, 2004).
- According to US Department of Health and Human Services, only 1/3 of teen mothers go on to complete a diploma. (Casey, Teen Parents, 2004)

The poverty of young mothers also impacts future outcomes for children:

- Children born to teen mothers are twice as likely to be poor (Casey, KidsCount, 2004)
- Of children living with single mothers, 40% lived in poverty, compared with 9% of those living with 2 parents. (America's Children in Brief, 2004)

On the national and local level, African American and Latina women are more likely to be single mothers. According to national figures, in 2002, 68.2% of all births to African American women were to unmarried women and 43.5% of births to Latina women were to unmarried women, compared with 23% of births to White women. (America's Children in Brief, 2004). ***In Boston, there were a total of 3,167 single mothers among 16-24 year olds, which is 78.7% of all mothers of that age.*** As outlined in the graph below, African American women had the highest proportion of single mothers among all mothers, 89.5%, followed by Latina women at 74.6%.

**Percentage of Boston Single Mothers Aged 16-24
by Race Ethnic Group**



Source: Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp), Analysis of PUMS 5% Data, Census 2000.

According to the BRA analysis of Census 2000, Boston's single mothers had lower educational attainment levels and employment rates than the total population. This study found that:

- 30% of the 16-19 year old single mothers were out of school, compared with 14% of the total population;
- 25% of the 20-24 year old single mothers lacked a high school credential, compared with 10% of the total population;
- 5% of the 20-24 year-old single mothers had a Bachelor's Degree or more, which is lower than the lowest race ethnic group's percentage of 6% for African American men 16-19 on this measure.
- 23% of 16-19 year old single mothers were working, compared with 34% of the total population;
- 44% of the 20-24 year old single mothers were working, compared with 60% of the total population.

Obviously, many young women may choose to defer education and work until their children are older, but these choices, when combined with a low skill level to begin with, will make it difficult for them to earn a wage sufficient to break the poverty cycle for themselves and their children when they are ready to reenter the labor market.

5. YOUTH INVOLVED WITH FOSTER CARE

In 2000, there were over half a million children in foster care in the United States. 16% of them were between ages of 16-18. Of these, a third were in care for at least 2 years and a quarter for more than five years. Foster children are at high risk to drop out of school, become unemployed as young adults and have other poor outcomes. Studies have found that:

- 30-40% of foster children have physical or emotional difficulties;
- As many as 55% drop out of high school;
- 50% were regularly employed 2-4 years out of foster care;
- almost 50% had been arrested;
- 25% had been homeless;
- more than 50% of young women had children early, with many going on welfare. (Casey, Kids Count, 2004; Hewlett, Connected by 25, 2003)

Most foster children must leave the system at age 18, an age at which they are not yet fully prepared to negotiate the world of adult responsibility. This phenomenon, called “aging out,” applies in Massachusetts, where the Department of Social Services (DSS) manages the foster care system.

This is in a context in which most American adults do not think that children are fully independent until their early- to mid-twenties. One recent national survey reported that a majority of respondents viewed the average age at which a young adult is prepared for independence as 23, with a full third of respondents viewing the appropriate age as 25. In addition to the other difficulties with developmental milestones listed above, foster children leaving care are more likely to be at medical risk (stemming from past neglect or abuse)—and often don’t have medical coverage sufficient to cope. (Casey, Kids Count, 2004)

African American children are disproportionately represented among foster children. 40% of foster children in the U.S. being African American, while African Americans make up less than 20% of the population. 31% of foster children are White, while Whites make up 64% of the population (Casey). African-American foster children are more likely to be placed in institutions rather than families, stay in care longer, and are least likely to be reunified with families. Long duration of care and institutional placements are important factors in the likelihood of negative outcomes for a young person.

In Boston, there are 723 youth living in out-of-home placements. 359 are in foster homes, 278 in residential placements and 86 in other placements. 136 of these youth attend residential schools, with the remaining 587 most probably enrolled in Boston Public Schools. (New England Home for Little Wanderers, 2004).

6. JUVENILE AND YOUNG ADULT OFFENDERS

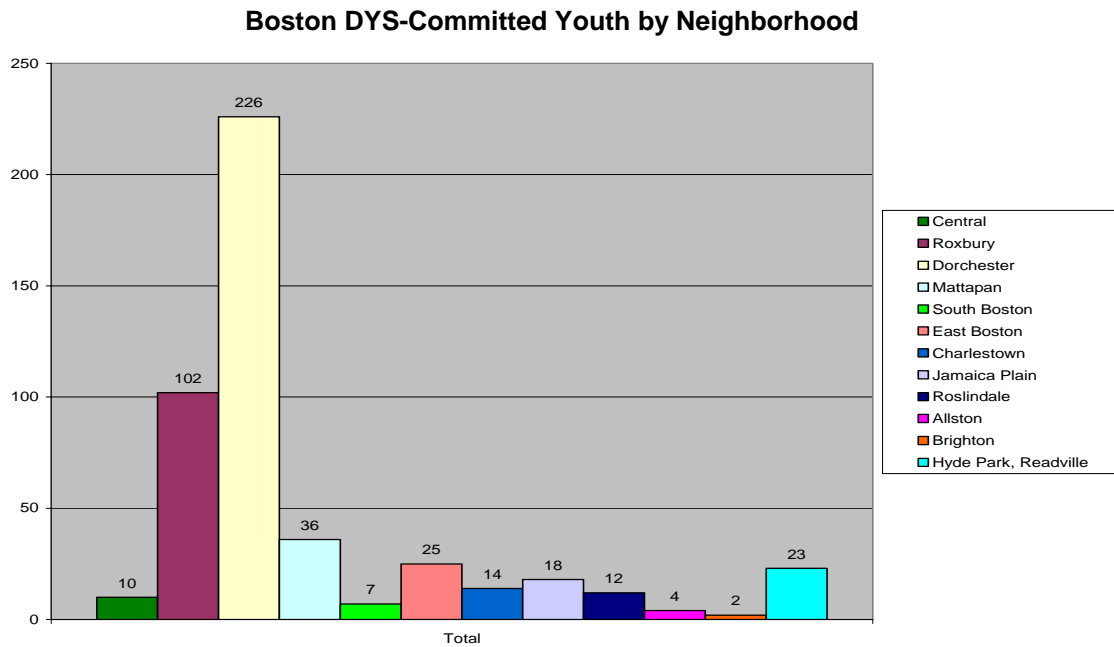
Juvenile offenders face the most severe barriers to educational and employment outcomes, in addition to having high rates of social, emotional and mental health problems. Offenders are primarily male, though there have been some increases in female offender rates. African American and Latino males are disproportionately represented, especially African American males. The rate of incarceration of African American males is high enough that some studies cite it as a reason that Census figures (which do not include those in jail or prison) underestimate unemployment and drop-out rates for this group. (CLMS, Trends in Black Male Joblessness, 2004)

Nationally, there are about 600,000 youth admitted each year to secure detention facilities, with more than a third of these for status offenses (acts that would not be criminal were they committed by adults) (Casey, Kids Count). Two thirds of those detained are minority (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Juveniles in Corrections, June 2004). Almost all growth in numbers of youth detained (about 100%) since 1985 is due to the increase in African American and Latino detention rates.

In Massachusetts, delinquent youth under 18 years old can be committed to the Department of Youth Services (DYS) for treatment as well as for public safety considerations. A commitment to DYS results in a period of confinement to a facility-based program followed by a period of structured supervision in the community. The DYS committed caseload for the City of Boston is approximately 700 youth annually. There are another 600 to 800 youth remanded to DYS on pretrial status annually. A portion of this number gets committed to DYS but the majority are returned to the community under supervision of the Juvenile Court Probation staff. The Juvenile Justice Reform Act was passed in Massachusetts in 1996. Youth charged with violent crimes can be indicted and then charged as Youthful Offenders. Youthful Offenders can be sentenced to DYS until their 21st birthday, or sentenced into the adult correctional system. (DYS, 2004; Massachusetts Statistical Analysis Center, Implementation of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act, 2001)

Youth that are seen by either side of the justice system are largely male and either Latino or African American. In 2003, the Suffolk County Juvenile Court system handled 2,275 juvenile cases, three-fourths of whom were males. A CLMS study commissioned by CommCorp found that statewide, Latino and African American youth make up the majority of the DYS committed caseload, with 27% of these youth being Latino, 25% African American, 38% White and 4% Asian. (CLMS, Racial, Ethnic and Social Inequities in Indicators for Massachusetts Teenagers and Young Adults, prepared for the Commonwealth Corporation, 2004).

Most of the youth committed to DYS in 2004 live in the neighborhoods that have the highest concentration of youth, Dorchester, Roxbury and Mattapan, illustrated in the graph below.



Source: DYS Records of Youth Committed to Date, August 2004.

As in the case of foster children, there is a particularly unique and severe set of problems associated with being incarcerated or detained:

- 1/2-3/4 of incarcerated youth are estimated to suffer from a mental health disorder.
- Suicide in juvenile facilities is more than 4 times more frequent than in the general population.
- More than a half of detained youth have substance abuse problems warranting treatment.
- Facilities are not well equipped to deal with mental health issues or substance abuse treatment.
- Those detained are likely to re-offend and get re-arrested, with 50-75% recidivism rates predicted. (Casey, Kids Count, 2004; Hewlett, Connected by 25, 2003)

Education and Employment Prospects

Among incarcerated or detained youth, there are high rates of learning disabilities, with estimates ranging from 42% (Casey) to 75% (National Youth Employment Coalition, Background Information—Youth at Risk, 2003) , compared to 10-12% in general population.

- One study found among incarcerated 9th graders , only 50% returned to school; 2/3 of these dropped out within 1 year and more dropped out over 4 years
- Only 15% completed high school
- School districts are reluctant to accept reentering offenders, presenting another barrier.

According to the Annie Casey Foundation, *“Controlling for other factors, the impact of incarceration on employment is greater than the impact of a youth living in a high unemployment area or being a high school dropout...having been in jail is the most important deterrent to employment and its effect, even years later, is persistent and substantial.”* (Casey, Kids Count, 2004)

Boston Trends

In Boston, between 1997 and 2001, juvenile crime arrests decreased 25%, from 2,279 down to 1,709 arrests. However, the Boston Police Department identifies the most serious offenders entering Suffolk County House of Corrections (HOC) on a monthly basis. A study of that data revealed that young offenders are more likely to have committed more violent crimes. Though the average age of HOC inmates is 29-31, the average age of “high risk” inmates, more serious and violent offenders, is 23. (Jaime Watson, Case Study of Inmates Released from the Suffolk County House of Corrections, 2001)

Some analysts argue that the youth population increase will increase the numbers of youth crimes and arrests, placing pressure on the criminal justice system and disrupting communities (CLMS, Confronting the Youth Population Boom, 2004; The Boston Foundation, Boston Indicators Report, 2002). The increase in shootings this year, and the involvement of young people in some of them has raised concerns about youth violence. Additionally, two suicides of youth in DYS facilities have raised concern about the gap between facilities’ capacity for dealing with depression and the needs of DYS-committed youth.