

Boston's Youth Employment & Education Indicators

March 2018



Defining “Opportunity Youth”

- The most common measure of youth disconnection is the number of 16-24 year olds who are **neither in school** nor **employed** at the time of being surveyed.
- The term “**Opportunity Youth**” was coined to highlight the positive assets inherent in disconnected youth, and the potential societal benefits if these young people reconnect. The terms Opportunity Youth and Disconnected Youth are *often* used interchangeably, though Opportunity Youth tends to be defined more broadly in recent literature.



The Key Indicators of Disconnection & Connection

Boston is tracking these indicators that impact the size and characteristics of the population of opportunity youth and inform potential interventions:

- **High school credential attainment: The 4-year and 5-year graduation rates of Boston Public School classes and annual high school dropout rates.**
 - An **increase** in high school credential attainment is generally associated with a **decline** in the incidences of disconnection, as high school graduates are better prepared for the labor market and postsecondary training opportunities than those youth without a regular diploma. Boston is experiencing lower disconnection among high school aged youth as the high school graduation rate increases. The majority of opportunity youth in Boston possess at least a high school credential but have encountered difficulty transitioning from high school to employment or postsecondary education.
- **Postsecondary education enrollment and attainment:** The postsecondary college and training enrollment rate of high school graduates pursuing postsecondary education within 16 months of earning their diploma.
 - An **increase** in the postsecondary enrollment rate will **reduce** the number of recent high school graduates that are disconnected from school and work.

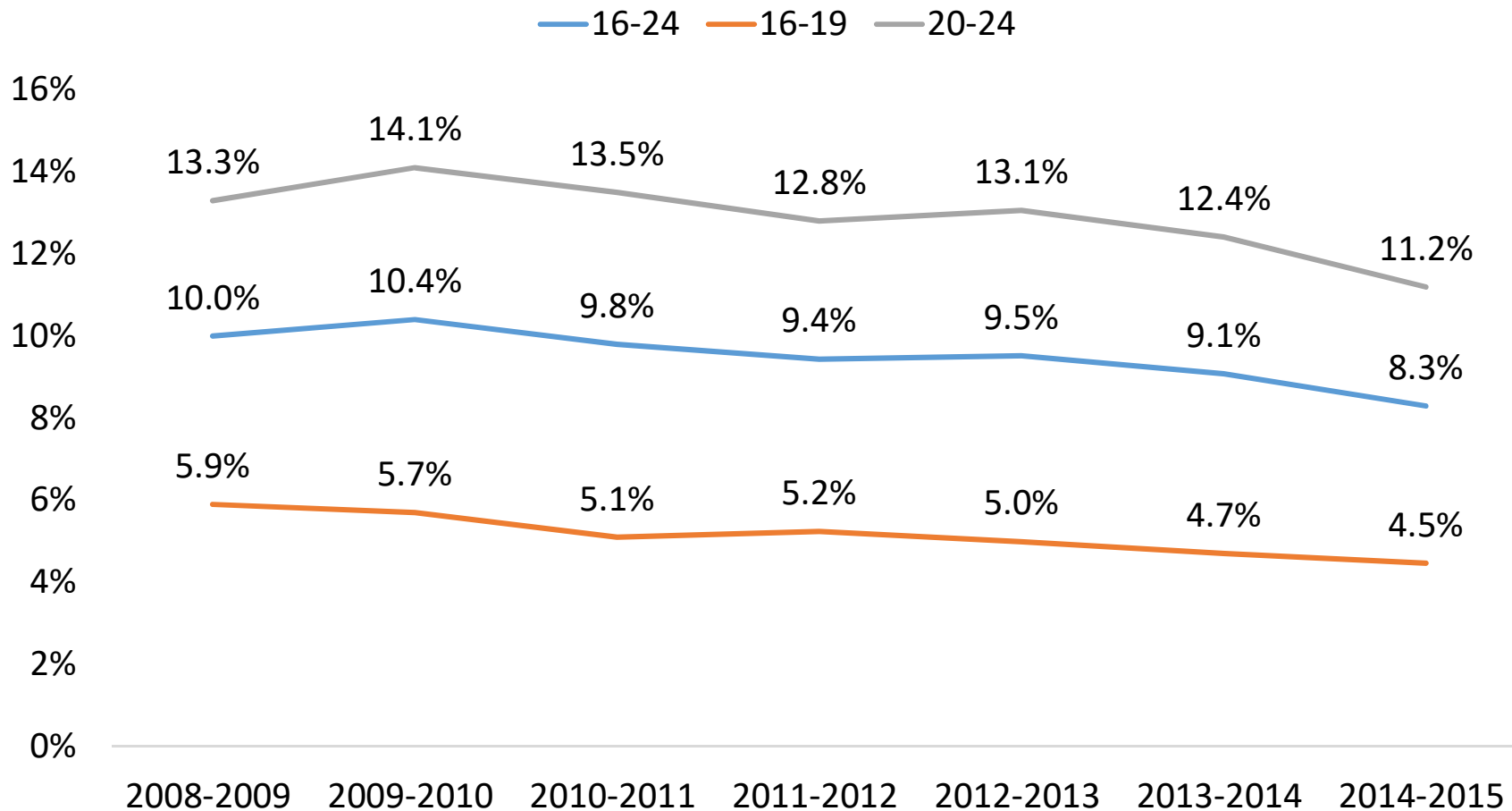


The Key Indicators of Disconnection & Connection

- **Employment Rates:** The percent of the 16-19 and 20-24 year old populations that are employed at the time of the American Community Survey.
 - The number of opportunity youth **increases** when employment rates **decline** and vice-versa.
- **Indicators disaggregated by race and ethnicity:** Boston is focusing on the disparities in access to opportunity that disproportionately affect young people of color.
 - On every education outcome tracked in this dashboard, there is a persistent race-ethnic gap.



Trends in the 16-24 year-old disconnection rate in Massachusetts 2008-09 to 2014-15 (2-year averages)



Source: American Community Survey



Number and Percent of 16-24 Year Olds Disconnected from School and Work by Race / Ethnic Group, Gender, and Age 2014-2015 2-year averages

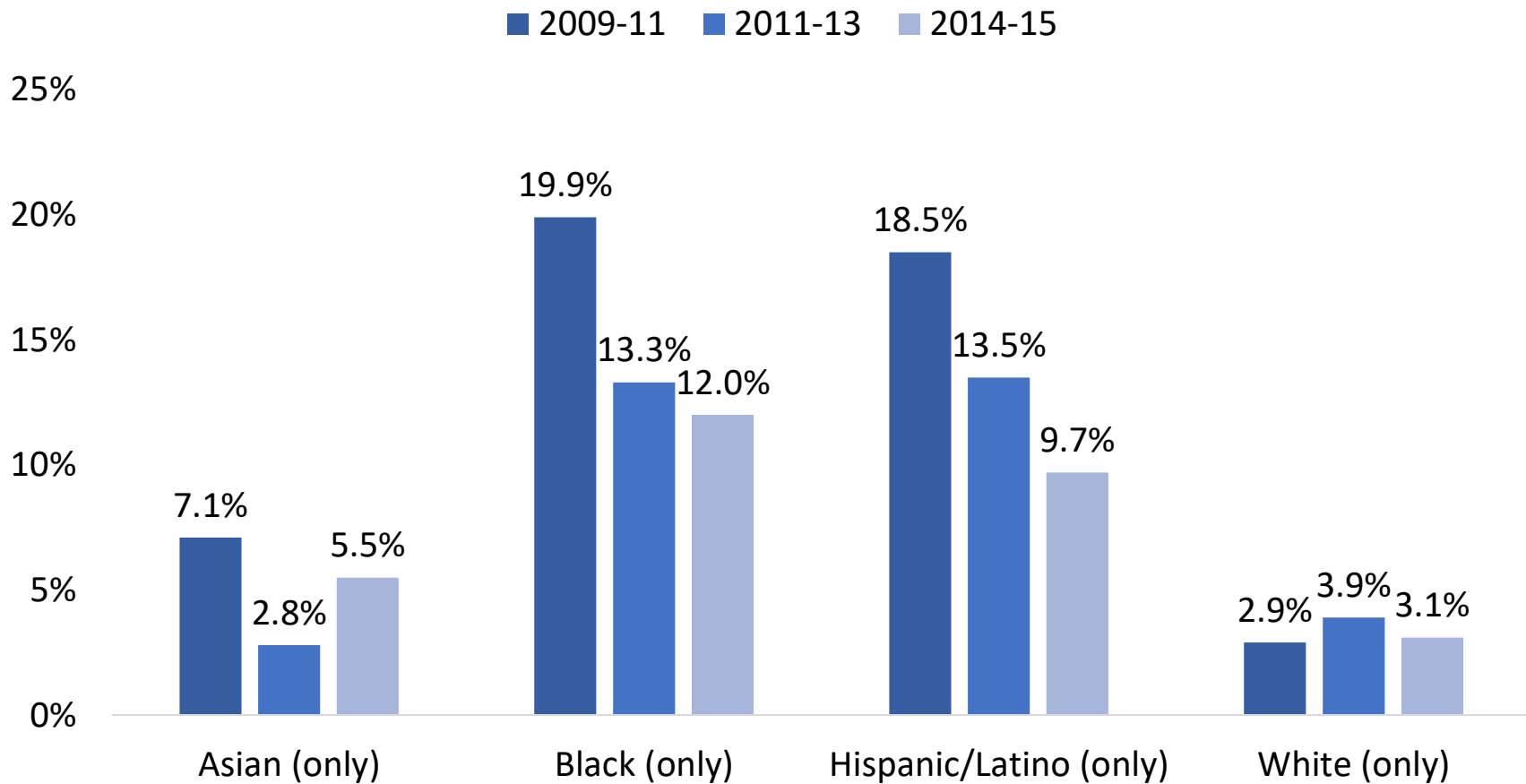
Race / Ethnic Group	Population	Opportunity Youth	% of Population
Asian	12,530	687	5.50%
Black	23,541	2,836	12.00%
Hispanic/ Latino/ Spanish	22,290	2,156	9.70%
White	50,424	1,539	3.10%
Male	54,440	4,457	8.20%
Female	58,756	3,313	5.60%
16-19	41,255	1,593	3.90%
20-24	71,941	6,177	8.60%
Total	113,196	7,770	6.90%

Note: Groups consist of people who identified solely with that racial or ethnic group and did not select multiple options

Source: American Community Survey



Disconnection rates of Boston youth by race/ethnic group 2009-11 to 2014-15

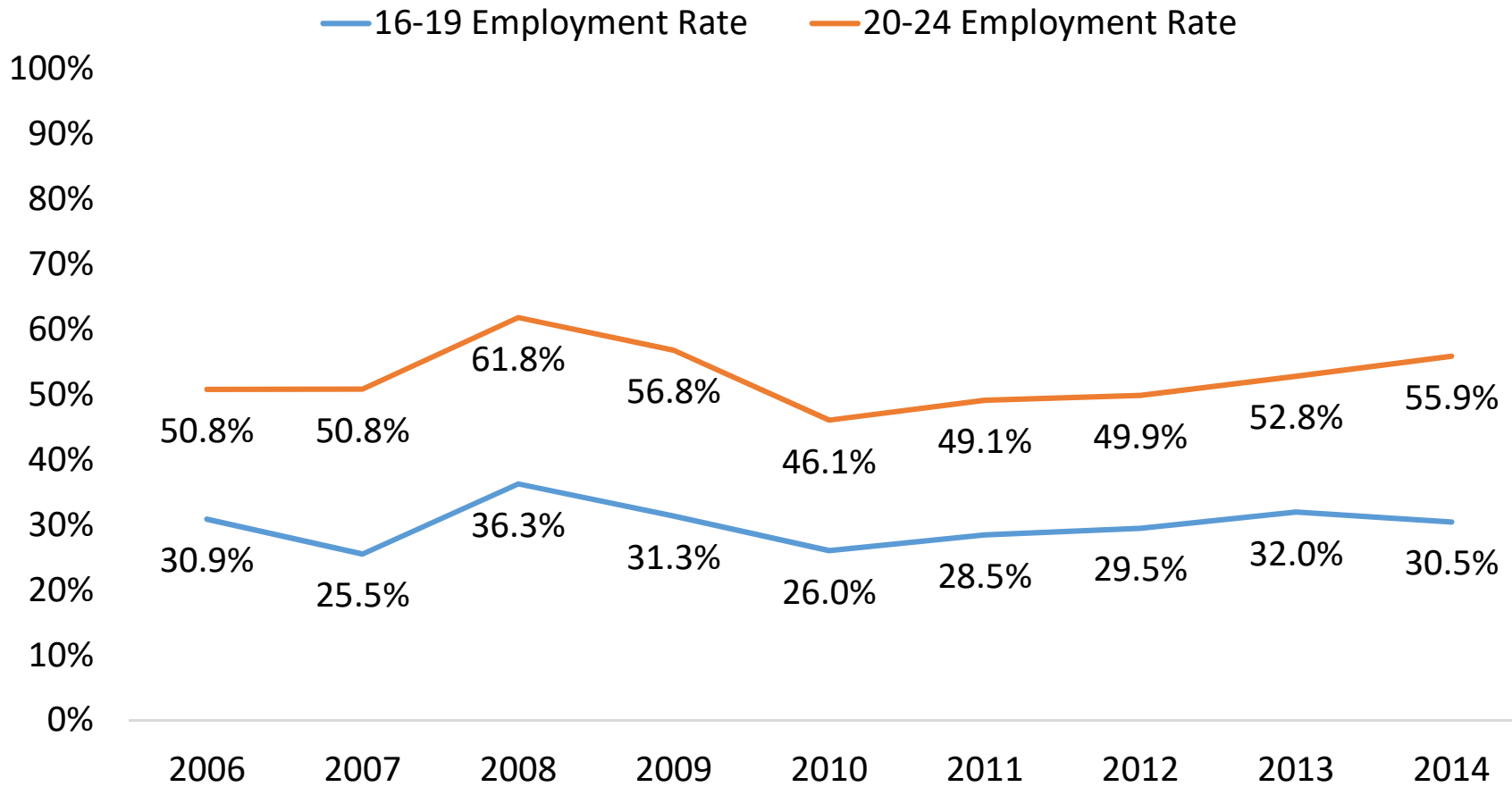


Note: Groups consist of people who identified solely with that racial or ethnic group and did not select multiple options



Source: American Community Survey

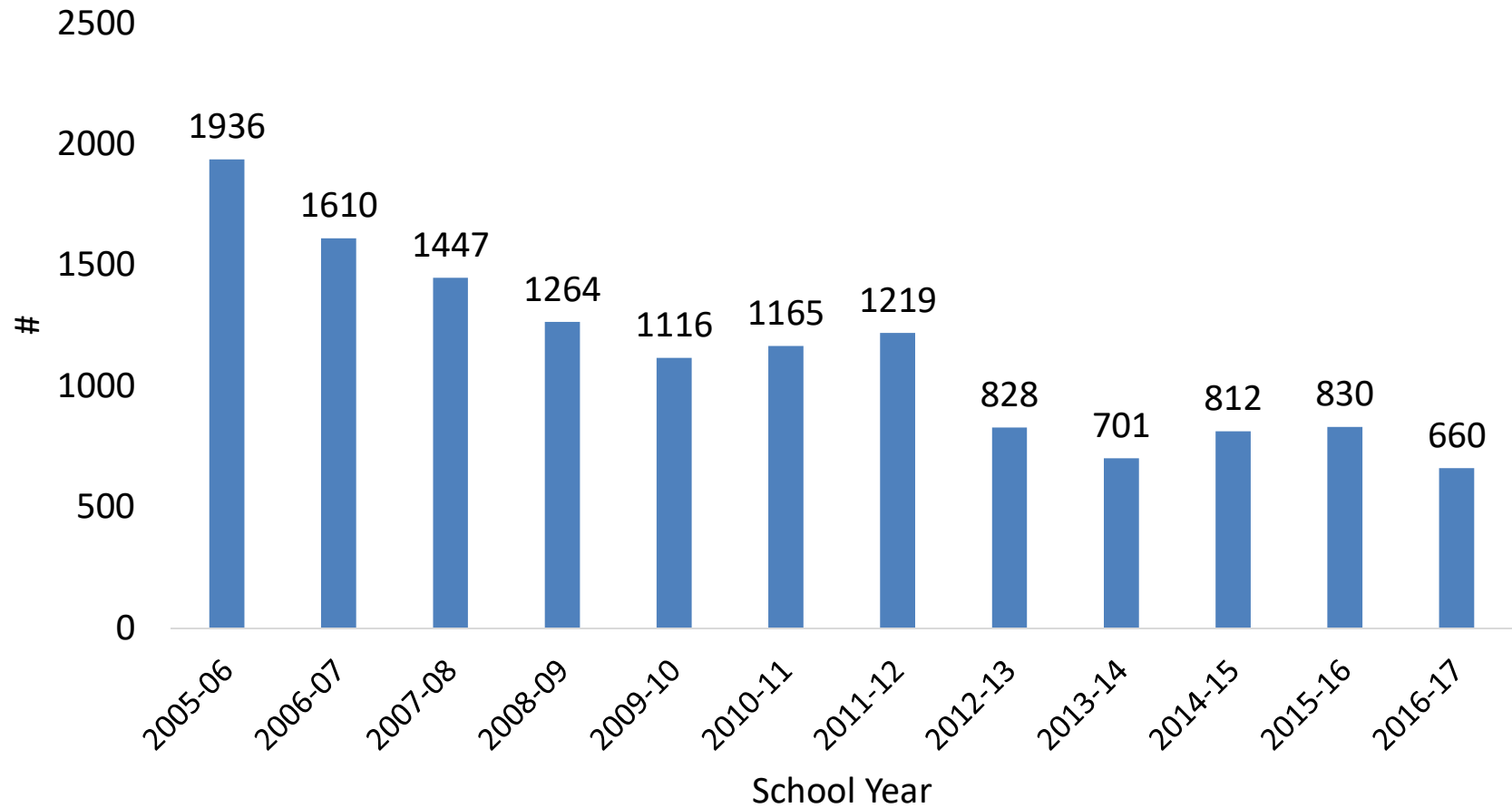
Boston's Youth Employment Rates, 2006 to 2014



Source: American Community Survey

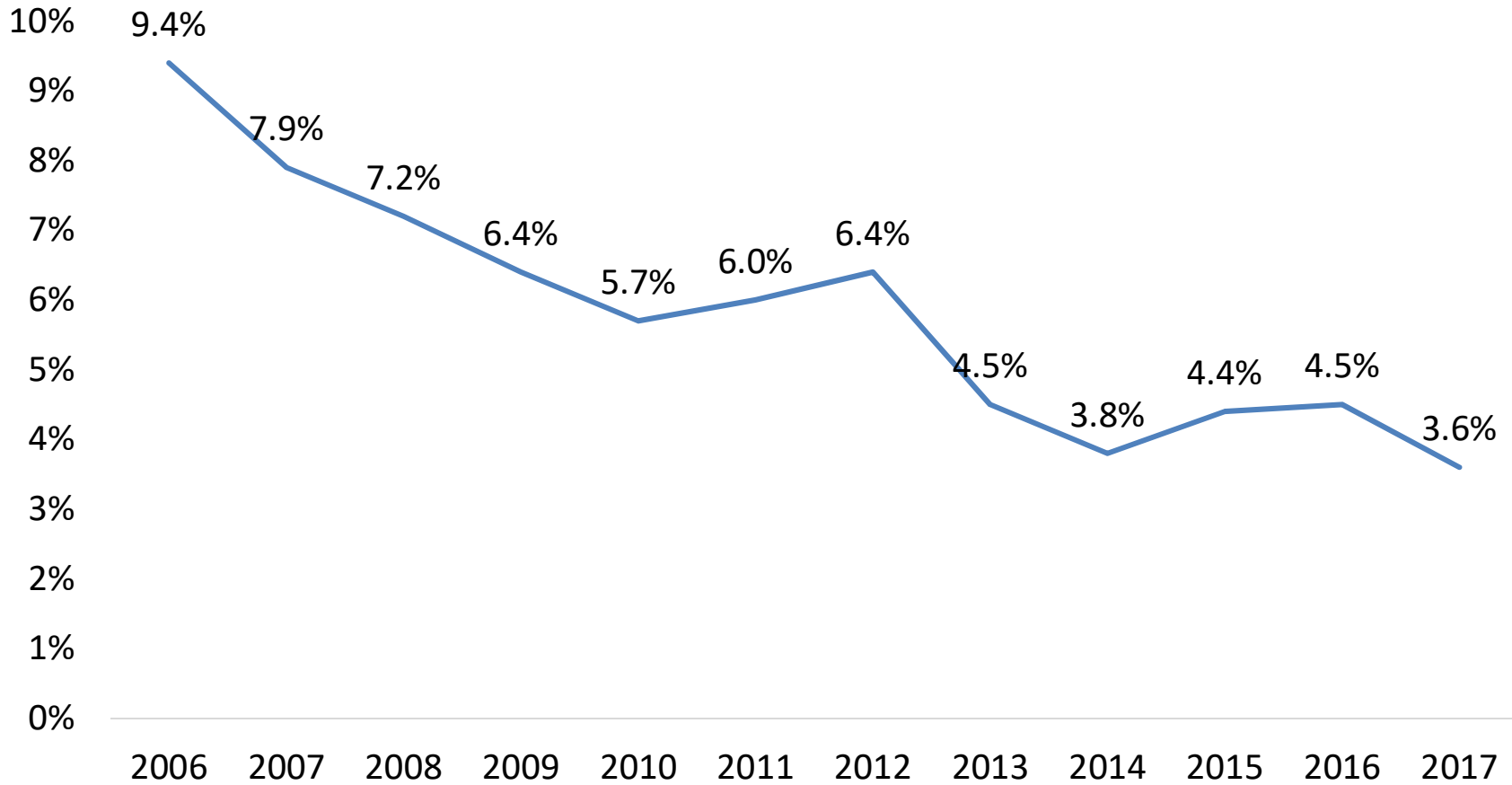


Boston Public Schools District, number of students dropping out of high school, 2006 to 2017



Sources: Boston Public Schools

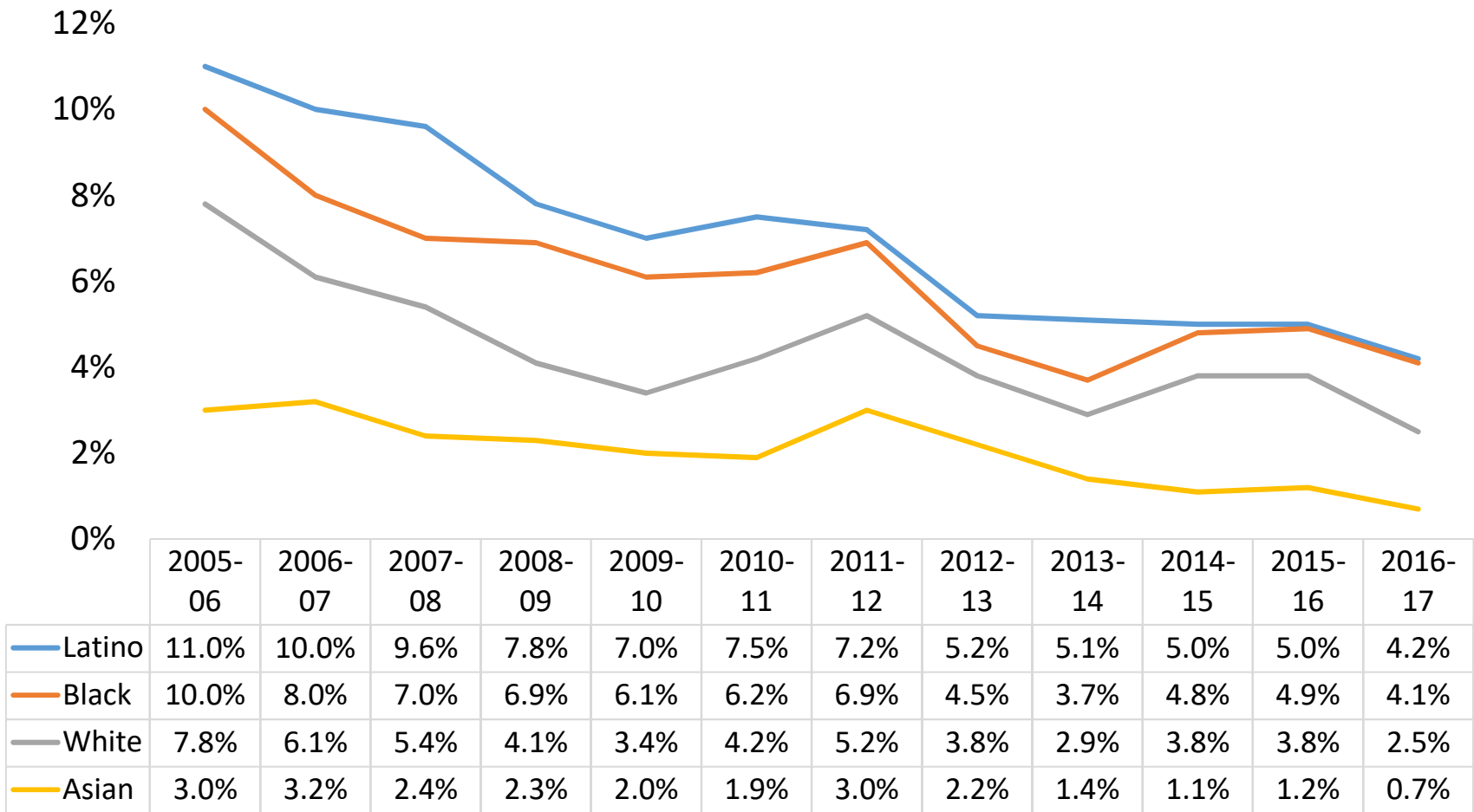
Boston Public Schools District, annual dropout rates, 2006 to 2017



Source: Boston Public Schools



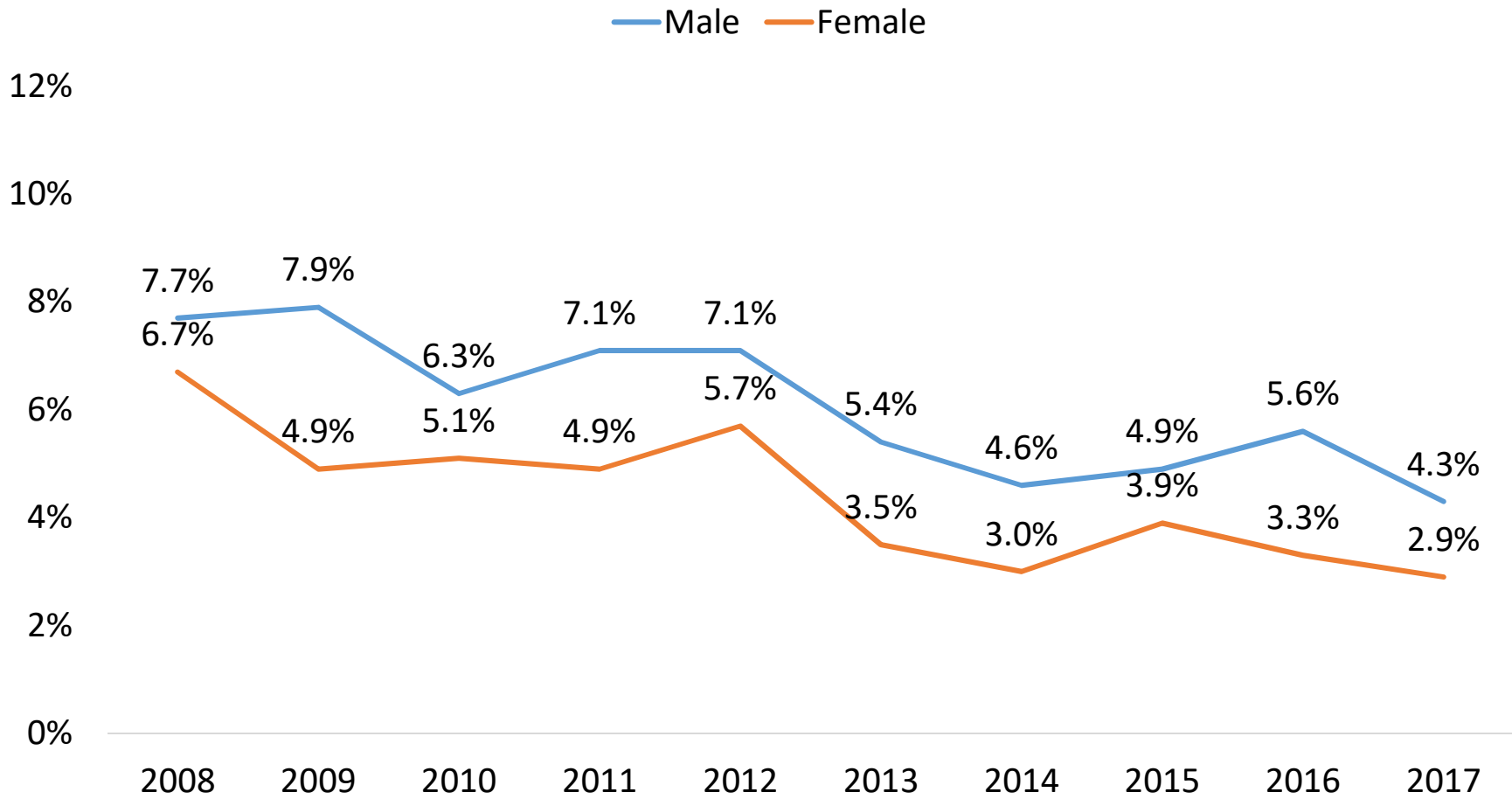
Boston Public School Annual Dropout Rates by Race / Ethnic Group 2006-2017



Source: Boston Public Schools



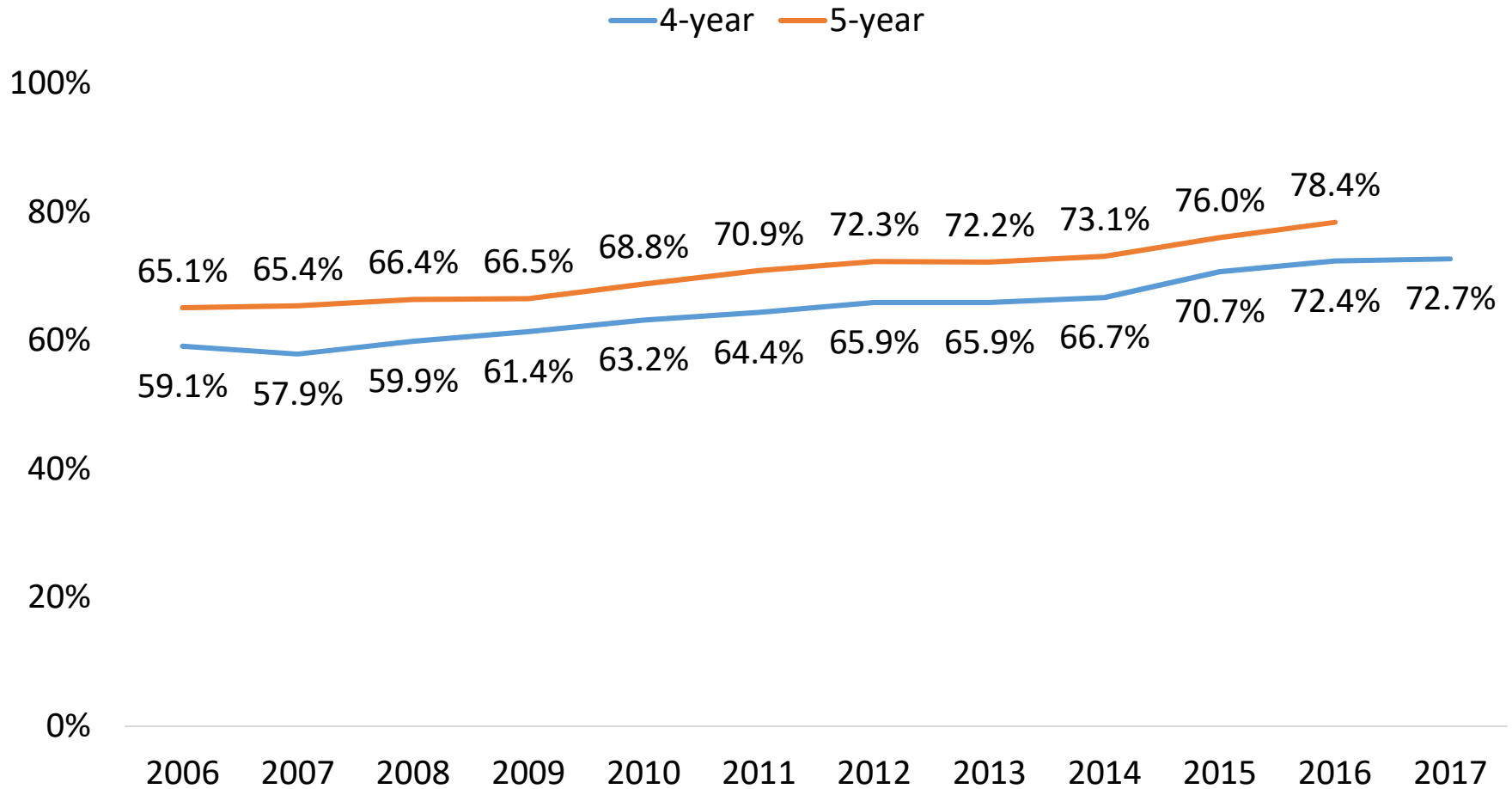
Boston Public School Annual Dropout Rates by Gender, 2006-2017



Source: Boston Public Schools



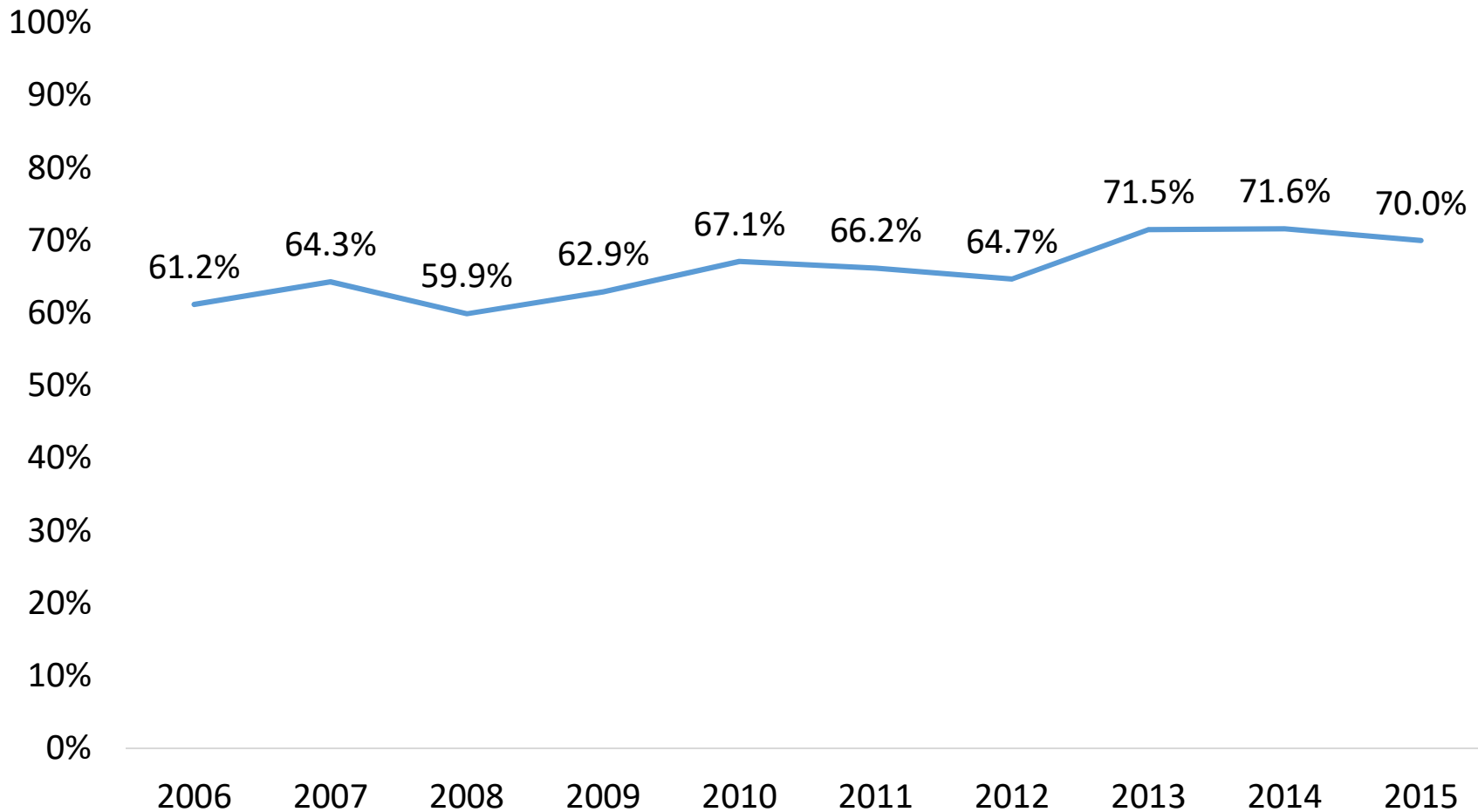
Boston Public School 4- and 5-year graduation rates, 2006 to 2017



Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education



Trends in the 16-Month College Enrollment Rates BPS Classes of 2006 to 2015



Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Data Sources

- **Employment:** The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Surveys (ACS) is the primary source for population statistics at the local level. The ACS is a large-scale, national household survey. ACS interviews are conducted monthly on an on-going basis. The 3-year and 5-year averages of these monthly interviews can be used for analysis at the city and sub-city levels. Unfortunately, the 3-year file was discontinued in 2014. The Census creates only a 1-year and 5-year file now.
- **High school diploma:** Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) tracks the percentage of students who graduate with a regular high school diploma within 4 or 5 years. This is defined by the number of students in a cohort who graduate in 4 or 5 years or less dividing by the number of first time students entering 9th grade 4 years earlier – transfers out + transfers in.
- **Postsecondary education:** DESE reports the enrollment of public high school graduates into institutions of higher education within 16 months of graduating high school, including private two-year, private four-year, public two-year, and public four year institutions.



Data Sources

- **American Community Survey**
<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>
- **Boston Public Schools Data and Reports**
<http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/Page/693>
- **Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)**
http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/dropout.aspx



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