

Pawtucket Data in Your Backyard

Findings from the *2025 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook*

Presented by Stephanie Geller

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

March 11, 2026

Pawtucket, Rhode Island



Special thanks to



for partnering with us to bring you this important data

2025 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook

31st annual publication
67 indicators across 5 areas
City and town-level information



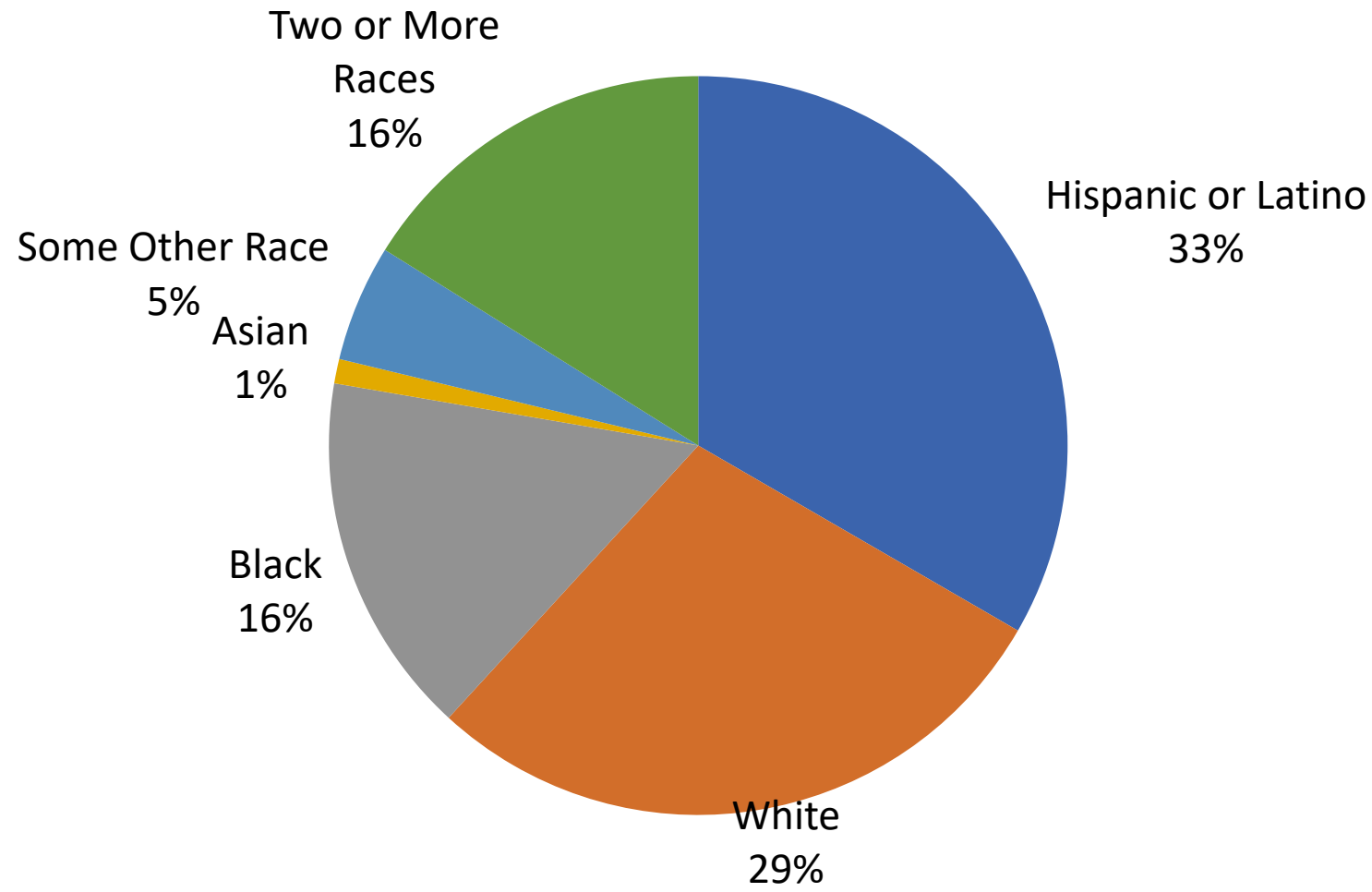
2025 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook



Family and Community



Pawtucket's Child Population, 2020

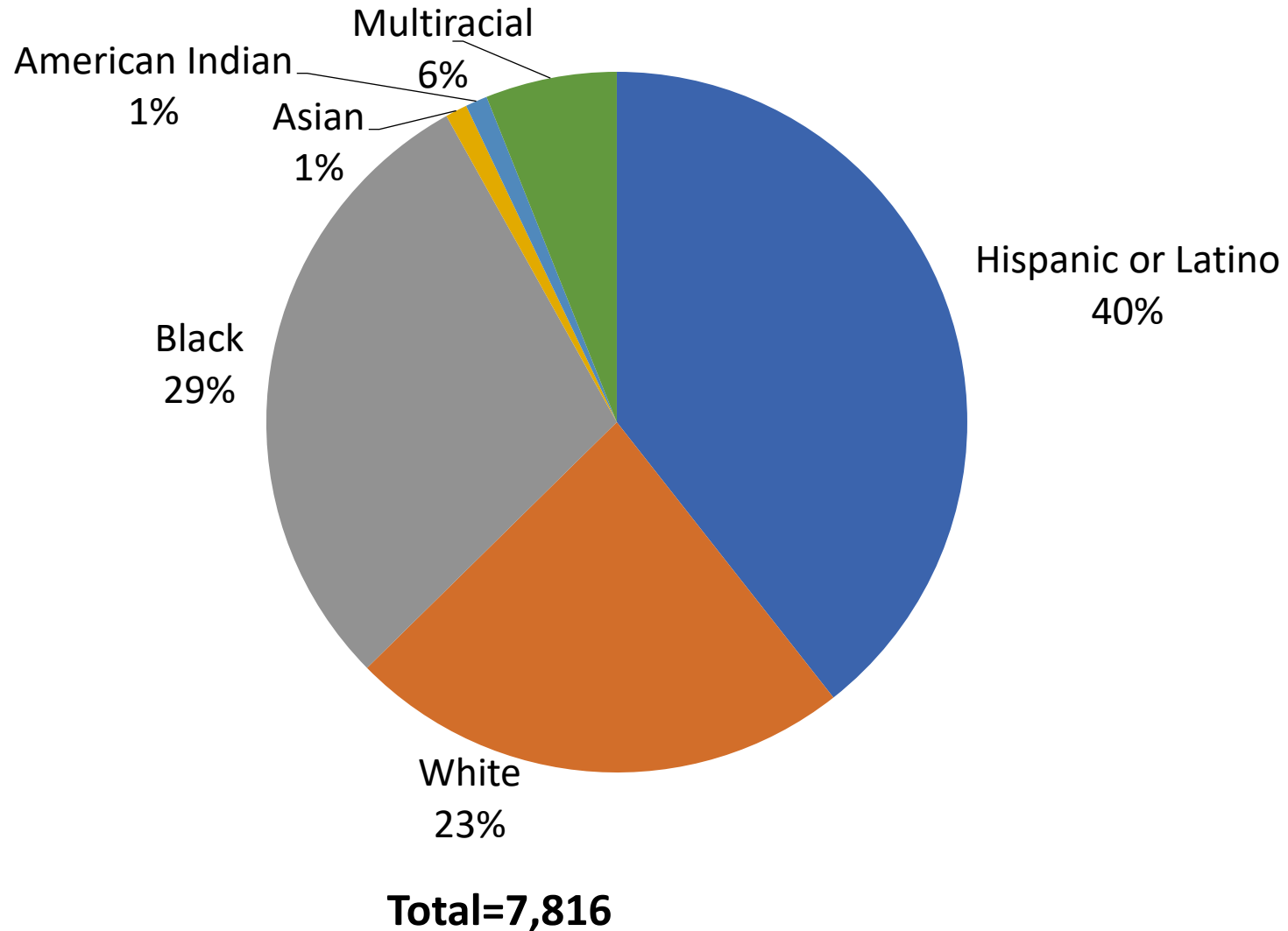


Total=16,455

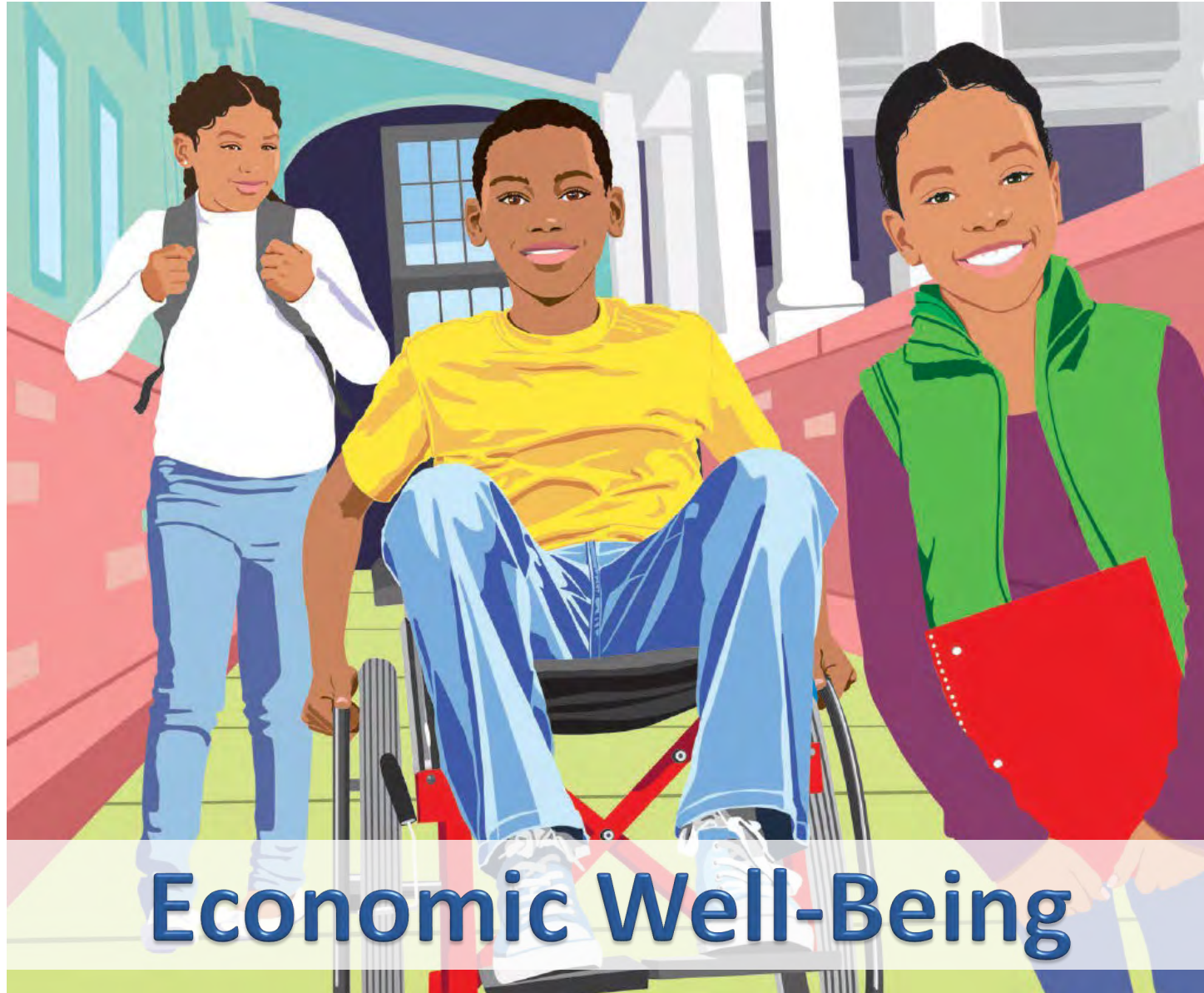
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2020, Tables P2 and P4.



Pawtucket's School Enrollment, Oct. 1, 2024



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education. Public School Enrollment, Preschool-Grade 12, October 1, 2024.



How Do We Define Poverty?

- Poverty threshold in 2024
 - \$26,650 for a family of 3
 - \$32,150 for a family of 4

- Extreme poverty in 2024
 - \$13,325 for a family of 3
 - \$16,075 for a family of 4

- *2024 Rhode Island Standard of Need*
 - Single-parent family with 2 children would need \$83,239 a year to meet its basic needs, which would require a pre-tax income of \$99,418 (or \$47.80 per hour) to meet this budget without governmental subsidies.



Pawtucket's Child Poverty Rate High but Declining



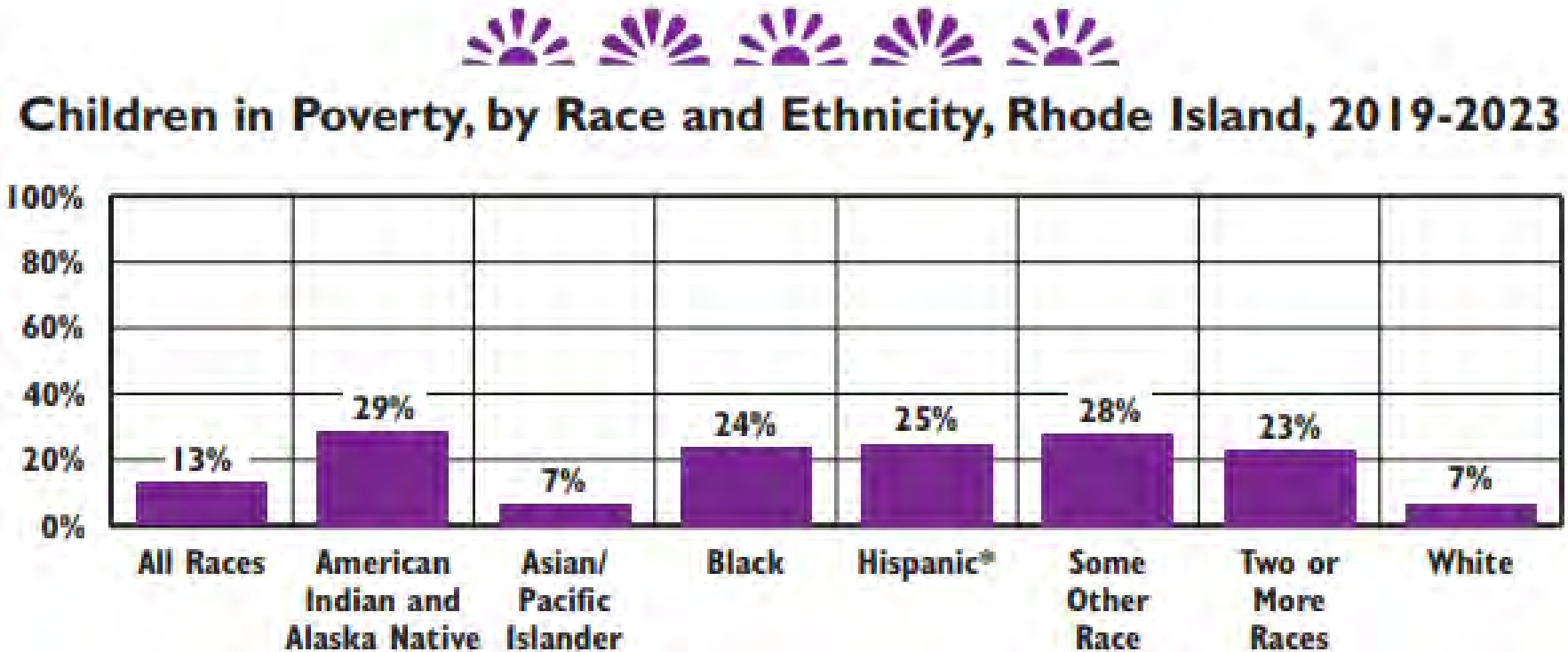
Child Poverty Concentrated in Four Core Cities, Rhode Island, 2019-2023

CITY/TOWN	NUMBER IN POVERTY	PERCENTAGE IN POVERTY	NUMBER IN EXTREME POVERTY	PERCENTAGE IN EXTREME POVERTY
Central Falls	1,535	26%	561	9%
Pawtucket	2,982	19%	1,600	10%
Providence	9,733	26%	5,444	15%
Woonsocket	3,211	33%	1,837	19%
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>27,224</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>14,397</i>	<i>7%</i>

Source: Population Reference Bureau analysis of 2019-2023 American Community Survey data.

From 2014-2018, 30% of Pawtucket children were in poverty, compared to 19% from 2019-2023.

Large Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Child Poverty



Note: Hispanic children may be included in any race category.

More Children Experiencing Homelessness



**Homeless Children Identified by Public Schools,
Rhode Island, 2021-2022 through 2023-2024 School Years**



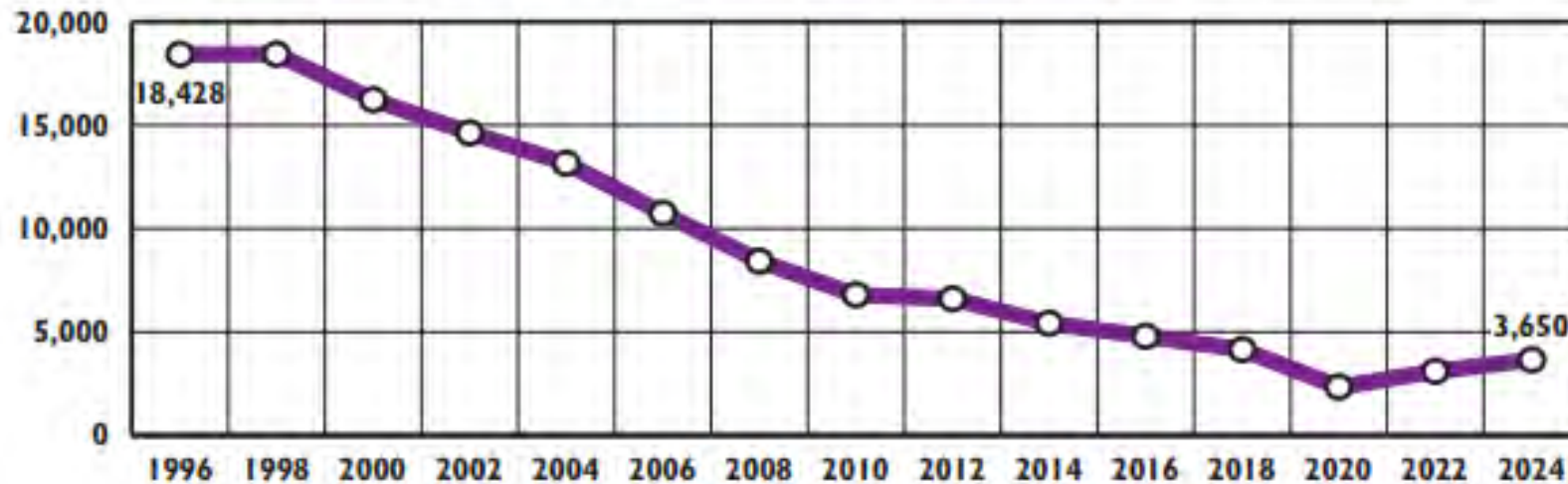
During the 2023-2024 school year, **Pawtucket** public school personnel identified 140 students as homeless.

- 69% were doubled up
- 22% were in hotels or motels
- 7% were in shelters
- 1% were unsheltered

Children in Families Receiving Cash Assistance



Cash Assistance Caseload, Rhode Island, 1996–2024*

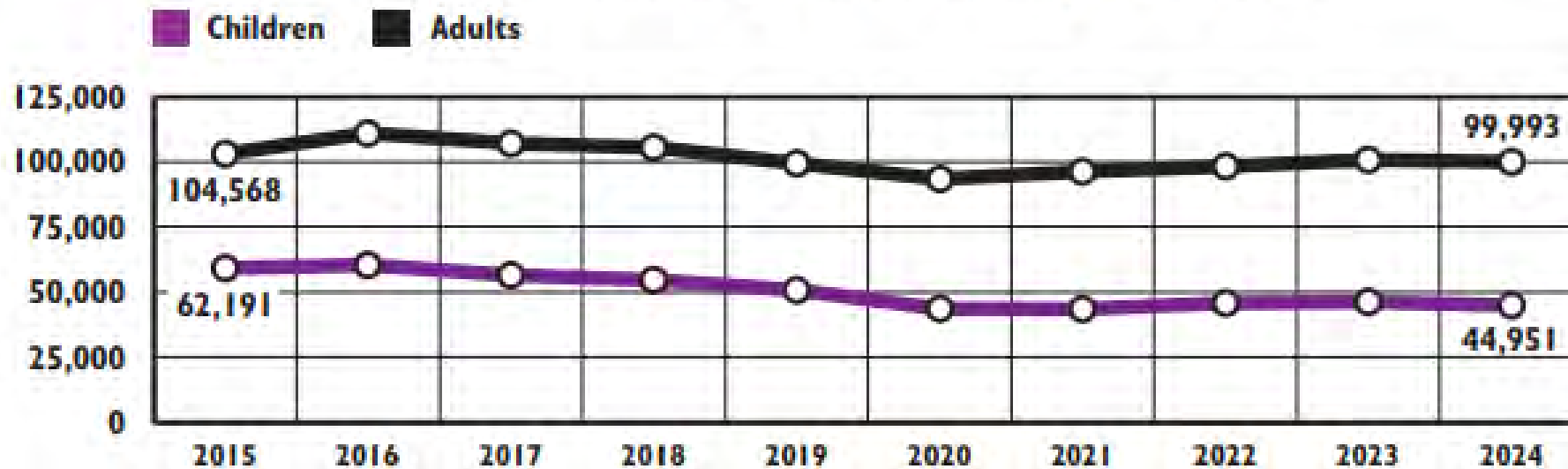


- **One in 20 or 5% (777) of children in Pawtucket receive cash assistance.**
- 68% of RI Works beneficiaries are children under age 18.
- A family of 3 receives a maximum of \$865/month, well below the poverty level, and benefits have only been raised twice in the past 30 years.

How Can We Ensure that Rhode Island Children Are Fed?



**Participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program,
Children and Adults, Rhode Island, 2015-2024**

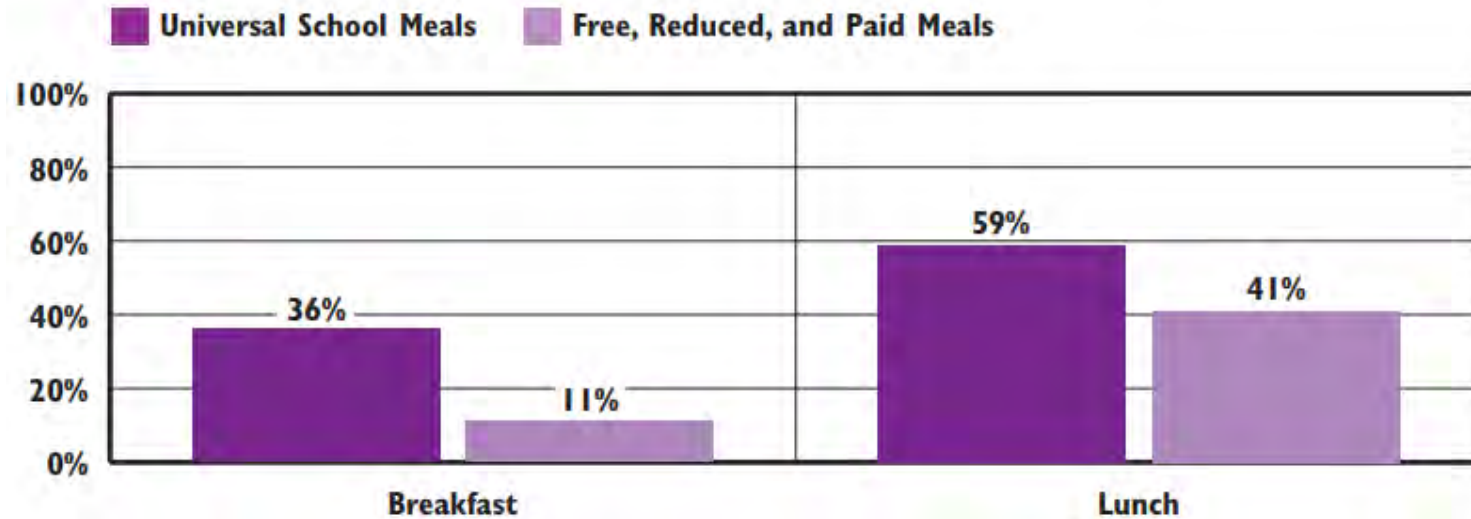


- Of the 144,944 Rhode Islanders enrolled in SNAP in October 2024, 69% were adults and 31% were children.
- In October 2024:
 - 5,037 children in Pawtucket received SNAP benefits

Children Participating in School Meals



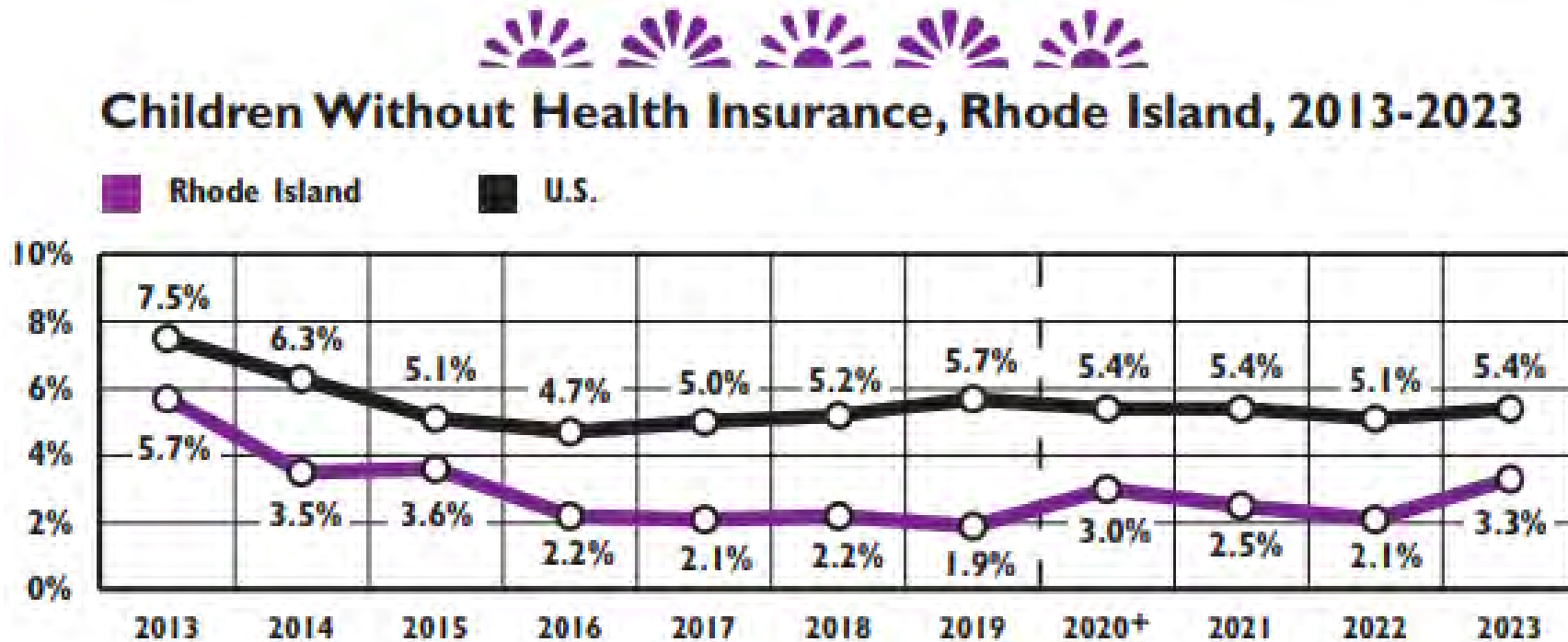
Percentage of Children Participating in School Meal Programs, Rhode Island, October 2024



- Schools participating in CEP or other universal meals options have higher rates as do schools offering breakfast in the classroom, grab-and-go, and other flexible options.
 - **Pawtucket has 71% participating in lunch and 35% in breakfast.**
 - Central Falls has 80% participating in lunch and 41% in breakfast.
 - Providence has 64% of students participating in lunch and 52% in breakfast.
 - Woonsocket has 64% participating in lunch and 33% in breakfast



How Can We Ensure that Rhode Island Children Are Insured?

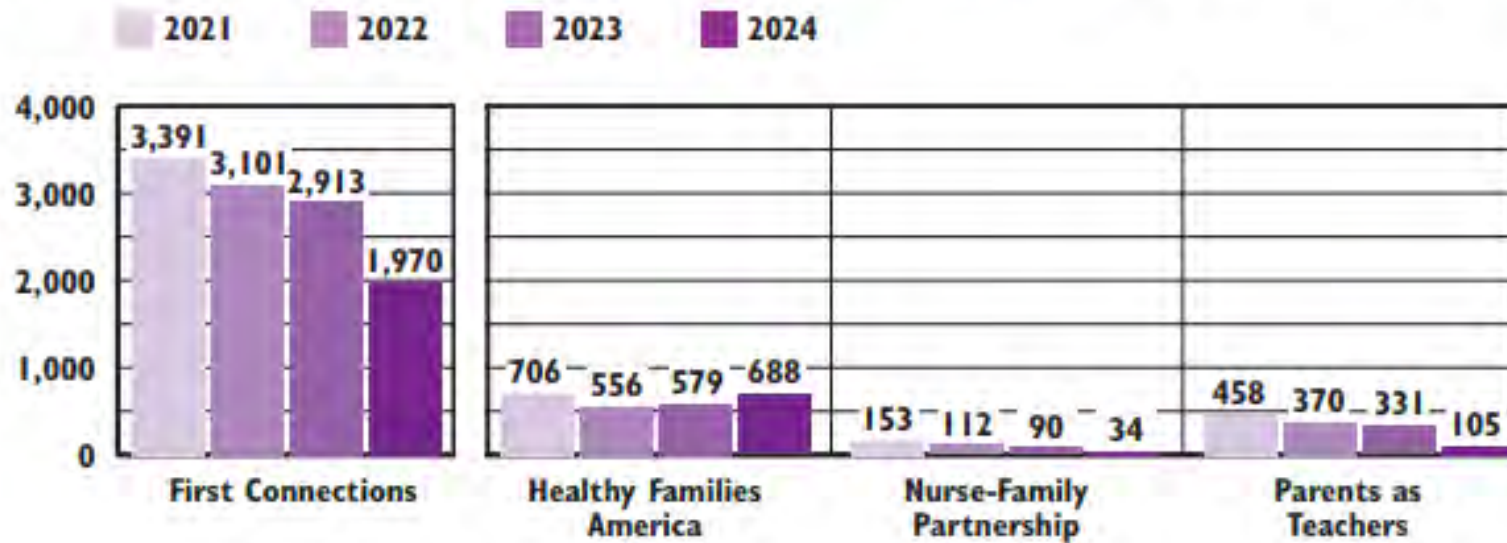


- Data released last fall show that in 2024 in Rhode Island:
 - ✓ 3.7% of children under age 19 were uninsured
 - ✓ Rhode Island ranks 12th best in the country
- **Cover All Kids** – all low-income kids now covered regardless of immigration status
- 117,890 children are covered by RItE Care
- 2,250 children are covered by HealthSource RI

Family Home Visiting

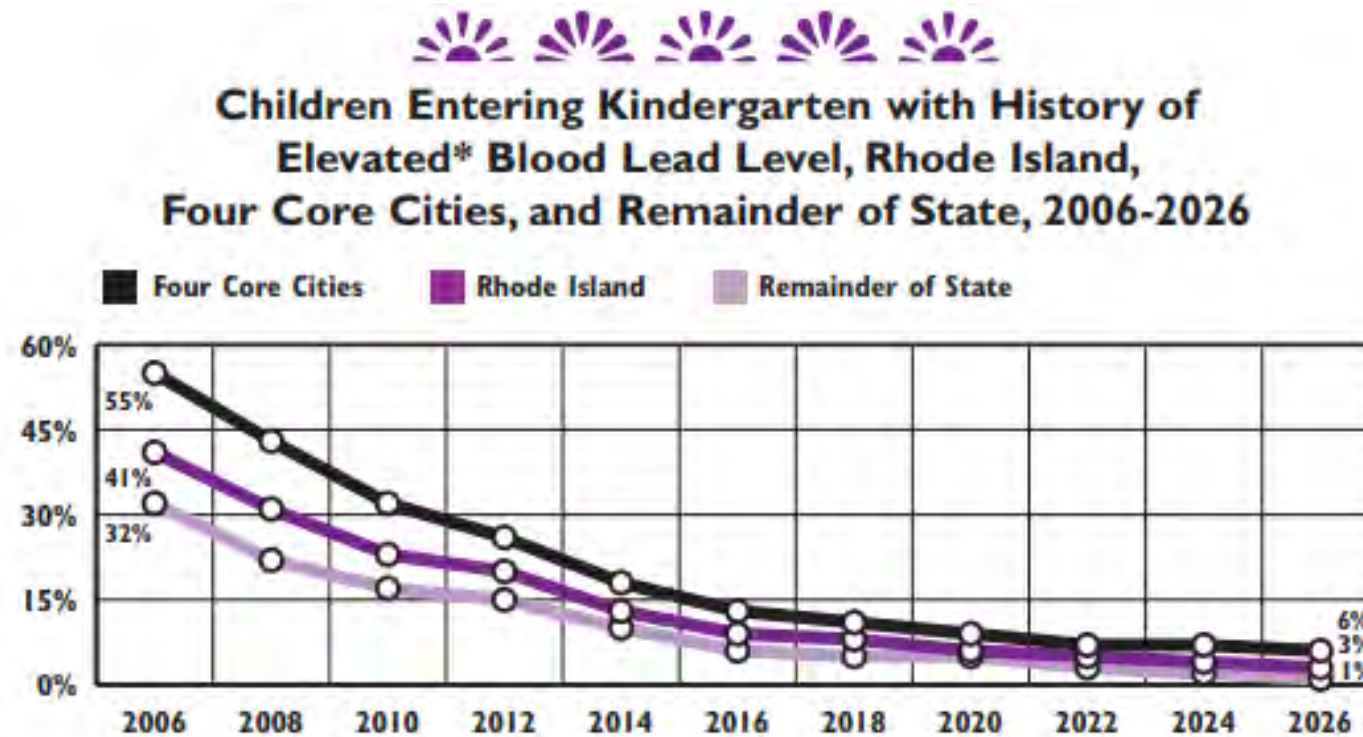


Family Home Visiting Program Participation, Rhode Island, 2021-2024



- Family home visiting programs are designed to reach young children and their families at home, providing parenting education to foster healthy, safe, and stimulating environments for young children.
- In 2024:
 - 139 Pawtucket families received a First Connections visit, down from 230 in 2021.
 - 89 Pawtucket families were enrolled in Healthy Families America, the Nurse-Family Partnership Program, or the Parents as Teachers Program, down from 176 in 2021.

Children Affected by Lead Exposure

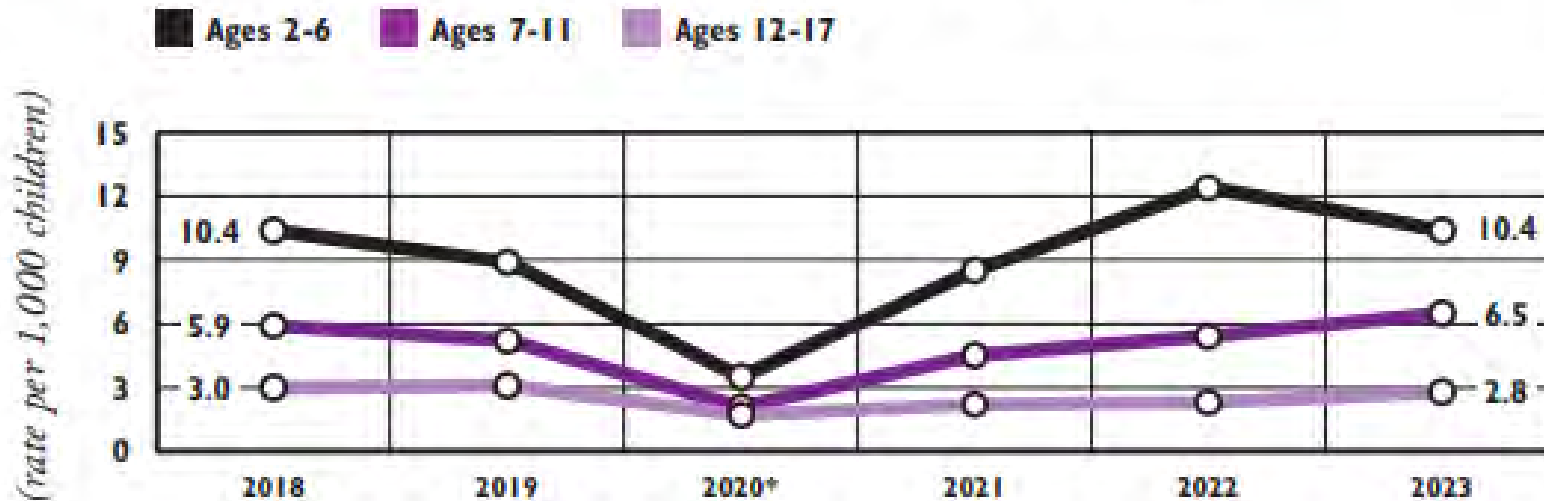


- 876 **Pawtucket** children due to enter kindergarten in the fall of 2026 had been tested
- 67 (7.6%) were confirmed positive for $\geq 3.5 \mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$, the 4th highest rate in the state.

Children with Asthma



Asthma Emergency Department Visit Rates By Age, Rhode Island Children, 2018-2023*



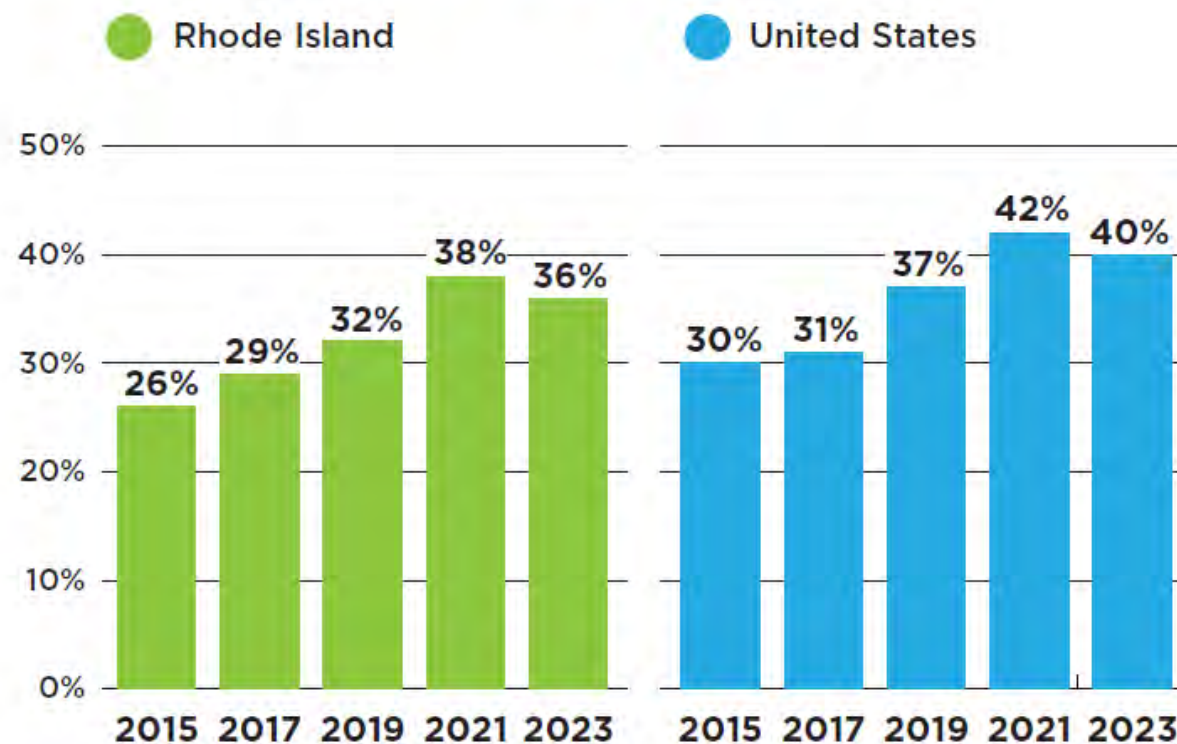
*Asthma-related emergency department visits decreased substantially in 2020 and must be interpreted with caution due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Pawtucket** has the 4th highest rate of asthma-related emergency department visits in the state at 7.1 per 1,000 children, compared to 5.1 for the state as a whole.
- Most common chronic condition among children.
- One of the leading causes of school absence.



Mental Health Crisis Both Nationally and in Rhode Island

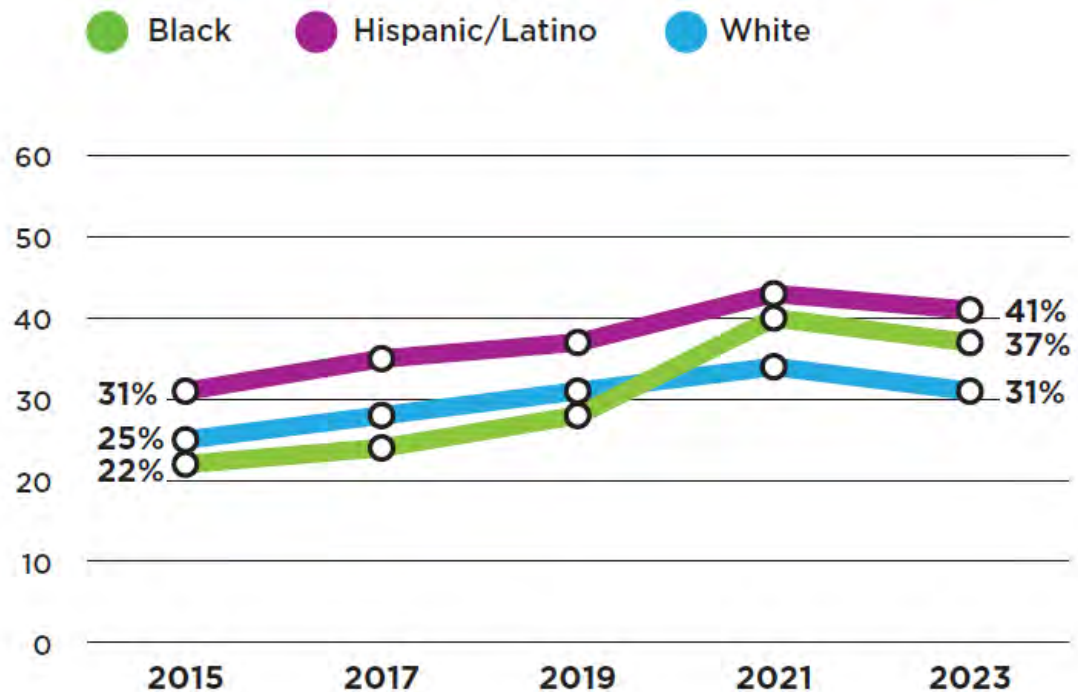
FEELINGS OF SADNESS OR HOPELESSNESS AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, RHODE ISLAND AND UNITED STATES, 2015-2023



Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015-2023.

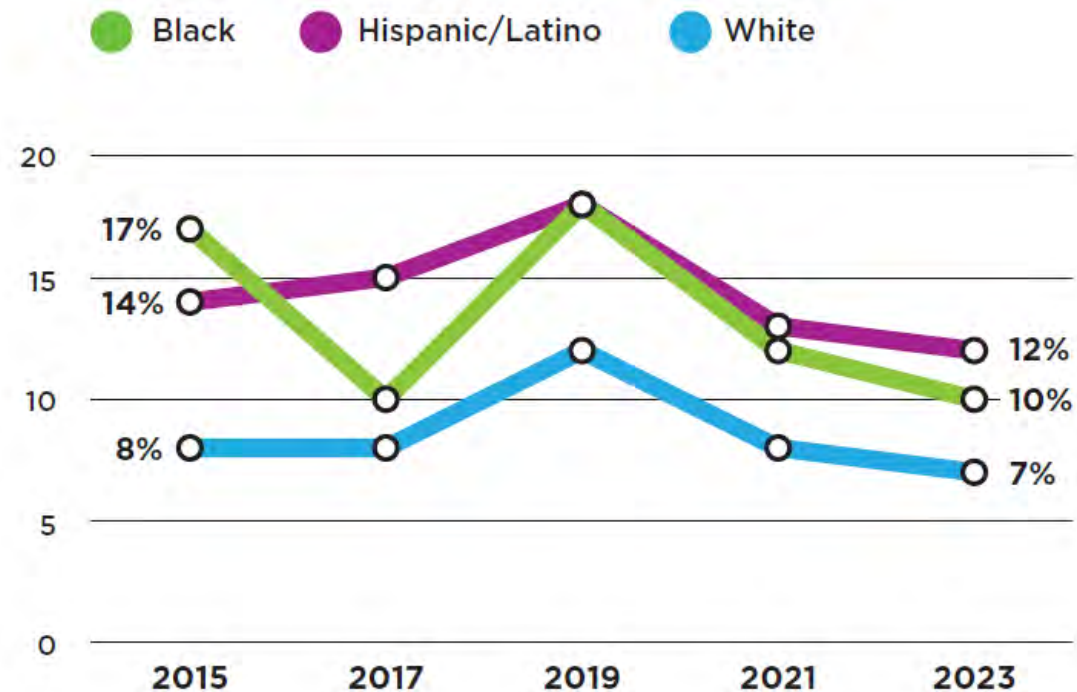
Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Youth Mental Health

FEELINGS OF SADNESS OR HOPELESSNESS AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, RHODE ISLAND, BY RACE AND ETHNICITY, 2015-2023



Source: Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015-2023.

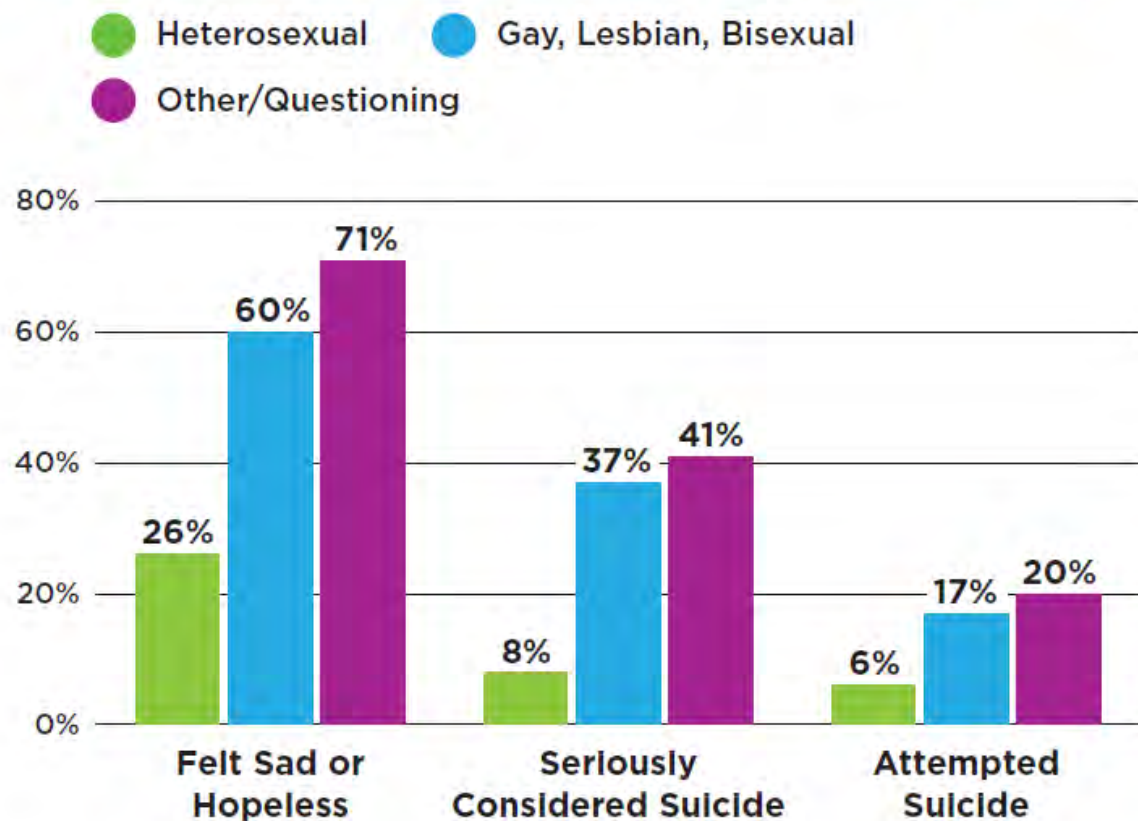
SUICIDE ATTEMPTS AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, RHODE ISLAND, BY RACE AND ETHNICITY, 2015-2023



Source: Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015-2023.

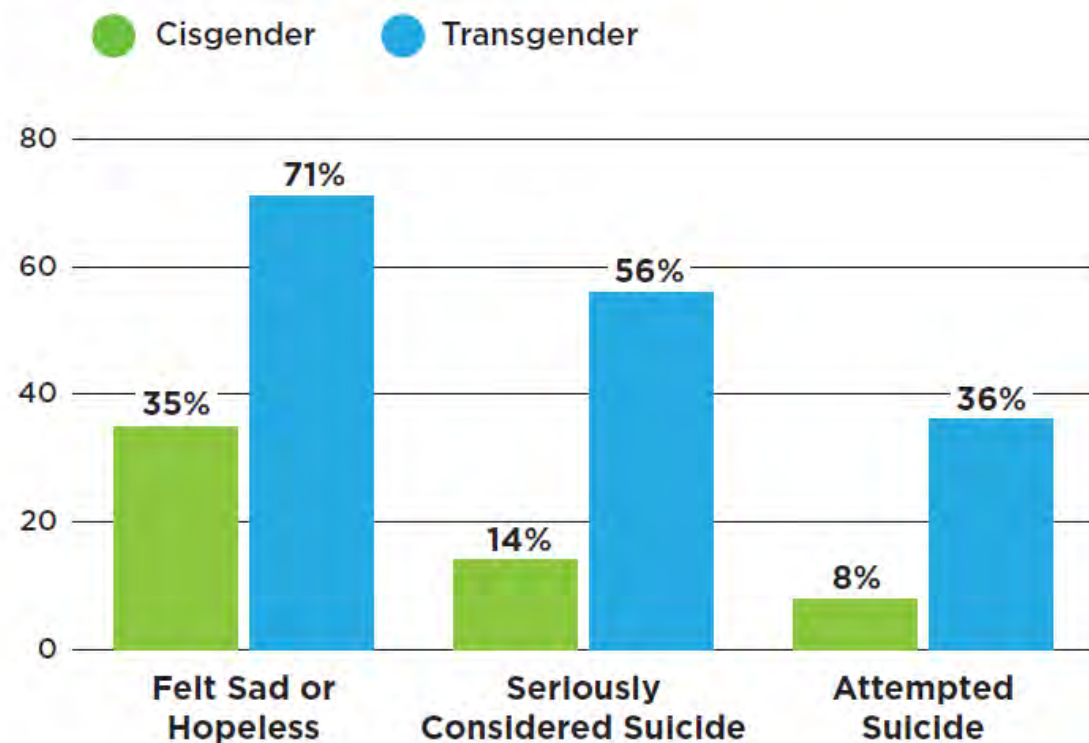
The Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Youth In Rhode Island

MENTAL HEALTH OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, RHODE ISLAND, BY SEXUAL ORIENTATION, 2023



Source: Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2023.

MENTAL HEALTH OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, RHODE ISLAND, BY GENDER IDENTITY, 2021 AND 2023



Source: Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2021 and 2023.

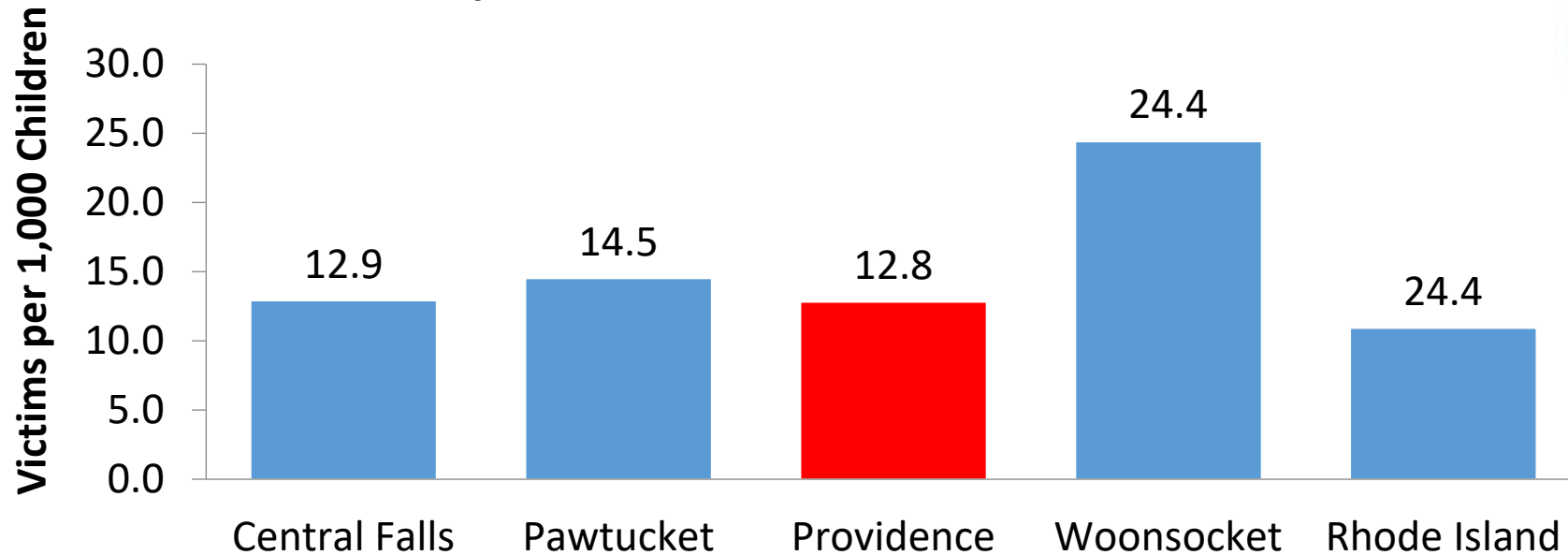
A Snapshot of *SurveyWorks* Data in Pawtucket

Questions Related to Mental Health	Percentage of Middle and High School Students Responding <u>Unfavorably</u>
During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?	37%
How much has stress interfered with your ability to participate in school in the last 30 days?	59%
How likely is it that someone from your school will bully you online ?	42%
If a student is bullied in school , how difficult is it for him/her to get help from an adult?	42%

Source: *SurveyWorks*, Spring '25 Secondary Student Survey - Grades 6-12 - Student Survey.

Child Neglect and Abuse

Victims of Child Neglect and Abuse per 1,000 Children, 2024



In 2024, 239 Pawtucket children were reported victims of child neglect and abuse.

Statewide, 80% of all child neglect and abuse cases were due to neglect. The large majority of these cases were related to lack of supervision or exposure to domestic violence.

Children of Incarcerated Parents



Parents at the Rhode Island Adult Correctional Institutions (ACI), September 30, 2024

	INMATES SURVEYED*	# REPORTING CHILDREN	% REPORTING CHILDREN	# OF CHILDREN REPORTED
Awaiting Trial	800	589	74%	1,531
Serving a Sentence	1,581	997	63%	2,463
TOTAL	2,381	1,586	67%	3,994

- On September 30, 2024:
 - 73 incarcerated parents with a known in-state residence identified **Pawtucket** as their last place of residence.
 - These parents reported 167 children.
 - Pawtucket has a somewhat higher rate of children with incarcerated parents (10.1 per 1,000 children) than the state as a whole (8.6 per 1,000 children).

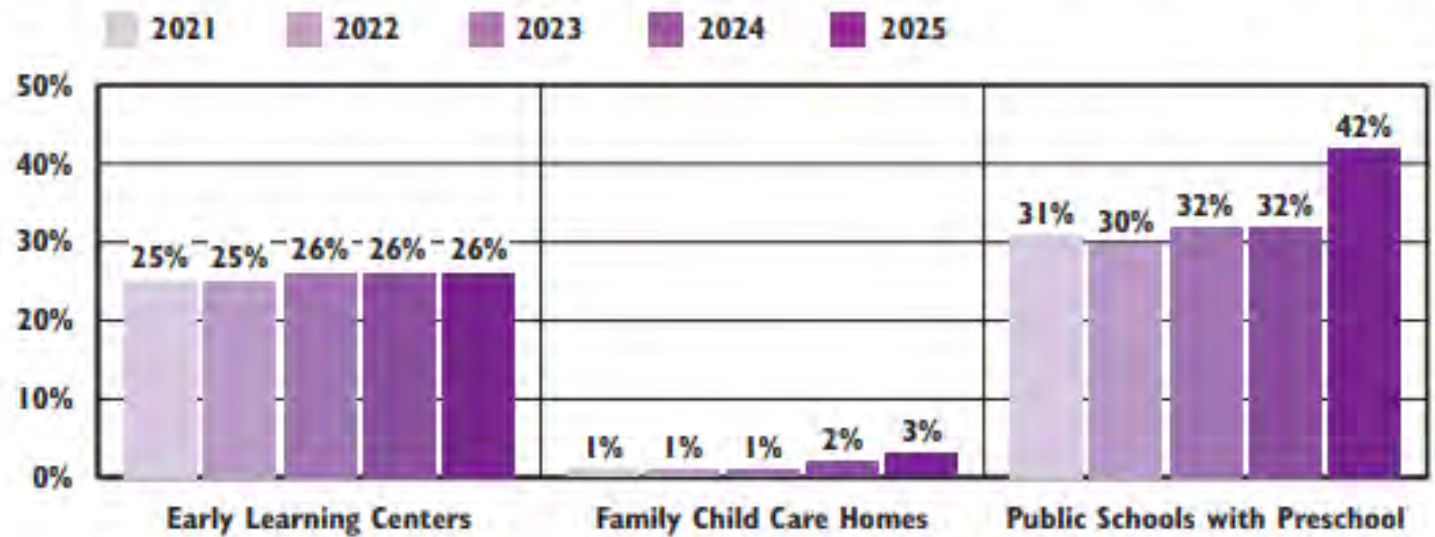


Education

High Quality Early Learning Programs



Percentage of Licensed Early Learning Centers, Family Child Care Programs, and Public Schools with a High-Quality BrightStars Rating (4 or 5 Stars), Rhode Island, 2021-2025

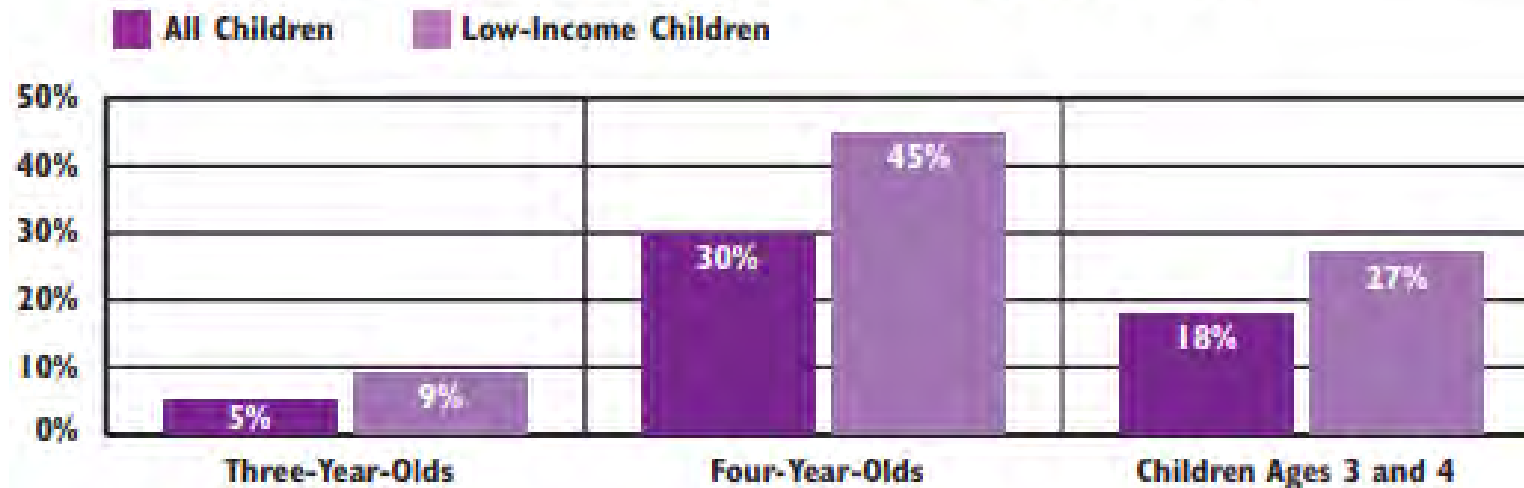


- All programs serving children participating in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) or the State Pre-K program are required to have a BrightStars rating.
- As of January 2025, **83% (5 out of 6) of Pawtucket’s public schools with preschool classrooms had a high-quality rating of 4 or 5 stars**, as well as 24% of the city’s licensed early learning centers and 8% of the city’s licensed family child care homes.

Opportunities for High-Quality Early Childhood Education in Pawtucket

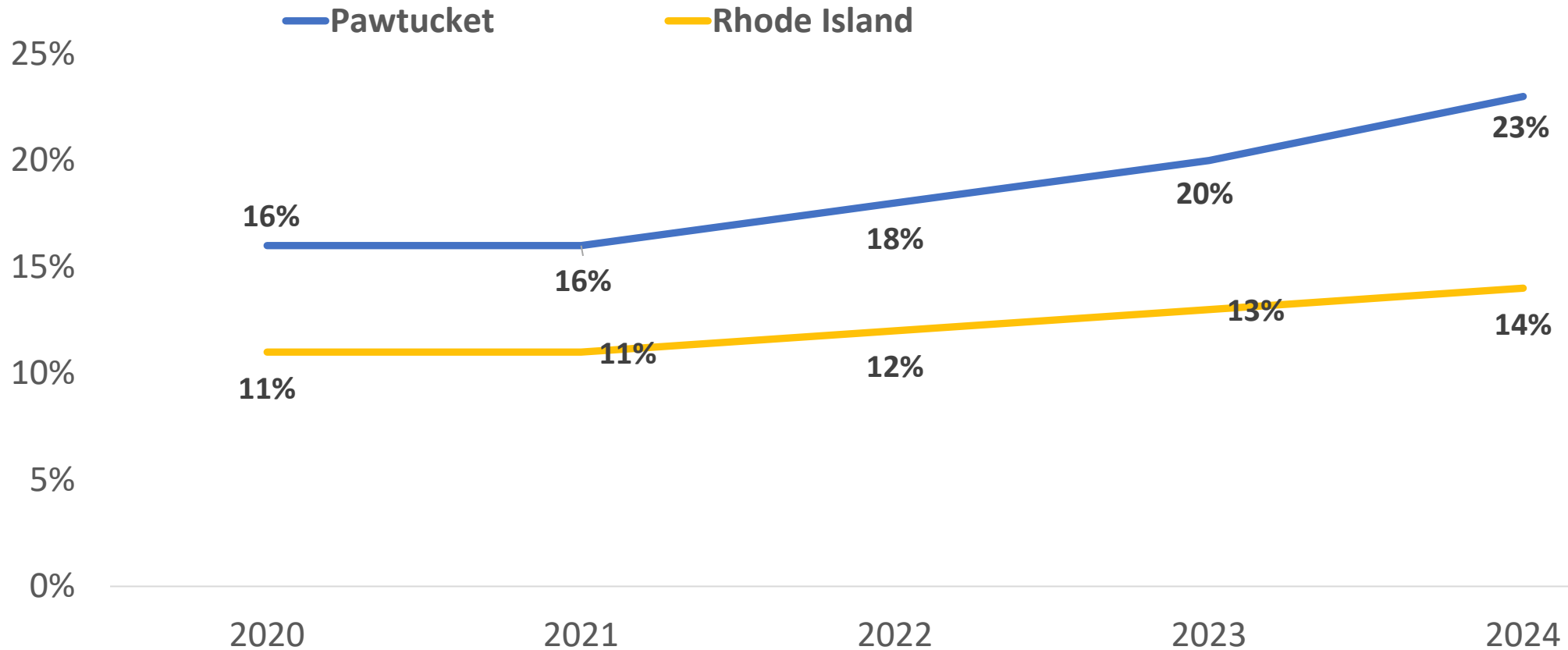


Percentage of Children Ages 3 and 4 Enrolled in Head Start and/or RI Pre-K, Rhode Island, 2024-2025



- **21% of all Pawtucket children and 26% of low-income children in Pawtucket who were ages 3 and 4 were enrolled in either Head Start or RI Pre-K.**

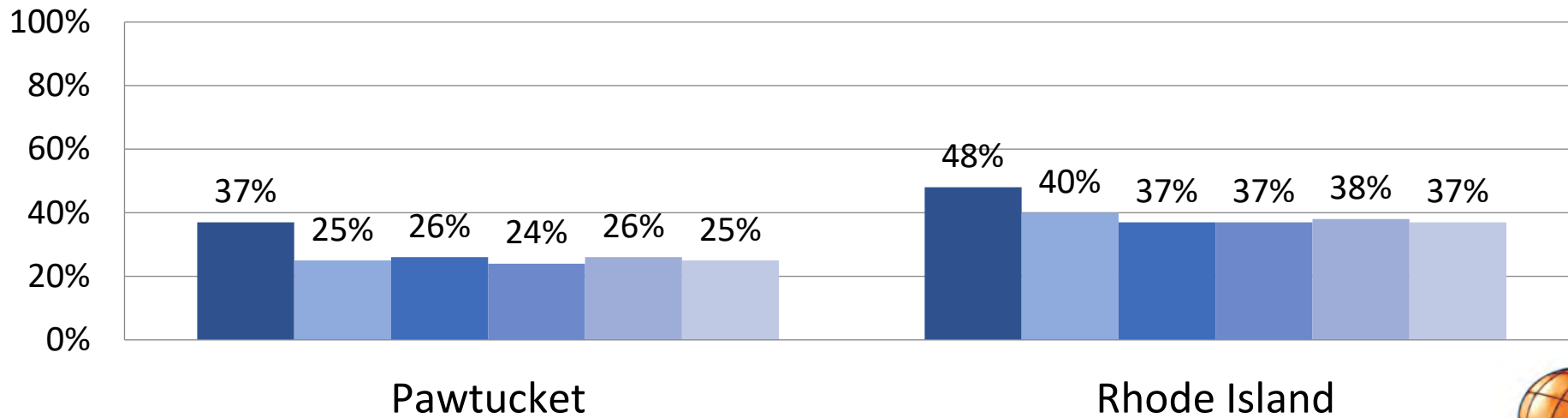
Growing Number of Multilingual Students



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, 2019-2020 through 2023-2024 school years.

Third-Grade Reading Skills Before and After Pandemic

Third-Graders Meeting Expectations in Reading 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education,
Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS), 2021-2025.



Disparities in 3rd Grade Reading and What We Can Do About It

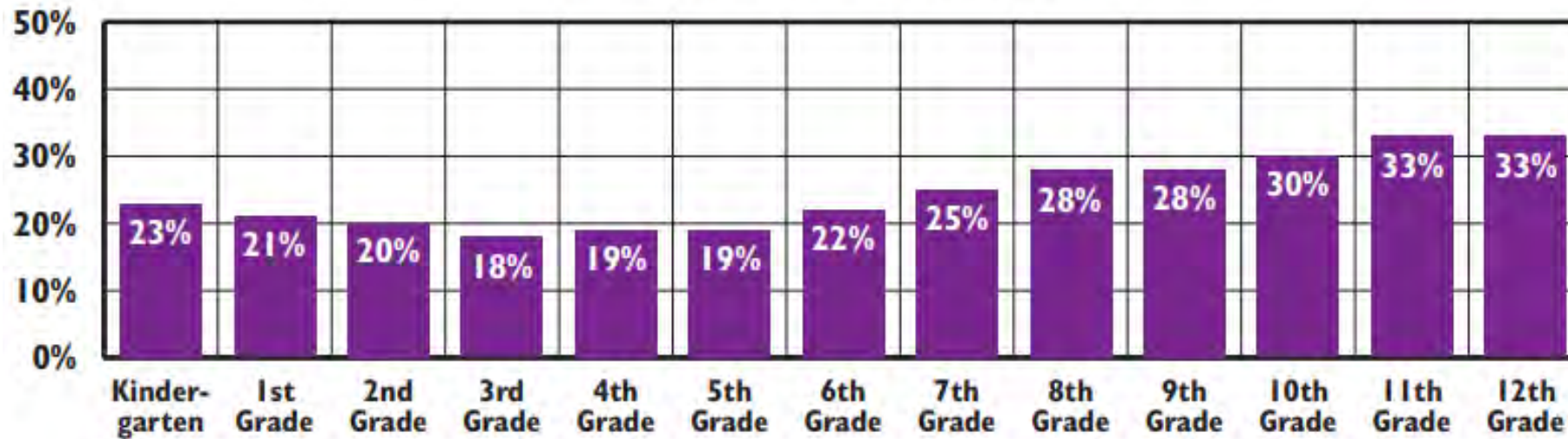
All Pawtucket's 3rd Graders Meeting Expectations, 2025 **25%**

Female	27%
Male	24%
Students With Disabilities	8%
Students Without Disabilities	30%
Multilingual Learners	6%
Low-Income Students	21%
Higher-Income Students	41%
Black Students	22%
Hispanic Students	19%
Multiracial Students	31%
White Students	39%

Chronic Absence Rates Across Grades



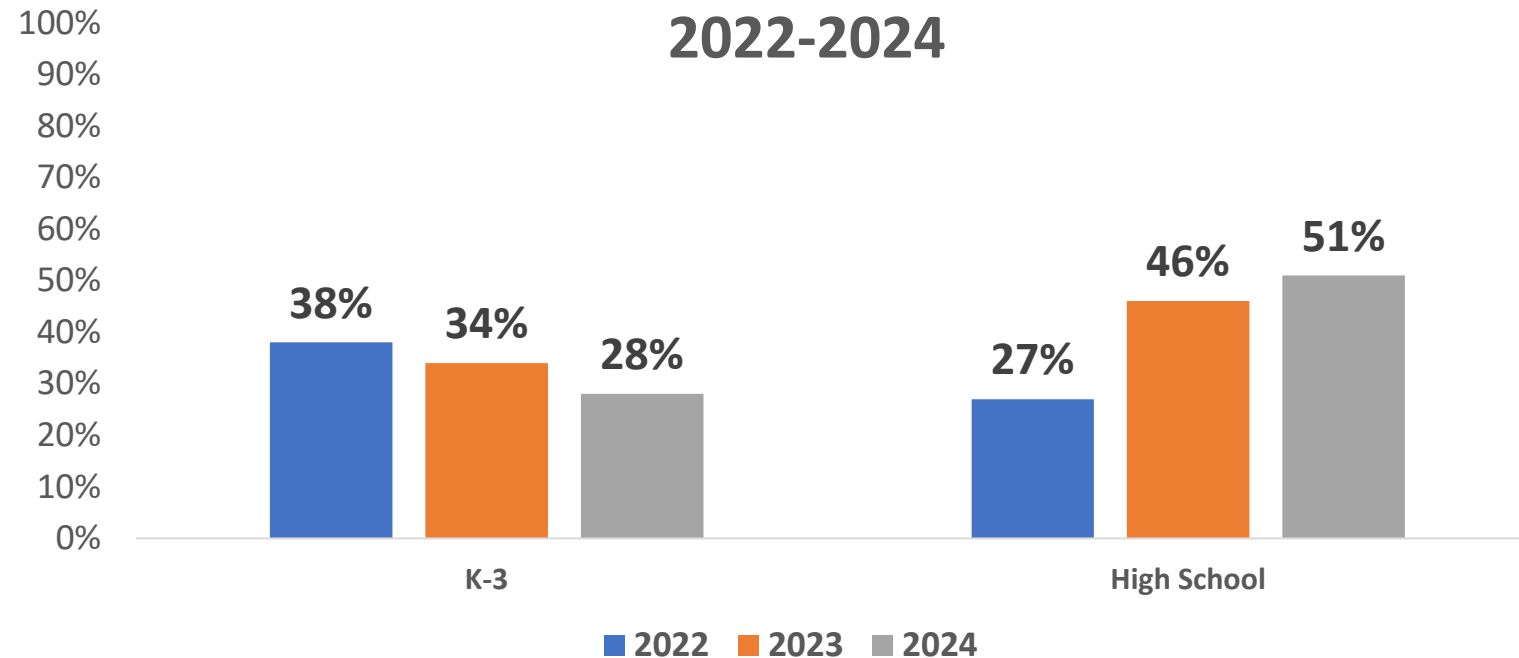
**Chronic Absence Rates in Rhode Island by Grade,
2023-2024 School Year**



- Chronic absence is the percentage of students who have missed at least 10% of the school year (i.e., 18 days or more), including excused and unexcused absences.

Chronic Absence Continues to Be a Problem in Pawtucket, but Progress Is Being Made at Elementary Level

Pawtucket Chronic Absence by Grade Level, 2022-2024



School Suspensions

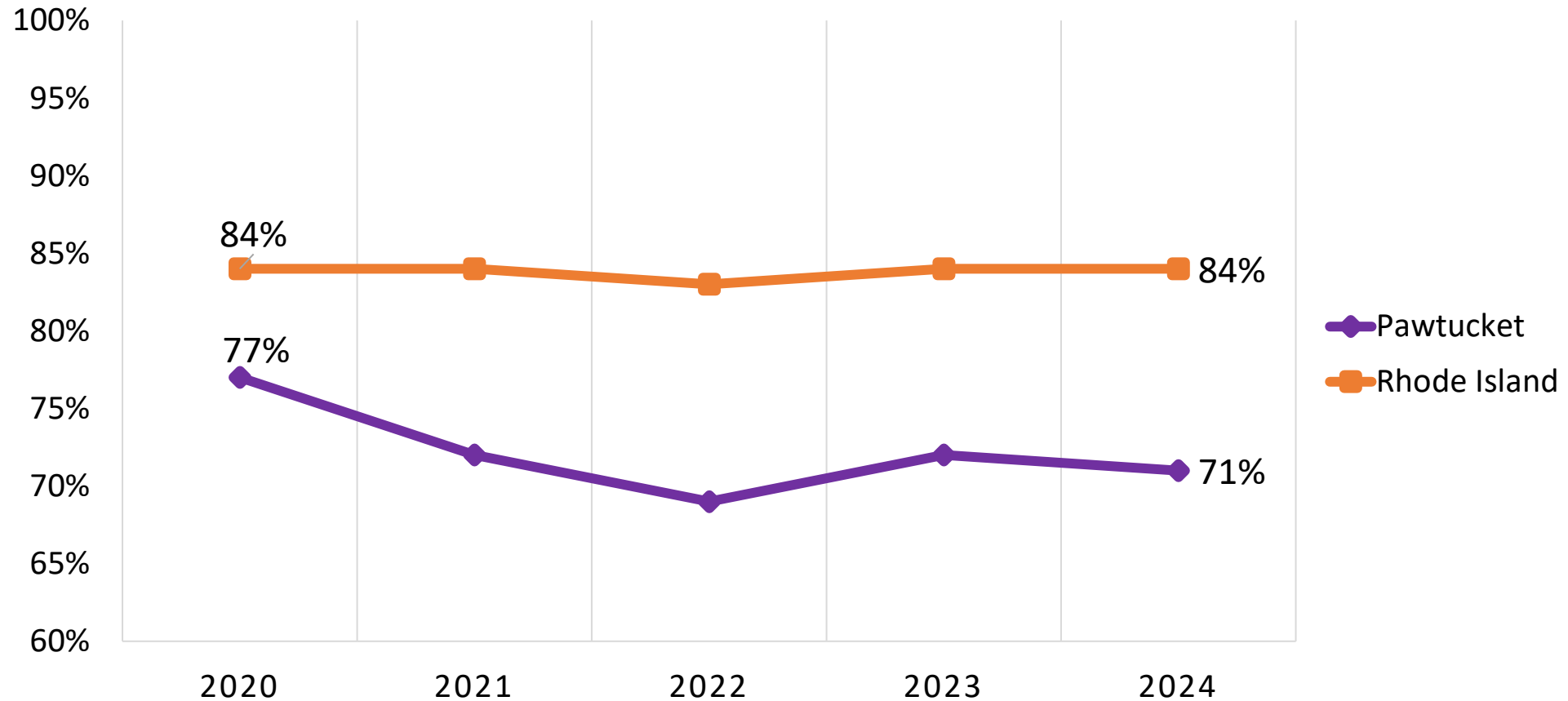


Out-of-School Suspensions by Infraction, Rhode Island, 2023-2024

TYPE OF INFRACTION*	#	%	TYPE OF INFRACTION	#	%
Fighting	2,204	24%	Obscene/Abusive Language	386	4%
Disorderly Conduct	1,580	17%	Weapon Possession	244	3%
Insubordination/Disrespect	1,337	15%	Arson/Larceny/Robbery/Vandalism	184	2%
Assault of Student or Teacher	1,274	14%	Electronic Devices/Technology	99	1%
Alcohol/Drug/Tobacco Offenses	1,117	12%	Other Offenses	55	1%
Harassment/Intimidation/Threat	728	8%	Attendance Offenses	0	0%

- In 2016, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed a law that restricts the use of out-of-school suspensions to situations when a child's behavior poses a demonstrable threat that cannot be dealt with by other means.
- During the 2023-2024 school year:
 - Pawtucket's overall suspension rate was lower than the state, but its out-of-school suspension rate was higher.
 - In Pawtucket, 18 students received in-school suspensions and 665 received out-of-school suspensions.

High School Graduation Rate, 2020-2024



Of the 590 Pawtucket students who entered 9th grade in the 2020-2021 school year and were expected to graduate in 2024, **71% graduated in 4 years**, 19% dropped out, 1% obtained a GED, and 9% were still in school.

High School Graduation Rate, 2024

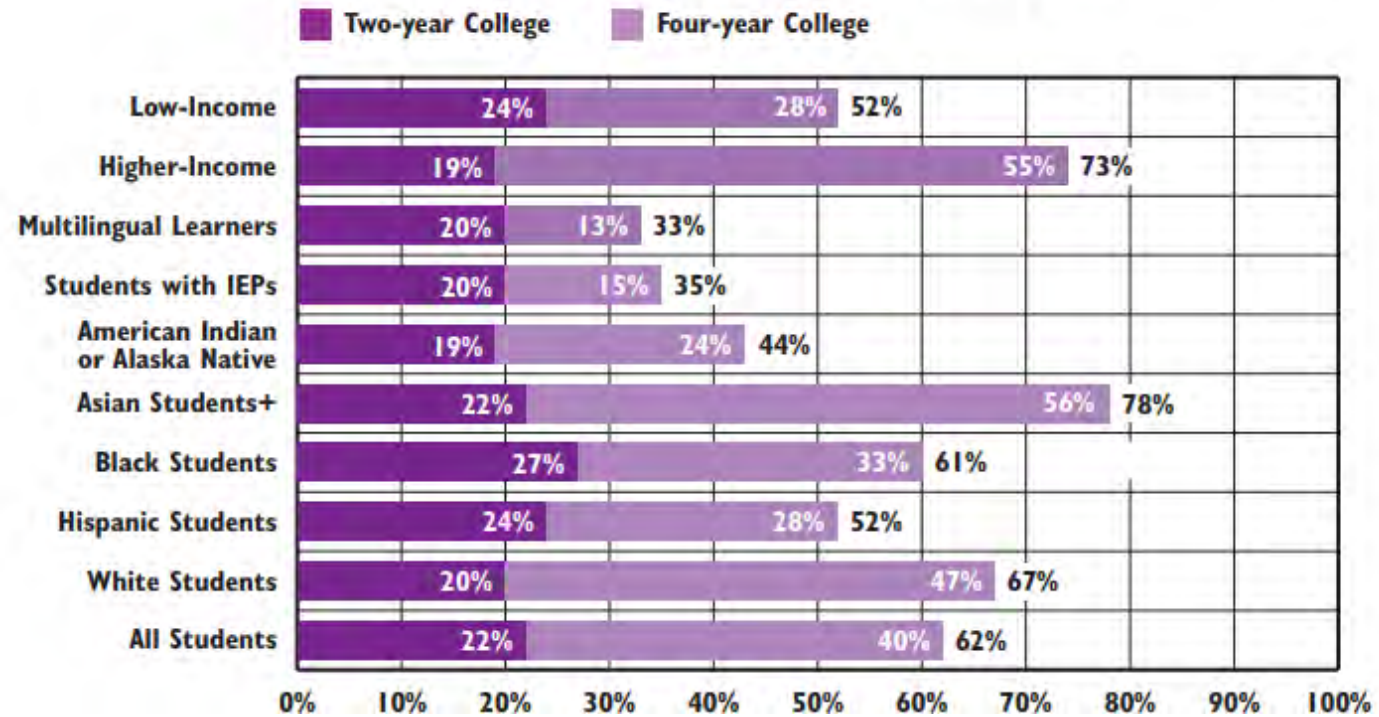
All Pawtucket Students	71%
CTE Concentrators	85%
Non-CTE Concentrators	61%
Students Receiving Special Education Services	62%
Students Not Receiving Special Education Services	73%
Multilingual Learners	76%
Low-Income Students	71%
Higher-Income Students	73%
White Students	72%
Black Students	76%
Hispanic Students	65%
Multiracial Students	73%



25% of children in foster care and 46% of children experiencing homelessness graduated in four years.

College Enrollment

Immediate College Enrollment by Family Income, Race, Ethnicity, and Type of College, Class of 2024, Rhode Island



- 62% percent of Rhode Island students and 46% of Pawtucket students who graduated from high school in the Class of 2024 immediately enrolled in college.

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