

# 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*

31<sup>st</sup> annual publication  
67 indicators across 5 areas  
City and town-level information

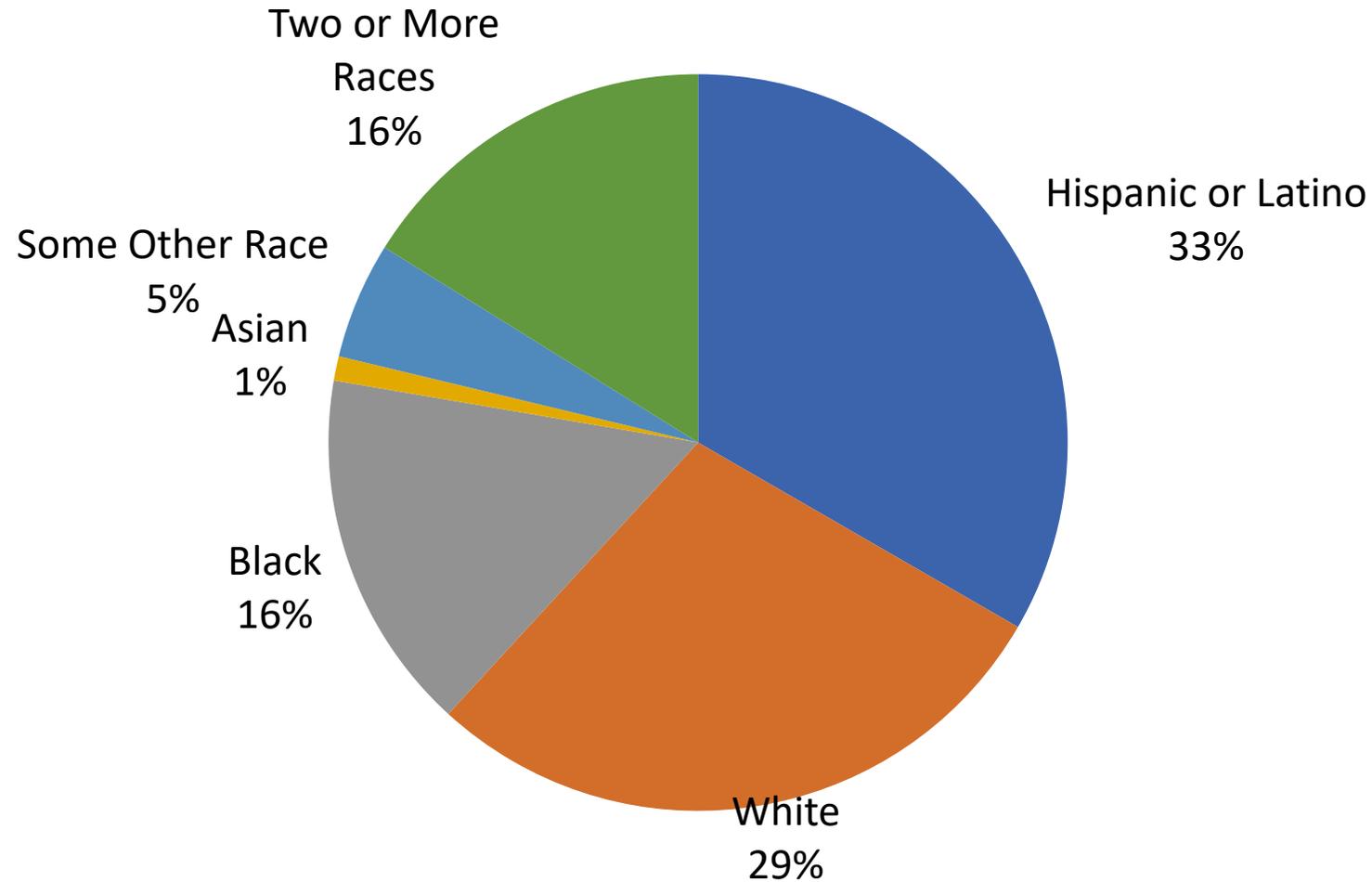


2025 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook



# Family and Community

# Pawtucket's Child Population, 2020

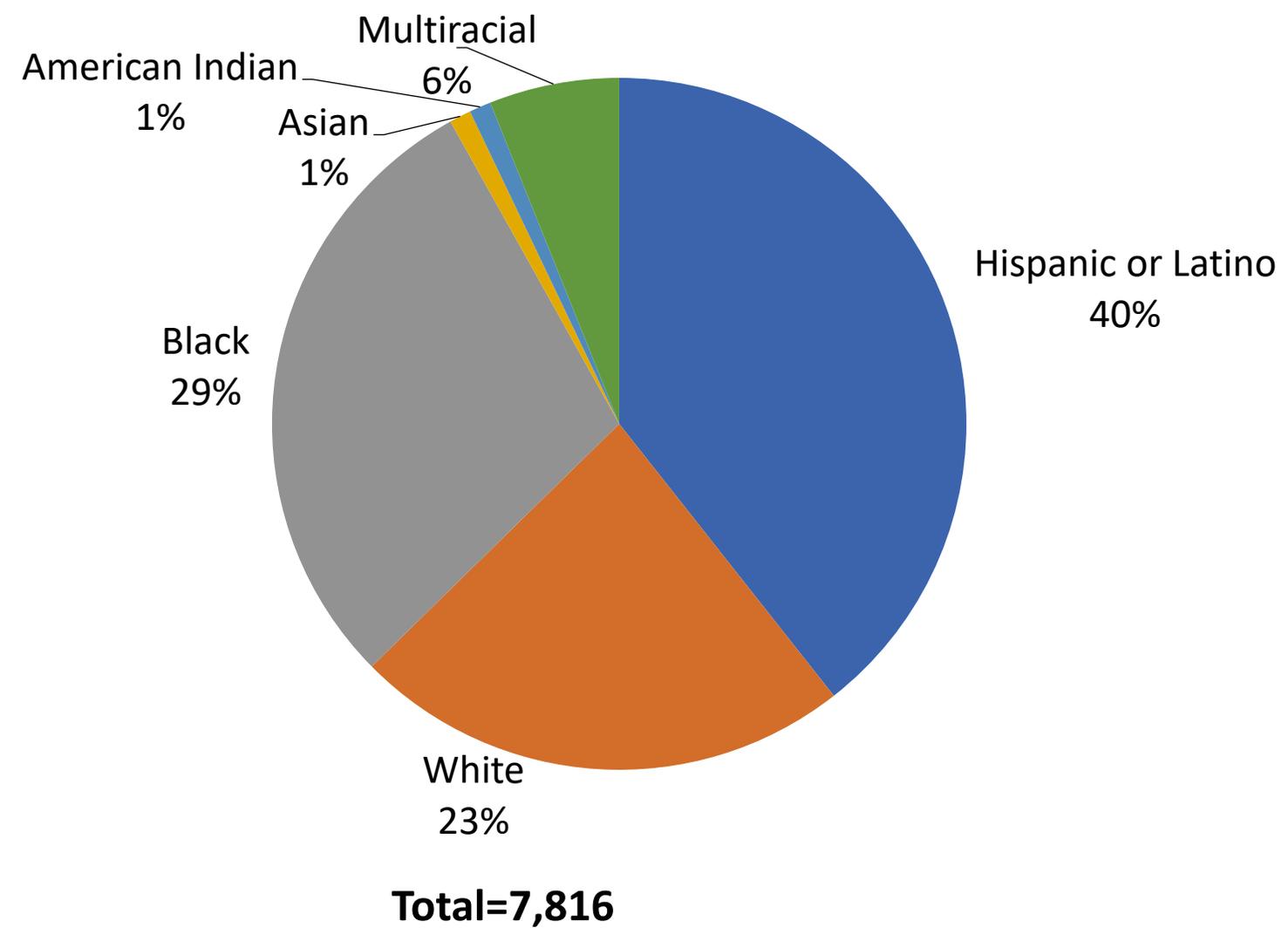


**Total=16,455**

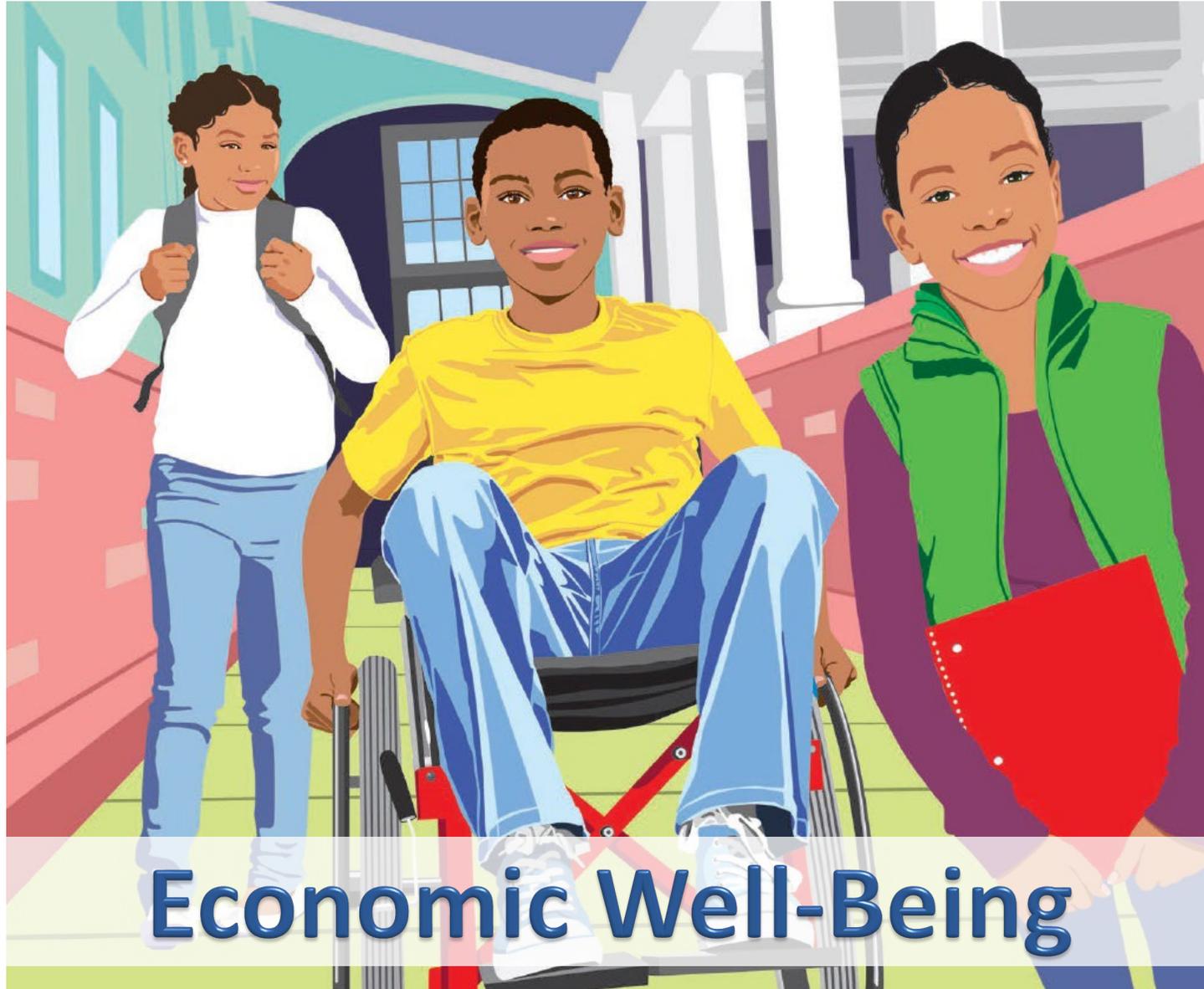
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2020, Tables P2 and P4.



# Pawtucket's School Enrollment, Oct. 1, 2024



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



# Economic Well-Being

# 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>

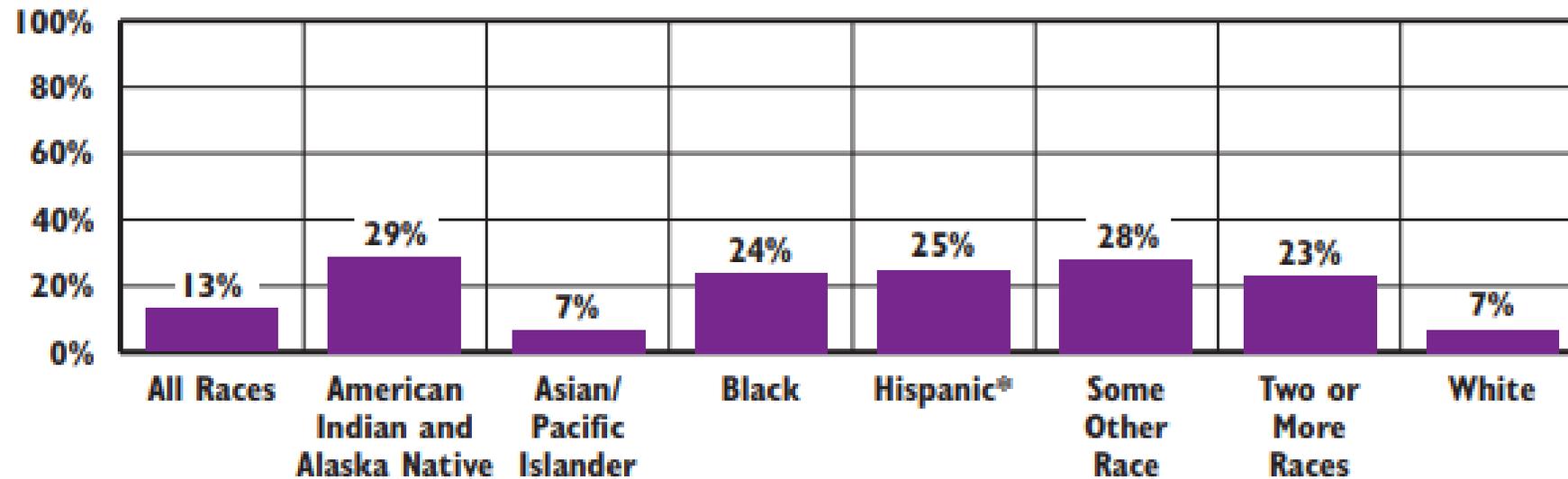
Source: Population Reference Bureau analysis of 2019-2023 American Community Survey data.

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

# Large Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Child Poverty



## Children in Poverty, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island, 2019-2023



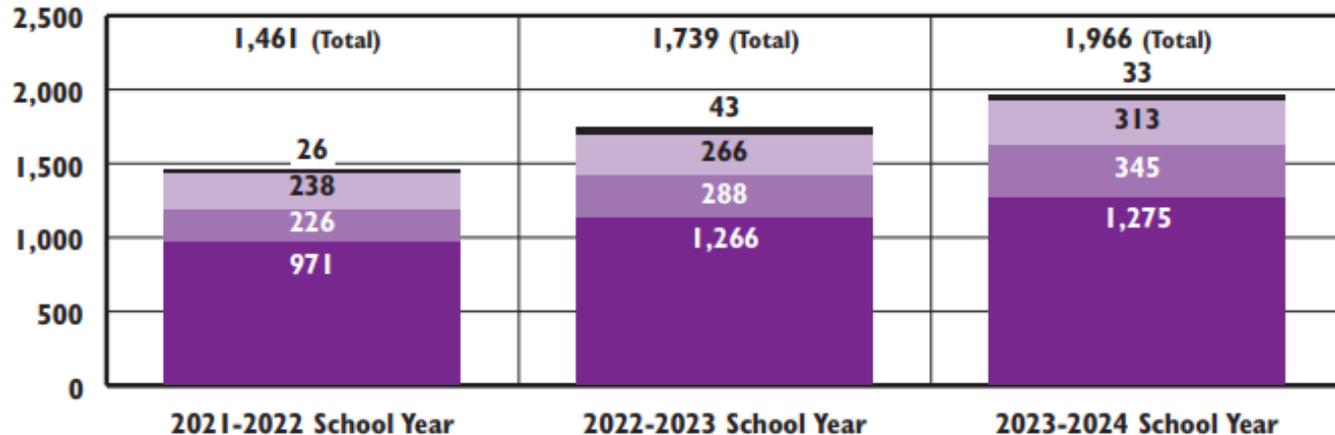
Note: Hispanic children may be included in any race category.

# More Children Experiencing Homelessness



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

■ Doubled Up  
 ■ Hotels and Motels  
 ■ Shelters  
 ■ Unsheltered



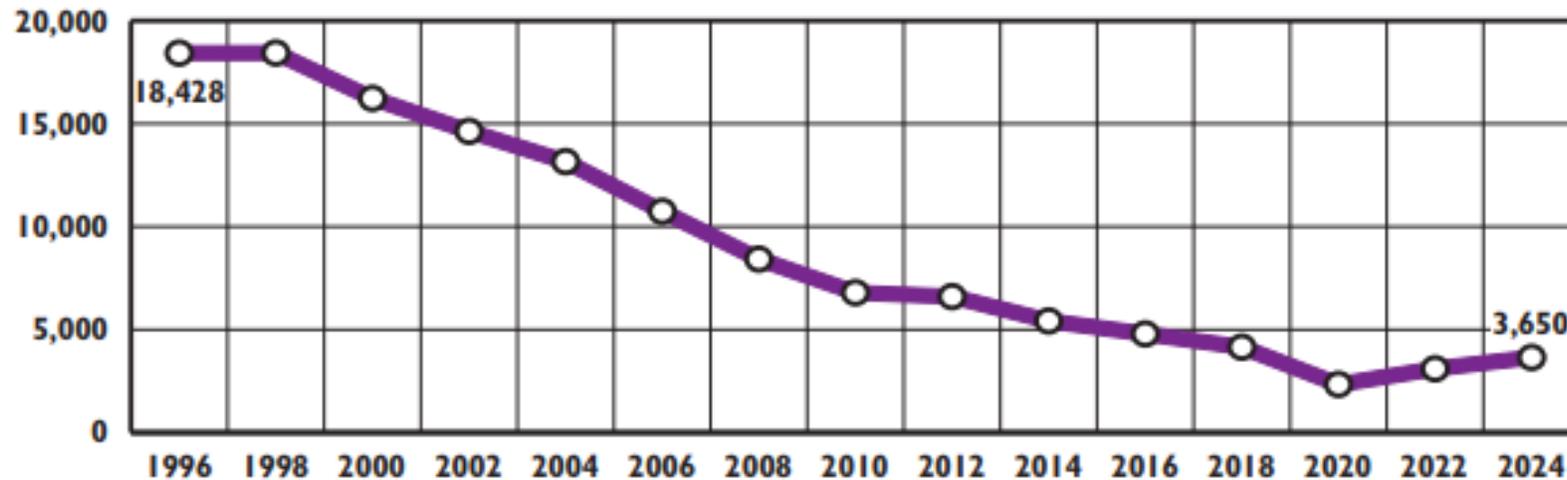
During the 2023-2024 school year, **Pawtucket** public school personnel identified 140 students as homeless.

- 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\*

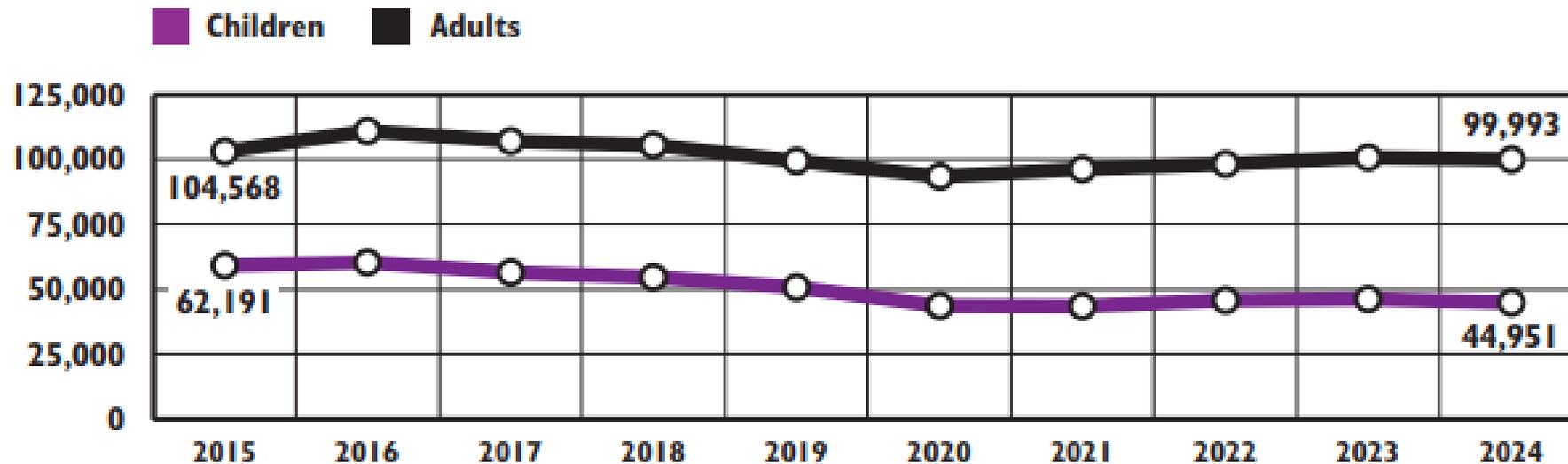


- **One in 20 or 5% (777) of children in Pawtucket receive cash assistance.**
- 68% of RI Works beneficiaries are children under age 18.
- A family of 3 receives a maximum of \$865/month, well below the poverty level, and benefits have only been raised twice in the past 30 years.

# How Can We Ensure that Rhode Island Children Are Fed?



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

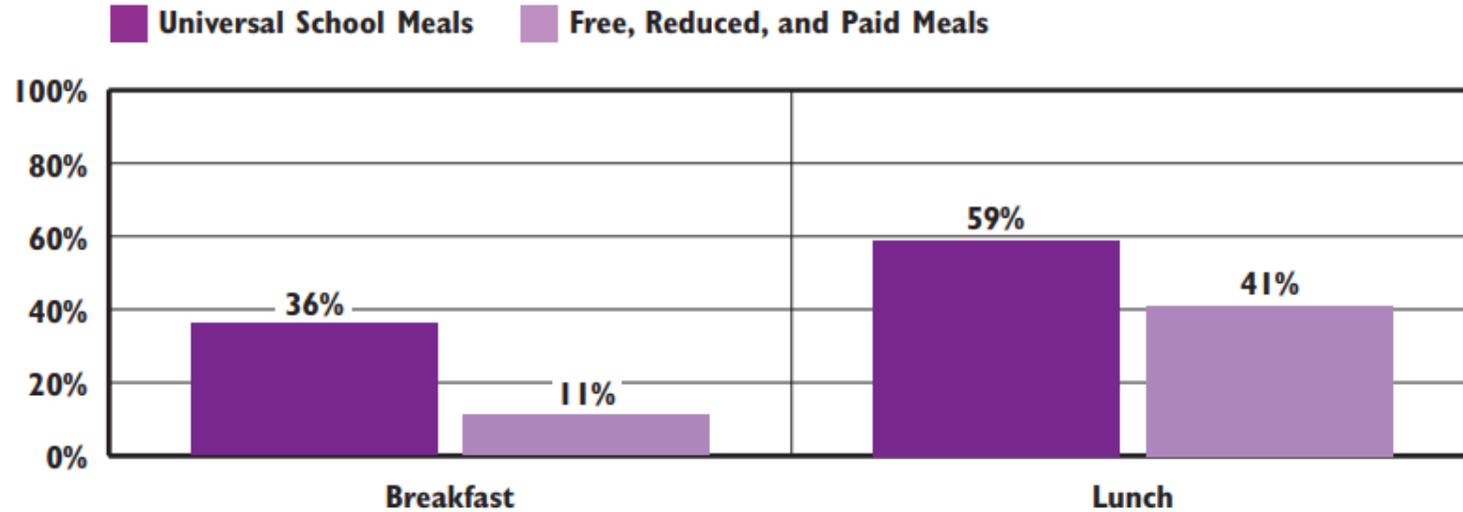


- Of the 144,944 Rhode Islanders enrolled in SNAP in October 2024, 69% were adults and 31% were children.
- In October 2024:
  - 5,037 children in Pawtucket received SNAP benefits

# Children Participating in School Meals



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



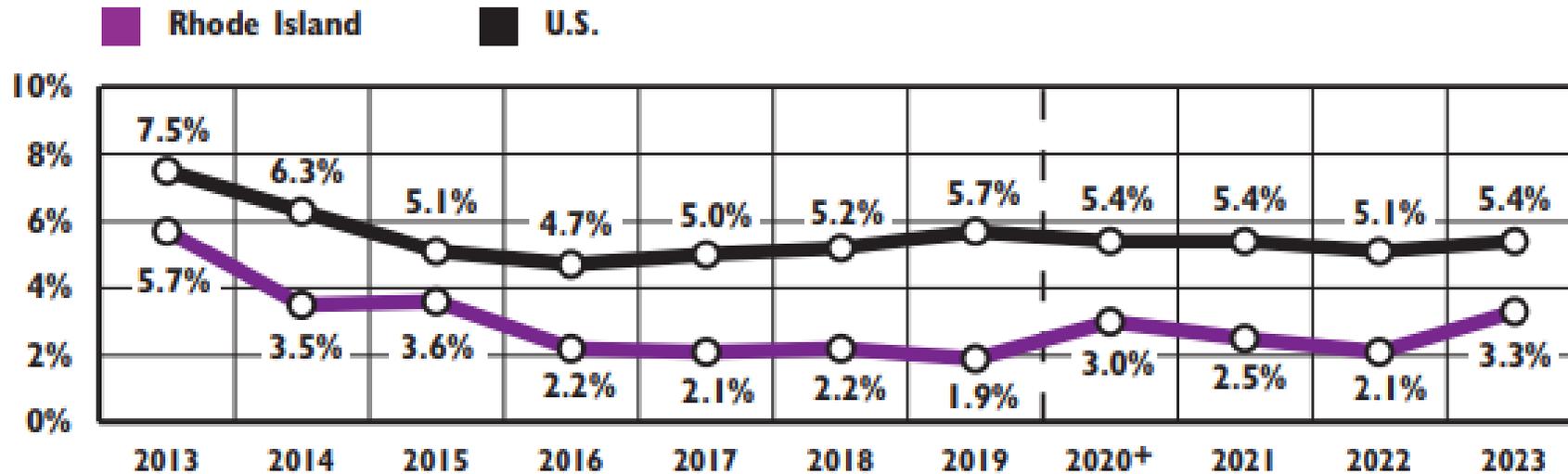
- Schools participating in CEP or other universal meals options have higher rates as do schools offering breakfast in the classroom, grab-and-go, and other flexible options.
  - **Pawtucket has 71% participating in lunch and 35% in breakfast.**
  - Central Falls has 80% participating in lunch and 41%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



## Children Without Health Insurance, Rhode Island, 2013-2023

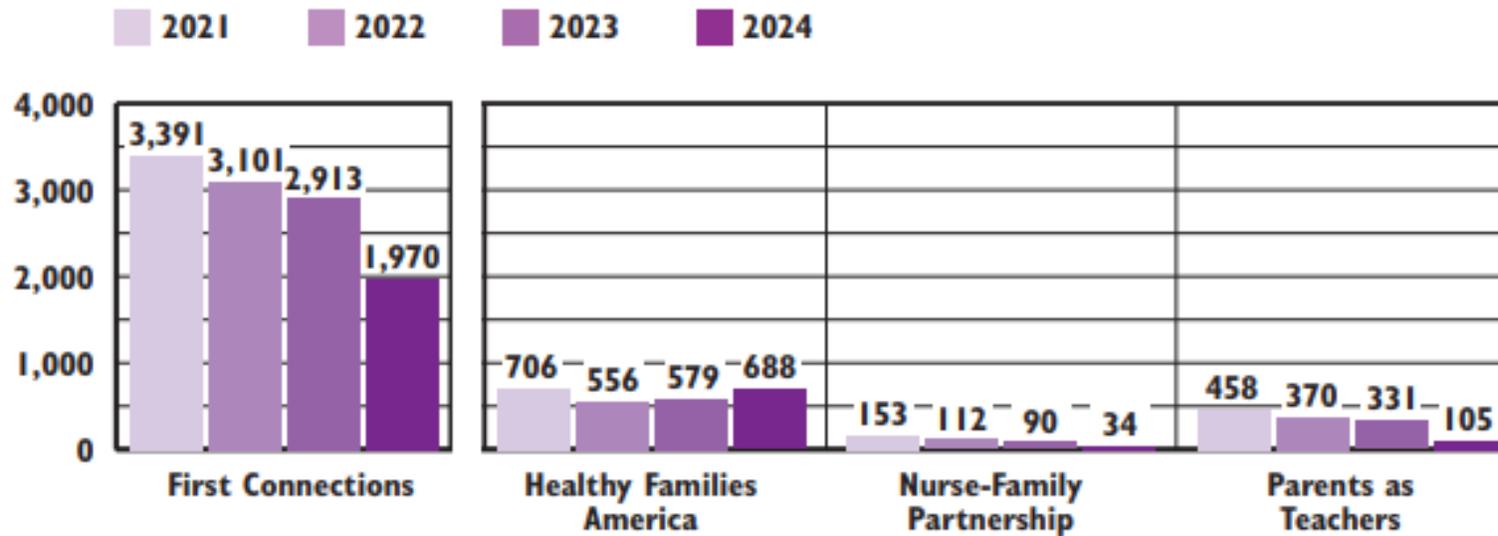


- Data released last fall show that in 2024 in Rhode Island:
  - ✓ 3.7% of children under age 19 were uninsured
  - ✓ Rhode Island ranks 12<sup>th</sup> best in the country
- **Cover All Kids** – all low-income kids now covered regardless of immigration status
- 117,890 children are covered by RItE Care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

# Family Home Visiting



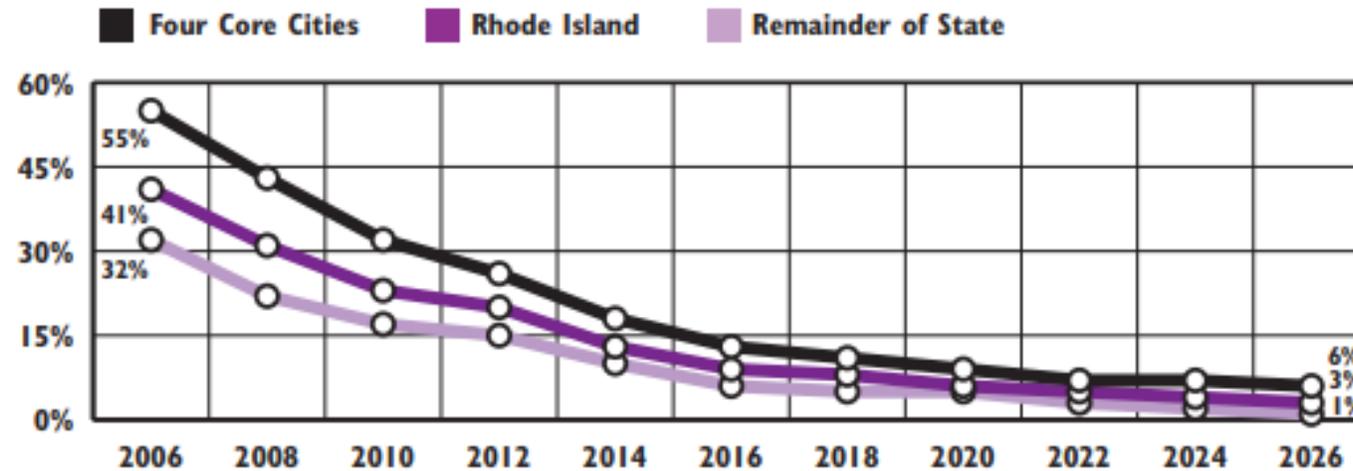
## Family Home Visiting Program Participation, Rhode Island, 2021-2024



- 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

  
**Children Entering Kindergarten with History of Elevated\* Blood Lead Level, Rhode Island, Four Core Cities, and Remainder of State, 2006-2026**

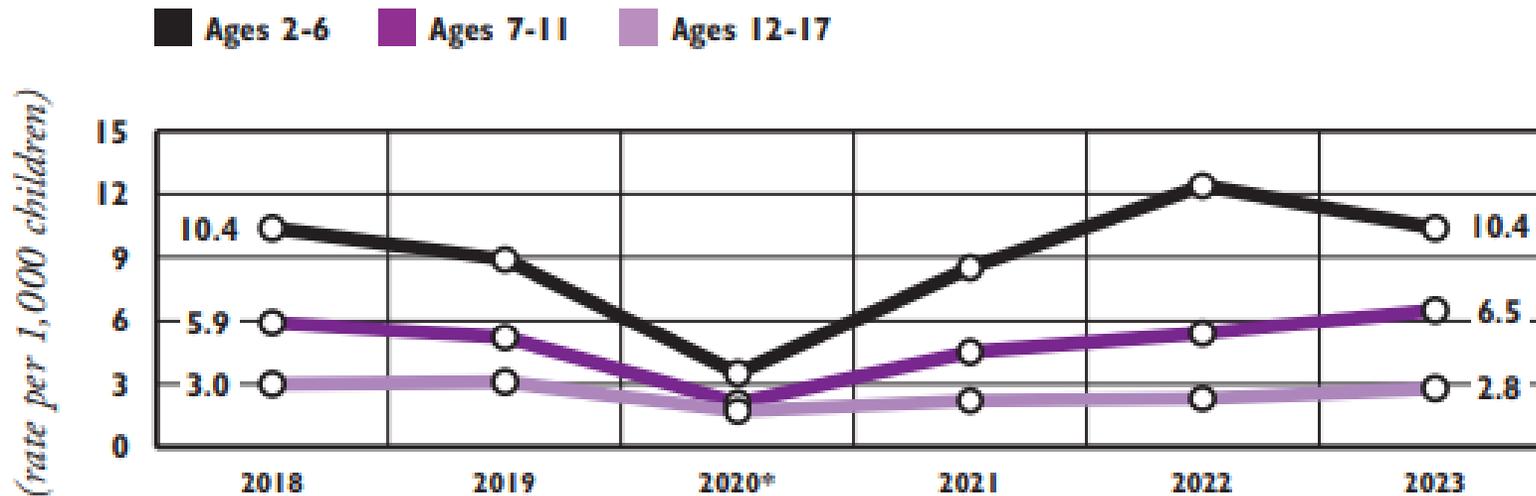


- 876 **Pawtucket** children due to enter kindergarten in the fall of 2026 had been tested
- 67 (7.6%) were confirmed positive for  $\geq 3.5 \mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ , the 4<sup>th</sup> highest rate in the state.

# Children with Asthma



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



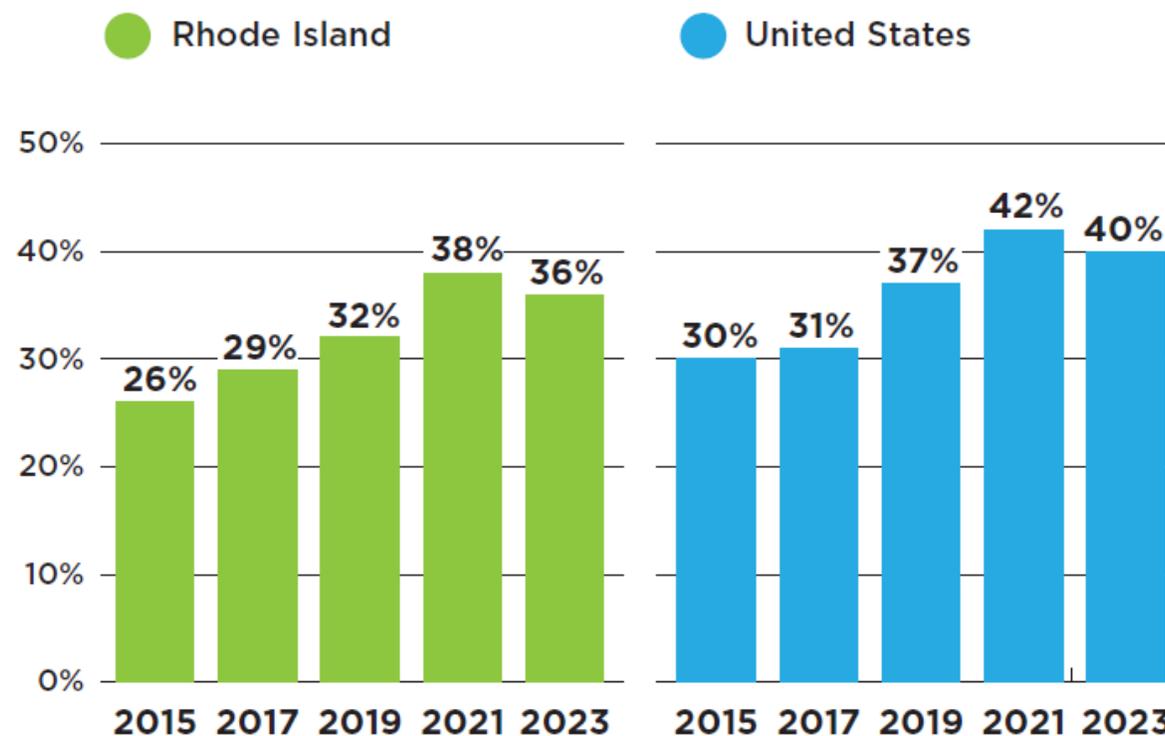
\*Asthma-related emergency department visits decreased substantially in 2020 and must be interpreted with caution due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Pawtucket** has the 4<sup>th</sup> 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

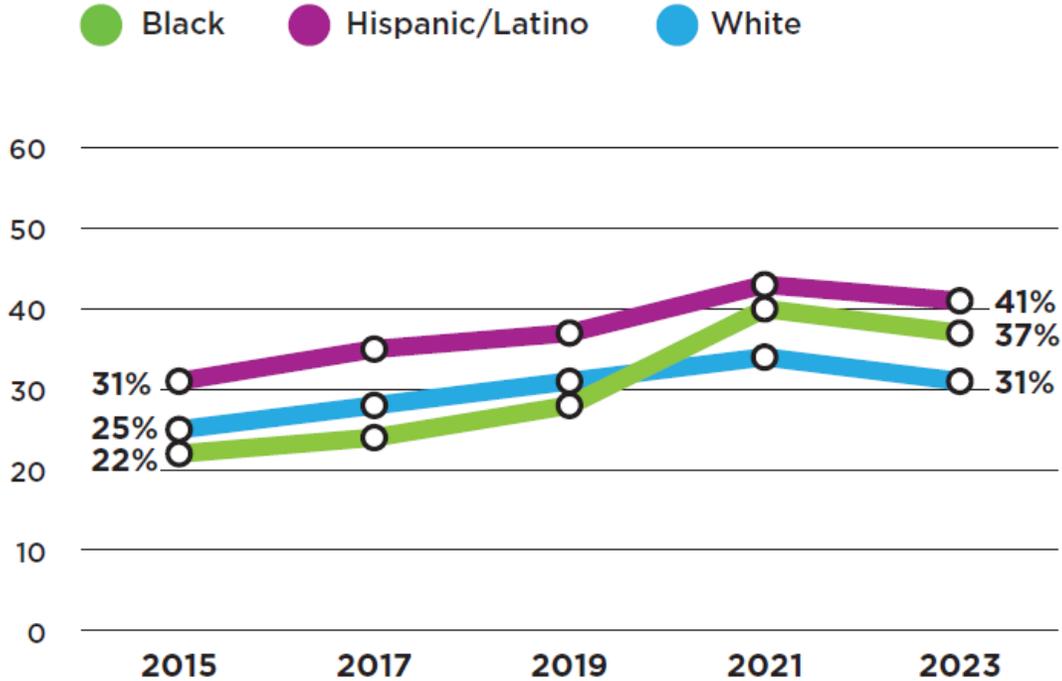
## FEELINGS OF SADNESS OR HOPELESSNESS AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, RHODE ISLAND AND UNITED STATES, 2015-2023



Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015-2023.

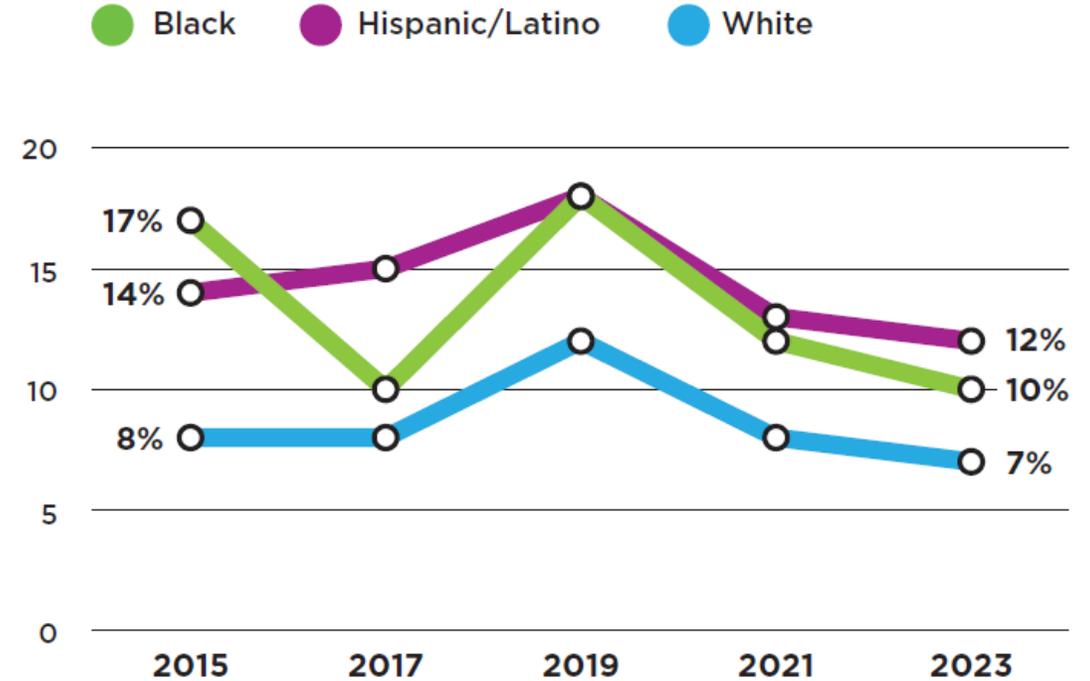
# Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Youth Mental Health

**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.

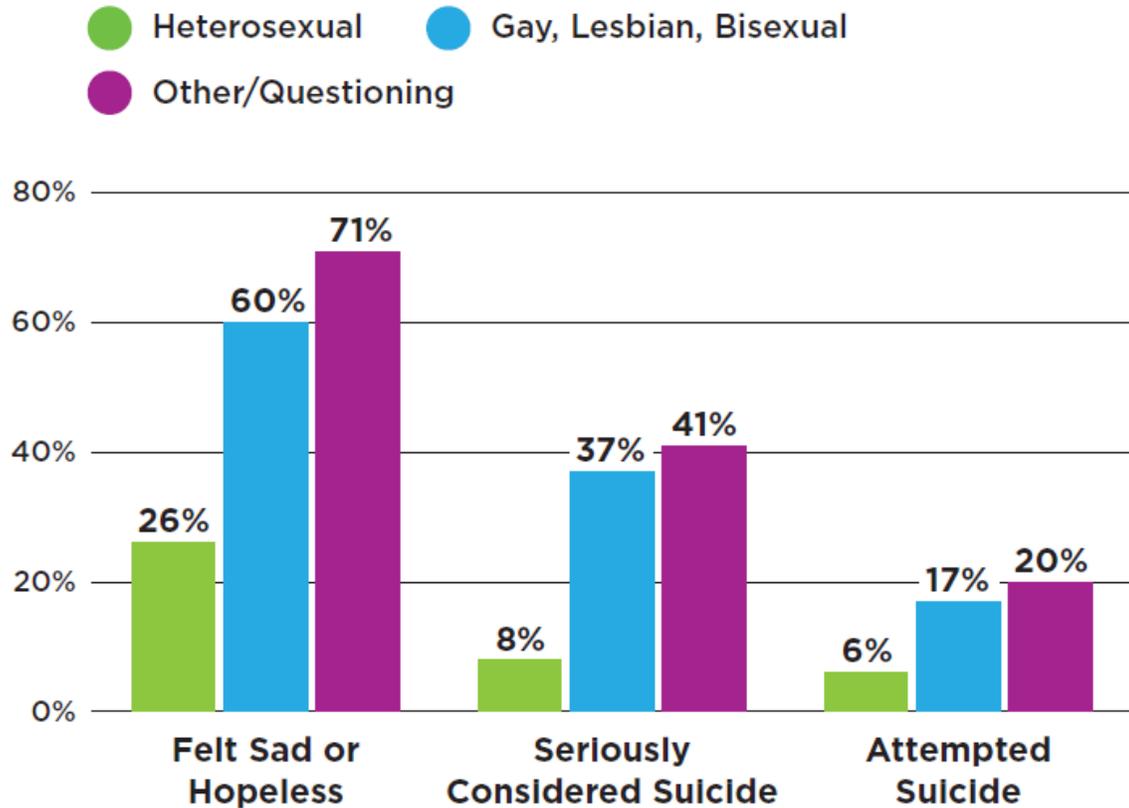
**SUICIDE ATTEMPTS AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, RHODE ISLAND, BY RACE AND ETHNICITY, 2015-2023**



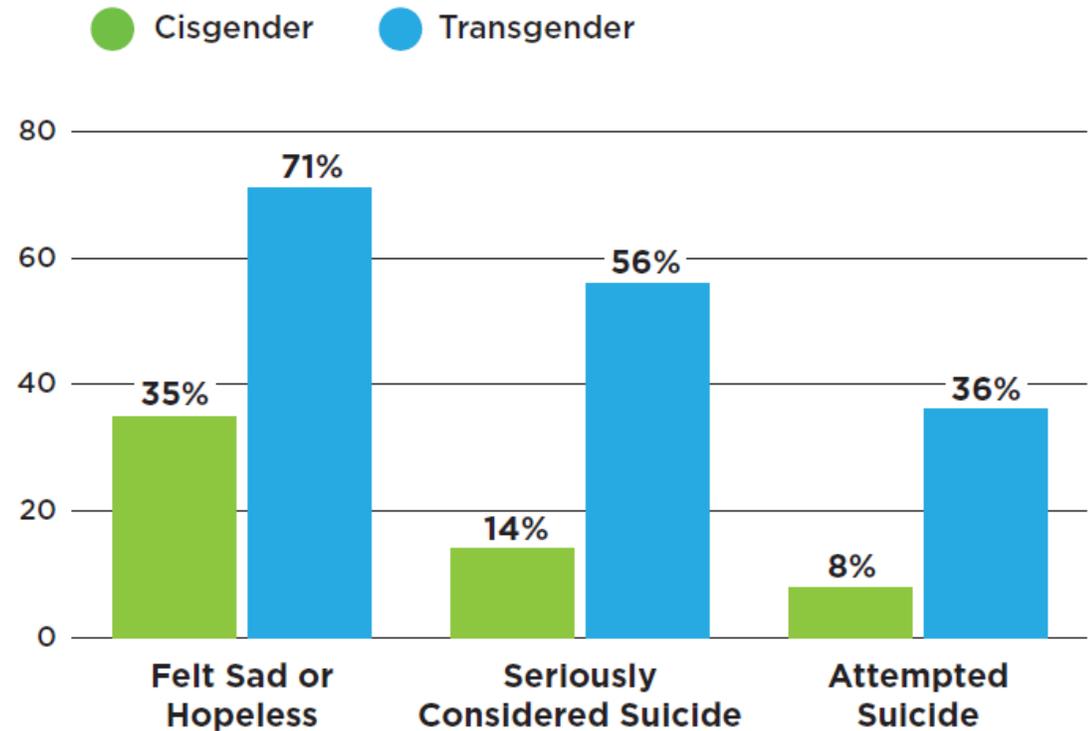
Source: Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015-2023.

# The Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Youth In Rhode Island

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



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



Source: Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2023.

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

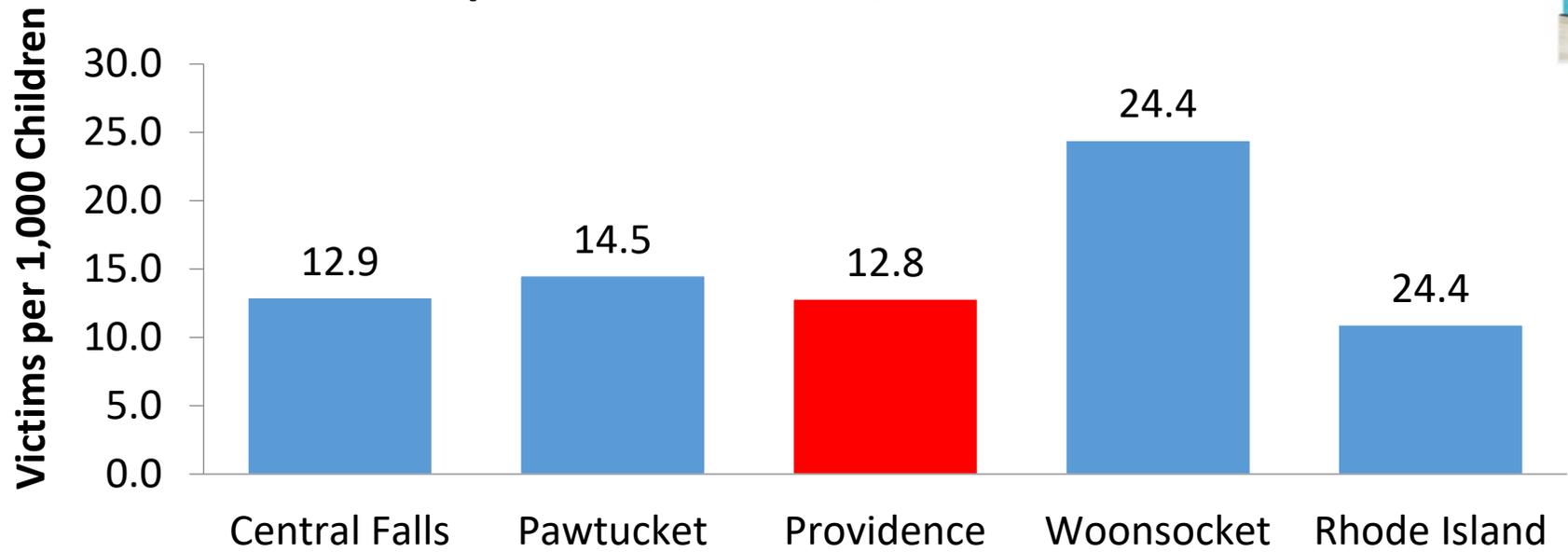
# A Snapshot of *SurveyWorks* Data in Pawtucket

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 <b>sad or hopeless</b> almost every day for 2 weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?	37%
How much has <b>stress</b> interfered with your ability to participate in school in the last 30 days?	59%
How likely is it that someone from your school will <b>bully you online</b> ?	42%
If a student is <b>bullied in school</b> , 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.

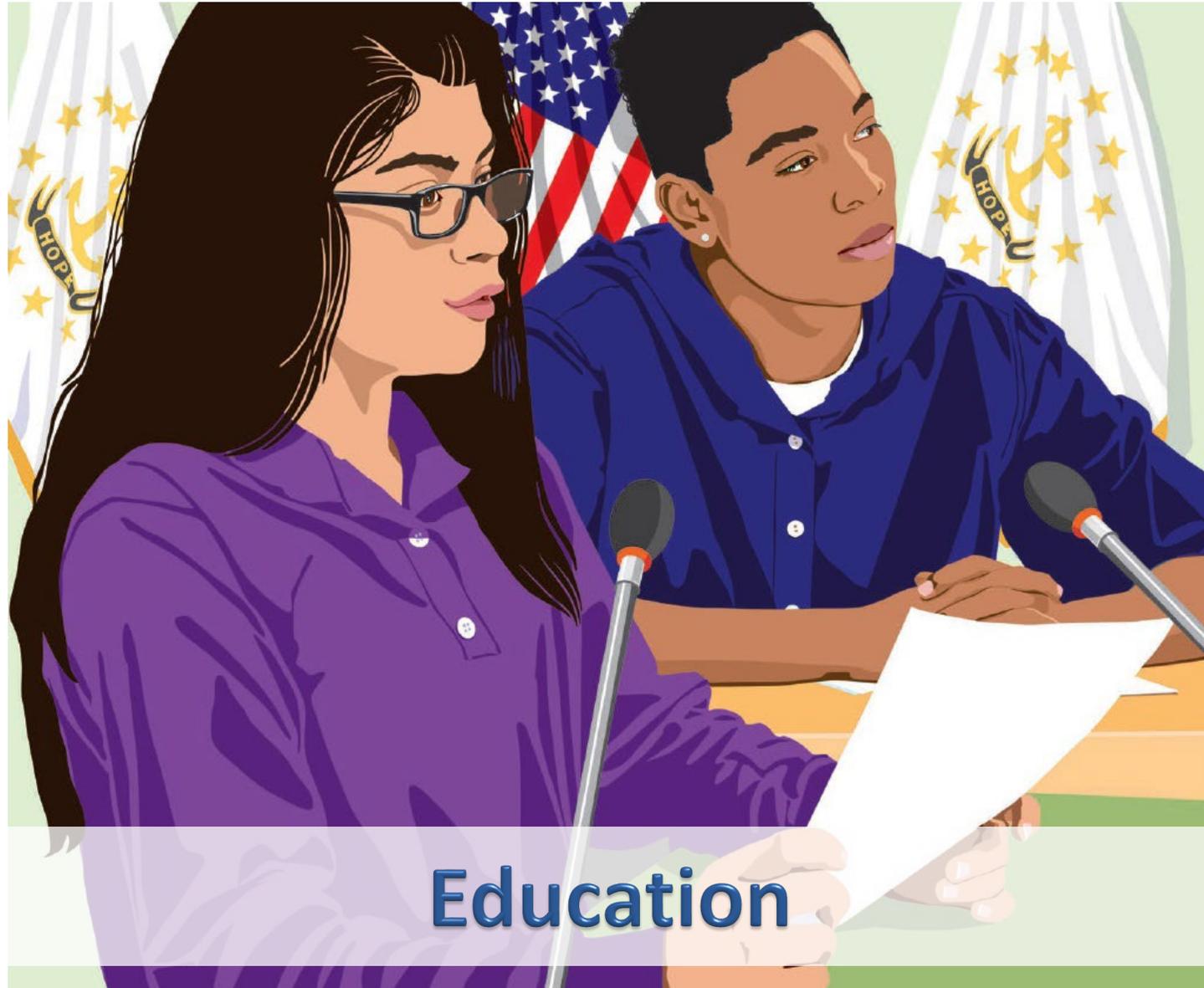
# Children of Incarcerated Parents



## 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
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,381</b>	<b>1,586</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>3,994</b>

- 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).

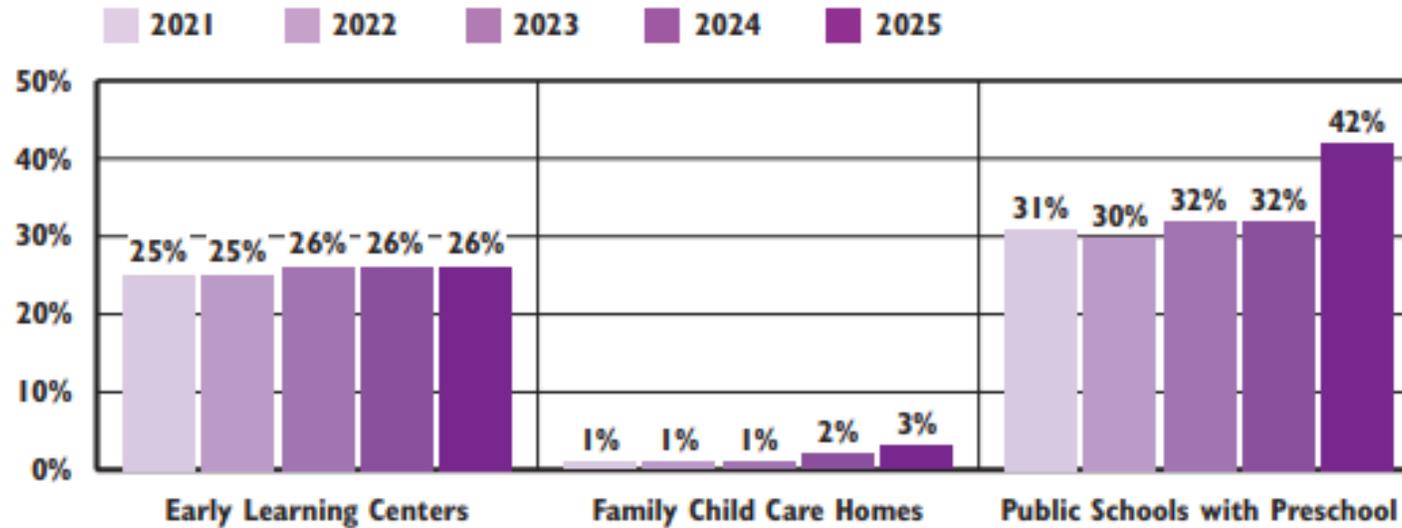


# Education

# 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**

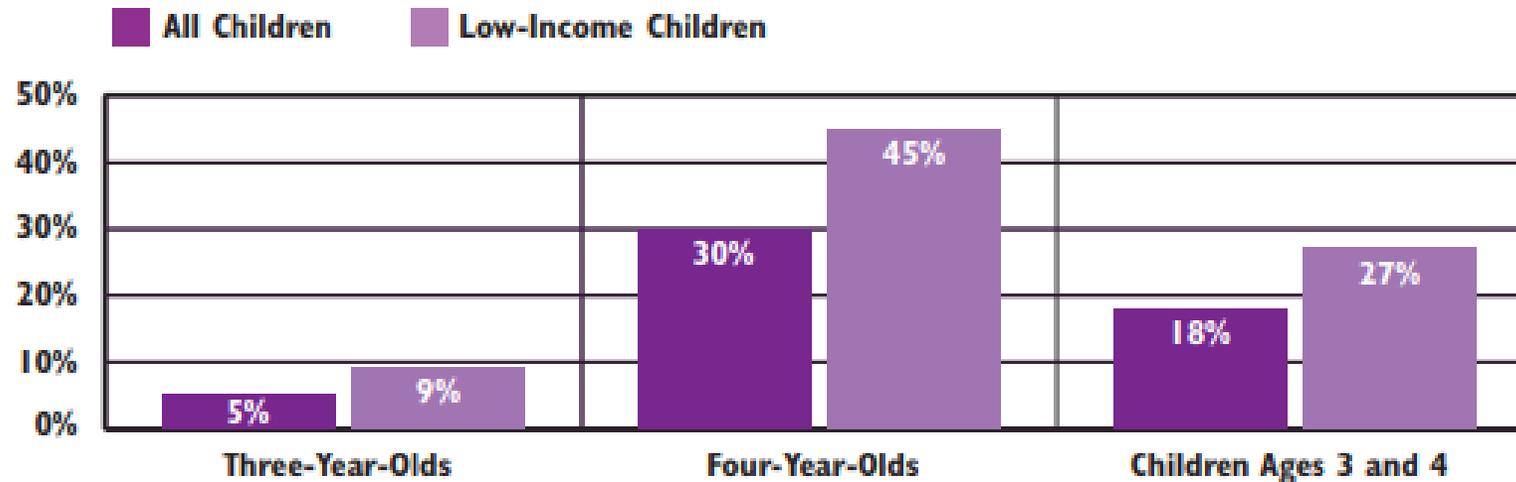


- All programs serving children participating in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) or the State Pre-K program are required to have a BrightStars rating.
- As of January 2025, **83% (5 out of 6) of Pawtucket’s public schools with preschool classrooms had a high-quality rating of 4 or 5 stars**, 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

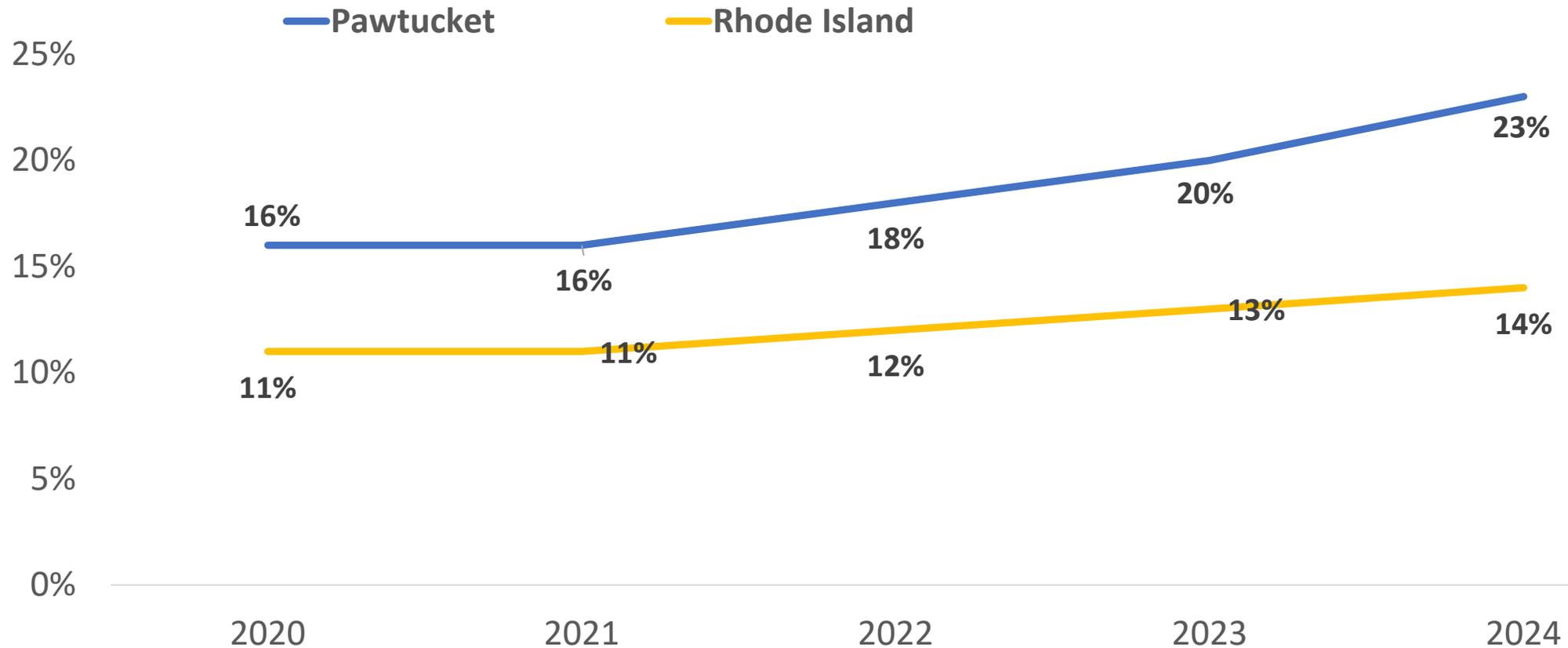


**Percentage of Children Ages 3 and 4 Enrolled in Head Start and/or RI Pre-K, Rhode Island, 2024-2025**



- **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.**

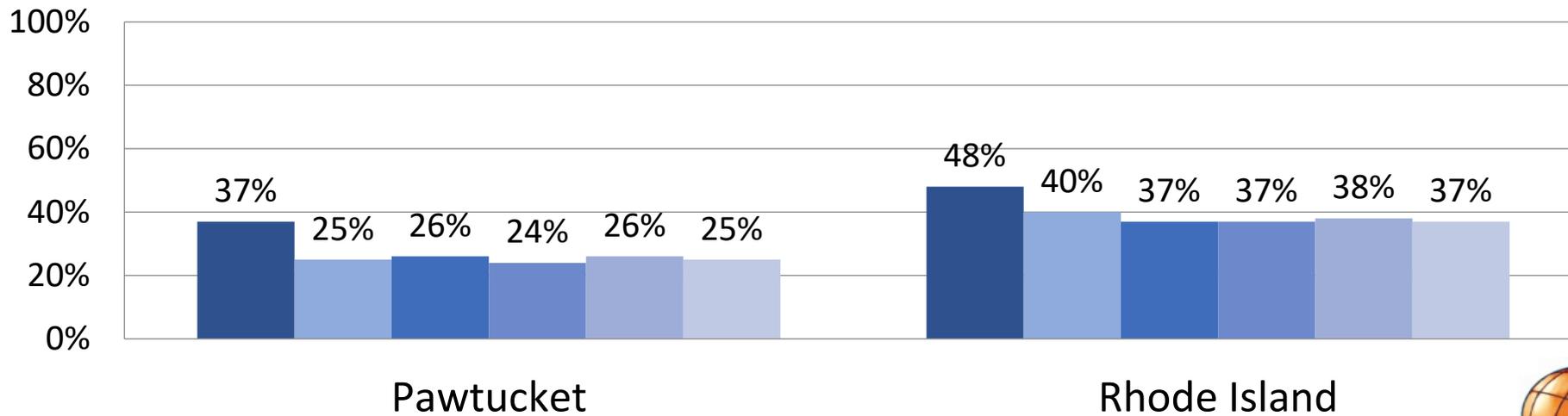
# Growing Number of Multilingual Students



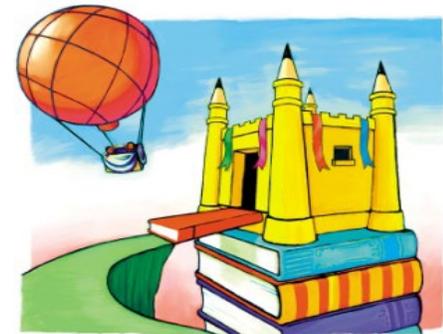
Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, 2019-2020 through 2023-2024 school years.

# 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 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading and What We Can Do About It

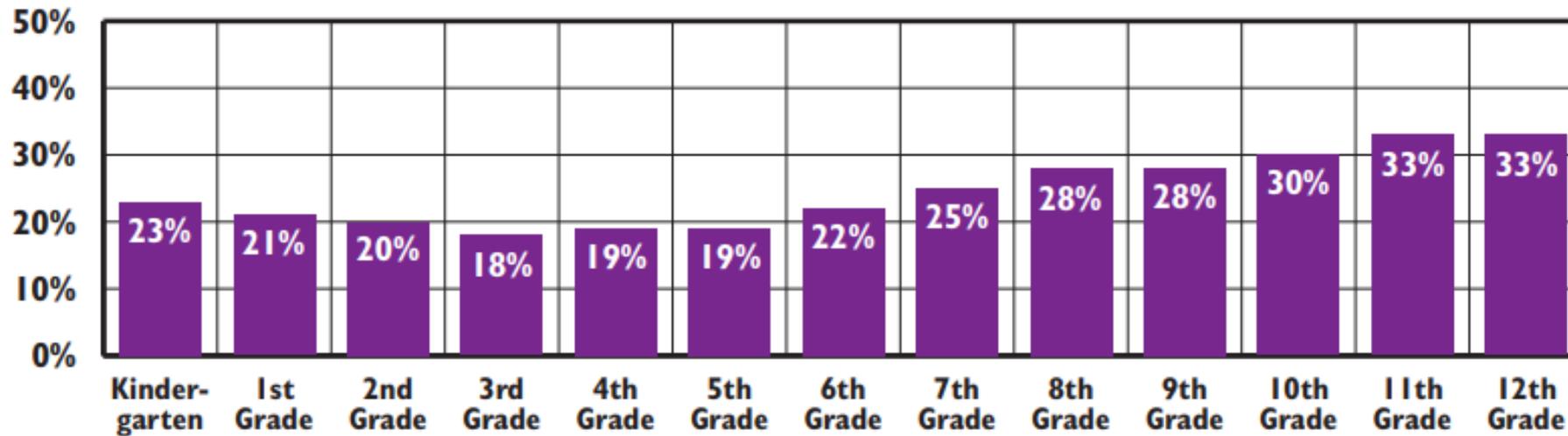
All **Pawtucket's** 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders Meeting Expectations, 2025 **25%**

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



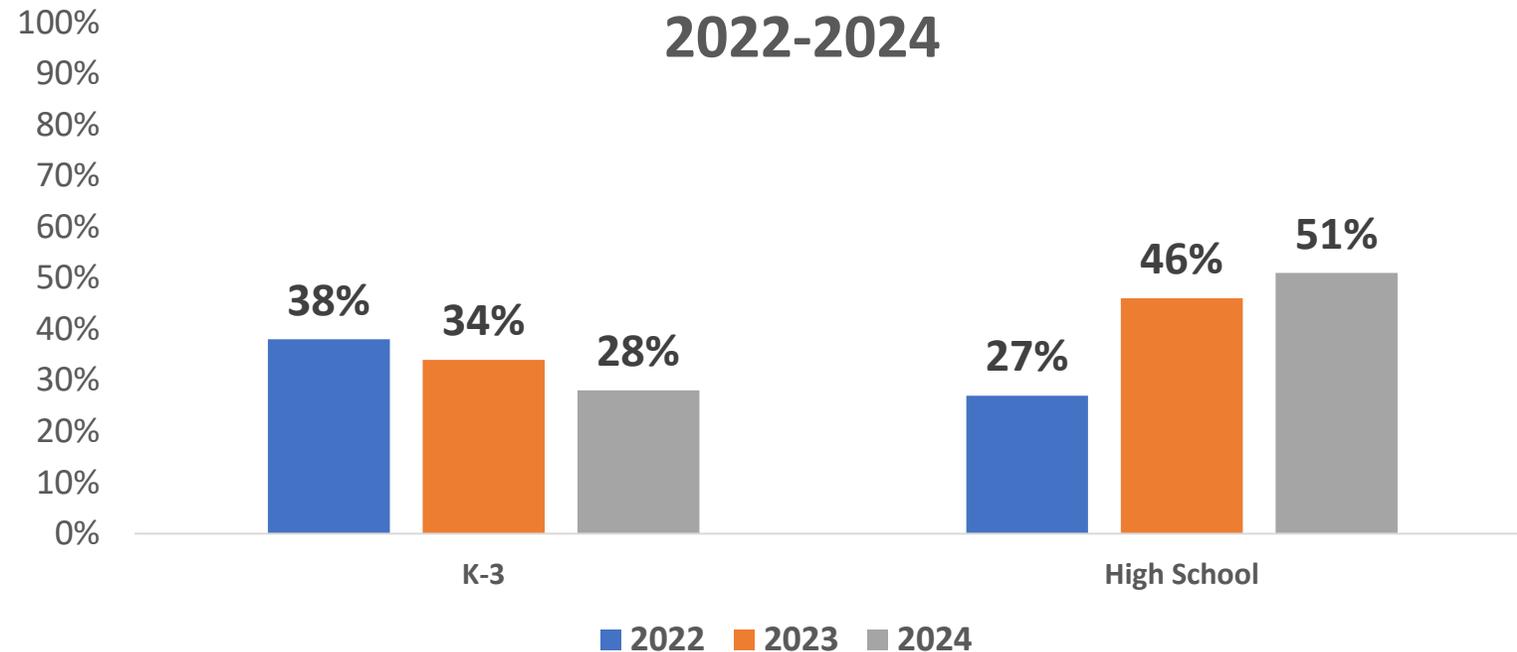
## Chronic Absence Rates in Rhode Island by Grade, 2023-2024 School Year



- 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

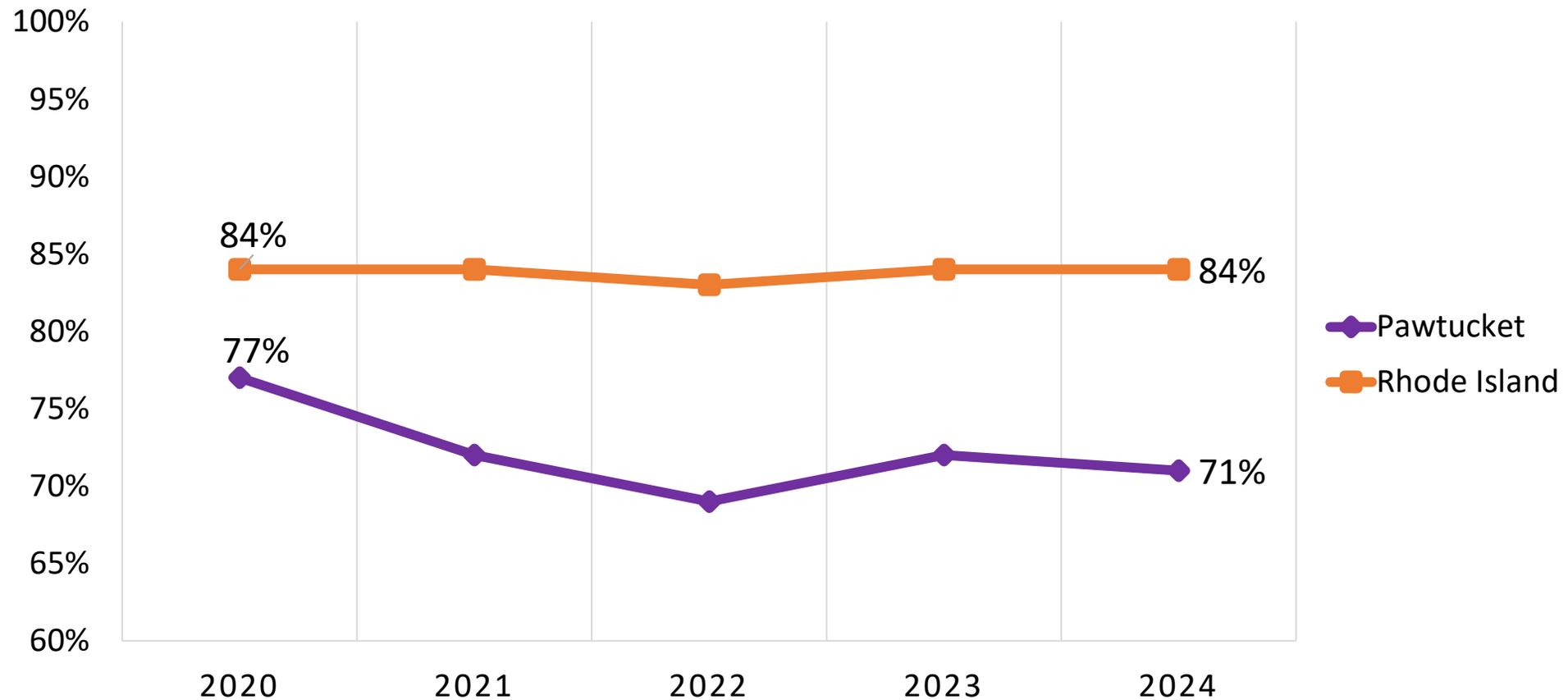


## Out-of-School Suspensions by Infraction, Rhode Island, 2023-2024

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 9<sup>th</sup> 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

<b>All Pawtucket Students</b>	<b>71%</b>
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%

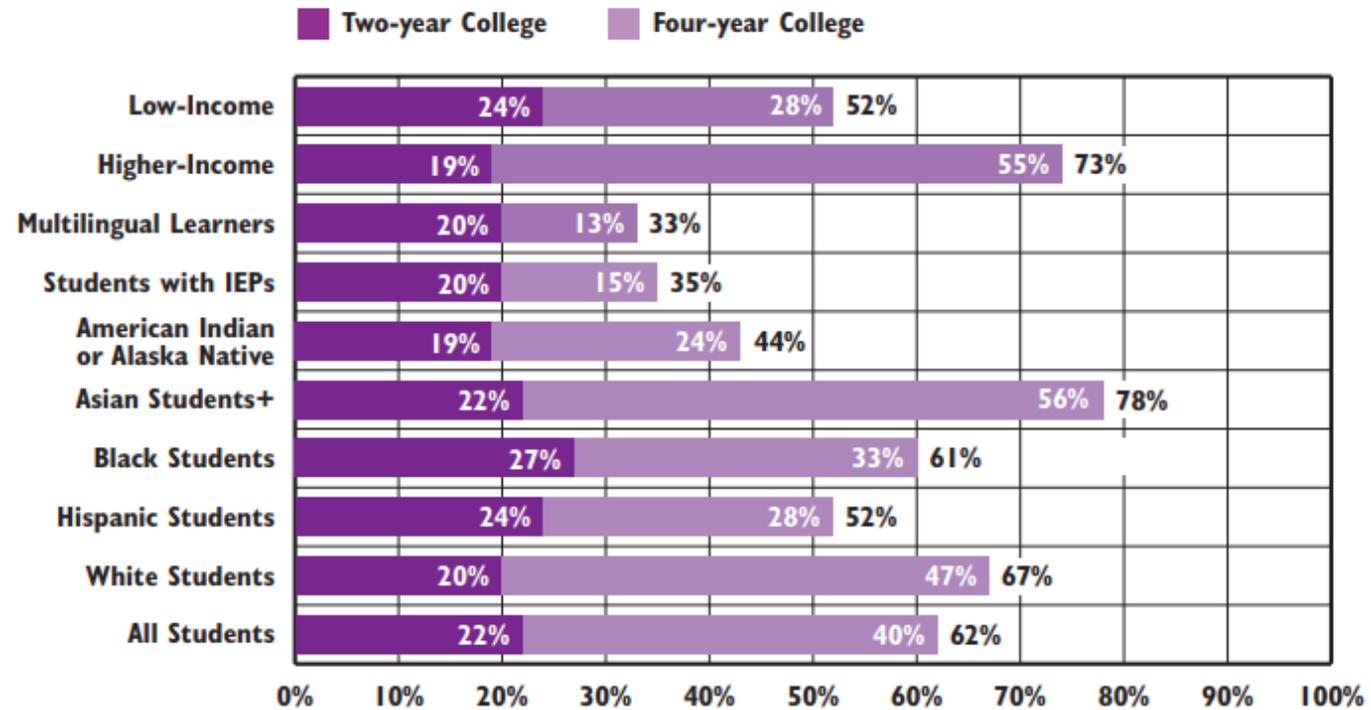


25% of children in foster care and 46% of children experiencing homelessness graduated in four years.

# 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.

**Rhode Island KIDS COUNT**  
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