

Bard College

20 Years of Bard Early College



Bard Baltimore

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Bard New Orleans

“We should also explore innovative approaches being pursued here in New York City; innovations like Bard High School Early College [...] that are challenging students to complete high school and earn a free associate’s degree or college credit in just four years.”

– PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA
SPEECH TO THE NAACP, 2009

1.0

Our Mission and Philosophy

Bard Early College is built on the belief that intellectually curious high school-aged students are ready and eager to do serious college work, that their ambition should be taken seriously, and that a liberal arts education can effectively engage them and prepare them to excel as the next generation of leaders.

Bard Early College acts on this vision as a tuition-free, multi-site college exclusively for adolescents in public school systems, empowering high school students – particularly those at risk of not completing postsecondary education – to access, afford, and complete college prepared to contribute to civic life and a range of professional pathways. Bard Early College simultaneously works to influence and lead a growing early college movement focused on equity and excellence.

*Bard Queens**Bard Newark*



Our Model

Bard Early College is a division of Bard College, a leading non-profit college of the liberal arts and sciences. Bard is renowned for innovation in the public interest, leading nationally recognized undergraduate programs for non-traditional students, including those who are incarcerated, adult learners, and students in urban high school systems.

Bard Early College is one undergraduate organization distributed across eight sites – Manhattan (New York City), Queens (New York City), Newark, New Orleans, Cleveland, Baltimore, Hudson Valley and Washington D.C – with over 3,300 students and 250 faculty.

Bard Early College fundamentally rethinks the connection between high school and college. BEC directly links the two by replacing the last two years of traditional high school with a tuition-free and rigorous immersion in college study. Students receive up to 60 college credits and an Associate in Arts degree from Bard College, alongside a high school diploma. These schools are designated as public high schools and accredited as branch campuses of Bard College. Through the Bard Sequence, Bard Early College also provides early college curricula through partnerships with existing schools and school networks.

Forward:

Bard President Leon Botstein

Dear Friends and Supporters of the Bard Early Colleges,

The 2021 – 22 academic year marks the 20th anniversary of the opening of the first public Bard High School Early College. Our aspiration was to demonstrate how a public tuition-free early college program could successfully offer a pathway for students in the public schools to earn not only a high school diploma, but also as much as an AA degree from Bard at the end of the four years of high school. In 2002 we moved to Houston Street in Lower Manhattan. BHSEC Manhattan, a private public venture made possible by the late Harold Levy, then Chancellor of the New York City Board of Education, was a resounding success. It was followed quickly in 2008 by a second Bard Early College in Queens. With the encouragement of Cory Booker, then Mayor of Newark, we opened a Bard Early College in Newark. After Newark, Bard Early Colleges were created in Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and Cleveland, and last but not least, in New Orleans, where Bard's educational initiative begun in the aftermath of Katrina turned into a full Bard Early College.

The enclosed report documents the character and accomplishments of all these Bard Early Colleges. The 20 years of experience have provided ample evidence that the early college offers a powerful public policy alternative that can offer adolescents in the public education system, particularly in the inner cities and among underserved communities, a pathway to education marked by excellence, the completion of four years of college, and access

to the wide variety of careers that are available to those who complete college. Bard Early Colleges realize the twin goals of equity and excellence in public education.

The factors that have made the Bard Early Colleges successful are:

1. A demanding curriculum backed by strategies in teaching that motivate students beginning in the 9th grade, no matter how deficient their education in elementary and middle school has been.
2. The recruitment of faculty with advanced degrees and training in the disciplines, from mathematics to literature
3. An emphasis on the skills of critical inquiry, particularly writing, reading, and quantitative reasoning
4. The creation of a supportive culture within a separate school structure thereby avoiding the challenges of dual-enrollment programs.

We look forward to the next 20 years as a period of expansion of the Bard Early College network. We have eight programs today, and we hope that number will double by the end of the decade. As we explore the expansion of the Bard Early College model, I want to thank all who helped us get to where we are. We have succeeded in transforming the years of secondary schooling by treating young adults seriously as learners capable of doing more than adapting to textbooks and standardized tests.

We are grateful to the community that has enabled the Bard Early College idea to flourish and grow. The fundamental change in the opportunity faced by young people that the Bard Early Colleges have created should inspire us. There is much more to be done; it is therefore deeply gratifying to be able to work together on expanding a program that actually shows concrete results and promises significant improvement in the education of this nation's young people.



Leon Botstein

President, *Bard College*

2.0

The Power and Promise of Early College

Twenty years after Bard College President Leon Botstein and then-Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education Harold Levy launched the first Bard High School Early College, Bard continues to lead a national discussion about who has access to a first-rate college education and when. These questions have the power to transform young people's lives and communities.

Since the first Bard High School Early College opened its doors, we have acted with urgency to expand the reach of this model. Bard has partnered with public school systems to launch early colleges in Newark, New Orleans, Cleveland, Baltimore, Hudson, and Washington, D.C. In the last decade, we have created over 1,000 new seats for young people, with a strong emphasis on communities with limited access to higher education, and we've awarded over 3,000 college degrees.

This is a moment of increasing concern over higher education – a system that is essential to our democracy and yet not democratically accessible. As a society, we need college to be an inclusive home for free, rigorous, and fearless expression and inquiry for young people from all corners of American life. We believe that Bard Early College is an essential part of building this vision, opening doors for our students and changing the conversation on teaching and learning in our country.



On eight campuses, from Cleveland to Baltimore, the Bard Early Colleges enroll over 3,000 students (more than half of whom are the first in their families to pursue a college degree), employ 300 full-time undergraduate faculty, and award over 700 Bard College Associate in Arts degrees every year – all without a dime of tuition ever changing hands.

Today, this is possible thanks to the generosity and commitment of a growing community of parents, alumni/ae, educators, partners, and civic leaders. You can read some of their stories here.

Thank you for working with us to make college free and excellent for young people across the country.



A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' and 'T' followed by a long horizontal line.

Stephen Tremaine

Executive Director, *Bard Early College*

Vice President for Early Colleges, *Bard College*

“A visit to [BHSEC] is a glimpse into the realm of the possible....In class after class, I was struck by how engaged the students were....One of the things [BHSEC] has shown is that kids from widely different backgrounds...can thrive in an educational environment that is much more intellectually demanding than your typical high school.”

– BOB HERBERT, NEW YORK TIMES, “A VERY BRIGHT IDEA”



Bard Manhattan

Bard Newark

History of Bard Early College

In its first decade, Bard Early College launched and established one of the country's first public early college high schools – our flagship campuses in New York City – followed by our campus in Newark, New Jersey.

In its second decade, BEC expanded its campus network to five states and the District of Columbia. BEC also introduced new models and new approaches to early college and established a national structure to advocate for public policies that support excellent and equitable early college.

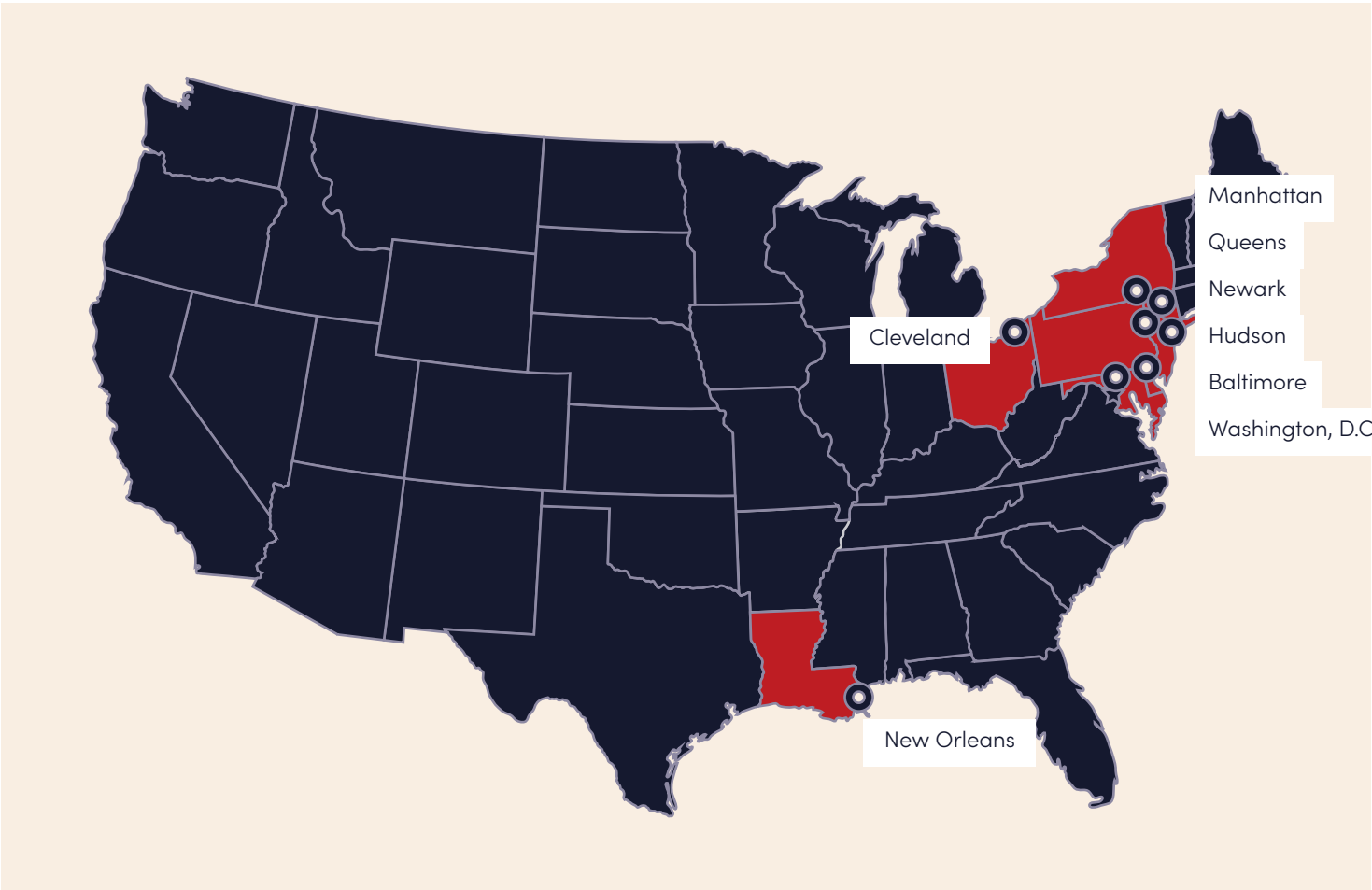
Bard Early College has begun its third decade as a home for intellectually ambitious teenagers and is deepening its policy impact at the local, state, and national levels.

Over the last two decades, early college has grown from an idea to a movement, with programs inspired by Bard's model in nearly every state in the U.S. Bard Early College nonetheless remains unique, as a leading force both in public policy and in the classroom.



Bard New Orleans

Bard New Orleans





Michael Lerner, PhD
Principal

**BARD HIGH SCHOOL
EARLY COLLEGE
MANHATTAN**

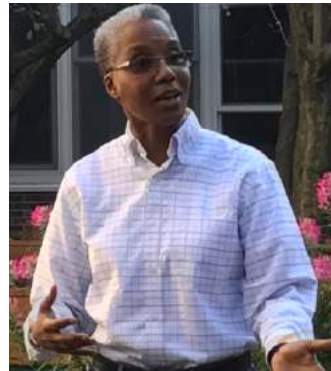
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Executive Director

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Francesca Gamber, PhD
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Matthew Park, PhD
Executive Director

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Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

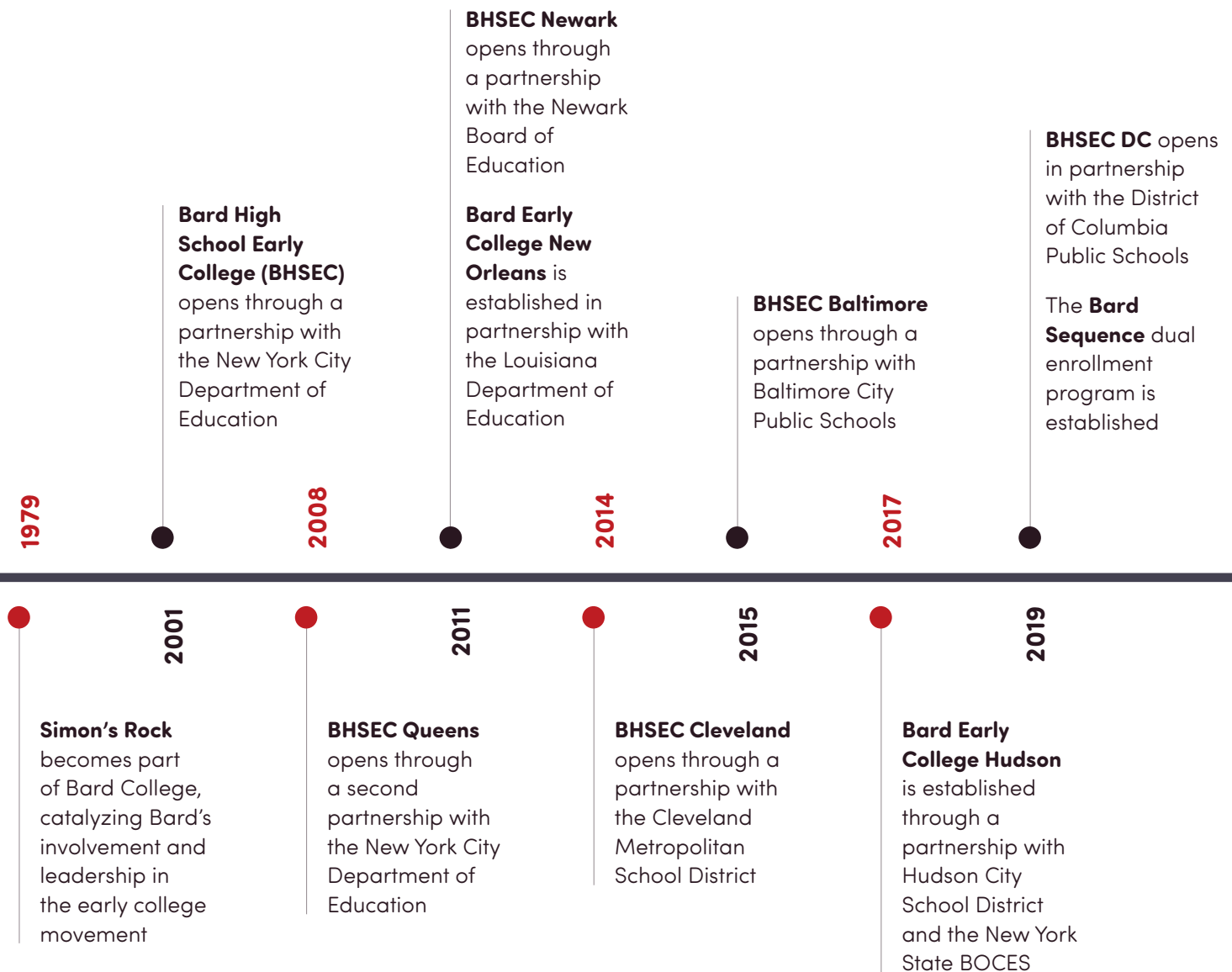


Vanessa Anderson, PhD
Principal

**BARD HIGH SCHOOL
EARLY COLLEGE DC**

4430 H Street SE,
Washington, DC 20019

Timeline



Early College Excellence and Impact

Bard Early College alumni/ae enroll in college after high school and earn four-year degrees at significantly higher rates than college-goers nationwide, especially alumni/ae from historically excluded groups.

Percent of
Students Earning
Two-Year
Degrees

73%



73% of BHSEC students earn a two-year degree by the end of high school, tuition-free

39%



39% of students nationwide who enroll in a two-year degree program earn any credential within six years

6-year BA
Completion
Rates



86%

Six-year BA completion across all graduating classes at BHSEC



63%

National average for six year BA completion

37%

According to an independent study using matched-pair analysis in NYC, attending Bard Early College resulted in Black students being 37% more likely to complete a BA than matched students who attended traditional high schools

48 credits

Bard Early College alumni/ae transferred an average of 48 college credits to their next institution of higher learning

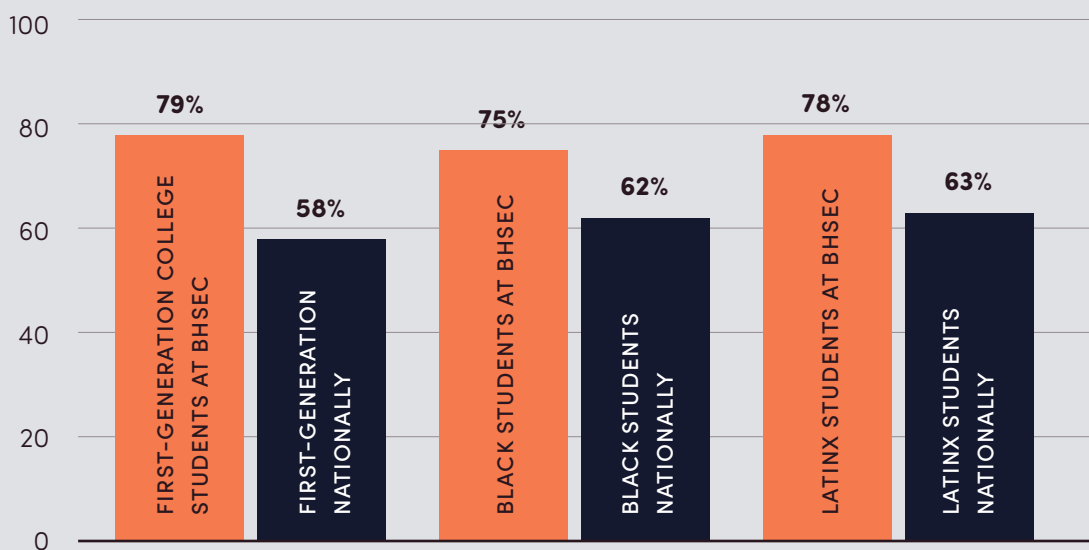
12%

According to an independent study using matched-pair analysis in Newark, attending BHSEC Newark made students 12% more likely to enroll in a four-year college after high school

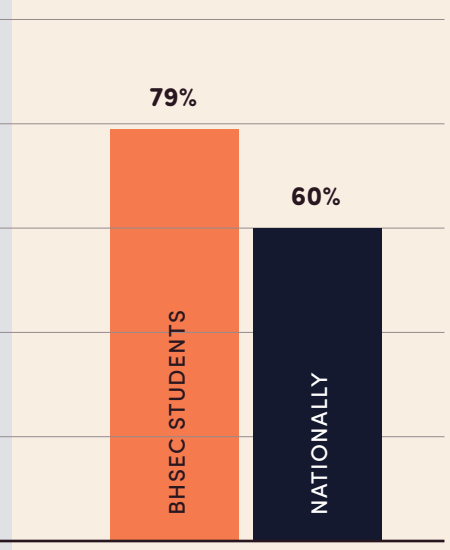
97%

97% of students graduated with at least a high school diploma and one year of college credit

Rates of immediate college enrollment (within 6 months of high school graduation):

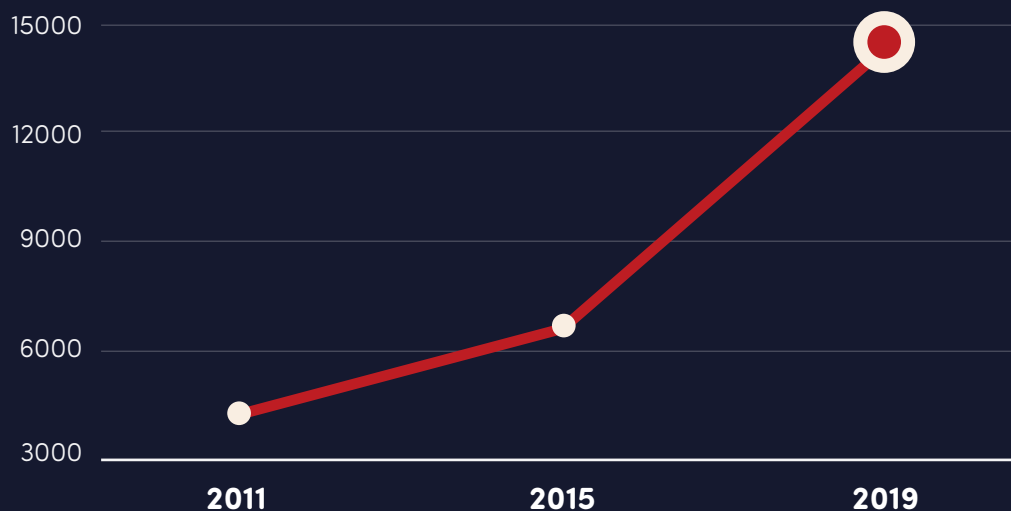


Rates of 4-year degree completion within six years of college enrollment:



4.0

In the most recent class, Bard Early College awarded over 10,000 tuition-free, transferable college credits to young people who are Black, Hispanic or Latinx, low-income, and/or first-generation.



Bard College credits awarded at BEC to students who are Black, Hispanic or Latinx, low-income, and/or first-generation.

Recent analysis by the Education Trust - New York follows the rate at which students of economic need in New York State are progressing from high school to a bachelor's degree. Their research found that, among families for whom college was financially inaccessible, BHSEC Manhattan and Queens alumni/ae had higher on-time college graduation rates than any other high school in the state of New York.

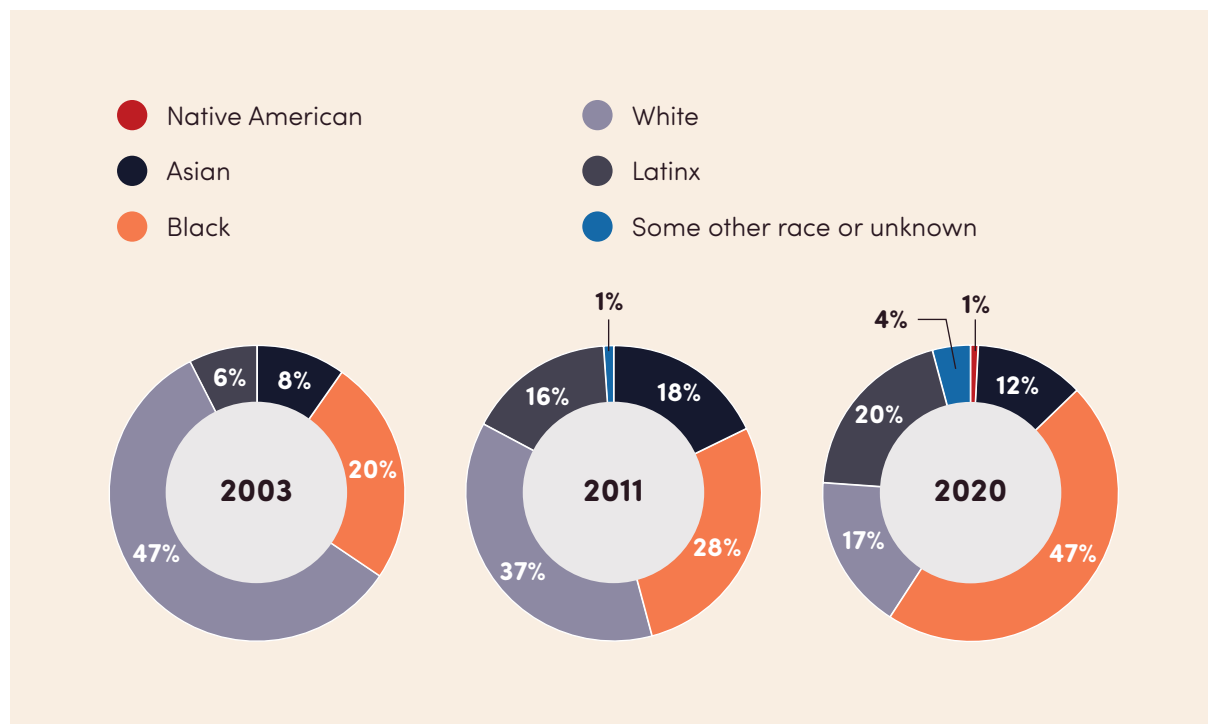
Source: <https://newyork.edtrust.org/to-and-through/>

**“Early College gives
students the opportunity
to be in an environment
that encourages
intellectual independence
and self-expression...
What we’re offering is a
unique chance to develop
both as a young person
and as a scholar.**

– DR. FRANCESCA GAMBER, PRINCIPAL, BHSEC BALTIMORE

4.0

Bard Early College's schools are diverse by design, reflecting the racial and economic makeup of their cities and communities. Intentionally scaling where opportunities for higher education are lacking, BEC's respond to the urgent need for education reform and access in underserved communities.



5.0

Student and Alumni/ae Voices

"Bard taught me to be skeptical of the world, to be aware and mindful of things. Don't just take things at face value, don't take assumptions and stereotypes and just hold them to your heart when there's so much more. At Bard, I've learned how to critically think."

–JENNORA, MANHATTAN, '20



"Coming into BHSEC as a high school freshman was a difficult transition. A lot of us didn't have the study habits. It was the team building that really prepared me for college. We were treated as young adults, taught to take ownership of our learning and given room to voice our opinions. A lot of teenagers crave all of that."

–DR. MOSI LONDON, MANHATTAN, '06

"After coming to BHSEC, I learned how to speak out. I learned how to lead conversations. I learned how to participate in discussions, and I also learned, most importantly, how to be a leader."

–GENESIS, QUEENS, '20

"At Bard, you have a sense of independence, but while at home online you have to have discipline to sit down and actually do the work, and I wouldn't have had that discipline nor that sense of responsibility had I not been at Bard."

–KIMBRIELLE, NEW ORLEANS, '20



"Learning to think for myself was a lot harder than learning how to get good grades or test scores. BHSEC has allowed me to unlock an intellectual vitality and curiosity that I carry with me everywhere."

–TAYLOR SPANN, BALTIMORE, '17

"I never thought I would be ready for college until I realized that I was already in one. Bard helped me shift my way of thinking about myself and the world through stimulating and growing on my existing knowledge, as opposed to remediating my interests to socially proclaimed "smart" ones, under the guise of education...Bard emphasizes that higher education is a tool that has the potential to change the world, rather than a chore that must be done for a piece of paper."

–AARSHA JOSHI, QUEENS, '23

"BHSEC changed the way I see education. Before coming to BHSEC, I didn't like school. Staying focused on long tasks is challenging for me, and I used to get bored and distracted. I didn't think college was the right thing for me. At BHSEC, the class discussions build on what we're learning and there is always a new perspective or opinion being offered that keeps it interesting. BHSEC helped support me with strategies to remain focused on my assignments and gave me the opportunity to seriously explore computer science. Now, I plan to major in computer science in college. Education for me is the key to success and to help my family reach new heights."

–DANIEL OYASODUM, NEWARK, '22

"BHSEC opened my eyes to education. Before I came here, I thought education was just about getting good grades in school -- just do that and you're going to be good. BHSEC taught me that education is not just about grades. It's about understanding. Everything we do at BHSEC involves thinking and questioning things with our own opinions. It's not about memorizing the right answers for a test. Understanding things and being part of conversations that push me to think further makes me feel powerful."

–JILES EBAI, NEWARK, '23

“Intellect is not a matter of merely having knowledge, but of analysis, integration, and synthesis that makes knowledge useful. In supporting the intellectual growth of our diverse student body, faculty and staff understand that to be useful, knowledge must also be relevant.”

– DR. CARLA STEPHENS, PRINCIPAL, BHSEC NEWARK

Why Early College

Early college is no longer an experiment in American education. Today, following Bard's lead, over one million students begin undergraduate coursework before the end of high school. Bard Early College is a model of excellence and impact in this growing field, distinguished in four key areas:

Depth

Bard Early College intentionally weaves together a high school and college education throughout its curriculum design. Bard Early College students complete a serious and sustained undergraduate course of study leading to the A.A. degree.

Quality

Bard Early College courses are designed and led by faculty who hold terminal degrees in their fields and are actively engaged in scholarship and research. In 2020, BEC faculty earned Fulbright Fellowships, published dozens of scholarly articles and books, and involved their students directly in their scholarly research. A Bard Early College campus is defined by the characteristics of the nation's best liberal arts colleges: small seminar-style classes, accomplished faculty who are expert in their fields, opportunities for individual research and student-driven inquiry, and a diverse intellectual community with a shared focus on scholarship that advances public understanding and the public good.

Affordability

By leveraging public school funding in place of college tuition, Bard Early College awards over \$30 million in college credits and degrees every year, at no cost to students or their families

After public school funding, the cost of providing a tuition-free year of college at Bard Early College is less than \$3,000 per student – substantially lower than the typical cost of college study in America.

To date, BEC has awarded college credits worth over \$270 million for primarily low-income families in American cities. In 2021 alone, BEC awarded over 700 tuition-free college degrees to a student body of whom half were the first in their families to attend college. In the coming twenty years, BEC will award over \$1 billion in college credits, tuition-free.

Equity

Even though students in the 12th grade and those in the first year of college may be only months apart in age and only blocks away from each other, they are in vastly different spheres of education. This disconnect is starkest for low-income students, who are often confronted by both the weakest bridge between high school and college and the widest gulf to cross.

BEC schools close this gap, bringing a serious and supportive college course of study to young people where they are, in their high schools and communities. Bard Early College campuses are diverse by design, reflecting the racial and economic makeup of the cities and communities with which we partner. Students are admitted on the basis of their intellectual curiosity and commitment to an early college education, rather than on the basis of a test score or report card.

In the current BEC student body, half are the first in their families to go to college, two-thirds would be eligible for federal Pell grants, and over 80% are finishing high school with two years of transferable college credits.

BEC makes an excellent college education available based solely on talent and not on wealth.

6.0

The Way Forward for Early College

Our country needs a new vision to improve the transition from high school to college and help students complete degrees, on time or early and without substantial debt. We believe early college is a critical component of that vision.

Bard Early College is creating a future in American education in which young people can start college when they're ready, not simply when tradition dictates. By changing 'when' college happens, early college has proven its extraordinary potential to change 'who' succeeds in college.

To realize that vision, we are working towards structural change. In coalition with leading education organizations around the country, Bard Early College is taking action to create the conditions in which early college can reach significantly more young people. This action includes **research**, to evaluate and disseminate what practices and models are most effective in the early college classroom; **training and school design**, to support the development of excellent and equitable early college programs beyond Bard's network; and **policy engagement**, to strengthen city, state, and federal policies that can open doors to college for young people at an earlier age.

Research

Bard Early College has been the focus of rigorous research and evaluation, including two randomized control trials, showing significant and lasting benefits for young people and public systems in Bard's early college programs. Additionally, Bard Early College has been highlighted as a successful model that merits national replication in case studies and reports, including from Ithaka S & R and others.



Training and School Design

Bard Early College has partnered with educators, public agencies, and civic organizations to directly support the design and implementation of over twenty new early college programs across the country.

Policy Engagement

Bard Early College co-founded the College in High School Alliance, a consortium of some of the country's leading voices for early access to higher education. Through advocacy and outreach, Bard Early College and its partners across the College in High School Alliance push for a bolder vision for where, when, and for whom college is available nationally.

“What impressed me most about Bard was that they didn’t just have teachers; they had professors. Who better for my son to learn from than educators who had taught at the same colleges I am looking to send my son to? The professors encourage students to approach school differently; as if high school isn’t the last stop. My son and I have had many talks that stemmed from class where I am always impressed at his ability to think outside the box and still give consideration of other viewpoints very different from his own. I know that Bard helped shaped that mature sense of thinking and it is that type of thinking that will help shape the world.

Today we need to give our children every possible advantage to help them succeed and be competitive in their next stage in life.

Bard makes it possible for my son to have that head start without the student loan debt that comes with it. I wanted a school where he wouldn’t get lost and that is exactly what I got. Bard is the type of school I wish I had growing up. I feel like my son is off to a great start in his next journey. I appreciate Bard being there for that journey.”

**– APRIL BRADLEY, PARENT OF A YEAR TWO STUDENT IN
THE CLASS OF 2022 AT BARD BALTIMORE**

7.0

Bard Early College Partners

Bard Early College's work is possible thanks to the vision and commitment of our partners.

- » The Abell Foundation
- » The Alexander & Marjorie Hover Foundation
- » The Annenberg Foundation
- » Baltimore City Public Schools
- » Baptist Community Ministries
- » Bloomberg Philanthropies
- » Carnegie Corporation of New York
- » The Charina Endowment
- » Clark Foundation
- » Cleveland Metropolitan School District
- » Coleman Family Charitable Foundation
- » DC Public Education Fund
- » DC Public Schools
- » F.O.R.E. Foundation for Art, Science, and Education
- » France-Merrick Foundation
- » Galvan Foundation Charitable Trust
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- » Historical Society of the New York Courts
- » Hudson River Bank & Trust Foundation
- » Hyde and Watson Foundation
- » Keller Family Foundation
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- » Louis D. Srybnik Foundation
- » Louisiana Department of Education
- » Maryland State Education Department
- » New York City Department of Education
- » New York Community Trust
- » New York State Education Department
- » The Oak Foundation
- » Office of the State Superintendent of Education, Washington, DC
- » The Open Society Institute-Baltimore
- » RosaMary Foundation
- » Teagle Foundation
- » Toshiba America Foundation
- » Ward Foundation

Bard Early College Board of Governors

Lucy Friedman

Founder, The Afterschool Corporation
Former Strategic Advisor, HERE to HERE
Bard Early College parent

Cesaltine Gregorio

Senior Consultant, CBG Intl Communications
Bard Early College parent

Glendean Hamilton Stewart

Senior Director, Bloomberg Center for Cities
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Bard Early College alumnus

Margaret Hempel

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Ben Iselin

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Beth Lief

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Former President, New Visions for Public
Schools

Matthew Mallow

Former Senior Managing Director and
General Counsel, BlackRock

Sylvia Méndez

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Bard Early College alumnus

Ray Peterson

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and Newark

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Managing Director, Digitalis Ventures

Marquitta Speller, EdD

CEO, Ivy Learning Services

Dumaine Williams, PhD, ex officio

Vice President, Bard College and Dean, Bard
Early College

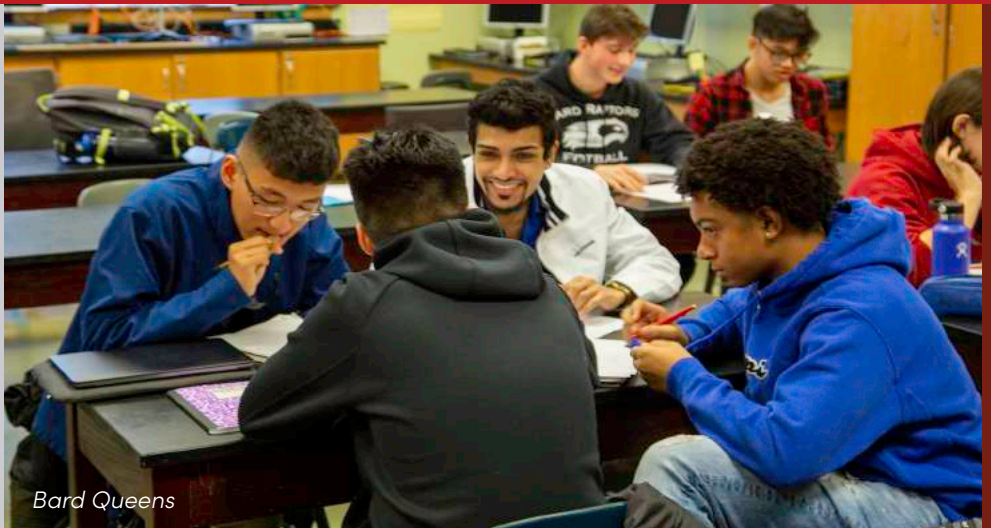
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