



# Bard Baltimore Impact Evaluation

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Understanding Student Outcomes in the  
Context of the Baltimore Education Landscape



Bard High School Early College Baltimore  
2801 N Dukeland St, Baltimore, MD 21216

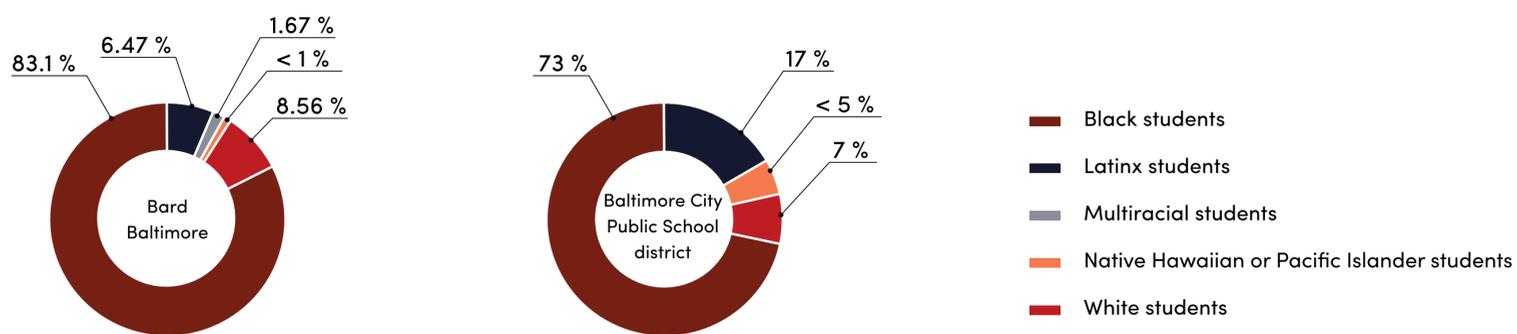


June 2023  
Bard Early College

# Overview

In 2015, Bard College partnered with Baltimore City Public Schools to establish Baltimore's first full, degree-granting early college high school: Bard High School Early College Baltimore (Bard Baltimore). Since then, Bard Baltimore has provided students, particularly those from low-income families and communities historically underrepresented in higher education, with the opportunity to begin rigorous and sustained college and university study during the traditional high school years. This partnership between Bard and the Baltimore City Public School (BCPS) allows students to earn up to 60 transferable college and university credits and an Associates in Arts degree from Bard College by the end of the 12th grade, while concurrently earning their high school diploma. Since opening, Bard has awarded 226 associates degrees and nearly 15,000 transferable college and university credits, entirely tuition-free.

## Student Body Breakdown by Race



*Additionally, 87% of Bard's most recent graduating class was eligible for Pell grants. At present, Bard Baltimore is a Title I school, with 76% of its students qualifying for direct certification.*

Bard's location in West Baltimore is central to the impact of the school. Baltimore City's school district holds one of the highest rates of poverty (more than 70%) across the state of Maryland, with West Baltimore being among the lowest-wealth communities in the city. As such, the under-resourced educational landscape has limited its students' access to post-secondary education opportunities. In this report, we seek to understand the impact of Bard's robust early college model in reversing this trend and expanding opportunity, access, and success in higher education in Baltimore.

The Baltimore Education Research Consortium (BERC), a leading educational research organization in the city of Baltimore, recently published Baltimore College Factbook: Data Digest of College Access Outcomes (Durham et al., 2020) detailing students' pursuit of postsecondary education across Baltimore. As Bard Baltimore enters its eighth academic year and its fifth academic year since enrolling full cohorts across all four grade levels, Bard is applying its internal student data to assess the impact of Bard Baltimore alongside the data sets that BERC has made available. In doing so, we see the comparative impact and added value of early college in the larger landscape of educational opportunity in Baltimore City, with attention to the most marginalized student subgroups in higher education.

The State of Maryland is designing ambitious new systems to strengthen educational access and opportunity for young people - the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. We believe that the early college model should be among the main strategies that the State pursues in reforming the secondary to postsecondary pipeline. This document is intended to contribute to the body of evidence and best practices that can advance the vision of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

## Data Sources

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This report serves as an evaluation of the comparative impact of Bard Baltimore. As such, the report primarily utilizes student-level data to identify graduation rates, student-enrollment counts, as well as key student demographics such as student race and gender identity.

In addition to its internal data sources, this report also draws upon data recently published in the Baltimore Education Research Consortium's Baltimore College Factbook: Data Digest of College Access Outcomes (Durham et al., 2020). It should be noted that, while this report uses BERC's College Factbook to compare Bard Baltimore's college and university access outcomes to the city as well as to a peer group of similarly selective high schools, some of the comparisons do not align precisely with regards to class year and cohorts. In particular, because Bard Baltimore's first class (class of 2017) had graduated only 5 years prior to the data collection for this report, a one-to-one comparison of BCPS 6-year degree completion rates could not be drawn. Instead, this report includes a 5-year rate for Bard Baltimore, as it is the next closest indicator of long-term college and university completion. Lastly, this report used the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) to collect data on Bard Baltimore graduates' college and university enrollment and degree completion across institutions of higher education located in the United States.

*Durham, R.E., Smith, Z., & Cronister, C. (2020). Baltimore College Fact Book: Data Digest of College Access Outcomes. Baltimore, MD: Baltimore Education Research Consortium.*

## Bard Baltimore Enrollment and Selectivity

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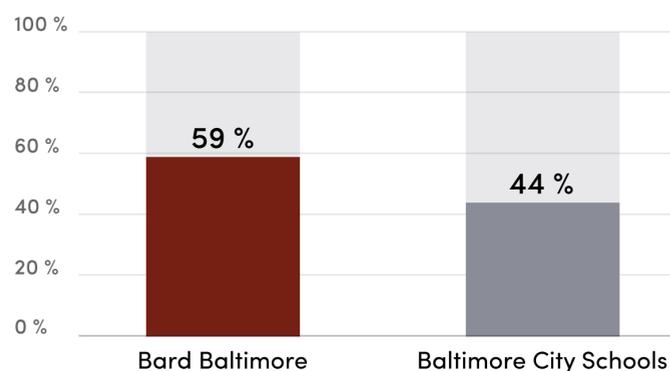
Bard Baltimore is an academically accelerated public high school that operates as a partnership between Bard College and Baltimore City Public Schools. Unlike Baltimore City's most historically high-demand high schools - such as Baltimore City College, Dunbar High, Polytechnic, and Western High, all of which this report includes in its comparative group of "entrance criteria" schools - Bard does not screen applicants on the basis of their prior academic record and does not use a composite score to determine admissibility. Instead, Bard employs a qualitative screening process through interviewing prospective students. As a result, the student body reflects academic motivation but not necessarily strong academic preparation: more than half of all incoming students have entered the 9th grade at one or more levels behind in core subjects. This gap in incoming academic performance levels is particularly significant given that other high schools in BCPS' "selective criteria" category employ a quantitative screening process that considers prior academic performance, particularly that from middle school, and composite scores on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).

# Data and Discussion of Findings

## College and University Enrollment

### College and university enrollment within six months of high school graduation

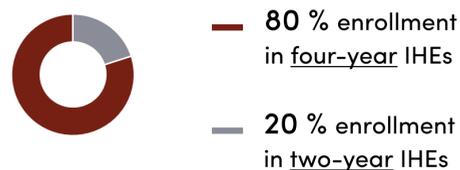
Bard Baltimore students enrolled in college and university in the six months following high school graduation at a rate 15 percentage points higher than Baltimore City as a whole.



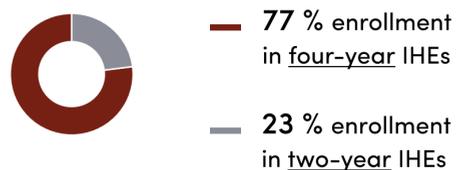
### Enrollment in four-year or two-year colleges and universities

Bard Baltimore students were four times more likely to enroll in four-year degree programs than in two-year degree programs. The data shows a difference of nearly 25 percentage points between Bard Baltimore and BCPS graduates' average enrollment in 4-year colleges and universities. This trend is consistent when broken down by race and gender identity. Bard Baltimore graduates enrolled in four-year IHEs at a rate higher even than that of the city's most academically screened and selective public high schools.

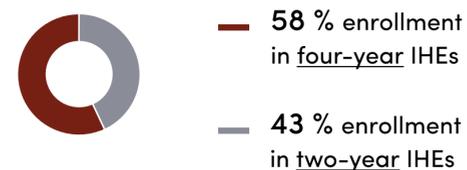
#### Bard Baltimore \*



#### Baltimore Entrance Criteria Schools



#### Baltimore City Schools \*\*



\* Of the graduates who matriculate into IHE's, the following percents of subgroups enroll in 4-year colleges and universities, as compared to 2-year colleges: 85 % of male students - 77 % of female students - 77 % of black students.

\*\* Of the graduates who matriculate into IHE's, the following percents of subgroups enroll in 4-year colleges and universities, as compared to 2-year colleges: 51 % of male students - 58 % of female students - 53 % of black students

# College Persistence and Completion

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## *First year persistence at four-year or two-year colleges and universities*

**84 %** of Bard Baltimore students return for a second year either at the same or at a different post-secondary institution.

## *Degree completion at four-year colleges and universities*

Over the past five years, the majority of Bard graduates have earned post-secondary degrees from four-year rather than two-year institutions. In that time (and for those students for whom NSC data is available), the following subgroups have successfully completed their bachelors degrees from four-year institutions within the five-years:

- *100% of male graduates*
- *85% of female graduates*
- *83% of Black graduates*



Baltimore  
Mike Yeh 2016

# Why Bard Early College

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By the measures of college and university enrollment and degree-completion, Bard Baltimore has established itself as a leader in post-secondary outcomes in the Baltimore City Public School System. The data particularly demonstrates that early exposure to serious college and university study increases the likelihood of students pursuing four-year degree programs (as evidenced by 80% of Bard Baltimore students enrolling in a four-year program as compared to 57% of Baltimore City students) and completing those degrees within six years.

The American Talent Initiative notes in their 2018 Impact Report that “when high-achieving, lower-income students do attend [high graduation rate institutions], they have a greater chance of graduating and moving to the middle class and beyond than they otherwise would” (Pisacreta et al., 2018). Bard’s model provides an intentional bridge to advanced study that overcomes the major barriers of access to such programs, which include cost (tuition-free program), location (Bard is centrally located and accessible to public transit), and preparation (Bard does not screen students on the basis of prior academic performance). Recognizing that students may be ready to take on college and university material, but enter with varied amounts of experience and support, Bard creates a college and university culture within a high school space, with a particular emphasis on:

## Strong social and emotional supports

- A collegiate learning environment emphasized by high levels of student accountability in the classroom, matched with high levels of institutional support.
- Small class sizes.

## Academic rigor

- Writing and discussion-based seminar-style classes.
- A faculty of college and university professors, many with terminal degrees in their field and trained in early college pedagogy, teaching both high school and college and university level courses.
- A College Transfer Office and dedicated staff that support the matriculation to four-year degree programs.

## Building an intellectual community of critical thinkers

- A qualitative admissions process that selects students based on their motivation to participate and intellectual curiosity.
- Pedagogies that intentionally transition from secondary to postsecondary learning, creating a runway for students that builds momentum for continued education.

These unique curricular and cultural components distinguish Bard Early College from other secondary school programs and drive higher rates of postsecondary success.

*Pisacreta, E., Schwartz, E., & Kurzweil, M. (2018). A 2018 Report on the Progress of the American Talent Initiative in its First Two Years. American Talent Initiative.*

# Tables

**Table 1**

Percentage of BHSEC Baltimore Graduates Fall Enrolled and Type of Fall College and University  
*Classes of 2017 through 2022*

|   | 2017   | 2018   | 2019   | 2020   | 2021   | 2022   | Total  |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| # of graduates                            | 40     | 17     | 81     | 103    | 90     | 92     | 423    |
| # of students enrolling the fall          | 30     | 10     | 61     | 56     | 50     | 43     | 250    |
| % students enrolling the fall / graduates | 75.0 % | 58.8 % | 75.3 % | 54.4 % | 55.6 % | 46.7 % | 59.1 % |

**Sub-Group Analysis**

|                                  |  |       |        |
|----------------------------------|--|-------|--------|
| <b># 163 of Male graduates</b>   | Male Graduates Enrolled in 4-year college and university   | # 72  | 44.2 % |
|                                  | Male Graduates Enrolled in 2-year college and university   | # 13  | 8 %    |
| <b># 260 of Female graduates</b> | Female Graduates Enrolled in 4-year college and university | # 128 | 49.2 % |
|                                  | Female Graduates Enrolled in 2-year college and university | # 37  | 14.1 % |
| <b># 343 of Black graduates</b>  | Black Graduates Enrolled in 4-year college and university  | # 153 | 44.6 % |
|                                  | Black Graduates Enrolled in 2-year college and university  | # 44  | 12.8 % |

**Table 2**

**Ratio of First Fall Enrollment in 4-Year or 2-Year Colleges and Universities the Following Graduation**  
*Classes of 2017 through 2022*

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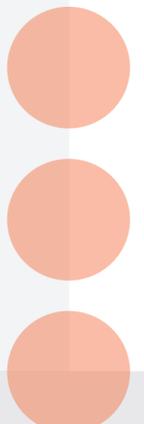
|   |   |              |             |
|---|---|--------------|-------------|
| <i># 250 of BHSEC Baltimore graduates fall enrolled</i> | <i># of enrolled in 4-year college and university</i> | <i># 200</i> | <i>80 %</i> |
|   | <i># of enrolled in 2-year college and university</i> | <i># 50</i>  | <i>20 %</i> |

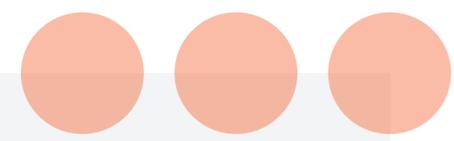
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**Sub-Group Analysis**

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|  |   |              |               |
|--|---|--------------|---------------|
| <i># 85 of Male graduates fall enrolled</i>    | <i>Male Graduates Enrolled in 4-year college and university</i>   | <i># 72</i>  | <i>84.7 %</i> |
|  | <i>Male Graduates Enrolled in 2-year college and university</i>   | <i># 13</i>  | <i>15.3 %</i> |
| <i># 165 of Female graduates fall enrolled</i> | <i>Female Graduates Enrolled in 4-year college and university</i> | <i># 128</i> | <i>77.6 %</i> |
|  | <i>Female Graduates Enrolled in 2-year college and university</i> | <i># 37</i>  | <i>22.4 %</i> |
| <i># 197 of Black graduates fall enrolled</i>  | <i>Black Graduates Enrolled in 4-year college and university</i>  | <i># 153</i> | <i>77.7 %</i> |
|  | <i>Black Graduates Enrolled in 2-year college and university</i>  | <i># 44</i>  | <i>22.3 %</i> |





**Table 3**

**Percent of First-Fall Enrolled BHSEC Baltimore Graduates Completing Degrees, by Fall College and University Type**

|                      | <i>Graduates<br/>N</i> | <i>First Fall<br/>Enrolled</i> |        | <i>1st Year<br/>Persistence</i> |        | <i>Degree within<br/>5-years</i> |        |
|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------|--------|----------------------------------|--------|
| <i>Class of 2017</i> | <b>40</b>              | # 30                           | 75 %   | # 26                            | 86.7 % | # 18                             | 60 %   |
| <i>Class of 2018</i> | <b>17</b>              | # 10                           | 58.8 % | *                               | 90.0 % | *                                | 40 %   |
| <i>Class of 2019</i> | <b>81</b>              | # 61                           | 75.3 % | # 49                            | 80.3 % | # 17                             | 27.9 % |
| <i>Class of 2020</i> | <b>103</b>             | # 56                           | 54.4 % | # 51                            | 91.1 % | *                                | *      |
| <i>Class of 2021</i> | <b>90</b>              | # 50                           | 55.6 % | # 37                            | 74.0 % | n/a                              | n/a    |
| <i>Class of 2022</i> | <b>92</b>              | # 43                           | 46.7 % | n/a                             | n/a    | n/a                              | n/a    |

\* Fewer than 10 masked for confidentiality

**Sub-Group Analysis - Bachelor's Degree Completion within 5 Years, Class of 2017**

|                                       |  |        |
|---------------------------------------|--|--------|
| <b># of Male First Fall Enrolled</b>  | <i>Male First Fall Enrolled in 4-year college and university</i>   | 100 %  |
|                                       | <i>Male First Fall Enrolled in 2-year college and university</i>   | -      |
| <b># of Female First Fall</b>         | <i>Female First Fall Enrolled in 4-year college and university</i> | 85.7 % |
|                                       | <i>Female First Fall Enrolled in 2-year college and university</i> | 14.3 % |
| <b># of Black First Fall Enrolled</b> | <i>Black Graduates Enrolled in 4-year college and university</i>   | 83.3 % |
|                                       | <i>Black Graduates Enrolled in 2-year college and university</i>   | 16.7 % |

# Methodology

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## Notes on the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC)

Since its founding in 1993, the NSC has reliably provided data on postsecondary education pathways; however, even with that being the case, the NSC does not ensure complete or accuracy of its data. This is because 3,600 colleges and universities out of nearly 4,000 in the U.S. elect to participate in the NSC. As a result, the NSC captures information for approximately 97% of students enrolled in public and private institutions. Notably, some institution types, such as trade schools, arts conservatories and religious schools predictably do not participate in the NSC. Consequently, information about students' choices to enroll or complete a degree from these institutions is limited.

The NSC's matching algorithm also creates room for error, as it relies on the submission of student names and birthdates. Errors occur when the information that a college or university provides for students differs from that which the school district provides. Small differences in the spelling of a name or the in numbers of a birthdate, for example, can result in differences in student information between reporting and requesting. When this occurs, a report may include one or more "false positives," as the information for students with either an identical name or birthdate may appear in place of the intended students, who are, in fact, not enrolled in a post-secondary institution. Conversely, "false negatives" may occur when students place a "FERPA block" on their enrollment data. In these cases, students may be enrolled in college or university even though the NSC does not have a record. In this way, NSC records may under-report college and university enrollment.

## Data Masking for Student Confidentiality

In accordance with FERPA reporting requirements, table cell values with a number of estimated cases less than 10 or a percent less than 10 are masked with an asterisk. Additionally, in the instance when the inverse of a percentage of a specific outcome would allow readers to infer an associated percentage with a value less than 10, the percentage is consequently reported as an approximation by rounding up to the nearest 5. For example, if an actual percentage is between 75.0 and 79.9% and has an associated percentage less than 10, then the original percentage is reported as <80%.

## Identifying BHSEC Baltimore Graduates

Throughout this report, graduates of BHSEC Baltimore included any student receiving a High School Diploma between September 1 and August 31 of a given school year. This timeframe accounts for and includes students who receive their degree during summer school. In this way, the summer graduates join the class graduating in the traditional spring window. Students completing their high school diploma outside of the summer school window have been included in the next class corresponding with their exit date. For example, if students, who began their high school career with the class of 2018, completed their coursework to earn a high school diploma in January 2019, then they would be considered part of the class of 2019.

These parameters for assigning BHSEC Baltimore graduating class differ slightly from the ones set out in BERC's College Factbook. To identify students' graduating class, Durham et al. (2020) used July 1 to June 30 of a respective school year as the timeframe in which students receiving a diploma would be considered part of a graduating class. Thus, in BERC's report, students who received their diploma in the summer became members of the next academic year's class, and students who received their diploma even further outside of the traditional spring window became members of the class corresponding with their exit date.

In part, this difference in the parameters used to assign graduates to their class year, accounts for discrepancies in the number of graduates in BHSEC Baltimore's class of 2017 and 2018. In the College Factbook, Durham et al. (2020) counted 44 graduates in BHSEC Baltimore's class of 2017 and 14 graduates in its class of 2018. This report, however, counts 40 graduates in BHSEC Baltimore's class of 2017 and 17 graduates in its class of 2018.

## Identifying College and University Enrollees

This report uses returns from the NSC to identify college and university enrollment, specifically first-fall college and university enrollment. Although the NSC can provide post-secondary information about student enrollment and degree completion for up to eight consecutive cohorts, this report only searched through five; these being, Fall 2017 - Fall 2022. To determine fall enrollment status, this report compared students' high school graduation date with their college or university enrollment status the next fall. Students who received their high school diploma in the summer and enrolled in college or university in the next fall were considered to have enrolled "first-fall". Furthermore, students who received their high school diploma in the fall after the traditional spring graduation window then immediately enrolled in college or university were also counted as "first-fall".

## Degree Completion

This report uses returns from the NSC to identify BHSEC Baltimore graduates' rate of college and university completion. As has been previously stated, while the NSC can provide post-secondary information about student degree completion for up to eight consecutive cohorts, this report only searched through five; these being, Fall 2017 - Fall 2022. Because BHSEC Baltimore's first class had graduated only 5 years prior to the time of data collection, this report counted degree completion as those earned within six years after students' on-time fall enrollment. By comparison, BERC's College Factbook counts college and university degree-completion as those earned within six years after students' on-time fall enrollment. Both reports count completed degrees only for first-time fall-enrollees, which has been defined in the explanation of identifying college and university enrollees. With regards to students who completed their college and university degree outside of the traditional spring window, this report has applied the same parameters as it applied to high school graduates. That is, the summer graduates join their cohort graduating in the traditional spring window, while students completing their colleges and universities outside of the summer window have been included in the next class corresponding with their exit date. For example, if students first enrolled in college or university in the Fall of 2018, but completed their coursework to earn their degree in Summer 2020, then they would be considered to be part of the class of 2020 and to have completed their degree within two years. However, if students first enrolled in college or university in the Fall of 2018, but completed their coursework to earn their degree in Fall 2020, then they would be considered to be part of the class of 2021 and to have completed their degree within three years.

## College and University Enrollment

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Since opening its doors in the Fall of 2015, Bard Baltimore has graduated 423 students. Of those students, 250, or approximately 59%, enrolled in college or university the first-fall after graduating from high school. In the College Factbook, which the Baltimore Education Research Consortium (BERC) published in 2020, Durham et al. included college and university enrollment rates for all BCPS graduating classes from 2014 - 2018. While these five cohorts do not directly overlap with Bard Baltimore's five cohorts that graduated between 2017- 2022, they nonetheless provide a comparable five-year enrollment average of approximately 44%.

The data illustrates a difference of nearly 25 percentage points between Bard Baltimore and BCPS graduates' average enrollment in 4-year colleges and universities. Of the 250 Bard Baltimore graduates who enrolled in the fall, 200, or 80%, enrolled in 4-year colleges and universities, leaving 50 graduates, or 20%, to enroll in 2-year colleges and universities. By comparison, Durham et al. (2020) note that between 2014 - 2018, approximately 55% of BCPS graduates enroll in 4-year colleges and universities their first fall after graduation, leaving approximately 45% to enroll in 2-year colleges and universities. This trend is similarly present when broken down by race and gender identity.

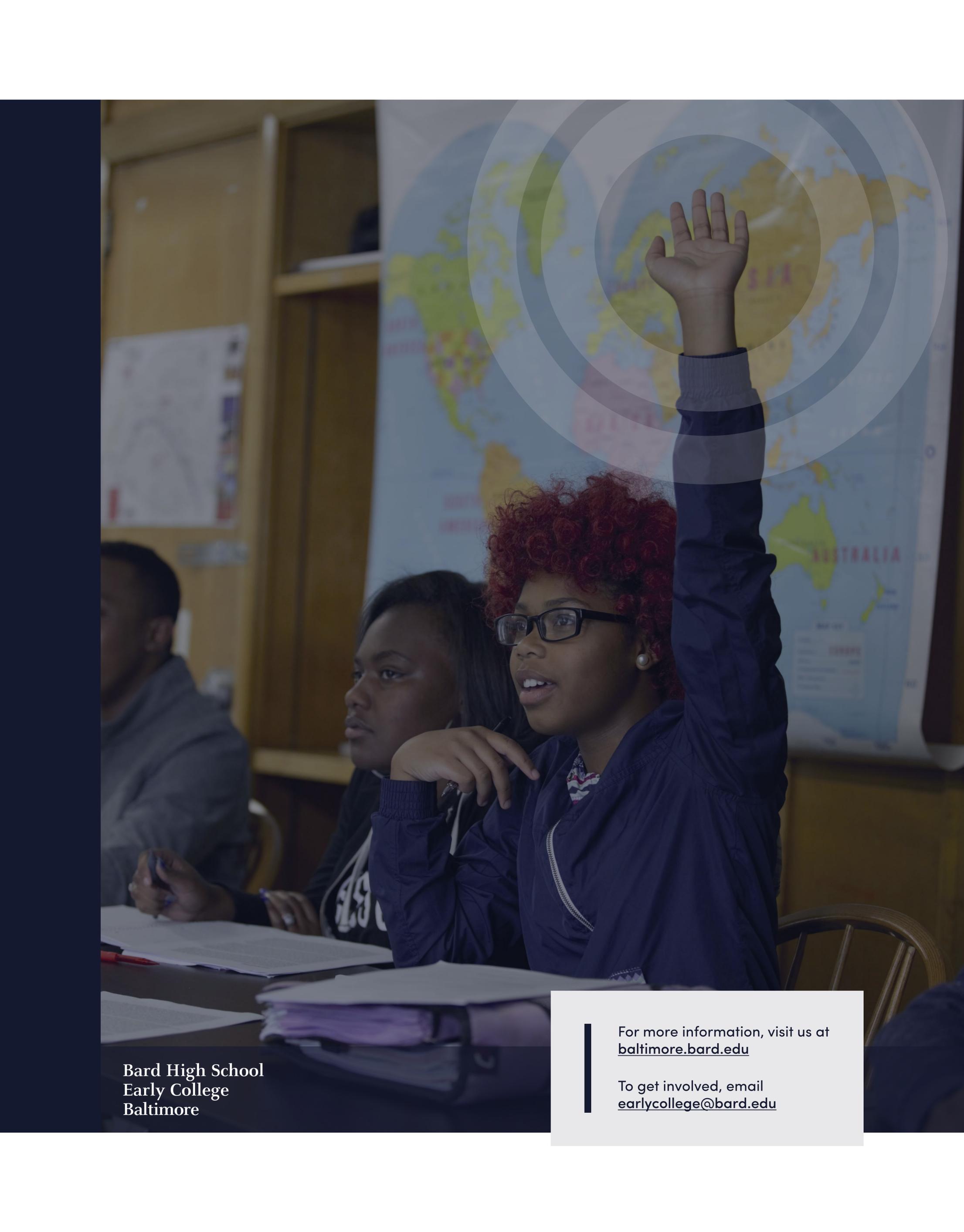
## College and University Persistence & Completion

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Out of the 250 Bard Baltimore students who enrolled in college or university the first fall after high school graduation, approximately 84% return for a second year either at the same or at a different post-secondary institution. Of the 163 Bard Baltimore graduates who have enrolled in college or university the first fall after graduating and then returned for a second year, 138, or 85%, returned if first fall enrolled in a 4-year college or university; and 25, or 15%, returned if first enrolled in a 2-year college or university.

Over the last five years, Bard Baltimore students have completed 4-year degrees at 18 different colleges and universities ranging from local colleges and universities such as Maryland-College Park to out-of-state- Ivy League colleges and universities such as Stanford University. Across those 18 schools, BHSEC Baltimore students have an average degree completion rate of 64%. By comparison, Durham et al. (2020) reports in BERC's College Factbook, that between the BCPS classes of 2011 and 2012, the average six-year graduation rate amongst the noted 4-year colleges and universities was 54%.

While BHSEC Baltimore does not yet have a class of graduates who have been enrolled in postsecondary-institutions for six years, the ten percentage points that distance Bard's five-year degree completion rate and BCPS' six-year degree completion reasonably suggest that with another year to finish college or university, more Bard students will earn their bachelors within six years.



Bard High School  
Early College  
Baltimore

For more information, visit us at  
[baltimore.bard.edu](http://baltimore.bard.edu)

To get involved, email  
[earlycollege@bard.edu](mailto:earlycollege@bard.edu)