Transparent Automatic Admissions System in a Time of Test Optional

Board of Regents, State of Iowa

August 9, 2022

BOARD OF
REGENTS
STATE OF IOWA

EDUCATION RESEARCH SERVICE ACCOUNTABILITY

History of Regents Automatic Admission

- **1958 – 2009**:   Top 50% of high school class

- **Fall 2009**:   First entering class to use the RAI

- **Summer 2020**: High School Rank dropped from the RAI

- **Fall 2021**:   Test-optional pathway created

Overview of Higher Education in Iowa

- **3 public universities**--governed by a Board of Regents (Two R1 universities, one regional comprehensive)

- **15 public, open-access community colleges** with individual governing boards, coordinated by Iowa Dept of Education

- **30+ private colleges** (ranging from essentially open access to highly selective)

- No all-encompassing coordinating body

Highlights of the Automatic Admissions System

Regent Admission Index (RAI) Formula

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l}(3 \times \text{ACT composite score}) \\ + (30 \times \text{high school GPA}) \\ + (5 \times \text{number of high school core courses})\end{array}}{\text{Regent Admission Index Score}}$$

≥ 245 = Automatic admission to ISU, UI, UNI

Applying for Automatic Admission

- Initial admission based on self-reported scores

- Official scores & transcripts reviewed

- Admissions offers can be rescinded

Transparency & Predictability

- Admissions formula is public

- Plan your high school classes

- Low uncertainty & stress

- Less need to "hedge your bets"

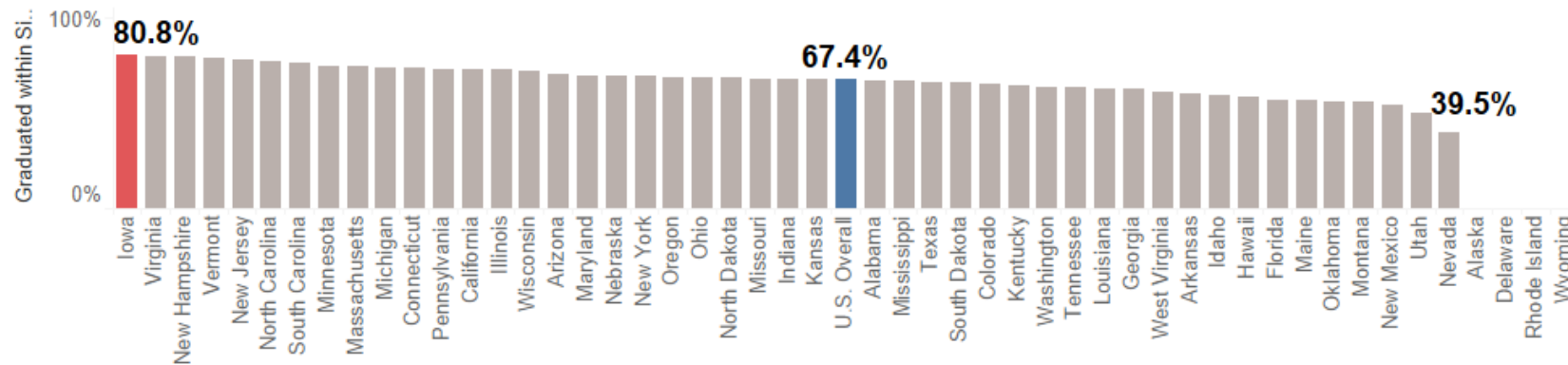- Reduces political pushback regarding residency mix at universities

Graduation Rates from 4-Year Public Universities
2014 Entry Class

Started at an Iowa Public University and Earned a Degree at First University Attended
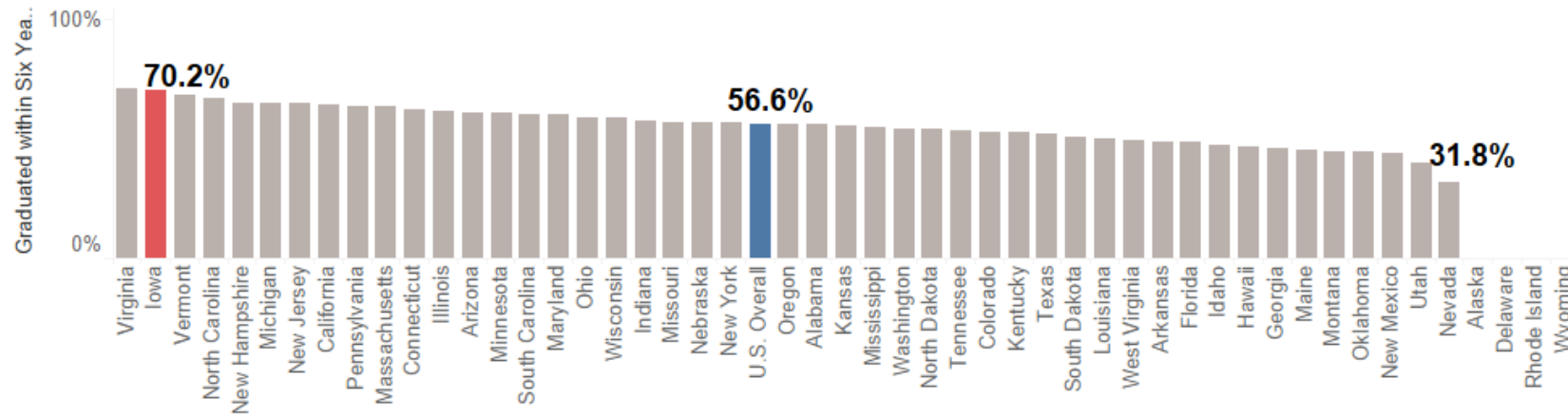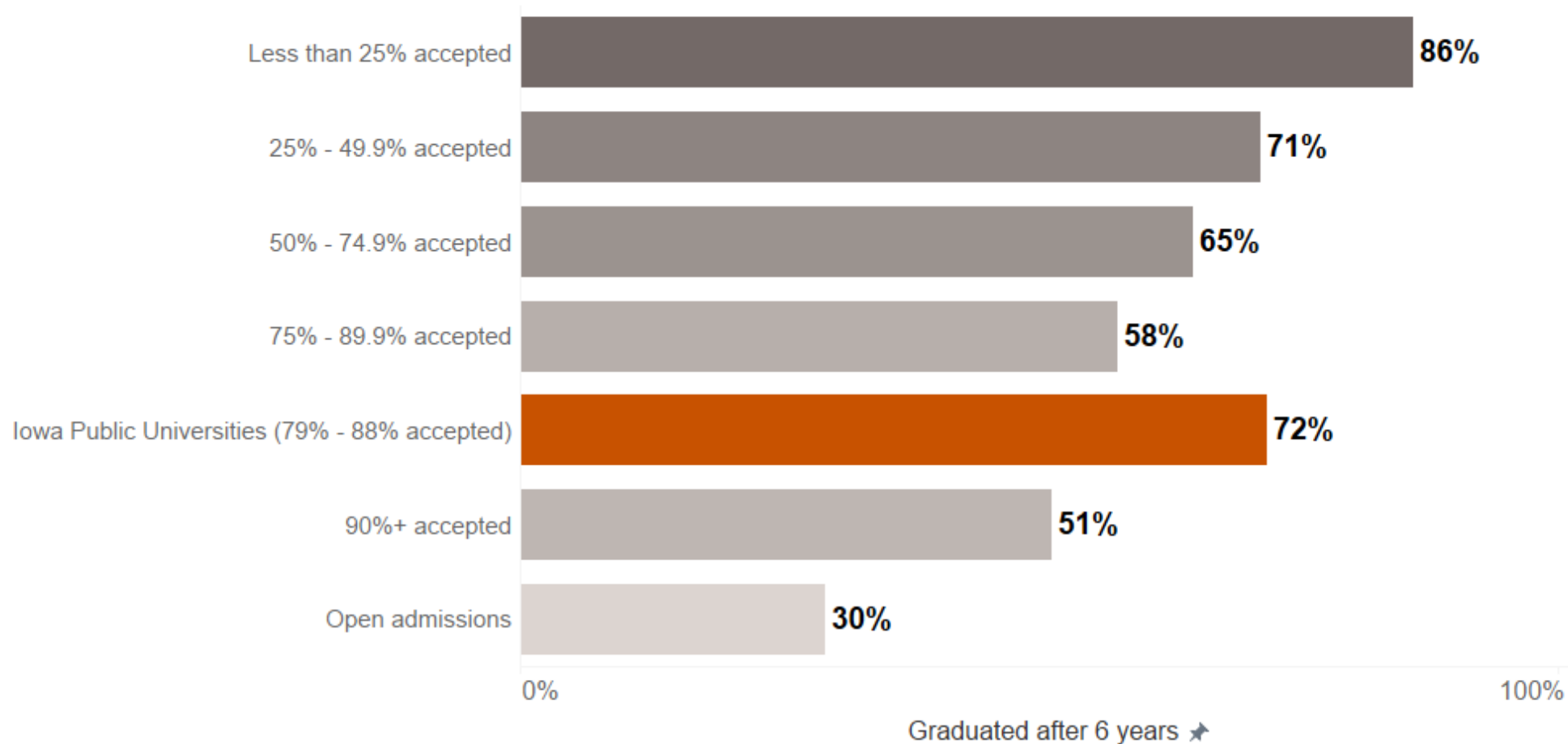

Started at an Iowa Public University and Earned a Degree from any U.S. Institution

Source: NSC 2020 Completing College National and State Reports. Graduation rates determined six years after entry to first college attended. Student could have graduated from any U.S. college, not just the first attended.

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Graduation Rates after Six Years at 4-year Public Colleges
by Admissions Selectivity for 2013 Entry Cohort

Category	Rate
Less than 25% accepted	86%
25% - 49.9% accepted	71%
50% - 74.9% accepted	65%
75% - 89.9% accepted	58%
Iowa Public Universities (79% - 88% accepted)	72%
90%+ accepted	51%
Open admissions	30%

0%   100%
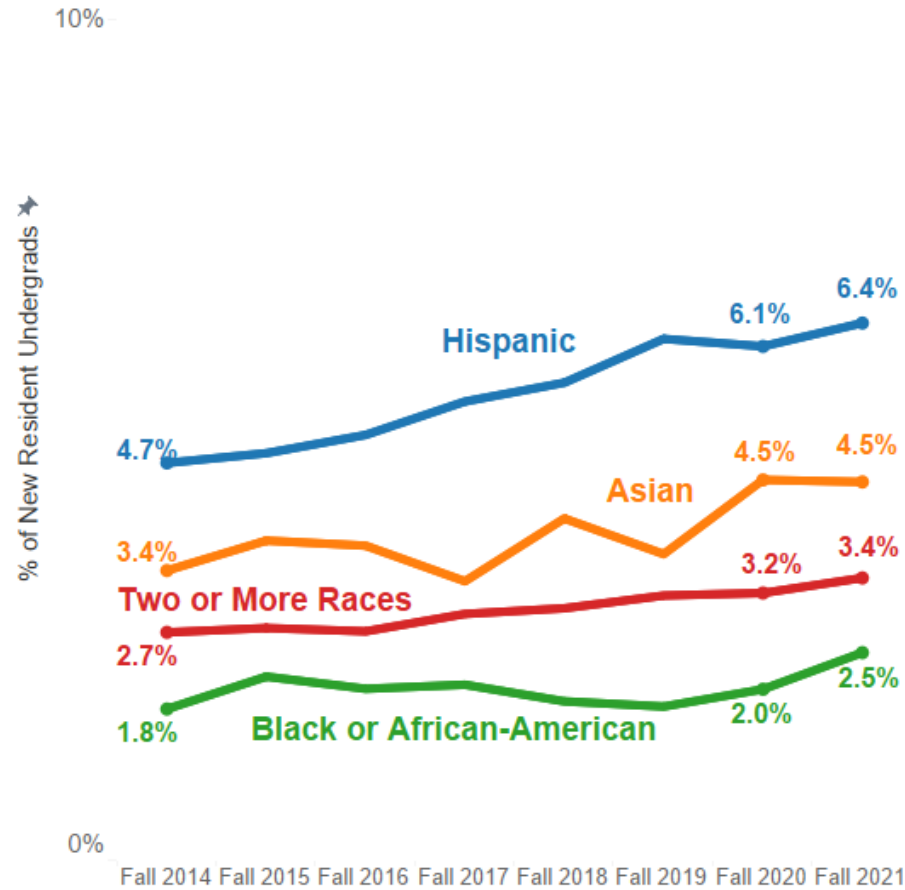
Graduated after 6 years ★

Source: BOR and NCES Table 326.10
Workbook: Fall 2021 Grad & Retention Report, BOR Warehouse Supplement

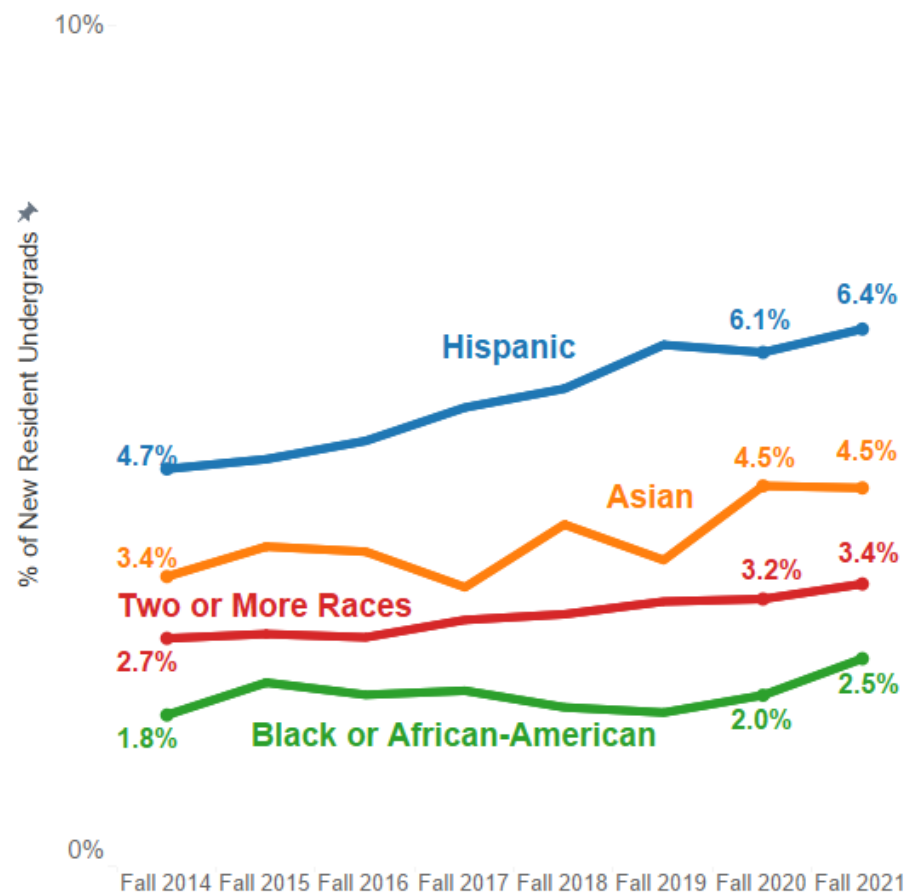# Percent of Iowa Residents Who Identify as a Racial/Ethnic Minority

New First-Year Undergraduates from Iowa

% of New Resident Undergrads

10%

Hispanic
4.7% — 6.1% — 6.4%

Asian
3.4% — 4.5% — 4.5%

Two or More Races
2.7% — 3.2% — 3.4%

Black or African-American
1.8% — 2.0% — 2.5%

0%

Fall 2014 Fall 2015 Fall 2016 Fall 2017 Fall 2018 Fall 2019 Fall 2020 Fall 2021

Source: Iowa Board of Regents. International students are excluded from both the numerator and denominator.
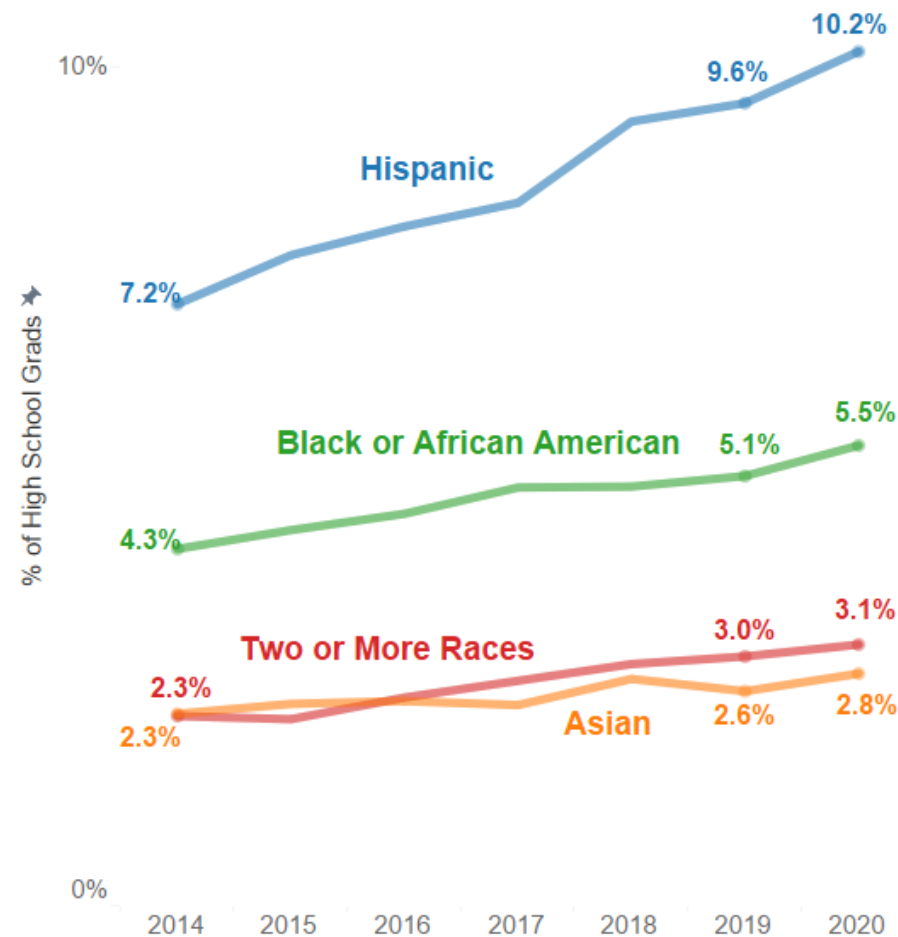
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0%

Fall 2014 Fall 2015 Fall 2016 Fall 2017 Fall 2018 Fall 2019 Fall 2020 Fall 2021

Source: Iowa Board of Regents. International students are excluded from both the numerator and denominator.

Iowa High School Graduates

% of High School Grads

Hispanic
7.2% ... 9.6% ... 10.2%

Black or African American
4.3% ... 5.1% ... 5.5%

Two or More Races
2.3% ... 3.0% ... 3.1%

Asian
2.3% ... 2.6% ... 2.8%

10%

0%

2014   2015   2016   2017   2018   2019   2020

Source: Iowa Statewide Longitudinal Data System, Postsecondary Readiness Reports
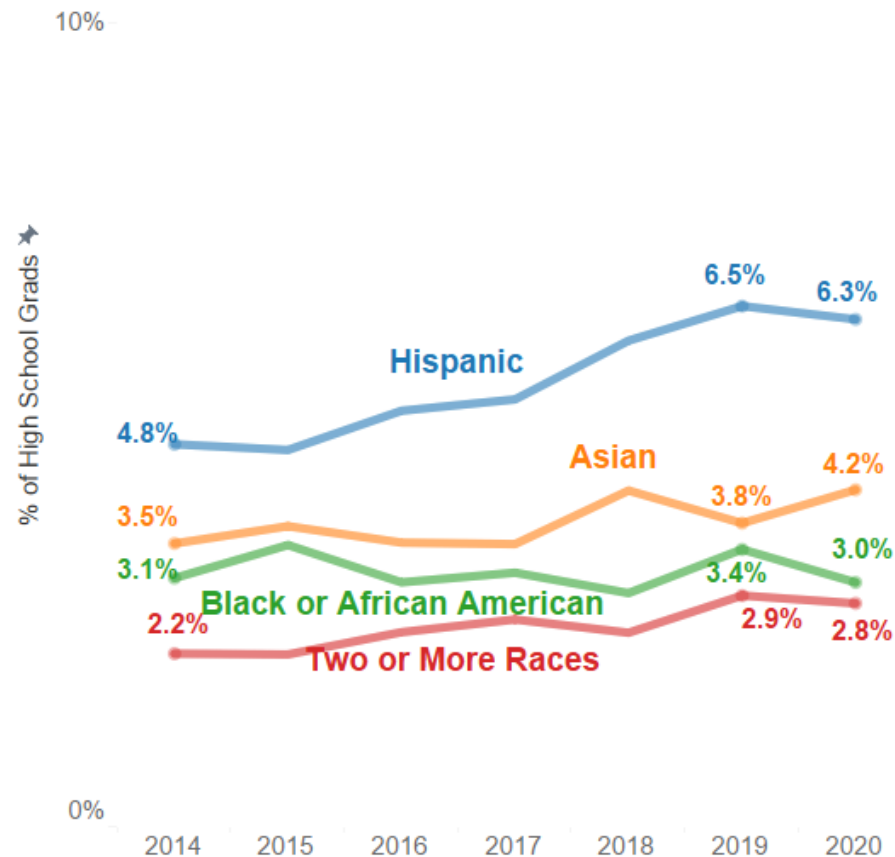
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Percent of Iowa Residents Who Identify as a Racial/Ethnic Minority

New First-Year Undergraduates from Iowa

% of New Resident Undergrads

- Hispanic: 4.7% ... 6.1% ... 6.4%
- Asian: 3.4% ... 4.5% ... 4.5%
- Two or More Races: 2.7% ... 3.2% ... 3.4%
- Black or African-American: 1.8% ... 2.0% ... 2.5%

10% — 0%

Fall 2014 Fall 2015 Fall 2016 Fall 2017 Fall 2018 Fall 2019 Fall 2020 Fall 2021

Source: Iowa Board of Regents. International students are excluded from both the numerator and denominator.

Iowa High School Graduates Interested in Attending a 4-Year Public College
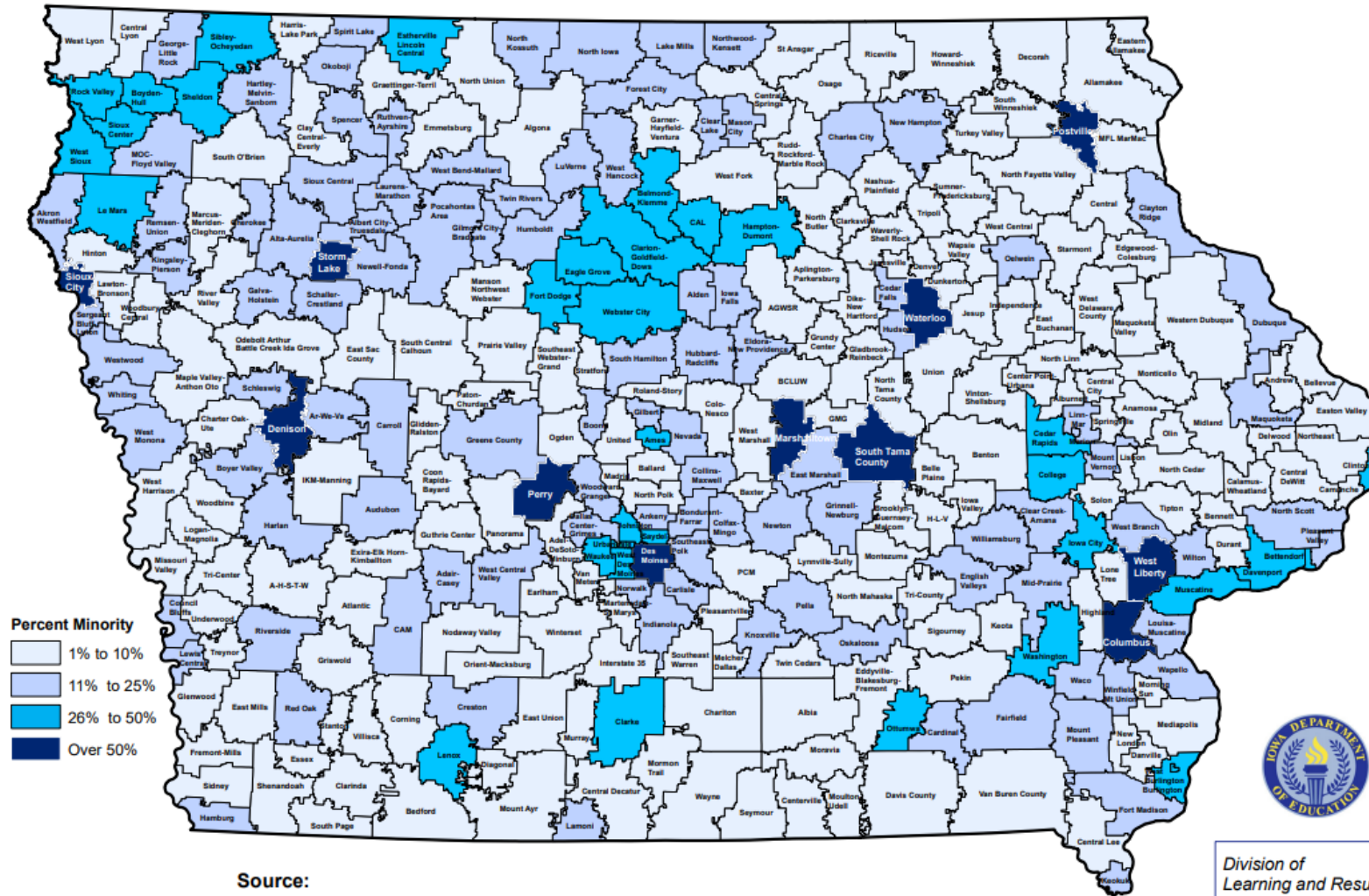

% of High School Grads

- Hispanic: 4.8% ... 6.5% ... 6.3%
- Asian: 3.5% ... 3.8% ... 4.2%
- Black or African American: 3.1% ... 3.4% ... 3.0%
- Two or More Races: 2.2% ... 2.9% ... 2.8%

10% — 0%

2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020

Source: Iowa Statewide Longitudinal Data System, Postsecondary Readiness Reports

Iowa Public K-12 Enrollments

	2000-2001	2020-2021
Racial/Ethnic Minority	**9.7%**	**26.1%**

Source: Iowa Department of Education 2022

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Iowa School Percent Minority Enrollment 2021-2022

Percent Minority
- 1% to 10%
- 11% to 25%
- 26% to 50%
- Over 50%

Source:
2021-22: Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Information and Analysis, Address File, and SRI Fall Merged 2122 file

Division of Learning and Results
Map #4287
December 28, 2021

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Then came COVID and Test-optional

- Throw out the RAI?

- Find a replacement for ACT/SAT in the formula?

- Create a 2-factor RAI?

- How do we control for grade inflation?

- We leveraged our SLDS data partnership to learn more

Comparing 4-year Graduation Rates by ACT and High School GPA
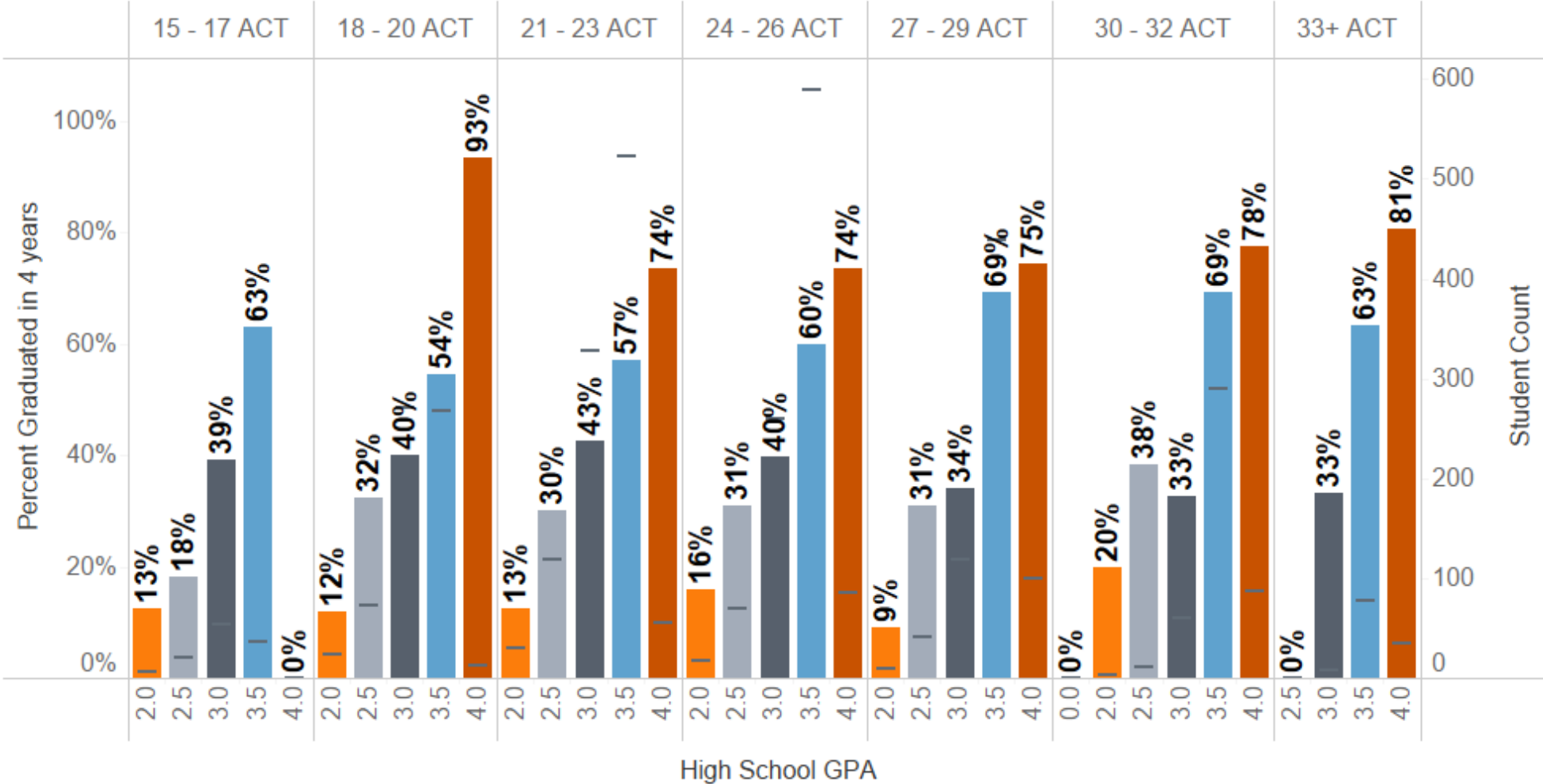
Source: Iowa Board of Regents, 2016 entry cohort

Comparing 3-factor RAI & 2-factor RAI

	3-Factor = YES 2-Factor = NO	2-Factor = YES 3-Factor = NO
High School GPA	3.04	**3.24**
ACT composite	**25.4**	17.9
Percent Women	26%	**64%**
Percent White	**89%**	71%
Percent Free or Reduced Lunch	28%	**38%**
First Generation	20%	**30%**
Gifted & Talented	**36%**	5%
College GPA	2.25	**2.41**
Returned for 3rd Year	62%	**65%**

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Test-Optional Era

- Kept the 3-factor RAI for automatic admission

- Added a pathway for individual review admission if a student did not report test scores

- For Fall 2021, 30-38% of applicants did not report ACT/SAT

- Preliminary analysis: students enrolled without scores had college GPAs 0.1 below others

Questions so far?

Next Steps: Addressing the decline in the number of Iowa HS graduates interested…

- Why? We're not sure

- Would direct acceptance reach these students?

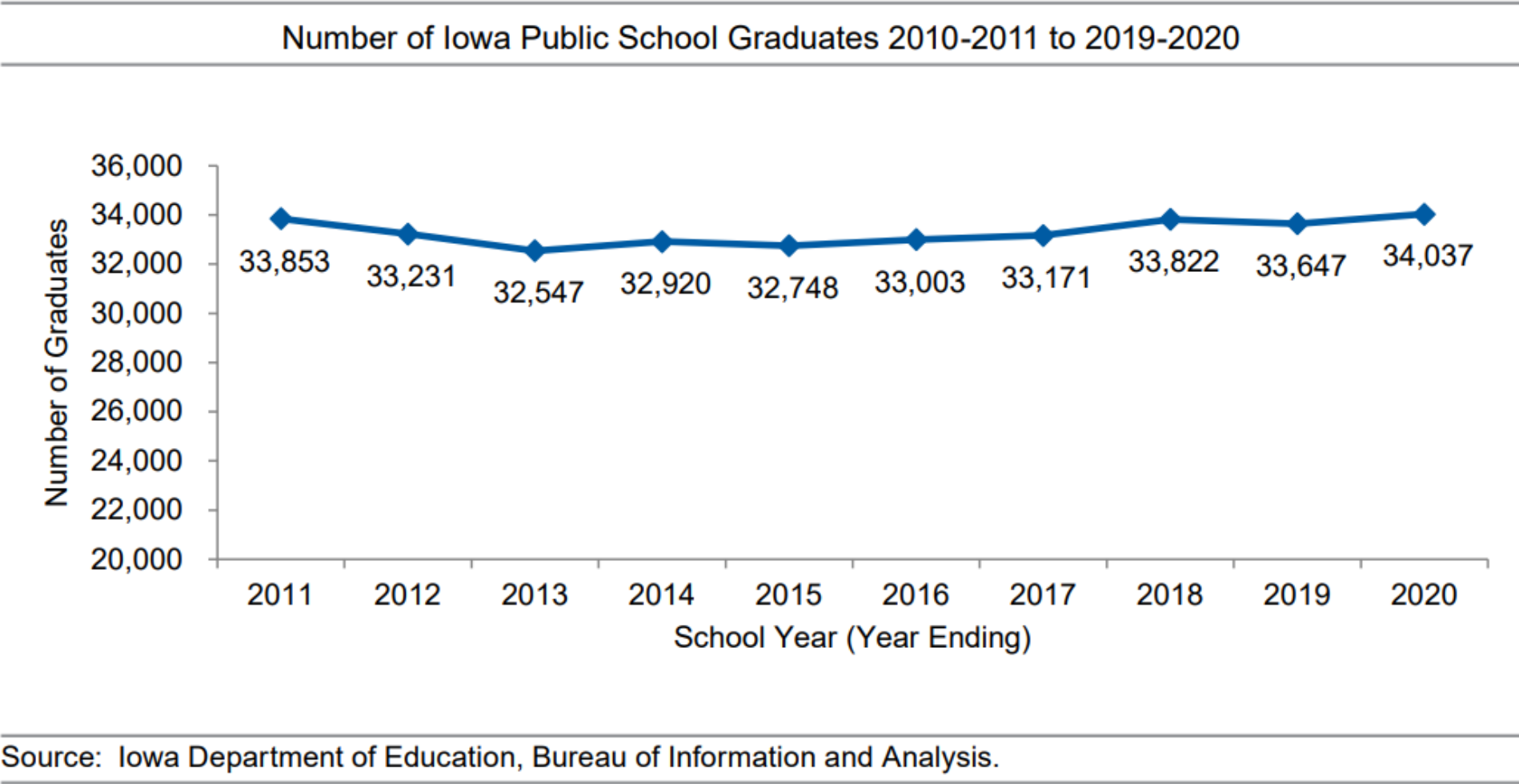- It might improve equity and, to some degree, access

Figure 5-49

Number of Iowa Public School Graduates 2010-2011 to 2019-2020

Figure 5-44

Percent of Iowa Public School Graduates Intending to Pursue Postsecondary Education/Training
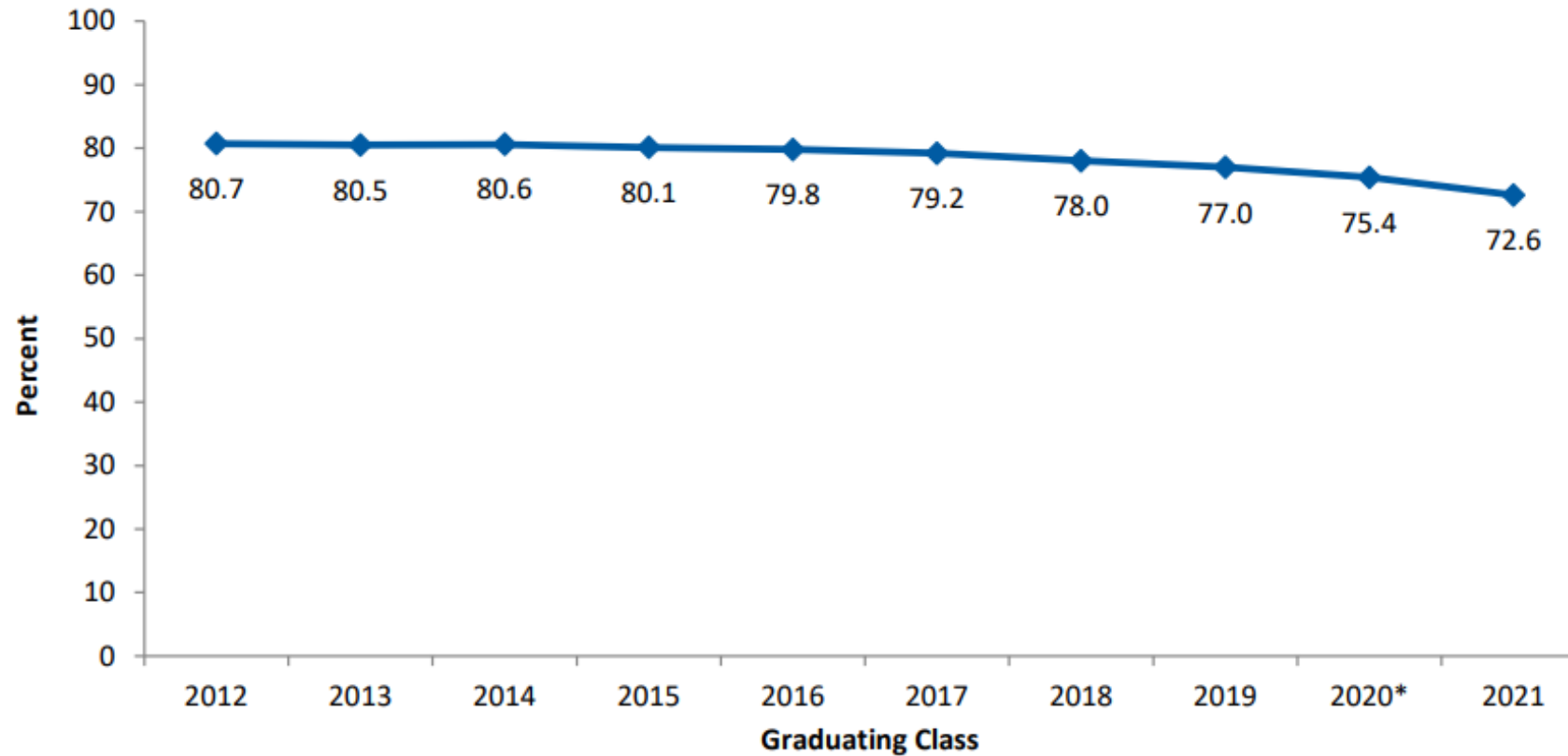Graduating Classes of 2012 to 2021

Table 5-19

Percent of Iowa Public High School Graduates/Seniors Intending to Pursue
Postsecondary Education/Training by Postsecondary Institution Type, 2001 and 2016 to 2021

Graduating Class

Postsecondary Institution	2001	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020*	2021
Private 4-Year College	14.9	11.1	11.5	11.6	11.7	10.8	11.0
Public 4-Year College	27.3	28.9	28.1	27.7	27.5	27.6	27.0
Private 2-Year College	5.2	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.7
Community College	31.0	36.8	36.4	35.7	34.2	33.4	30.6
Apprenticeship	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.0
Internship	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.1
Other Training	4.3	2.4	2.7	2.5	3.0	3.1	2.3
Total	82.7	79.8	79.2	78.0	77.0	75.4	72.6

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First Fall College Enrollment after Graduating from an Iowa High School
by Race/Ethnicity, Sex, and Free & Reduced Price Lunch Eligibility
2012 - 2021 HS Graduating Classes
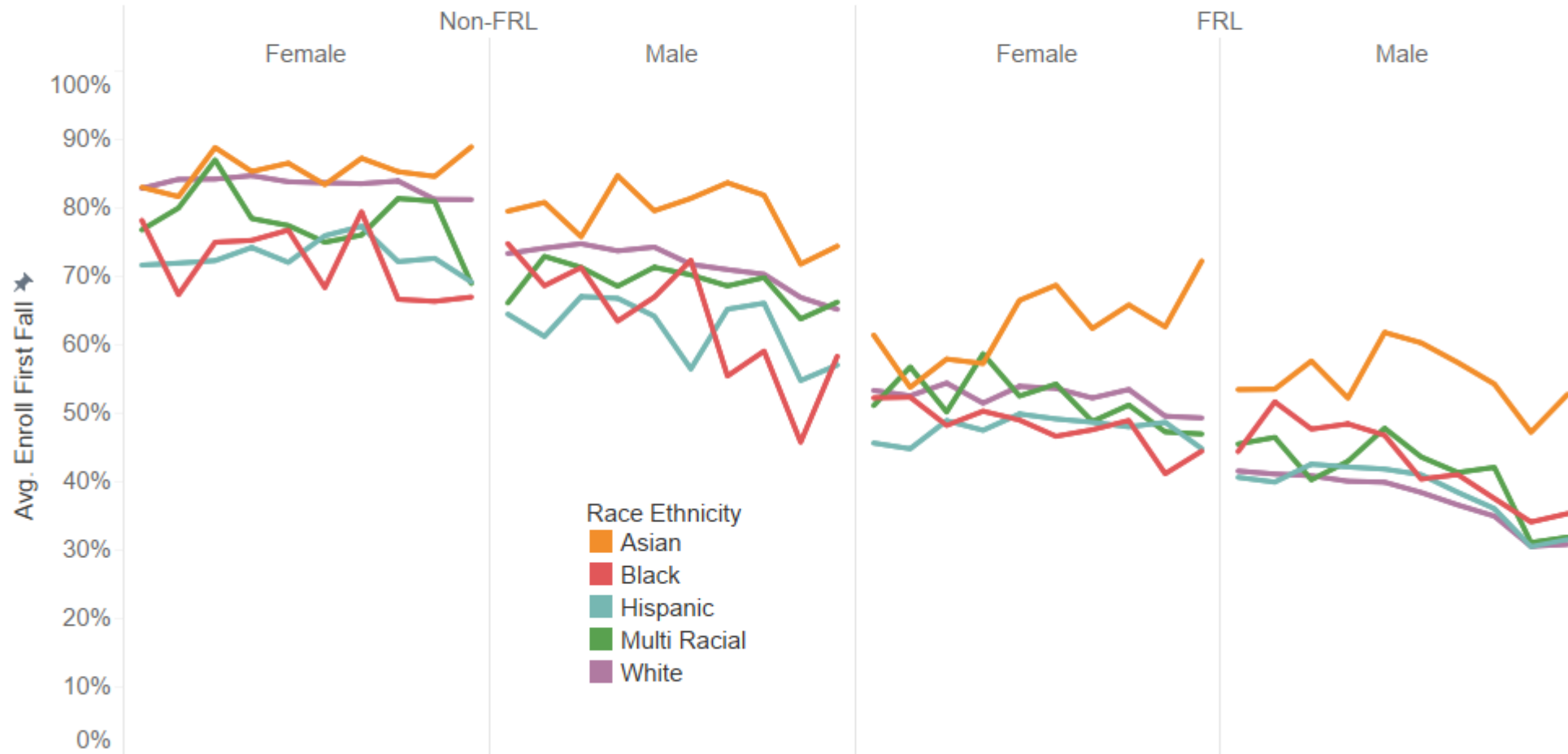
Source: Iowa SLDS, college enrollment includes all colleges reporting to the National Student Clearinghouse

Final Thoughts

- Automatic admission might feel scary
  - Culturally embedded expectations for transparency and access make this work in Iowa

- Test optional admission might feel scary
  - Yep—it's still scary, but the access expectation combined with an explosion of data (compared to 1958) makes it manageable

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