



About Excel Academy

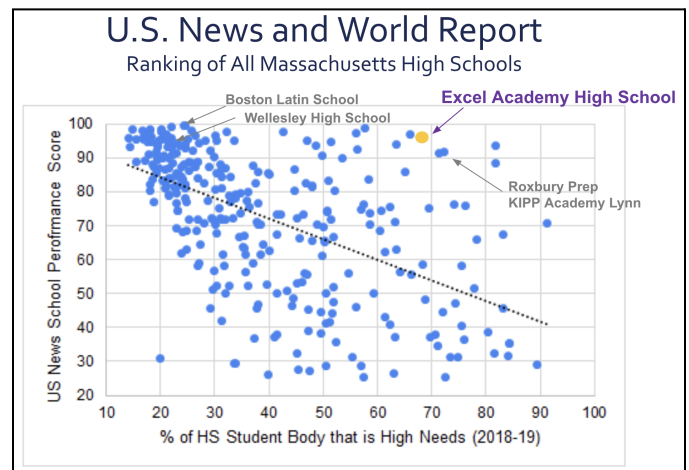
Updated Feb. 6, 2024

Highlights

- **Founding:** Excel Academy was founded in 2003 with the mission to provide a high-quality education to students in East Boston and Chelsea, communities that are predominantly low-income and Latinx and historically have faced significant social and educational barriers.
- **Tuition-free public school:** Excel is open to all children within our catchment areas in MA & RI, with enrollment determined by blind public lotteries.
- **Inclusive and diverse:** Our demographics reflect the communities we serve (percentages of students with special needs, English as a second language, etc). There is no “skimming” or “cherry picking” our student body.
- **Transportation and meals provided:** We remove barriers and focus on student success, not logistics.
- **Proof of concept:** Our success in Massachusetts shows the opportunity gap can be closed, and we're expanding that impact to Rhode Island. Today we serve more than 1500 students in both states. At full scale, Excel will serve approx. 1,400 students in MA and 2,200 students in RI.

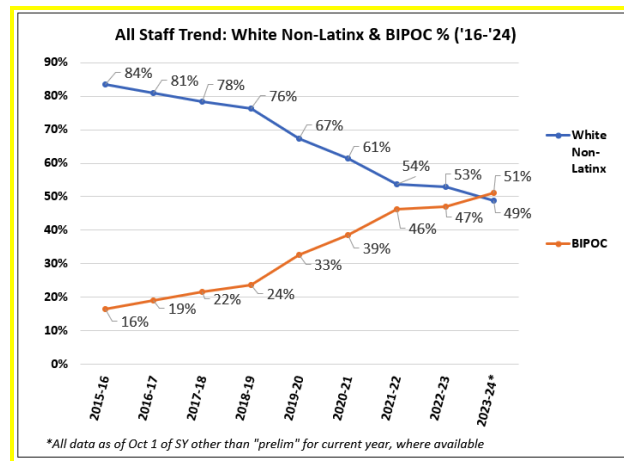
Notable Achievements

- **National recognition:** Excel Academy High School has been ranked in the top 3% of public high schools nationwide by US News and World Report, comparable to some of the highest-income high schools in the Boston region.
- **Academic growth:** Excel Academy students show more growth from 5th to 8th grade on the MCAS than any peer charter public school.
- **Post-secondary pathways:** 89% of Excel students pursue positive post-secondary pathways, from trade schools to top universities.
- **High retention rate:** We nurture a supportive environment, with a student attrition rate (just 4%) lower than any other Boston public charter school and our sending districts.
- **Statewide excellence:** Overall, our schools perform better on the Massachusetts MCAS than 72% of middle/high or K-12 schools statewide, irrespective of income.
- **Special education success:** The percentage of our students with disabilities who meet or exceed expectations on the MCAS is double the Massachusetts state average.





- **English language learners thrive:** 10% more of our 8th graders meet or exceed expectations compared to sending districts on the MCAS.
- **Honoring student identities:** A diverse staff that mirrors our students' backgrounds fosters connection and empowerment. Research shows increased college enrollment and reduced dropout rates when students see themselves reflected in their teachers. Focusing on that statistic, Excel has more than tripled its staff that identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) since 2015, from 16% to 51%.



- **Excel lifers:** Alumni returning as staff (10% of total staff) create a powerful cycle of shared experiences and mentorship.

The Future of Excel

- **Demand exceeds capacity:** Families want what Excel offers, with sending district demand exceeding seats by 11:1.
- **Expansion plans:** Over the next ten years, we aim to be a fully enrolled K-12 school in RI that serves 2,186 students from Providence, North Providence, and Central Falls.
- **Strategic priorities:** Securing facilities and growth funding, political advocacy, recruiting leaders, students, and Board members, and planning for an impactful future in MA & RI.



Our Mission & Impact

Excel Academy's mission is to prepare students to succeed in high school and college, apply their learning to solve relevant problems, and engage productively in their communities.

Neighborhood School
Rooted in Community
A Culture of Achievement
College Prep for All



Excel Academy is proving that we can close the opportunity gap together. Excel has 20 years of experience building and running high-quality schools, **delivering** on its mission with an approach that is focused on **rigor, inclusivity and joy**:

- **Rigor:** Rigor as measured by annual growth, statewide assessments, and post-secondary success outcomes;
- **Inclusivity:** Student body and staff representative of the communities that we serve;
- **Joy:** Low student attrition, effective support for all students, and deep community connections and impact.

Excel's students have achieved remarkable success at the middle and high school levels and have consistently been ranked as top-performers among peer schools. Founded in Massachusetts, we are excited to bring our program to students and families in Rhode Island with similar needs.

In addition to academic rigor, Excel has a 20-year track record of ensuring that our students are engaged, productive citizens who are successful in the post-secondary life that they choose. This includes the 10% of current Excel staff who are also Excel alums. We take pride in the number of former students who return to our schools to continue our mission with a new generation.





Excel provides an unparalleled post-secondary success support program through our College Access and Post-Secondary Success (CAPS) team. From the moment a student first walks through the doors of an Excel campus, until six years after they graduate high school, Excel's ten-person CAPS team provides robust support and counseling services to ensure that every Excel student succeeds in their chosen productive post-secondary path.

As a result of this exceptional programming, Excel graduates achieve at high levels, whether compared to graduates of schools in communities dealing with high poverty rates or to those from some of the wealthiest communities in the region. Nationally, only 8% of children from low-income families go on to earn a college degree, and our sending districts have college graduation rates around 12%. In comparison, for Excel this figure is 43%. Looking at our most recent class to graduate college, 88% of Excel's high school graduating class of 2019 matriculated to college (78% to 4-year programs and 10% to 2-year programs), and so far 52% of the students in 4-year programs and 22% of the students in 2-year programs have earned their degrees. For our high school graduating class of 2022, 80% are on a productive post-secondary path and 86% of our alumni are making progress towards their goal-aligned post-secondary plan.

Additionally, our CAPS team has developed new resources to respond to family and student demand for direct employment preparation. The goals of our Local Excel Employment Program (LEEP) are:

- To develop essential skills that graduates need for meaningful and reliable employment.
- To expose students to career opportunities within their specific area of interest.
- To increase work experience to make students more competitive upon graduation for employment within their chosen field.
- To provide coaching through regular feedback and evaluation to develop students professionally and meet the needs of local employers post-graduation.

Our History & Goals

In 2003, Excel Academy was founded in East Boston, Massachusetts, with a singular focus: to close the opportunity gap for low-income students of color. We set out to serve East Boston and Chelsea, communities with a growing population of children, predominantly low-income and Latinx, who have historically faced systemic barriers to post-secondary success and college access.

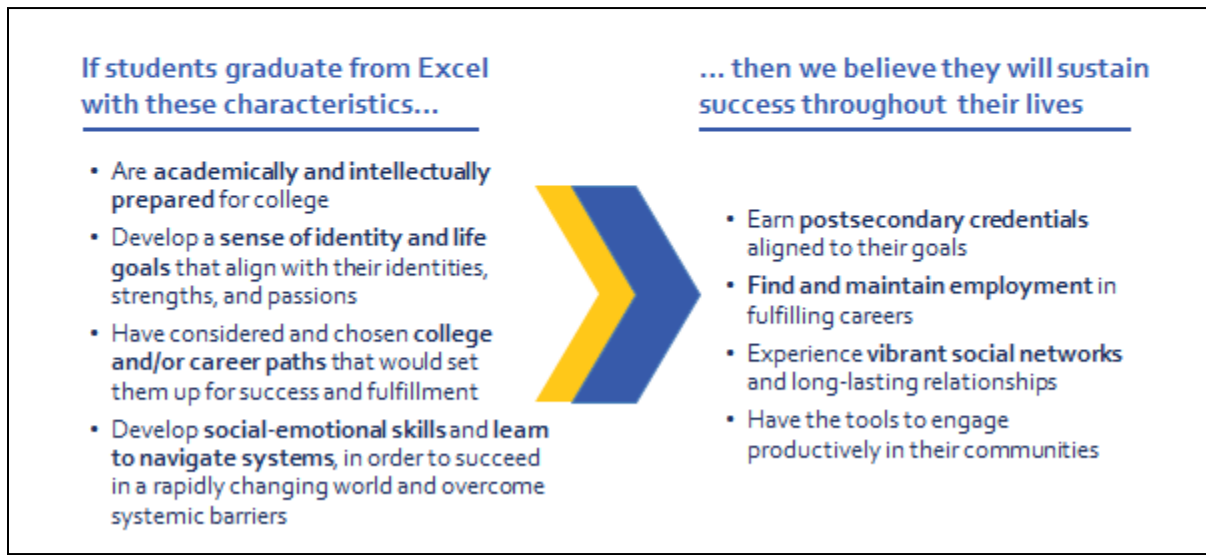
Twenty years since our founding, and now serving more than 1,500 students in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island, Excel's purpose remains clear. Schools that are both rigorous and inclusive can fundamentally change life trajectories and close opportunity gaps so that students and their families can choose their own futures.

Our commitment to continue our work in Rhode Island was sparked by the release of the June 2019 Johns Hopkins report on the Providence schools. The report painted a stark picture of who is most at risk of being left behind by the current system: low-income students, minority students, students learning English, and students with disabilities. This is the population we set out to serve over 20 years ago, and we have a consistent track record of achieving educational



excellence with these students and their families. We seek to work with state and local education and civic leaders to redefine what is possible in public education and equip students in Providence, North Providence, and Central Falls to overcome systemic barriers and sustain success throughout their lives.

Our educational theory of change is:



Thank you so much for your interest in learning more about Excel Academy. Please let us know if you have any questions!

Owen Stearns, CEO, ostearns@excelacademy.org

Arthur Kaynor, Director of Development & Governance, akaynor@excelacademy.org

Elizabeth Matson, Director of Special Projects, ematson@excelacademy.org