Kentucky Department of Education

Our Children, Our Commonwealth

Profile of Kentucky's Alternative Programs 2014-15

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A Brief History and Context of the Profile

This report of the alternative education programs in the state is generated by the Kentucky Department of Education, Office of Next Generation Schools and Districts, Division of Student Success. The 2014 inaugural report was a result of new legislation that required all alternative programs to have their own school number/location code. This relatively minor statutory change resulted in the first opportunity to disaggregate demographic and environmental data for alternative education programs using the state's student information system, Infinite Campus. As a result, all information from the 2013-14 school year will be regarded as the baseline for future reports. Prior to this change, any information that was available came as the result of anecdotal or self-reported survey data. All data in this report comes from Infinite Campus.

Alternative Education Programs Definitions

Pursuant to KRS 160.380 an "**alternative education program**" is defined as "a program that exists to meet the needs of students that cannot be addressed in a traditional classroom setting but through the assignment of students to alternative classrooms, centers, or campuses that are designed to remediate academic performance, improve behavior, or provide an enhanced learning experience. Alternative education programs do not include career or technical centers or departments." This current definition became effective July 12, 2012.

Alternative education programs exist to provide a learning environment that can best support the success of students who may not be thriving in the traditional education environment or whose behavior requires them to be separated from the general student population. Servicing a diverse set of learners, alternative education programs are often associated only with at-risk students. While those students often find a home in an alternative education program, the population can also include those with special needs, gifted and talented, adjudicated, abused and neglected, differently abled, and other students who seek a non-traditional learning environment.

An **A5 alternative program** is a district operated and district controlled facility with no definable attendance boundaries that is designed to provide services to student populations with unique needs. The student composition and characteristics change frequently and are controlled by the local school district's student assignment practices and policies. These programs may be located in the same building as a traditional (A1) school or located off-site as a stand-alone program that more closely resembles a school.

An **A6 alternative program** is a district operated instructional program in a non-district operated institution or school. An A6 program is also referred to as a program that contracts with the Kentucky Education Collaborative for State Agency Children (KECSAC). These students may also be involved with the Department of Juvenile Justice, foster care, or behavioral health agencies.

Blended programs are programs that serve both A5 and A6 students within the same alternative education program. Because blended programs can only have one designation in Infinite Campus they are included with the A6 data presented throughout the report. Both A5 and A6 programs exist to provide educational services to students in uniquely different ways that best address the students' individual needs.

Alternative education programs serve a variety of grades with varying enrollment sizes and lengths of enrollment. Diversity among learners also requires a diversity among programs. Some alternative education programs serve students for a short period of time (e.g. less than 10 days). Others provide an environment that can support a learner for many years until graduation. Programs exist that students apply to and others are institutions students are sent to involuntarily.

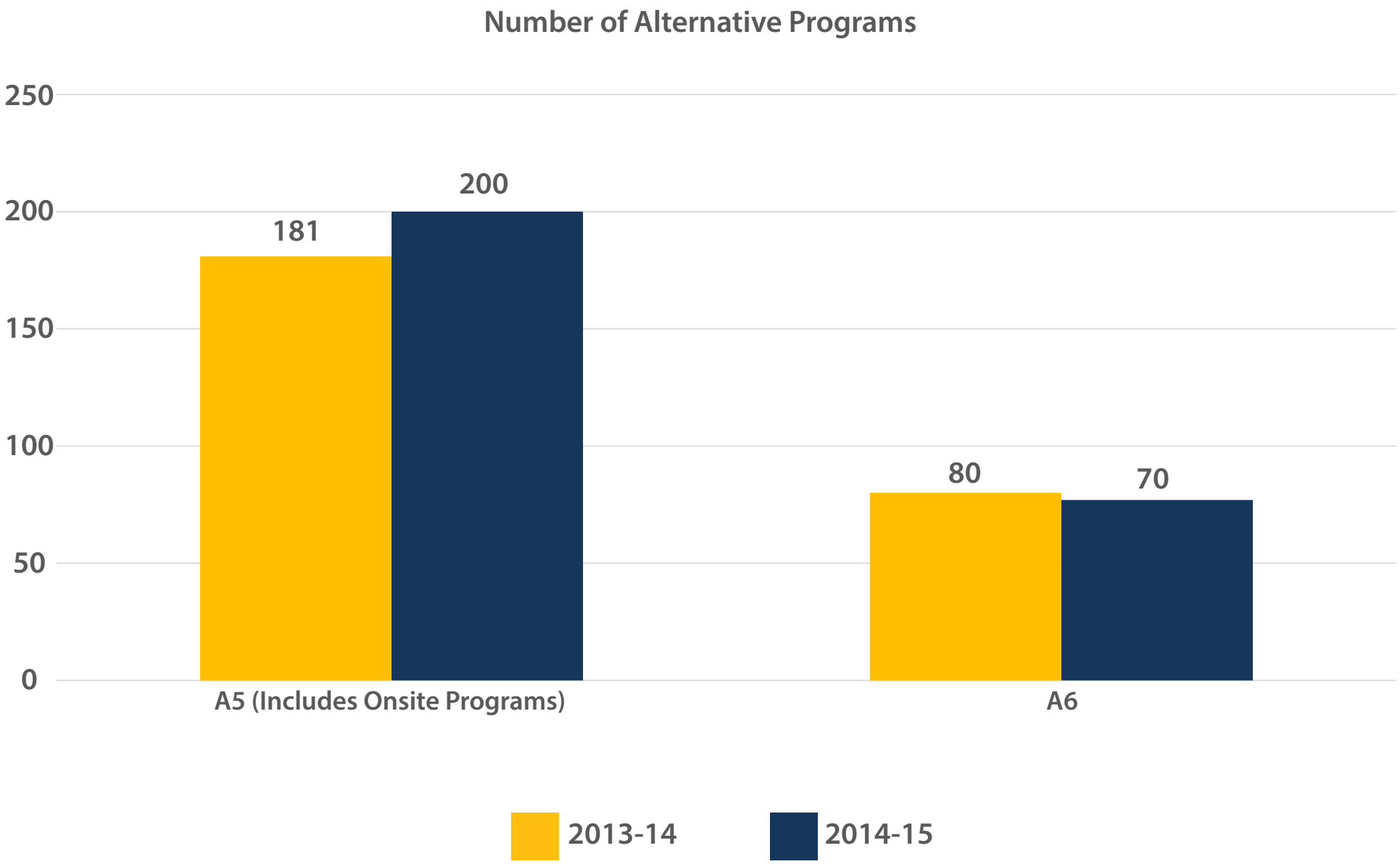
Due to the variety in the types of A5 and A6 programs, as well as the diverse characteristics of students who attend them, any report on the scope of alternative education programs will be limited in the conclusions that can be drawn and inferences that can be made. This report is a summary of education services provided outside the traditional A1 school model. Any stereotypes, archetypes, or countertypes should be avoided when considering the programs, services offered, or students enrolled.

Data Summary for School Year 2014-2015

- Alternative programs were operating in **109** of Kentucky's **173** School Districts through on-site or off-site programs.
- During the 2014-2015 school year, **28,657** students were enrolled in **277** alternative programs in Kentucky.
- **16,216** students were served in **200** A5 alternative education programs in **73** districts. This is **1,874** more students in **19** more programs than in the 2013-14 school year.
- **12,441** students received education services in **77** A6 alternative education programs in **46** districts. This is **209** fewer students being serviced in **3** fewer programs.
- Overall, student enrollment in alternative programs increased by **14%** from school year 2013-14 to 2014-15.
- There were **10,378** students who enrolled in alternative programs more than once, which is an increase from **5,373** the 2013-14 school year.
- Students receiving special education services are overrepresented in A6 alternative education programs. **13.3%** of Kentucky students were receiving special education services, which is comparable to A5 programs (**14%**), yet **21%** of A6 students were receiving special education services. There was a noted decrease from **20%** (2013-14) to **14%** (2014-15) for students in A5 programs as well as a decrease in A6 programs from **38%** (2013-14) to **21%** (2014-15).
- During both the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years, most students in A5 and A6 programs were enrolled at the high school level. In A5 programs, more **12th-grade** students are enrolled than any other grade. For A6 programs, more students are in the **9th-grade**.
- A gender gap exists in alternative education programs. Of A5 students, **60%** were male and **40%** female. Similarly, A6 students were **63%** male and **37%** female, which is consistent with the data from the previous year.
- Data for the 2014-15 school year indicates that White students represent **69%** of combined A5 and A6 enrollment, with African-American students representing **22%**. All the other race/ethnicity categories (Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Asian, American Indian-Alaska Native, Hispanic-Latino, and two or more races) combined represented **9%** of alternative program enrollment.
- African-American students are disproportionally served in alternative education programs. While African-American students comprised **10.5%** of students in Kentucky during school year 2014-15, they accounted for **24%** of unduplicated enrollments in A5 programs and **21%** in A6 programs.
- Data over the past two school years indicate enrollment for students receiving free or reduced lunch decreased from **84%** to **77%** from 2013-14 to 2014-15 for A5 programs. However, low-income student enrollment in A6 programs slightly increased from **78%** to **79%** from 2013-14 to 2014-15 school year. In comparison, the 2014-15 state average for students receiving free or reduced lunch was **60%**.

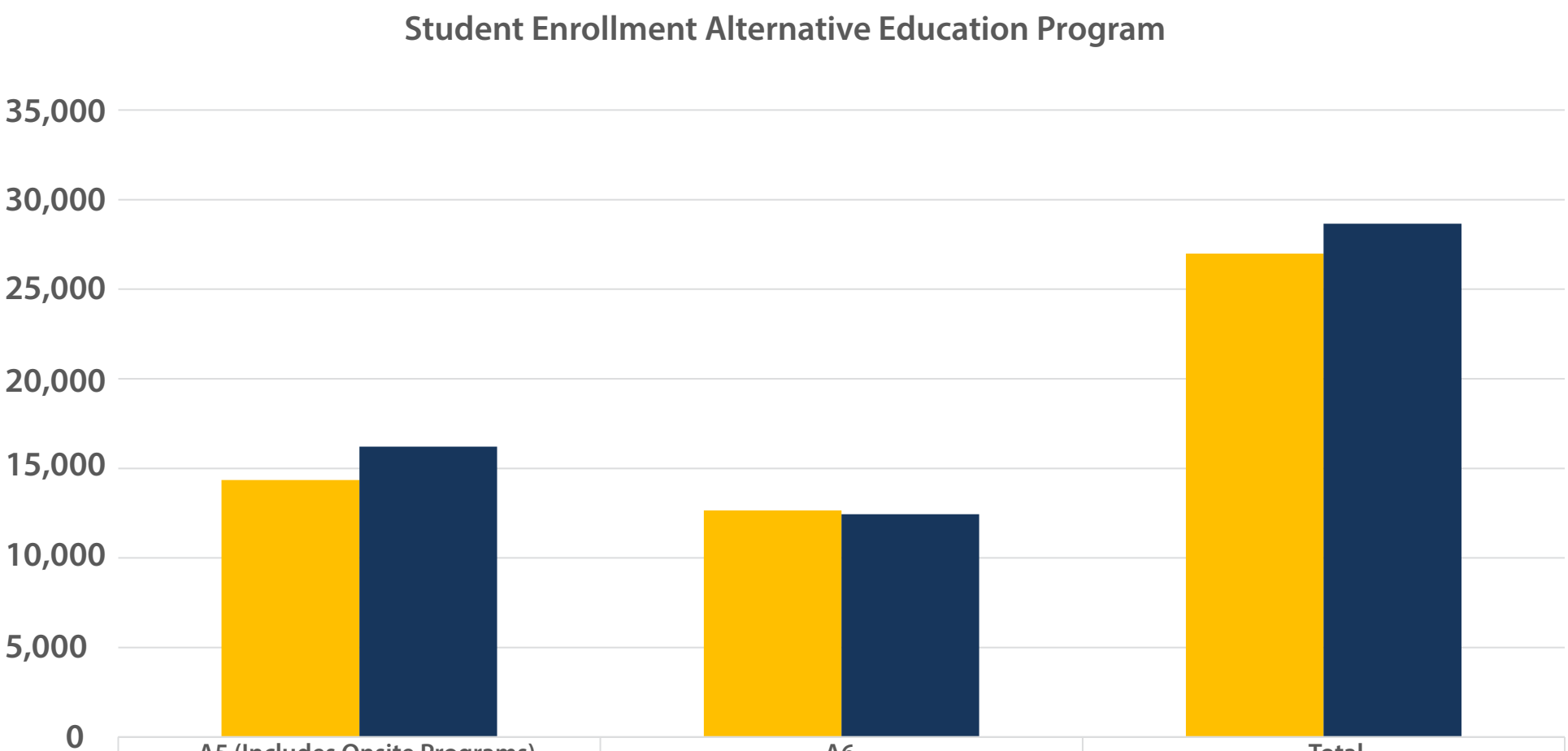
Number of Alternative Programs Operating Statewide

Alternative programs were operating in **109** of Kentucky's 173 school districts through on-site or off-site programs. The chart below details the number of A5 (both onsite and offsite) and A6 alternative program in operation during the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years. There are many more A5 programs operating than A6 programs, and the number has grown from the 2013-14 to 2014-15 school years. There is a fairly even distribution of these programs in operation across the state (see maps at end of report).



Alternative Program Student Enrollment

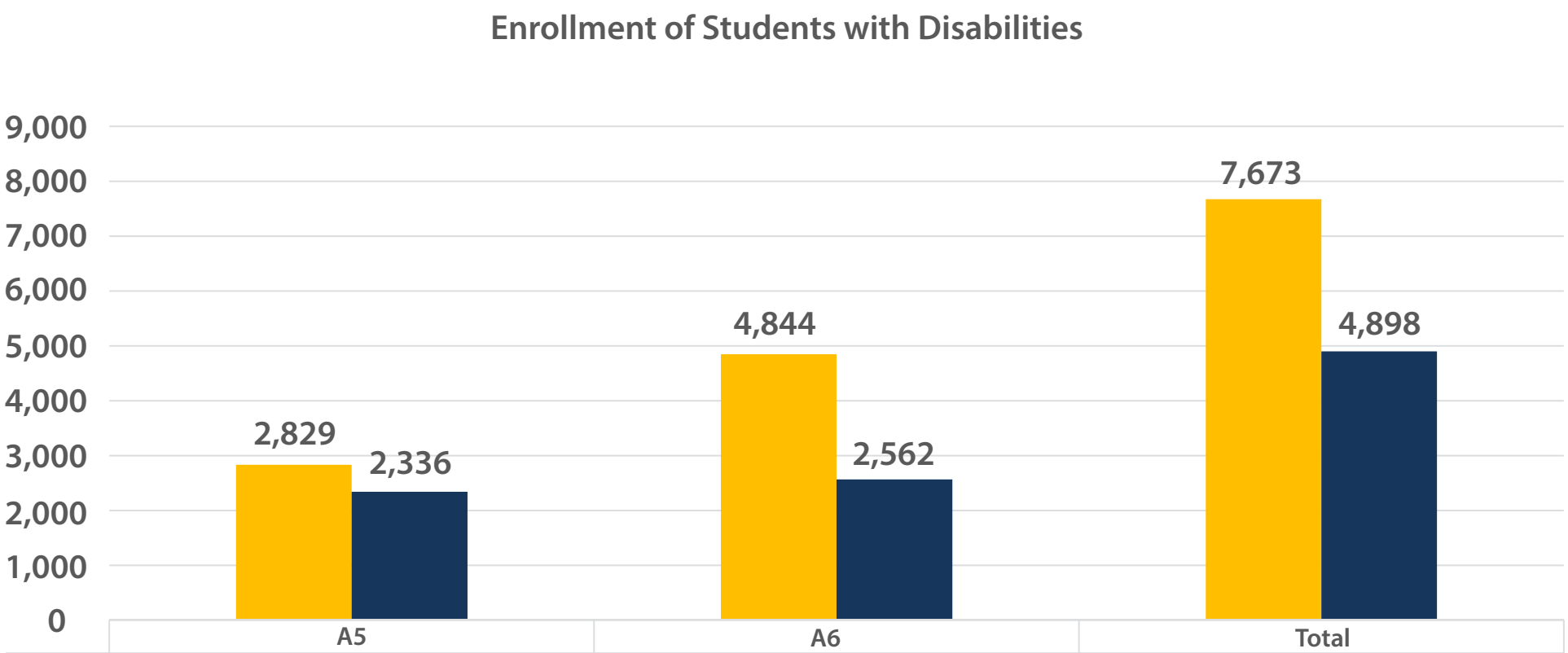
The chart below details the number of students receiving educational services in either an A5 or an A6 alternative program over the past two years. The data reflect an unduplicated count of students enrolled into an alternative program within the school year specified. In school year 2014-15, there were **10,378** students who enrolled in alternative programs more than once, which is an increase from **5,373** in the 2013-14 school year. The total student enrollment in alternative programs increased by **14%** over two school years.



	A5 (Includes Onsite Programs)	A6	Total
2013-14	14,342	12,650	26,992
2014-15	16,216	12,441	28,657

Students with Disabilities in Alternative Programs

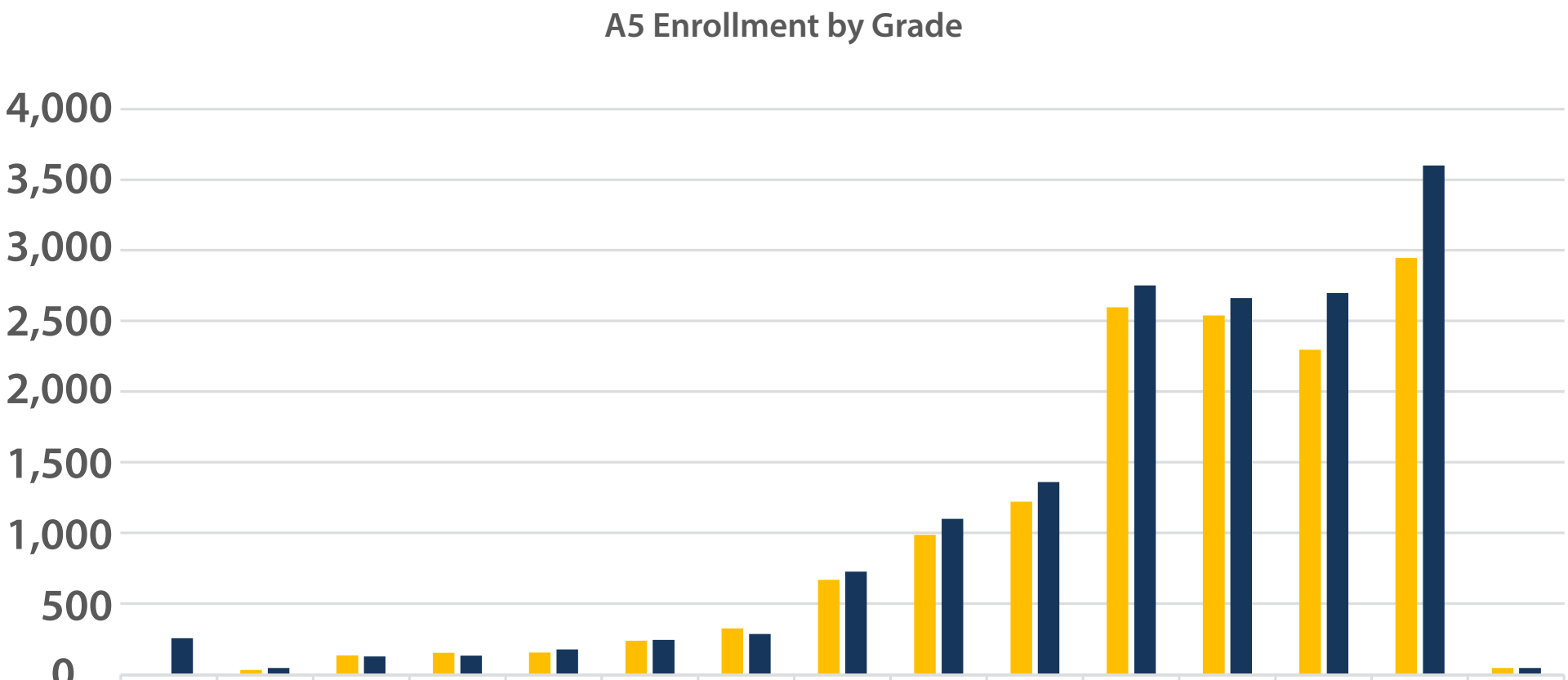
The chart below details students enrolled in an alternative program with a school/location code that has been identified under IDEA as a student with a disability. The data reflects an unduplicated enrollment into an alternative program at any point within the specified school year. The graph below demonstrates that there was a noted decrease from **20%** (2013-14) to **14%** (2014-15) for students in A5 programs as well as a decrease in A6 programs from **38%** (2013-14) to **21%** (2014-15). This data shows that although the number of students with disabilities enrolled in alternative schools has decreased, comparatively student enrollment remains higher than the state average of **13.3%** of students with disabilities.



	A5	A6	Total
2013-14	2,829	4,844	7,673
2014-15	2,336	2,562	4,898

Alternative Program Enrollment by Grade

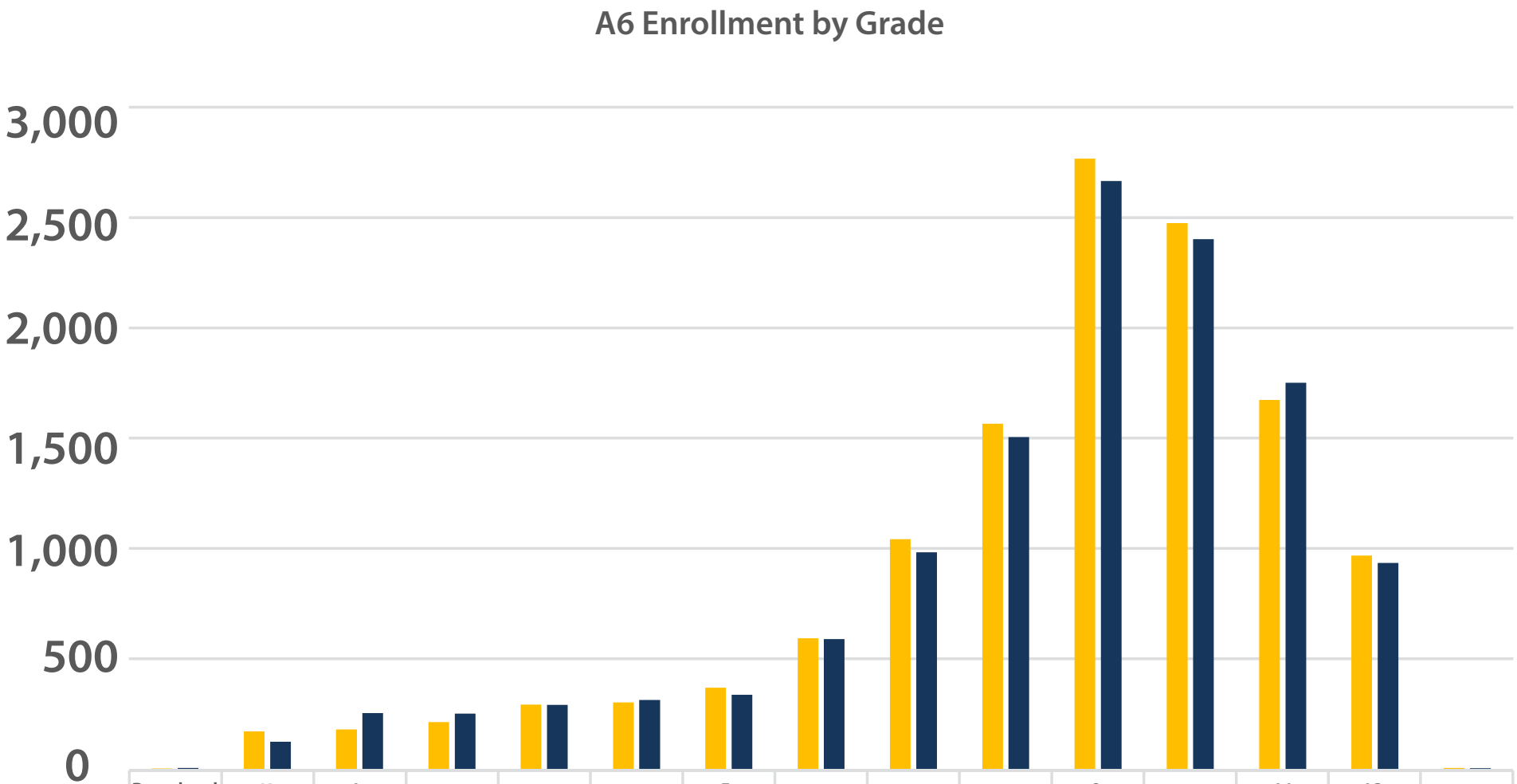
The chart below details the grade levels for all students enrolled in A5 alternative programs. The data reflect unduplicated enrollment into an alternative program at any point within the specified school year. During the 2014-15 school year, the data indicated that 9th-grade and 11th-grade students comprised **17%** of the total enrollment (K-14) with 10th-graders at **16%**.The greatest number of students were considered 12th-graders which comprised **22%** of the population enrolled in alternative programs.



	Preschool	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	14
2013-14	0	32	136	153	156	239	327	670	987	1,221	2,595	2,539	2,295	2,946	46
2014-15	256	46	127	133	178	245	287	728	1,101	1,361	2,750	2,661	2,698	3,598	47

Alternative Program Enrollment by Grade

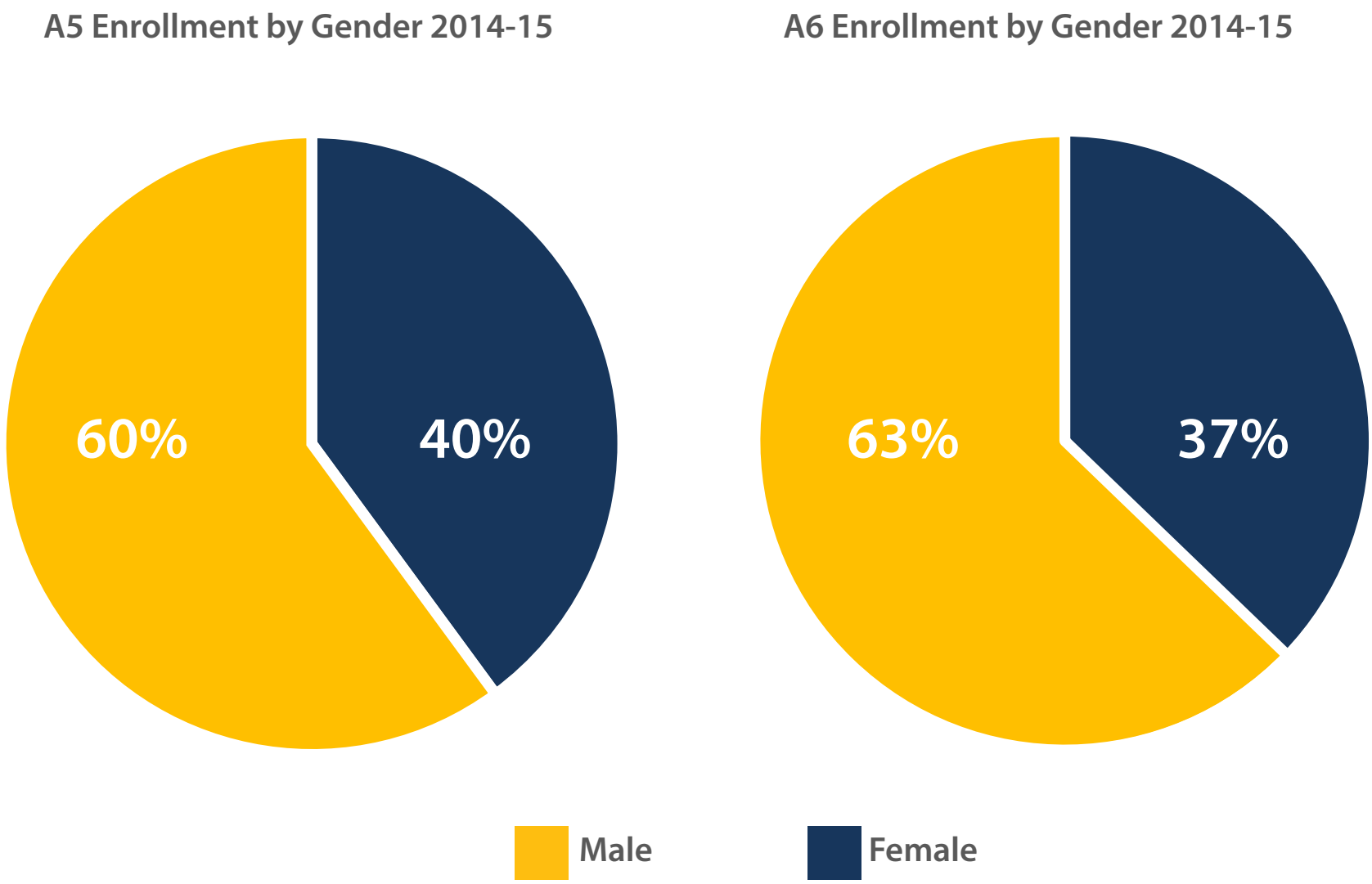
The chart below details the grade levels for all students enrolled in A6 alternative programs. The data reflect unduplicated enrollment into an alternative program at any point within the specified school year. During the 2014-15 school year, the data indicated that 9th-grade had the highest enrollment with **21%**, followed by 10th-grade with **19%**, 11th-grade with **14%** and 12th-grade with **8%**.



	Preschool	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	14
2013-14	7	174	183	217	296	305	372	596	1,044	1,566	2,765	2,473	1,674	969	9
2014-15	9	127	257	255	294	316	340	592	985	1,506	2,664	2,401	1,751	936	8

Alternative Program Enrollment by Gender

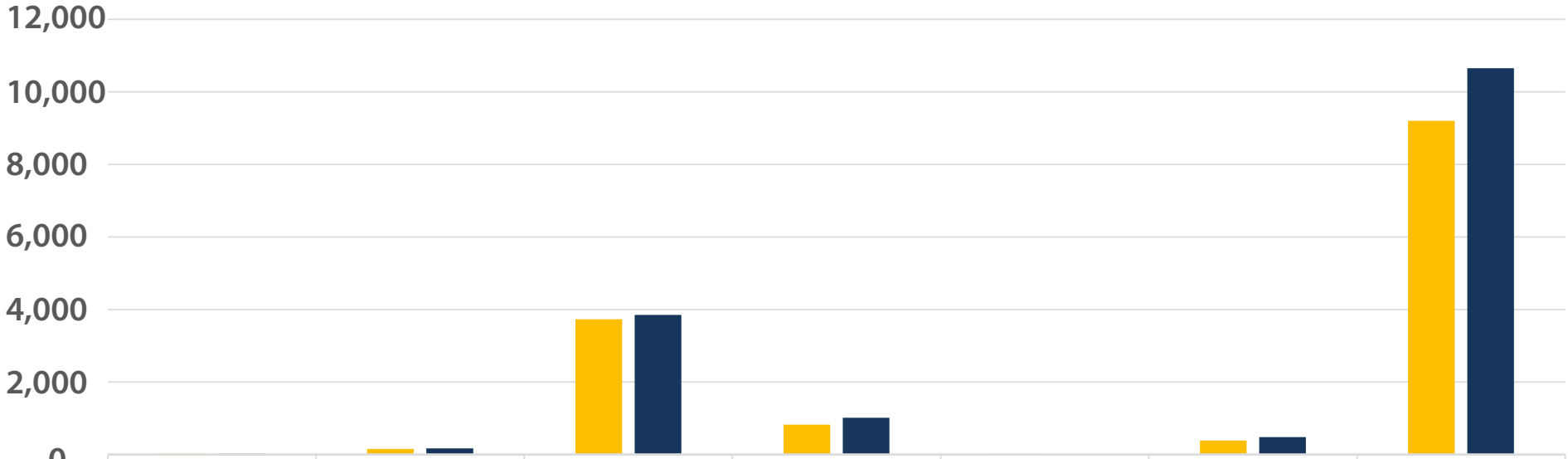
The chart below details the gender of students enrolled in an alternative program. The data reflect an unduplicated enrollment into an alternative program at any point within the 2014-15 school year. A gender gap exists in alternative education programs. During the 2014-15 school year, **60%** were male and **40%** female in the A5 programs; similarly **63%** were male and **37%** were female in the A6 programs, which is consistent with the data from the previous two years (2012-13 and 2013-14, available at http://education.ky.gov/school/eap/Documents/Alternative%20Programs%20Report%20March%202013.pdf.



Alternative Program Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

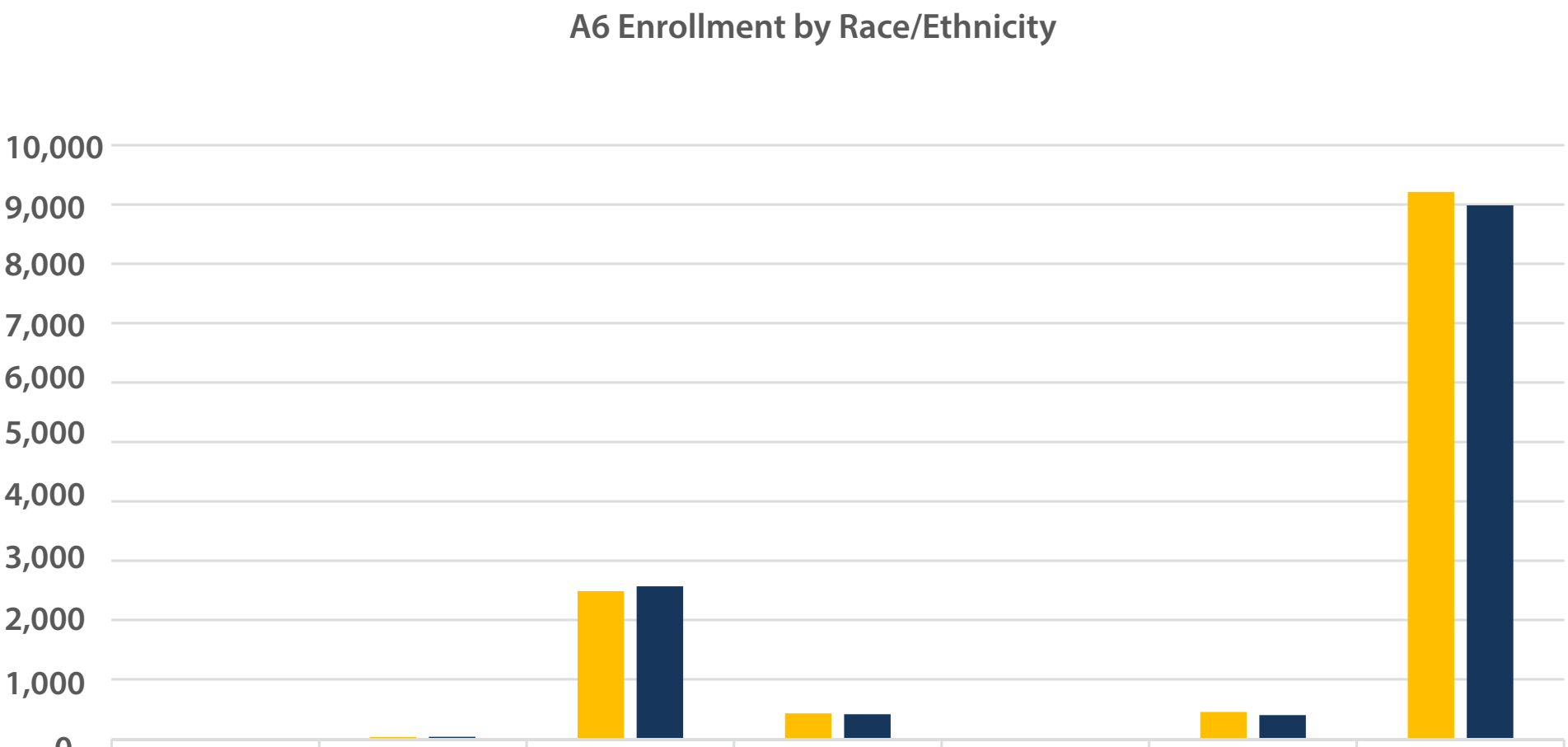
The charts below reflect the ethnicity of students in alternative programs over the past two years. The ethnicity categories are the same as the U.S. Census Bureau. The data reflect an unduplicated enrollment into an alternative program at any point within the specified school year. Data (A5 and A6 programs combined) for the 2014-15 school year indicates that white students had an average enrollment of **69%** with African-American students at **22%**. All the other categories combined had an average enrollment of **9%** and include: American Indian-Alaska Native, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and two or more race. While African-American students comprised **10.5%** of students in Kentucky during school year 2014-15, they accounted for **21%** of unduplicated enrollments in A6 programs and **24%** in A5 programs.

A5 Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian	Black	Hispanic/Latino	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	White
2013-14	25	157	3,733	823	16	384	9,204
2014-15	24	174	3,854	1,018	15	480	10,651

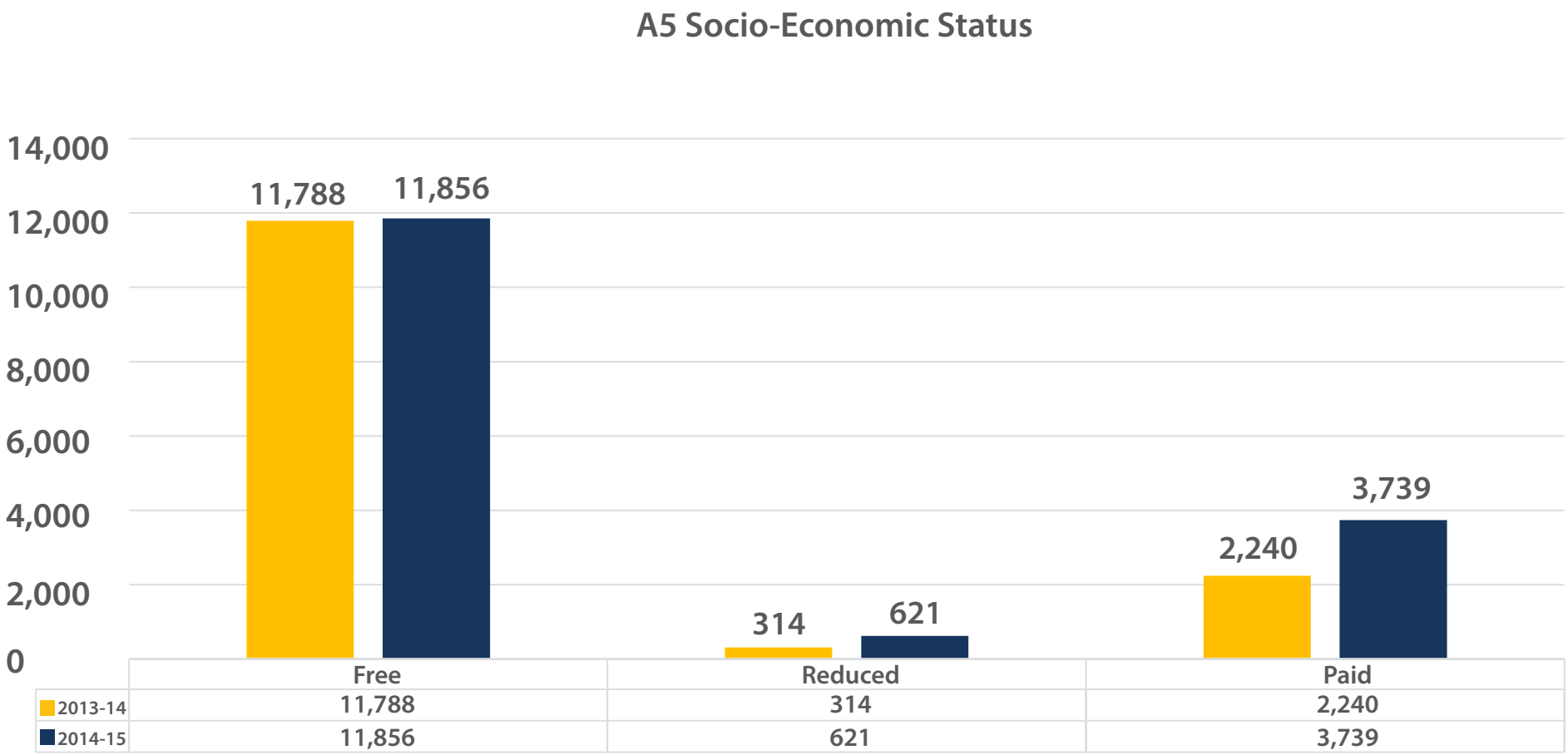
Alternative Program Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



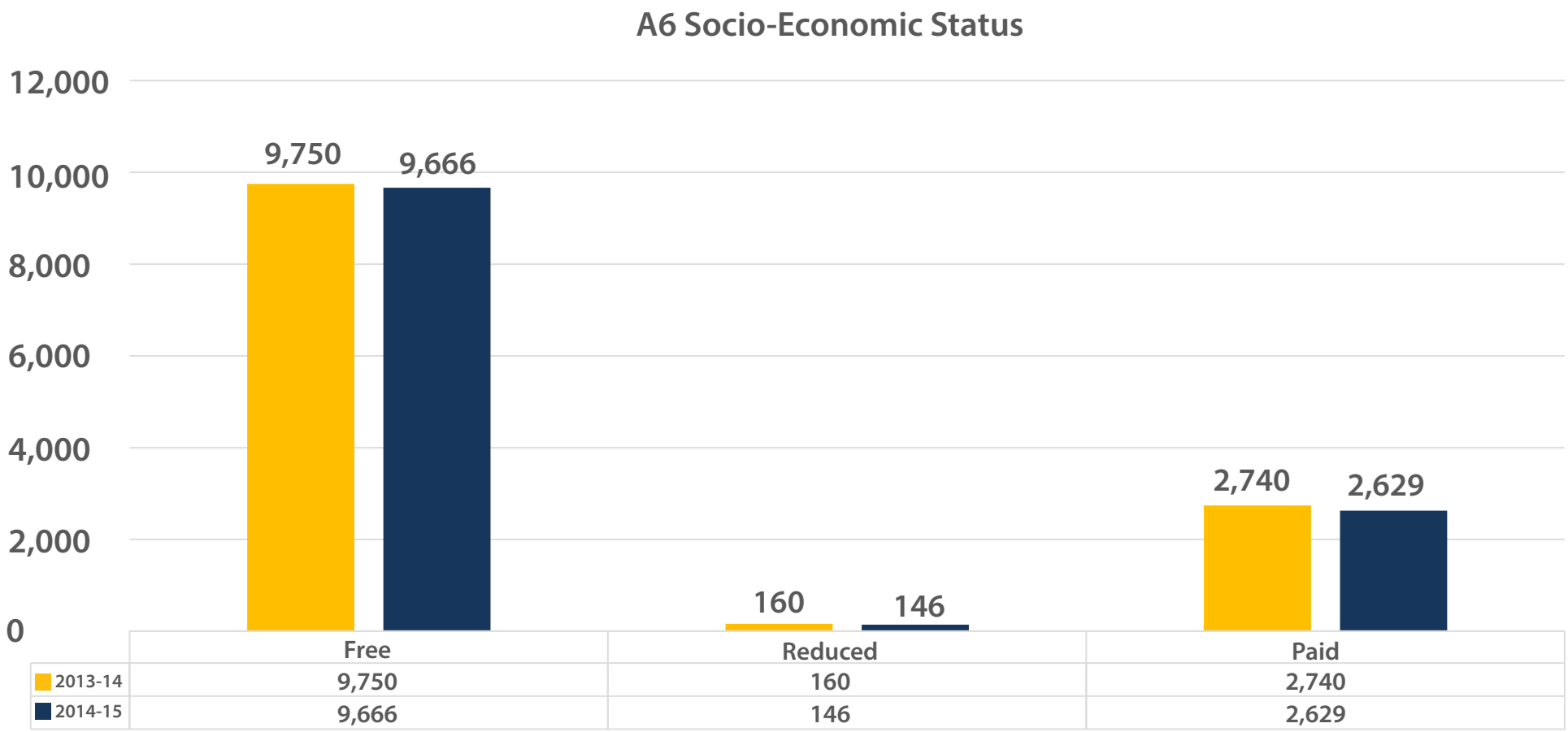
	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian	Black	Hispanic/Latino	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	White
2013-14	15	37	2,492	433	7	458	9,208
2014-15	20	38	2,570	420	5	405	8,983

Alternative Program Enrollment by Socio-Economic Status

The charts below reflect the number of students identified as low-income (as determined by eligibility for free or reduced-priced lunch) enrolled in alternative programs during the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years. Data over the past two school years indicate enrollment for students receiving free or reduced-priced lunch decreased from **84%** to **77%** from 2013-14 to 2014-15 in **A5** programs. Low-income students enrolled in **A6** programs showed only a slight change from **78%** to **79%** for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years. The current data shows that the proportion of students eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch in alternative programs is higher than the overall state average of **60%** (**54.5%** on free and **5.6%** on reduced lunch).



Alternative Program Enrollment by Socio-Economic Status



Conclusion

What does the data tell us?

As stated previously, this report was developed based on the two years of data from Infinite Campus since that is the only consistent data we have available for all alternative programs across the state. Review of the data reflect enrollment in alternative programs has increased and that the largest population is at the high school levels. While there was a decrease in enrollment of students receiving special education students, this population is overrepresented in alternative programs compared to statewide data. Male, African-American, and low-income students are also overrepresented in alternative programs compared to state averages. Because these student groups have had lower rates of school success nationally[1] and alternative programs are designed to meet the needs of students that cannot be addressed in a traditional school setting and it may be that the rate of enrollment in alternative programs is an indication that these programs are appropriately serving the populations of students they were designed to serve.

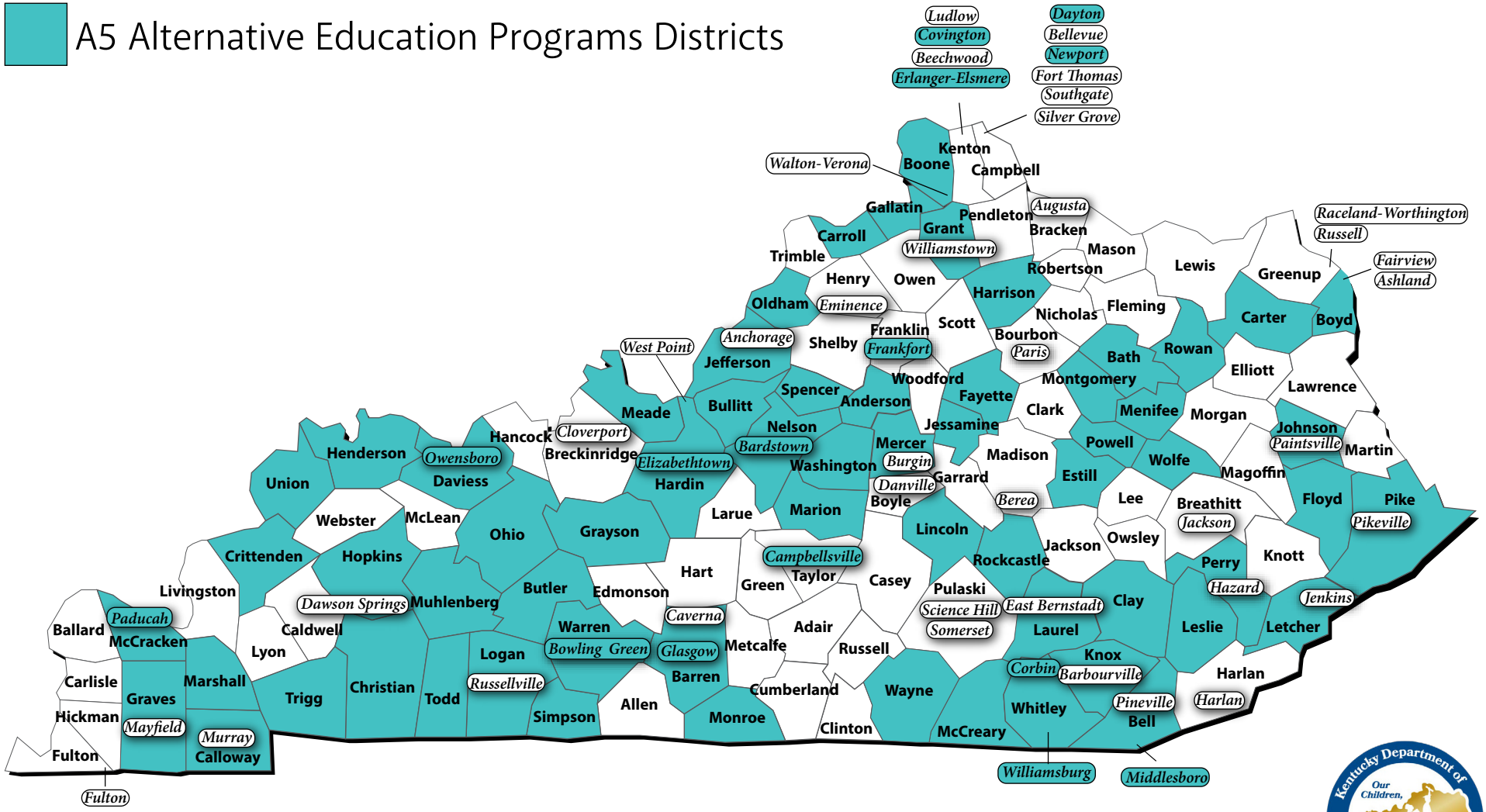
What does the data not tell us?

While the data for alternative programs for the past two years provides a useful snapshot of student enrollment, a third year of data including school year 2015-16 will provide the opportunity to analyze trends for both A5 and A6 alternative programs. Additionally, KDE is considering ways to collect data that will provide more detailed information about the types of A5 and A6 alternative programs throughout the state, including some that are quite specialized in the population they intend to serve (e.g. older English learner students; parenting students; students seeking online learning, credit recovery, and/or dual enrollment opportunities; students in need of behavioral and/or mental health supports, etc.). KDE is also working to collect data to pursue answers to the following questions:

- How well are program features meeting specific student needs (e.g. behavior, credit recovery, academic)?
- Why are students P-5 reflected as being enrolled in alternative programs in Infinite Campus?
- What types of curriculum, learning, and teaching strategies are being used in alternative education programs?
- Why are low-income, special education, male, and students of color more likely to be served in an alternative education program?
- How well are alternative programs supporting students at risk of not graduating in getting back on track to meet graduation requirements?
- What is the impact of SB 97 and SB 200 on the enrollment of A5 and A6 programs, respectively?

[1]See "Building a Grad Nation Report" at http://www.americaspromise.org/building-grad-nation-report and "The Condition of Education 2016" at http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016144.pdf.

A5 Alternative Education Programs Districts

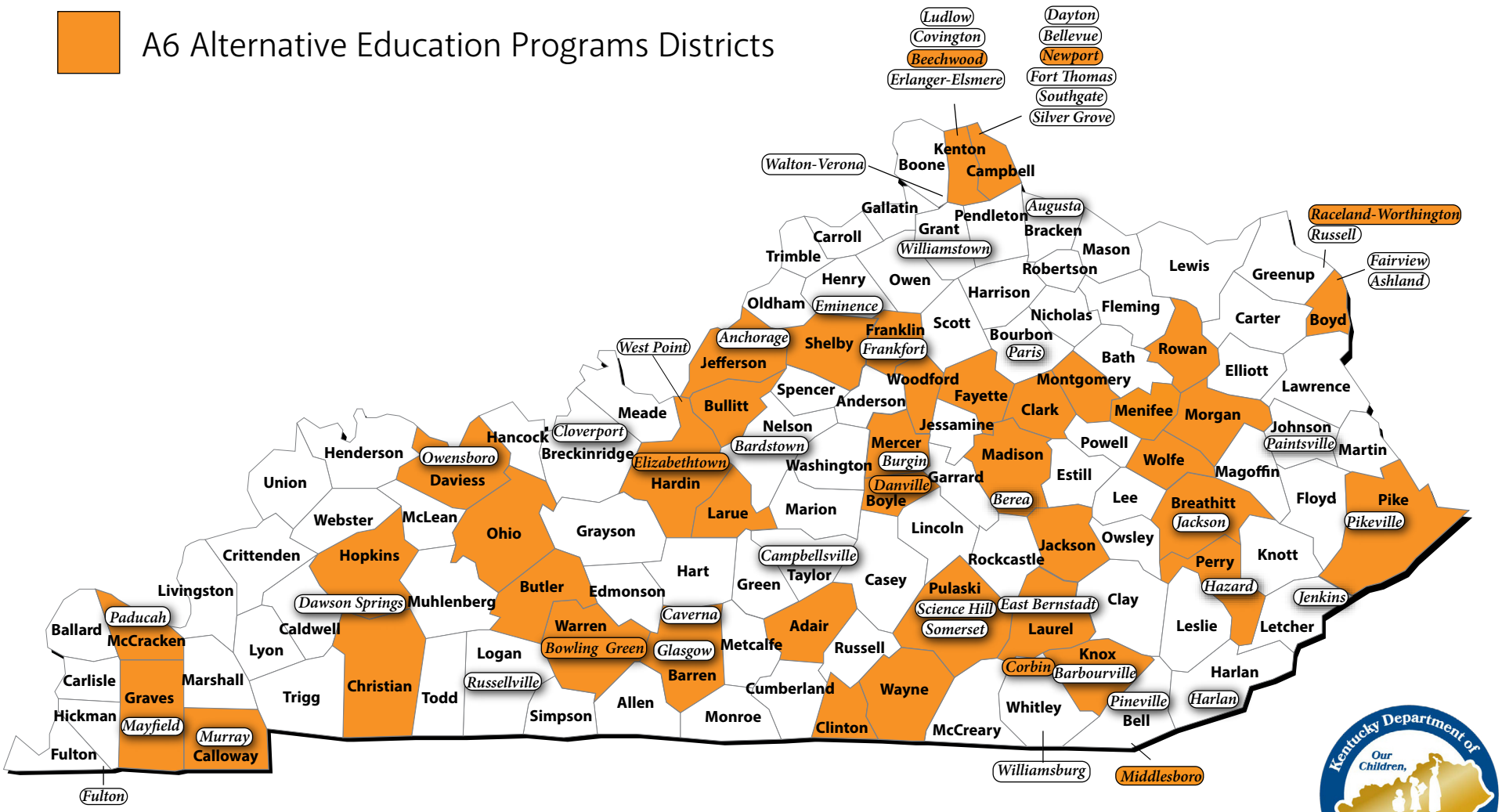


County & Independent School Districts

Independent districts indicated with italicized type

120 County School Districts
53 Independent School Districts

A6 Alternative Education Programs Districts



County & Independent School Districts

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