

Chronic Absenteeism in Arizona: A Description of K-8 Trends 2017-2021

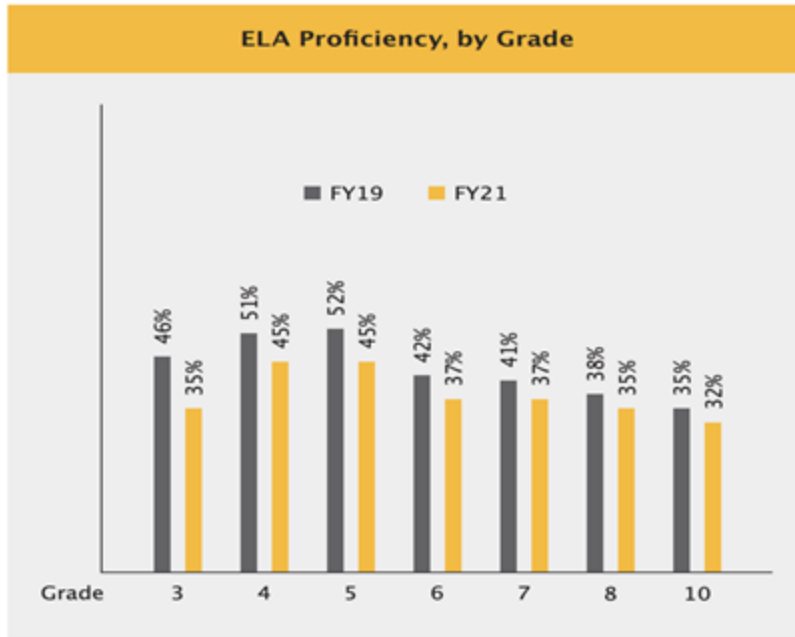
Presenters:

- **Dr. Paul Perrault, Senior Vice President, Community Impact and Learning, Helios Education Foundation**
- **Dr. Lenay Dunn, Senior Project Director, WestEd**

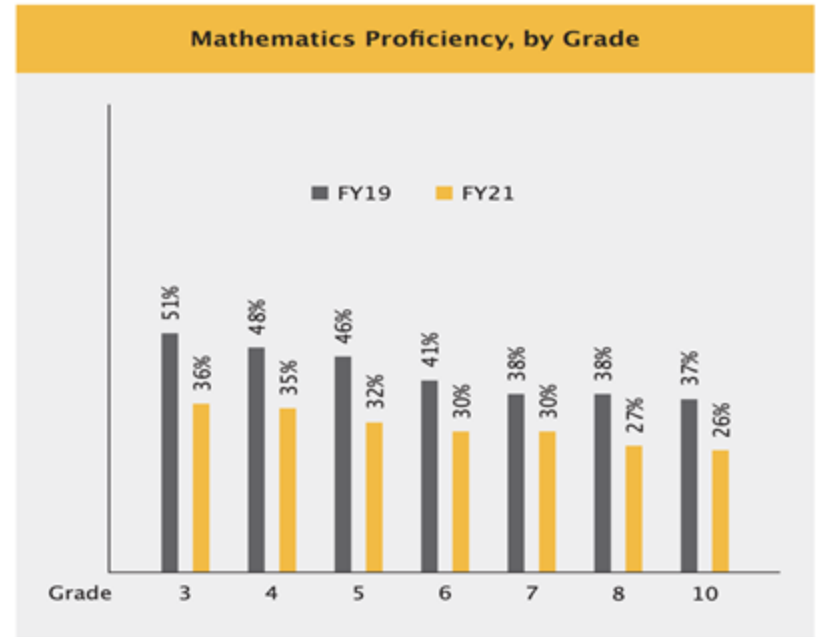
March 2023

ELA/Math Proficiency – 2019-2021

ELA Proficiency, by Grade

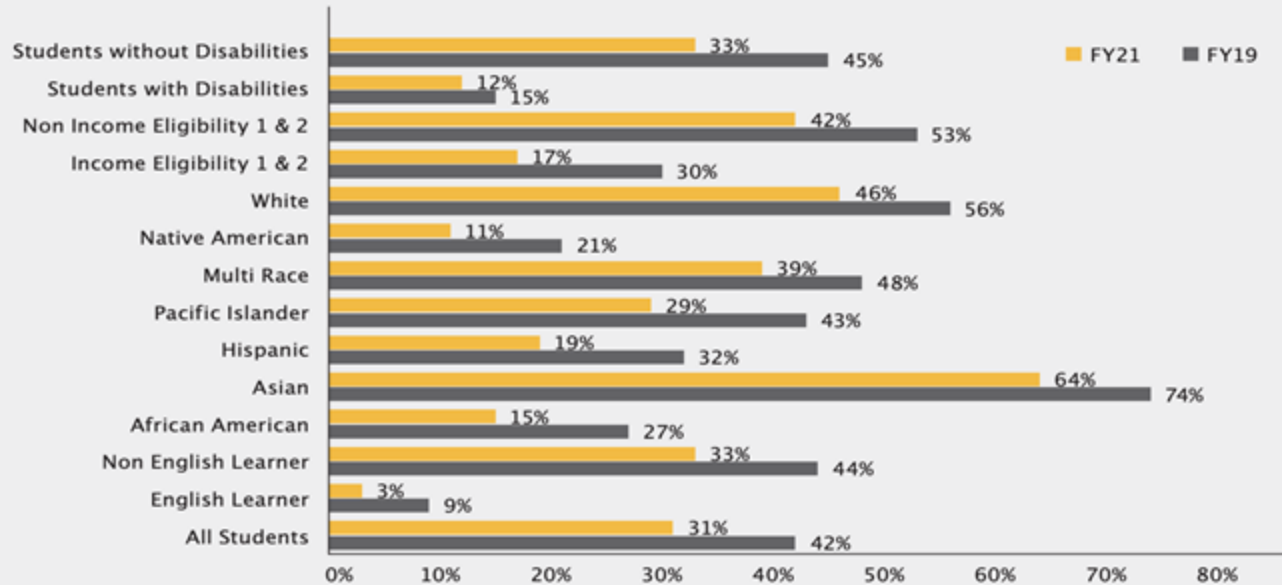


Mathematics Proficiency, by Grade

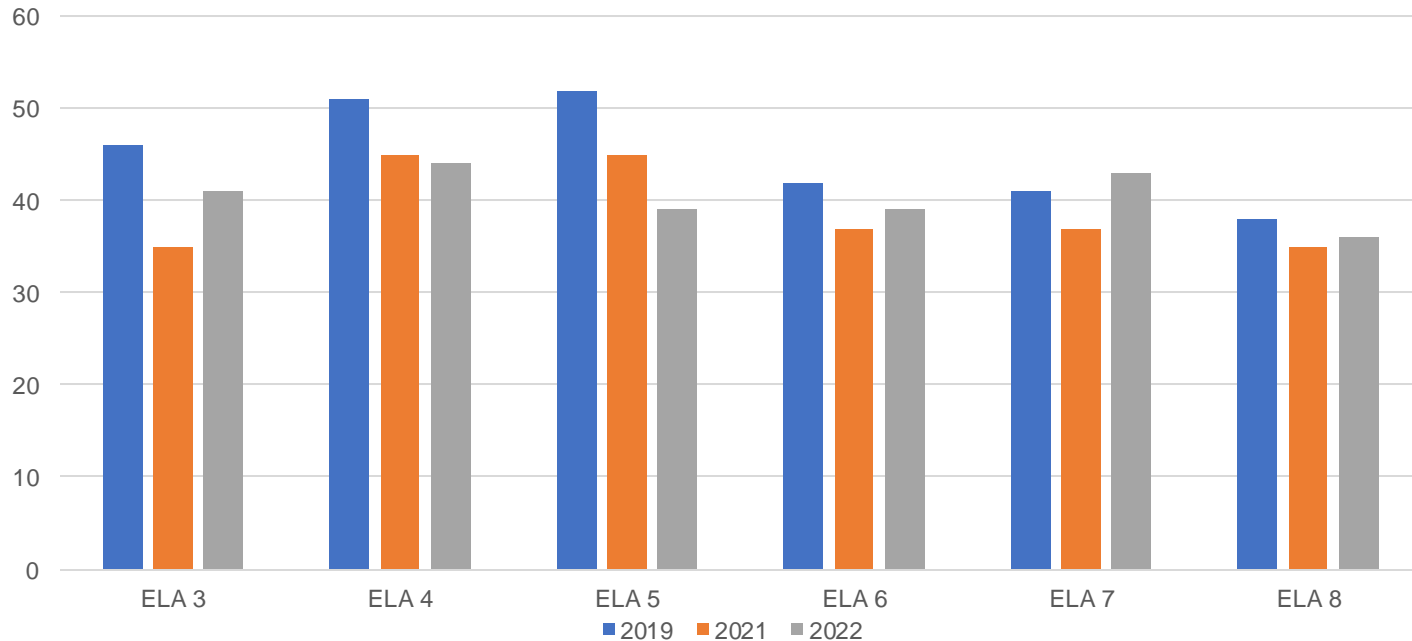


Math Proficiency by Subgroups – 2019-2021

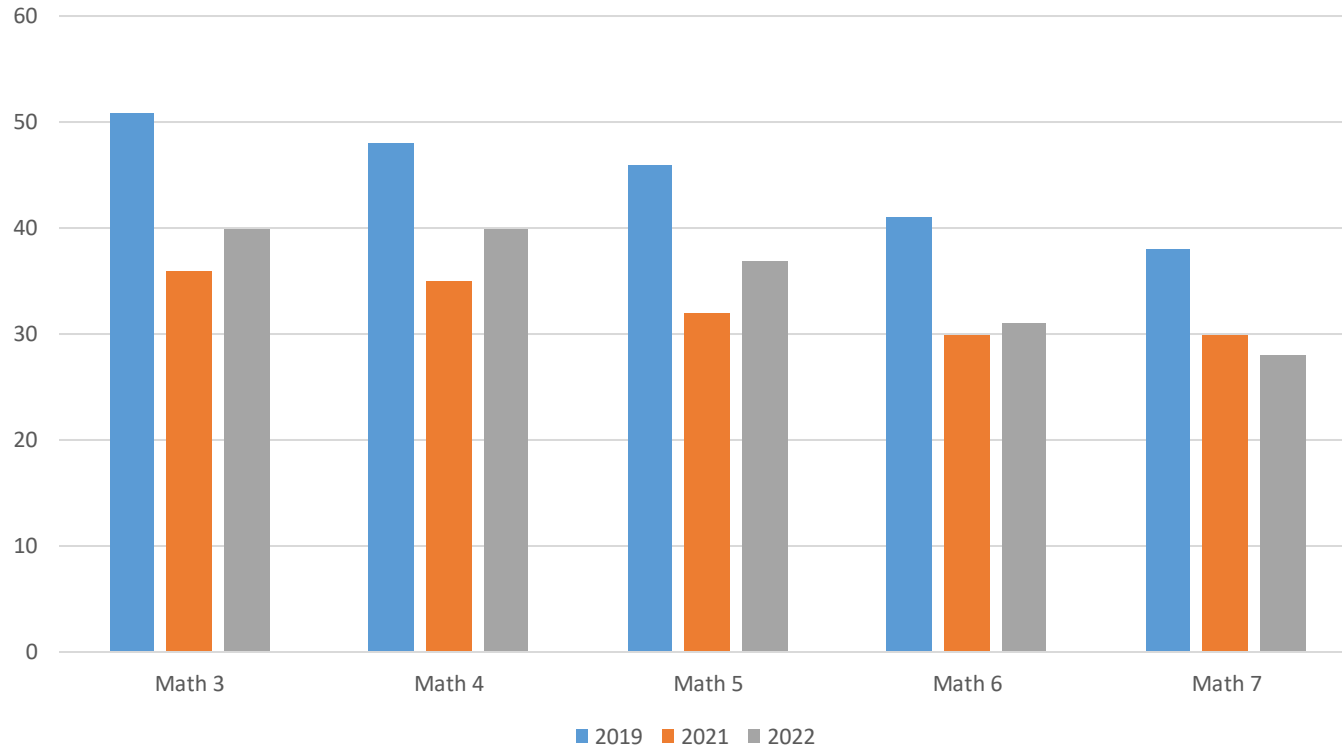
Mathematics Proficiency, by Subgroup



ELA Proficiency – 2019-2022



Math Proficiency – 2019-2022



Research Questions

1. What are statewide trends in chronic absence 2017-2021?
2. Which student and school characteristics are most related to chronic absence?
3. What are the preliminary 2021 trends in chronic absence for vulnerable student populations?

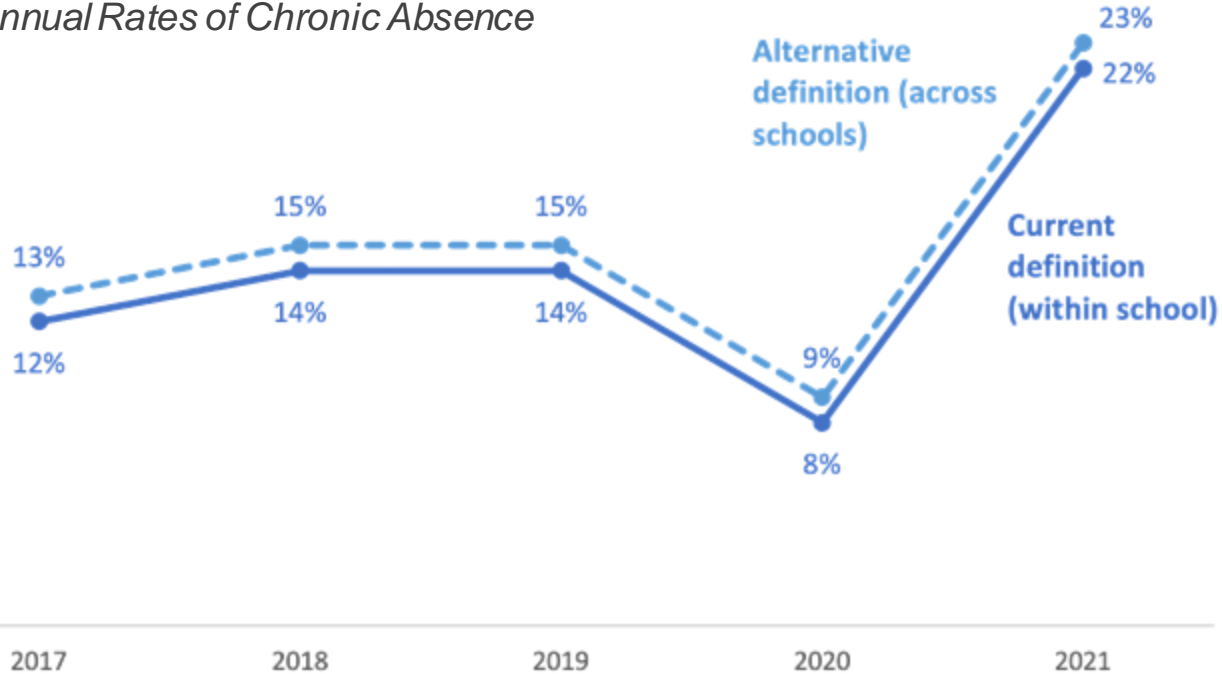
Chronic Absence Definitions

Chronic Absence – In Arizona, for school accountability purposes, chronic absence is when a student is absent from a given school for any reason (excused and unexcused) more than 10 percent of a school’s calendar year (e.g., 18 days for a typical 180-day school year that meets 5 days per week).

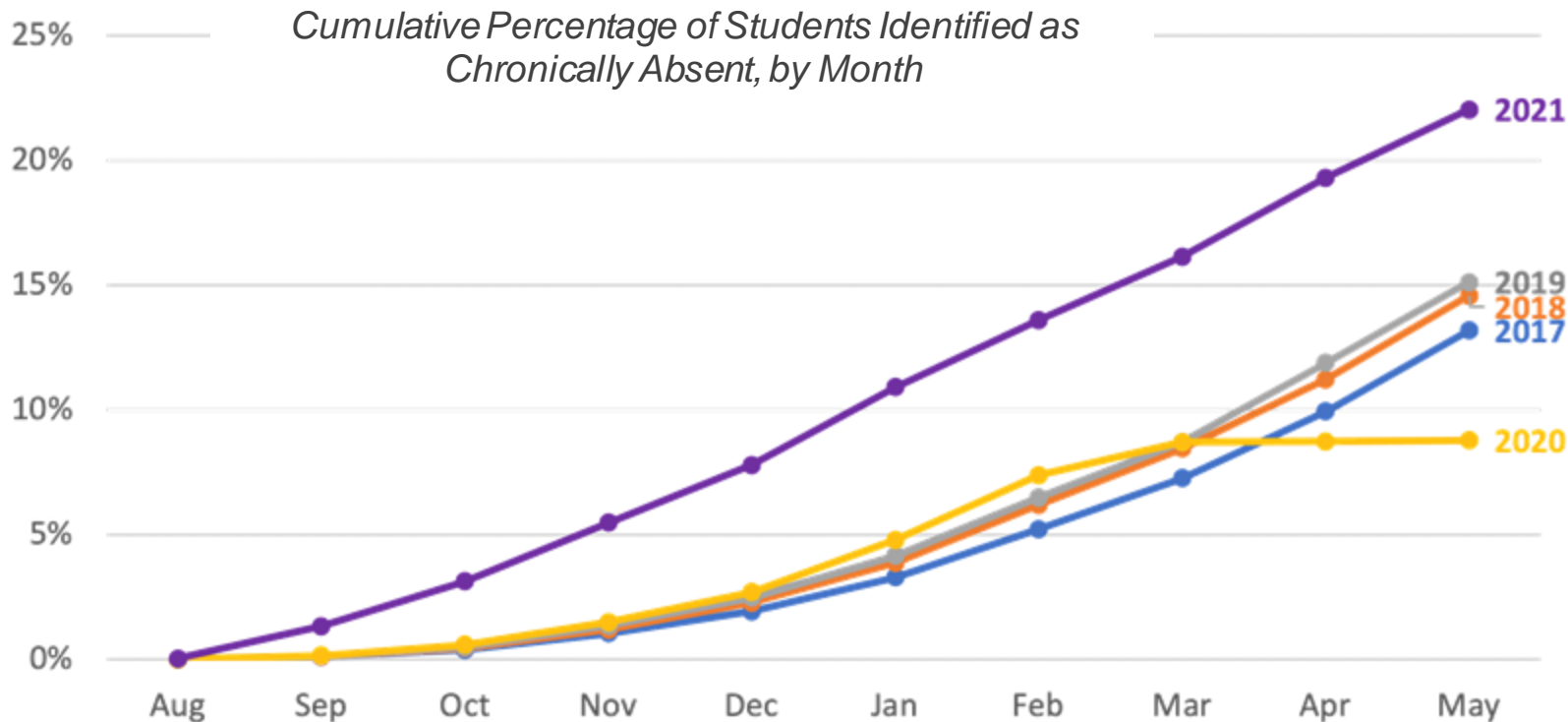
Alternative Definition of Chronic Absence – For the purpose of this study, absences (excused and unexcused) were also added across all schools attended by a student in a given school year. A student with absences more than 18 days in a school year was classified as chronically absent.

The 2021 AZ Chronic Absence Rate Exceeded Pre-Pandemic Levels

Statewide Annual Rates of Chronic Absence

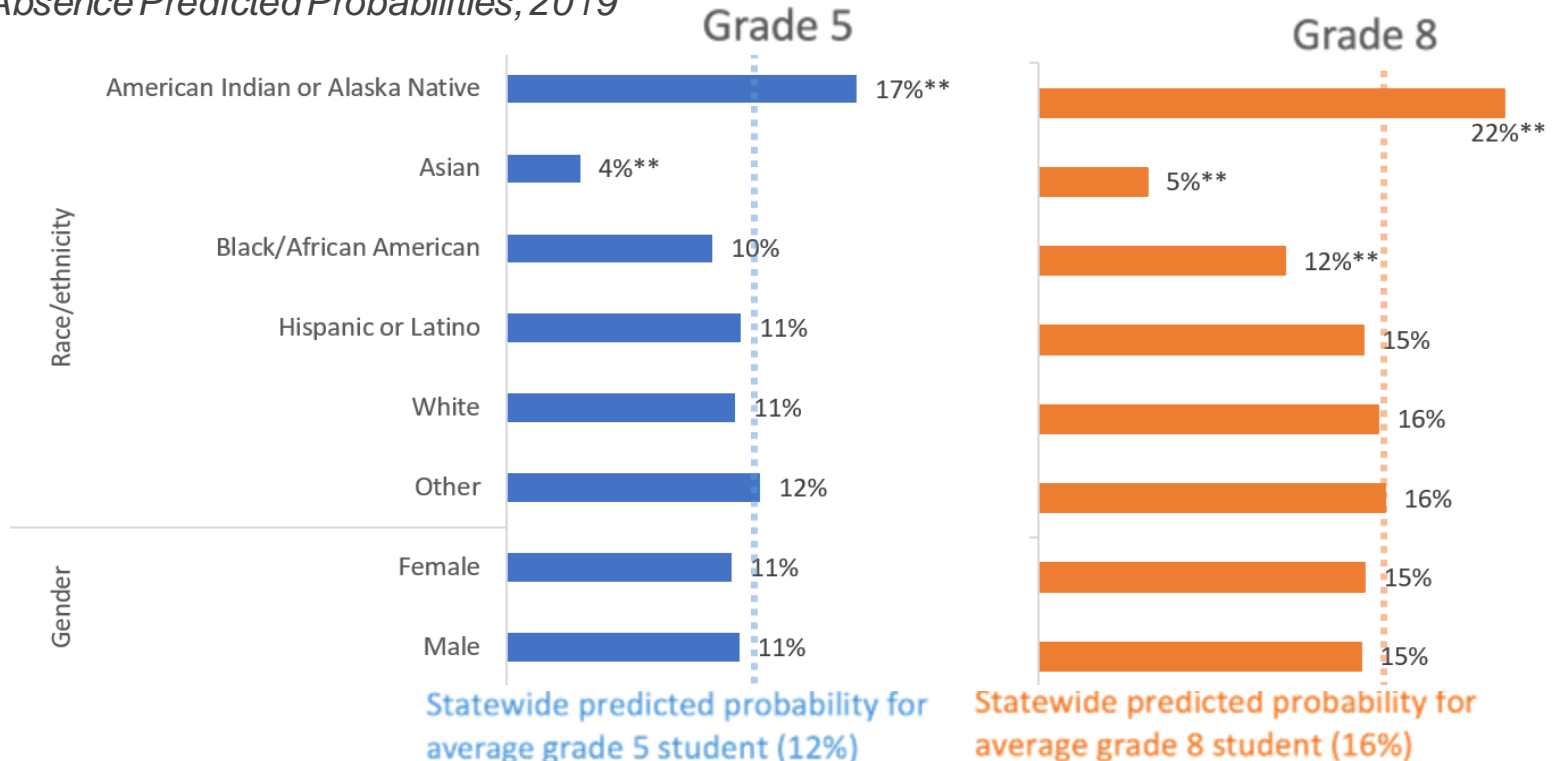


In 2021, a Higher Percentage of Students Reached the Chronic Absence Cut Off Earlier in the School Year



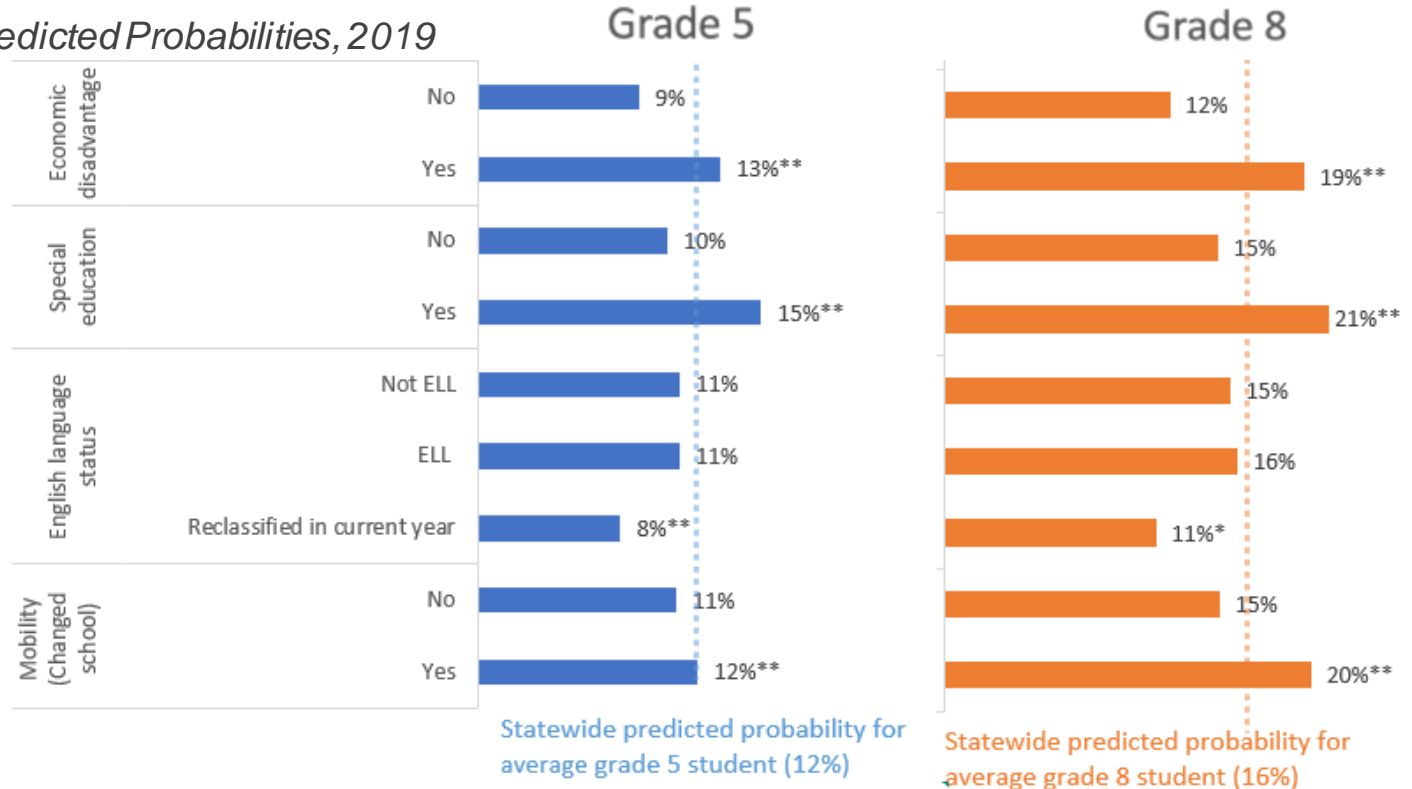
Before the Pandemic American Indian or Alaska Native Students Were Significantly More Likely To Be Chronic Absent

Chronic Absence Predicted Probabilities, 2019



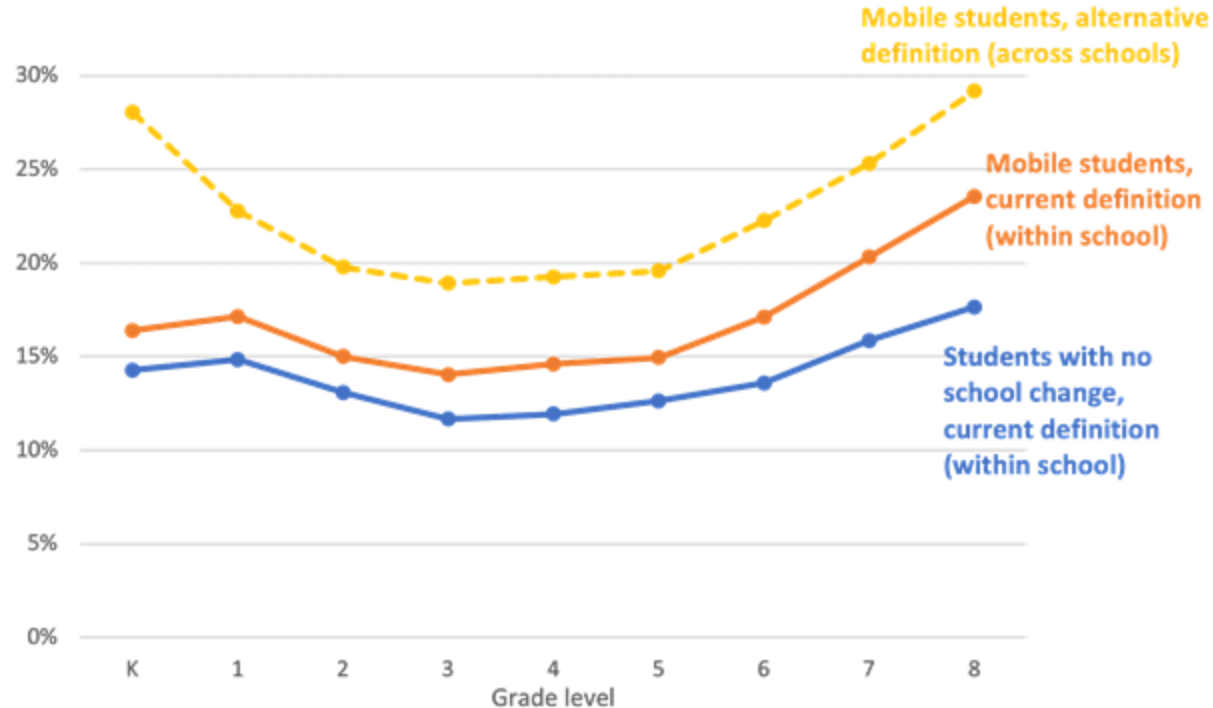
Before the Pandemic Economically Disadvantaged Students, Special Education Students and Mobile Students Were Significantly More Likely To Be Chronic Absent

Chronic Absence Predicted Probabilities, 2019



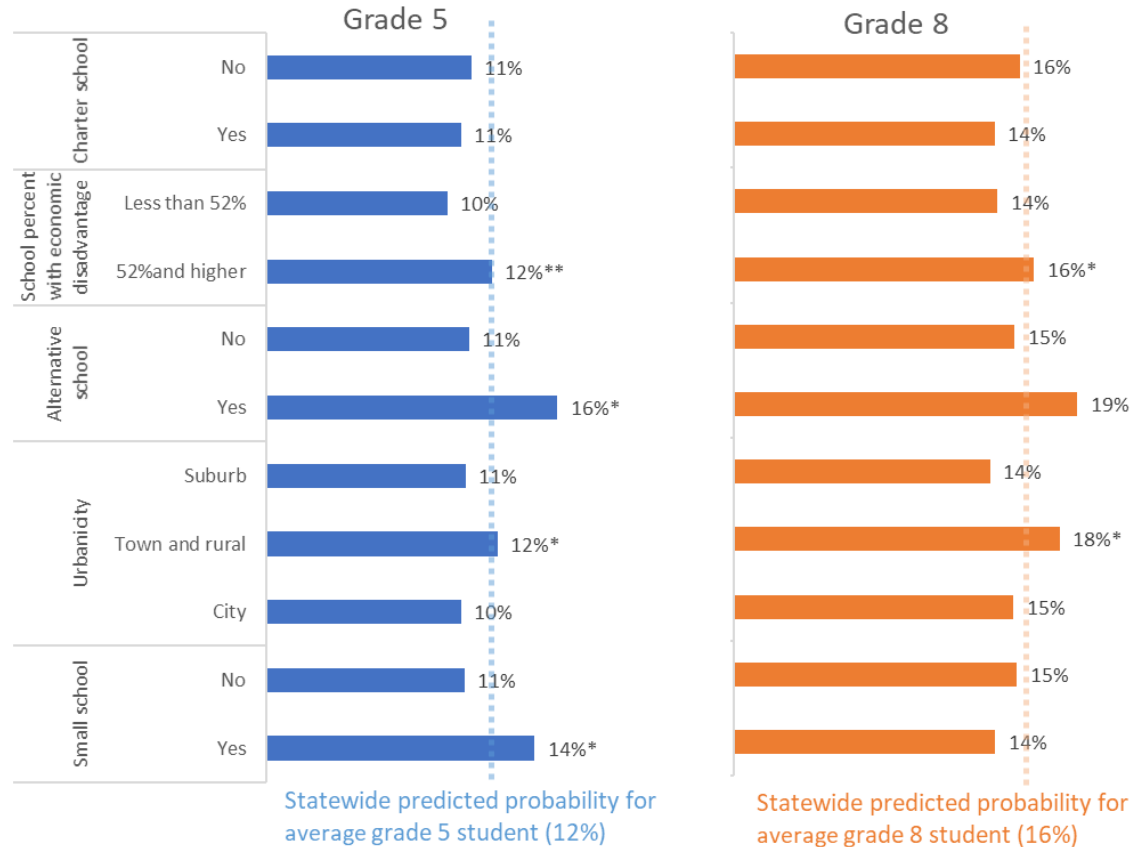
The Pre-Pandemic Chronic Absence Rate for Mobile Students Increased Significantly Under the Alternative Definition

Chronic Absence by Grade Level by Mobility, 2018-19



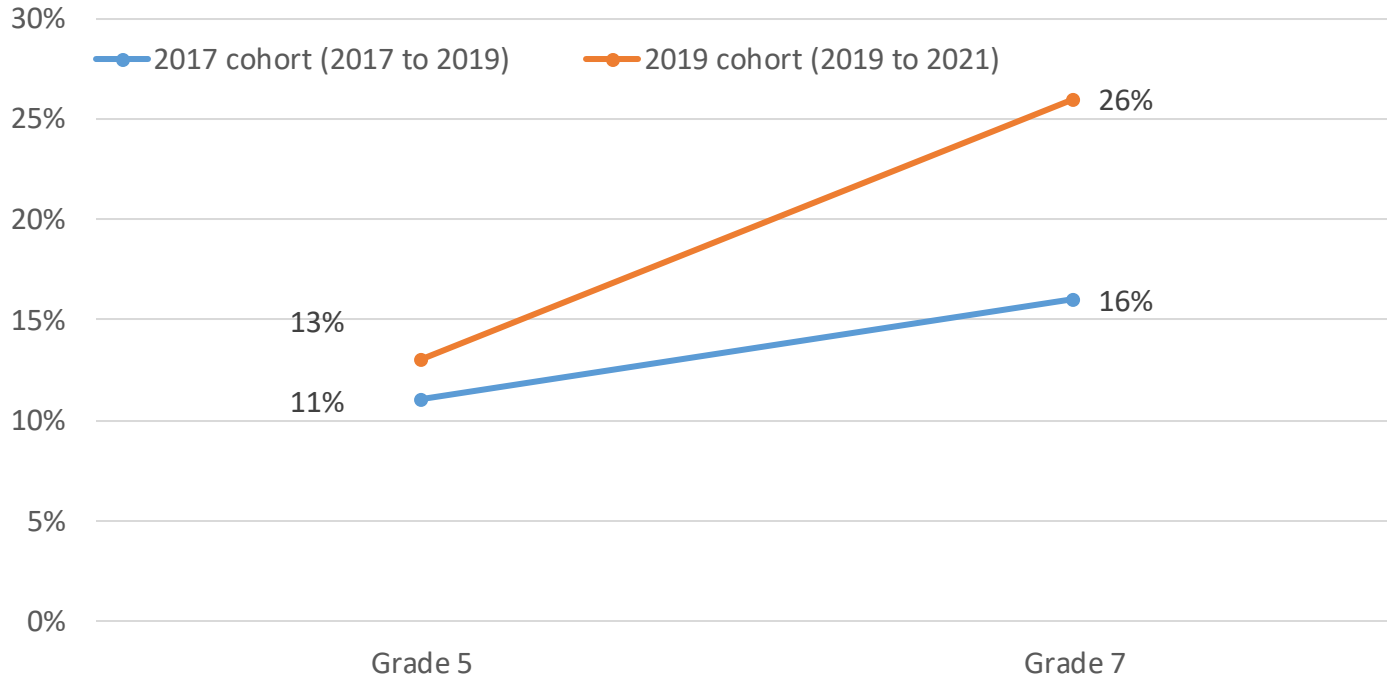
Before the Pandemic Students Enrolled in Rural and in High Poverty Schools Were Significantly More Likely To Be Chronic Absent

Chronic Absence Predicted Probabilities, 2019



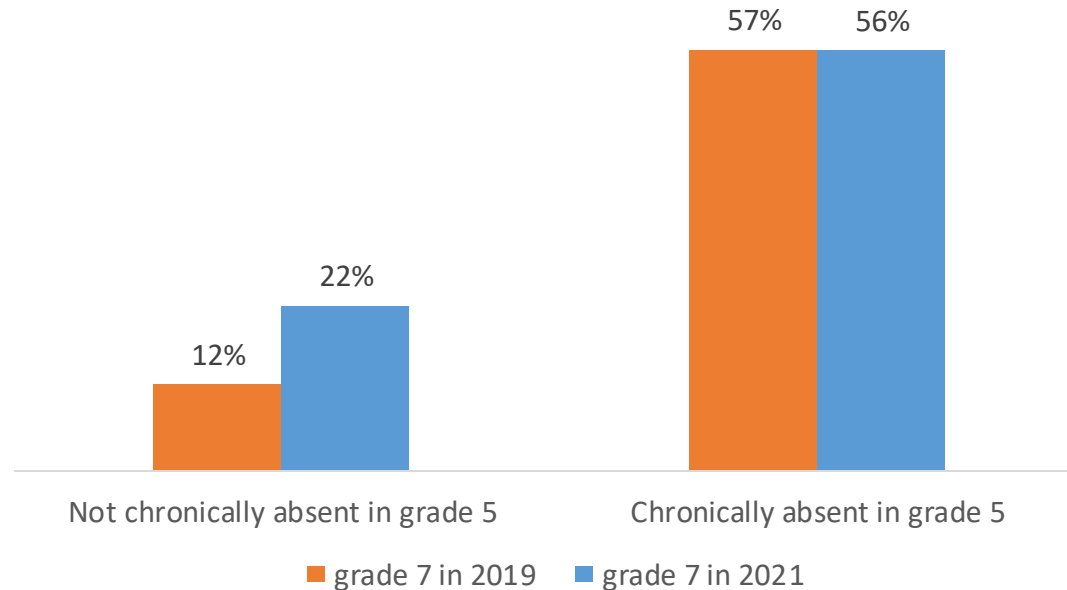
Chronic Absence Rates Increased by 5 Percentage Points for the Grade 5 Cohort From 2017 to 2019 but Doubled Over the Same Grades From 2019 to 2021

Percent of Students Chronically Absent in Grade 5 and Grade 7, from 2017 to 2019 and 2019 to 2021



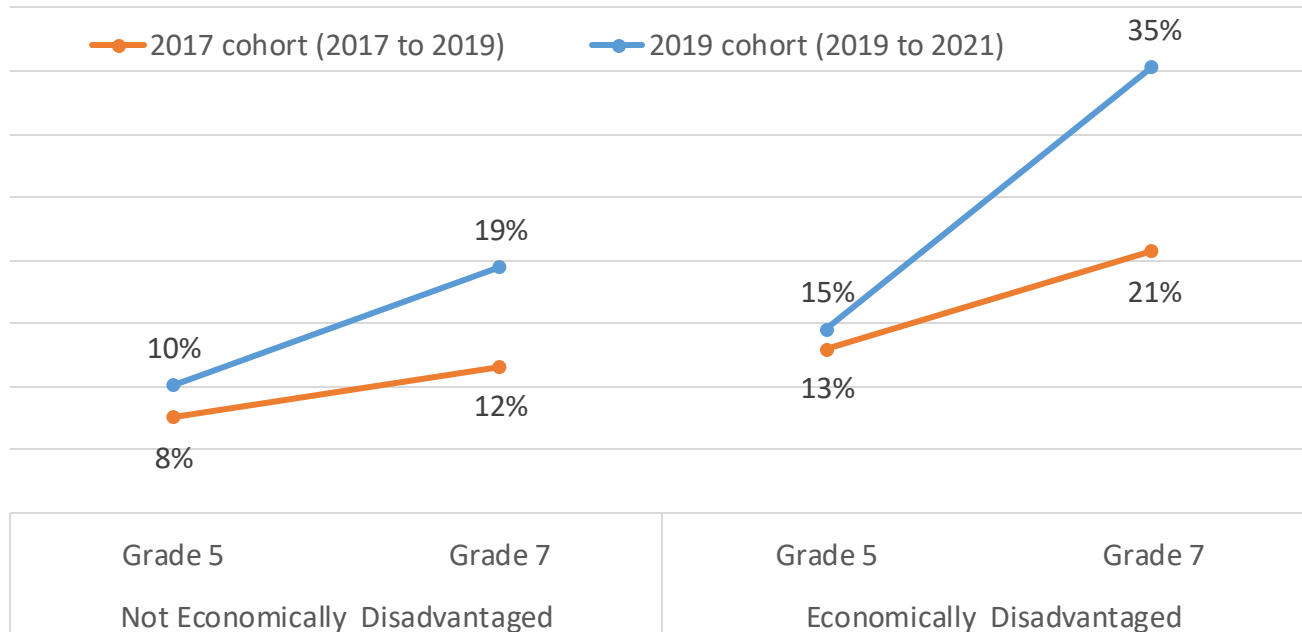
Chronic Absence in Grade 5 Was Highly Predictive of Chronic Absence in Grade 7 Both Pre-Pandemic and During the Pandemic

Percent of Students Chronically Absent in Grade 7 by Chronic Absence Status in Grade 5, 2017 and 2019 Grade 5 Cohorts



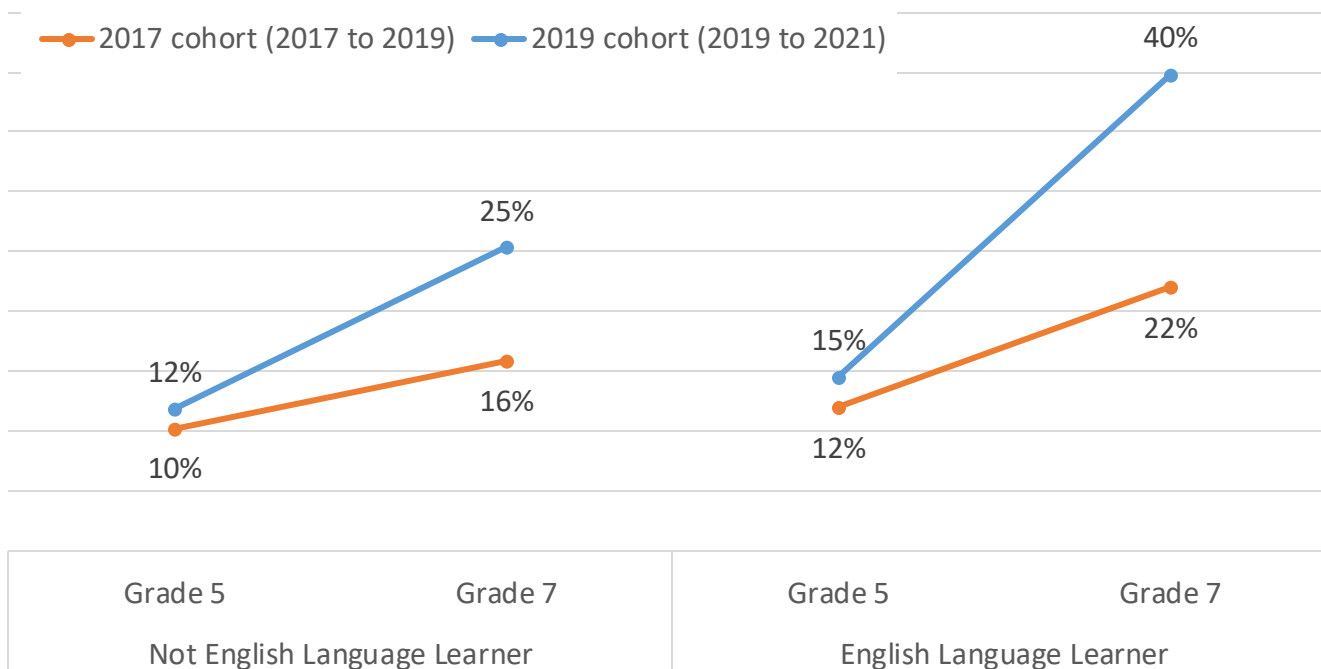
The Difference in Chronic Absence Rates Between Students Classified As Economically Disadvantaged and Other Students Increased During the Pandemic

Percent of Students Chronically Absent in Grade 7 by Economic Disadvantage Status in Grade 5, 2017 and 2019 Grade 5 Cohorts



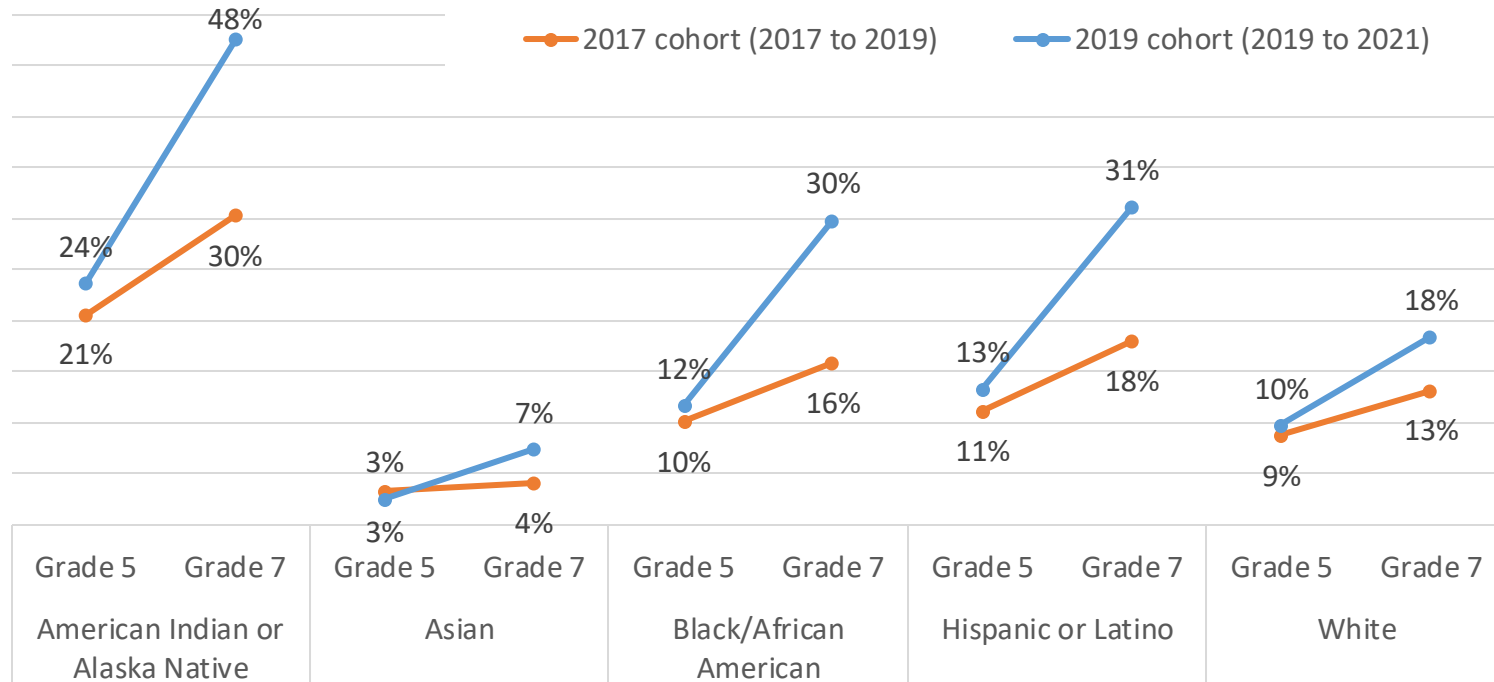
The Difference in Chronic Absence Rates Between English Language Learner Students and Other Students Increased During the Pandemic

Percent of Students Chronically Absent in Grade 7 by English Language Learner Status in Grade 5, 2017 and 2019 Grade 5 Cohorts



The Rates of Chronic Absence for American Indian or Alaska Native Students Nearly Reached 50 Percent in Grade 7 in 2021

Percent of Students Chronically Absent in Grade 7 by Race/Ethnicity Status in Grade 5, 2017 and 2019 Grade 5 Cohorts



Implications

- The current definition does not accurately reflect chronic absenteeism among students who change schools. With increased student mobility during the pandemic, the current definition of a chronically absent student may need to be revisited for purposes in addition to school accountability.
- The pandemic exacerbated chronic absence for some groups, including economically disadvantaged students, English learners, American Indian students, Black students, and Hispanic/Latino students. ADE might consider providing supports to help LEAs target attendance and engagement support to the groups who have been most impacted.

Possible Next Steps

- Revisit how chronic absence is defined to help LEAs identify and support mobile students who are at risk of becoming chronically absent.
- Support LEAs in identifying evidence-based interventions to address chronic absence, especially for student groups who have experienced steep increases in chronic absence. Study which ones are working well for which student groups.
- Examine how the pandemic affected chronic absence and dropout rates in high school.

Examples of Evidence-Based Strategies to Reduce Chronic Absence

- Supporting and building positive relationships between students and with faculty/staff
- Strengthening connections with families
- Addressing basic needs such as providing breakfast, transportation, or laundry access which could serve as barriers to attending school

Key Resource: Attendance Playbook: Smart Solutions for Reducing Chronic Absenteeism in the Covid Era

<https://www.future-ed.org/attendance-playbook/>