



State of Recovery in Los Angeles Unified:

Four Years Later, How are Students Doing?

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Dear Reader,

Four years ago, in March 2021, we released our inaugural Educational Recovery Now report with the goal of contributing to an effective, equitable recovery from the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 on Los Angeles students. Major strides have been made since that first report, and preliminary test scores from this year show a continued upward trajectory. We have seen the Los Angeles Unified School District commit to investing in the recovery of students, staff and families. But the work is far from over, and it is critical that we ensure the most vulnerable students are not left behind.

The pandemic exacerbated already stark inequities in our school system, and additional years of data have made this ever more apparent. All students deserve to benefit from the power of a quality education, but some face steeper obstacles to that right. As the mother of a Los Angeles Unified student, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges the pandemic inflicted, and have also witnessed the district's ongoing efforts to accelerate recovery.

Superintendent Alberto Carvalho has shepherded Los Angeles Unified through recovery efforts since February 2022, alongside a diverse leadership team committed to strengthening the district. The Strategic Plan for 2022-2026 espouses goals of a more inclusive and responsive district. The administration has announced or already enacted a suite of interventions to reduce achievement gaps, address learning loss, and deeply invest in 100 priority schools.

GPSN is committed to supporting Los Angeles Unified in its continued recovery efforts. We strongly believe that an honest and transparent assessment of student performance can yield informed, effective and comprehensive strategies. Transparency enables accountability, but also facilitates the celebration of successes. At a disaggregated level, data transparency helps us ensure no student, school or community is left behind, advancing equity by revealing the true state of our students across all schools in our district.

We hope this follow-up report will help further the conversation around the path to full recovery, raising up the successes already achieved and illuminating the areas still urgently in need of support. It is our job as a community to protect the education and well-being of every student in the district. Through internal and external collaboration, Los Angeles Unified students can accomplish educational recovery — now.

In partnership,

Dr. Ana Ponce



Executive Director
GPSN

Executive Summary

In the first Educational Recovery Now report, released in March 2021, early data revealed devastating impacts on Los Angeles students from school closures and the COVID-19 pandemic. The efforts undertaken by the district achieved some improvements, but testing results and student engagement data painted a troubling picture as students returned to campuses. Los Angeles was not alone; nationally, students and school districts grappled with massive new challenges as they navigated the return to in-person learning. The impact of the pandemic on students encompassed not only their time and engagement level in classes and subsequent learning loss, but also the toll on mental health and social emotional well-being. In 2024, with two more years of data available, we can begin to understand the progress towards recovery in the district.

This report looks back at the findings from the first Educational Recovery Now report and examines new data from the 2021-22 and 2022-23 academic years to evaluate the state of recovery in the district four years out from the onset of the pandemic. We also look at data from across the country to compare Los Angeles Unified's recovery path to other major districts, and provide recommendations for where the district should go from here.

Despite less learning loss and above average recovery, Los Angeles Unified is still behind other major districts

In the four years since Los Angeles Unified moved its almost half a million students to online learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, students and families, teachers, and staff have navigated many challenges. The disruption to the school system was enormous, and the district took on the massive task of overhauling the second largest school district in the country. Between distributing computer and internet devices to a majority of students and supplying food to the community, district staff and educators developed online education strategies while themselves weathering the crisis.

Though the district's efforts resulted in improvements in engagement by fall 2020, Los Angeles Unified students received less remote instructional time than peers in other large districts in California and early assessments revealed severe impacts:

- Two out of three students were falling behind their grade level in literacy and math.

- There was evidence of widening gaps between highest need students and their peers. Low-income students and students of color in particular struggled with online learning and staying on track academically.
- Young students were falling short on early reading goals, while alarming numbers of older students were at risk of not earning their high school diploma.

Los Angeles Unified had an above average recovery...

One major new analysis of national pandemic learning loss and recovery from Stanford University found that nationally, on average, students lost more than half a year of learning from the start of the pandemic until 2022. Recovery over the following academic year has been uneven, with the average student recovering a third of what they lost in math and a quarter of what they lost in reading.

The same report found that Los Angeles Unified students had both less loss during distance learning and an above-average recovery afterward. Los Angeles Unified students lost almost a third of a grade level in math from 2019 to 2022, but recovered more than half of that back by 2023, according to the Stanford report. In reading, though students lost minimal ground during remote learning, they dropped further behind in the 2022-23 academic year. Several other major districts in California lost as much or more ground during distance learning, and most recovered more slowly. Early release of test scores from 2023-24 show a continued upward trajectory for Los Angeles Unified, underscoring the trend of

longer-term above average recovery in the district. Superintendent Alberto Carvalho called the improvements “quite stunning,” praising district employees’ efforts.¹

... but remains behind other major districts

Los Angeles Unified’s performance over the last four years has reduced gaps between the district and both the state and national average. However, prior to the pandemic, Los Angeles Unified students were testing lower than students in other large districts in the state; so despite a strong relative recovery, there is still much ground to cover. The district is still a year behind the national average in reading and almost 1.4 years behind in math, based on the Stanford University report. This report outlines areas where additional investment is urgently needed so that Los Angeles Unified can recover lost ground and continue to pursue the best opportunities available.

Recovery has been substantially different by age group and race/ethnicity

The story of learning recovery in Los Angeles Unified varies considerably from one student group to another. Younger students, students of color, low-income students, and English learners were more impacted and have struggled more to recoup losses.

Overall, elementary students have returned to literacy testing rates similar to before the pandemic. However, tracing student cohorts through the years shows that many have not regained lost ground, or did so more slowly. Students who had remote school in their earliest years demonstrated

¹ In a July 2024 speech, Carvalho discussed the preliminary test results that the district also posted on social media. See Howard Blume, “LAUSD test scores rise in math and English, positive marks after pandemic setbacks”, The Los Angeles Times, July 2024.

improvement faster, but a few years out are not caught up to where they should be by now. Conversely, older elementary students struggled more during remote classes but recovered faster upon returning to in-person learning. In both groups, Black and Latino students have fallen further behind other students their age, exacerbating already existing inequities.

Statewide testing early in the pandemic suggested that older students in Los Angeles Unified were alarmingly behind, with just one in three middle and high school students on track in reading and math. With two years of testing data post-return to in-person learning, it is clear that despite some improvement students are still struggling. The degree of both learning loss and recovery also varies across race/ethnicity groups, with Black, Latino and low-income students falling further behind their peers. Assessment results for two key years, eighth and 11th grade, show how students are doing as they prepare for high school and college.

- *Eighth graders are on track in reading and math at even lower rates than before the pandemic*, when fewer than a third met state math standards and two in five met reading standards. In 2022-23, just 39% were on track in reading and 24% in math. Black and Latino students were on track at less than half the rate of Asian and white students, and English learners struggled most of all, with 1% or less meeting either standard.
- *Eleventh graders have seen small overall improvements but are still doing worse than pre-pandemic, and face wide achievement gaps*. Just one in five 11th

graders met math standards and one in two met reading standards in 2022-23. As with eighth graders, English learners and students of colors are struggling significantly more than their peers.

Despite major improvements, students are absent from school at significantly high rates and signaling poor social-emotional wellness

The period of remote learning and the return to in-person learning were marked by low rates of active engagement in online classes and then skyrocketing chronic absenteeism, respectively. Despite major improvements, this remains a serious problem in the district. Los Angeles Unified is not alone in facing this issue; it has become one of the standout concerns surrounding recovery nationally.

- *Chronic absenteeism almost tripled upon the return to in-person learning*. From a high of 45% in 2020-21, rates have improved somewhat to 37% in 2022-23 but are still much higher than pre-pandemic across all grade levels and student groups. The share of students with excellent attendance levels also dropped significantly, signaling this issue is widespread across the student body.
- *Existing gaps across student groups are worsening*. Though attendance dropped sharply among all student groups, existing gaps between groups have widened as rates begin to improve. Students of color and low-income students have been set back further than their peers.

Many students feel more negatively about their school overall now, though they feel closer to peers.

- *Student surveys indicate stagnant or declining well being and satisfaction.* At all grade levels, students were less happy to be at school after returning to in-person and less inclined to believe their teacher cared about their absences.
- However, following their return to in-person school, *students feel increasingly closer to people at the school.*

Existing recovery strategies & further opportunities

The above average recovery in Los Angeles Unified cannot be attributed to any single factor, given the combined efforts of leaders, educators and school staff alongside families in supporting students over the last four years. However, the role of district leaders and policy in shaping pandemic response and recovery is critical.

Much of the pandemic recovery in Los Angeles Unified has been shepherded by Superintendent Alberto Carvalho, who started his term in February 2022 and reshaped a significant amount of district policy. His administration has enacted or announced a suite of interventions aimed at closing achievement gaps and supporting highest-need schools. Learning loss recovery strategies so far have included expanded instructional time and academic offerings, targeted investments such as the Black Student Achievement Plan and 100 newly-identified priority schools, and an overhauled early literacy and numeracy program.

As Los Angeles Unified continues recovery efforts, we suggest five steps that build upon existing efforts and prioritize the highest need students and schools:

- 1 To best prioritize limited funding as pandemic relief funds expire, Los Angeles Unified should publicly share its guidelines or framework for its financial and resource allocation decisions that are centered on student needs and recognize ongoing disparities in the district.
- 2 The district should strengthen alignment between the school day and how it approaches time out of school in order to more comprehensively serve and engage students year-round.
- 3 The district should consider expanding opportunities prioritizing wellness for both students and employees, thereby enabling healing from the pandemic and supporting strategic plan goals around whole-child well-being and staff wellness.
- 4 District leadership should increase the transparency, accessibility and frequency of public data in order to facilitate higher accountability, support family advocacy, and elevate successes in the district.
- 5 Los Angeles Unified should consider providing disaggregated data to the public beyond what it currently reports, to help identify trends and inequities across subgroups and enable more effective interventions in such a diverse district.

The State of Recovery in Los Angeles Unified

In March 2020, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) closed schools and moved its almost half a million students to online instruction. Over the ensuing months, the district supported over 30,000 educators and thousands of staff in the transition to distance learning and worked to continue addressing students' critical needs. During school closures, students faced many challenges that disrupted their education. Around one in three families in the district did not have broadband internet or a computer at home when schools first closed.² Though the district distributed many computers and purchased hotspots, many students had delayed access to remote learning. Even students with access had to learn, alongside their teachers, how to navigate online lectures, assignments and tests from home. Not every student had access to quiet, private places from which to attend class. At all grade levels, students in LAUSD had the least amount of synchronous time with teachers of the five largest districts in the state.³ Many more students started missing classes and becoming chronically absent than in the years before the pandemic, a reality that has continued beyond the district's time in distance learning.

Despite many efforts from the district to mitigate the effect of school closures, early data in the first version of this report released in March 2021, [Educational Recovery Now](#), indicated that school closures had devastating impacts on Los Angeles students and deepened existing inequities. In spring 2020, the majority of students in Los Angeles Unified — 64% of middle and high schoolers — were not actively engaging on a daily basis. As many as two in five students were absent every day that semester. Very few elementary students logged on to classes, and some were entirely absent for the last several months of school.⁴ Though more students received computers and hotspots by the fall 2020 semester and attendance improved, district data showed that more than a third of middle and high school students were still not actively engaging on a daily basis. There were stark gaps in engagement in the fall along the lines of income, race/ethnicity, and student need, which threaten to exacerbate existing achievement gaps in the district.⁵

Students in kindergarten and first grade suffered the biggest learning losses among elementary students, with the percentage of students not on track in

² Hernan Galperin, "COVID-19 and the distance learning gap", USC Annenberg Research Network on International Communication, Connected Cities and Inclusive Growth (CCIG) Policy Brief #5, April 2020.

³ Jeimee Estrada-Miller and Jennifer Monica Perla, "Educational Recovery Now: LA's Children and Schools Need a Comprehensive Plan", GPSN, March 2021.

⁴ Megan Besecker and Andrew Thomas, "Student Engagement Online During School Closures: An analysis of Los Angeles Unified secondary students' Schoology activity from March 16 to May 22, 2020", Los Angeles Unified Independent Analysis Unit, July 2020.

⁵ Megan Besecker and Andrew Thomas, "Fall 2020 Schoology Usage Update: Student engagement online between August 18 and October 31", Los Angeles Unified, Independent Analysis Unit, January 2021.

literacy increasing by 13-20%. Meanwhile, early assessment data indicated that two out of every three students in middle and high school were falling behind in reading and math. As of March 2021, 40,000 high school students were at risk of not graduating in the next four years. Across all areas of concerns, students of color, English learners, low-income students, students with disabilities, foster youth and homeless students were set back further than more advantaged students.⁶ In a district where consistent achievement gaps already existed for those groups, this elicits significant concern.

After spending part of the 2019-20 and all of the 2020-21 school year in remote or hybrid classes, the almost half a million students in Los Angeles Unified returned to school campuses full-time in fall 2021. The full impact of the pandemic on education is still being explored, but data indicates that most students experienced some degree of learning loss, particularly younger grades and those who were most academically behind before the pandemic, and that school closures deepened and accelerated existing inequities. Recovery efforts have been well underway in Los Angeles, and we now have data on the first two years of in-person learning following school closures to understand Los Angeles Unified's recovery trajectory.

In this report, we revisit the early look at the impact of the pandemic we released in Educational Recovery Now. We look at data across a number of different areas — academic achievement, attendance and absenteeism, early learning indicators, and post-secondary outcomes — from both before and after the primary COVID-19 pandemic years (from 2016-17 to 2022-23). The goal of this report is to uplift both the impact of the pandemic and recovery in Los Angeles Unified. We uplift some of the key strategies Superintendent Carvalho and his team used to address major gaps in learning present before and worsened during the pandemic.

Fortunately, due to the hard work of thousands of educators and families, the Los Angeles Unified story of recovery is one of hope and celebration. In the following sections, we highlight how Los Angeles Unified experienced less learning loss and above-average recovery compared to other major school districts in California and across the country, the differential impact of the pandemic by the age of students experiencing it, the major challenges still ahead on student connection and attendance, and the key strategies the district used to achieve its still ongoing recovery.

⁶ Jeimee Estrada-Miller and Jennifer Monica Perla, "Educational Recovery Now: LA's Children and Schools Need a Comprehensive Plan", GPSN, March 2021.

Los Angeles Unified experienced less learning loss than other major districts and an above-average recovery.

Despite this, it remains behind other major districts both statewide and nationally.

From 2019 to 2022, average test scores across the country dropped significantly. One major analysis of national pandemic learning loss and recovery at the district level, the [Education Recovery Scorecard](#) out of Stanford University, found that, overall, students lost more than half a year of learning from the start of the pandemic until 2022. On average nationally, students in elementary and middle school (grades three through eight) lost half a grade level in math and a third of a grade level in reading by 2022. By the end of the 2022-23 school year, the average student had recovered about a third of what they lost in math and a quarter of their reading loss. This recovery, however, has not been felt evenly across districts.

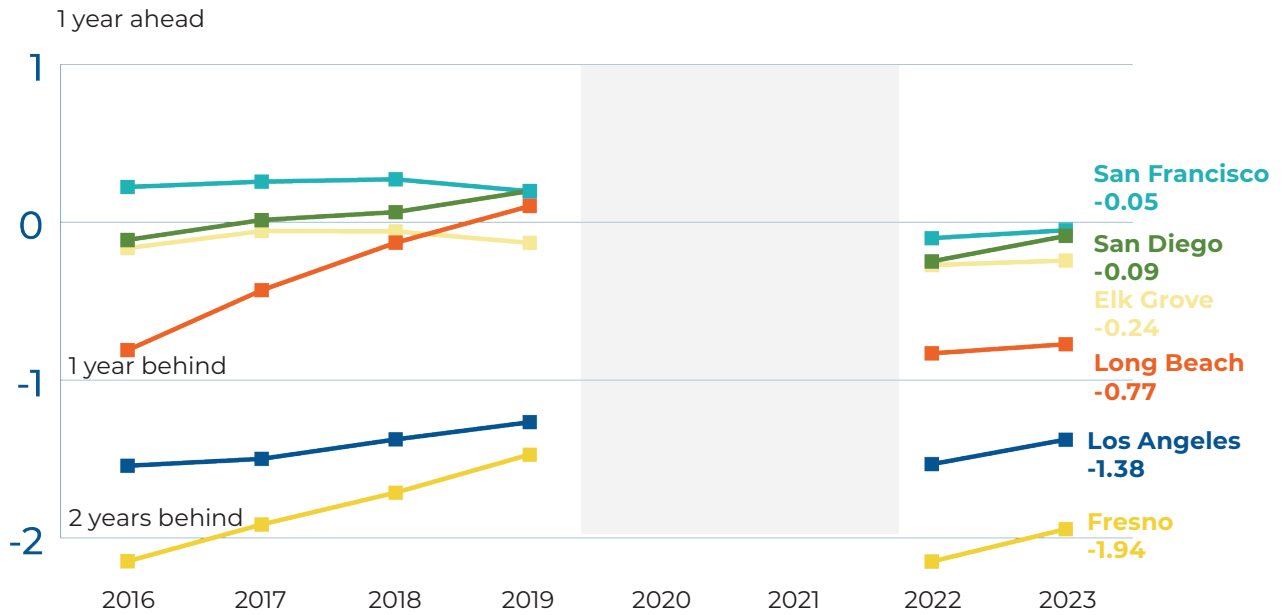
Achievement gaps between students in rich and poor communities widened, and gaps between students of different economic status and race/ethnicity even within districts did the same.⁷

Compared to other major districts in California, the Educational Recovery Scorecard found that Los Angeles Unified students had both less significant learning loss during remote schooling and an above-average recovery following it.⁸ Los Angeles Unified math achievement dropped just under a third of a grade level from 2019 to 2022 (0.27 grade levels), but gained a significant portion of that back by 2023 (0.16 grade levels), bringing their overall math loss since 2019 to just a tenth of a grade level. Meanwhile in reading, students lost almost no ground from 2019 to 2022, but then dropped over a tenth of a year further behind the national average in 2022-2023.

⁷ Erin Fahle, Thomas J. Kane, Sean F. Reardon, and Douglas O. Steiger, "The First Year of Pandemic Recovery: A District-Level Analysis", the Educational Opportunity Project and the Center for Education Policy Research, January 2024.

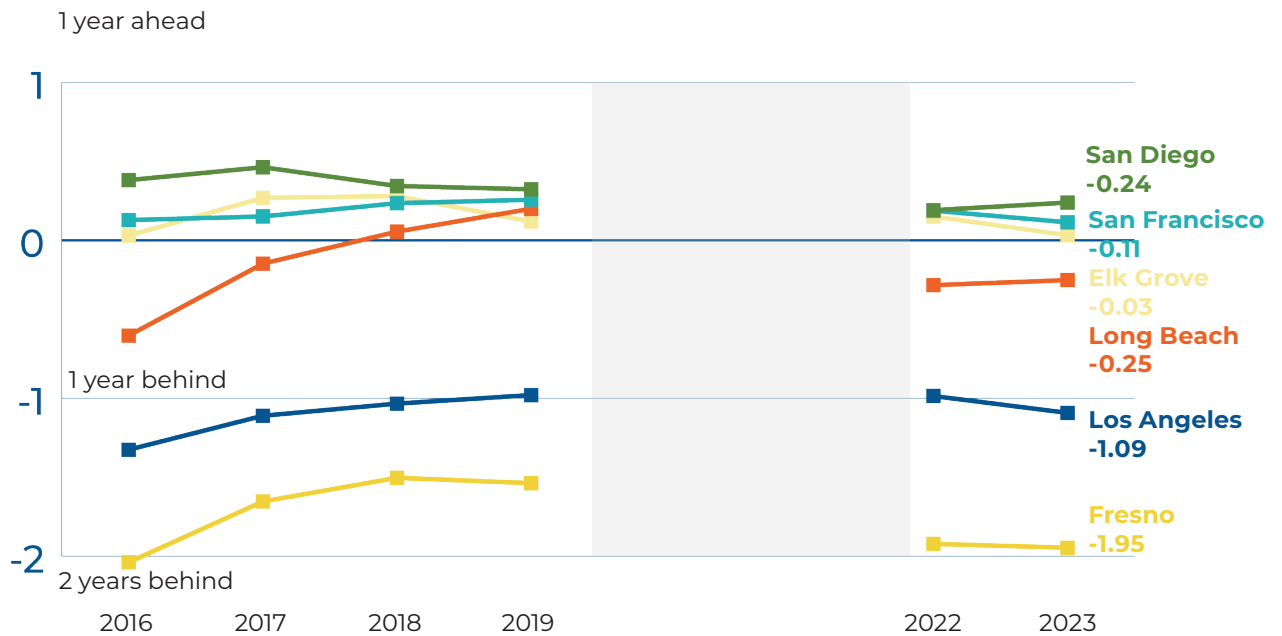
⁸ Francesca Paris, "See How Your School District is Recovering from the Pandemic", The New York Times, February 2024.

Math scores for major California school districts, in grade levels relative to the 2019 national average



Source: Education Recovery Scorecard Project

Reading scores for major California school districts, in grade levels relative to the 2019 national average



Source: Education Recovery Scorecard Project

There was no consistent trend in loss or recovery across the other major districts in the state. Long Beach Unified lost almost a full year of math learning and half a year of reading by 2022 (0.93 grade levels in math), and gained back little in 2023. Elk Grove Unified, which lost less ground in math than the other major districts (0.14 grade levels), also gained back only a small fraction of that in 2023. San Francisco Unified lost slightly more ground in math than Los Angeles Unified during remote/hybrid learning (0.3 grade levels), but recovered much more slowly than Los Angeles; they saw a 0.05 increase in 2023 compared to a 0.16 grade level improvement in Los Angeles Unified. They also did not achieve any recovery in reading in 2023, instead they increased their losses.

Meanwhile Fresno Unified, which saw the second biggest loss in math at more than two-thirds of a year of loss, recovered almost a third of that in 2023. They were unable to duplicate that recovery in reading, losing more than a third of a year over the pandemic and losing a little more in 2023. San Diego Unified, with almost half a year of math loss by 2022, recovered at a similar pace as Los Angeles Unified and recovered almost half their loss in reading as well.

All of these districts spent at least 96% of a year in hybrid/remote learning, suggesting the differences in performance are due to remote learning approach or recovery strategies, rather than to the length of

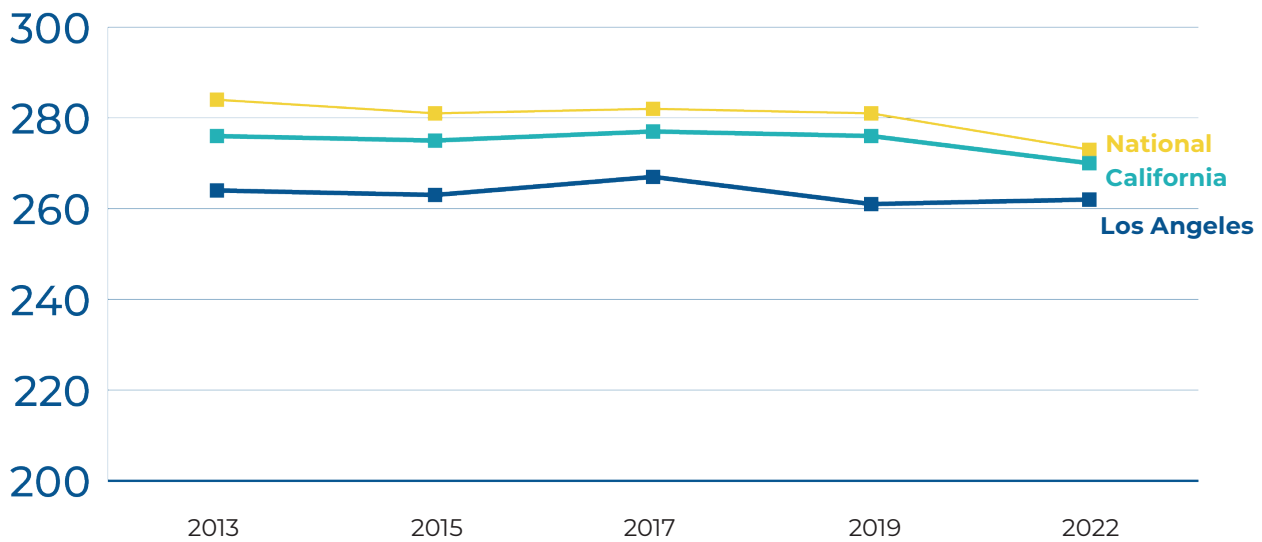
time students spent remote. All major districts in the state achieved at least a minor recovery in math, but some lost as much or more ground in reading after returning to in-person learning rather than beginning to recover.⁹

A National View: Los Angeles Unified Compared to Other Large School Systems Nationwide

Los Angeles Unified's positive educational recovery was not only highlighted by student performance on state test scores as discussed in the previous section, but is also supported by improvements in student performance on the national assessments. On the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), Los Angeles Unified scores in both reading and math for eighth grade were considerably lower than both California and national averages before COVID-19. However, whereas both state and national scores in math and reading have been unsteady or declining over the past decade, Los Angeles eighth graders gained major ground in reading scores and held relatively stable in math. This aligns with the Education Recovery Scorecard findings discussed earlier, with Los Angeles Unified performing relatively well during the recovery period but still a year behind the national average in reading and almost 1.4 years behind in math.

⁹ Erin Fahle, Thomas J. Kane, Sean F. Reardon, and Douglas O. Steiger, "The First Year of Pandemic Recovery: A District-Level Analysis", the Educational Opportunity Project and the Center for Education Policy Research, January 2024.

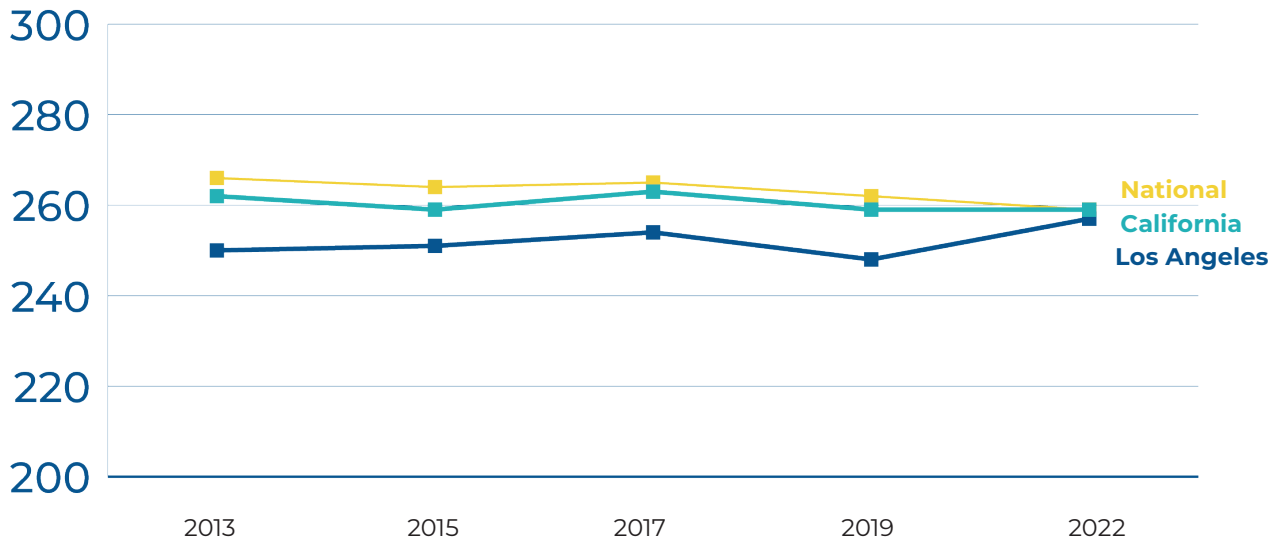
8th Grade Math Scores, NAEP



Note: Based on NAEP scale of 0 to 500

Source: U.S. Department of Education

8th Grade Reading Scores, NAEP



Note: Based on NAEP scale of 0 to 500

Source: U.S. Department of Education

How did students who started in key grade levels fare throughout the pandemic and after?

We followed students in third, sixth, and eighth grades to see how they fared during the pandemic. Below are a few key points about the impact of the pandemic and their recovery.

Students who were third graders at the outset of the pandemic:

- 60% of third graders in 2019-20 met early literacy benchmarks, down from 69% of their class as second graders. They continued to lose ground in fourth grade.
- While this group of students did recover somewhat by the end of elementary school, they hadn't fully regained all lost ground. As fifth graders, 66% of these students met early literacy benchmarks.
- The degree of learning loss experienced varied across race/ethnicity groups, as did the rate of recovery. Black third graders at the outset of the pandemic fared the worst in their cohort, still six percentage points lower than their pre-pandemic rates while Asian, Latino and white students were within three points of their pre-pandemic rates.

Students who were sixth graders at the outset of the pandemic:¹⁰

- As fifth graders, 45% of these students met or exceeded English Language Arts standards. They lost ground during remote learning, with just 39% meeting standards as seventh graders. By their eighth grade year in 2021-22, 42% of those students were back to meeting ELA standards.
- As fifth graders, 31% of these students met or exceeded math standards. Math testing results for these students are not available again until their eighth grade year, when just 24% met math standards.
- Socioeconomically disadvantaged students¹¹ lost ground in math at a similar scale to non-disadvantaged students during the pandemic, but met eighth grade math standards at less than half the rate of non-disadvantaged students (18% vs 43%). This means students from higher income households are faring twice as well as their peers from lower income households.

¹⁰ Statewide CAASPP testing did not occur in 2019-20, and results are limited in 2020-21. In addition, ninth and 10th graders are not tested. This leaves only a few years of data available to evaluate how these students progressed.

¹¹ This subgroup is based on the CALPADS definition and includes students who meet several criteria, including eligibility for free or reduced lunch, foster students or homeless students, or parents without a high school diploma, among a few others.

- Asian sixth graders at the start of the pandemic lost far less ground in math by their eighth grade year than other students in their cohort (a 7% decrease in students meeting standards, compared to rates of 21-30% for other race/ethnicity groups).

Students who were eighth graders at the outset of the pandemic:

- As seventh graders, 44% of these students met or exceeded ELA standards. They were not tested to those standards again until their 11th grade year in 2022-23, when 49% met the standards.
- As seventh graders, 30% of these students met or exceeded math standards. They weren't tested to those standards again until their 11th grade year in 2022-23, when only 20% met the standards.
- Socioeconomically disadvantaged students fell slightly further behind non-disadvantaged students in ELA from seventh to 11th grade, but closed the gap somewhat in math. As 11th graders, 17% of socioeconomically disadvantaged students met math standards, compared to 35% of non-disadvantaged students.
- As 11th graders, Black and Latino students both met ELA standards at a higher rate than as seventh graders, increasing by 9% and 22%, while Asian and white students met standards at a higher rate overall but did not change substantially.
- Students across race/ethnicity and income groups met math standards at a lower rate as 11th graders. Socioeconomically disadvantaged students and Asian students lost less ground, declining 25% and 17% respectively, compared to drops over 30% in other student groups.

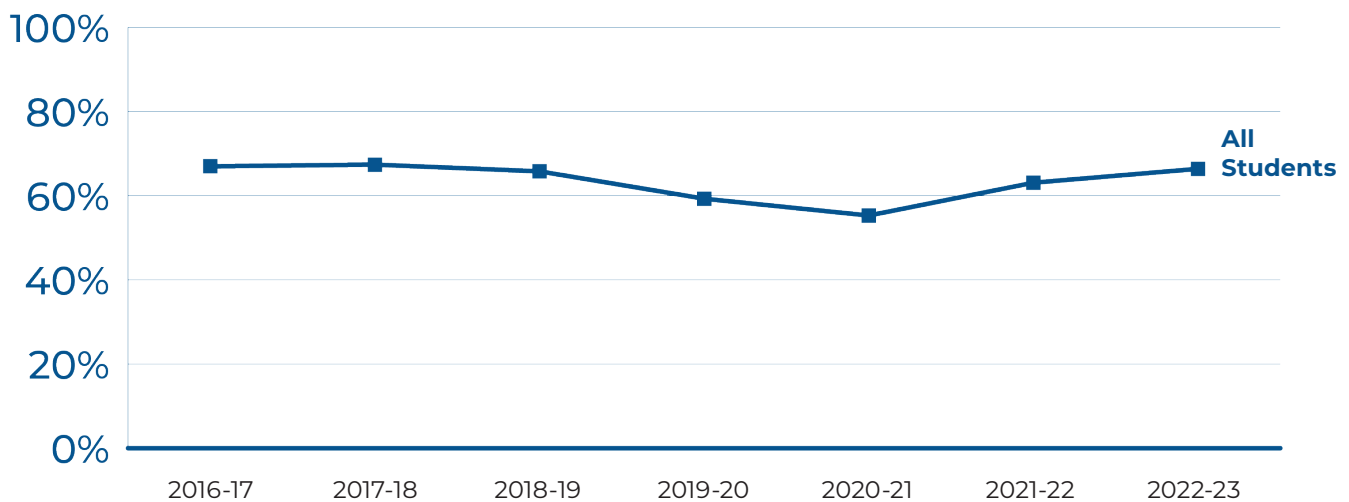
Though Los Angeles Unified had a generally strong learning recovery overall, it differs substantially by age and race/ethnicity.

This section of the report reviews key metrics of academic success for students across the district, from early literacy to post-secondary outcomes, grade level and for student ethnic/racial and income groups. Results from early reading tests for elementary students (the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills, or DIBELS, assessment), standardized English Language Arts and mathematics assessments for middle and high school students, and graduation data for high schoolers paint a fuller picture of recovery efforts.

The data suggests that the youngest students who experienced remote learning were most impacted and are the ones continuing to struggle the most to fully recoup key math and literacy skills. Some student groups are struggling more significantly, English learners in particular. And while key high school academic measures show that college eligibility (the rate of students graduating meeting four-year university requirements) among graduates has fully recovered, students in high school are still performing well below pre-pandemic levels in math.

Recovery for Early Learners

Percent of K-5 Students Meeting Literacy Benchmark, LAUSD



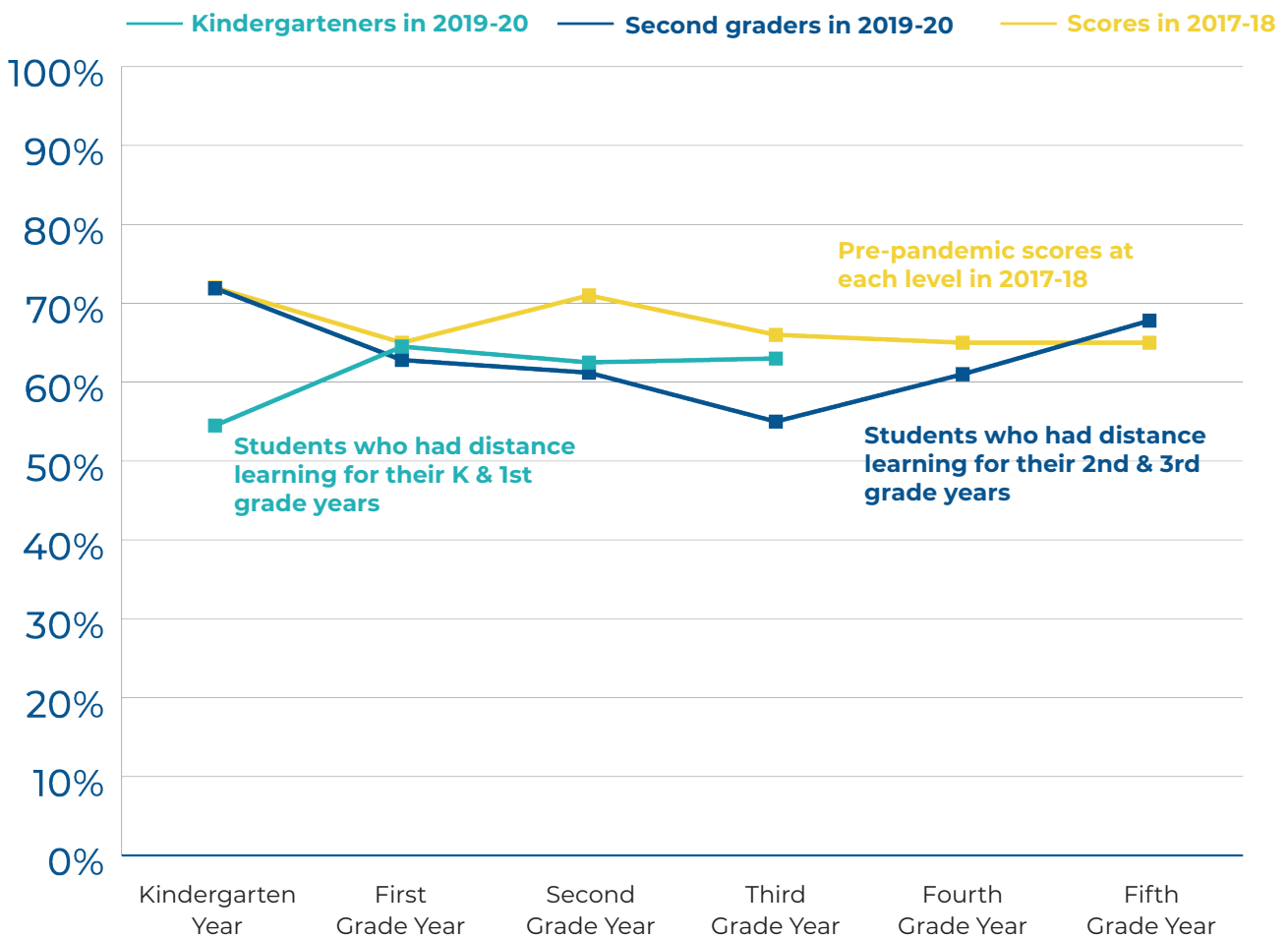
Source: U.S. Department of Education

RECOVERY DIFFERS BY GROUP

Two years out from the pandemic, elementary students overall have recovered from significant losses in early literacy, but not all grades recovered at the same pace. Just before the pandemic, in 2018-19, 66% of students in grades K-5 were on track in early reading skills, down incrementally from the prior year.

The overall percentage of K-5 students in the district who are meeting early literacy benchmarks has returned to pre-pandemic levels as of 2022-23, with 66% meeting the benchmark. Students on track in early reading skills hit a low of 55% in 2020-21, but have seen a steady climb over the following two years.

DIBELS Results for K-5 Students in LAUSD, Cohort



Note: This chart doesn't include full cohort analysis. It includes the annual rate for students as they progress through years, and single-year scores at each grade level in 2017-18.

Source: LAUSD Data Request

However, looking at the data by grade level reveals that this positive trend is not universal. Students who had remote schooling for some of their earliest years adapted and demonstrated some improvement quickly but, a few years later, are still struggling to catch up to where they should be. Slightly older students, who benefitted from a full year or more of in-person learning before the pandemic, struggled more to adjust to distance learning but are now recovering faster. While even before the pandemic the share of students meeting benchmarks declined in older grades, comparing cohorts' progress to pre-pandemic literacy rates at the same stage offers key insights.

Literacy among kindergarteners saw the biggest initial dip during the pandemic, with just 51-55% of kindergarteners in 2019-20 and 2020-21 on track, compared to 71% of students in 2018-19. Those students' scores improved significantly within a year; and as first graders, their scores surpassed those of pre-pandemic first graders. However, longer-term data indicates that fast recovery might not have been as thorough as was hoped. Gaps have emerged as those students progress; as second and third graders, their scores were lower than pre-pandemic students of the same age. Sixty-three percent of 2019-20 kindergarteners were on track in 2021-22 as second graders and 63% were on track in 2022-23 as third graders. In the years just before the pandemic, by comparison, 69-71% of second graders and 64-66% of third graders were on track. Trends are relatively

consistent across race/ethnicity groups, but gaps — already a concern — have widened further. In particular, Black students who were kindergarteners in 2019-20 have fallen farther behind other members of their cohort. Students whose kindergarten year was fully remote in 2020-21 are following a similar pattern.

Students who benefitted from a full year or two of in-person schooling before the pandemic seem to be faring better, though their recovery followed a different pattern. Those who were second and third graders in 2019-20 experienced learning losses in 2019-20 and a continued decline in 2020-21. This contrast suggests that these students, used to traditional schooling, struggled more to adapt to distance learning. However, their scores began to climb back up in 2021-22, when they returned to in-person classes. As fifth graders, students who were second or third graders in 2019-20 surpassed comparable pre-pandemic literacy rates (with 66-68% on track, versus 63-65% pre-pandemic). However, recovery was not consistent across race/ethnicity groups. Asian and white students who were second graders in 2019-20 experienced a much smaller decline during remote learning and, as fifth graders, had fully recovered lost ground. Black and Latino students, on the other hand, saw a much more precipitous drop in literacy in 2019-20 and 2020-21 and had not recovered by their fifth grade year. Black second graders in 2019-20, 66% of whom hit literacy benchmarks in kindergarten and first grade, saw just 58% hit benchmarks in fifth grade.

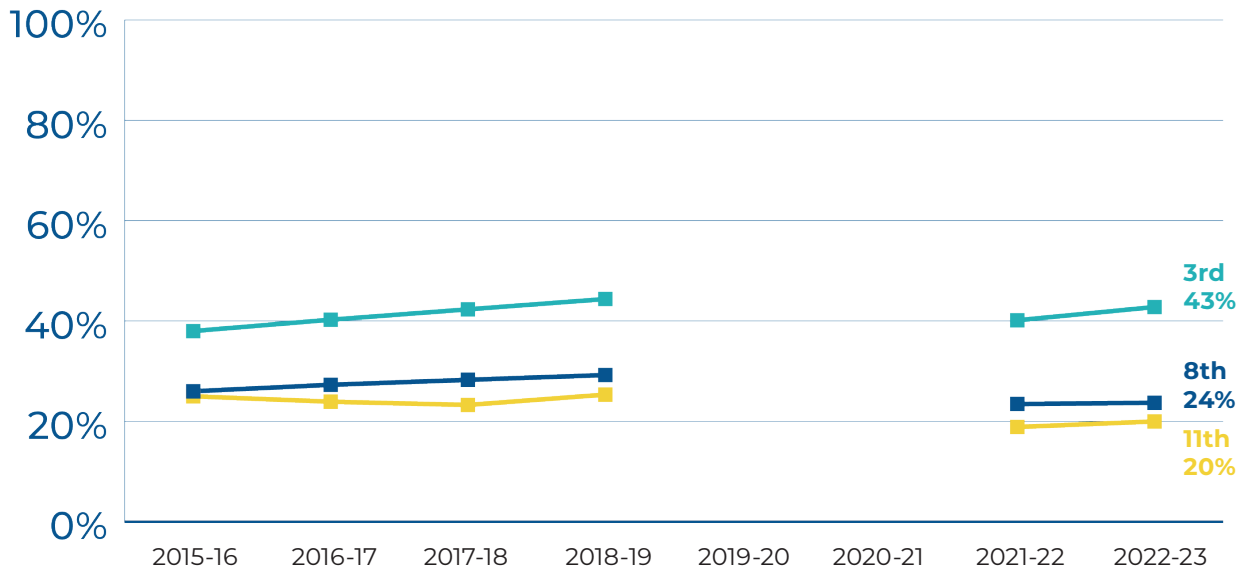
Recovery Among Older Students

We can use three key measurements of success to understand students' progress in education recovery in older grades: standardized assessments in reading and mathematics (the NAEP and CAASPP assessments), whether students are graduating, and doing so with the courses they need to attend college.

In fall 2020, statewide assessment results in Los Angeles Unified indicate

that only one in three middle and high school students were on grade-level in both reading and math. Though these assessments were not taken by all students (between 60 and 70 percent of secondary students tested), they offered suggestions of significant learning loss, particularly in reading.¹² This raised alarms about how students would fare once they returned to in-person schooling. Now, with two years of more thorough data on math and reading achievement, we have a better understanding of the impact of school closures on older students.

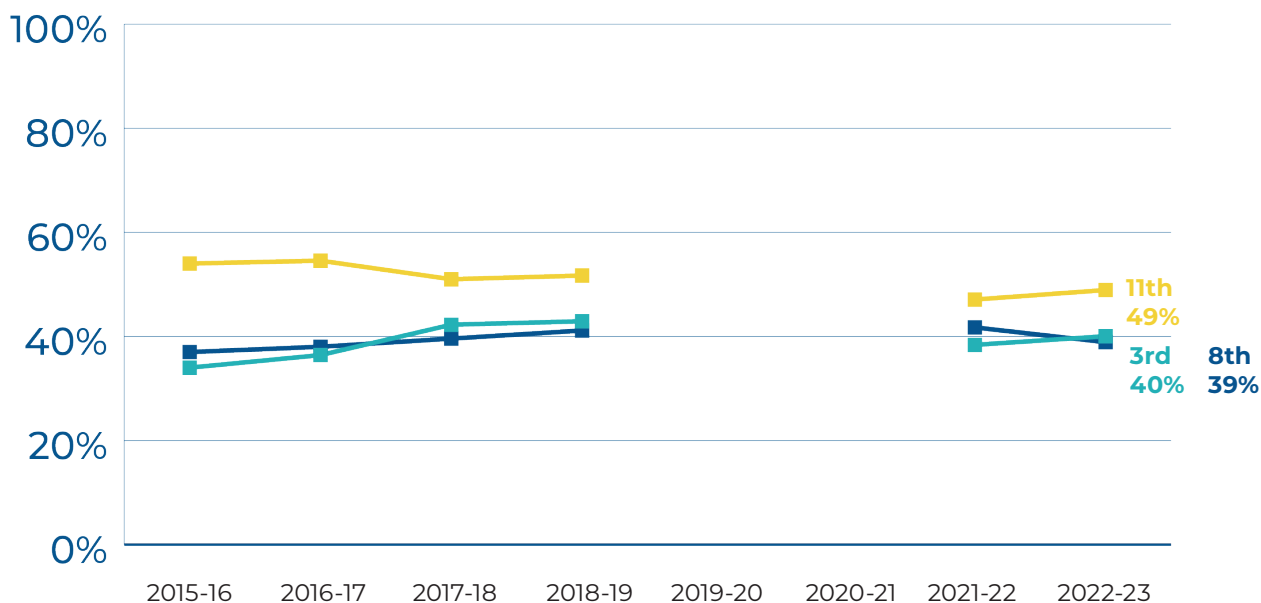
Percent of Students Who Met or Exceeded Standards, Math CAASPP Results, LAUSD



Source: California Department of Education

¹² Jeimee Estrada-Miller and Jennifer Monica Perla, "Educational Recovery Now: LA's Children and Schools Need a Comprehensive Plan", GPSN, March 2021.

Percent of Students Who Met or Exceeded Standards, English Language Arts CAASPP Results, LAUSD



Source: California Department of Education

After two years of recovery, assessments indicate eighth graders are still struggling to catch up, particularly English learners.

As with the Los Angeles Unified testing in 2020, statewide testing results on the math and English Language Arts during the pandemic had varied participation during remote schooling. Before the pandemic, less than a third of eighth graders met state standards in math (29% in 2018-19) and 41% met English Language Arts (ELA) standards. The district had been improving incrementally in both areas over recent years, by a percentage point or two per year. Results for eighth graders in 2021-22 reflected no loss in eighth grade reading proficiency (at 42%) but a drop in math achievement, with just 23% of eighth graders meeting standards.

The latest results for 2022-23 show there may be a residual drop in reading among students who were impacted in younger

grades, with 39% of eighth graders on track. In math, little improvement is seen for eighth graders, 24% of whom were on track. Eighth grade assessments are an important check-in point before students reach high school, and are indicative of how successful students will be in more rigorous secondary coursework. The result of these trends is correlated to how students' critical early learning skills were impacted during remote schooling.

In 2022-23, Asian students far outperformed other students in both math and English Language Arts (at 64% and 76% proficiency, respectively) followed by white students. Black and Latino students were on track at less than half the rate of Asian and white students. English learners are struggling the most, with less than 1% meeting ELA standards and just over 1% meeting math standards. Scores among English learner students were low pre-

RECOVERY DIFFERS BY GROUP

pandemic as well — in 2018-19, around 2% met both math and ELA standards – but this decline puts them even further behind other student groups.

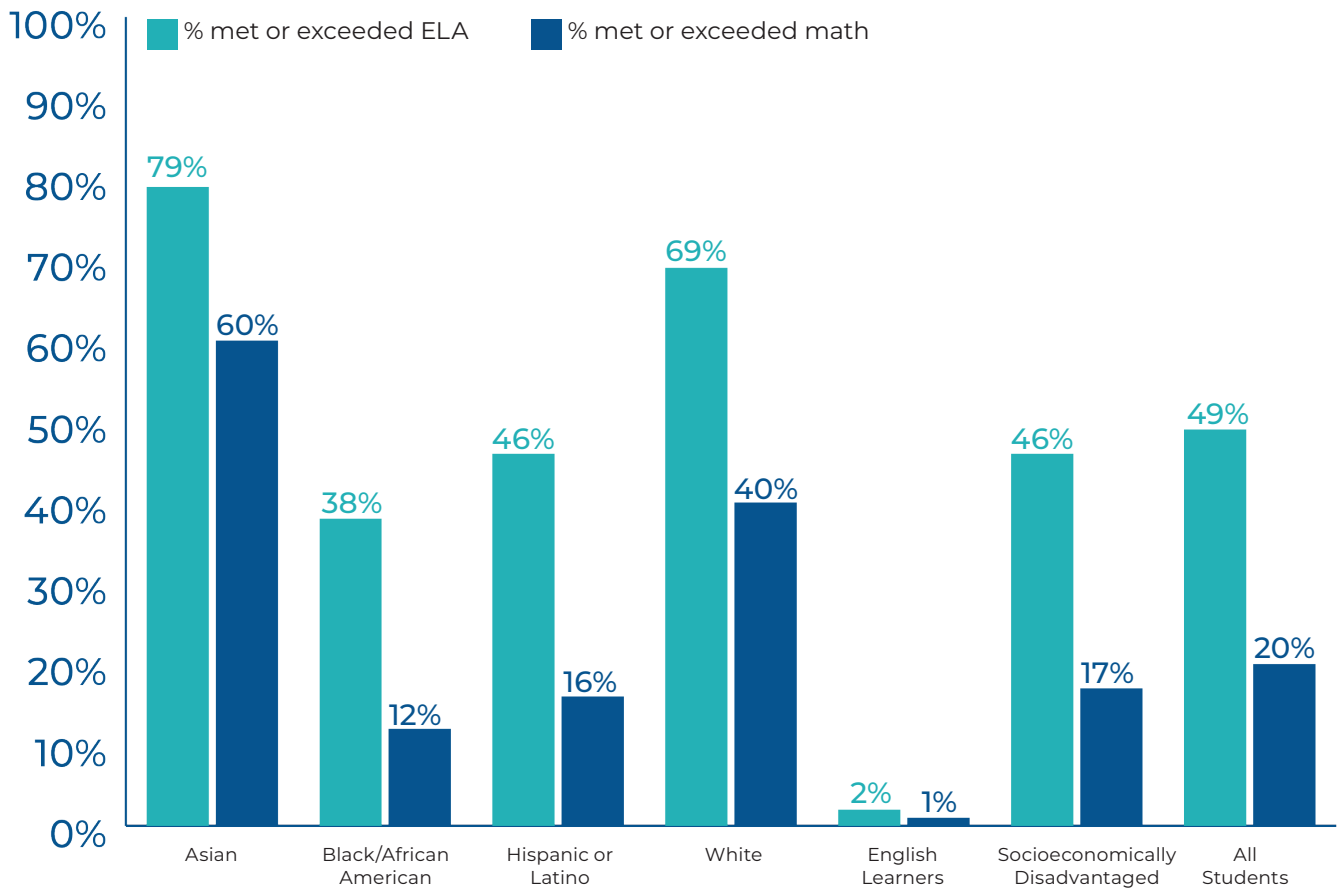
Similarly, 11th grade assessment results are still lower than pre-COVID, though they improved incrementally in 2022-23. Disaggregated data shows wide achievement gaps across race/ethnicities and language learner status.

Meanwhile, just one in five 11th graders met state math standards in 2022-23 and slightly less than one in two met ELA

standards. Statewide English Language Arts results were similar, with just over one in two meeting standards, but Los Angeles is behind the state average on math. In 2022-23, 27% of 11th graders in California met state math standards.

Asian and white 11th graders far outperformed the district average in both reading and math. Socioeconomically disadvantaged students performed only slightly below the district average in both areas, while English learners struggled most of all in both subjects.

11th Grade CAASPP Results, 2022-23



Source: California Department of Education

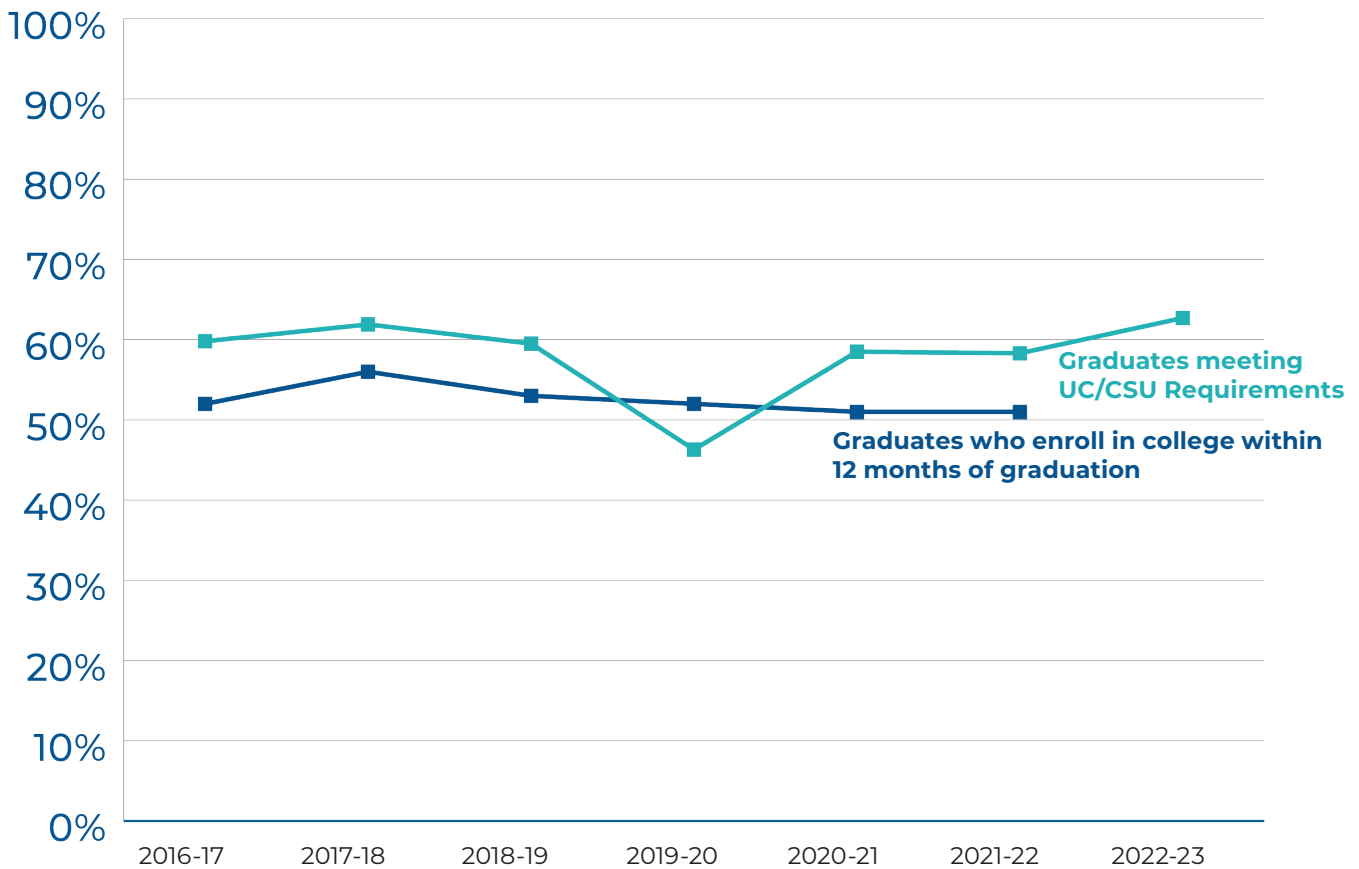
Post-Secondary Outcomes

The percentage of graduates from Los Angeles Unified who meet the eligibility requirements for the state university systems is an important indicator for college readiness and post-secondary options. In 2019-20, when the spring semester was impacted by COVID-19, the share of graduates who met requirements dropped down to 46% from its usual rate of around 60%. However, there was a fast recovery on this front in the district and

by 2020-21, graduates were back to near-normal rates of eligibility. As of 2022-23, the district has officially surpassed pre-pandemic rates of eligibility, with 63% of graduates meeting requirements.¹³

The college-going rate among Los Angeles Unified graduates, once closer to 60%, has been on a downward trajectory even before the pandemic and was exacerbated further. In 2021 and 2022, just one in two graduates in the district attended college within a year of graduating.

Percent of All LAUSD High School Graduates



Source: California Department of Education

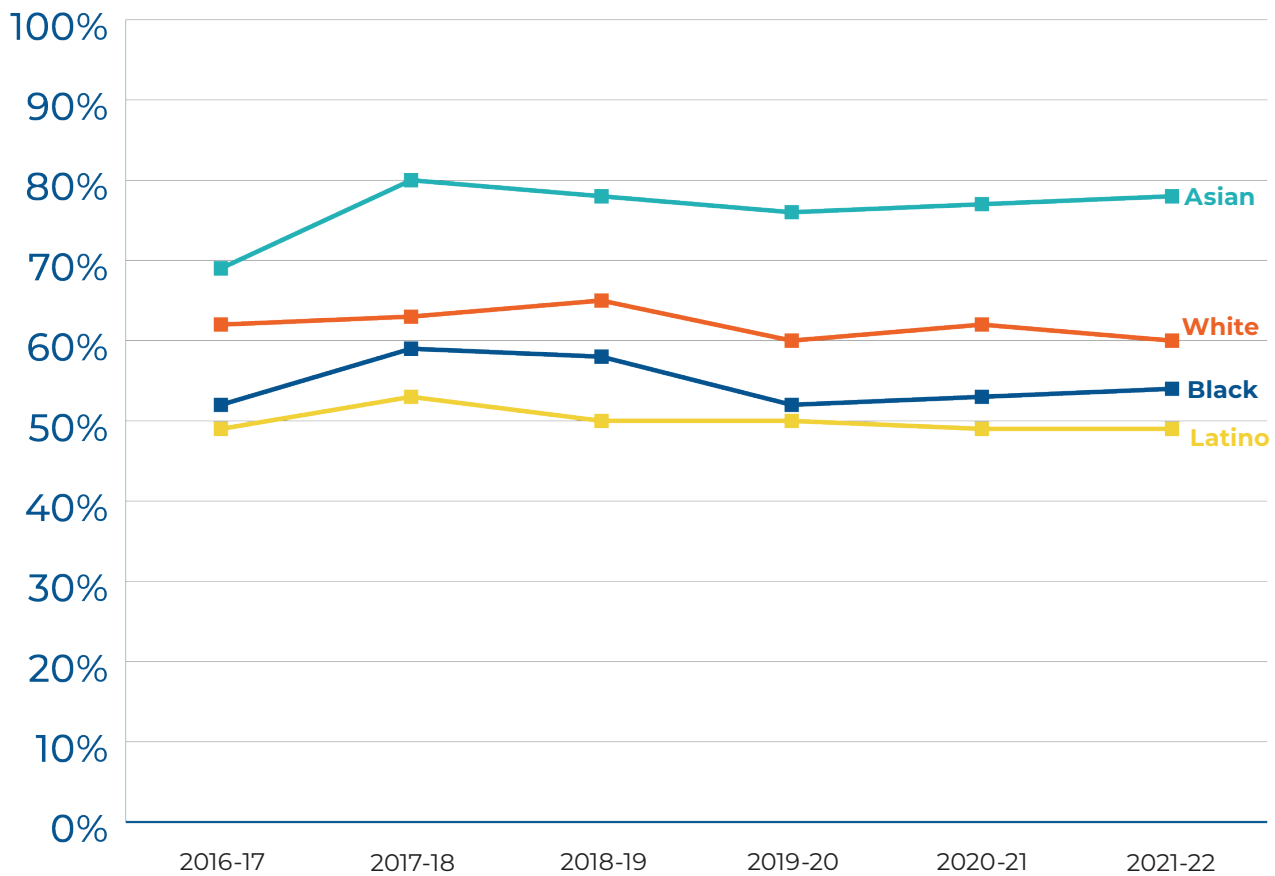
¹³ "Meeting requirements" per LAUSD data refers to completing the A-G course list required by UC/CSU schools. LAUSD allows students to pass with a D grade or better, while the UC/CSU requirement is C grade or better, so not all students deemed eligible in this data would qualify for the university requirements.

RECOVERY DIFFERS BY GROUP

The continuing drop in overall college-going is not reflected in all student groups. Socioeconomically disadvantaged students have consistently had a college-going rate just below the district average. Asian students consistently attend at the highest levels and by 2022 had returned to pre-pandemic levels. As of 2022, Black students were slowly recovering from an initial pandemic decline, while white students'

recovery has been more stagnant. Latino students typically have the lowest rates of college-going but did not experience much fluctuation during COVID-19. As of 2022, there was a gap of almost 30 percentage points across race/ethnicity groups (78% among Asian students vs 49% among Latino students). The most recent data is from 2021-22, so the impact of the last year of recovery efforts is not yet clear.

College-Going Rate of LAUSD Graduates Within 12 Months, by Race/Ethnicity



Source: California Department of Education

Major gains made in attendance, but too many students are still chronically absent and feeling disconnected.

Two of the areas that most demonstrated the early impact of the pandemic were extremely high rates of students who missed classes or had altogether not returned to school following the closures in March of 2020, and the level of disengagement students report on the Los Angeles Unified student experiences survey. Improvements are shown in overall attendance as indicated by a sharp reduction in chronic absenteeism in 2022-23 and increased attendance are highlighted below. Additionally, we include indicators of student mental health wellness provided by Los Angeles Unified from the student experiences survey. There have been declines in self-reported student satisfaction and well-being since the return to in-person classes, adding concerning context to issues of absenteeism.

Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism, defined by the district as students absent for 9% or more of instructional days (i.e., at least 15 days of school), is an ongoing problem in Los Angeles Unified. Chronic absenteeism skyrocketed upon return to in-person

learning, from a relatively consistent 16% pre-pandemic to 45% in 2021-22.¹⁴ While some improvement has been made since then, with the rate dropping to 37% overall in 2022-23, attendance levels in the district are still well below pre-pandemic levels.

This is not a problem unique to Los Angeles Unified. Nationally, chronic absenteeism has been extremely high since the pandemic began. One national report, examining absenteeism in 39 states, called it “schools’ greatest post-pandemic challenge” and predicted it would be 2030 before classroom attendance is back to pre-pandemic levels.¹⁵

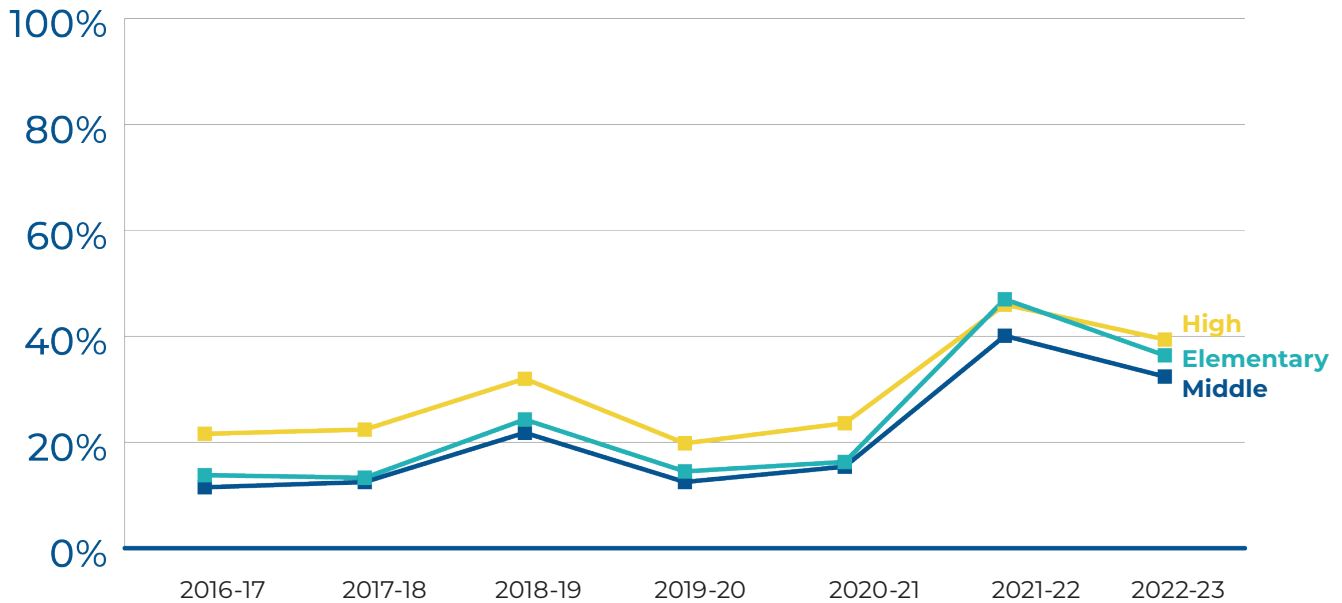
In Los Angeles Unified, high school students typically have the highest rates of chronic absenteeism, but rates among younger students have caught up to them since returning to in-person school. In 2021-22, it was students in grades K-5 with the highest rate (47%).

Asian students have the lowest levels of chronic absenteeism, while Black students have the highest. Though rates increased across all groups, the racial gap widened upon the return to in-person learning.

¹⁴ A large one-year spike in absenteeism in 2018-19, up to 26%, appears to be an anomaly; likely due partly to the fact that during the historic six-day teachers’ strike in 2019, many students did not attend school. See Howard Blue and Sonali Kohli, “The teachers’ strike gripped LA for 6 days. A year later, what are the results?”, Los Angeles Times, January 2020. And “LAUSD Teachers’ Strike Enters Second Week as Negotiations Heat Up”, CBS News, January 2019.

¹⁵ Linda Jacobson, “Schools Won’t Recover from COVID Absenteeism Crisis Until at Least 2030”, The 74 Million, January 2024.

Percent of Students Chronically Absent, LAUSD



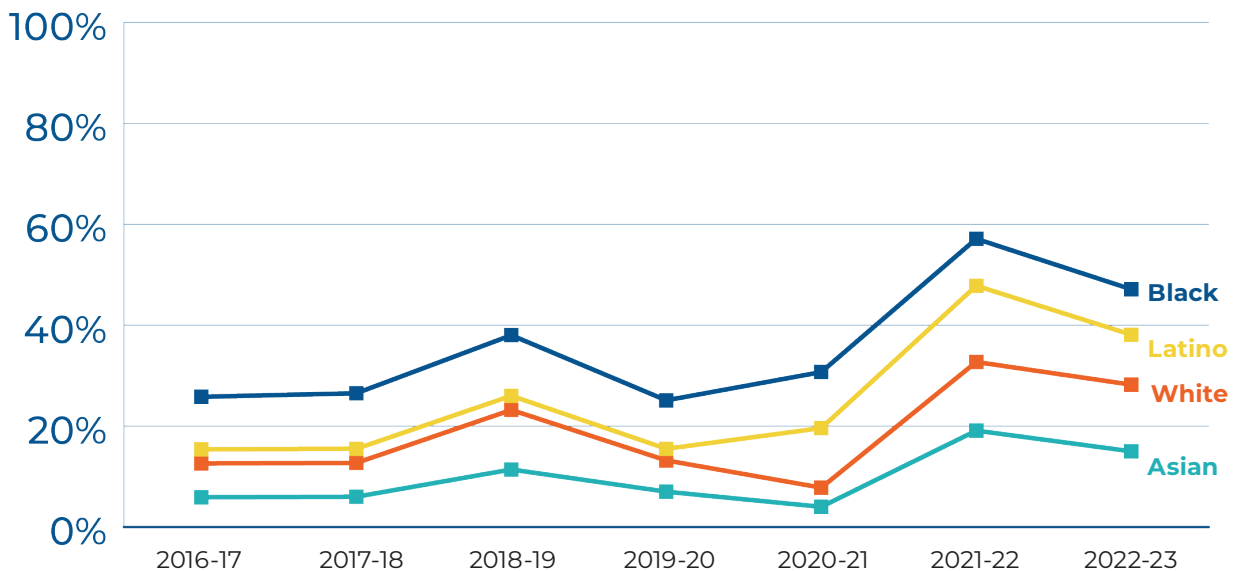
Source: LAUSD Data Request

Note: 2019-20 attendance is through 3/13/20

Asian students, with the consistently lowest chronic absenteeism, had almost five times more chronic absenteeism in 2021-22 than 2020-21 (from 4% to 19%). White students almost quadrupled their absenteeism (from

8% to 33%), and Latino students more than doubled theirs (20% to 48%). Black students, who already had the highest rates, still saw almost double chronic absenteeism from 2020-21 to 2021-22 (31% to 57%).

Percent of Students Chronically Absent by Race/Ethnicity, LAUSD



Source: LAUSD Data Request

Note: 2019-20 attendance is through 3/13/20

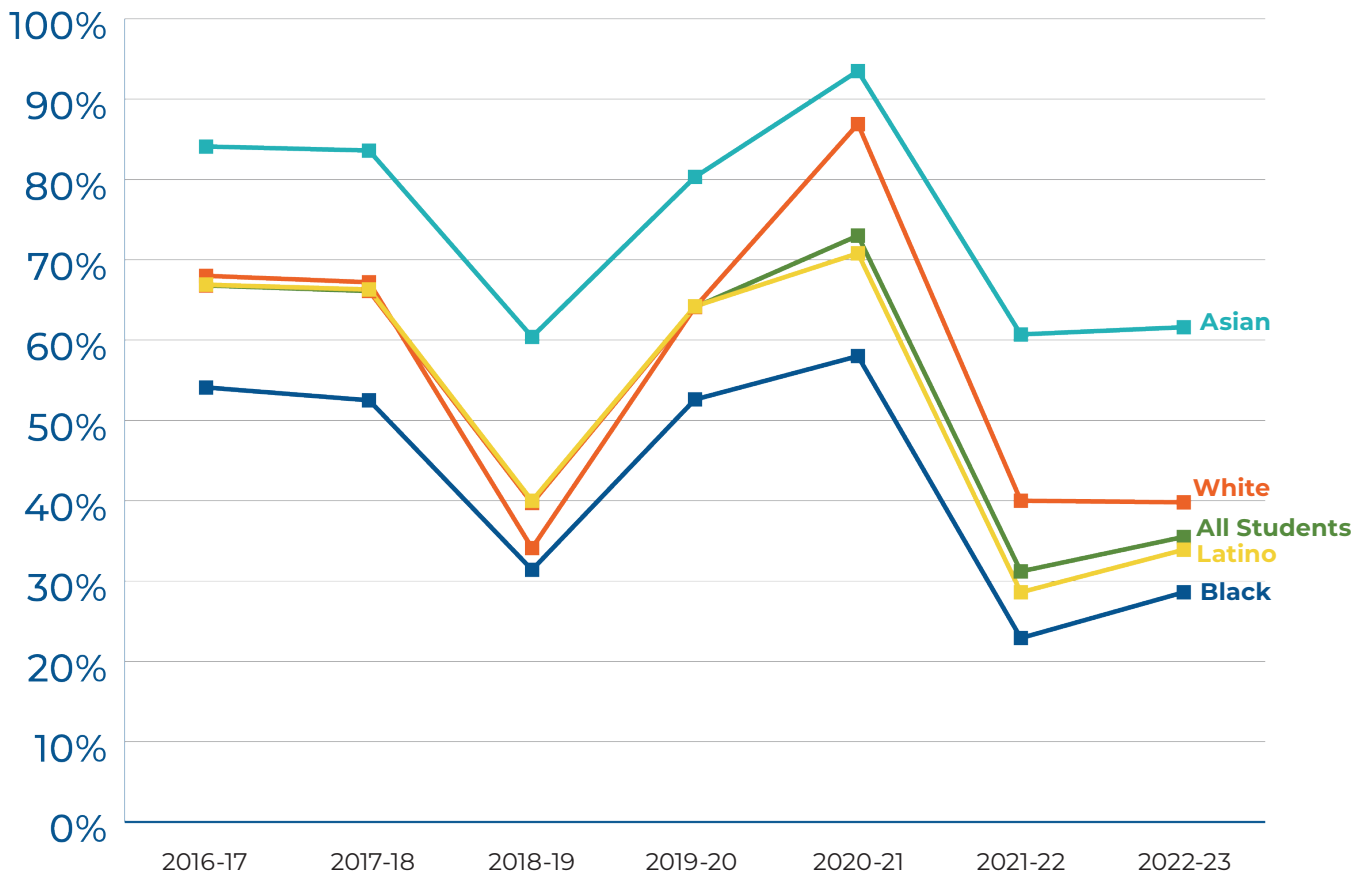
Excellent Attendance

Similarly, rates of excellent attendance (meaning students in attendance 95% of the time or more) have dropped precipitously in the district since the return from remote learning. Around two thirds of Los Angeles Unified students had excellent attendance from 2016 through the 2019-20 school year (until the pandemic), aside from the drop in 2018-19. During remote schooling, rates actually improved, with almost three quarters of students in excellent attendance

(73%). However, since the return to in-person learning, just around a third of students have had excellent attendance. Most student groups have seen a small improvement from 2021-22 to 2022-23, with excellent attendance up four percentage points overall to 35.5%.

Students in economically disadvantaged homes are consistently less likely to have excellent attendance, and that gap widened during the pandemic. In 2020-21, 89% of non-economically disadvantaged students

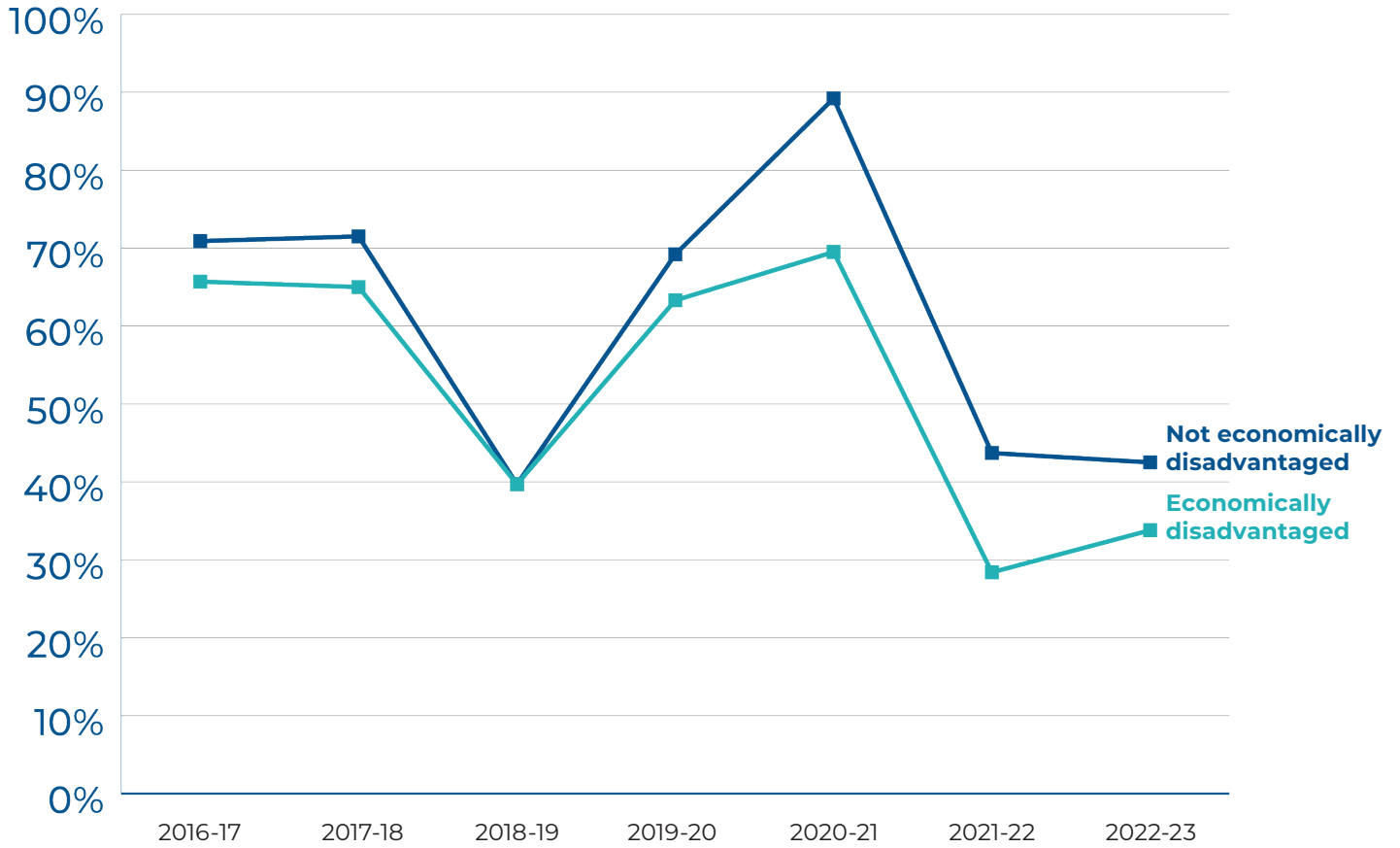
Students with Excellent Attendance (96% or higher) by Race/Ethnicity, LAUSD



Source: LAUSD Data Request

Note: 2019-20 attendance is through 3/13/20

Percent of Students With Excellent Attendance (96% of higher) by Socioeconomic Status, LAUSD



Source: LAUSD Data Request

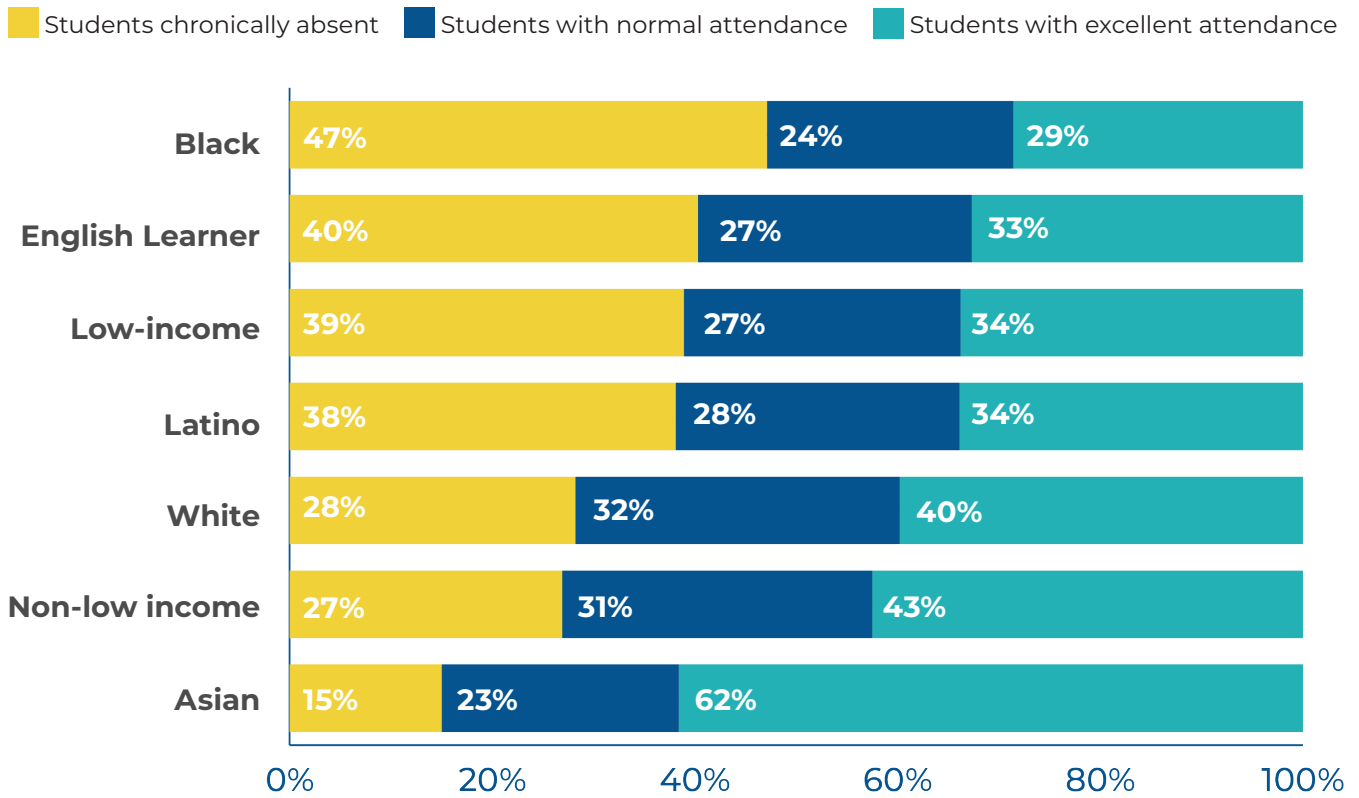
Note: 2019-20 attendance is through 3/13/20

had excellent attendance, compared to 70% of disadvantaged students. The gap has been less significant since returning to in-person, but it persists. In 2022-23, there was a nine percentage point difference.

Rates of excellent attendance dropped across all race/ethnicity groups in Los

Angeles Unified, but the gaps between groups have mostly remained consistent. Asian students consistently have the highest rates, while Black students often have the lowest. For 2022-23, rates in both groups were more than 20 percentage points lower than in 2017-18.

LAUSD Attendance Levels by Most Chronically Absent Group to Least, 2022-23



Source: LAUSD Data Request

Social-Emotional Wellness

The negative ramifications of learning losses and record chronic absences after the experience of remote learning are also visible in student surveys.

Mental health experts voiced extensive worries over mental health during remote learning. Children dealt with isolation and loneliness over the pandemic, and experts were concerned about anxiety and depression following the prolonged period of isolation.¹⁶ For children at every age,

experiencing and recovering from a year of learning remotely, distanced from their peers and teachers, is inarguably another challenge to overcome upon returning to in-person learning. Beyond the immediate negative consequences of poor mental health or emotional wellness to students, it can also harm their academic abilities and motivations, and only compounds concerns about the long-term impacts of learning loss.¹⁷ Persistent poor attendance likewise suggests that students have not yet returned to their pre-pandemic approach to school, which hinders their social connections.

¹⁶ See Sammy Weale, “Prioritize play when schools reopen, say mental health experts”, The Guardian, May 7, 2020, and Deng, J., Zhou, F., Hou, W., Heybati, K., Lohit, S., Abbas, U., Silver, Z., Wong, C. Y., Chang, O., Huang, E., Zuo, Q. K., Moskalyk, M., Ramaraju, H. B., & Heybati, S. (2023). Prevalence of mental health symptoms in children and adolescents during the COVID-19 pandemic: A meta-analysis. *Ann NY Acad Sci.*, 1520, 53–73. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nyas.14947>

¹⁷ Yiinghua Wang, “The research on the impact of distance learning on students’ mental health”, *Educ Inf Technol (Dordr)* 11:1-13, March 2023.

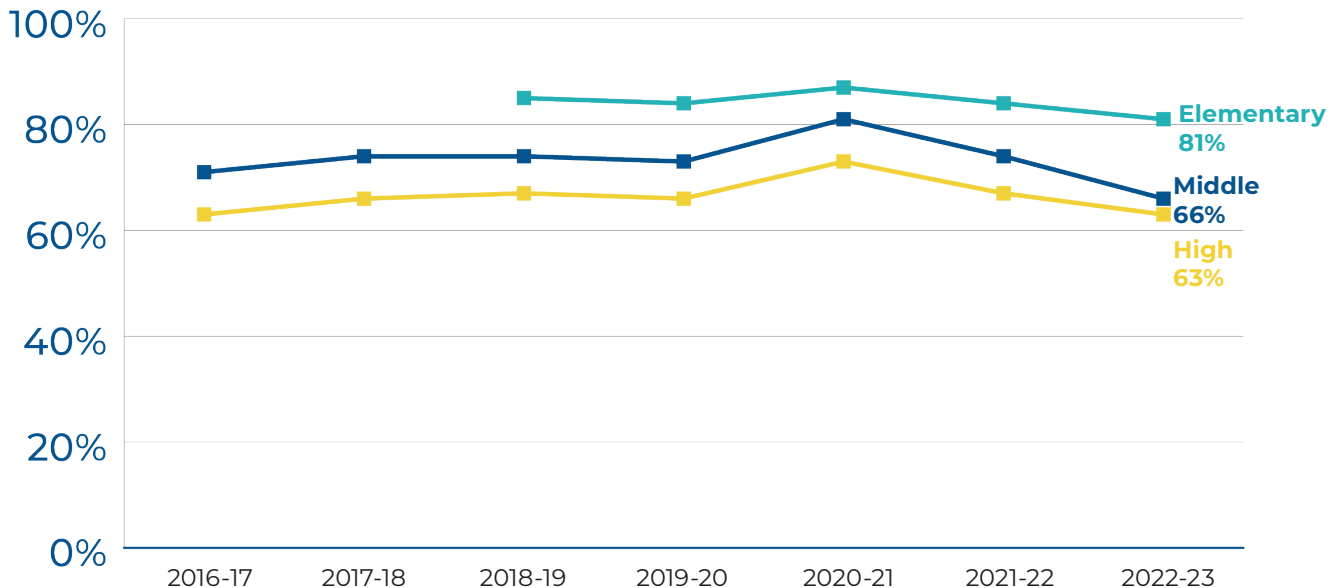
Key aspects of social-emotional wellness have been stagnant or declining across grade levels in Los Angeles Unified since the return to in-person learning. Since 2020-21, fewer students reported being happy to be at school across elementary, middle and high school. Fairly steady in the years just preceding the pandemic, the rate of students happy to be “at school” actually increased during remote learning. However, it dropped across all grade levels upon returning to in-person and this negative trend has continued. In 2022-23, 66% of middle schoolers were happy to be at school, versus 81% during distance learning in 2020-21 and 74% in 2018-19. When asked whether they felt like a part of their school, trends among all grades have been similarly in decline.

During remote learning, students’ perception that their teachers cared if they missed school actually increased, especially among older students. Since the return to in-person learning, students

are much less likely to feel that teachers care if they are absent, to a greater extent than before the pandemic. In 2022-23, just 52% of high schoolers and 56% of middle schoolers believed their teachers cared if they were absent. This is an especially concerning belief given the rampant chronic absences in the district. Elementary school students are more likely to think their teachers care about their absence (72% in 2022-23) but are still on a downward trajectory compared to a pre-pandemic rate of 78%.

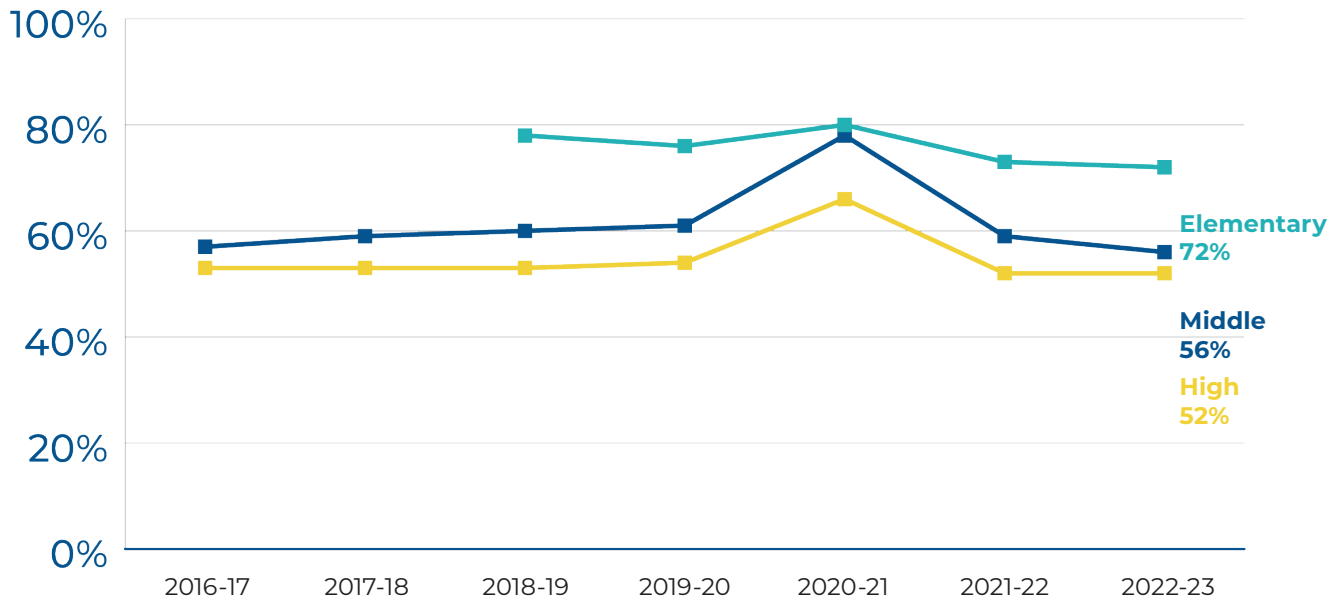
On a more positive note, students at all levels feel closer to people at school than they did during remote learning, when this perception dipped notably. High school students have already returned to pre-pandemic levels in this area. Though younger students have not fully recovered yet, this trend is a positive indication that if the district can keep students in classes, they can rebuild relationships with their peers and instructors.

Strongly agree/agree: I am happy to be at this school



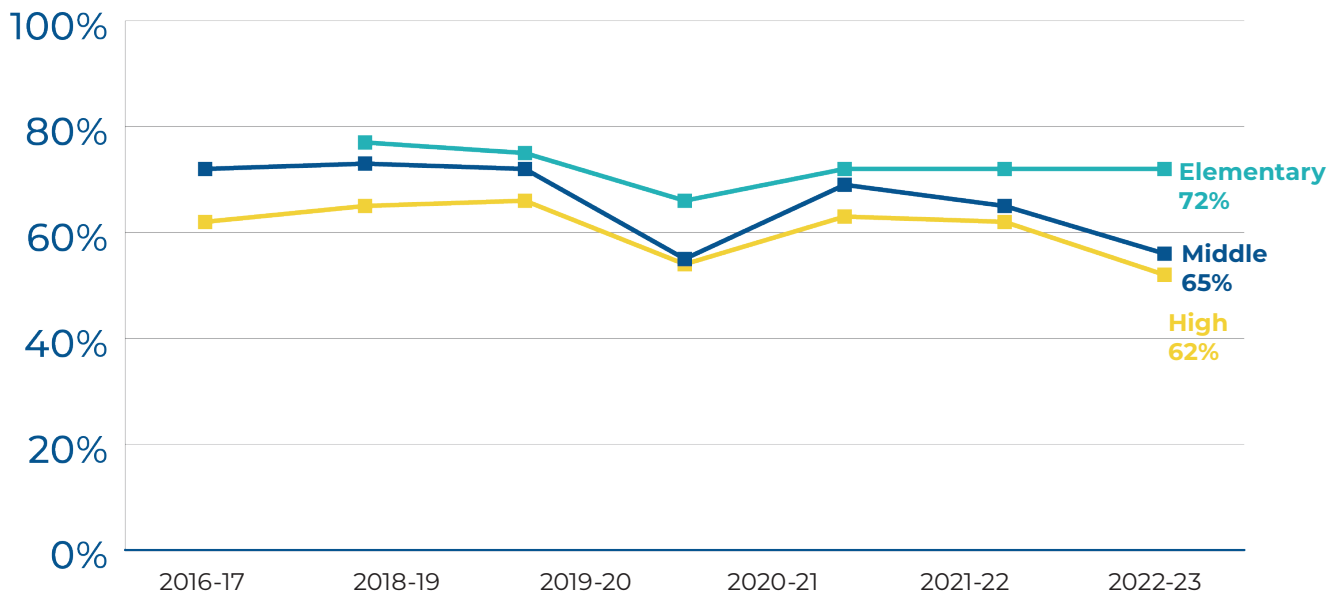
Source: LAUSD

Strongly agree/agree: Teachers care if I'm absent from school



Source: LAUSD

Strongly agree/agree: I feel close to people at this school



Source: LAUSD

Note: Question not included in 2017-18 survey

How did Los Angeles Unified achieve its above-average recovery?

The transition from initial pandemic response policy to recovery efforts in Los Angeles Unified largely coincided with a change in district leadership. Superintendent Austin Beutner, who served from May 2018 to June 2021, was succeeded by an interim superintendent for several months until the Board of Education appointed Alberto Carvalho to start in February 2022.

Superintendent Carvalho's early messaging addressed the reality that the pandemic was building onto existing problems in the district, particularly around achievement gaps and enrollment. He came to Los Angeles Unified from Miami-Dade County Public Schools, another of the country's largest and majority-minority districts where he was recognized for facilitating high academic performance and closing achievement gaps.¹⁸¹⁹ "I recognize that many of our students and their families are in crisis, but let's be honest, they were in crisis prior to the pandemic," said Carvalho at a press event in his first month, where he announced plans centered around reducing achievement gaps and targeting 100 priority schools with support programs in Los Angeles Unified.²⁰

The timing of a new superintendent's overhaul of the district occurring in the midst of pandemic recovery efforts means that many of the plans put in

place targeted district improvement more broadly than a plan focused solely on pandemic recovery might. The superintendent's initial plans included a wide swathe of programs and changes, some targeting pandemic-related learning loss and some aimed at improving district operations generally. Programs enacted to improve district-family communication, leadership accessibility, administrative structures, and data collection may not have been classified as recovery efforts, but certainly contribute to the district's overall progress to date. Carvalho himself indicated he does not view any one intervention as the key to the district's recovery, sharing that he "stopped looking for these silver bullets ... More often than not, it is the compound effect of good strategies."²¹ Between the superintendent's initial 100-Day Plan and the completion of the first year of the district's new strategic plan in 2022-23, several strategies have been implemented to address learning losses from remote schooling.

Key Recovery Strategies Implemented:

- Expanded learning opportunities at all Title I schools to target students who fell behind during the pandemic, including additional instructional days over the summer and winter breaks, acceleration

¹⁸ Anne Vasquez, "Why years in Miami will serve new LAUSD Superintendent Alberto Carvalho", EdSource, March 2022.

¹⁹ Biography, Office of the Superintendent LAUSD, <https://www.Los Angeles Unified.org/superintendent>

²⁰ Kate Sequeira, "New Los Angeles Unified Superintendent Outlines Priorities in 100-Day Plan", Ed Source, February 2022.

²¹ Claire Cain Miller, Sarah Mervosh and Francesca Paris, "Students are Making a Surprising Rebound from Pandemic Closures. But Some May Never Catch Up", The New York Times, January 2024.

days during the school year, and enrichment offerings in arts and music.²²

- Targeted support and investments for high-need students in addition to SENI funds, through expanded early education, arts education and dual-language programs, and the Black Student Achievement Plan.²³
- Additional support for 100 district-identified priority schools in coordination with principals, selected based on attendance rates, state assessment performances, college eligibility of graduates, and the prevalence of English learner students.²⁴
- As of the 2023-24 school year, replacing the Primary Promise program — which was started in 2020-21 to address literacy and numeracy skill losses for K-2 students — with the Literacy and Numeracy Intervention Model. The new program includes all elementary and middle schoolers, in an effort to address the literacy gap that was exacerbated by the pandemic, and is designed to equitably distribute resources to high-need schools.²⁵

Many of these strategies, such as the optional additional instructional days during school breaks, utilized emergency federal funding passed in the wake of the

pandemic. Putting federal funds toward expanded learning opportunities through summer and after-school programs was a common recovery tactic across the country, alongside increased small group tutoring and increasing mental health support by hiring psychologists, social workers and counselors.²⁶ There is substantial evidence that well-designed expanded learning time leads to improvements in both engagement and achievement for students, particularly low-income students, students of color and students who are behind academically.²⁷

The current wave of federal funding, which supported the district's optional winter and spring break learning days in 2022 and 2023, expires in fall 2024. However, Carvalho said the district will continue offering additional instructional days even after the funds expire.²⁸ ²⁹ Los Angeles Unified's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan includes efforts to expand instruction and enrichment, and improve social-emotional wellness and well-being among students, among other priorities.³⁰ In July 2024, Carvalho's annual Opening of the Schools address highlighted the district's commitment to a holistic approach, touting 48 new initiatives ranging from free eye care for students and laundry services for families to technology literacy and adult education.³¹

²² Mallika Seshadri, "LAUSD kicks off Winter Academy to boost academic performance", EdSource, December 2023.

²³ "Superintendent Carvalho's 100-Day Plan Report", Office of the Superintendent, June 2022.

²⁴ Mallika Seshadri, "LAUSD's 100 priority schools target district's highest-need students", EdSource, February 2024.

²⁵ Alberto M. Carvalho, "Literacy and Numeracy Intervention Model", Interoffice Correspondence, May 2023.

²⁶ Erin Fahle, Thomas J. Kane, Sean F. Reardon, and Douglas O. Steiger, "The First Year of Pandemic Recovery: A District-Level Analysis", the Educational Opportunity Project and the Center for Education Policy Research, January 2024.

²⁷ Anna Maier, Julia Daniel, Jeannie Oakes and Livia Lam, "Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy: A Review of the Evidence", Learning Policy Institute, December 2017.

²⁸ Mallika Seshadri, "LAUSD kicks off Winter Academy to boost academic performance", EdSource, December 2023.

²⁹ Kate Sequeira, "Why thousands of L.A. students are showing up for school during winter vacation", Los Angeles Times, December 2023.

³⁰ "Strategic Plan - Year One (2022-2023) Report: Executive Summary", LAUSD, January 2024.

³¹ Mallika Seshadr, "LAUSD Superintendent Carvalho introduces 48 new initiatives for the upcoming school year", EdSource, July 2024.

Opportunities for further accelerating recovery

As this report has made clear, Los Angeles Unified has already embarked on expansive recovery efforts. Below, we detail five key recommendations that build upon and would expand existing district efforts. These are presented in acknowledgement that the district has already made strides in some of these areas. The following recommendations are intended to strengthen recovery in light of this report's findings:

1

Center Students in Financial and Resource Investments

As COVID-19 relief and recovery funding expires, it is more important than ever to prioritize the district's limited resources for the students and schools with the highest needs. We recommend the district publicly share its guidelines or framework for its financial and resource allocation decisions that are centered on student needs and recognize ongoing disparities and inequities across the district. Doing so will maximize both resources and recovery efforts and increase alignment with the district's strategic plan priorities of data-driven decision making and eliminate opportunity gaps. Los Angeles Unified has already moved to centralize their approach for school instruction and operations, but additional targeted funding based on student need must address remaining gaps.

2

Strengthen Alignment between School Day and Out of School Time

Los Angeles Unified should continue to develop and implement approaches that holistically address students from 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. all year round, including through increased enrichment and tutoring opportunities. By leveraging out of school time to inspire a love of learning through experiential and engaging enrichment, the district can better serve all students and advance efforts to meet strategic plan goals. This enrichment can also help close the opportunity gap, which, like the academic gap, has a profound impact on students' ability to live thriving adult lives.

3

Prioritize Student and Employee Wellness

Just as the district should expand the alignment between the school day and out of school time to more comprehensively support students, Los Angeles Unified should also create more opportunities for students and employees to experience joy and heal from both pandemic and pre-existing traumas. This is an opportunity for the district to demonstrate a commitment to whole-child well-being. It is also critical to recognize the impact the pandemic had on employees as well as students; the success of the district depends on employee well-being and the district has named staff wellness as a priority. Prioritizing wellness is also an excellent way to strengthen community ties, giving philanthropic and community-based service provider nonprofits the opportunity to partner with the district to address the mental health crisis. Recovery efforts must continue to aim for more than just regaining lost ground academically.

4

Increased Public Data Transparency

Increased transparency and accessibility of public data, made available at least quarterly, would facilitate accountability in the district and allow students and families to advocate locally. Transparency includes publishing raw data as well as school level. This would support the engagement and collaboration pillar of the district's strategic plan. Increasing transparency will build upon work the district has already done, particularly publishing the Family Guide to the Los Angeles Unified Strategic Plan and the district's Family Academy. Increased public data transparency can strengthen instructional decision-making and align those decisions to student needs.

Strategic investment and intervention in the district requires that our limited resources be directed towards those who need it most. As the data in this report makes clear, recovery is uneven across student groups and ages. We also outlined areas where data is not sufficient or recent enough to accurately understand how students are faring. More accessible data enables government, philanthropy, and community-based partners to best target supports to uplift students and schools to their full potential. Equally, increased transparency can elevate success in the district, encouraging further support from those same partners and highlighting strengths among leadership.

5

Report Disaggregated Data

Hand-in-hand with increased transparency should come more nuanced, disaggregated data. We encourage Los Angeles Unified to provide data by high school feeder pattern or at least board district, including more complete subgroup data. The district already provides disaggregated data at several levels, but doing so more comprehensively would help identify trends and inequities in the system and enable more effective interventions (financial investment, staffing and otherwise). Los Angeles Unified has a very diverse student population, and this should be celebrated and respected by enabling appropriately complex analysis. Useful subgroup data to provide would be data on students who have been with the district since kindergarten, English learners, ethnicity, and DIBELS data with feeder patterns and board districts.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic took an unprecedented and devastating toll on the well-being and education of students, their schools and communities. Los Angeles Unified has made remarkable progress towards recovery in the four years since the pandemic began, achieving both a lower degree of learning loss and above average recovery compared to peer districts. However, the pandemic also exacerbated existing achievement gaps and inequities in the district, and as a whole, Los Angeles Unified remains behind other major districts in the state. Recovery has been uneven across age and race/ethnicity groups. Younger students, students of color, low-income students, and English learners were more impacted and have struggled more to recoup losses.

And despite major improvements, the district is still facing severe levels of chronic absenteeism at all grade levels.

The district has already enacted a swathe of recovery strategies and announced more to come, including interventions targeting the highest need students and schools. Los Angeles Unified leadership, with Superintendent Carvalho at the helm, have shown they intend to not only recover lost ground but charge further ahead. It is critical that our most vulnerable students are not left behind as we work to make these plans a reality. The recovery gaps highlighted in this report, and our subsequent recommendations, aim to ensure Los Angeles can achieve educational recovery, for all students, now.

Methodology

Data Sources

The following publicly available reports and data files were obtained from the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD):

- Students with Excellent Attendance (96% or Higher), 2016-17 - 2022-23
- Students Chronically Absent, Grades K-12 (District Threshold of 91%), 2016-17 - 2022-23
- Meeting Early Literacy Benchmarks, 2016-17 - 2022-23
- Data Privacy, Analysis and Reporting Branch, School Experience Survey Data Files, 2020-21 - 2022-23
- LAUSD Independent Analysis Unit, *Fall 2020 schoolology usage update: Student engagement online between August 18 and October 31*, January 2021
- LAUSD Independent Analysis Unit, *Student engagement online during school facilities closures: An analysis of L.A. Unified secondary students' schoolology activity from March 16 to May 22, 2020*, July 2020

The following publicly available reports and data files were obtained from the California Department of Education (CDE):

- Public Schools and Districts Directory, 2022-23
- Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate, 2016-17 - 2022-23
- College-Going Rate for High School Completers (12-month), 2016-17 - 2020-21
- California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) Research Files, 2016-17 - 2022-23

The following publicly available data files were obtained from the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics:

- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading Assessments, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, and 2022

District level data from the Education Recovery Scorecard project was obtained from the Stanford Educational Data archive:

- Reardon, S. F., Ho, A. D., Shear, B. R., Fahle, E. M., Kalogrides, D., Saliba, J. (2024). Stanford Education Data Archive (Version 5.0). Retrieved from <https://purl.stanford.edu/cs829jn7849>.

Note: Students reported as African American by LAUSD and the CDE are referenced as Black throughout the report and Hispanic students are referenced as Latino.

Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism Data

Using chronic absenteeism data obtained from a data request to LAUSD, we report the percentage of students missing 15 days of school or more from 2016-17 to 2022-23. We report these percentages by grade level, race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status. To assess students with high attendance, we used data on students with excellent attendance (96% of school days or more) from 2016-17 to 2022-23, obtained from a data request to LAUSD. We report these percentages at an overall level and by race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status.

Attendance data from LAUSD for 2019-20 is through March 13, 2020. Data on attendance in the remainder of the spring 2020 semester, referenced in findings from the first Educational Recovery Now report, is based on analysis of spring and fall 2020 daily engagement data from two reports published by LAUSD's Independent Analysis Unit (IAU) and applied IAU's definitions of Schoology activity:

- Active engagement: Students who participated asynchronously that day by submitting an assignment, assessment, or posting to a discussion board
- Passive engagement: Students who logged in or viewed content but did not complete assignments or post
- No activity: Students who did not complete any action in Schoology

Schoology was the primary online course management system LAUSD students used to communicate with their teachers, access class materials, and complete class assignments.

K-5 Early Literacy Results

To assess learning loss among students in grades K-5, we used Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills (DIBELS) benchmark aggregate data for 2016-17 to 2022-23 obtained from a data request to LAUSD. In 2019-20, DIBELS assessment data is based on mid-year assessments, as there were no end of year assessments in spring 2020. In all other years, DIBELS results are from end-of-year assessments.

We report the percentage of tested students who met or surpassed

benchmarks on literacy overall and by grade level. To better assess the impact of learning loss on students' progress over time, we also report on results by cohort, following classes of students through their elementary education to see how different ages were impacted by remote learning.

CAASPP Reading and Math Results

To assess learning loss among middle and high school students, we obtained CAASPP English Language Arts and math assessment data for LAUSD and the state of California from the California Department of Education for 2015-16 to 2022-23. We reported these results for all students, by grade level, race/ethnicity and language-learner status. There was no testing in 2019-20, and while some results in 2020-21 are available, low testing rates mean they are considered less reliable; so we have omitted that year as well.

NAEP Reading and Math Results

To assess LAUSD students' performance against other districts nationally, we used National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading Assessments from 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2022, obtained from the U.S. Department of Education. We reported results for LAUSD in comparison to averages for eighth grade reading and math skills nationally, in the state of California, and in the following comparable school districts: New York City, Miami-Dade, Chicago, and Clark County.

High School Graduation Rates and College-Going Rate

To assess the postsecondary outcomes of LAUSD students, we reported the overall percentage of graduates meeting UC/CSU requirements obtained from the California Department of Education DataQuest, four-year cohort graduation rates and outcomes for 2016-17 to 2022-23.

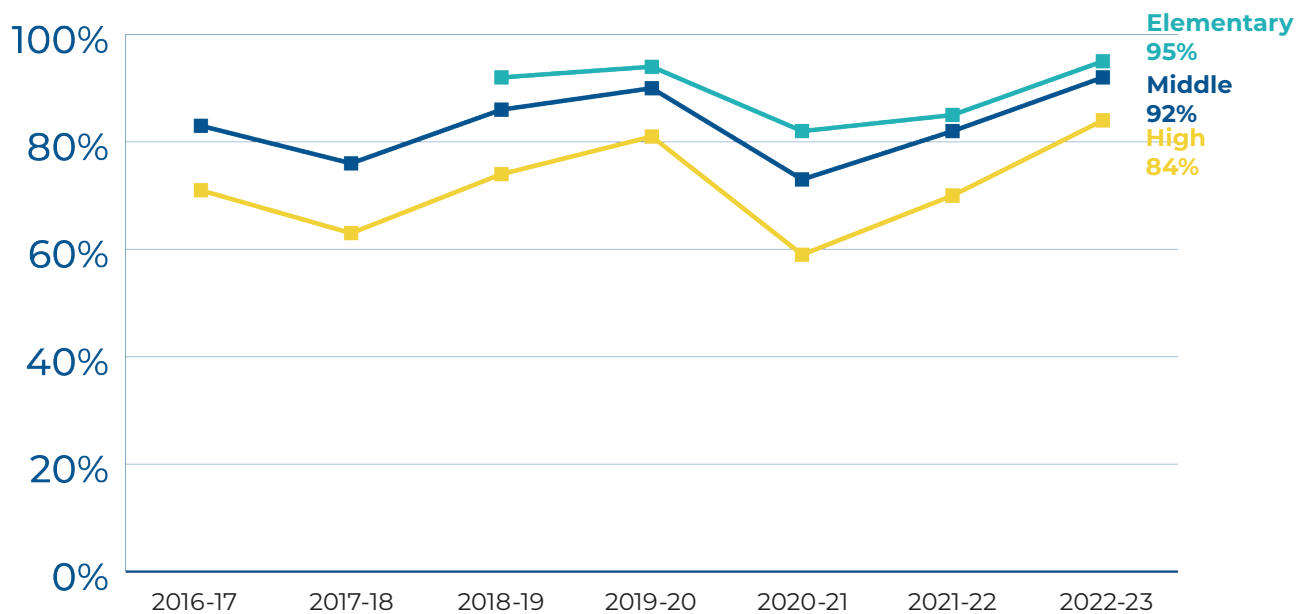
We also used data on the percent of graduates who enrolled in college within 12 months of graduation overall and by race/ethnicity for 2016-17 to 2020-21 (the most recently available year), from the

California Department of Education Data Reporting Office.

Los Angeles Unified School Experience Survey Results

The School Experience Survey is an annual survey administered to all LAUSD schools. It provides schools with feedback from teachers, students and parents. We obtained the student survey question results on school connectedness to assess how connected students felt during distance learning and since. We report results from 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 by school level; response rates were strong across levels.

SES Response Rates



Source: LAUSD

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GPSN is a nonprofit intermediary organization exclusively focused on improving Los Angeles public education. GPSN envisions a public school system in Los Angeles that prepares all students to succeed in school and to live thriving adult lives.

Guided by this vision, our mission is to bring together the Los Angeles community to catalyze the transformation of the public education system so that students of color and students living in poverty gain the knowledge, skills, and experiences to lead thriving adult lives.