



Education Coordinating Council

August 30, 2023, 9:00 a.m. | Hybrid Meeting

In-Person: 500 West Temple Street, Room 372, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Remote: via Microsoft Teams

Member	Tanya Ortiz Franklin, ECC Chair, Los Angeles Unified School District
Representatives	Commissioner Ashley Price for Judge Akemi Arakaki, ECC Vice Chair
Present in Person:	Fabricio Segovia, ECC Vice Chair (former foster youth)
	Abimbola Williams Ajala, Compton Unified School District
	Matt Case, Antelope Valley High School District
	David Carroll, Los Angeles County Department of Youth Development
	Jessica Chandler, former foster/probation youth
	Jesus Corral, Los Angeles County Probation Department
	Howard Wong, Los Angeles County Probation Department
	Joshua Elizondo, Los Angeles County Youth Commission
	Jennie Feria, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services
	Wendy Garen, Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families
	Denise Grande, Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture
	Ana Gutierrez, West Covina Unified School District
	La Shona Jenkins, Los Angeles County Office of Education
	Jodi Kurata, Association of Community Human Service Agencies
	Marcy Manker, First 5 LA
	Denise Miranda, Los Angeles Unified School District
	Judge Michael Nash, Office of Child Protection
	Luciana Svidler, Children's Law Center of California
	Kanchana Tate, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
	Trish Wilson, Lancaster School District
Meeting	La Shona Jenkins, Los Angeles County Office of Education
Presenters:	Melissa Schoonmaker, Los Angeles County Office of Education
	Lucrecia Santibañez, UCLA Center for the Transformation of Schools
	Nick Holden, Fourth Supervisorial District
	Jessica Petrass, John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY)
Staff	Barbara Lundqvist, Director, Education Coordinating Council
and Guests:	Minsun Park Meeker, Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection
	Rachael Parker-Chavez, Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection
	Candice Roosjen, First Supervisorial District
	Elise Weinberg, First Supervisorial District
	Erica Reynoso, Third Supervisorial District
	Elizabeth Shuster, Third Supervisorial District
	Nick Holden, Fourth Supervisorial District

A quorum of members physically present in a single location having been established, Chair Tanya Ortiz Franklin brought the meeting to order, welcoming everyone. In-person attendees were asked to introduce themselves aloud, while remote participants were encouraged to introduce themselves in the Chat feature of Microsoft Teams.

ECC Director Barbara Lundqvist read Los Angeles County’s [land acknowledgement](#), then covered virtual-meeting housekeeping topics for those joining remotely, plus the online [location of meeting materials](#) that will remain available following today’s adjournment.

In an effort to make the group’s meetings as welcoming and inclusive as possible to youth, caregivers, and other stakeholders who may be unfamiliar with specific County or school-district acronyms and initialisms, Chair Ortiz Franklin asked ECC members and constituents to use full agency names so that all participants feel included in the discussion.

Because of unavoidable delays, the Board of Supervisors’ scroll presentation to partners involved in the 2022–2023 FAFSA Challenge was moved until later in the meeting, as were the follow-up actions from the May ECC meeting.

Addressing Chronic Absenteeism for Youth in Foster Care

Chronic absenteeism is defined as a student missing 10 percent or more of school days for any reason, excused, unexcused, or resulting from suspension. As an introduction to this main topic of today’s meeting, ECC Director Barbara Lundqvist reviewed **Attachment 1**, which utilizes chronic absenteeism data collected from Los Angeles County by the California Department of Education, including a breakdown by school district for school year 2021–2022. Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, overall chronic absenteeism rates had been rising, but foster-student rates continue to be significantly higher than those for non-foster students. The data from Attachment 1 can also be accessed [online](#).

The timing of chronic absenteeism can also be significant. Page 7 of Attachment 1 shows a grade-level breakdown of 2021–2022 chronic absenteeism showing very high rates in kindergarten, again for both foster and non-foster populations. As noted in the draft data-story infographic made available at the meeting¹:

Consistently, students [who attend kindergarten] score significantly higher on measures of math, English, science, and overall achievement. These differences in academic achievement transferred to differences in high school cumulative grade point averages (GPAs).

Source: Prince, Hare, R.D., & Howard, E.M. (2001) Longitudinal Effects of Kindergarten. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 16(1), 15–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02568540109594971>

Chronic absenteeism is even more prevalent in high school, with more than half of foster students in grades 9 through 12 being chronically absent. Race/ethnicity can likewise be a factor (page 5 of Attachment 1), with gaps between foster and non-foster groups being particularly high for American Indian/Alaska Native and Hispanic/Latinx students.

“I know all of you are doing a lot of hard work to engage our students,” Lundqvist told meeting participants, “and I want to share a quote from Superintendent of County Schools Debra Duardo from a recent [article](#). ‘The antidote to social isolation is not just getting students back in the physical classroom. It’s also about nurturing connections, fostering understanding, and promoting a sense of belonging.’ So as we listen to today’s presentations,” Lundqvist went on, “can we think about what concrete steps we can take as a council to address these high absenteeism rates? How can we work better together to create a sense of belonging for our youth?”

The Impact of Chronic Absenteeism on Youth in Foster Care. La Shona Jenkins and Melissa Schoonmaker from the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) reviewed **Attachment 2**, beginning with the definition of ‘attendance’—*the physical presence of a child and/or children within regular school hours, including attending scheduled classes during scheduled hours.*

By law in California, public schools must offer 180 instructional days per academic year (175 for public charter schools). The warning signs for chronic absenteeism begin when days out of class exceed the once

¹This document is still in draft form; a final version will be posted/distributed when available.

a month or so—for illness, medical appointments, etc.—that is considered ‘normal’ for most students. With 18 or more days’ non-attendance during an academic year, students are considered chronically absent, with all the learning loss and social/emotional interruptions resulting from that.

This is true for both foster and non-foster students, of course, but foster youth face additional attendance and focus challenges simply because of the various traumas in their lives (pages 7 and 15 of Attachment 2), including unstable school and placement environments, scheduled court appearances, trouble getting to school, health and mental health issues, and so on, which often lead to upheaval, lack of engagement, and poor education outcomes. Foster youth are twice as likely to be chronically absent as other students, and four times more likely to be suspended from school (suspension rates for African-American foster students are even higher). About one-third of all youth in foster care attend two or more schools in a single academic year. Placement instability and switching schools can lead to less-than-optimal results (low graduation rates, homelessness later in life, etc.), while nurturing school connections can prepare foster students for graduation and a career pathway or college, or whatever is right for them.

“When kids move so often,” Schoonmaker explained, “they get less and less connected to where they are. They can’t get invested in the teacher, the other kids, the work. It’s like, ‘Why bother? I’m just gonna get moved.’ Elementary students in third grade or fifth grade maybe can’t read at grade level, and they act out in the classroom. Some older students get so far behind in their credits that they just give up. The idea of minimizing placement moves and keeping kids in their schools of origin is *so* important both to students’ academic growth and to their social/emotional connections.”

To support its 80 school districts and 372 charter schools and build their capacity, LACOE’s Foster Youth Services (FYS) division each month convenes five Regional Learning Networks, or RLNs (pages 17 to 21 of Attachment 2), inviting that region’s school districts plus staff from other entities—the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Probation, community colleges, universities, community-based organizations, and so on—as appropriate, to identify the challenges foster youth face and develop strategies to support them.

FYS’s tiered support for child welfare and attendance includes trainings, workshops, and other offerings to *support student attendance* (page 22 of Attachment 2) and to *improve school climate* (page 23). **Attachments 3 and 4** lay out ‘five steps’ schools and districts can take toward these two goals.

The overarching goals of FYS (page 24), best practices to address chronic absenteeism (page 26) and best practices specific to students in care (page 27), lessons learned (page 29), and considerations for local support (page 30) also appear in Attachment 2.

“LACOE received funds a year or so back to support young people in Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs [STRTPs],” Jenkins said. “We now have a team of seven staff members who make weekly visits to youth in those settings, building rapport, funding weekend excursions, and making sure supports are wrapped around them and that they have someone to connect with.”

“Most of the best practices to address chronic absenteeism are not specific to foster youth,” Schoonmaker said. “School campuses need to be a safe place for *all* young people where they can connect and re-engage with others, particularly after the pandemic craziness. Maybe the student comes early and the school employee they interact with the most is the bus driver, a crossing guard, or part of the cleaning staff. The concern for all individuals should soak in to *everyone* on campus.”

Jenkins encouraged individual school districts to contact the child welfare and attendance specialists and Foster Youth Services staff in their regions (pages 32 and 33 of Attachment 2) for assistance.

In the discussion following the presentation, the following comments and questions were raised:

- Do schools keep track of *why* a student is out?
- The school lives of young people in foster care are full of absences, most beyond their individual control—court appearances, mandated medical appointments, placement moves (all ‘excused’ if the school is properly notified).
- They may also attend schools with high suspension rates (‘unexcused’), which can also affect attendance, as can widely varying school and district isolation/quarantine policies around COVID and other infectious diseases.
- Legislation would be required to mandate more specific coding than ‘excused,’ ‘unexcused,’ and ‘suspension,’ but legislation change is a challenging prospect.
- Court appearances are generally calendared well ahead of time, Jessica Petrass noted, as are most medical appointments. Children’s social workers know when family visitations are scheduled and should be booking them outside of children’s school hours in any case, absent extraordinary circumstances. Child removals can happen without much warning, but DCFS staff are certainly aware of when they are taking place.

Ideally, individuals with information about these and similar events would notify the child’s school, but that communication is currently done on a catch-as-catch-can basis, sometimes days after the fact, and can involve multiple phone calls or the search for a fax machine.

Jennie Feria from DCFS stated—and many meeting attendees agreed—that what is needed is a standardized electronic platform through which parents/caregivers can easily communicate with social workers and schools, report the circumstances behind any ‘excused’ absences to allow children to make up missed schoolwork and receive appropriate credit (something *not* possible with ‘unexcused’ absences), and stay in contact with other adults in their children’s lives.

- Wendy Garen would like to see age-group data on so-called ‘truancy’—reports with ‘excused’ and ‘suspension’ absences taken out of the mix, leaving only days when students simply don’t come to school. Can efforts toward improving school climate and student engagement lower truancy numbers?

Chronic Absenteeism | School Stability | Transportation Policy in Los Angeles County: Study Update.

Lucrecia Santibañez from the UCLA Center for the Transformation of Schools reviewed **Attachment 5**, an update on the Center’s study seeking to:

- Better understand the predictors of school instability and chronic absenteeism among foster youth
- Examine how the County’s school-of-origin transportation initiative has affected stability and absenteeism
- Provide policy and practice recommendations based on lessons learned from its implementation

Because of privacy issues around accessing student-level quantitative data, research approval is pending in several areas, but the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) has already shared its [CORE](#) data, and similar data from the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) has been requested. “If your district is interested in sharing its data with us,” Santibañez told school representatives, “there’s still time.” Qualitative data on school-of-origin transportation is being sought via interviews with foster youth, caregivers, social workers, and others.

Preliminary findings indicate that:

- School instability for foster students in Los Angeles County (in other words, the percentage of foster youth switching schools during the academic year) declined from 42% in 2017–2018 to 35.6% in 2021–2022, but still remains high.

- Changing schools mid-year appears to be more disruptive for foster students in terms of test scores and attendance than are ‘non-structural’ summer moves.
- Transportation initiatives are very important to mitigate the impact of foster students’ mid-year moves.
- Some differences in mobility exist (page 10 of Attachment 5): nearly half of American Indian foster students changed schools in 2021–2022, compared to 41% of African-American, 34% of Latinx, 36% of White, and 27% of Asian foster students. Non-foster subgroups remain close to the overall average of 36% non-stability—students with disabilities (SWDs) matched that average and English-language learners were at 34% non-stability.
- Rates of mid-year and summer moves can also vary by ethnicity (page 11), and students with disabilities have lower mid-year mobility than other students. “Also,” Santibañez added, “when foster students start a school year, a distance between school and home of more than four miles is strongly related to higher mid-year mobility.”

So far, qualitative interviews for the study have been held with foster-youth liaisons and top-level school-district staff, but no students (although those are planned). “What we’ve learned,” Santibañez said, “is that school and district staff are often not part of foster youths’ best-interest-determination [BID] meetings, where a team decides if it is in the best interest of the student to remain at the current school—their ‘school of origin’—despite an upcoming placement change.” District absence during that discussion can affect later negotiations about who pays for and coordinates transportation from the new placement to the current school and back each day.

“Overall,” Santibañez finished, “the transportation initiative seems to be perceived as useful, and certainly filling a gap in services, but costly.” Next steps for the study are outlined on page 14 of Attachment 5.

In the discussion following this presentation:

- Robbie Odom suggested looking at foster-youth living circumstances, such as whether they reside in an apartment or a single-family dwelling. The data being used doesn’t include ZIP Codes, Santibañez explained, but she may be able to match census data to get a sense of available options. “Housing instability is also important,” she acknowledged.
- Jamie Estrada asked how sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (SOGIE) was being pulled into this conversation, a topic that Santibañez said was being addressed in interviews. “LGBTQ+ kids and gender-diverse kids have higher instances of drug use, mental health issues, suicides, and attempted suicides,” Estrada said. “What supports and services exist on the school side that can add to what DCFS is doing? I ask particularly in light of the Chino Valley Unified School District vote to require school officials to notify parents if their children identify as transgender. That could have far-reaching effects, even here in L.A. County.”
 - **Action Item** La Shona Jenkins will make sure this issue is included in the training LACOE provides to districts, and she will also invite Estrada to the Regional Learning Networks’ quarterly meetings to share the resources DCFS offers to foster students and make sure they appear in LACOE’s newsletter.
- Another population to be considered, Santibañez said, is pregnant and parenting foster youth, so many of whom fail to return to school for reasons that almost always include a lack of child care. HopSkipDrive (the service contracted in Los Angeles County to provide individual transportation to and from schools) is taking one young woman a considerable distance to a rare school that does offer child care. “But that was extremely hard to arrange and not accessible to everyone,” Luciana Svidler added.
- Attendance data for youth overseen by the Probation Department may not be tracked by the state Department of Education, but that is still a population for which the ECC advocates.

- **Action Item** Lundqvist will connect with Probation and LACOE about tracking attendance data for Probation youth.

General Discussion. Judge Michael Nash began. “Obviously, the data that we’ve just heard is pretty ugly. It won’t be easy to fix and the fix won’t happen overnight,” he said. “A lot of good stuff is going on, but my question is *What is the Education Coordinating Council, as a group, going to do within this sphere?* The ECC was created nearly 20 years ago to focus on enhancing the education and achievement of system-involved children and youth. It takes the whole village, of course, but we’ve got pretty much the whole village in this room. What is the role of each member of our village? What’s being done within the framework of those different roles, and what are the barriers to doing more? How should these different members and roles interact, communicate, and collaborate with each other? What are the barriers there? What data do we need to be looking at on a regular basis? How can we measure this group’s impact on that data? We need to put everything together in a big package that will really benefit our kids.”

- Chair Ortiz Franklin sits on the Board of Directors of the California School Board Association, which often works on legislation. “I would love to hear from all of you,” she told meeting attendees, “about what you think could help in that arena. We’ve been working with Senator Rubio on a mandatory-kindergarten bill, for instance. It’s wonderful that the state has been expanding transitional kindergarten to all four-year-olds, but California doesn’t yet require its *five-year-olds* to be in school! And since half our DCFS foster kids are zero to five, cultivating school stability from an earlier age might be something this group would want to sign on to.

“We’re also working with Senator Portantino to get school districts funded according to enrollment instead of Average Daily Attendance, or ADA [the total number of days of student attendance divided by the total number of days taught],” Ortiz Franklin continued. “ADA-based funding definitely does a disservice to schools that experience more chronic absenteeism. We know how helpful enrollment-based funding could be for schools serving at-risk populations, but we’re still getting pushback.”

(As a body created by the Board of Supervisors, the ECC needs the Supervisors to take a formal ‘for’ or ‘against’ position on any legislation before it could follow suit.)

- **Action Item** Lundqvist will consult with staff in the Chief Executive Office’s Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations unit (CEO LAIR) for information on how the ECC can share bills of interest and provide recommendations on bills to CEO LAIR and the Board of Supervisors.
- **Action Item** David Carroll, director of the Department of Youth Development, would like to connect his department’s Youth Development Networks (currently being launched) with LACOE’s Regional Learning Networks.
- Because the school year has recently started, Luciana Svidler mentioned that requests are again being received for electronic devices and internet connectivity at student homes. LAUSD families may contact this link—[LAUSD Device Connectivity](#)—to ask for assistance by completing the Parent Acknowledgement and Device/Connectivity Request Form.
- The previous discussion on chronic absenteeism, several attendees commented, was not really about excused vs. unexcused absences, but about children and youth in foster care getting an education without being penalized. “We’re punishing youth for being in this system through no fault of their own,” said Melissa Schoonmaker.

How do they make up the learning missed because of their presence being required elsewhere? How can that not seem burdensome to them? And how can other arms of ‘the system’—the courts, health and mental health care providers, social workers, and so on—adjust *their* routines to accommodate court appearances, medical appointments, and other case-related events outside of school hours? Can the courts open late-afternoon or evening/weekend slots for certain hearings, for example? Since adults control all these things, as one meeting attendee put it, can we flip it around?

- **Action Item** Lundqvist wants a small group to meet more regularly about the chronic absenteeism topic; those interested in participating were asked to [contact her](#).
- **Action Item** Lundqvist will also work on distributing a survey to all ECC members to gather information on the roles/responsibilities of each member of the Council when it comes to addressing chronic absenteeism for youth in foster care. This will support the development of strategies to address this issue at a systemic level.

FAFSA Challenge Board of Supervisors Scroll Presentation

Nick Holden, Legislative Deputy for the Fourth Supervisorial District, presented scrolls from the Board of Supervisors to the teams behind the very successful recent push for students to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®), increasing countywide financial-aid application rates for high-school seniors in the foster-care system from 33% in the 2017–2018 school year to 71% in the 2022–2023 school year.

Representatives came forward from John Burton Advocates for Youth, the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Los Angeles County of Education’s Foster Youth Services section, the Department of Children and Family Services’ Independent Living Program, and the Probation Department, receiving their scrolls to much applause.

Issues from the Field

Expanded Financial Aid for Youth in Foster Care. Jessica Petrass from John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY) presented **Attachment 6**, a fact sheet on Increased Financial Aid for Foster Youth taking effect this fall, including the Student Success Completion Grant (available to enrollees at a California Community College) and the Middle Class Scholarship (available to enrollees at a state-sponsored university or a community-college bachelor’s program).

“Both these programs were expanded in the state’s 2023–2024 budget bill—and in SB 117, the higher-education budget trailer bill—for students who have spent at least one day in foster care on or after their 13th birthday,” Petrass said. “Neither program, by the way, has an age cap for eligibility.”

- The Student Success Completion Grant—\$5,250 per semester, or the quarterly equivalent—is available to California-resident current and former foster youth if they are enrolled in 12 or more units at a California Community College.²

“Because the colleges themselves identify students eligible for this grant, no additional application is necessary,” Petrass added. “But the identification process is not automated, and JBAY is working with colleges to make sure students don’t slip through the cracks because of data errors, etc. However, if any of you work with these students, please urge them to proactively reach out to their colleges if they are eligible for this grant, to make sure they receive it.”

Joshua Elizondo additionally suggested that colleges review rosters of their [Guardian Scholar](#) and [Next Step](#) program participants, along with Chaffee Grant, Cal Grant B, and Cal Grant Access Award for Foster Youth recipients, to identify eligible students.

- The Middle Class Scholarship (MCS) is state financial aid for low- to middle-income undergraduate students enrolled at least part-time at a University of California campus, a California State University campus, or in a bachelor’s program at a California Community College. Applicants must submit a FAFSA or California Dream Act Application (CADAA) by a certain date, and be both a California resident and a U.S. citizen/permanent resident, or meet the requirements for a non-resident tuition exemption.³

² See Attachment 6 for details on additional requirements.

³ See Attachment 6 for details on additional requirements.

With the MCS, individual awards are based on the Cost of Attendance (COA) that each university sets for itself, offset by whatever other financial aid a student has secured, plus a ‘self-help’ contribution of nearly \$8,000. Originally, the MCS provided only 24% of any remaining unmet need, but SB 117 raised that figure to 100% for current and former foster youth (the ‘self-help’ contribution is still required).

Remarks following this presentation included:

- These programs still leave foster youth attending or wishing to attend private universities with no way to access these funds. “If the state is claiming that foster students are part of its responsibility,” Elizondo asked, “shouldn’t this effort include help at private institutions?”
- Some private colleges/universities do have Guardian Scholar or similar programs to support foster youth, Robbie Odom mentioned, although schools may call them something else.
- Depending on location, housing costs can may not be factored realistically into a given college’s Cost of Attendance. At some private institutions—USC, for example—nonprofit foundations or individuals subsidize some individual student housing, but finding the right contact person to arrange that can be difficult.

“Believe me,” Petrass said, “I don’t disagree with anything you’ve said. We’re chipping away with the Legislature on these topics. In future years, we definitely want to address the Cost of Attendance issue, because it does not actually reflect the actual costs for most college attendance in California. Thank you all for your comments.”

Action Items from the May 2023 ECC Meeting

- Lundqvist briefly described the work on shaping the new ECC strategic plan that has been going on since May, thanking all those around the table and in the audience who have given their time. “We want to return our attention to that topic at our November meeting,” she said, “and hope to have a draft outline of the plan for everyone to look at then.”
- With regard to SB 89, the 2017 California Foster Youth Sexual Education Act—which mandates comprehensive sexual health education for youth in foster care, as well as new training requirements for caregivers, social workers, and judges—Lundqvist reported working on the effort with Jennie Feria of DCFS, Luciana Svidler from Children’s Law Center, LACOE’s La Shona Jenkins and her team, and many school districts; a meeting is being scheduled to ensure that Los Angeles County’s youth in foster care receive this required sexual health education.

Public Comment

- SB 88 (Skinner, D-Berkeley), briefly discussed at the ECC’s May meeting, is draft legislation that would compel drivers for private ride-sharing companies—Los Angeles County’s contractor, HopSkipDrive, for instance, which transports foster, homeless, and some special-education students for school districts—to meet the same safety regulations required of school bus drivers, including passing biannual medical exams, learning first aid, passing a tuberculosis test, and a host of other requirements, as well as keeping daily vehicle maintenance logs and checking brakes, fluid levels, and lights every morning.

Should the bill pass, Paul Freese said, it will be critical for the ECC to monitor its impact, particularly on disabled foster youth who are struggling to get to their schools of origin. “We need to keep hard data on this,” he concluded. “We want as many tools as possible to transport these kids and facilitate school stability.”

- Freese serves as an Educational Rights Holder for young people housed in Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs), where he has observed that, “a lot of them are just checked out, angry at life and at how they’ve been treated. They are not interested in school for a variety of

reasons. However, a lot of them *are* interested in vocational opportunities. Has the ECC ever delved into exploring alternative paths for youth in this situation?”

- Another bill, SB 407, would require more intensive training for resource parents/families on sensitivity to LGBTQ+ issues and individuals. One concern that faith communities are raising, Freese said, is that this approach would reduce the pool of people willing to open their homes to youth. “I would love to see an Educational Rights Holder ‘division’ focused on LGBTQ+ youth, serving as advocates for them,” Freese went on. “These could be paid positions for LGBTQ+ individuals who have transitioned out of foster care or the juvenile-justice system who have a unique expertise in engaging LGBTQ+ youth, and give them some potential career tracks.”

Next Meeting

The Education Coordinating Council’s next meeting is scheduled for:

Wednesday, November 8, 2023 | 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.
Physical location and remote connection to be determined

Adjournment

There being no further public comment, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

LA County Foster Youth Education Data

CDE Dataquest Summaries

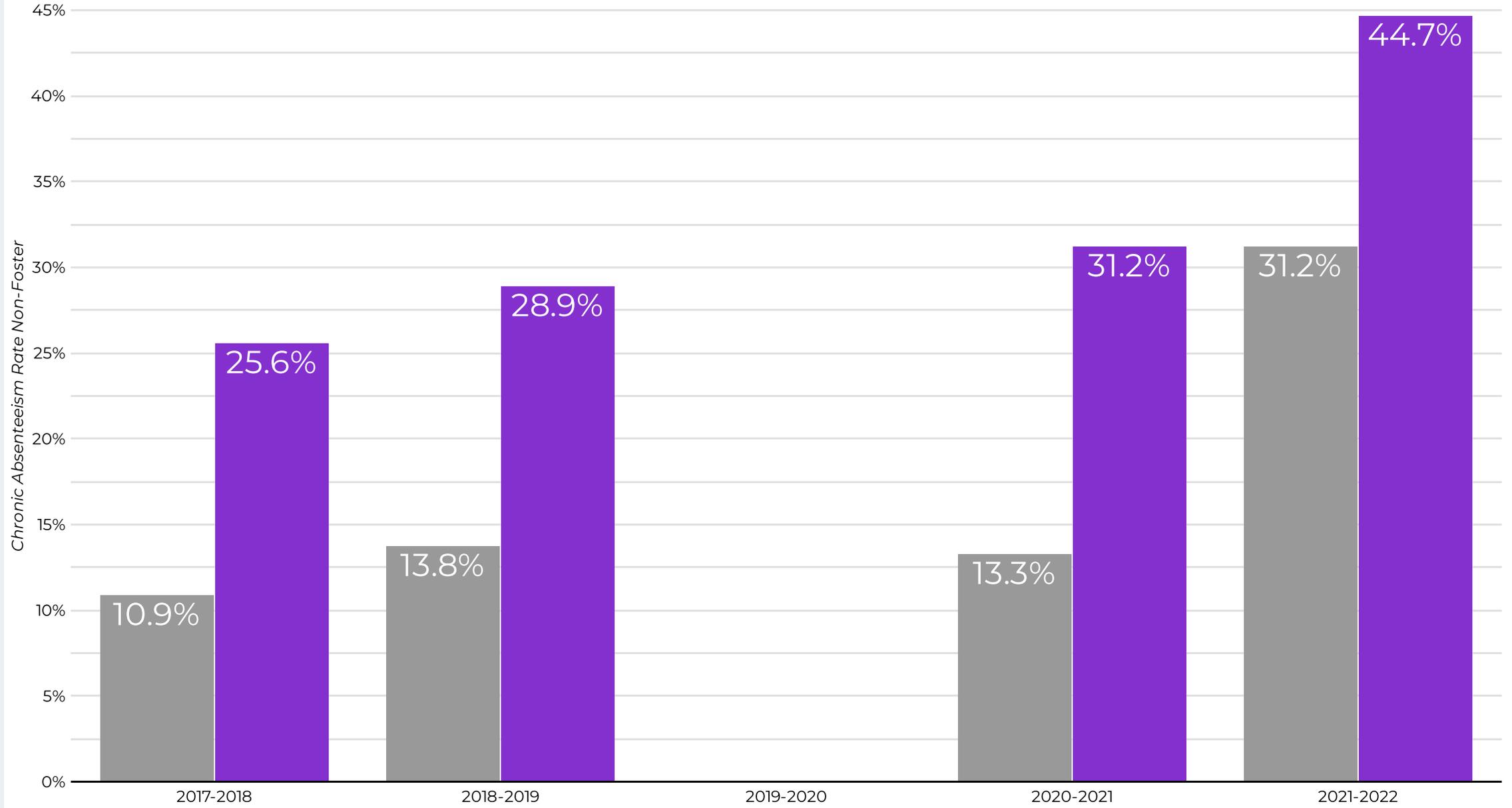
Data in these slides are from the CDE Dataquest website and can be accessed via: <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

This slide deck can be accessed online at:
<https://lookerstudio.google.com/reporting/9829c8e4-f59a-4301-8a6f-d806f322e3df>

LA County Chronic Absenteeism Rates By Year

Academic Year ▾

Chronic Absenteeism Rate Non-Foster Chronic Absenteeism Rate Youth in Foster Care



*Note data not reported in 2019-2020 due to COVID

LA County Chronic Absenteeism Rates By District For 2021-2022 Academic Year

School District ▼

School District	# of Foster Youth Chronically Absent	Chronic Absenteeism Rate Foster	Chronic Absenteeism Rate All
ABC Unified	45	38.5%	20.7%
Acton-Agua Dulce Unified	13	65%	46.5%
Alhambra Unified	25	37.3%	15.6%
Antelope Valley Union High	270	44.3%	33.7%
Arcadia Unified	3	20%	6.7%
Azusa Unified	38	38.4%	36.8%
Baldwin Park Unified	44	35.2%	36.5%
Bassett Unified	10	40%	31.4%
Bellflower Unified	53	36.1%	29%
Beverly Hills Unified	null	null	17.4%
Bonita Unified	50	49.5%	24.5%
Burbank Unified	23	50%	21.1%
Castaic Union	5	27.8%	37.7%
Centinela Valley Union High	13	40.6%	34.6%
Charter Oak Unified	17	36.2%	25.2%
Claremont Unified	17	44.7%	26.2%
Compton Unified	114	30.2%	32.9%
Covina-Valley Unified	53	41.7%	23.8%
Culver City Unified	5	45.5%	19.3%
Downey Unified	73	38.2%	36.2%
Duarte Unified	15	44.1%	31.9%
East Whittier City Elementary	24	32.9%	26.6%
Eastside Union Elementary	68	36%	41.2%
El Monte City	27	32.9%	18.5%
El Monte Union High	22	54.7%	37.1%

LA County Chronic Absenteeism Rates By District For 2021-2022 Academic Year

School District ▼

School District ▲	# of Foster Youth Chronically Absent	Chronic Absenteeism Rate Foster	Chronic Absenteeism Rate All
El Monte Union High	30	51.7%	27.1%
El Rancho Unified	29	27.9%	35.3%
El Segundo Unified	null	null	11.1%
Garvey Elementary	6	37.5%	21.7%
Glendale Unified	31	44.3%	19.1%
Glendora Unified	17	40.5%	18.8%
Gorman Joint	null	null	38.2%
Hacienda la Puente Unified	69	37.3%	33%
Hawthorne	29	46%	38%
Hermosa Beach City Elementary	null	null	9.4%
Hughes-Elizabeth Lakes Union Elementary	null	null	27%
Inglewood Unified	35	35.7%	43.8%
Keppel Union Elementary	27	47.4%	53.7%
La Canada Unified	null	null	7.2%
Lancaster Elementary	279	41.2%	48.3%
Las Virgenes Unified	6	33.3%	18.4%
Lawndale Elementary	7	29.2%	29.9%
Lennox	9	33.3%	32.3%
Little Lake City Elementary	12	30%	30.8%
Long Beach Unified	373	48.3%	37.2%
Los Angeles County Office of Education	75	28.6%	26.8%
Los Angeles Unified	2,242	48.6%	40.3%
Los Nietos	3	21.4%	31.8%
Lynwood Unified	56	37.1%	37.1%
Manhattan Beach Unified	null	null	

LA County Chronic Absenteeism Rates By District For 2021-2022 Academic Year

School District ▼

School District ▲	# of Foster Youth Chronically Absent	Chronic Absenteeism Rate Foster	Chronic Absenteeism Rate All
Manhattan Beach Unified	null	null	9.5%
Monrovia Unified	14	48.3%	29.2%
Montebello Unified	80	36.5%	26.3%
Mountain View Elementary	33	47.8%	40.8%
Newhall	12	36.4%	14.1%
Norwalk-La Mirada Unified	66	32.7%	28.3%
Palmdale Elementary	167	26%	27.2%
Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified	1	8.3%	11.7%
Paramount Unified	46	40.4%	42.4%
Pasadena Unified	193	66.1%	34.9%
Pomona Unified	157	51.5%	39.9%
Redondo Beach Unified	3	27.3%	14.9%
Rosemead Elementary	null	null	11.1%
Rowland Unified	57	48.7%	25.6%
San Gabriel Unified	8	36.4%	17.8%
San Marino Unified	null	null	3.4%
Santa Monica-Malibu Unified	11	33.3%	23.5%
Saugus Union	9	22%	12.8%
South Pasadena Unified	null	null	7.1%
South Whittier Elementary	12	44.4%	33.3%
Sulphur Springs Union	18	40.9%	21.8%
Temple City Unified	10	34.5%	11.9%
Torrance Unified	30	42.9%	13%
Valle Lindo Elementary	4	28.6%	35.4%
Walnut Valley Unified	13	26%	8.9%

LA County Chronic Absenteeism Rates By District For 2021-2022 Academic Year

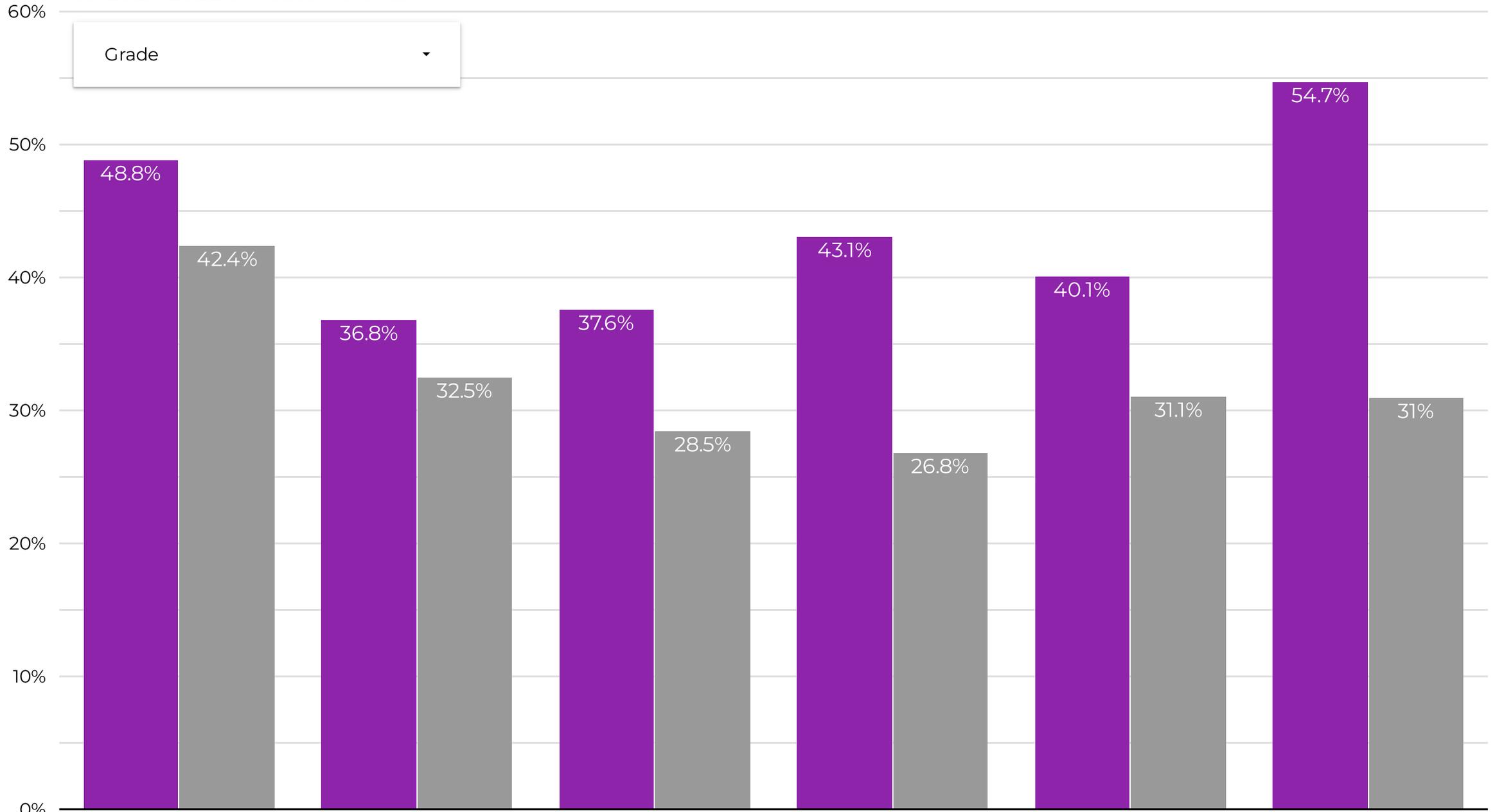
School District

School District	# of Foster Youth Chronically Absent	Chronic Absenteeism Rate Foster	Chronic Absenteeism Rate All
Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified	1	8.3%	11.7%
Paramount Unified	46	40.4%	42.4%
Pasadena Unified	193	66.1%	34.9%
Pomona Unified	157	51.5%	39.9%
Redondo Beach Unified	3	27.3%	14.9%
Rosemead Elementary	null	null	11.1%
Rowland Unified	57	48.7%	25.6%
San Gabriel Unified	8	36.4%	17.8%
San Marino Unified	null	null	3.4%
Santa Monica-Malibu Unified	11	33.3%	23.5%
Saugus Union	9	22%	12.8%
South Pasadena Unified	null	null	7.1%
South Whittier Elementary	12	44.4%	33.3%
Sulphur Springs Union	18	40.9%	21.8%
Temple City Unified	10	34.5%	11.9%
Torrance Unified	30	42.9%	13%
Valle Lindo Elementary	4	28.6%	35.4%
Walnut Valley Unified	13	26%	8.9%
West Covina Unified	40	35.7%	20.8%
Westside Union Elementary	71	31.4%	34.4%
Whittier City Elementary	15	23.8%	37.1%
Whittier Union High	44	40.7%	26.6%
William S. Hart Union High	36	39.1%	16.3%
Wilsona Elementary	9	22.5%	44.4%
Wiseburn Unified	0	0%	10.9%

LA County Chronic Absenteeism Rates By Grade Level for 2021-2022 Academic Year

Foster Non-Foster

Grade ▾



Grade

LA County Chronic Absenteeism Rates By Race/Ethnicity For 2021-2022 Academic Year

Race/Ethnicity ▾

Race/Ethnicity	CA Count Foster	CA Rate Foster ▾	CA Rate Non-Foster
Not Reported	94	58.4%	32.6%
Two or More Races	163	50%	21.2%
African American	1,461	48.1%	43.1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	25	46.3%	33.9%
Hispanic or Latino	3,835	43.5%	35.4%
White	409	42.7%	21%
Pacific Islander	13	41.9%	40.9%
Asian	45	36.9%	8.5%
Filipino	18	31%	14.2%



EDUCATION COORDINATING COUNCIL

THE IMPACT OF CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM ON YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

August 30, 2023



Los Angeles County Office of Education



Dr. La Shona Jenkins, LCSW, Project Director, FYS
Melissa Schoonmaker, LCSW, Project Director, CWA





AGENDA

- Chronic Absenteeism
- Outcome Data
- Challenges
- LACOE Supports
- Best Practices
- Lessons Learned



CHRONIC ABSENTIEESM

ATTENDANCE MEANS...

- ...the **physical presence** of a child and/or children within regular **school hours** and includes **attending scheduled classes** during scheduled hours.

There are 180 school days per academic year...

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM IS...

Missing **10%** or more of school days due to
absence for **any reason**.

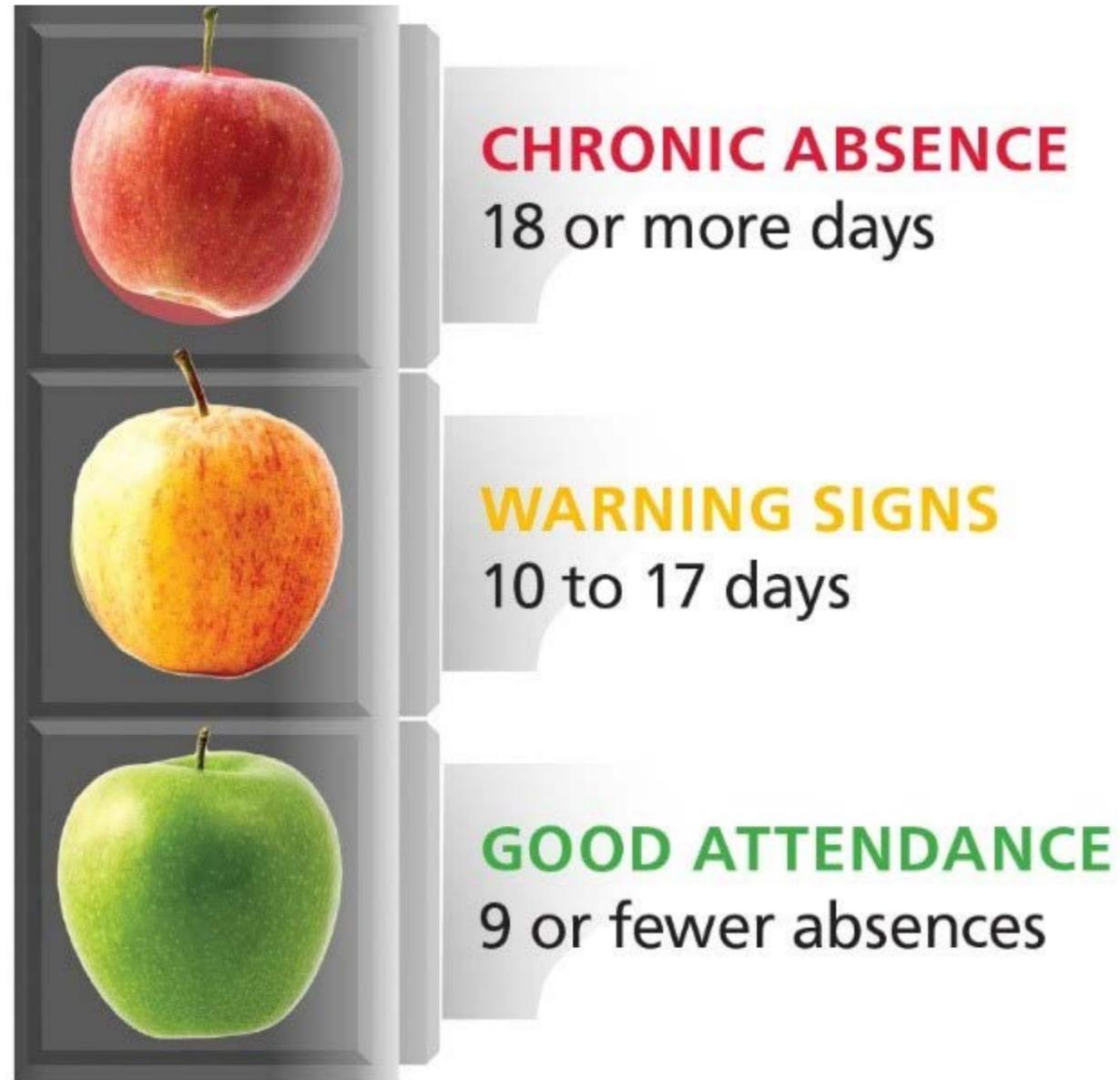
Excused

Unexcused

Suspensions



WHEN DO ABSENCES BECOME A PROBLEM?



Students in foster care face high chronic absenteeism rates, homelessness, low graduation rates and low college attendance rates.

Note: These numbers assume a 180-day school year.



FOSTER YOUTH AND SCHOOL

- **One-third** of all youth in foster care **attend two or more schools** in a single year – compared to **7% of all students** nationwide.
- **Over 92% of all youth** in California are in a “stable” school environment, while the same is true for **less than 72% of all youth in foster care** within the state.
- This contributes to **poor education outcomes** including lower graduation rates, lower academic testing, and higher rates of chronic absenteeism and school discipline.
- In the 2021-22 school year, **65% of youth in foster care** remained in their school of origin, compared with nearly **90% for all students**. Their rate was **lower than all other student groups**, including students experiencing homelessness.

FOSTER YOUTH AND ATTENDANCE

- 2x more likely to be chronically absent as students not placed in care
- Increase in absences among high school students, missing 1 out of every 8 days
- Suspension rate 4x higher than students not in care
- Suspension rates higher for African American students in foster care

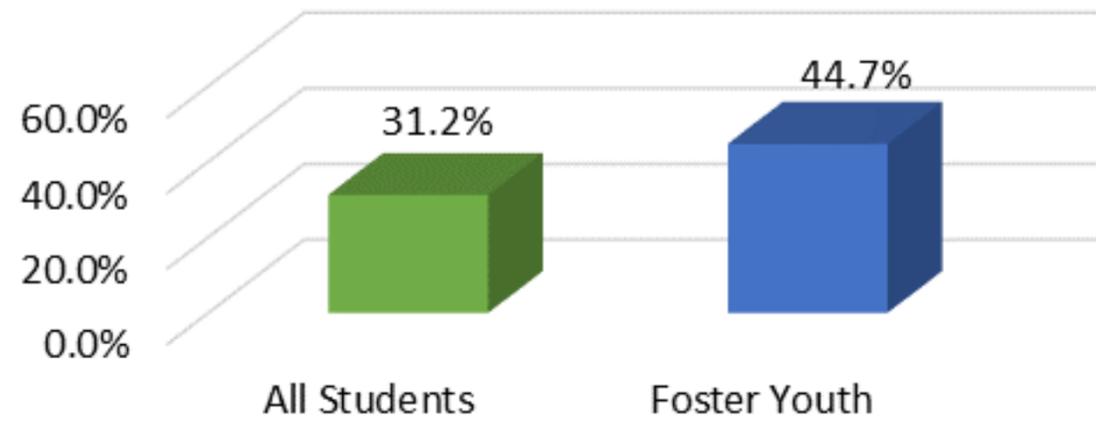


OUTCOME DATA

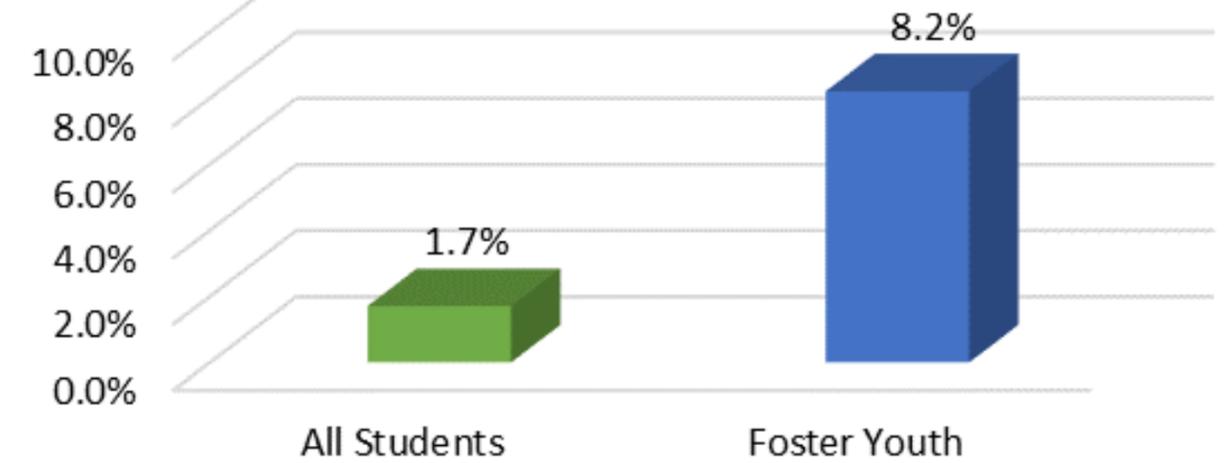


FOSTER YOUTH: LOS ANGELES COUNTY SNAPSHOT

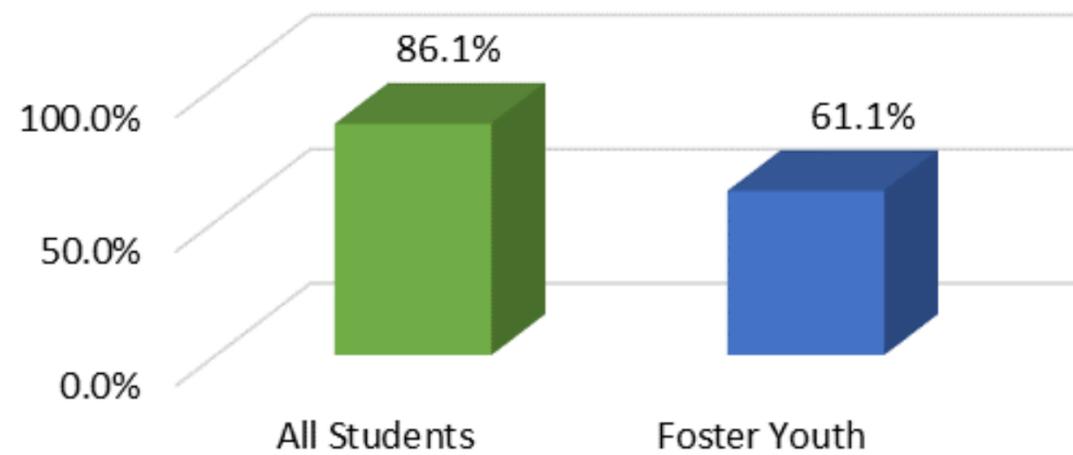
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2021-2022



Suspension Rate 2021-2022

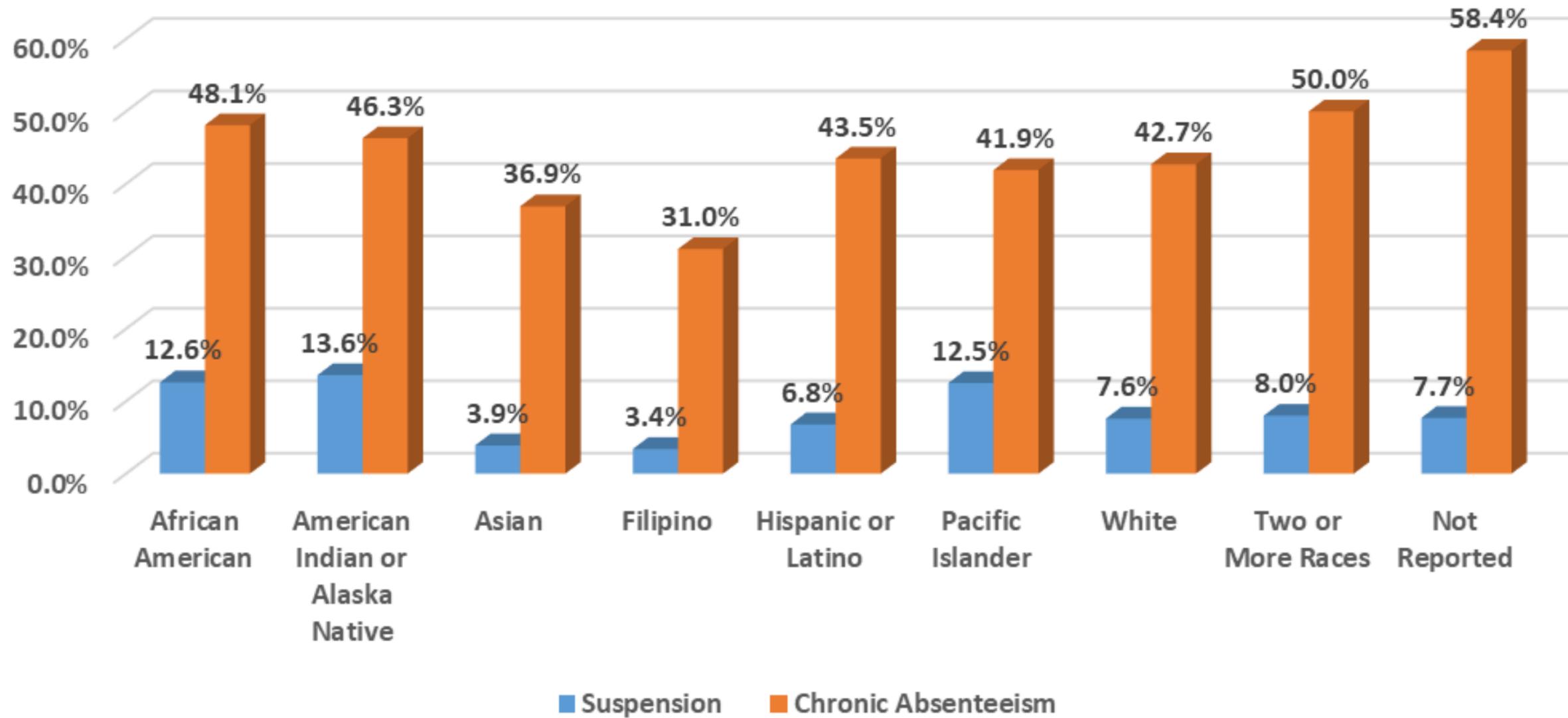


Cohort Graduation Rate 2021-2022



FOSTER YOUTH: LA COUNTY SNAPSHOT

2021-2022 Foster Youth: Suspension & Chronic Absenteeism by Ethnicity





FOSTER YOUTH: CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM PRE AND POST PANDEMIC

18-19	Name	Enrollment	One+ Abs	Avg # Days Abs	Excused Abs	Unexcused Abs	Out-of-School Susp	Inc Ind Study Abs	Chronic Absenteeism Count	Chronic Absenteeism Rate
	California	6,258,845	5,521,652	9.8	54.1%	39.5%	1.2%	5.2%	755,950	12.1%
	Los Angeles	1,490,852	1,339,282	10.5	49.2%	46.9%	0.5%	3.4%	205,928	13.8%
	Foster Youth	14,737	14,176	14.5	35.1%	56.1%	2.7%	6.2%	4,265	28.9%

19-20	Name	Enrollment	One+ Abs	Avg # Days Abs	Excused Abs	Unexcused Abs	Out-of-School Susp	Inc Ind Study Abs	Chronic Absenteeism Count	Chronic Absenteeism Rate
	California	No data collected by CDE due to pandemic								
	Los Angeles									
	Foster Youth									



FOSTER YOUTH: CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM PRE AND POST PANDEMIC

20-21	Name	Enrollment	One+ Abs	Avg # Days Abs	Excused Abs	Unexcused Abs	Out-of-School Susp	Inc Ind Study Abs	Chronic Absenteeism Count	Chronic Absenteeism Rate
	California	6,072,413	4,234,221	13.3	19.3%	72.3%	0.0%	8.4%	866,842	14.3%
	Los Angeles	1,404,045	918,002	13.5	11.7%	79.4%	0.0%	8.9%	186,665	13.3%
	Foster Youth	13,229	11,152	20.8	10.1%	77.5%	0.0%	12.4%	4,133	31.2%

21-22	Name	Enrollment	One+ Abs	Avg # Days Abs	Excused Abs	Unexcused Abs	Out-of-School Susp	Inc Ind Study Abs	Chronic Absenteeism Count	Chronic Absenteeism Rate
	California	5,995,399	5,544,045	16.7	51.3%	38.4%	0.7%	9.7%	1,799,734	30.0%
	Los Angeles	1,365,307	1,277,590	17.0	42.2%	45.7%	0.3%	11.8%	426,445	31.2%
	Foster Youth	13,566	13,076	21.6	32.6%	50.0%	1.4%	16.0%	6,063	44.7%



CHALLENGES

CHALLENGES YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE FACE

Court Appearances	Supervised Visitations	Health
Frequent Placement Changes	Lack of Engagement	Hygiene
Mental Health	Transportation	Multiple School Transfers
Suspensions	Caseworker Visits	Credit Deficient





LACOE SUPPORTS

REGION ONE

FYS Coordinator I:

Kawena Cole

FYS Senior Program Specialist:

Christina Castro

CWA Senior Program Specialist:

Nykesha Geeter, MSW

FYS Program Specialist:

Gina Wright

Acton-Agua Dulce USD	Antelope Valley Union HSD
Castaic Union SD	Eastside Union ESD
Gorman Joint SD	Hughes-Elizabeth Lakes Union SD
Keppel Union ESD	Lancaster ESD
Newhall SD	Palmdale ESD
Saugus Union SD	Sulphur Springs Union SD
Westside Union ESD	Wilsona SD
William S. Hart Union HSD	LACOE Court Schools

REGION TWO

FYS Coordinator I:

Christina Mayeshiro

FYS Senior Program Specialist:

Vacant

CWA Senior Program Specialist:

Dr. Andres Castro

FYS Program Specialist:

Elizabeth Ramos

Stephanie Villegas

Jessica Martinez

Azusa USD	Baldwin Park USD
Bassett USD	Bonita USD
Charter Oak USD	Claremont USD
Covina-Valley USD	Garvey ESD
Glendora USD	Hacienda La Puente USD
Montebello USD	Mountain View ESD
Pomona USD	Rowland USD
Walnut Valley USD	West Covina USD

REGION THREE

Coordinator I:

Allisonne Crawford

Senior Program Specialist:

Miriam Lopez-Torres

CWA Senior Program Specialist:

Toni Banuelos, MSW

FYS Program Specialist:

Evelin Flores Cruz

Vanessa Renteria

Alhambra USD	Arcadia USD
Burbank USD	Duarte USD
El Monte City SD	El Monte Union HSD
Glendale USD	La Canada USD
Monrovia USD	Pasadena USD
Rosemead ESD	San Gabriel USD
San Marino USD	South Pasadena USD
Temple City USD	Valle Lindo ESD

REGION FOUR

Coordinator I:

Jose Smith

Senior Program Specialist:

Tanya Alvarez-Espinosa

CWA Senior Program Specialist:

Kevin Givan, MSW

FYS Program Specialist:

Mari Cruz Sanchez

ABC USD	Bellflower USD
Compton USD	Downey USD
East Whittier ESD	El Rancho USD
Little Lake City ESD	Long Beach USD
Los Nietos SD	Lynwood USD
Norwalk-La Mirada USD	Paramount USD
South Whittier ESD	Whittier City ESD
Whittier Union HSD	

REGION FIVE

FYS Coordinator I:

Krystal Fowler

FYS Senior Program Specialist:

Kesha Wood

CWA Senior Program Specialist:

Dr. Courtney Matz

FYS Program Specialist:

Gina Wright

Mari Cruz Sanchez

Beverly Hills USD	Centinela Valley Union HSD
Culver City USD	El Segundo USD
Hawthorne SD	Hermosa Beach City ESD
Inglewood USD	Las Virgenes USD
Lawndale ESD	Lennox SD
Los Angeles USD	Manhattan Beach USD
Palos Verdes USD	Redondo Beach USD
Santa Monica-Malibu USD	Torrance USD
Wiseburn USD	



Student Support Services
CWA Tiered Support

Offerings to Support Student Attendance			
Trainings		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Custody, Residency and Enrollment, and Student Records • Foundational Principals and Practices: Evidence Based Strategies to Improve Student Attendance • Experiencing Homelessness (Joint CWA Training) • Home Visit Guidance: Safety First 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Mental Health First Aid Training (YMHFA) for Parents • Youth Mental Health First Aid Training (YMHFA) • SARB Overall Attendance and Refresher Courses • PBIS Collaboration: Restorative Practices
Workshops		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic Absenteeism & Supporting Students • CWA Café (Monthly) • Attendance Refresher • Support district with parent workshop- Importance of School Attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Learning Networks (NEW) • Social Media and Outreach • Supervisor of Attendance/SARB Certification • How to Connect with Your Parent Resource Center, PTA, and Parents
Support		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Publications • Notifications • Attendance Recognition • Data Review and Analysis • District or School Attendance Review Team Support • Legislative Guidance / Interpretation • Personalized CWA Workshop Based on Need • Publication Chapter Review w/ Experts • Needs Assessment Support • School Attendance Review Board Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Assistance / Case Consultation • Local SARB Chairpersons Bi-Annual Meeting • Use of Student Information System • Data Dive & Recalibration • Legislative Guidance (Interpretation & Implementation) • On-site/virtual facilitation of site specific training • Technical assistance/case consultation in regard to attendance (intensive) • Policy/Regulation Revision • Student & Parent Surveys

Child Welfare and Attendance
(562) 922-6897
www.lacoe.edu/Student-Services



Student Support Services CWA Tiered Support

Offerings to Support School Climate			
Trainings		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundational Principles and Practices: Supporting Student Attendance • On-site/Virtual facilitation of school district discipline related meetings/trainings (per request) • On-site/Virtual Training (discipline process, OMC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student & Parent School Climate Surveys Support with Parent Workshop- Understanding the Student Discipline Process • Youth Mental Health First Aid Training (YMHFA) • Youth Mental Health First Aid Training (YMHFA) for Parents
Workshops		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CWA Café (Monthly) • Regional Learning Networks (starting 23- 24 SY) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Discipline: Other Means of Correction Suspension and Expulsion Workshop
Support		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Notifications • Collaboration: Restorative Practices Publication Chapter Review w/ Experts • Consultation with Parents - Expulsion Appeal Process • Data Dive & System Recalibration • Data Review and Analysis • Discipline Review Team Support Legislative Guidance / Interpretation Needs Assessment and System • Expulsion Appeal Hearings • Interdistrict Appeal Hearings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative Guidance (Interpretation and Implementation) • Legislative Updates • Policy/Regulation Revision • Publications (Distribution and/or Review) • SSS Area Meeting • Support Technical Assistance / Case Consultation (Districts and Charters) • Technical Assistance/Case Consultation in regard to student discipline and OMC

Child Welfare and Attendance
(562) 922-6897
www.lacoe.edu/Student-Services

Foster Youth Services - Overarching Goals

- **Build Capacity**
 - Quarterly Countywide Meetings
 - Monthly Regional Learning Network Meetings
 - Differentiated Assistance - Quarterly Meetings
 - Technical Assistance Guides
 - Monthly Newsletter
 - Training Topics:
 - Trauma-Informed Practices
 - Human Trafficking
 - Navigating Your Local School District
 - The Impact of Chronic Absenteeism on Youth in Foster Care
- **Promote School Stability**
 - Transportation Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
 - Education Passport System (EPS)
- **Increase Cross Systems Collaboration**
 - Education Passport System (EPS)
- **Support Transition to College and Career**
 - FAFSA/CADAA Challenge Workgroup
 - High School Counselor Foster Youth FAFSA/CADAA Challenge Toolkit
 - Think Tank
- **Increase Graduation Rates**
 - Tutoring





BEST PRACTICES

BEST PRACTICES TO ADDRESS CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

Schools

- Promote prompt identification and continuous attendance monitoring and supports
- Safe, inclusive and engaging school environment
- Wraparound supports
- Basic needs and Mental and Physical Health Challenges
- Relationship building
- Trained FY Liaison
- Utilize tiered systems of support
- Trauma informed and restorative practices
- Social-emotional learning
- Access to EC 51225.1 and post secondary planning

Community Partners

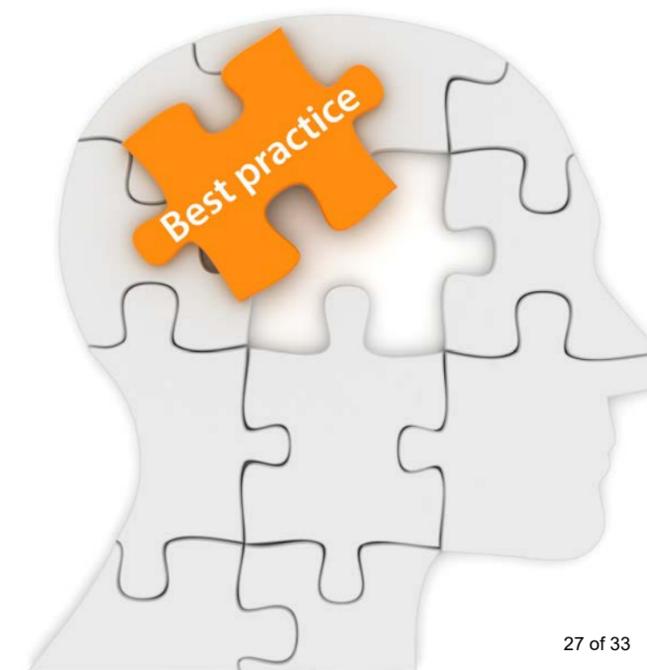
- Cross system collaboration
- Improved data collection and sharing
- Provide families with support, not punishment
- Address capacity issues for stakeholders
- Colocation of staff
- Community schools
- Continued transportation agreements





BEST PRACTICES SPECIFIC TO STUDENTS IN CARE

- Promote prompt identification of students who are involved in the foster care and juvenile justice system.
- Have an introductory meeting when students in care enroll.
- Consider if school-based mental health services are needed. Verify if DCFS or probation has submitted mental health referrals. Refer if appropriate.
- Assess the basic needs of these students and provide resources as appropriate.
- Review records to see if academic support is needed.
- Connect students with extracurricular and enrichment activities.
- Identify staff that can provide ongoing one-on-one support.
 - Have consistent and frequent check-ins
- Ensure staff are equipped with trauma informed and restorative practices.
- Collaboration between school, DCFS/probation, and caregiver.





LESSONS LEARNED



LESSONS LEARNED

- Students' basic needs including safety and well-being must first be considered to engage them in school.
- When students leave without being formally disenrolled, at times they are marked absent.
 - Accurate exit coding at disenrollment is important.
- Every student is unique. Some strategies that work for one student may not work for another.
- Punitive strategies do not increase attendance.
- More collaboration with caregivers is needed.
- If a student is performing below grade level, it can negatively impact their desire to attend school.
- Transportation to and from school can be a barrier.
- Mental health needs can impact a student's ability to attend school.
- We must address the trauma and refusal to attend school.
- We should not wait until a student is chronically absent to intervene. We should start at the first signs of disengagement.



CONSIDERATIONS FOR LOCAL SUPPORT

**Maintain
school of
origin**

**Transportation
agreements**

**School
move
notifications**

**Access to
EC 51225.1**

**Partner
with the
LEA
Liaison**

**Partner with
FYS/CWA
Senior Program
Specialists**

**Placement
move
notifications**



CONTACT INFORMATION

Dr. La Shona Jenkins, LCSW
Project Director III
Foster Youth Services
Jenkins_LaShona@lacoed.edu

Melissa Schoonmaker, LCSW
Project Director III
Child Welfare and Attendance
Schoonmaker_Melissa@lacoed.edu



LACOE SUPPORTS: CHILD WELFARE AND ATTENDANCE (CWA)

Region	Coverage Area	CWA Senior Program Specialist (SPS)	Email
1	Antelope Valley & Santa Clarita	Nykesha Geeter, M.S.W.	geeter_nykesha@laoce.edu
2	East San Gabriel Valley & Pomona	Marie-Helene Demers, L.M.F.T.	demers_marie-helene@laoce.edu
3	Alhambra, Glendale & Pasadena	Toni Banuelos, M.S.W.	banuelos_toni@laoce.edu
4	Compton, Long Beach & Whittier	Kevin Givan, M.S.W.	givan_kevin@laoce.edu
5	LAUSD & South Bay Area (Torrance & Beach Cities)	Courtney Matz, Ph.D.	matz_courtney@laoce.edu
6	Additional Support	Andres Castro, Ed.D.	castro_andres@laoce.edu



LACOE SUPPORTS: FOSTER YOUTH SERVICES

REGION ONE

Coordinator I	Kawena Cole	562-302-3185	cole_kawena@lacoed.edu
Senior Program Specialist	Christina Castro	805-552-6830	castro_christina@lacoed.edu

Acton-Agua Dulce USD - Antelope Valley Union HSD - Castaic Union SD - Eastside Union SD - Gorman Joint SD - Hughes-Elizabeth Lakes Union SD - Keppel Union ESD - Lancaster ESD - Newhall SD - Palmdale ESD - Saugus Union SD - Sulphur Springs Union SD - Westside Union ESD - Wilsona SD - William S. Hart Union HSD - LACOE Court Schools

REGION TWO

Coordinator I	Christina Mayeshiro	626-501-0923	mayeshiro_christina@lacoed.edu
Senior Program Specialist	Vacant		

Azusa USD - Baldwin Park USD - Bassett USD - Bonita USD - Charter Oak USD - Claremont USD - Covina-Valley USD - Garvey ESD - Glendora USD - Hacienda La Puente USD - Montebello USD - Mountain View ESD - Pomona USD - Rowland USD - Walnut Valley USD - West Covina USD

REGION THREE

Coordinator I	Allisonne Crawford	626-765-1626	crawford_allisonne@lacoed.edu
Senior Program Specialist	Miriam Lopez-Torres	818-934-0104	lopez-torres_miriam@lacoed.edu

Alhambra USD - Arcadia USD - Burbank USD - Duarte USD - El Monte City SD - El Monte Union HSD - Glendale USD - La Canada USD - Monrovia USD - Pasadena USD - Rosemead ESD - San Gabriel USD - San Marino USD - South Pasadena USD - Temple City USD - Valle Lindo ESD

REGION FOUR

Coordinator I	Jose Smith	562-922-6930	smith_jose@lacoed.edu
Senior Program Specialist	Tanya Alvarez-Espinoza		alvarez_tanya@lacoed.edu

ABC USD-Bellflower USD-Compton USD-Downey USD-East Whittier ESD-El Rancho USD-Little Lake City ESD-Long Beach USD-Los Nietos SD-Lynwood USD-Norwalk-La Mirada USD-Paramount USD - South WhittierUSD-Paramount USD-South Whittier ESD-Whittier ESD-Whittier Union HSD

REGION FIVE

Coordinator I	Krystal Fowler		fowler_krystal@lacoed.edu
Senior Program Specialist	Kesha Wood	323-744-0234	wood_kesha@lacoed.edu

Beverly Hills USD - Centinela Valley Union HSD - Culver City USD - El Segundo USD - Hawthorne SD - Hermosa Beach City ESD - Inglewood USD - La Virgenes USD - Lawndale ESD - Lennox SD - Los Angeles USD - Manhattan Beach USD - Palos Verdes USD - Redondo Beach USD - Santa Monica-Malibu USD - Torrance USD - Wiseburn USD



5 STEPS TO SUPPORT STUDENT ATTENDANCE

With chronic absenteeism in Los Angeles County at 31%, it is essential to build the capacity of school staff and educational partners to understand what chronic absence is and how to access data to improve student outcomes. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must actively engage in data analysis discussions to formulate effective responses, resources, and interventions. The LACOE Child Welfare and Attendance team is available to support you as you recalibrate systems to reengage students and families.



Assemble an Attendance Review Team

For LEAs, an attendance team inclusive of your Student Support Services staff should meet monthly to review attendance data and determine **root causes of student absenteeism**. Creating a **framework to support student attendance** will guide your practice and implementation efforts. It is important that members of your team have experience with examining data trends, and an understanding of appropriate internal and external resources to respond to barriers impacting attendance.

1



Analyze Attendance Data and Develop a Response

Your attendance review team should examine the prior year's **absenteeism data** and recalibrate **tiered interventions** as needed. Look for trends related to grade level, time of year, school communities, and student sub-groups. Conduct a mid-year review to ramp up Tier II interventions and monitor student progress.

2



Equip School Leaders and Formulate Goals

Build staff capacity by encouraging data dive discussions. On a monthly basis, provide school leaders with actionable data that is accurate, accessible, and understandable. In your LCAP planning sessions, ensure that your **attendance goals, strategies, and campaigns** are commensurate with identified challenges, patterns, and trends evident in your data analysis.

3



Create a Positive and Affirming School Environment

Positively engage educational partners by effectively messaging attendance expectations. Implement compassionate systems when addressing chronic absenteeism by **creating a supportive school climate**. Assess student need while providing access to personalized internal and external resources. **Implement strategies to connect** such as conducting home visitations with counselors, school social workers, and teachers to re-engage your high-barrier students.

4



Engage Parents and the Community as Partners

Communicate with parents and **community partners** to convey attendance expectations for students and solicit feedback on "bright spots" of efforts. Organize an annual initiative to re-engage and recover students. Implement a **"nudge system"** with text messages, phone calls, email, and U.S. mail to send correspondence and ensure parents are aware of their student's attendance progress.

5

Student Support Services
Child Welfare and Attendance



5 STEPS TO IMPROVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

Improving school climate and culture is a continuous process that requires input and support from diverse educational partners and students that make up a school community. It has been proven that students learn best in affirming environments where they feel safe, accepted, and supported. Therefore, educational leaders must implement strategies emphasizing a student's sense of connectedness and promotes student well-being to achieve such goals. Below are five steps that district leaders can access to establish a supportive tone to improve school climate and culture.



Assemble a School Climate and Culture Planning Team

Collaborate with and engage educational partners - such as the schoolboard, staff, students, parents, and community leaders, regarding [elements contributing to an improved school climate](#). Plan what, when, and how new strategies are implemented for maximum impact. [Examine existing domains, plans, and goals](#) to determine what adjustments can bolster efforts to create a safe space for students. Engage educational partners to highlight resources and expected outcomes for the school community.

1



Collect, Review, and Distribute School Climate Data

[Collecting and reviewing school climate data](#) is essential to formulate practices for system improvement. Distributing data and communicating to school teams the importance of accurate data collection via a reliable and actionable school climate survey, focus groups, and/or interviews is critical. [Periodic information from students, staff, and families](#) can yield valuable data to recalibrate strategies to improve school climate. It is important to include youth voice in data collection efforts.

2



Select and Implement School Climate Interventions

Ongoing support from district leadership helps school teams to regularly review data and formulate effective responses to strengthen school communities. Providing schools with adequate resources and professional development builds capacity and ensures interventions are implemented with fidelity. Accountability is elevated when district policy and procedures are interwoven into site-specific, evidence-based strategies (e.g., [MTSS](#), [Calming Spaces](#), [Social-Emotional Learning](#), [Restorative Practices](#), etc.).

3



Implement Other Means of Correction Strategies

Accessing [alternative strategies to address student behavior](#) directly contributes to the improvement of school culture and climate. Restorative practices that allows for self-reflection and relationship repair. Such efforts include practices such as student/parent conferences, peer mediation and mentorship, referrals to internal and external resources, and intervention-related teams to ensure behaviors are being taught and positively reinforced.

4



Support Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation of School Climate Improvements

Monitoring and evaluation provide evidence of how well districts and school sites implement school climate improvements and the impact on students and the school community. Evaluation and monitoring of student progress and intervention effectiveness can inform ongoing work. Participate in planned sessions with school teams to calibrate and align the vision and mission of the district with [methods to improve school climate](#).

5

Student Support Services
Child Welfare and Attendance

Chronic Absenteeism & School Stability & Transportation Policy in LA County: Study Update

Lucrecia Santibañez, Ph.D.

Mayra Cazares-Minero, Ph.D., MSW

Andres Fernandez

Yesi Camacho Torres, MSW

Presentation prepared for the Meeting of the Education Coordinating Council, August 20, 2023

Project Team Members



Lucrecia Santibañez, Ph.D.
Co-Faculty Director, Center for the Transformation of Schools at UCLA;
Associate Professor of Education, UCLA School of Education and Information Studies



Mayra Cazares-Minero, Ph.D., MSW
Research Analyst, Center for the Transformation of Schools at UCLA



Andrés E. Fernández-Vergara
Graduate Student, School of Education & Information Studies, and researcher CTS



Yesi Camacho Torres, MSW
Graduate student, UCLA School of Social Work, and researcher CTS

Study Partners & Funders

- **Office for Child Protection (OCP)**
 - **Barbara Lundqvist, Director, Education Coordinating Council**
- **Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE)**
- **Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)**
- **Funded by the Hilton Foundation**

Purpose of Research

This study will seek to:

1. Better understand the **predictors of school instability and chronic absenteeism** among foster youth
2. Examine **how the county's school of origin transportation initiative affected stability and absenteeism**
3. Provide **policy and practice recommendations** based on lessons learned from its implementation.



Study uses quantitative and qualitative methods and data

Data:

- Student-level CORE data from Long Beach Unified and (hopefully!) LAUSD
- Student-level Transportation-matched data for several districts in the county (from CDE, LACOE, DCFS)
- Qualitative interview data with youth, caregivers, foster liaisons, etc.
- Court-research petition (in progress), research approval from LBUSD, research approval from DCFS (pending), seeking more data and approvals

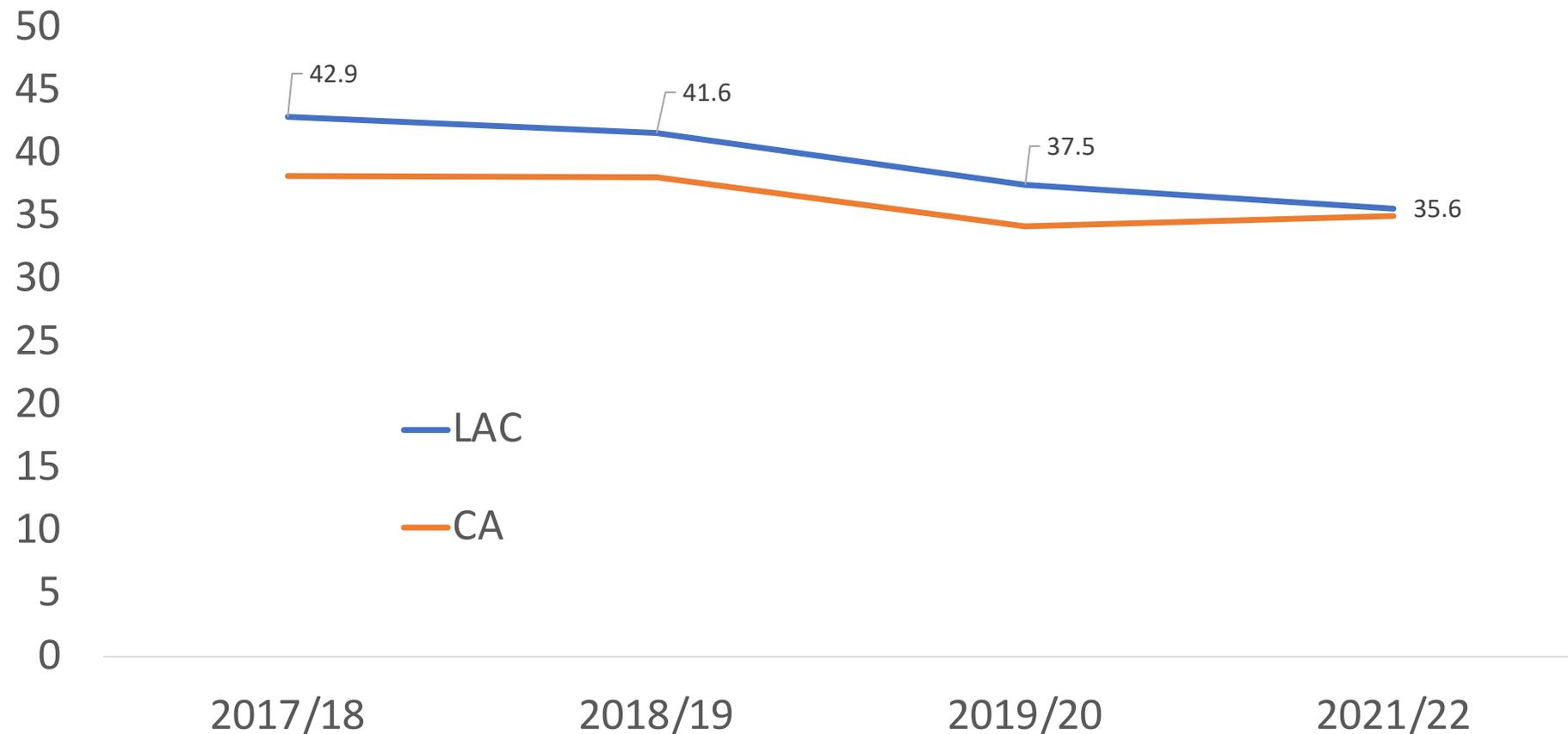
What our study adds to what is already known

- Statistical methods allow us to understand how some factors affect absenteeism/stability holding other things constant
 - We can also isolate types of moves (mid-year, summer non-structural)
- Qualitative interviews lend depth to quantitative analyses and allow us to explore additional hypotheses with data

Initial (preliminary) findings

School Instability Has Declined, But Remains High Around 36%

Non-Stability Rate, Los Angeles County and Statewide

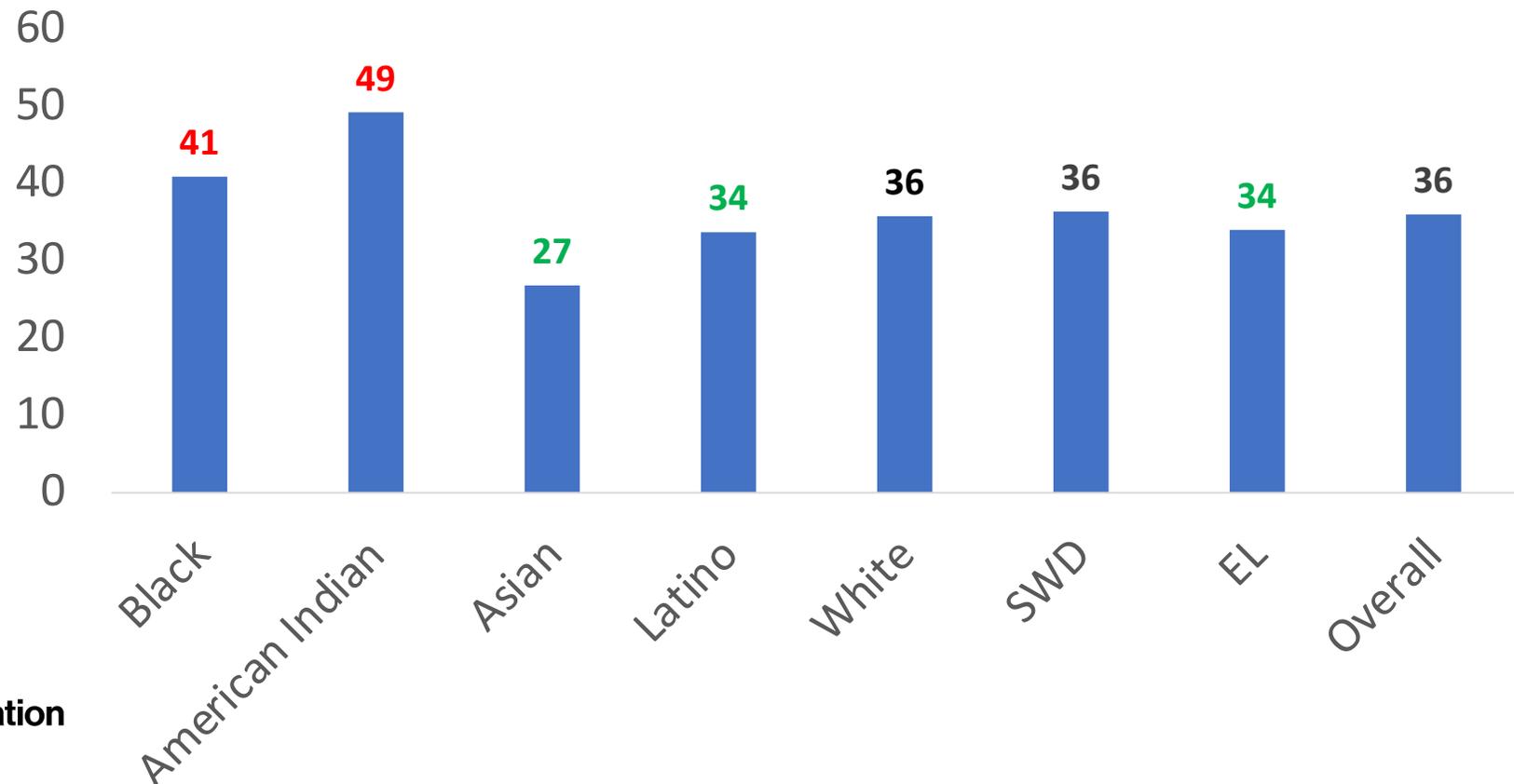


Mid-year moves are more disruptive

- Current (ongoing) work, finds mid-year moves are more disruptive for student outcomes (test scores, attendance) than non-structural summer moves
 - Before the pandemic (one district), 11% of students made a mid-year move and around 27% made a summer non-structural move
 - Now updating with 2021/22 data
 - Transportation initiatives more important to tackle mid-year moves

There are Differences in School Stability by Foster Youth Student Sub/Group

Non-Stability Rate (CDE), 2021/22 by Race/Ethnicity and Programs



Some differences in mobility rates disappear by type of move and when other factors held constant*

- Differences by race/ethnicity vary by type of move
 - Few differences by race/ethnicity in summer moves, but Asian-American FY have lower mid-year mobility rates
 - Black foster youth have higher rates of all types of non-structural mobility (even when we hold suspensions, absences, and other factors constant)
- SWDs have lower mid-year mobility than non-SWDs (no difference for summer)

Some differences disappear by type of move and when other factors held constant* (cont'd)

- Distance home-school (Fall) above 4 miles is strongly related to higher mid-year mobility
- Mid-year mobility highest In 9-11th grade
 - Grade less important for summer mobility

Qualitative Findings we're looking into

- BID meetings do not always involve school/district staff
 - Affects later conversations about who pays/coordinates transportation
- Students marked absent until school of origin receives official request for records --> new enrollment happens
 - Where are students in the meantime?
- Transportation initiative perceived as useful and filling a gap in services, but costly
 - Cost sharing, communication with vendor, understanding of service, are all challenge areas

Next Steps

- Securing additional district data from CORE (ongoing conversations)
- Approval of court research petition (updated petition)
- Approval of DCFS research → to begin interviews with youth/caregivers and social workers
- Securing matched transportation data with LACOE for all available LAC districts
- Conducting interviews, finalizing analyses, writing-up report
- Initial report anticipated December 2023

Thank you!

Contact:

Dr. Lucrecia Santibañez

lsantibanez@ucla.edu

650-704-2652 (texts)

Increased Financial Aid for Foster Youth

The 2023/2024 budget bill included increased funding for financial aid for foster youth across all three public postsecondary systems. Language governing this funding was included in SB 117, the higher education budget trailer bill.

WHICH FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS WERE EXPANDED FOR FOSTER YOUTH?

The Middle Class Scholarship and Student Success Completion Grant financial aid programs were expanded for foster youth.

HOW DOES THE MIDDLE CLASS SCHOLARSHIP (MCS) WORK?

The MCS is a state financial aid program that provides low- to middle-income undergraduate students, including students pursuing a teaching credential, with a scholarship if they are enrolled in a University of California (UC) or California State University (CSU), or enrolled in a bachelor's program at a California Community College. Students are awarded for up to four years depending on their educational level when first awarded (or five years for a teaching credential).

To qualify, students must be enrolled at least part time, submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or California Dream Act Application (CADAA) by March 2nd, be a California resident, and a U.S. Citizen, permanent resident or meet the requirements for a non-resident tuition exemption. Students must also meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards.

Individual award amounts are based on the Cost of Attendance (COA) set by each college. For *independent* students, the MCS provides roughly 24% of the remaining unmet need after accounting for other federal, state, and institutionally administered grants, scholarships, and fee waivers and a "self-help" student contribution of \$7,898.

WHAT CHANGES WERE MADE TO THE MCS FOR FOSTER YOUTH?

SB 117 requires that 100% of the remaining COA is covered for current and former foster youth.

WHAT TYPES OF RESOURCES COUNT TOWARD THE "SELF-HELP" STUDENT CONTRIBUTION?

In addition to resources from work and/or savings, private scholarships and institutionally awarded emergency housing funds or emergency basic needs assistance is counted toward the "self-help" student contribution.

HOW DOES THE STUDENT SUCCESS COMPLETION GRANT WORK?

The Student Success Completion Grant is administered by the California Community Colleges and provides a grant award to students that are enrolled in 12 or more units, receive the Cal Grant B or C and are California residents or meet the requirements for a non-resident tuition exemption. Students must also meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards.

Non-foster students receive \$1,298 per semester, or quarterly equivalent, if enrolled in 12-14 units and \$4,000 per semester, or quarterly equivalent, if enrolled in 15 units.

WHAT CHANGES WERE MADE TO THE STUDENT SUCCESS COMPLETION GRANT FOR FOSTER YOUTH?

SB 117 increased the grant amount for current and former foster youth enrolled in 12 or more units to \$5,250 per semester, or quarterly equivalent.

HOW IS "FOSTER YOUTH" DEFINED ACROSS BOTH OF THESE FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS?

Current and former foster youth is defined as a person whose dependency was established or continued on or after the age of 13.

WHEN DOES THIS FUNDING GO INTO EFFECT?

Funding goes into effect starting in the 2023-24 academic school year.

Language governing this funding was included in SB 117, the higher education budget trailer bill

STUDENT SUCCESS COMPLETION GRANT

- Administered by the California Community Colleges
- Non-foster youth students receive \$1,298 per semester if enrolled in 12–14 units, and \$4,000 per semester if enrolled in 15 units.
- **Foster youth receive an award of \$5,250 per semester if enrolled in 12+ units.**
 - Students must have been in foster care on or after their 13th birthday.
 - Students must also receive the Cal Grant B or C and meet SAP standards to be eligible.
- Funding went into effect this Fall 2023.
- No additional application is required, however, each college must manually identify and award eligible students.

Increased Financial Aid for Foster Youth

Language governing this funding was included in SB 117, the higher education budget trailer bill

MIDDLE CLASS SCHOLARSHIP (MCS)

- Provides low-to middle-income undergraduate students with a scholarship if enrolled in a UC or CSU, or bachelor's program at a community college.
- Individual award amounts are based on each college's Cost of Attendance (COA).
- For *independent* students, the MCS provides roughly 24% of the remaining unmet need after accounting for other federal, state, and institutional aid and a "self-help" student contribution of \$7,898.
- **SB 117 requires that 100% of the remaining unmet need be funded for current and former foster youth (in care on or after the age of 13) after accounting for the self-help contribution and other existing aid.**
- Additional funding will be awarded to students sometime during the Fall 2023 semester. No additional application required.

Learn more at: jbay.org/resources/2023-fact-sheet-financial-aid/