



# Chronic Absence Patterns Across California Schools

A deep-dive study of absenteeism in 30 districts across California



# K-12 Absenteeism in California

As districts worked to address disruptions caused by the COVID pandemic, recovering from patterns of increased absenteeism remained a critical issue, even when in-person learning resumed.

This report analyzes attendance data from nearly 325,000 PK-12 students in 30 districts across California. All saw heightened levels of chronic absenteeism from March 2022 to March 2023.

The California Department of Education (CDE) collects absenteeism information in arrears, so they enlisted SchoolStatus to help spot and address attendance patterns and trends as they occur. In partnership with the CDE, SchoolStatus created the following report to better understand why these trends were rising, which groups seemed to be the most at risk, and how to find solutions to address and tackle chronic absenteeism.

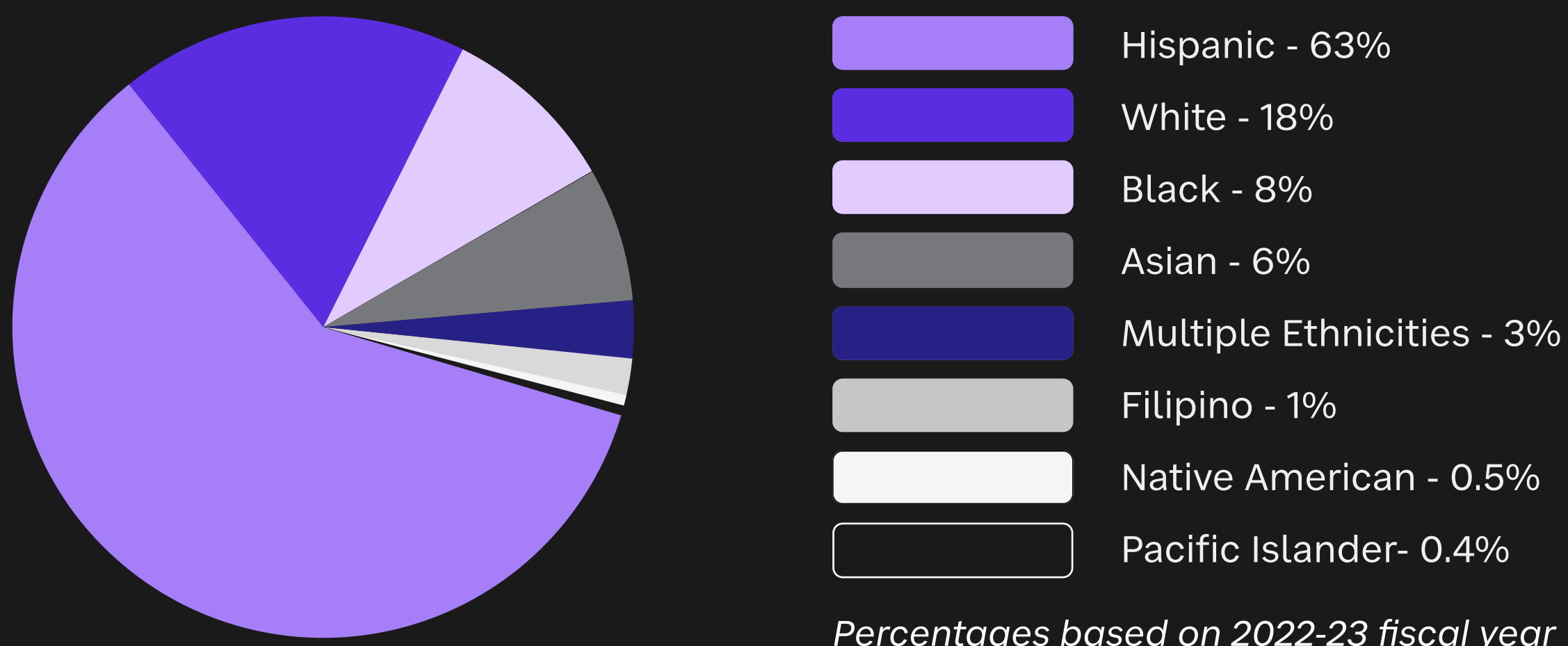
Students included in the sample missed a total of more than 15 million hours of learning time from 2022 to 2023. Historically marginalized student groups continued to have higher rates of absenteeism, which has further implications for equity as districts consider academic recovery.

SchoolStatus found that implementing their attendance management solutions—including consistent, positive school-home communication and automated attendance interventions—significantly improved student attendance compared to the state average. While this is an ongoing battle across districts in the U.S., the data shows that attentive and proactive solutions are key steps in recovery.



# Preliminary Chronic Absence Analysis

The pie chart displays the racial/ethnic composition of nearly 320,000 students in the 29 districts. This composition resembles the overall California state enrollment.



## SchoolStatus Chronic Absence Rates

**SchoolStatus chronic absence rates include more students than the California Dashboard:**

- We include all students in every grade--including PK/TK and high school grades 9-12. The State only calculates based on TK-8
- Our chronic rate includes all active students
- We include all students regardless of how many days enrolled
- We calculate on a day equivalent basis, weighting partial days absences. The State calculates based on full day absences

Based on these differences, our numbers include more students and capture larger numbers for lost learning time than the California Dashboard.

# Long Term Impacts of Missing School

Being late to class doesn't really make a big difference,  
but this is what it can lead to:

If a student misses 30 minutes per month...

**7.5**

minutes per week



**1**

day per year



**13**

days over 13 years  
of schooling

If a student misses 10 minutes per day...

**50**

minutes per week



**1**

week per year



**36%**

of 1 school year

If a student misses 20 minutes per day...

**100**

minutes per week



**2**

weeks per year



**~3/4**

of 1 school year

If a student misses 30 minutes per day...

**1/2**

a day per week



**3**

weeks per year



**>1**

year over 13 years  
of schooling

If a student misses 60 minutes per day...

**1**

day per week



**7**

weeks per year



**>2.5**

years over 13 years  
of schooling

*Percentages based on 2022-23 fiscal year*

# Long Term Impacts of Missing School

1 or 2 absences a week doesn't seem much, but this is what it can lead to:

If a student misses 1 day per quarter...

**4**

days per year



**1**

week per year



**36%**

of 1 school year

If a student misses 1 day per month...

**10**

days per year



**2**

weeks per year



**~3/4**

of 1 school year

If a student misses 4 days per quarter...

**16**

days per year



**3**

weeks per year



**>1**

year over 13 years of schooling

If a student misses 1 day per week...

**36**

days per year



**7**

weeks per year



**>2.5**

years over 13 years of schooling

If a student misses 2 days per week...

**72**

days per year



**14**

weeks per year



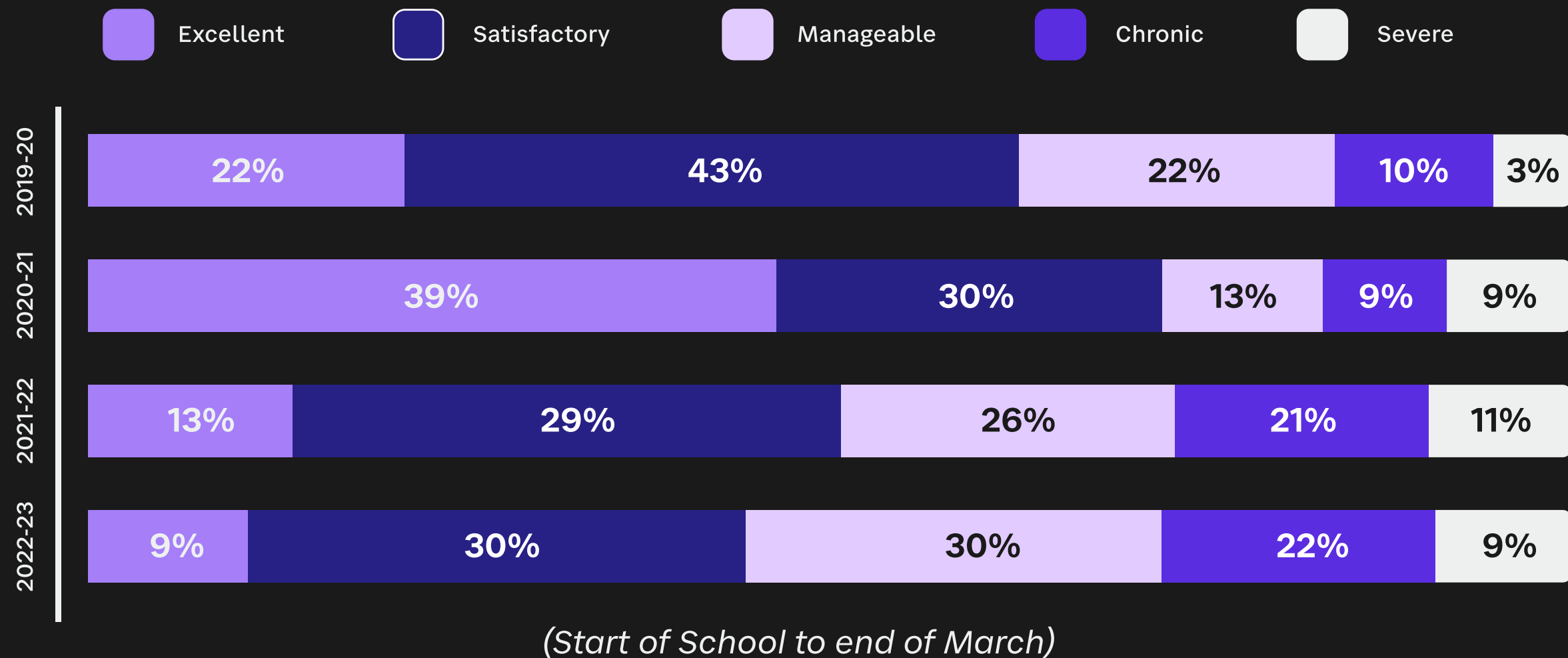
**>5**

years over 13 years of schooling

*Percentages based on 2022-23 fiscal year*

# Attendance Snapshot

Year-Over-Year

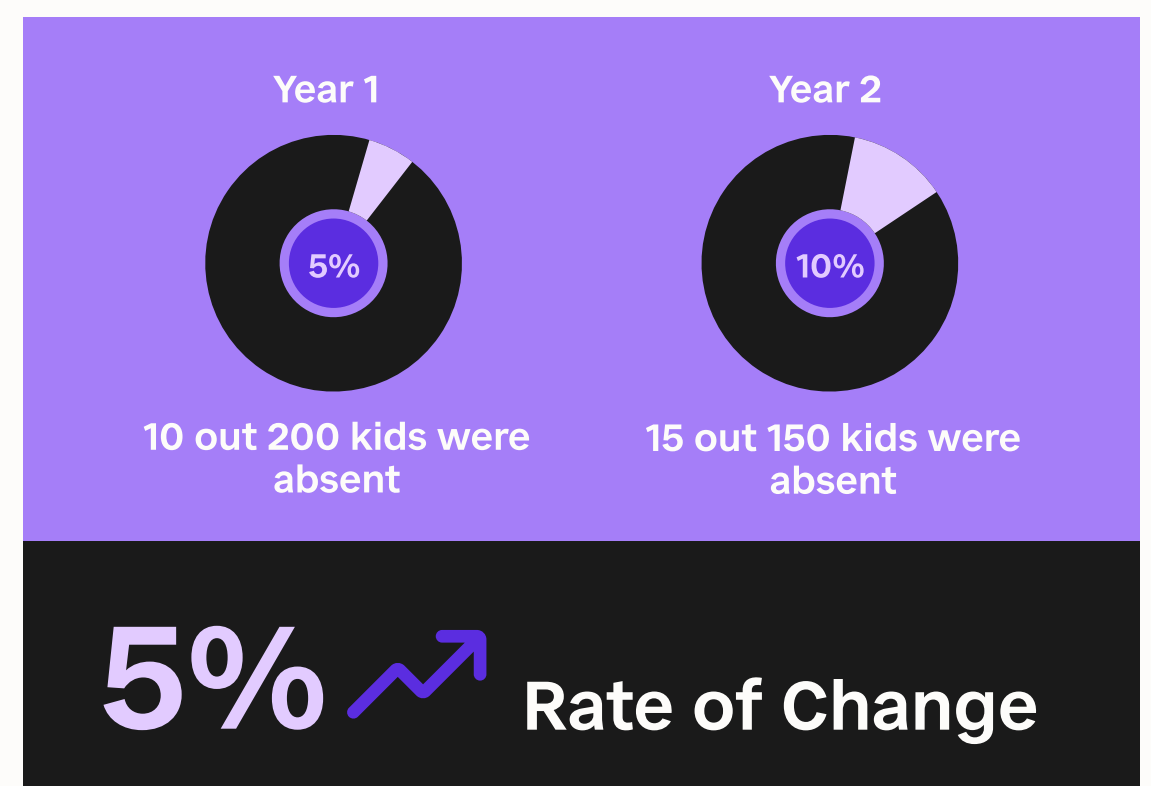


Our graph shows the growth of chronic absenteeism from 2019 to 2023. Issues behind student absenteeism have always been complex, but looking at the statistics spanning from pre-pandemic to today clearly show that there is an unsettling jump in chronic absenteeism specifically. At an all-time high, we need to get more creative about how we focus on daily attendance as the essential part to rebuild trust with families.

## Percent Change vs. Rate of Change

**Rate of Change is the percent change in the number of students.** We have a 50% increase in the number of kids chronically absent. Last year we had 200 kids and 5% were chronically absent - that's 10 kids. This year we have 150 kids and 10% are chronically absent - that's 15 kids - that's an increase of 5 kids or a 50% rate of increase.

**Percent Change is the change in percentage year-over-year.** We have a 5% increase in our chronic absence rate, it went from 5% to 10%. That is a percentage change of 5%.





# Chronic Rates Comparison Charts

Here you will see the comparison from 2021-2023 between districts based on size. The Rate of Change includes the majority of our enrollment, which is in Unified School Districts. The improvement in this group applies to more students, but there is still a long way to go throughout the State.

District Size	June 2021	June 2022	June 2023	Est. Rate of Change	Rate of Change
<3500	18.4%	25.3%	23.8%	-6.0%	24.8%
3500 - 5000	11.6%	20.0%	18.9%	-5.4%	33.6%
5000 - 10000	15.7%	25.9%	23.9%	-7.7%	22.4%
10000 - 20000	22.0%	33.5%	31.1%	-7.2%	16.0%
> 20000	19.5%	37.1%	34.8%	-6.3%	14.7%

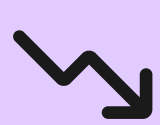
# Chronic Rates Comparison Charts

By District Type

District Type	June 2021	June 2022	June 2023	Est. Rate of Change	Rate of Change
ESD	19.0%	29.5%	29.5%	0.0%	21.3%
HSD	28.1%	46.6%	43.5%	-6.6%	10.1%
USD	16.1%	28.2%	25.6%	-9.3%	18.3%


- We are seeing some **improvements** across all district enrollment bands.
- Unified School Districts rate of change decreased by **9.3%**. Followed by high school districts with a **-6.6%** rate of change

**Unified School Districts**

**9.3%** 

Rate of Change

**High School Districts**

**6.6%** 

Rate of Change



## Chronic Rate Comparison Chart

By Grades K - 5

Grade Level	June 2021	June 2022	June 2023	Est. Rate of Change	Rate of Change
Kindergarten	17.4%	36.6%	38.0%	4.0%	21.2%
1st Grade	16.1%	31.3%	28.9%	-7.5%	12.7%
2nd Grade	14.8	27.2%	24.9%	-8.2%	15.0%
3rd Grade	13.1%	25.0%	22.5%	-9.9%	15.3%
4th Grade	13.7%	24.2%	21.7%	-10.5%	15.4%
5th Grade	13.7%	23.8%	20.7%	-13.4%	13.0%

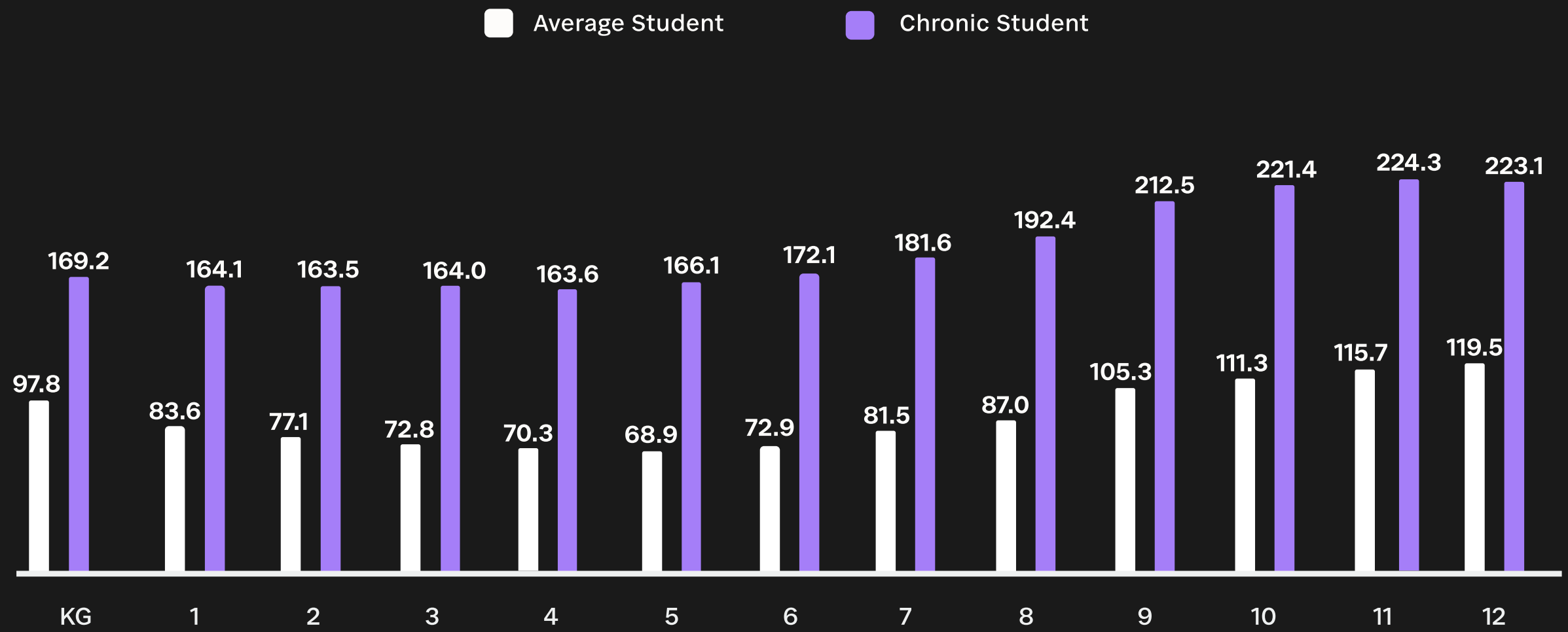
## Chronic Rate Comparison Chart

By Grades 6 - 12

Grade Level	June 2021	June 2022	June 2023	Est. Rate of Change	Rate of Change
6th Grade	17.4%	25.4%	22.3%	-12.3%	12.5%
7th Grade	20.7%	27.6%	26.2%	-5.1%	17.7%
8th Grade	20.4%	27.9%	27.8%	-0.4%	22.2%
9th Grade	25.0%	36.6%	34.6%	-5.5%	15.8%
10th Grade	24.9%	39.9%	36.2%	-9.3%	10.2%
11th Grade	24.1%	40.7%	38.0%	-6.6%	12.5%
12th Grade	22.7%	44.0%	39.7%	-9.9%	7.8%

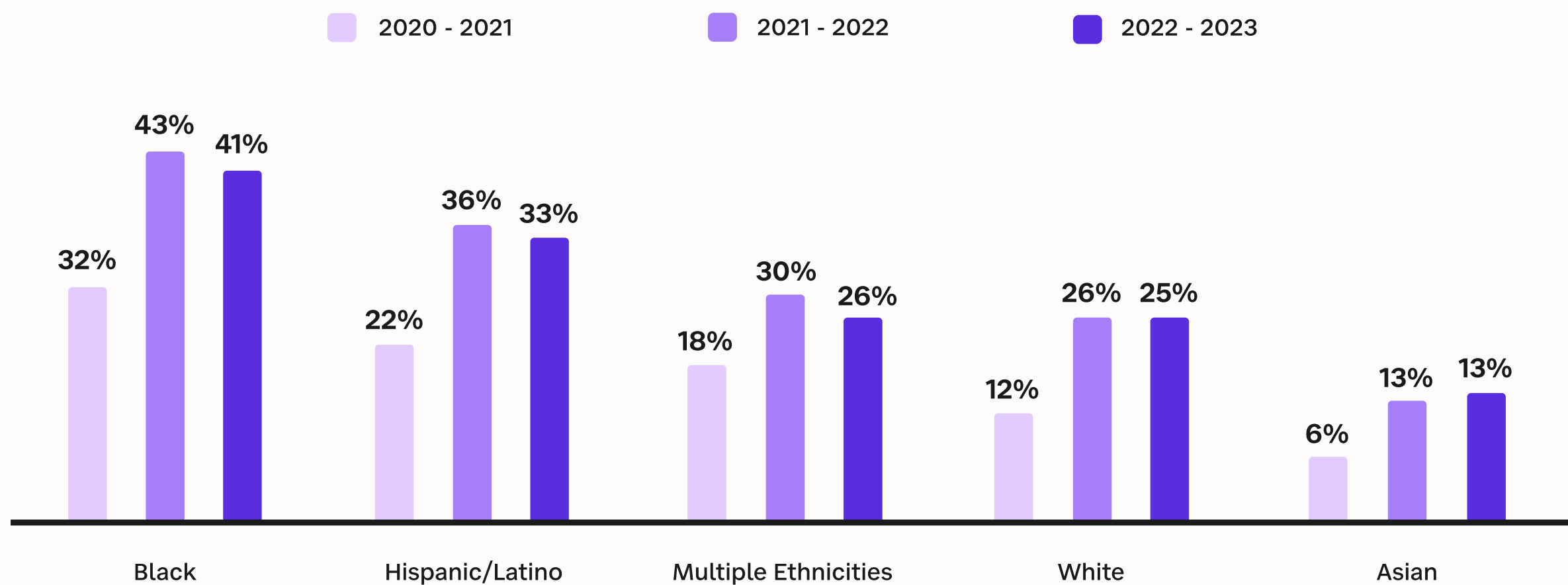
# Missed Learning Time

By Student and Grade



# Top 5 Ethnicity Absent Rates

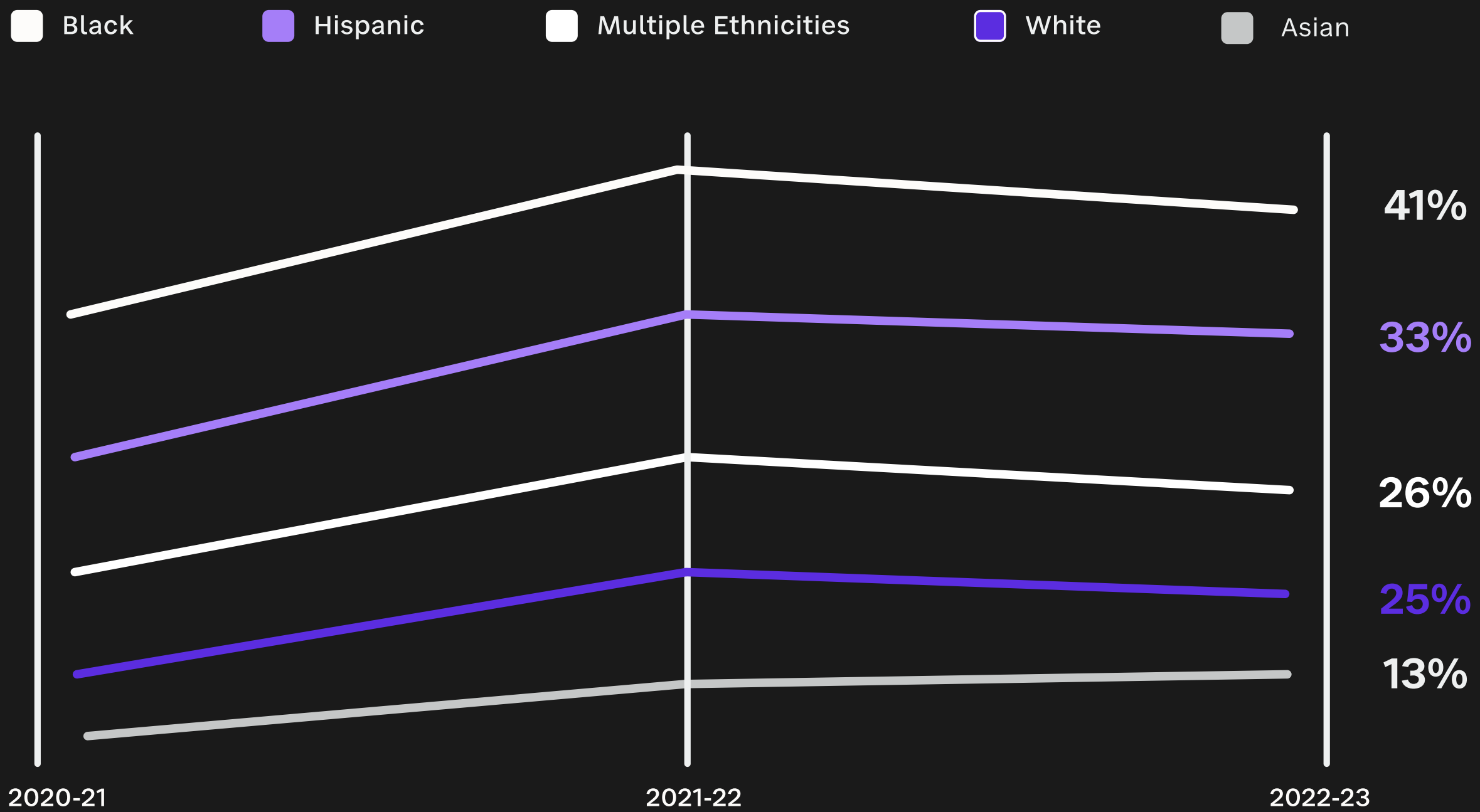
By Year





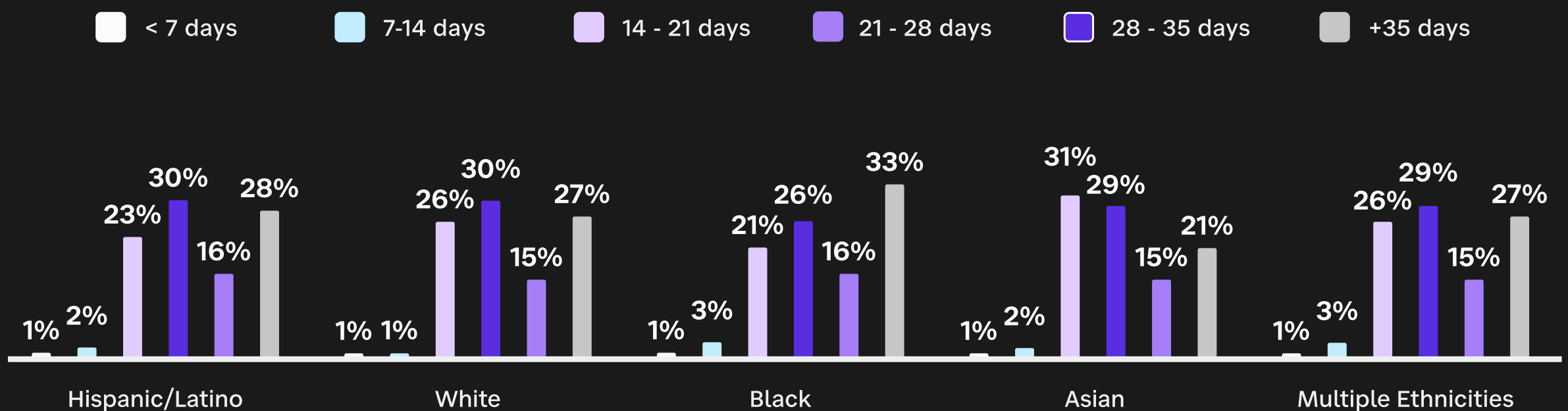
# Top 5 Ethnicity Absent Rate Trends

By Year



# Chronic Absent Students

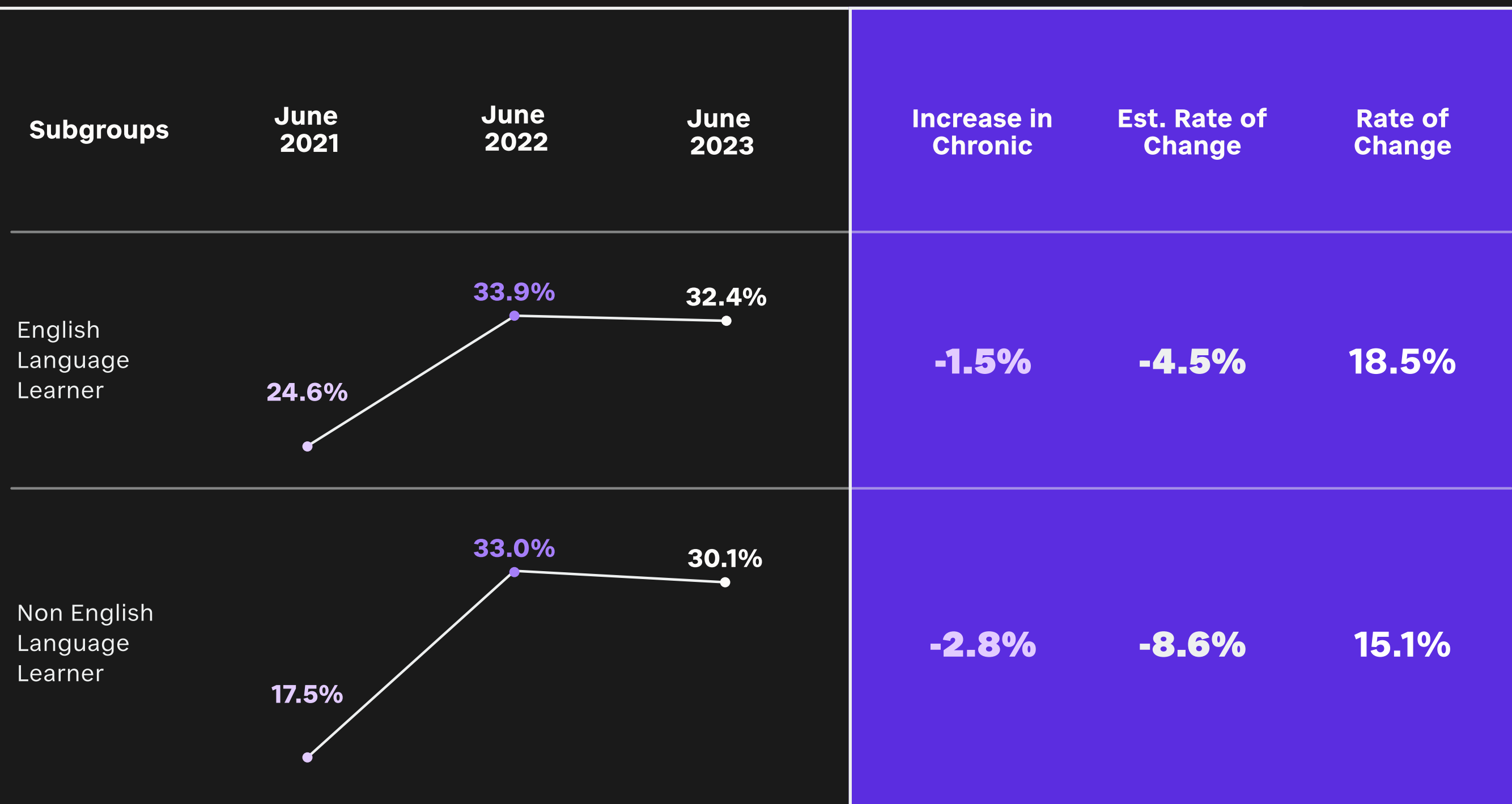
By Ethnicity



- Includes only chronic student population. Buckets represent the breakout of missed days for each subgroup
- Showing the 5 largest ethnic subgroups

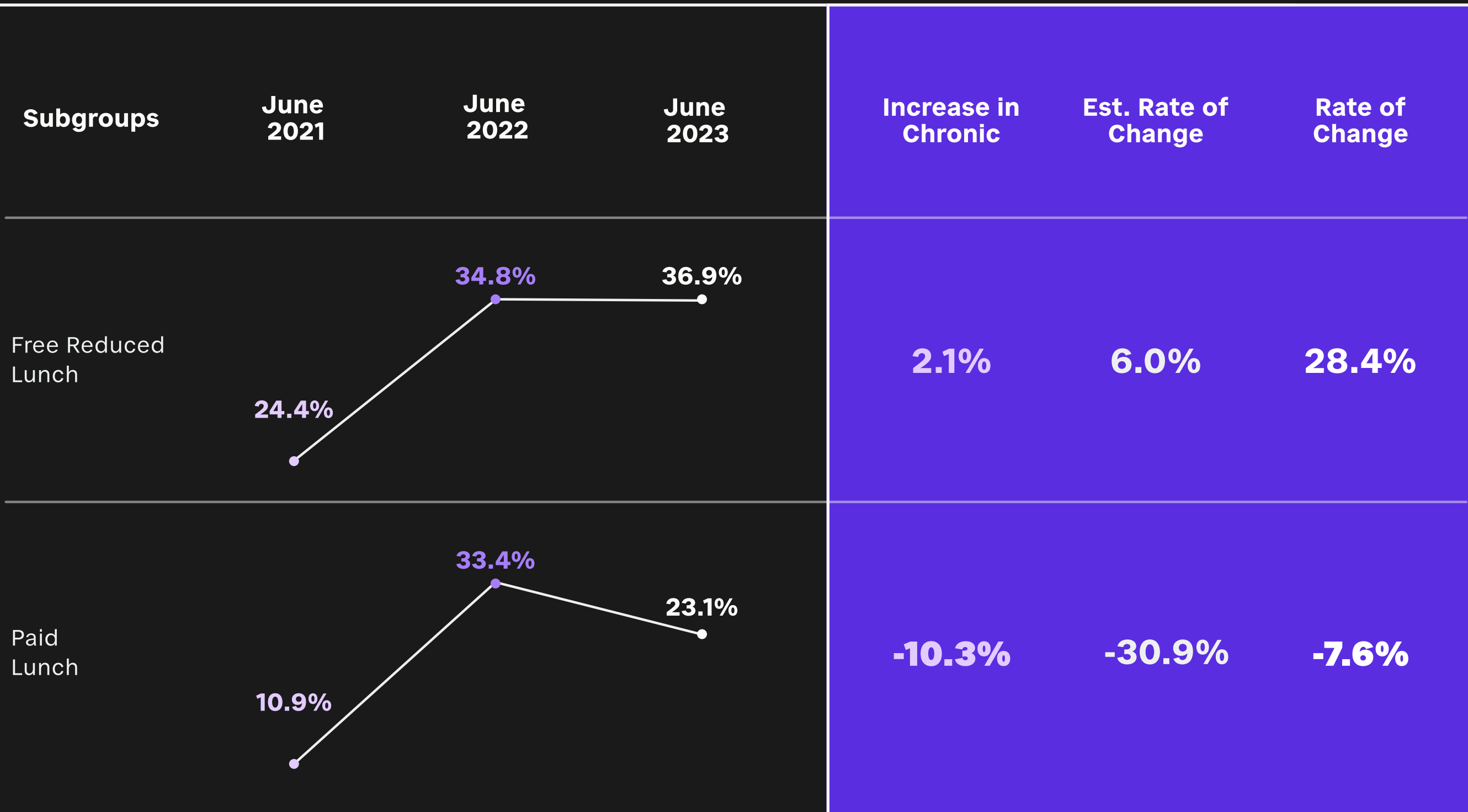
# Student Group Analysis

(By English Language Learner vs Non English Language Learner Subgroups)



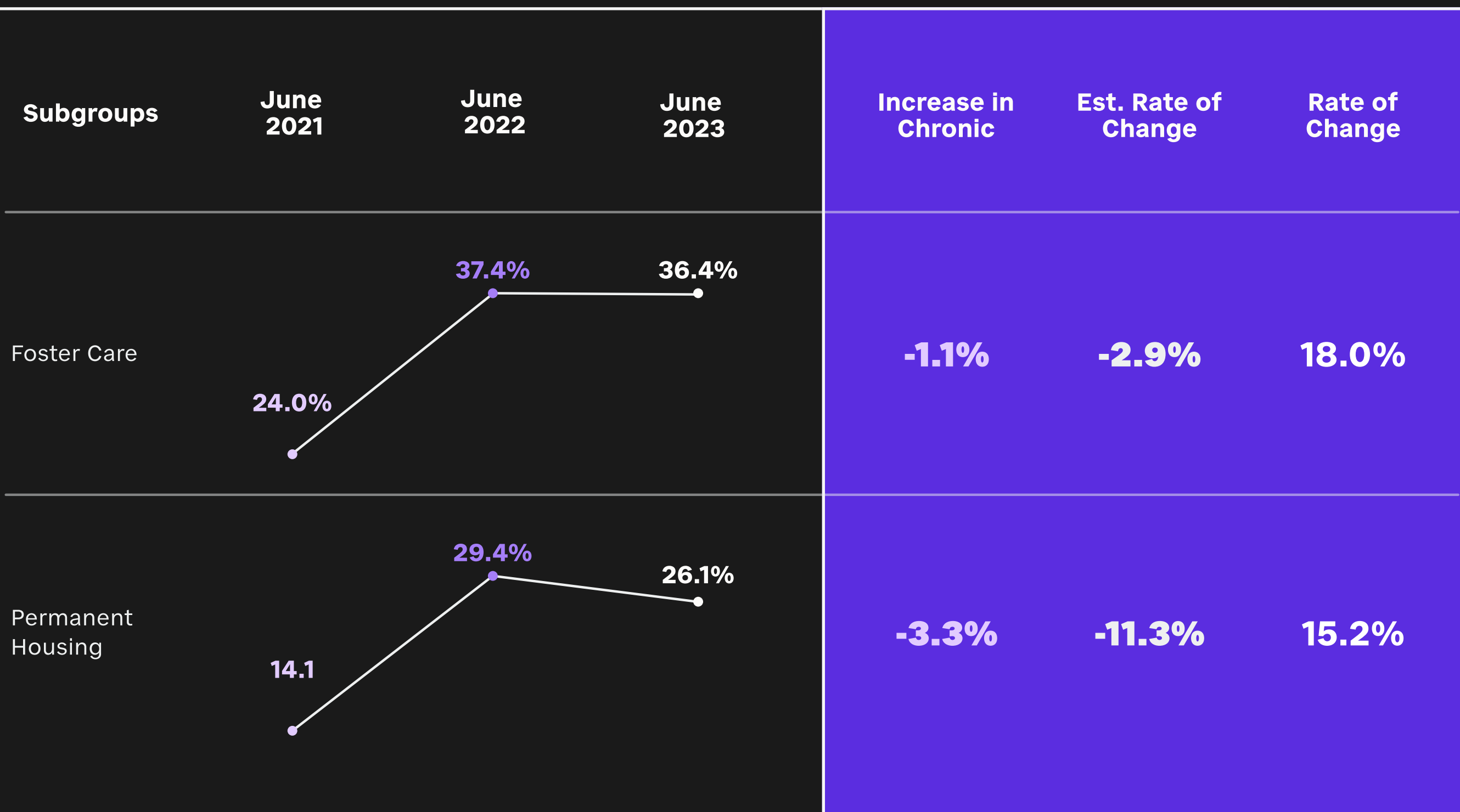
### Chronic Rate Comparison Chart

By Free Reduced Lunch vs. Paid Lunch Subgroups



### Chronic Rate Comparison Chart

By Foster Care vs. Permanent Housing Subgroups





# Positive Engagement and Multiple Touchpoints

- Families of our districts faced many challenges: sickness, finances, isolation—and in some cases—coping with grief from loss
- Our goal is to continue to provide a safe learning environment as we focus on rebuilding good attendance habits and family connections
- SchoolStatus Attend helps you communicate often, inclusively, and meet every family where they are
- **Together we will succeed!**

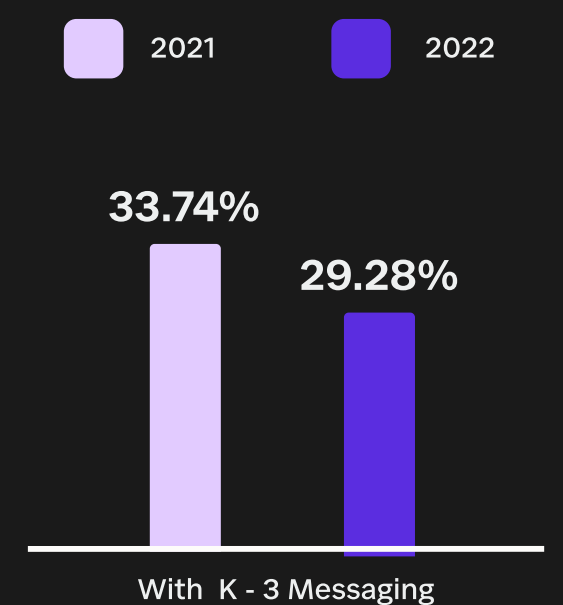
## Attending school every day:

- Helps students get back on track
- Promotes learning and increases chances of success
- Helps students feel better about school and their community

## Communicate Early and Often to Make a Positive Impact

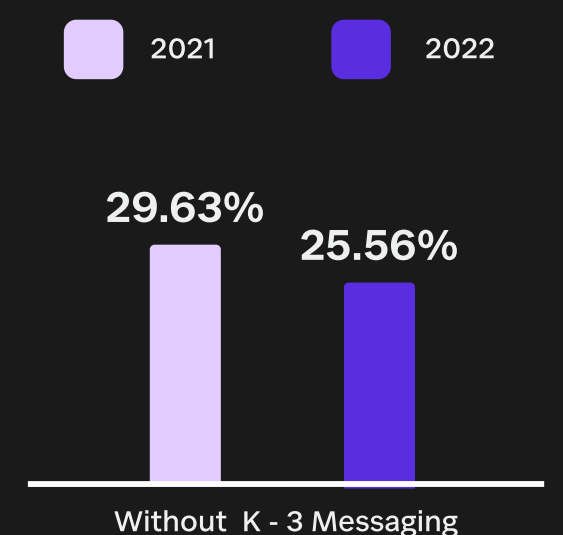
While we saw an overall reduction in chronic absenteeism for K-3rd grade students across all districts, districts that communicated more frequently in a positive, proactive, and consistent manner saw greater reductions in chronic absenteeism.

### Chronic Rate Changes



**11.8%** Rate of Change

### Chronic Rate Changes



**4.12%** Rate of Change

**SchoolStatus Attend** is the most effective way for a school district to tackle chronic absenteeism. The data-driven attendance management platform and processes provide automatic interventions and positive reinforcement to support student success, increase daily attendance, and reduce administrative overhead.

Our expert implementation team sets up all processes quickly to ensure that districts have access to accurate data and can send consistent interventions at the most effective times. By using automated and scheduled outreach throughout the school year, administrators can reduce the time spent on attendance management by up to 75%. School and district leaders can rely on SchoolStatus to provide effective tracking and outreach to all families in the district. By focusing on proactive outreach instead of punitive measures, SchoolStatus Attend sees 54% of at-risk kids returning to school after their initial contact.

**Schedule a personalized demo today to learn how SchoolStatus Attend can support your district.**

[Request a Demo](#)

