



Santa Clara County Office of Education

Dr. Charles Hinman
Interim County Superintendent of Schools

February 3, 2025

TO: Deborah Gorgulho, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent, Educational Progress

FROM: Dan Mason, Manager, Assessment & Accountability

Deann Walsh, Manager, Assessment & Accountability

SUBJECT: 2023-24 Santa Clara County Chronic Absenteeism Results

The following analysis details the 2023-24 chronic absenteeism rates and absence types for Santa Clara County. Santa Clara County's results are compared to the results for California and disaggregated by student groups [race/ethnicity and program participation (i.e., Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners, Students with Disabilities, Homeless, and Foster Youth)], grade spans, average days absent, and absence types.

Chronic absenteeism rates reflect the percentages of student groups who did not attend 10% or more of the instructional days for which they were enrolled. For example, if a student is enrolled in a school and/or school district for the typical 180-day school year and is absent 18 or more days, then they are considered chronically absent and included in the numerator of the applicable chronic absenteeism rates. To help illustrate how aggregate chronic absenteeism rates are interpreted, consider that if a student group has a chronic absenteeism rate of 25%, this means that 25% of the students in that student group were absent for 10% or more of the school days for which they were enrolled. Please note that a chronic absenteeism rate of 25% for a student group does not indicate that the students in the student group were absent 25% of the time nor that 25% of the students in that group had absences. Excused versus unexcused absences are not a factor in determining chronic absenteeism rates, as chronic absenteeism is a measure based on the rate of which a student is present or not present at school.

Chronic absenteeism is an important educational indicator because research demonstrates¹ that chronic absenteeism negatively impacts student outcomes, including academic achievement, social-emotional development, grade retention and graduation, and student discipline. Due to the negative impacts of chronic absenteeism, lower and/or declining rates are preferable to higher and/or increasing rates. For more information and resources, please visit the SCCOE's Attendance & Engagement webpage: <https://www.sccoe.org/educational-progress/attendance/Pages/default.aspx> or contact Jennifer Elenes at 408.453.6537 or jelenes@sccoe.org.

¹ Attendance Works, [A Summary of Key Research on Chronic Absence](#)

2024 Santa Clara County Chronic Absenteeism Results

To preserve space, the abbreviations in Table 1 are used in this report’s data displays.

Table 1: Data Display Abbreviations

SCC	Santa Clara County	EL	English Learner
CA	California	Not EL	Not English Learner (Fluent English Proficient and English Only)
All	All Students	SED	Socioeconomically Disadvantaged
Am. Ind.	American Indian or Alaska Native	Not SED	Not Socioeconomically Disadvantaged
Black	Black or African American	SWD	Students with Reported Disabilities
Latino	Hispanic or Latino	Not SWD	Students with No Reported Disabilities
Pac. Is.	Pacific Islander	Foster	Foster Youth
Two +	Two or More Races	Homeless	Homeless Youth

Table 2: 2023-24 Chronic Absenteeism Counts and Rates by Student Groups, Santa Clara County

	Eligible Enrollment*	Chronic Absenteeism Count	Chronic Absenteeism Rate
All	240,369	39,635	16.5%
Am. Ind.	636	159	25.0%
Asian	73,518	4,336	5.9%
Black	4,193	906	21.6%
Filipino	8,534	879	10.3%
Latino	98,995	26,916	27.2%
Pac. Is.	939	287	30.6%
Two +	13,999	1,520	10.9%
White	36,987	4,280	11.6%
EL	58,454	13,219	22.6%
Not EL	181,915	26,416	14.5%
SED	99,182	26,078	26.3%
Not SED	141,187	13,557	9.6%
SWD	31,249	8,990	28.8%
Not SWD	209,120	30,645	14.7%
Foster	415	219	52.8%
Homeless	7,226	2,947	40.8%

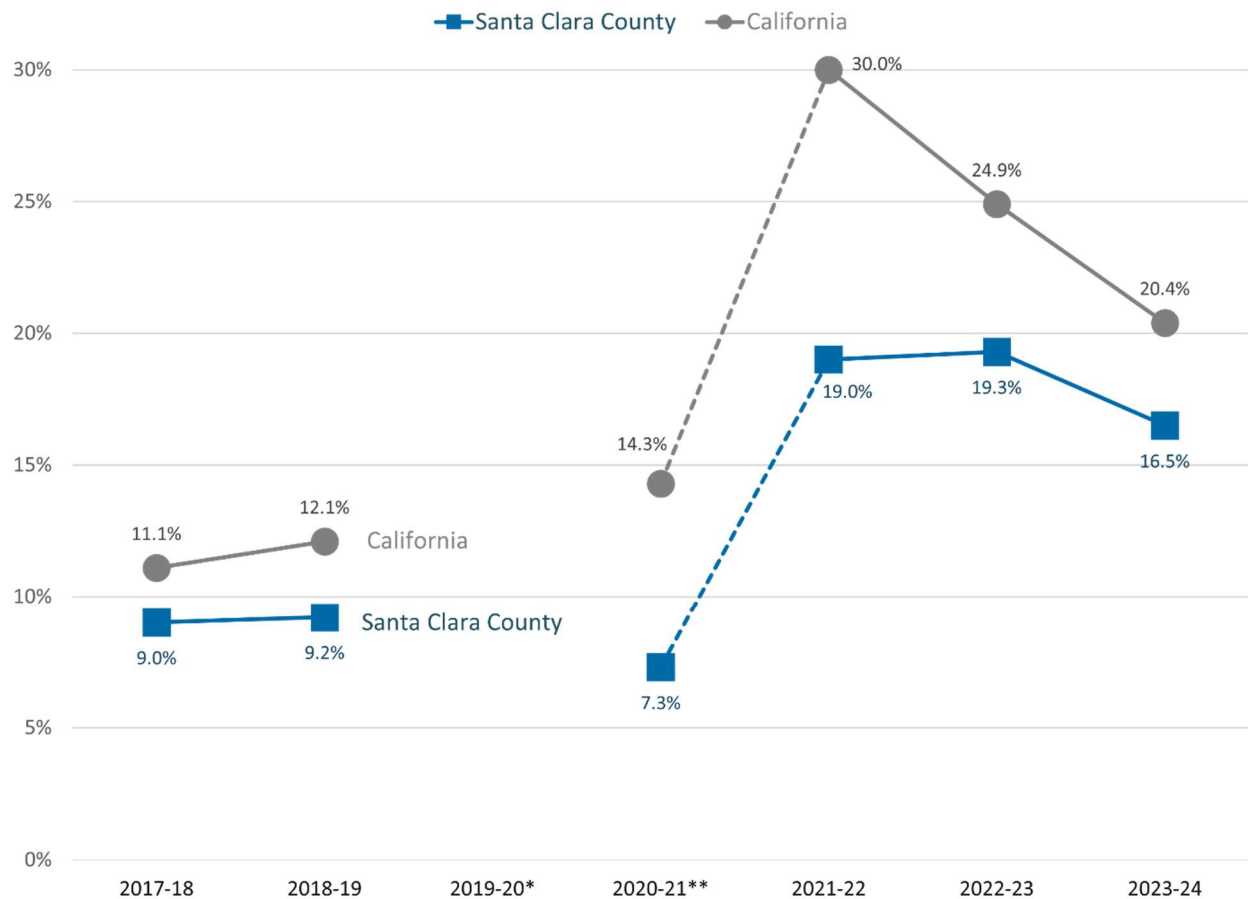
* This count uses the total Cumulative Enrollment as the baseline and removes students that were **not** eligible to be considered chronically absent. Students who attend less than 31 instructional days at an entity or who were enrolled but did not attend the selected entity are not eligible to be considered chronically absent at that entity.

For interpretation purposes, with the exceptions of Figures 1, 4 and 5, the data sets that the displays are reflecting have been rounded to whole number percentages.

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM RESULTS OVERTIME

Figure 1 illustrates the historical chronic absenteeism rates for Santa Clara County and California. Pre-pandemic, slight upticks in both rates occurred from 2017-18 to 2018-19. By 2021-22, as most students returned to in-person learning settings and schools were required to follow state and local quarantining guidelines, chronic absenteeism rates had more than doubled the pre-pandemic levels. From 2021-22 to 2023-24 chronic absenteeism rates have trended in a positive direction with California’s rate going from 30.0% to 20.4% and Santa Clara County’s rate going from 19.0% to 16.5%. Even with a declining rate, Santa Clara County’s 2023-24 chronic absenteeism rate represents almost 40,000 students (39,635) who were chronically absent from school. See table 2 above.

Figure 1: 2017-18 to 2023-24 Chronic Absenteeism Rates, California and Santa Clara County



* As a result of the statewide physical school closures that occurred in February/March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the CDE determined that the 2019–20 absenteeism data were not valid and reliable; therefore, they were not released to the public.

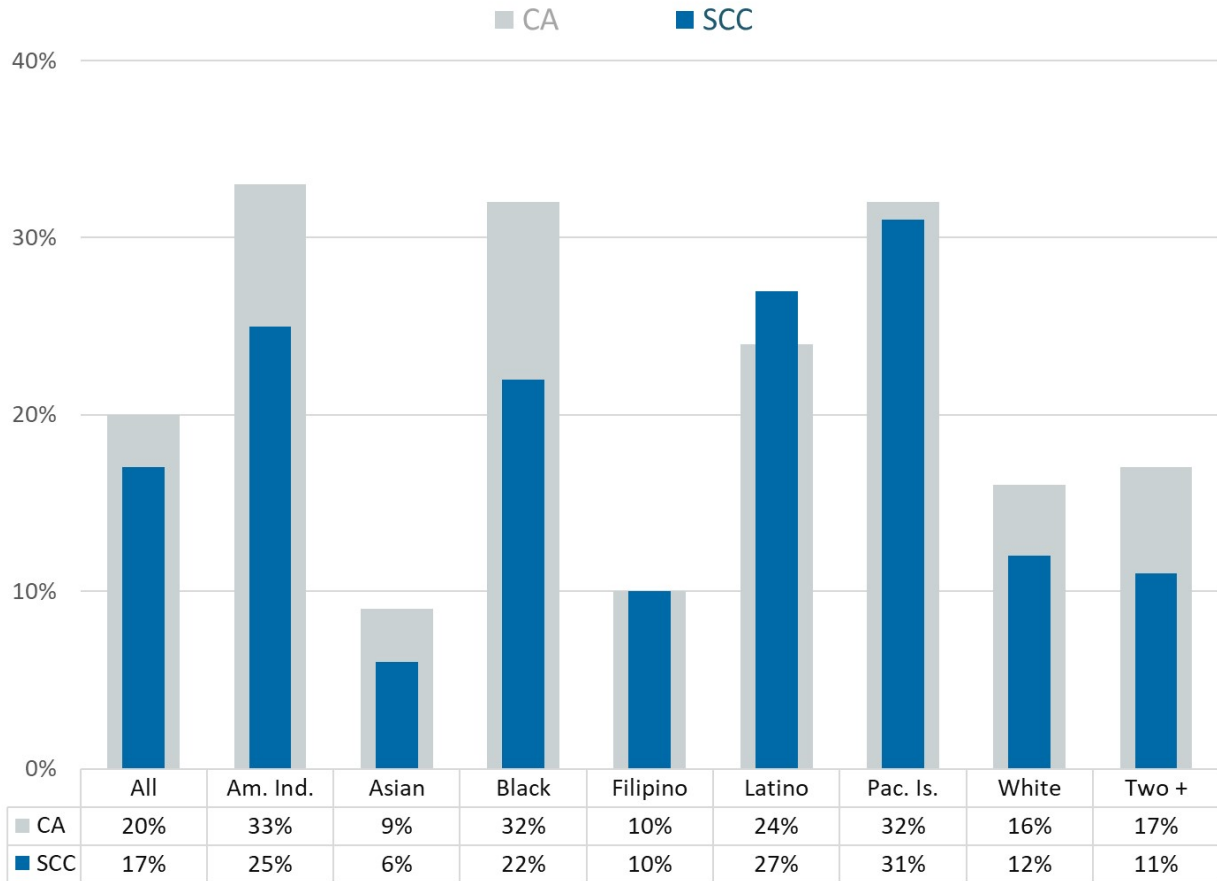
** While attendance related measures were collected in 2020-21, LEAs and schools were provided with unique parameters of what was considered attendance within distance learning settings. As such, data from the 2020-21 school year should be interpreted with caution and should not be directly compared to figures prior to or following the 2020-21 school year.

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM RESULTS BY STUDENT GROUPS

When the chronic absenteeism results are disaggregated by student groups, significant variation and gaps emerge. Figure 2 highlights the Santa Clara County and California chronic absenteeism rates by race/ethnicity. For six of the eight racial/ethnic student groups, the Santa Clara County rates were below the statewide rates. The exceptions were that the Santa Clara County Hispanic/Latino rate was higher than the statewide Hispanic/Latino rate (27% vs. 24%) and the county Filipino rate was equal to the statewide Filipino rate (10%).

Gaps persist within the county as African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latino and Pacific Islander student groups had chronic absenteeism rates ranging from 22% to 31%. In contrast, students in the Asian, Filipino, White, and Two or More Races student groups had rates below the county average, ranging from 6% to 12%.

Figure 2: 2023-24 Chronic Absenteeism Rates by Race/Ethnicity, California and Santa Clara County

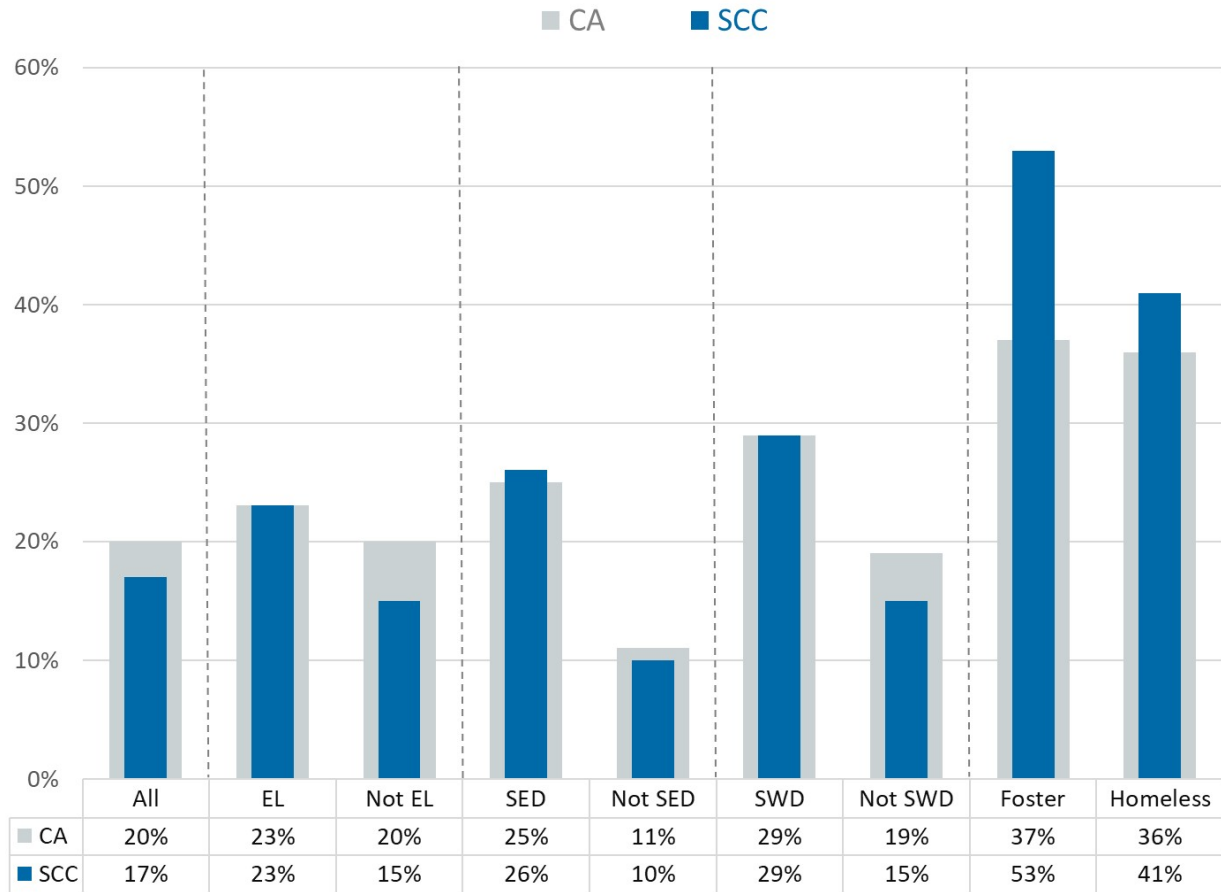


Though the overall Santa Clara County chronic absenteeism rate was lower than the California rate, Figure 3 demonstrates that Santa Clara County Foster and Homeless students had higher rates than their statewide counterparts (53% vs. 37% and 41% vs. 36%, respectively), while Santa Clara County English Learners, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged and Students with Disabilities had roughly the same rates as the comparable student groups statewide (23% vs. 23%, 26% vs. 25%, and 29% vs. 29%, respectively).

2024 Santa Clara County Chronic Absenteeism Results

As with race/ethnicity comparisons, significant gaps are evident within Santa Clara County when the chronic absenteeism rates are analyzed by student programs. For example, the chronic absenteeism rate of Santa Clara County Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students (26%) was more than two and a half times higher than the rate of Santa Clara County not Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students (10%). Santa Clara County students with reported disabilities were almost twice as likely to be chronically absent than Santa Clara County students with no reported disabilities (29% vs. 15%). Furthermore, the gaps between mutually exclusive student program groups (e.g., English learner vs. not English learner) in Santa Clara County were larger than the comparable statewide comparisons. For example, the gap between English Learner and not English Learner in California was three percentage points, whereas for Santa Clara County the same comparison reveals an eight-percentage point gap.

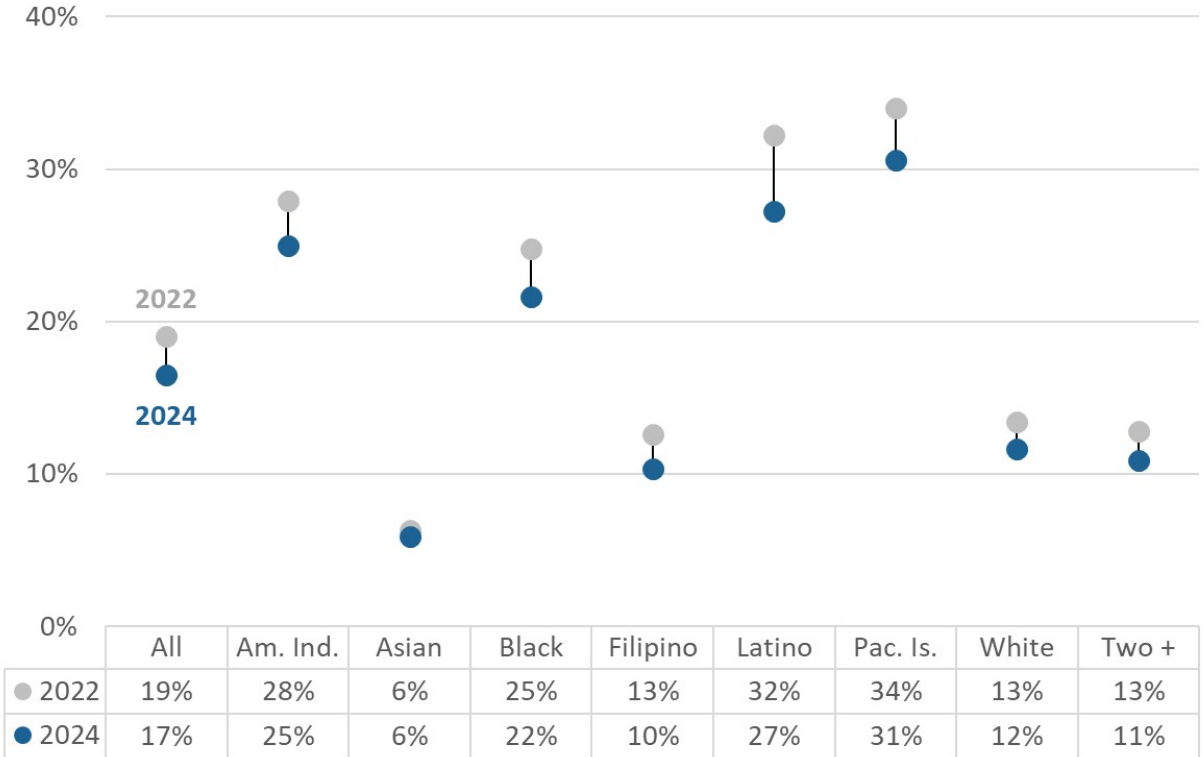
Figure 3: 2023-24 Chronic Absenteeism Rates by Student Programs, California and Santa Clara County



2024 Santa Clara County Chronic Absenteeism Results

Figure 4 illustrates the 2021-22 to 2023-24 changes in Santa Clara County’s chronic absenteeism rates by race/ethnicity. The chronic absenteeism rate for Hispanic/Latino students had the largest decline during this time span, going from 32% in 2021-22 to 27% in 2023-24.

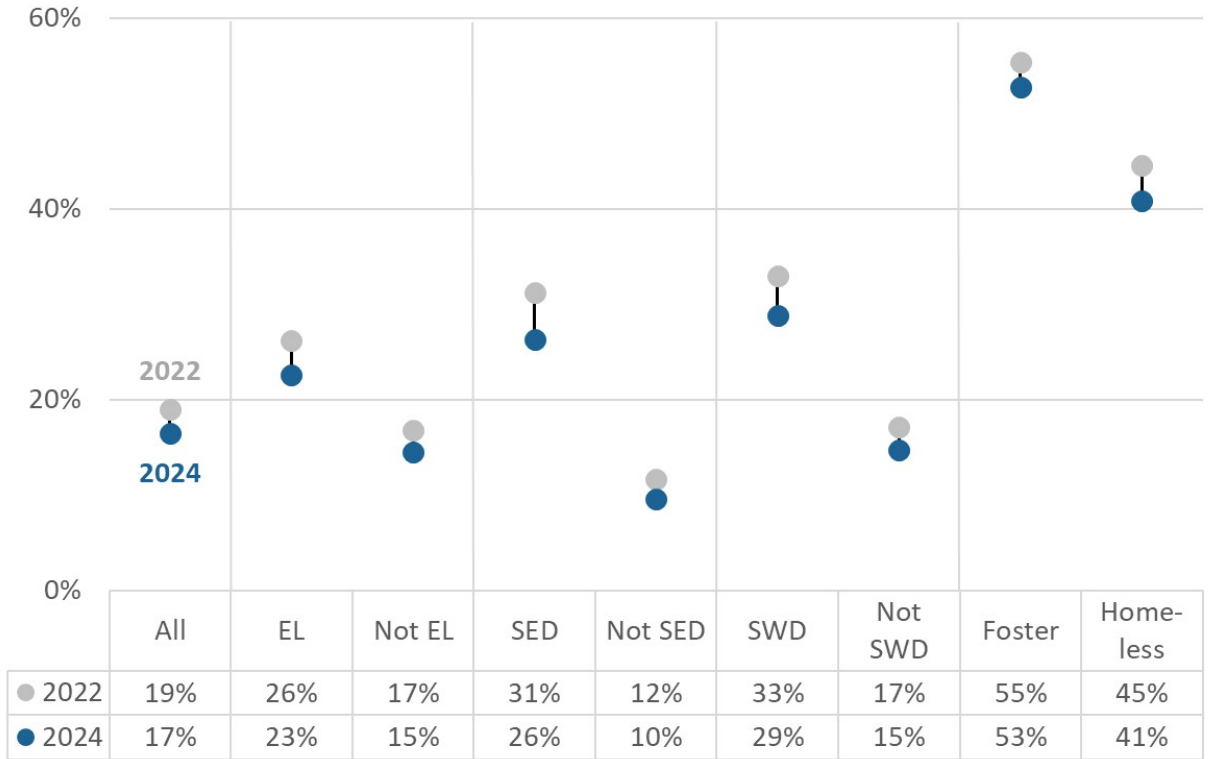
Figure 4: 2021-22 to 2023-24 Chronic Absenteeism Rates by Race/Ethnicity, Santa Clara County



2024 Santa Clara County Chronic Absenteeism Results

Figure 5 illustrates the 2021-22 to 2023-24 changes in Santa Clara County’s chronic absenteeism rates by student programs and mutually exclusive student program groups. The chronic absenteeism rate for Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students had the largest decline during this time span, going from 31% in 2021-22 to 26% in 2023-24.

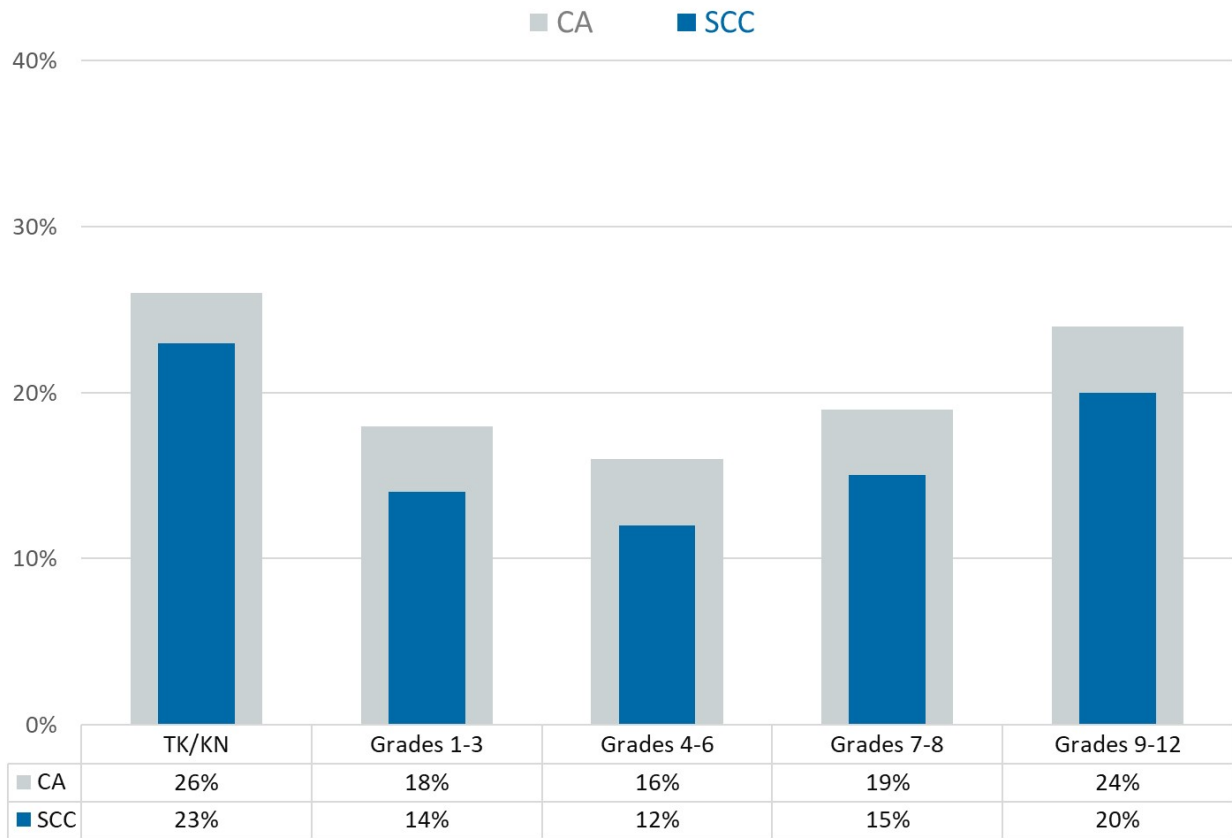
Figure 5: 2021-22 to 2023-24 Chronic Absenteeism Rates by Student Groups, Santa Clara County



CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM RESULTS BY GRADE SPAN

Figure 6 displays chronic absenteeism rates by grade spans. Santa Clara County chronic absenteeism rates are lower than statewide rates across all grade spans. When grade spans are compared to one another, countywide and statewide, students in both ends of the grade span spectrum have higher chronic absenteeism rates than those in the middle grade spans. For example, within Santa Clara County, transitional kindergarten/kindergarten students had the highest rates of chronic absenteeism (23%). Rates noticeably decreased across the next two grade spans (14% in grades 1-3 and 12% in grades 4-6) but increased for grades 7-8 (15%) and increased higher for grades 9-12 (20%).

Figure 6: 2023-24 Chronic Absenteeism Rates by Grade Spans, California and Santa Clara County



AVERAGE DAYS ABSENT

Aggregated by racial/ethnic groups, Figure 7 depicts the average days absent of the Santa Clara County students who were chronically absent (students who were not in attendance for 10% or more of the instructional days for which they were enrolled).

On average, Santa Clara County students who were chronically absent were absent for 33 days, which equates to missing roughly six and a half weeks of school. Though the gaps between clusters of racial/ethnic groups are narrower than they are with chronic absenteeism rates, the pattern for days absent mirrors the previously noted differences as African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latino, and Pacific Islander chronically absent students had higher average days absent than chronically absent Asian, Filipino, White, and Two or More Races students.

Figure 7: 2023-24 Average Days Absent for Chronically Absent Students by Race/Ethnicity, Santa Clara County

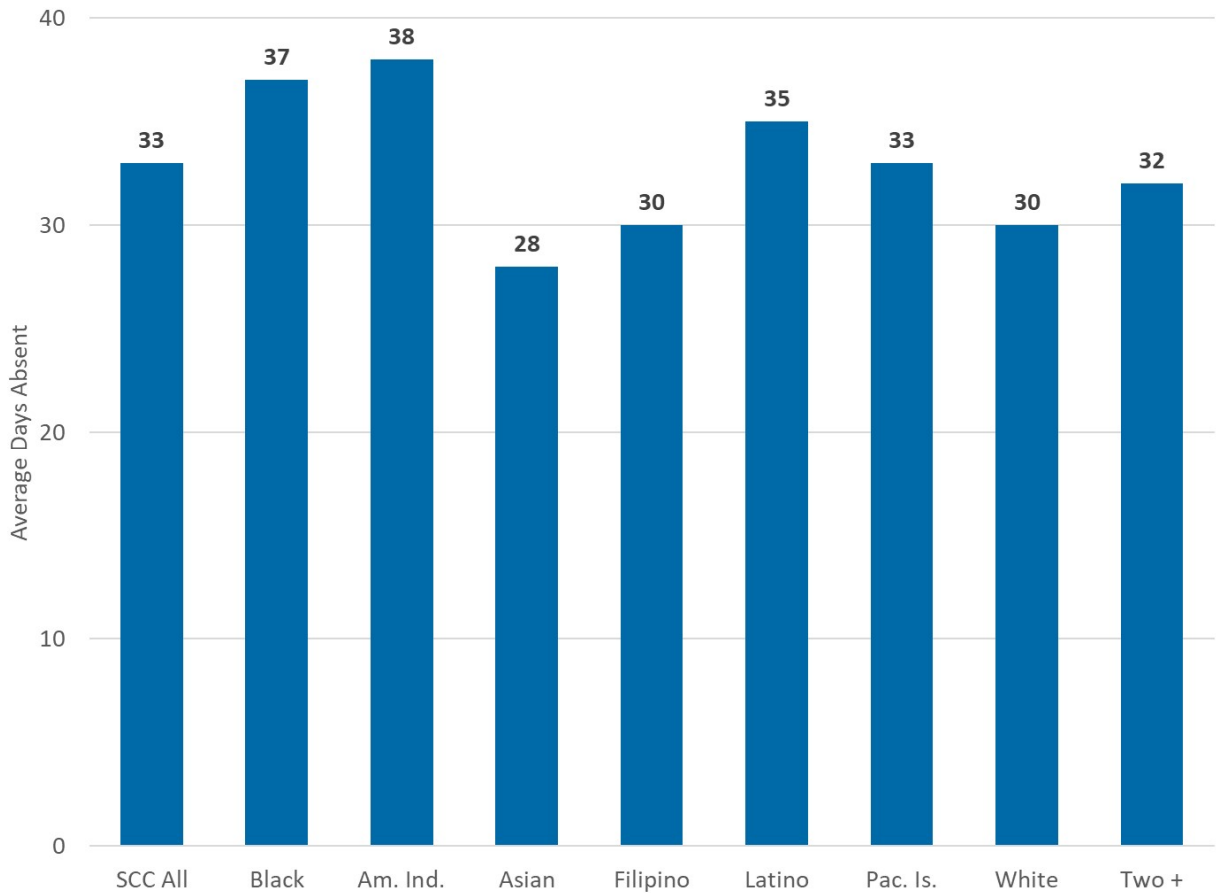
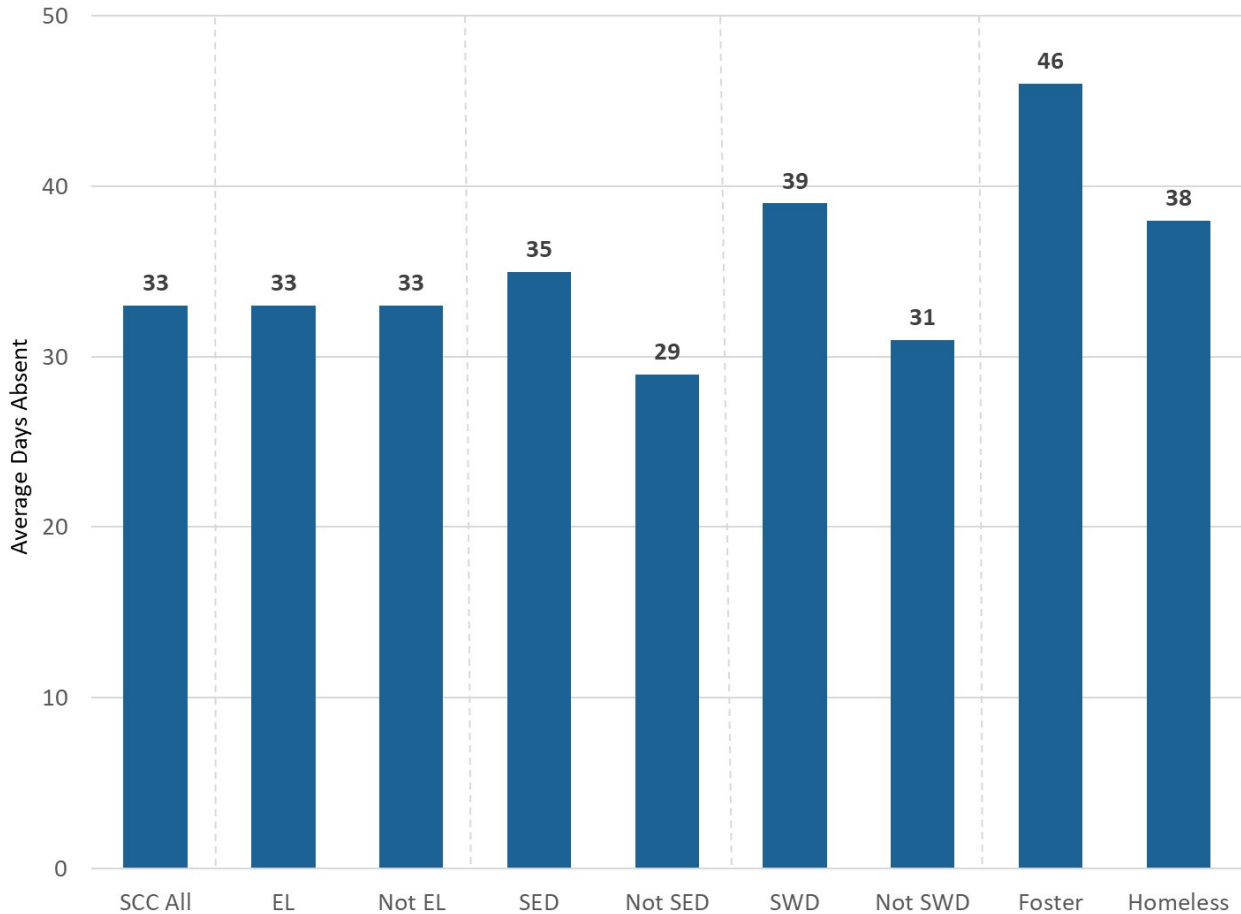


Figure 8 demonstrates that gaps are also revealed when Santa Clara County’s chronically absent students’ average days absent are disaggregated by student programs. For example, chronically absent Students with Disabilities missed an average of 39 days (almost eight weeks) compared to chronically absent students without disabilities, who missed an average of 31 days. The EL status of chronically absent students was not a factor in the average days absent.

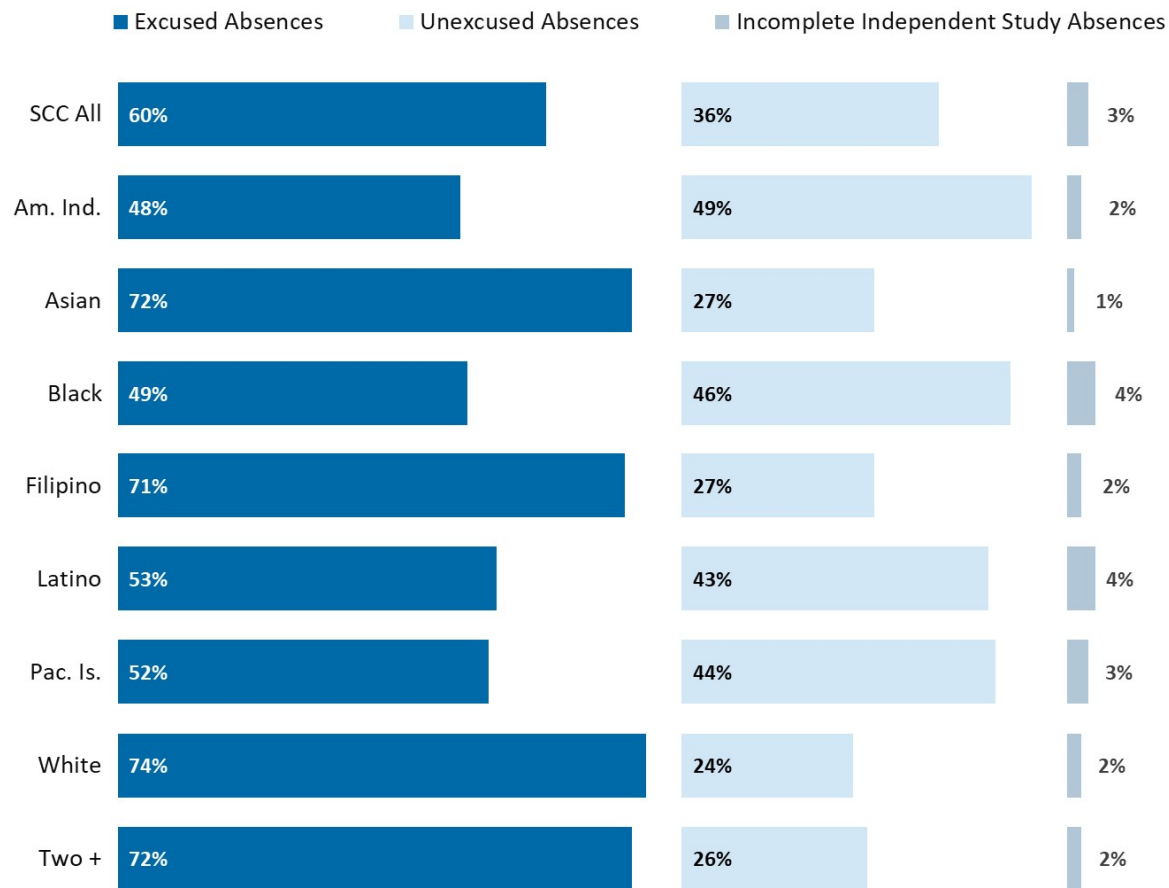
Figure 8: 2023-24 Average Days Absent for Chronically Absent Students by Student Programs, Santa Clara County



ABSENCE TYPES

Figure 9 represents absence types disaggregated by race/ethnicity. For all Santa Clara County students, 60% of absences were categorized as “Excused Absences” (e.g., illness, medical) while 36% were “Unexcused Absences” (e.g., no reason provided, personal vacation). Across all racial/ethnic groups, excused absences attributed to more absences than unexcused absences. However, the African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latino and Pacific Islander student groups had higher proportions of unexcused absences than the Asian, Filipino, White, and Two or More Races student groups (e.g., 43-49% versus 24-27%, respectively).

Figure 9: 2023-24 Absence Types by Race/Ethnicity, Santa Clara County

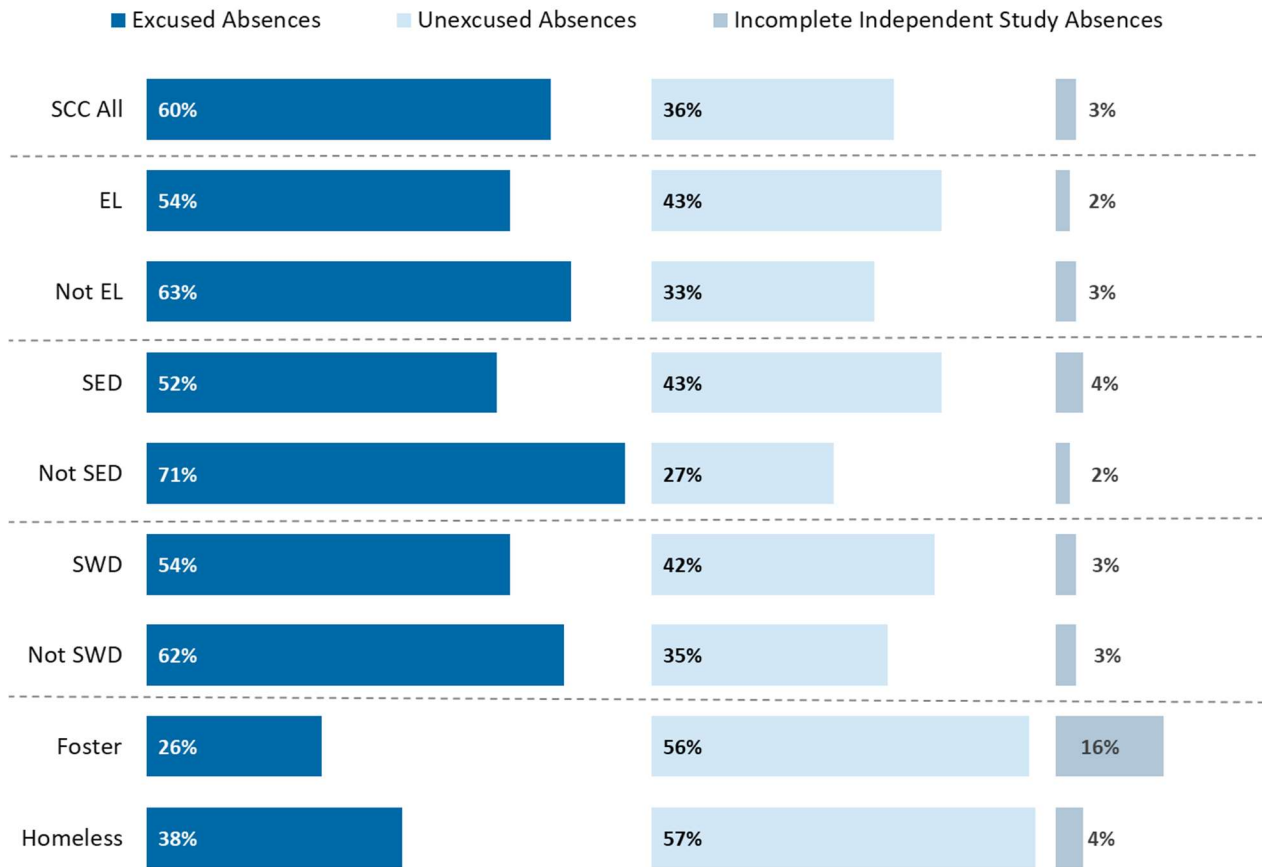


Figures may not add to 100% due to removal of suspension related absences within this analysis.

Figure 10 depicts absence types disaggregated by student program inclusion and exclusion. Each Santa Clara County program group (e.g., English Learners, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, etc.) had higher percentages of unexcused absences when compared to the students excluded from the program group. For example, 43% of the absences of Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students were unexcused, compared to 27% of the absences of not Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students being unexcused.

More than half of Foster and Homeless youth absences were unexcused (56% and 57%, respectively). Compared to the other student and ethnic/racial groups, a disproportionate amount of foster youth students' absences (16%) were incomplete independent study absences.

Figure 10: 2023-24 Absence Types by Student Programs, Santa Clara County



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