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Beyond the Schoolhouse: Digging Deeper | COVID-19 & Reopening Schools for Black Students in Los Angeles

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BEYOND THE SCHOOLHOUSE:
DIGGING DEEPER

**COVID-19 & Reopening
Schools for Black Students
in Los Angeles**

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OVERVIEW

In October 2019, we released **Beyond the Schoolhouse: Overcoming Challenges and Expanding Opportunity for Black children in Los Angeles County**, a report that documented a broad array of challenges impacting Black students and families in Los Angeles County.

The report showed that Black students are faced with a number of hardships, both within and outside of school, that adversely affect their educational performance, health, and overall well-being. As school districts across Los Angeles County begin to reopen due to the coronavirus, this new report is relevant and timely. We hope it will help illuminate patterns that can inform the strategic use of resources at the federal, state and local level to address historic patterns of inequality that have only been accelerated for Black students in Los Angeles. **Our analysis centers on 14 school districts in Los Angeles County that serve 800 Black students or more.** →

ABC Unified School District

Antelope Valley Union High School District

Bellflower Unified School District

Centinela Valley Union High School District

Compton Unified School District

Culver City Unified School District

Inglewood Unified School District

Long Beach Unified School District

Los Angeles Unified School District

Paramount Unified School District

Pasadena Unified School District

Pomona Unified School District

Torrance Unified School District

William S. Hart Union High School District

Collectively, these 14 districts serve **2 out of 3 Black students** in Los Angeles County.

Although most of the data we present was collected prior to the pandemic, in all likelihood, new data will reveal that conditions in the communities and schools we have written about have worsened *(Pastor & Segura, 2020)*. An analysis of these patterns should help inform where federal, state and regional resources are needed in Los Angeles County as more schools reopen. For example, total COVID relief funding, including stimulus dollars from the recently passed American Rescue Plan is bringing over $6 billion to these 14 districts to support learning recovery efforts (See **TABLE 1**).

The 14 school districts in this study all serve a majority low-income students broadly, and Black students in Los Angeles County often reside in neighborhoods where poverty is concentrated, educational enrichment opportunities are limited, strong healthcare options are

hard to come by and resources are lacking. Findings from this report can help inform discussions around resource allocations tied to the American Rescue Plan, which can subsequently assist Black youth in the nation's largest county: Los Angeles. This report also identifies promising schools and programs across Los Angeles County where Black children are being well-served. We believe that learning from these models will help achieve measurable progress in promoting the academic success and health of Black youth in Los Angeles County, California, and the nation. At the end of the report, we provide policies that can alleviate and address the challenges that have disproportionately affected Black youth across Los Angeles County. The complexity and systemic nature of the problems we identify in this report will only be ameliorated through targeted and sustained action. Our hope is that this report can serve as a catalyst for that action.

TABLE 1

Federal COVID
Relief Funds

School District	CARES Act Federal Allocation (3.27.20)	CARES Act State Allocation (3.27.20)	$900B COVID-19 Relief Bill (12.27.20)	Est. Rescue Plan Federal Allocation (3.11.2021)	Total Relief Funding
ABC Unified School District	$ 3,211,794	$ 11,462,211	$ 11,002,313	$ 24,462,535	$50,138,853
Antelope Valley Union High School District	$ 7,974,422	$ 20,551,288	$ 27,474,327	$ 61,086,401	$117,086,438
Bellflower Unified School District	$ 3,297,101	$ 10,452,842	$ 11,395,395	$ 25,336,514	$50,481,852
Centinela Valley Union High School District	$ 2,331,887	$ 7,796,427	$ 8,059,436	$ 17,919,344	$36,107,094
Compton Unified School District	$ 13,973,018	$ 25,723,368	$ 48,270,987	$ 107,325,683	$195,293,056
Culver City Unified School District	$ 398,019	$ 3,049,030	$ 1,375,628	$ 3,058,570	$7,881,247
Inglewood Unified School District	$ 6,403,134	$ 9,296,870	$ 22,050,368	$ 49,026,774	$86,777,146
Long Beach Unified School District	$ 28,787,248	$ 60,626,596	$ 99,494,090	$ 221,215,097	$410,123,031
Los Angeles Unified School District	$ 349,400,229	$ 496,020,961	$ 1,207,592,257	$ 2,684,959,862	$4,737,973,310
Paramount Unified School District	$ 5,161,687	$ 18,927,053	$ 17,723,389	$ 39,406,171	$81,218,300
Pasadena Unified School District	$ 5,595,351	$ 12,937,453	$ 19,261,277	$ 42,825,512	$80,619,593
Pomona Unified School District	$ 10,167,114	$ 26,396,161	$ 35,139,439	$ 78,129,007	$149,831,722
Torrance Unified School District	$ 2,102,914	$ 11,454,527	$ 7,268,062	$ 16,159,805	$36,985,309
William S. Hart Union High School District	$ 2,010,117	$ 10,940,866	$ 6,947,339	$ 15,446,708	$35,345,030
Total					**$6,075,861,981**

COVID-19 & REOPENING SCHOOLS FOR BLACK STUDENTS

The coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated inequalities by **worsening conditions for households in poverty.**

Across Los Angeles County, there has been a notable rise in food insecurity and housing instability *(Pastor & Segura, 2020).* Additionally, despite the efforts of local school districts, large numbers of Black children (approximately 30%), like many Latinx children, have been unable to participate in virtual learning. Many lack stable access to the internet, reliable screen devices, and adequate learning conditions at home *(Galperin et al., 2020).* Inequities in learning opportunities were pervasive prior to the pandemic, and several reports documented that the state's poorest, most vulnerable children were more likely to be denied high quality educational experiences *(Dorn et al., 2020).* In addition to learning loss, equally as important has been the social emotional challenges that many youth are experiencing such as isolation, anxiety and depression. Nationally, over 45% of essential workers are Black and Latinx *(Karpman et al., 2020; National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2010).* The reality of caregivers being essential workers, and not having consistent connection to adults has also resulted in troubling trends of emotional well-being for larger numbers of Black youth *(Fegert et al., 2020)*.

There are significant implications for reopening schools and designing learning recovery plans for our most vulnerable student populations, especially for Black families who have been negatively impacted by the virus. We cannot ignore how the physical, social, emotional and psychological state of communities of color, Black families in particular, have been profoundly impacted by structural racism, apparent in economic, housing, health and social patterns, especially in our education systems *(Pastor & Segura, 2020).*

As new data becomes available, it will be hardly surprising to discover that academic disparities have grown more pronounced as a result of these combined hardships. Prior to the pandemic, Black students ranked behind their peers in academic performance on standardized assessments and completing A-G courses *(CDE, 2018, 2019).* They were more likely than any other group to drop out of school, to be placed in special education, to be subjected to punitive discipline, or to be labeled with a disability. Additionally, disproportionate numbers of Black students throughout Los Angeles County experience homelessness and face challenges navigating the foster care system *(Noguera et al., 2019, CDE, 2018, 2019, Romero, 2019).*

The impact of the global pandemic on the education of Black students may potentially be devastating. As schools reopen, this is an important opportunity to reimagine schooling. Now is the time to create innovative learning communities, such as robust summer enrichment and learning academies, exploratory learning, flexible school calendars, hybrid learning models, student led teaching and learning arrangements. This report is being released at a time when the educational impact of the pandemic is falling heavily on an already vulnerable student population. We can and must act boldly and imaginatively.

DIGGING
DEEPER:

Setting the Context

DESPITE CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION PAID TO THE PERSISTENCE OF RACIAL DISPARITIES IN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, THE SO-CALLED ACHIEVEMENT GAP CONTINUES TO BE A CHALLENGE.

(Edwards, 2019)

Black youth continue to show disadvantage on a range of academic outcomes relative to other students. **Despite the state's central commitment to equity, the relative performance of Black students in California and Los Angeles County on standardized assessments and graduation rates, are significantly lower than is observed for other groups** *(Cano, 2018; LA Schools Report, 2019; EdTrust 2015; McFarland, et. al, 2019; NAEP, 2018).*

In reviewing the educational context of Black children, the impact of social, health and environmental conditions on their academic performance has often been overlooked *(Raver et al., 2013).* Existing research shows that Black students are more likely to experience homelessness, to be placed in foster care and group homes, to be diagnosed with learning disabilities, and to experience various forms of trauma and abuse. However, these disparities are rarely acknowledged in building a more nuanced understanding of racial disparities in educational outcomes *(Edwards, 2019; Masten et al., 2014; National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2010; Obradović, 2019).* More often than not, education policy has approached these issues separately, if at all.

Two underlying factors are important to keep in mind before we explore academic, health and environmental patterns for school districts that serve the largest number of Black students in Los Angeles County. One, the concentration of economic inequality for Black families and its profound impact on the education, health and well-being for young people. And two, how shifting enrollment patterns present unique challenges for students attending schools in communities that historically have not served a significant Black student population like in the Antelope Valley. In the following sections we unpack some of the persistent challenges that disproportionately affect large numbers of Black youth, and attempt to document how a web of disadvantage, racism, poverty, environment, policing, and exclusion have had a profound impact on their educational opportunities, experiences, and outcomes.

Underlying Factor 1
POVERTY & ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

In most of the school districts in this study where Black students and their families live and attend schools, the overwhelming majority are significantly impacted by poverty and housing instability.
For example, in 10 out of 14 school districts where Black students attend school and their surrounding neighborhoods, more than 40% of these families live two times below the federal poverty line (see **FIGURE 1.1**).

The effects of poverty are also reflected in the proportion of families negatively impacted by housing insecurity. For example, a majority of the 14 school districts have more than 40% of families who are classified as low income who are also significantly impacted and burdened with housing instability (see **FIGURE 1.2**).

The economic challenges encountered by a large number of Black families across Los Angeles County begin to explain how concentrated poverty shapes the lived experiences of Black families outside of school, speaking to the holistic support needed to address the academic disparities documented in this report. The economic burdens faced by many families has resulted in significant mobility across and out of Los Angeles County as many have searched for more economically viable living situations. Perhaps no other group has been more acutely affected by this reality than Black families as noted by the data in the following section on declining and shifting enrollment across Los Angeles County (see **FIGURE 1.3**).
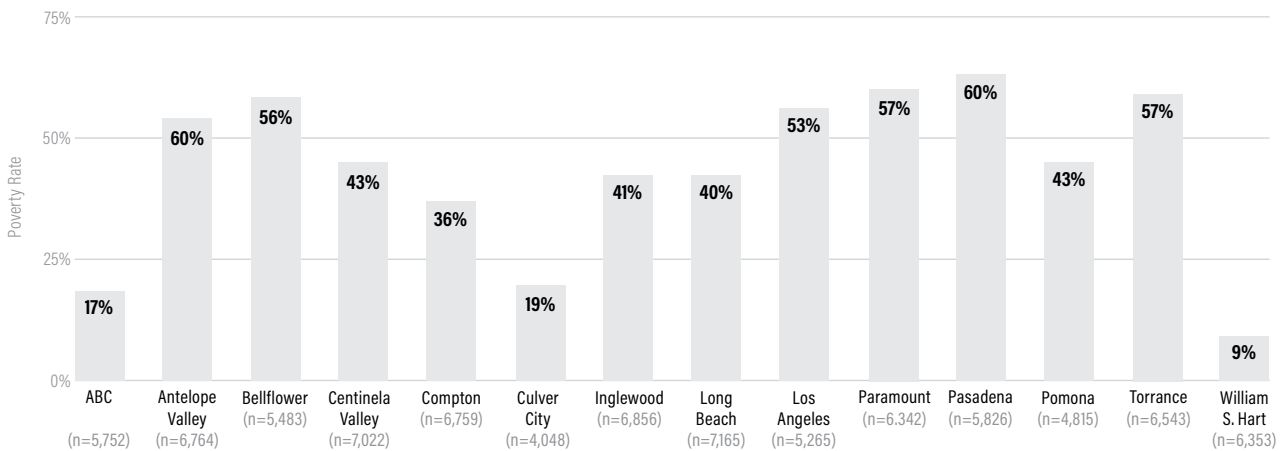
POVERTY

FIGURE 1.1

Percent of Population Living Below Two Times the Federal Poverty Level by District
2017*

District	Poverty Rate
ABC (n=5,752)	17%
Antelope Valley (n=6,764)	60%
Bellflower (n=5,483)	56%
Centinela Valley (n=7,022)	43%
Compton (n=6,759)	36%
Culver City (n=4,048)	19%
Inglewood (n=6,856)	41%
Long Beach (n=7,165)	40%
Los Angeles (n=5,265)	53%
Paramount (n=6.342)	57%
Pasadena (n=5,826)	60%
Pomona (n=4,815)	43%
Torrance (n=6,543)	57%
William S. Hart (n=6,353)	9%

HOUSING BURDEN

FIGURE 1.2

Percent Housing Burdened Low-Income Households by District
2017**

District	Housing Burdened
ABC	15%
Antelope Valley	20%
Bellflower	26%
Centinela Valley	22%
Compton	27%
Culver City	11%
Inglewood	20%
Long Beach	25%
Los Angeles	31%
Paramount	33%
Pasadena	17%
Pomona	26%
Torrance	36%
William S. Hart	9%
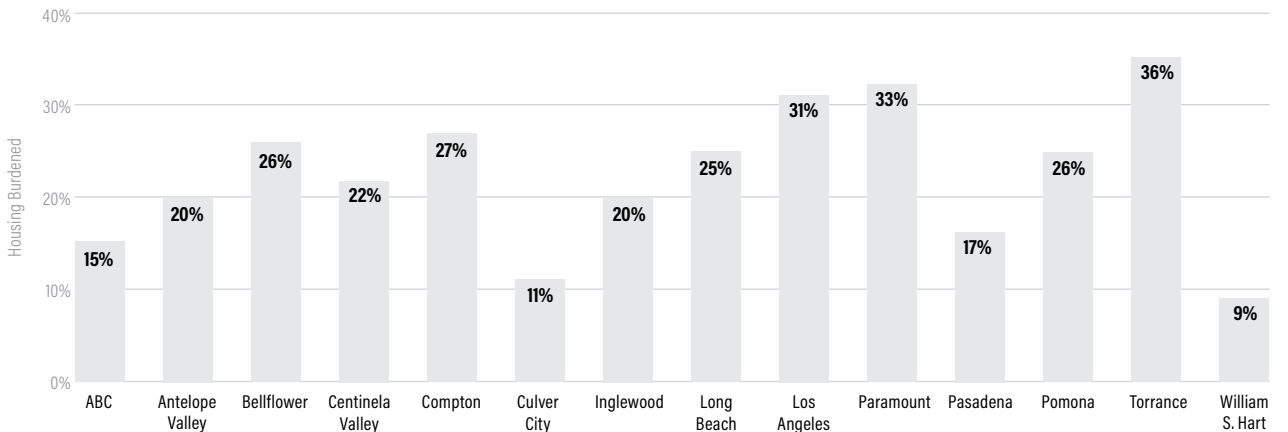
*The US Census Bureau's American Community Survey maintains information on the rate of poverty in different areas in California. The indicator is the percent of the population with incomes less than two times the federal poverty level. The data are from the years 2011-2015.

**Data from the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) is used for the indicator. CHAS data is a special analysis of US Census Bureau data. The indicator is the percent of households in a census tract that are both low income (making less than 80% of their county's median family income) and severely burdened by housing costs (paying greater than 50% of their income for housing costs).

IN 10 OUT OF THE 14 DISTRICTS, MORE THAN 40% OF FAMILIES LIVE TWO TIMES BELOW THE FEDERAL POVERTY LINE.

Underlying Factor 2
DECLINING & SHIFTING ENROLLMENT

From a high of 30% in the 1980s, today, Black youth comprise only 7% of the student population in Los Angeles County *(Public Health Institute & California Environmental Health Tracking Program, 2015).* Neighborhoods such as Watts and South LA and cities such as Compton and Inglewood that were predominantly Black in the 1970's and 80's are now predominantly Latinx. Yet, despite their decline in population, relatively few Black youth are enrolled in racially and economically integrated schools in Los Angeles County *(Orfield & Jarvie, 2020).* The vast majority of Black students in public schools in Los Angeles County are from low-income backgrounds and are also more likely to reside in neighborhoods where poverty is concentrated and the resources required to address their needs are lacking.

Over the last two decades there has been a 42% decline in Black student enrollment in Los Angeles County (**FIGURE 1.3**). Los Angeles County is still home to one of the largest Black populations in the nation *(U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).* If the 109,000 Black students in Los Angeles County were in a single school district, it would be the third largest school district in the state of California, and the 26th largest in the nation *(Noguera et al., 2019).*

In this report, we focus much of our analysis on the 14 school districts with Black student populations of at least 800 students. Overarching enrollment changes have varied significantly across Los Angeles County. Some school districts like Antelope Valley and William S. Hart, have seen dramatic increases, while others, like Pomona and Pasadena have seen significant declines (See **FIGURE 1.4**).
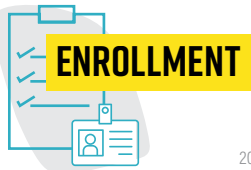
ENROLLMENT

FIGURE 1.3

Enrollment for Black Students in Los Angeles County
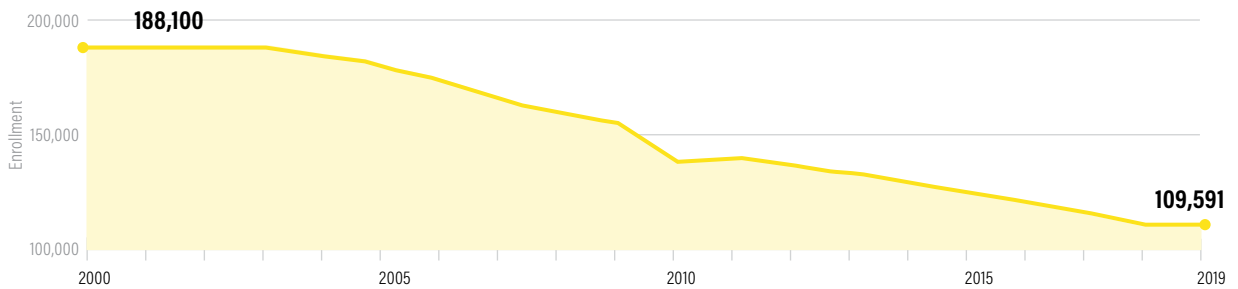*2000-2019**

FIGURE 1.4

School District Black Enrollment Shift
1993-2019*

District	Black 1993-94	Black 2018-19	Net Difference	Percentage Change
ABC Unified School District	1,878	1,755	-123	-7%
Antelope Valley Union High School District	1,548	3,758	2,210	+143%
Bellflower Unified School District	1,393	1,511	118	-8%
Centinela Valley Union High School District	1,179	1,160	-19	-2%
Compton Unified School District	11,158	4,147	-7,011	-63%
Culver City Unified School District	745	921	176	+24%
Inglewood Unified	7,371	4,665	-2,706	-37%
Long Beach Unified School District	15,661	9,155	-6,506	-42%
Los Angeles Unified School District	92,251	50,759	-41,492	-45%
Paramount Unified School District	1,997	1,198	-799	-40%
Pasadena Unified School District	7,793	2,145	-5,648	-72%
Pomona Unified School District	3,784	958	-2,826	-75%
Torrance Unified School District	663	942	279	+42%
William S. Hart Union High School District	264	989	725	+275%

Enrollment of Black students in Los Angeles County schools has **declined by 42 percent** over the past 20 years.

*Enrollment numbers were retrieved from DataQuest 2018-19 Enrollment Multi-Year Summary by Ethnicity, California Department of Education, 2019a

IF THE 109,000 BLACK STUDENTS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY WERE IN A SINGLE SCHOOL DISTRICT, IT WOULD BE THE THIRD LARGEST SCHOOL DISTRICT IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AND THE 26TH LARGEST IN THE NATION.

FIGURE 1.5 displays the racial and ethnic composition of students in the 14 school districts we examined. Because of the unequal geographical distribution across Los Angeles County, there are substantial variations in Black student enrollment across school districts. For example, Inglewood Unified School District (IUSD) has the largest proportion of Black students (40%) of any district in Los Angeles County. Pomona, Torrance and William S. Hart school districts all have relatively small Black student populations of around four percent.

FIGURE 1.5

Ethnic/Racial
Composition by
District

2018-2019*

School District	Black	Latina/o	Asian	White	All Other Ethnicities
ABC Unified School District	8.6%	45.8%	23.6%	5.9%	16.1%
Antelope Valley Union High School District	16.7%	63.3%	1.3%	12.3%	6.4%
Bellflower Unified School District	12.9%	64.9%	3.9%	9.5%	8.8%
Centinela Valley Union High School District	15.5%	74.5%	2.3%	2.7%	5%
Compton Unified School District	18.1%	78.7%	0.1%	0.5%	2.6%
Culver City Unified School District	12.9%	37.2%	10.6%	26.5%	12.8%
Inglewood Unified School District	40.4%	56.4%	0.5%	0.5%	2.2%
Long Beach Unified School District	12.5%	57.3%	7.4%	12.5%	10.3%
Los Angeles Unified School District	8.4%	74.1%	4.0%	10.7%	2.8%
Paramount Unified School District	8.1%	88.1%	0.8%	1.0%	2%
Pasadena Unified School District	12.1%	58.3%	5.0%	18.5%	6.1%
Pomona Unified School District	4.1%	86.5%	3.4%	3.0%	3%
Torrance Unified School District	4.0%	31.0%	29.2%	21.2%	14.6%
William S. Hart Union High School District	4.1%	39.5%	7.1%	38.4%	10.9%

*Enrollment numbers were retrieved from DataQuest 2018-19 Enrollment Multi-Year Summary by Ethnicity, California Department of Education, 2019a.

KEY
FINDINGS

HEALTH & NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS

This section sheds more light on the **community level environmental factors** that influence the overall wellness and academic performance of Black youth in Los Angeles County.

The health and neighborhood conditions bear in mind that concentrated poverty, which is often tied to environmental hazards, is a reality in most school districts serving 800 or more Black students (See **FIGURE 1.1)**. While we do not attempt to establish causation when documenting these patterns, we highlight and examine environmental conditions and health disparities that research suggests may adversely impact Black children and their family's overall health and well-being. Finally, we offer insights based on the information gathered in the hope that by drawing attention to these disparities, policy interventions can be designed to ameliorate them.

With limited access to park space (and attendant recreational outlets), higher lead exposure rates, greater proximity to waste dump sites, and higher concentrations of air pollution from surrounding oil production and high-density transportation arteries, predominantly poor, Black, and Latinx neighborhoods in Los Angeles County's urban core bear a demonstrably higher share of adverse environmental impacts compared to their whiter and more affluent counterparts. The result is higher rates of asthma and obesity as well as other deficiencies in the health, wellness, and well-being of Black, Latinx, and economically disadvantaged students, all of which are strongly correlated with lower attendance rates, higher dropout rates, chronic absenteeism, and lower academic performance *(Noguera et al., 2019).*

IN THIS SECTION:

DIESEL EMISSIONS

GROUNDWATER THREATS

ASTHMA

LOW BIRTH WEIGHT

In this iteration of the report, we examine indicators of the environmental and health contexts of Black students in the 14 focus districts. Specifically, we connect data from the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (Enviroscan) to specific census tracts with residential concentrations of Black people.[1] Census tracts are geographic units useful to represent the location of communities. We utilize these findings to suggest where interventions to reduce disparities in health may have educational impact.

The adverse effects of air and water pollution on children's development and overall health present major threats to their wellbeing and survival *(World Health Organization, 2018).* Substantial research connects ongoing exposure to pollutants to mental impairments as well as negative cognitive outcomes *(Johnson et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2005).* In neighborhoods where Black students and their families reside, higher levels of environmental pollution may play a significant role in disparities in academic performance and outcomes.

For example, the health consequences for children related to frequent exposure to air pollution includes the development of diseases such as asthma, and other chronic respiratory illnesses, which may in turn impact disproportionate chronic absences and negative academic outcomes *(Johnson et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2005).* Take for example diesel emissions or exhaust, which contains tiny particles known as fine particulate matter. These tiny or "fine" particles are so small that several thousand of them could fit in the period at the end of this sentence. Diesel engines are one of the largest sources of fine particulate matter, other than natural causes such as forest fires. Diesel exhaust also contains ozone-forming nitrogen oxides and toxic air pollutants. Fine particles and ozone pose serious public health problems for those who inhale them. Exposure to these pollutants causes lung damage and aggravates existing respiratory disease such as asthma and other respiratory ailments. **FIGURE 2.1** shows that in school districts such as Los Angeles and Long Beach, Black children are more likely to live in Census tracts where higher levels of diesel emission are present.
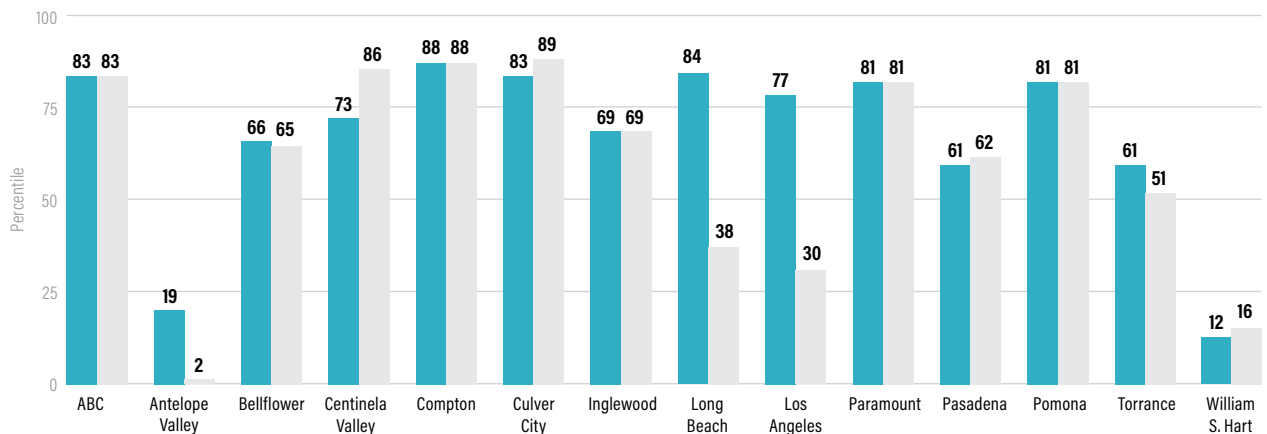
DIESEL EMISSIONS

FIGURE 2.1

Diesel Emissions: Percentile Rankings of Census Tracts by District

2018*

Black   White

1 The geographic area for each school district was examined to find census tracts with residential concentrations of Blacks (white residential concentrations were assessed for comparison). Selected census tracts with the highest numbers and concentrations were selected and connected with Enviroscan data to provide indicators of the varied health and environmental contexts of students in each district.

Health and environment data were retrieved from the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen) Version 3.0, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), 2017. This indicator uses Air Resources Board (ARB) data on emissions from on-road (trucks and buses) and off-road (ships and trains, for example) sources. Diesel emissions are available at a 4x4km grid statewide. The gridded emissions are then converted to census tracts.

*Census tracts with the highest concentration of each group were selected for each of the 14 districts. These tracts were used to obtain indicators of environmental/health context for students in that district. Percentile rankings (between 0-100) reflect the level of diesel emissions in the selected census tract relative to census tracts across California.
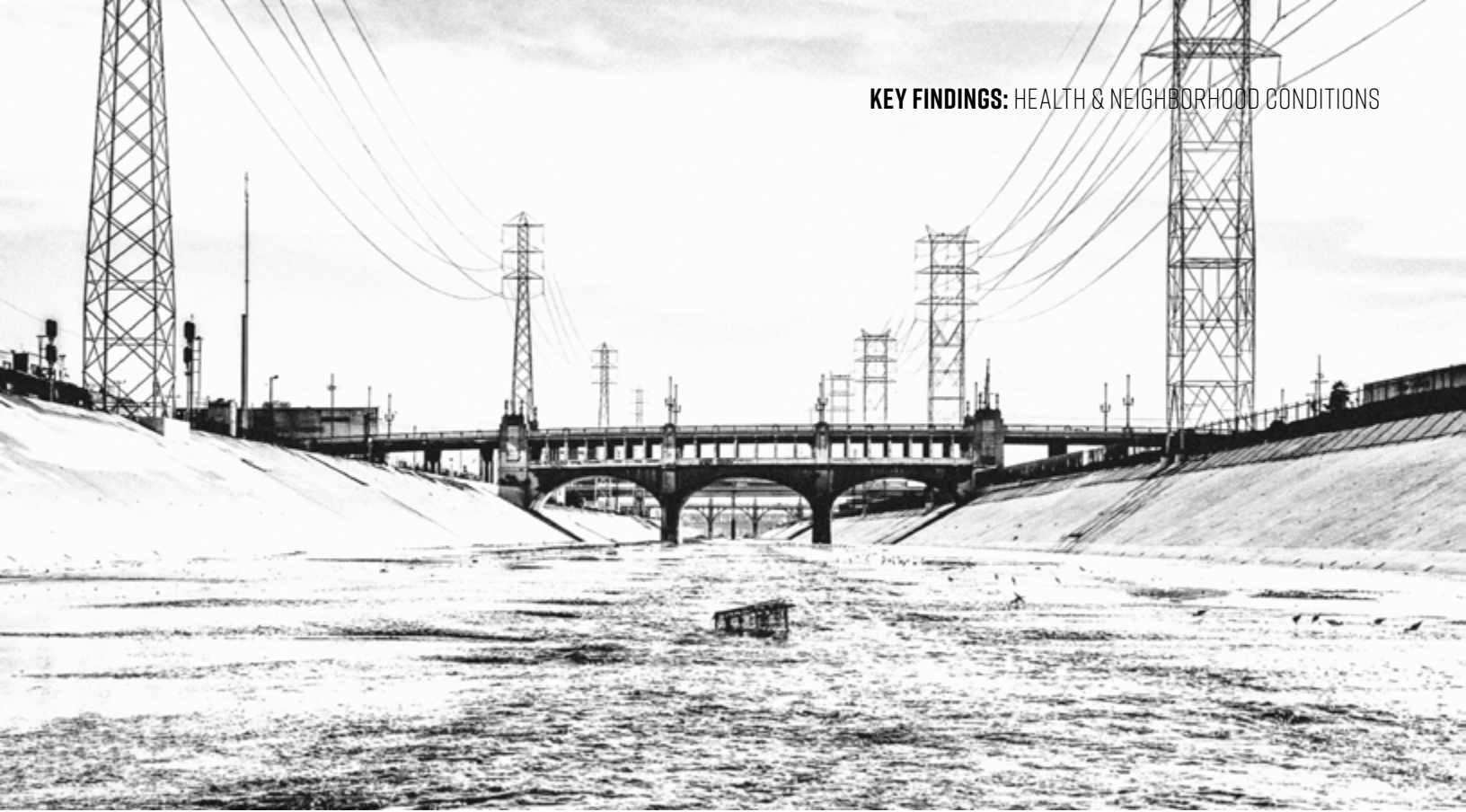
Diesel emissions are not the only dangerous contaminant that affect health and learning. Hazardous wastes are sometimes kept in below ground storage containers. When these containers leak, they can contaminate the soil and groundwater of the surrounding area. Contaminated water has been linked to impaired cognitive functioning and a range of other health problems *(Gong et al., 2011).* **FIGURE 2.2** displays percentile rankings for census tracts in each of the

focus districts. In several school districts, large disparities can be seen in the exposure to groundwater pollutants. **In Los Angeles and Torrance Unified school districts for example, Blacks reside in census tracts with the worst levels of groundwater pollution while Whites in those school districts generally live in areas with among the lowest levels of groundwater threats.**

GROUNDWATER THREATS

FIGURE 2.2

Groundwater Emissions: Percentile Rankings of Census Tracts by District
2018*
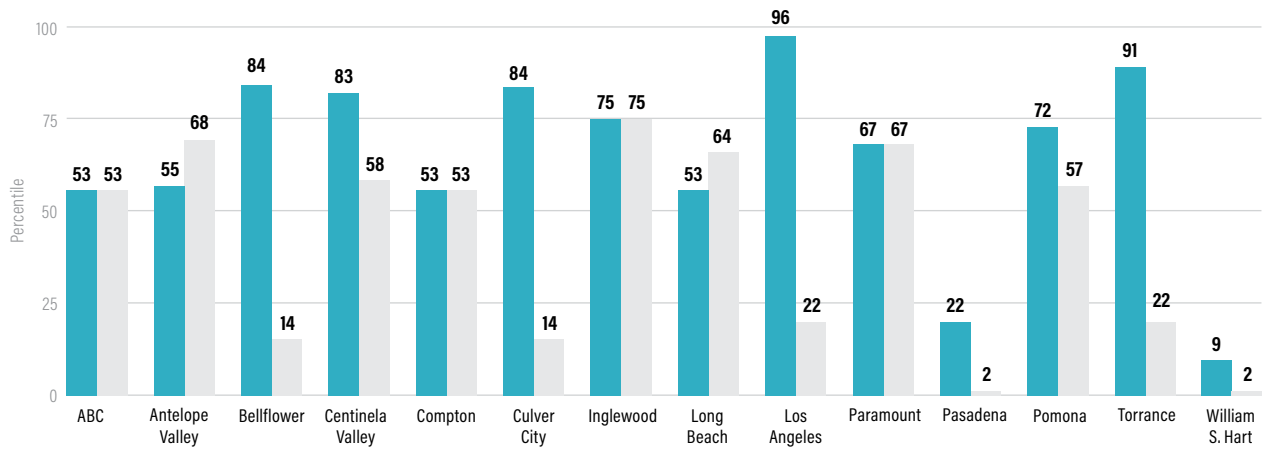
■ Black   ■ White

*Health and environment data were retrieved from the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen) Version 3.0, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), 2017. Groundwater threats, sum of weighted GeoTracker leaking underground storage tank sites within buffered distances to populated blocks of census tracts. The State Water Resources Control Board maintains a database of places where groundwater may be threatened by certain sources of pollution and scores for sites that threaten groundwater quality are added together for each census tract.
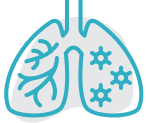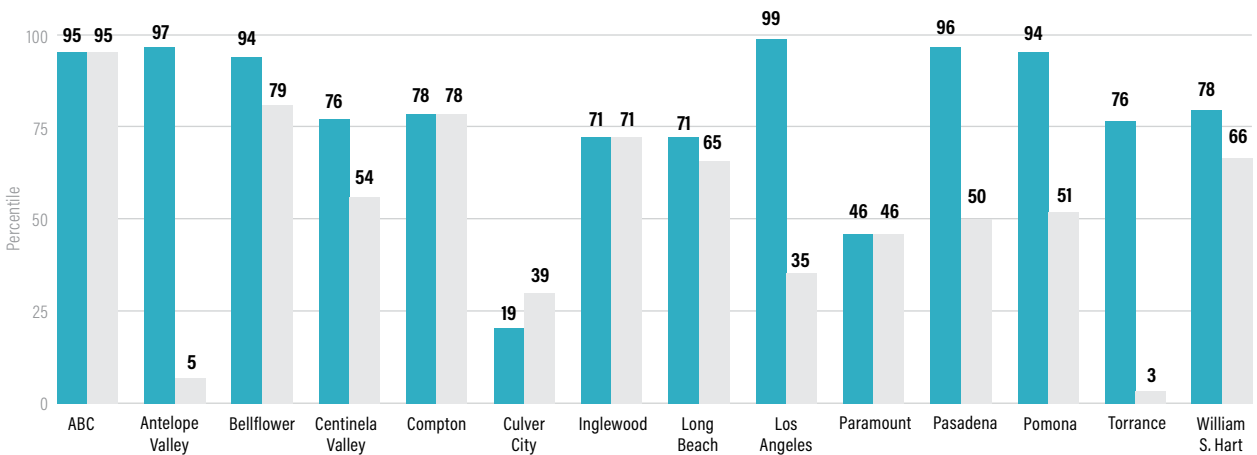
ASTHMA

FIGURE 2.3

Asthma: Percentile
Rankings of Age
Adjusted Rate
of Emergency
Department Visits
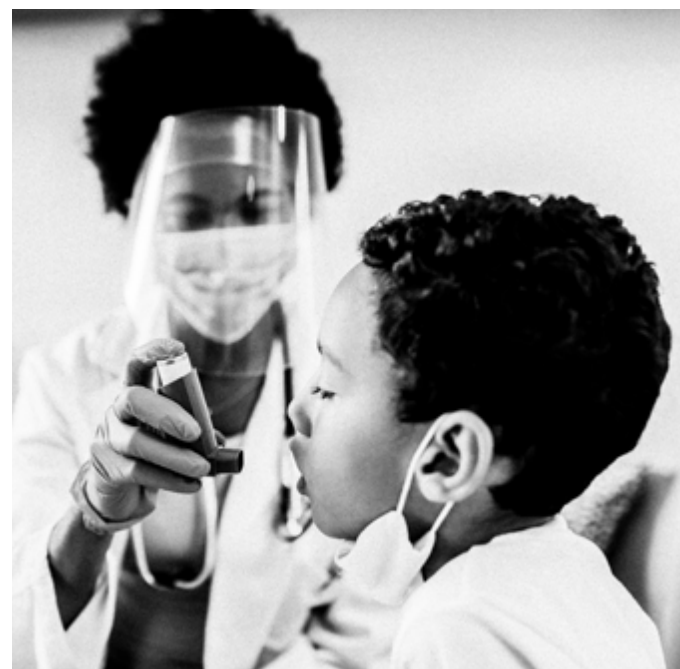by District
2018*

■ Black □ White

*Health and environment data were retrieved from the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen) Version 3.0, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), 2017. The indicator is the number of asthma emergency department visits per 10,000 people for 2011-2013 and was collected by The California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (CEHTP).

Asthma and low birth weight are two health conditions that have been directly linked to air and water pollution, and have been shown to disproportionately impact Black students and their families *(Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2009; Wolf et al., 2007).* Both asthma and low birth weight are thought to be impacted by a complex interplay of genetics and environmental conditions. Several studies have shown that asthma and other chronic respiratory conditions among children are correlated with lower rates of school attendance and academic performance *(Johnson et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2005).* While asthma is relatively common in children, low-income and Black children are significantly more likely to visit emergency-rooms and/or be hospitalized for problems brought on by the condition *(Public Health Institute & California Environmental Health Tracking Program, 2015).* The rate of emergency room visits due to asthma is an indicator of both the prevalence of people in the population with severe or more acute problems, as well as possible ongoing exposure to environmental triggers.

Our findings reveal that the rate of emergency room visits prompted by asthma somewhat mirrors the findings relating to diesel particulates. There are large disparities in several of the focus districts. **FIGURE 2.3** shows that in school districts such as Los Angeles, Long Beach, and Antelope Valley, census tracts containing the highest proportions of Blacks are also those in the 90th percentile or above for such emergency room visits. Whites in these same districts appear to be residentially distinct and live in census tracts with relatively low rates of asthma induced emergency room visits.
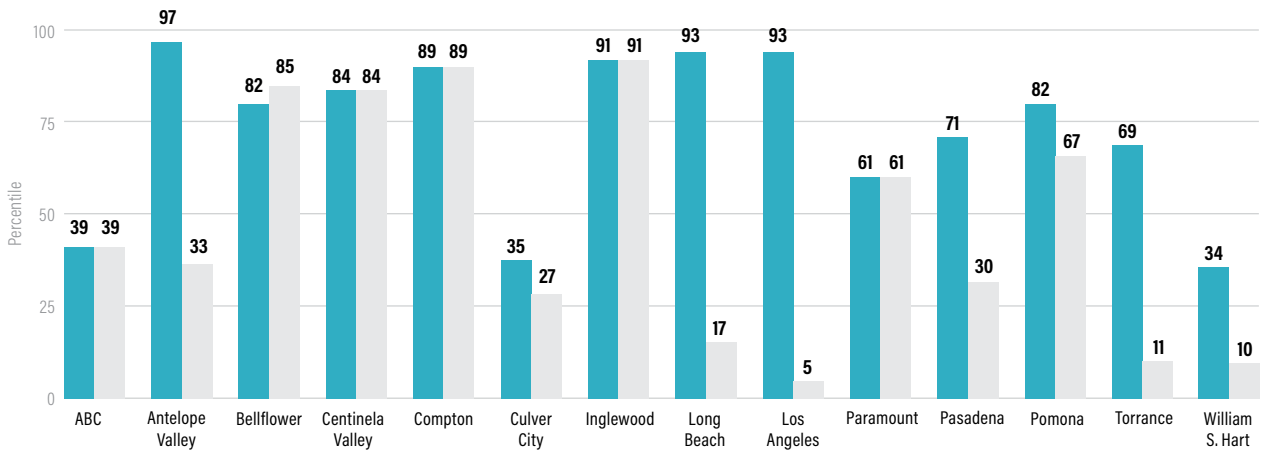
LOW BIRTH WEIGHT

FIGURE 2.4

Low Birth Weight: Percentile Rankings by District
2018*

■ Black ▢ White

District	Black	White
ABC	39	39
Antelope Valley	97	33
Bellflower	82	85
Centinela Valley	84	84
Compton	89	89
Culver City	35	27
Inglewood	91	91
Long Beach	93	17
Los Angeles	93	5
Paramount	61	61
Pasadena	71	30
Pomona	82	67
Torrance	69	11
William S. Hart	34	10

*Health and environment data were retrieved from the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen) Version 3.0, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), 2017. The California Department of Public Health collects information on where low birth weight infants are born in California. The indicator is the percentage of low weight births, averaged over a seven-year period (2006-2012).

Our findings also show that within each district, Black students and their families reside in areas where there are relatively higher rates of low birth weight babies born. **FIGURE 2.4** demonstrates that Antelope Valley, Torrance, and Los Angeles notably have both extreme spatial-racial disparities and are as well as contain census tracts that are highest percentile relative to other census tracts statewide.

It is important to note that districts with large racial disparities in environmental and health contexts tend to have higher proportions of Black students with poor academic outcomes. While schools can do very little to control the quality of air children breathe, or the water children drink, clearly such conditions have a profound impact on the overall health, well-being and development of young people, and subsequently their academic performance. To the extent that the burdens of pollution fall unevenly across Los Angeles County and within districts, these concerns should be included in comprehensive efforts to improve educational outcomes.

ACADEMIC
OUTCOMES

STATEWIDE STANDARDS

Statewide assessments provide education decision makers with a standardized measurement of whether students are meeting benchmarks, signifying effectiveness of instruction. California uses the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) summative standardized assessment. All public school students in the state of California are required to take this assessment in grades 3-8 and 11. The California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) system monitors student progress from year-to-year on state standards for English Language Arts/ Literacy (ELA) and Mathematics. Each district is required to post CAASPP scores, as well as other performance indicators (i.e. attendance, graduation, suspension rates, etc.) on a digital dashboard that can be viewed by the public. The SBAC has three components that are "designed to support teaching and learning" throughout the year *(CDE, 2018).* The system measures and tracks how students perform, and rates them at four different levels: 1) Standard not met: Student is in need of substantial improvement for success in future courses; 2) Standard nearly met: Student may require further development for success in future courses; 3) Standard met: Demonstrates progress toward mastery; 4) Standard exceeded: Student demonstrates advanced progress toward mastery.

IN THIS SECTION:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

MATH STANDARDS

GRADUATION RATES

UC/CSU ELIGIBILITY

In the following figures, the percentage of Black students not meeting grade-level standards is compared to the overall student percentage in that category for each district. **FIGURE 2.5 shows alarming percentages of Black third graders not meeting English Language Arts standards in many school districts across Los Angeles County.** In Inglewood Unified and Paramount Unified, at least half of all Black third grade students were assessed as being in need of substantial improvement in English Language Arts (ELA). In some school districts the high levels of Black students not meeting ELA standards is shared by other students in the district. In other school districts, however, there are strong racial differences in achievement. In Paramount Unified, for example, 1 in 2 (51 percent) of Black students are failing to meet standards in this area. On the other hand, in the

Inglewood Unified school district racial disparities in achievement are much less. For example, 1 in 2 (50 percent) of Black students are failing which is only slightly higher than the overall district total numbers (46 percent) as evidenced in **FIGURE 2.5**.

FIGURE 2.6 shows the percentages of third grade students not meeting Mathematics standards across 14 school districts that serve 800 Black hundred students or more in Los Angeles County. Over 50% of Black students in the Inglewood Unified district are struggling to meet state Mathematics standards that are foundational to their academic progress. Students in smaller school districts like Culver City and Torrance Unified have a smaller proportion of Black students; smaller numbers of students overall; as well as a 3 percent gap in performance for Culver City on Mathematics for Culver City and 7 percent gap for Torrance.

THIRD GRADE ELA STANDARDS

FIGURE 2.5

Percent of Third Grade Students Not Meeting SBAC ELA Standards by District
2018-2019*

■ Black   ■ District Total

THIRD GRADE MATHEMATICS STANDARDS

FIGURE 2.6

Percent of Third Grade Students Not Meeting SBAC Mathematics Standards by District
2018-2019*

■ Black   ■ District Total
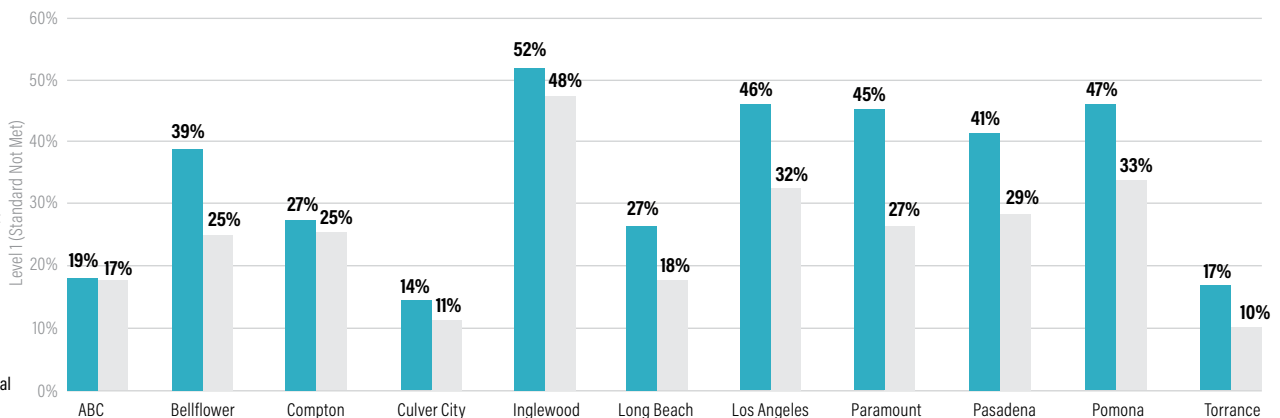
*Data for Antelope Valley, William S. Hart, and Centinela Valley were unavailable. English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) data were retrieved from the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) System online database, California Department of Education, 2019f.

FIGURE 2.7 displays the percentage of eighth graders deemed as needing substantial support in English and Language Arts. In school districts such as Compton, Inglewood, Pomona, and Los Angeles, large percentages of Black eighth graders were deemed in need of substantial improvement in English and Language arts, with substantial racial disparities observed in the Compton and Long Beach school districts. In some respects, the circumstance of struggling eighth graders mirrors the performance of third graders **(FIGURE 2.5)**. In Compton, Inglewood and Pomona approximately 1 in 2 Black eighth graders are in need of substantial support to meet English Language Arts standards. In Compton and Pomona, high levels are accompanied with substantial racial disparities

where almost 1 in 2 (47%) of students in Pomona are significantly behind compared to the rest of their counterparts in the district.

FIGURE 2.8 displays eighth graders deemed as needing substantial support in Mathematics. Among eighth graders in Compton and Inglewood school districts, almost 3 in 4 Black students in those school districts do not meet the standard set for Mathematics acquisition. Among the 14 school districts, all but ABC and William S. Hart indicate that almost 50 percent of Black eighth graders are not meeting Mathematics standards. More importantly, **Torrance, Long Beach, and Compton have even more alarming racial disparities between Black and non-Black students.**
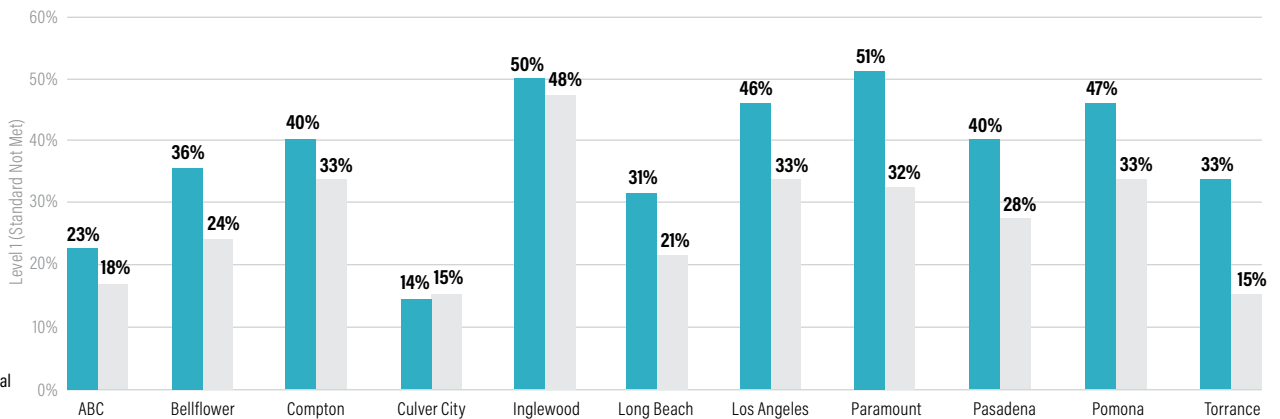
EIGHTH GRADE ELA STANDARDS

FIGURE 2.7

Percent of Eighth Grade Students Not Meeting SBAC ELA Standards by District

2018-2019*

Black   District Total

EIGHTH GRADE MATHEMATICS STANDARDS

FIGURE 2.8

Percent of Eighth Grade Students Not Meeting SBAC Mathematics Standards by District

2018-2019*

Black   District Total
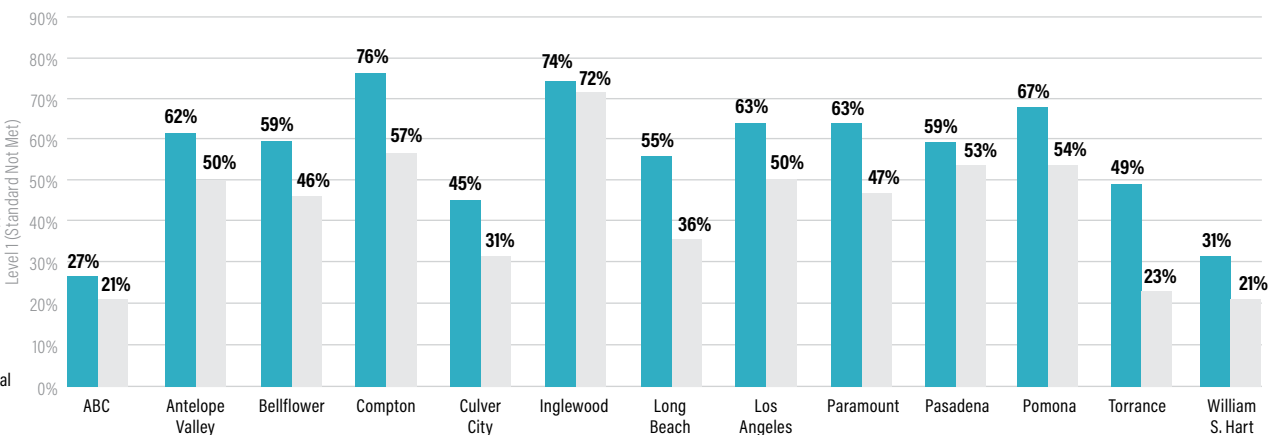
*Data for Centinela Valley not available. English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) data were retrieved from the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) System online database, California Department of Education, 2019f.

FIGURE 2.9 shows that there are differences between Los Angeles County school districts in the proportion of 11th grade Black students deemed in need of substantial support to meet state standards in English and Language Arts. Over 50% of Black students in the Antelope Valley and Compton districts were assessed in this category, and Paramount Unified very close. While racial disparities are very low in districts like Culver, Torrance and Inglewood, they are exceptionally high in Los Angeles, Antelope Valley and Pomona districts.

As shown by **FIGURE 2.10**, there are alarmingly high proportions of 11th grade students that clearly do not meet state Mathematics standards. In all but a few (Hart, ABC, & Torrance) of the selected districts, close to/exceeding half of the students in the district do not meet the standards for Mathematics. In Antelope Valley, Compton, and Inglewood districts the proportion of Black students not meeting 11th grade Mathematics standards exceeds 80% or 8 in 10 students not meeting standards.
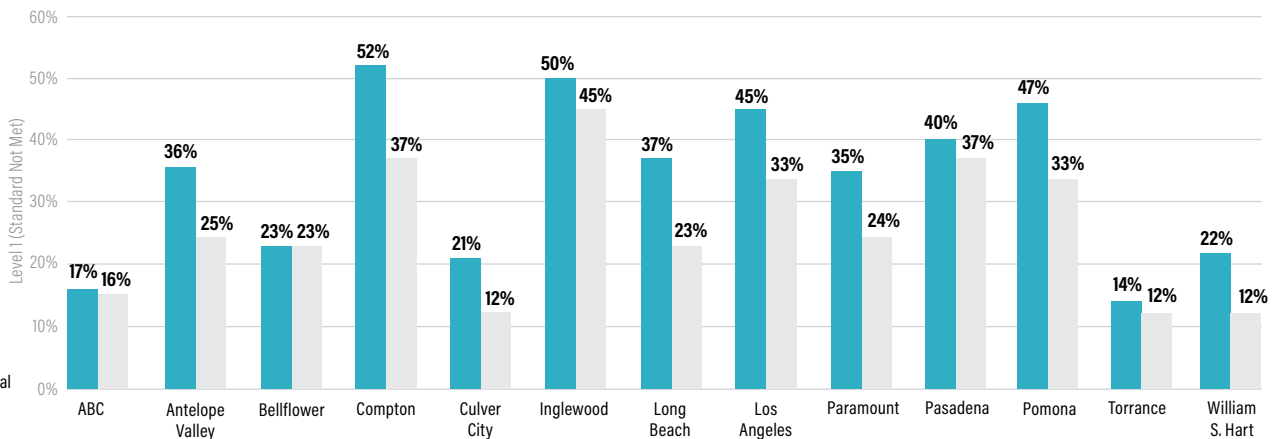
11TH GRADE ELA STANDARDS

FIGURE 2.9

Percent of 11th Grade Students Not Meeting SBAC ELA Standards by District

2018-2019*

■ Black ▢ District Total

| District	Black	District Total
ABC	22%	13%
Antelope Valley	51%	35%
Bellflower	23%	18%
Centinela Valley	36%	28%
Compton	51%	44%
Culver City	15%	12%
Inglewood	46%	44%
Long Beach	33%	24%
Los Angeles	38%	25%
Paramount	49%	38%
Pasadena	40%	37%
Pomona	44%	30%
Torrance	14%	12%
William S. Hart	8%	7%

Level 1 (Standard Not Met)
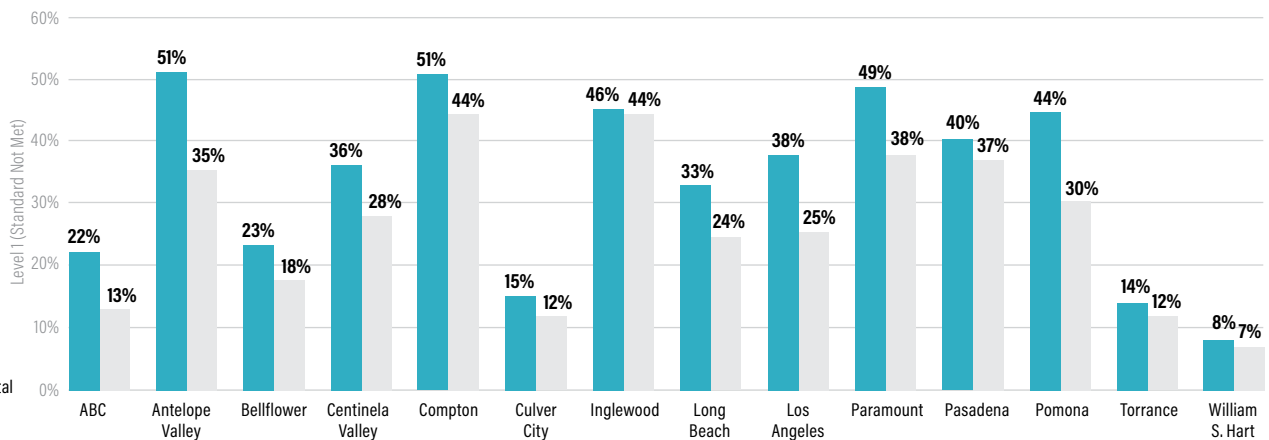
11TH GRADE MATHEMATICS STANDARDS

FIGURE 2.10

Percent of 11th Grade Students Not Meeting SBAC Mathematics Standards by District

2018-2019*

■ Black ▢ District Total

District	Black	District Total
ABC	41%	30%
Antelope Valley	83%	70%
Bellflower	60%	49%
Centinela Valley	72%	65%
Compton	81%	72%
Culver City	49%	36%
Inglewood	81%	80%
Long Beach	66%	49%
Los Angeles	68%	51%
Paramount	78%	59%
Pasadena	59%	53%
Pomona	68%	60%
Torrance	49%	23%
William S. Hart	37%	26%

Level 1 (Standard Not Met)
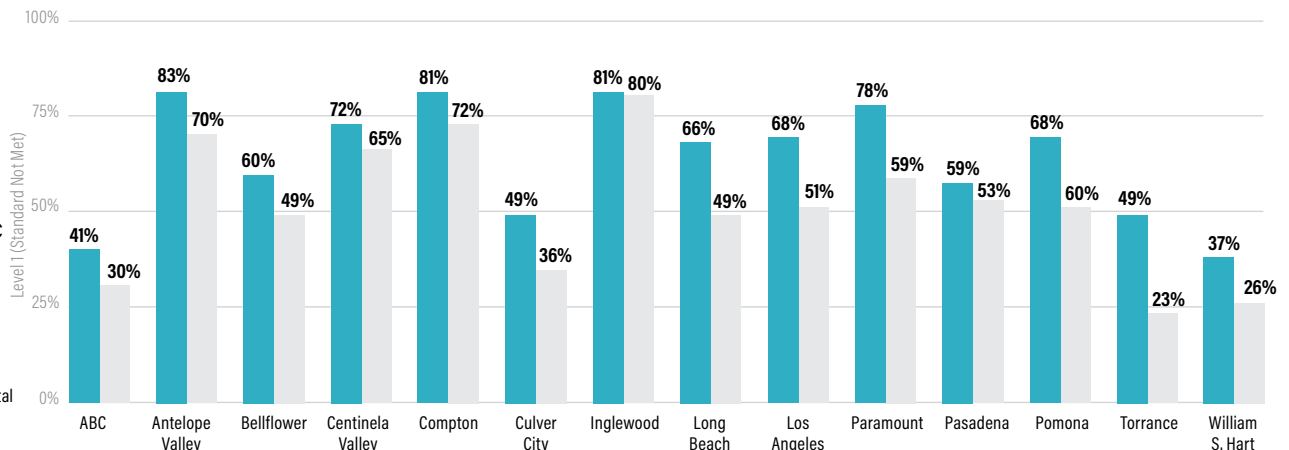
*English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) data were retrieved from the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) System online database, California Department of Education, 2019f.

GRADUATION RATES

The graduation rate is the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class *(Public Health Institute & California Environmental Health Tracking Program, 2015).* **While graduation rates for most student groups are near or exceeding county levels, Black students continue to graduate at a lower rate compared to their counterparts.** In the 14 school districts we examined, there is a great deal of variation in graduation rates. Contrastingly, only 76% of Black students in Antelope Valley graduated in four years compared to 97% of Black students in Torrance Unified (See **FIGURE 2.11**).

UC/CSU ELIGIBILITY

Another way to assess the quality of educational opportunity is by determining college eligibility and admission. To be eligible for admission, a California resident must complete A-G requirements with a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher. The A-G requirements are a sequence of high school courses that students must complete (with a grade of C or better) to be minimally eligible for admission to the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU). They represent the basic level of academic preparation that high school students should achieve to undertake university work *(California Department of Education, 2018).*
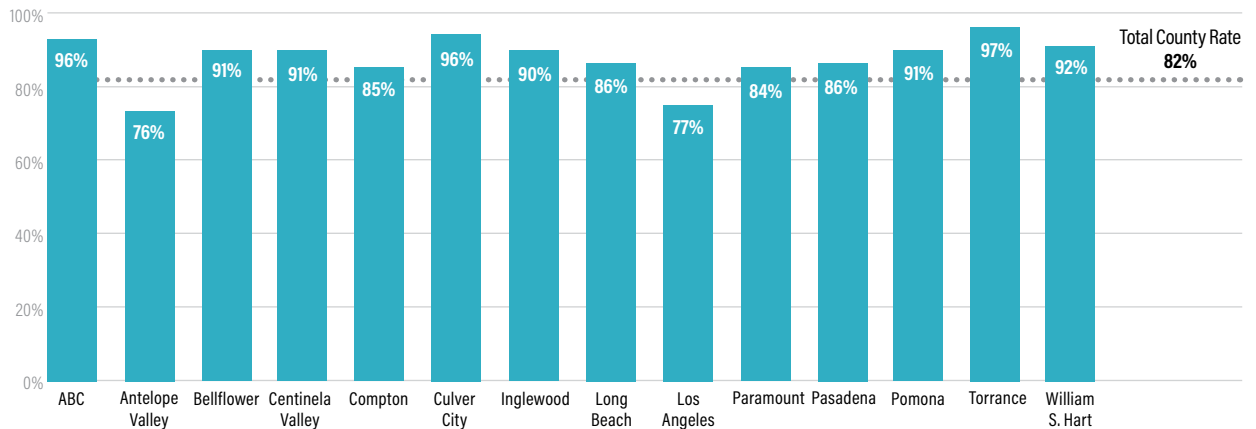
UC/CSU Eligibility Gap by District

In 13 of the 14 school districts, the eligibility rate of Black students is below that of both overall county and state eligibility rates. Notably, 62% of Black students in Culver City Unified—a small, racially, ethnically and economically diverse district—is the only district in our study that exceeded both county and state.

GRADUATION RATES

FIGURE 2.11

Black Student Aggregate Graduation Rate by District
2018-2019*

Graduation rates by district (Black students): ABC 96%, Antelope Valley 76%, Bellflower 91%, Centinela Valley 91%, Compton 85%, Culver City 96%, Inglewood 90%, Long Beach 86%, Los Angeles 77%, Paramount 84%, Pasadena 86%, Pomona 91%, Torrance 97%, William S. Hart 92%. Total County Rate 82%.

UC/CSU ELIGIBILITY

FIGURE 2.12

Percent of Black Graduates Meeting UC/CSU Requirements by District
2018-2019**
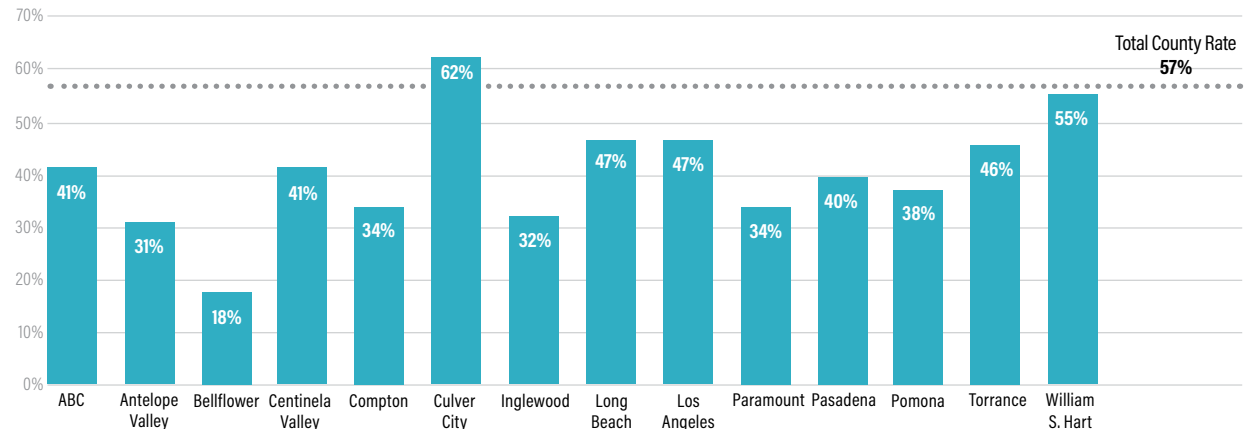
UC/CSU eligibility by district (Black graduates): ABC 41%, Antelope Valley 31%, Bellflower 18%, Centinela Valley 41%, Compton 34%, Culver City 62%, Inglewood 32%, Long Beach 47%, Los Angeles 47%, Paramount 34%, Pasadena 40%, Pomona 38%, Torrance 46%, William S. Hart 55%. Total County Rate 57%.

*Graduation rates were retrieved from DataQuest 2018-19 Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate, California Department of Education, 2019e

**UC/CSU Requirements Met data were retrieved from DataQuest 2018-19 Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate, California Department of Education, 2019e

SCHOOL POLICING & CLIMATE

Although the presence of police and armed security officers on school campuses is now fairly common in urban areas, it is a **relatively recent trend.**

As late as 1970, there were fewer than 100 police or 'school resource officers' on campuses nationwide *(National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2010).* In Los Angeles County, few school districts have their own police departments, but they include LAUSD, which has the largest school police department in the world *(Wolf, 2018).* Recent efforts to shrink the role of LAUSD's as adopted by the board will result in a smaller police presence. To provide clarity on the schools that were part of our study and the type of security that was in place, **TABLE 2.1** shows that each had some type of campus security, school resource officers, video surveillance, or metal detectors across their school districts.

Every district in our selected sample has some form of police involvement on high school campuses. The vast majority have sworn law enforcement officers (SROs) assigned to high school campuses and have video surveillance of students on campus. Many school districts subject middle and high school students to random searches, and may have controlled entry to the campus that includes the use of metal detectors. The presence of police officers on campus is associated with an increase in student arrests for offenses that were not previously regarded as criminal *(Gregory et al., 2010).* The arrests and other involvement with school police in Los Angeles County has fallen especially hard on Black students. For example, a recent report analyzing 2014-2017 arrest, citation and diversion data, found that **although Black student enrollment during this period was just 8% in LAUSD, at one of the school districts included in this report, Black students accounted for 25% of serious interactions with school police** *(Wolf, 2018; Edwards et al., 2020).*
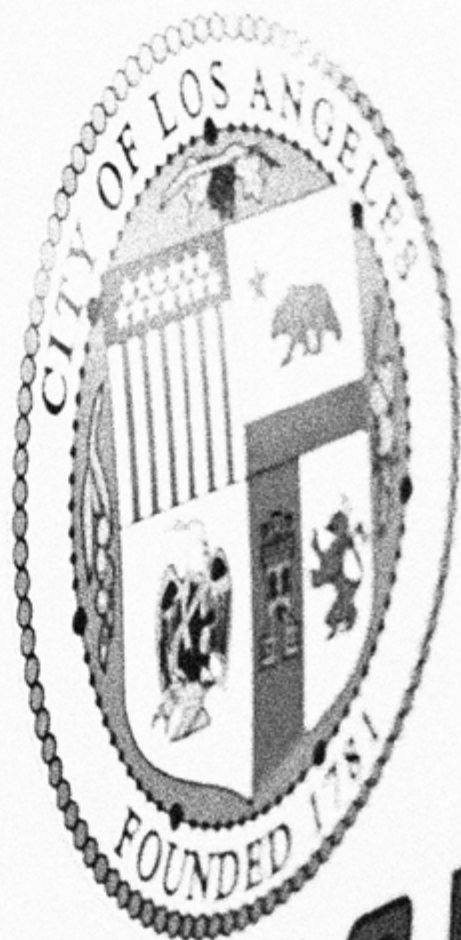
IN THIS SECTION:

SUSPENSIONS & EXPULSIONS
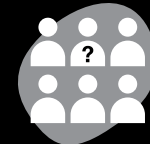
CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

BLACK STUDENT ENROLLMENT IS JUST 8% IN LAUSD, BUT BLACK STUDENTS ACCOUNT FOR 25% OF SERIOUS INTERACTIONS WITH SCHOOL POLICE.*

TABLE 2.1

School Safety
Summary by District*

District	Safety Infrastructure
ABC Unified School District	SRO at selected schools; Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department partnership. School Intervention Assistant (1 at each middle school, 4 at each HS which patrol everyday and provide campus security); Surveillance System.
Antelope Valley Union High School District	Enhanced fencing; Security personnel; Surveillance cameras
Bellflower Unified School District	Campus Security
Centinela Valley Union High School District	Security Department; Surveillance System: Security Cameras; Metal Detector at Select High School; K-9 Services; Recordings may be referred to law enforcement.
Compton Unified School District	School Resource Officers (SRO) stationed at select high schools; Uniformed patrol services for entire district; Traffic officers/Crossing guards; Campus Security Assistants at all school sites, Detective Bureau which investigates crime and prepares cases for prosecution
Culver City Unified School District	Security Department; SRO (Sworn Law Enforcement); Video Surveillance; Metal Detectors at Entrance(High School)
Inglewood Unified School District	Campus Security; Surveillance Systems; Random Search & Seizure
Long Beach Unified School District	Campus Security officers, school resource officers, and armed school safety officers; Security Cameras; School Safety Communications Center; School fencing;
Los Angeles Unified School District	District Police department; Random Searches; Video Surveillance; Metal Detectors at Selected High Schools and Middle Schools
Paramount Unified School District	Campus Security Officers; Security Cameras at select schools;
Pasadena Unified School District	Campus Security; Pasadena Safe Schools Team (composed of members of the Pasadena Police Department). Police hired for large events
Pomona Unified School District	School Resource Officer (SRO) assigned to each campus
Torrance Unified School District	Campus Security; Surveillance System at all schools (Video and Audio); Close work with Torrance PD; Random search and seizure; District contraband dog detection program. Measure T 15 Million.
William S. Hart Union High School District	A School Resource Officer (SRO) is assigned to each campus (6 deputies shared between Junior High and High Schools; BARK system of reporting

*School safety data were retrieved from multiple publicly available sources:

ABC Unified School District data were retrieved from "ABC School Safety", 2019

Antelope Valley Union High School District data were retrieved from "School Safety", 2019

Bellflower Unified School District data were retrieved from "Bellflower High School boosts security threat after social media threat", 2017 and "Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) Template", 2018

Centinela Valley Union High School District data were retrieved from "Security", 2019

Compton Unified School District data were retrieved from "Elevate Student Safety", 2014

Culver City Unified School Districtdata were retrieved from "CCUSD School Safety Information", 2019

Inglewood Unified School District data were retrieved from "Campus Security", 2014

Long Beach Unified School District were retrieved from "Long Beach Unified eliminates security positions, approves fencing and cameras", 2018 and "About Measure K", 2018

Los Angeles Unified School District data were retrieved from, "Los Angeles School Police Department," 2019x, and "Administrative Searches to Ensure School Safety," 2015

Paramount Unified School District data were retrieved from "Pasadena Unified Has No Contact With Police", 2020x and "School Safety", 2019

Pasadena Unified School District data were retrieved from "Board of Education Meeting", 2017

Pomona Unified safety data were retrieved from "District Security Officer at Pomona Unified School District," 2017

Torrance Unified School District data were retrieved from "Torrance installs comprehensive security measures after school shootings nationwide", 2018

William S. Hart Unified safety data were retrieved from "Safety Planning Message from the Superintendent's Office - William S. Hart Union High School District," 2020

SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS

One of the most vexing issues that has plagued Black students for the last several decades has been excessive and disproportionate punishment and discipline in schools. Nationally, research shows that Black students are overrepresented among students who are suspended and expelled from school *(Civil Rights Data Collection, 2016; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2018; Wood et al., 2018).* In our examination of the 14 school districts, we found a great deal of variation in suspension rates for both Black male and female students (See **FIGURE 2.13**). In Antelope Valley, Bellflower and Pasadena school districts, Black male students are suspended at rates far greater than Los Angeles County average for Black male students (22%, 13% and 14%, respectively).

FIGURE 2.14 depicts suspension rates of Black female students in the 14 school districts we examined during the

2018-2019 school year. As was seen for boys, the same three school districts, Antelope Valley, Bellflower, and Pasadena, all have suspension rates for girls that are at least double the overall county rate for female students and far exceeding that observed for other girls within those school districts.

The data suggests that while the suspension rate of Black boys tend to be higher than that of Black girls, school districts with relatively high rates of suspensions for Black boys, are generally also school districts with high rates of suspensions for Black girls. Interestingly, Antelope Valley stands out as having high rates of Black suspensions for both boys and girls. While these data are not new, they continue to pose significant loss of learning for too many Black youth in Los Angeles County and across the state of California. Immediate addressing and eradication of school suspension practices is needed.

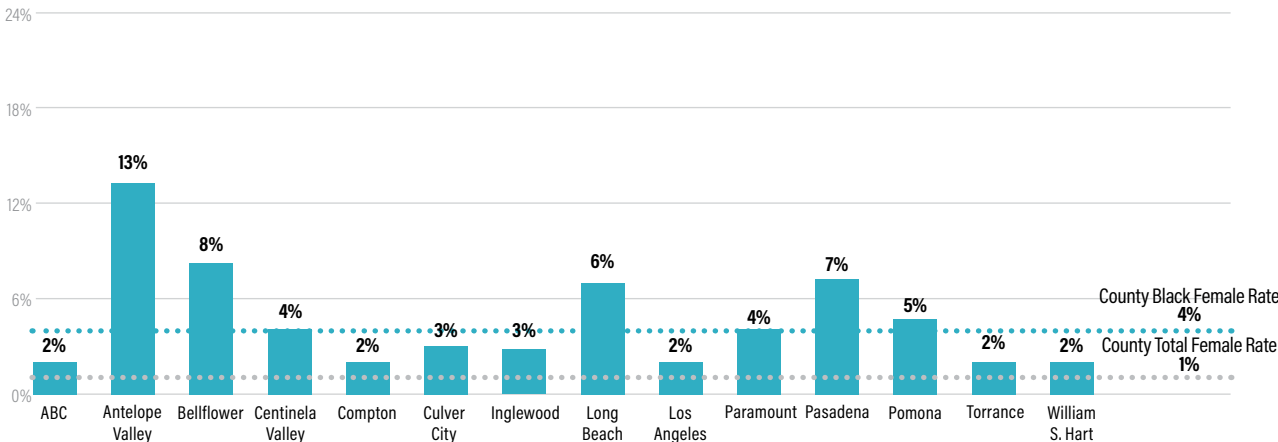## MALE SUSPENSIONS

FIGURE 2.13

Black Male Suspension Rate by District
*2018-2019**
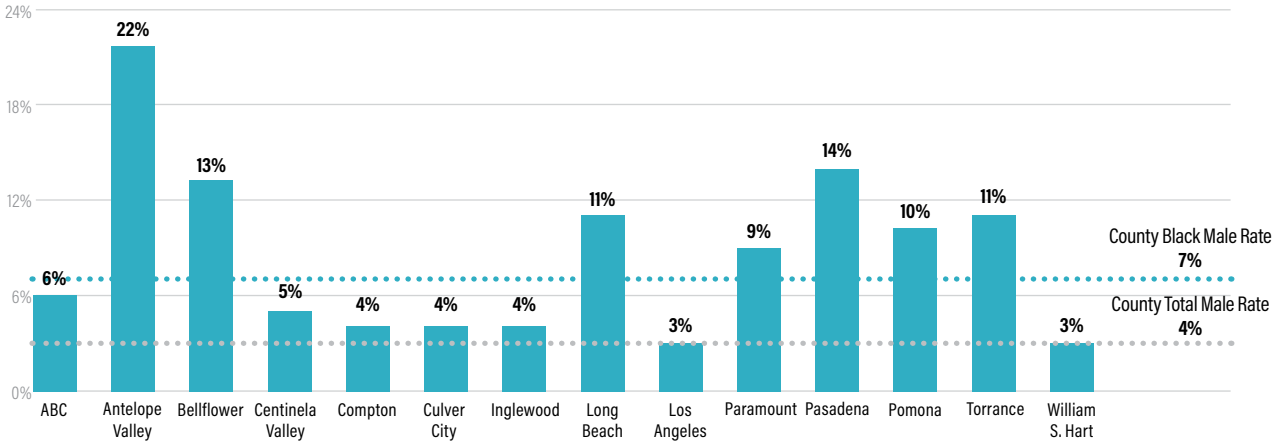
FEMALE SUSPENSIONS

FIGURE 2.14

Black Female Suspension Rate by District
*2018-2019**

*Suspension rate data were retrieved from DataQuest 2018-19 Suspension Rate, California Department of Education, 2019b
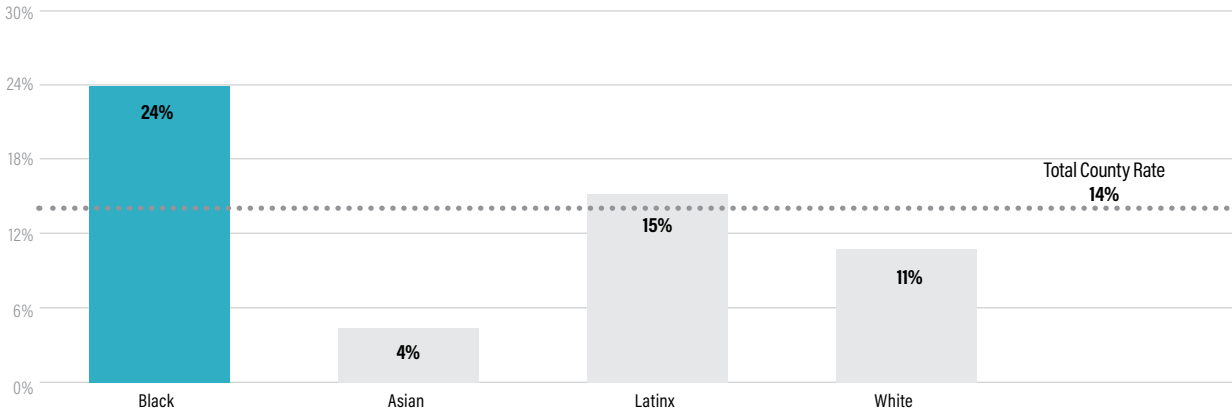
CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

Like students who are suspended, those who are chronically absent, no matter the reason of their absence, have less access to instructional time. Black students in Los Angeles County exhibit the highest levels of chronic absence compared to their peers. Chronic absence is defined as missing more than 10% of the school year. In general, chronically absent students miss more than three weeks of school. Research shows that chronic absenteeism dramatically affects the academic achievement of students in all grade levels *(Smerillo et al., 2018).* Overall, 24% of Black students in Los Angeles County are chronically absent; this percentage is significantly higher than white students (11%), Asian students (4%), Hispanic students (15%), and the state and county averages (14%) reflected below in **FIGURE 2.15.**

As illustrated by **FIGURE 2.16,** chronic absenteeism rates of Black students vary dramatically between school districts. Approximately a third of Black students in Antelope Valley and Centinela Valley school districts are absent three weeks or more of the school year. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Black student chronic absenteeism rates in Culver City; William S. Hart; and Torrance are much lower. Chronic absenteeism can vary, but our data suggests that **economic based reasons are certainly at play that require deeper examination to explain significant loss of learning time for many students. Moreover, the impact of COVID-19 could lead to an even higher surge in chronic absenteeism for the most vulnerable student populations.**

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

FIGURE 2.15

Los Angeles County Chronic Absenteeism Rate by Race
2018-2019*

BLACK CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

FIGURE 2.16

Black Student Chronic Absenteeism Rate by District
2018-2019**
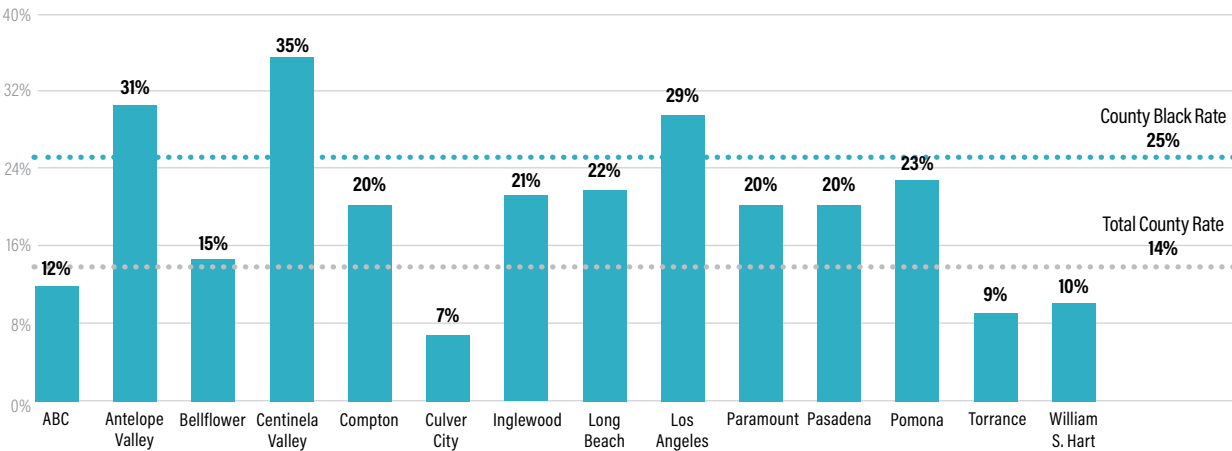
**Los Angeles County Chronic Absenteeism Rates by Race were retrieved from DataQuest County Enrollment and filtered by "Ethnicity", California Department of Education, 2019c

***Chronic Black Student Chronic Absenteeism Rate by District were retrieved from DataQuest County Enrollment and filtered by "Ethnicity", California Department of Education, 2019c

BLACK STUDENTS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY EXHIBIT THE ==HIGHEST LEVELS OF CHRONIC ABSENCE COMPARED TO THEIR PEERS.==
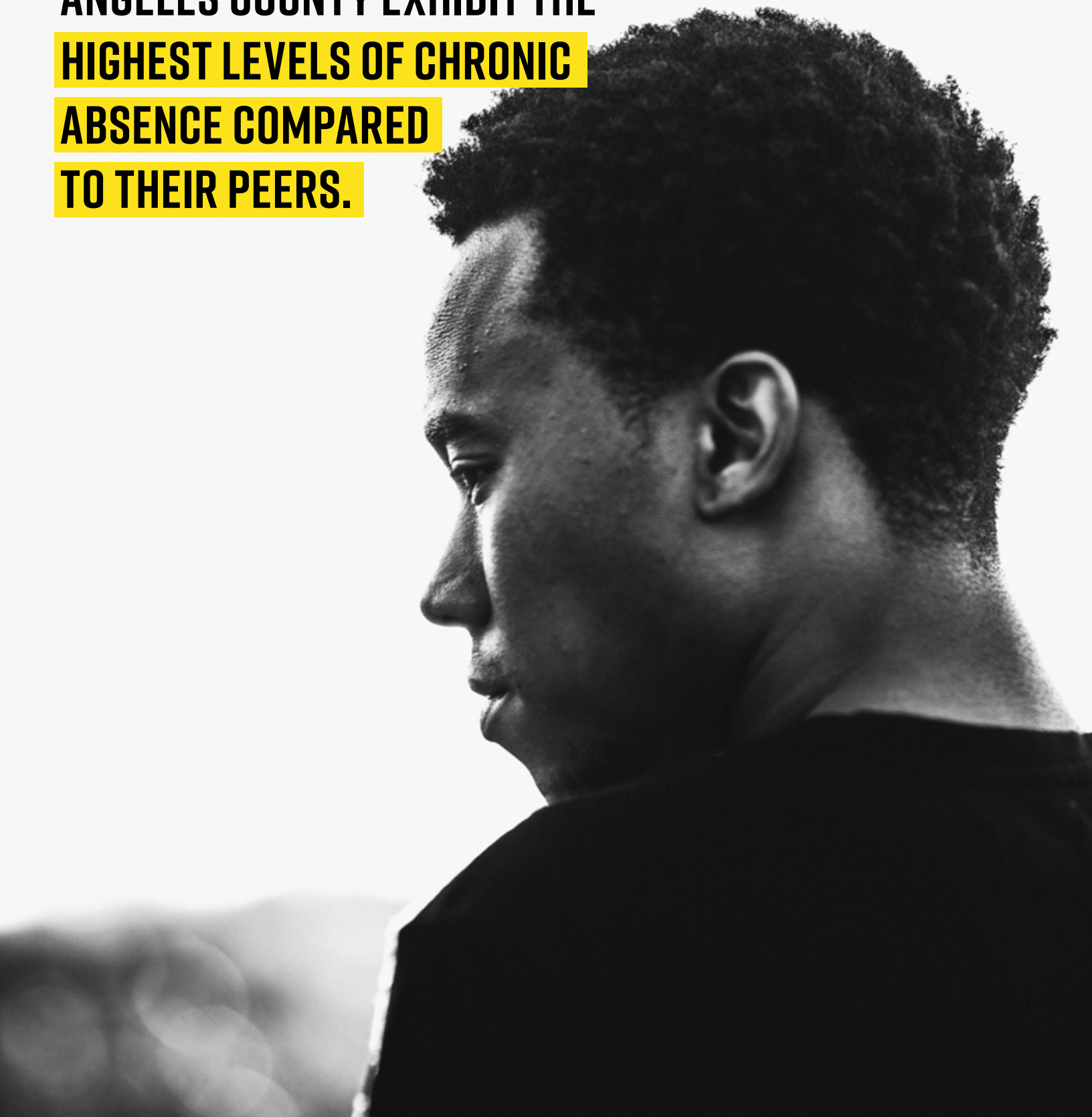
SPECIAL POPULATIONS OF BLACK STUDENTS

There are a number of student groups who **face more challenging circumstances** than their peers.

This section gives attention to sub groups of Black youth who face unique circumstances that require additional time, attention, intervention and support. Moreover, this section highlights how the subgroups of students that we focus on here (those that are economically disadvantaged, students in foster care, those chronically absent, students with disabilities, and students experiencing homelessness) fare even worse when they are Black. Many of these student subgroups are being harmed even more by cumulative disadvantage which requires even more intentional and intense interventions.

IN THIS SECTION:

SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE

STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

Chronic absenteeism is typically an indication of much deeper challenges that youth face at home. To capture a more complete picture of what may explain chronic absenteeism are patterns of economic disadvantage that disproportionately affect Black youth in Los Angeles County. Similar to Los Angeles County-wide trend, in 10 of the 14 focus districts, there are significant poverty disparities between Black and White students. For example, a Black student in Long Beach Unified is three times more likely to receive free or reduced lunch than a white student in that district. It should be noted that in school districts like Compton, Inglewood, Paramount, and Centinela Valley where there are

smaller economic disparities compared to white students, these school districts actually serve very small numbers of (less than 250) white students (See **FIGURE 2.17**). In other words, where racialized economic disparities are small, the numbers of white students are also noticeably small.

FIGURE 2.18 shows the significant variation in Black graduation rates in the 14 focus districts. While small school districts in relatively affluent areas of Los Angeles County graduate nearly all of their Black, economically disadvantaged students, school districts serving more working-class communities like Antelope Valley; William Hart, and Centinela have substantially lower graduation rates.

ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED ENROLLMENT

FIGURE 2.17

Economically Disadvantaged Student Enrollment District Comparison by Race
2018-2019*
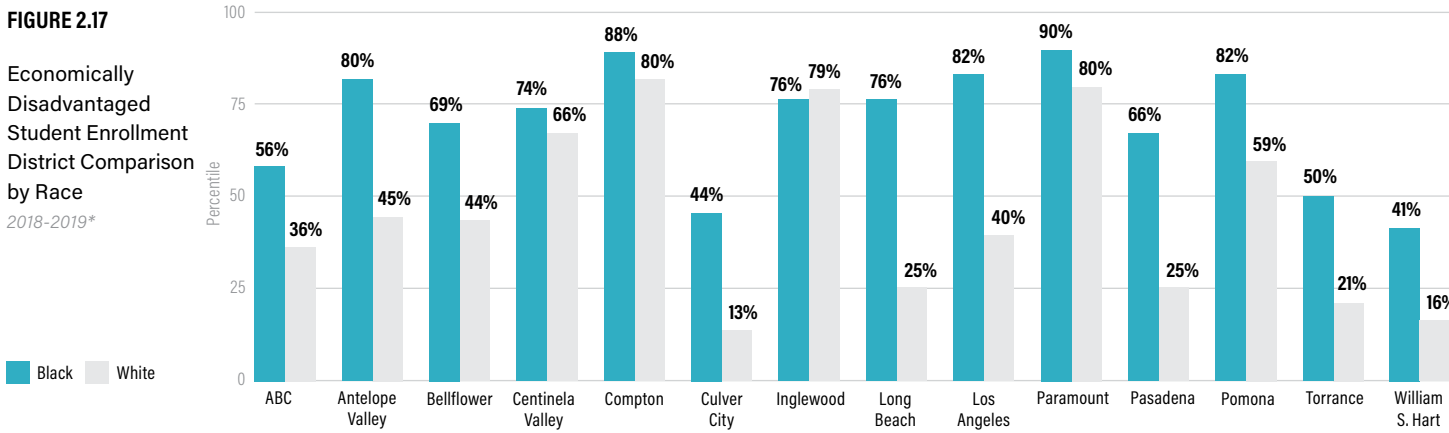
ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED GRADUATION

FIGURE 2.18

Economically Disadvantaged Black Student Cohort Graduation Rates by District
2018-2019**
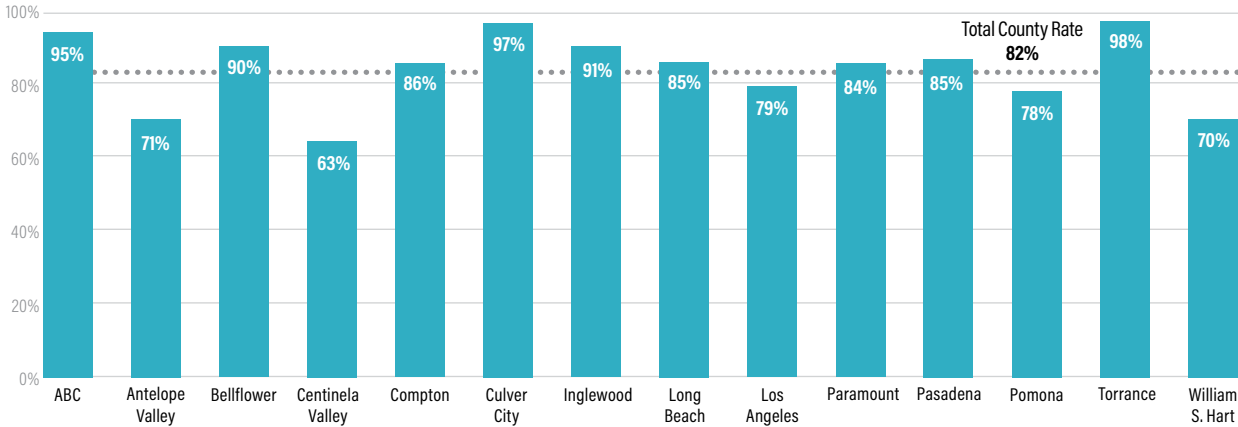
* Enrollment numbers were retrieved from DataQuest County Enrollment by Ethnicity and Grade and filtered by "Socioeconomically Disadvantaged," California Department of Education, 2019a

**Note. Graduation rates were retrieved from DataQuest 2018-19 Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate and filtered by "Socioeconomically Disadvantaged," California Department of Education, 2019d

STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE

Where issues around economic disadvantage are present, the ripple effect for families become even more apparent. One of the areas that is often linked to economic disadvantage, and disconnection from systems of support is youth in foster care. Black youth in the foster care system are among the most vulnerable in Los Angeles County. The 14 focus districts in this study have a significant population of youth in foster care and many of these students experience significant disparities in suspension rates *(Wood et al., 2018).* **School districts with particularly large Black student populations have at least twice the rate of Los Angeles County average suspension rate of two percent.** In Antelope

Valley and Pasadena, suspension rates are 30% and 30%, respectively, for Black youth in foster care (See **FIGURE 2.19**).

During the 2018 – 2019 school year, 34% of Black students in foster care were chronically absent from school, a rate that is nearly three times as high as Los Angeles County average. Furthermore, 12 of the 14 focus districts have chronic absenteeism rates of 20% or higher for Black students in foster care. Nearly half of the Black students in the foster care system who attend school in Pasadena Unified miss at least 18 days of school per year (See **FIGURE 2.20**).

FOSTER CARE & SUSPENSIONS

FIGURE 2.19

Black Students in Foster Care Suspension Rates by District
2018-2019*
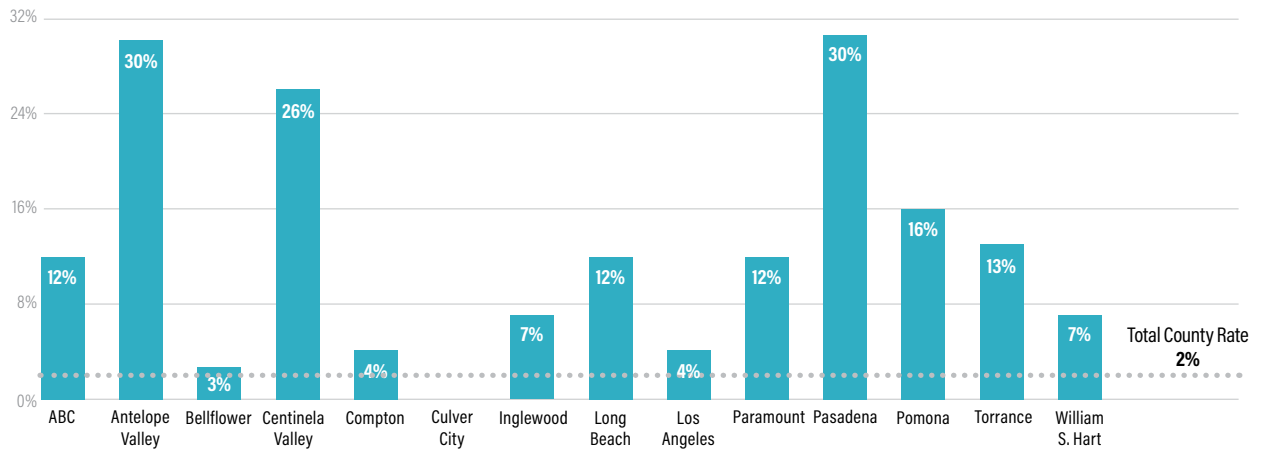
FOSTER CARE & CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

FIGURE 2.20

Black Students in Foster Care Chronic Absenteeism Rates by District
2018-2019**
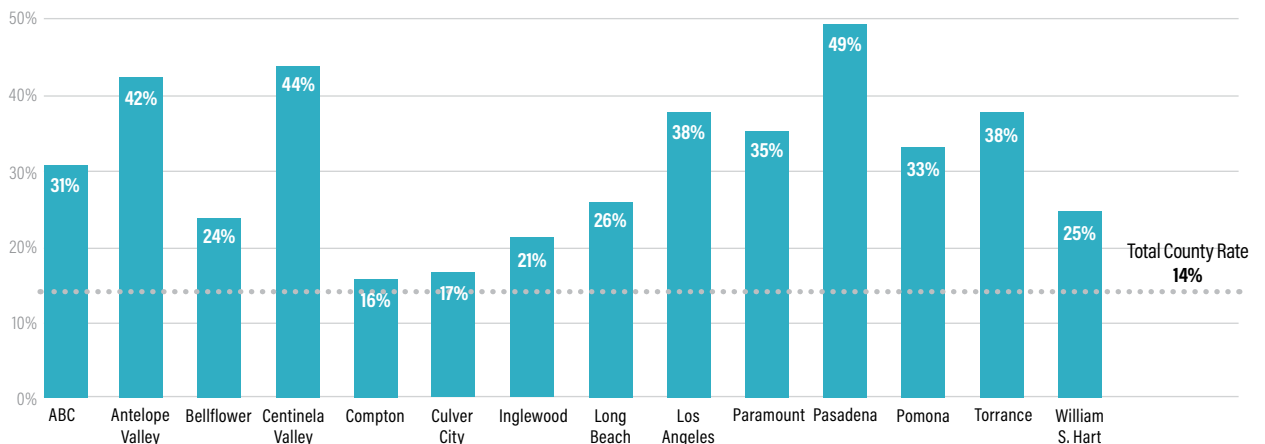
*No data were reported for foster students in Culver City Unified for the 2018-2019 school year. Suspension rate data were retrieved from DataQuest 2018-19 Suspension Rate and filtered by "Foster," California Department of Education, 2019b

**Enrollment numbers for Culver City Unified were unavailable or suppressed for foster care students. Chronic absenteeism rates were retrieved from DataQuest 2018-19 Chronic Absenteeism Rate and filtered by "Foster," California Department of Education, 2019c

STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Like youth in foster care, Black students experiencing homelessness face an inordinate number of obstacles. Housing instability plays a significant role in the overall academic success of low-income students. Student homelessness is defined under the McKinney Vento Homelessness Assistance Act "as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence" *(Edson, 2011; Underwood, 2016).* Research shows students experiencing homelessness are more likely to perform below grade level in reading, Mathematics, and Science on standardized exams when compared to students with stable housing but who also come from impoverished households *(Bishop et al., 2020; Edwards, 2019; Masten et al., 2014; Masten et al., 2014).*

Additionally, teachers face significant challenges in supporting students experiencing homelessness as a result of the population's high rates of absenteeism, school mobility and transience, and the challenges that arise related to addressing their unmet social emotional needs *(Bishop et al., 2020; Chow et al., 2015).* Black students experience disproportionately higher rates of homelessness compared to their counterparts *(Noguera et al., 2019).* **In eight of the 14 focus districts, Black students are twice as likely to experience homelessness than other groups** (**FIGURE 2.21**). **In Centinela Valley Union High School District, Black students experience homelessness at three times their representation in the district.**

HOMELESSNESS & ENROLLMENT

FIGURE 2.21

Black Students Experiencing Homelessness Enrollment Rate by District
2018-2019*
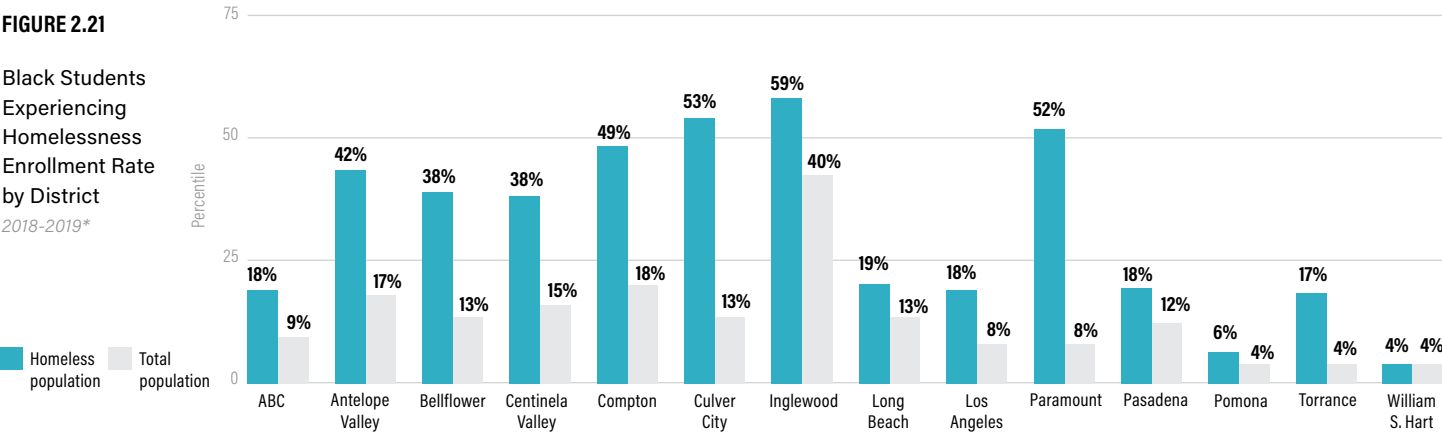
Note. Enrollment numbers were retrieved from DataQuest Enrollment Multi-Year Summary by Ethnicity and filtered by "Homeless," California Department of Education, 2019a
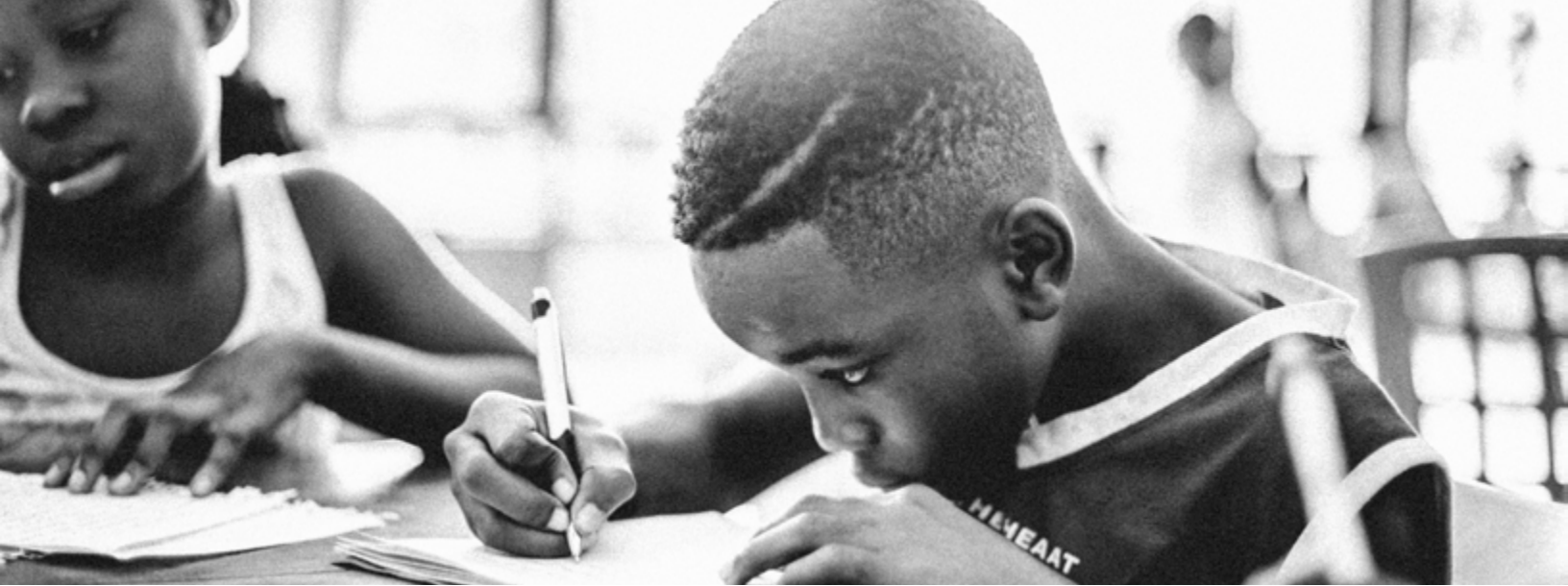
In addition to being over-represented in the Los Angeles County homeless population, Black youth experiencing homelessness graduate from high school at a rate 21 percentage points below the Los Angeles County average for all homeless students *(Public Health Institute & California Environmental Health Tracking Program, 2015).* In most of the focus districts we focused on, Black students who are experiencing homelessness clearly face cumulative disadvantages, with suspension rates that exceed overall County rates, as well as such rates for Black students in Los Angeles County or non-Black students that are experiencing homelessness. The suspension rates of Black students experiencing homelessness in Antelope Valley and Bellflower school districts are particularly high (**FIGURE 2.22**). Notably, the rate of suspensions of Black students experiencing homelessness in Bellflower are double that of all Black students in Bellflower.

HOMELESSNESS & SUSPENSIONS

FIGURE 2.22

Black Students Experiencing Homelessness Suspension Rate by District
2018-2019*

Bar chart data:
- ABC: 9%
- Antelope Valley: 23%
- Bellflower: 22%
- Centinela Valley: 4%
- Compton: 3%
- Culver City: 7%
- Inglewood: 4%
- Long Beach: 10%
- Los Angeles: 2%
- Paramount: 5%
- Pasadena: 9%
- Pomona: 10%
- Torrance: 5%
- William S. Hart: 17%

Total County Rate 2%

*Suspension rates were retrieved from DataQuest 2018-19 Suspension Rate and filtered by "Homeless," California Department of Education, 2019b

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Although the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1975 was established to ensure all children with disabilities receive an equitable education, students placed in special education classrooms still experience significant barriers to educational equity in schools. Throughout Los Angeles County, students who receive an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) due to learning differences are more likely to perform below grade level in reading, Mathematics, and Science on standardized assessments. **FIGURE 2.23** reflects district level students with disabilities. In 10 of the 14 focus districts there is relative parity between the percentage of Black students in special education and their representation in the larger population. In Inglewood Unified, for example, Black students represent 40% of the district's overall population and 40% of the students with a disability. However, **in Antelope Valley, Compton, and Paramount school districts, Black students are significantly overrepresented in the students with disability population. While Black students make up 17% of the student population in Antelope Valley, Black students make up nearly a third (27%) of students with disabilities.** These disparities raise important questions about the identification process that places a higher number of Black students in Special Education, as well as whether the effects of cumulative disadvantage are also at play.

DISABILITIES & ENROLLMENT

FIGURE 2.23

Black Students with Disabilities Enrollment Rates by District

2018-2019*

Legend:
- Students with Disabilities (teal)
- General population (grey)

Chart data (Students with Disabilities / General population):
- ABC: 11% / 8%
- Antelope Valley: 27% / 17%
- Bellflower: 14% / 13%
- Centinela Valley: 20% / 16%
- Compton: 24% / 18%
- Culver City: 15% / 13%
- Inglewood: 40% / 40%
- Long Beach: 17% / 13%
- Los Angeles: 11% / 8%
- Paramount: 14% / 8%
- Pasadena: 16% / 12%
- Pomona: 6% / 4%
- Torrance: 6% / 4%
- William S. Hart: 5% / 4%

* Note. Enrollment numbers were retrieved from DataQuest Enrollment Multi-Year Summary by Ethnicity and filtered by "Students With Disabilities," California Department of Education, 2019a
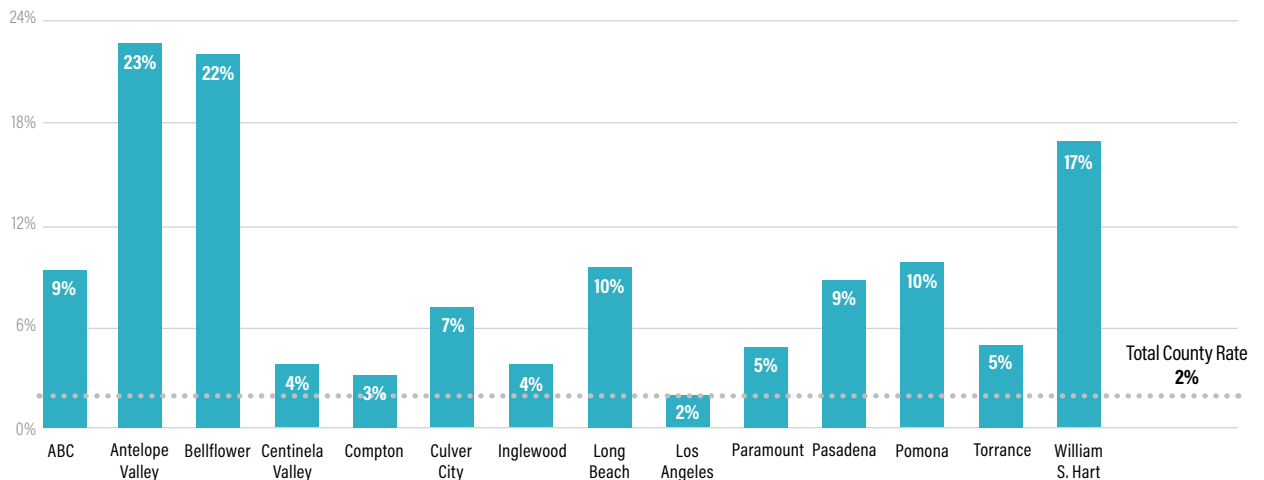
DISABILITIES & GRADUATION

FIGURE 2.24

Black Students with Disabilities Cohort Graduation Rates
2018-2019*

Total County Rate **82%**

District	Rate
ABC	92%
Antelope Valley	58%
Bellflower	68%
Centinela Valley	82%
Compton	84%
Culver City	—
Inglewood	78%
Long Beach	72%
Los Angeles	55%
Paramount	75%
Pasadena	78%
Pomona	88%
Torrance	88%
William S. Hart	88%

DISABILITIES & SUSPENSIONS

FIGURE 2.25

Black Students with Disabilities Cohort Suspension Rates
2018-2019**

Legend: Students with Disabilities / Black student total

Total County Rate **2%**

District	Students with Disabilities	Black student total
ABC	8%	4%
Antelope Valley	26%	17%
Bellflower	15%	11%
Centinela Valley	10%	5%
Compton	7%	3%
Culver City	4%	2%
Inglewood	5%	3%
Long Beach	13%	9%
Los Angeles	7%	3%
Paramount	10%	7%
Pasadena	20%	11%
Pomona	12%	8%
Torrance	9%	6%
William S. Hart	6%	3%

The majority of Black students with disabilities graduate at alarmingly low rates. And while school districts such as Inglewood, Paramount, Pasadena, Bellflower, and Long Beach are closer to Los Angeles County averages, both Antelope Valley and Los Angeles have gaps greater than 25% of Los Angeles County averages and these students do not graduate from high school on time (**FIGURE 2.24**).

FIGURE 2.25 reflects the suspension rates for Black students with disabilities in Los Angeles County in the 14 focus districts. **In 13 of the 14 school districts, Black students with disabilities range from being two to 10 times more likely to be suspended than the average Los Angeles County student.** In Antelope Valley, Pasadena, and Bellflower school districts, one in four Black students with a disability were suspended at least once during the 2018-19 school year.

The high rates of suspensions of Black students with disabilities might suggest that there is either **gross neglect for Black students with disabilities, or a complete and total misunderstanding of students' behaviors** that requires a significant intervention.

* No data were reported for students with disabilities in Culver City Unified for the 2018-2019 school year. Graduation rates were retrieved from DataQuest 2018-19 Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate and filtered by "Students With Disabilities," California Department of Education, 2019d

**Suspension rates were retrieved from DataQuest 2018-19 Suspension Rate and filtered by "Students with Disabilities," California Department of Education, 2019b
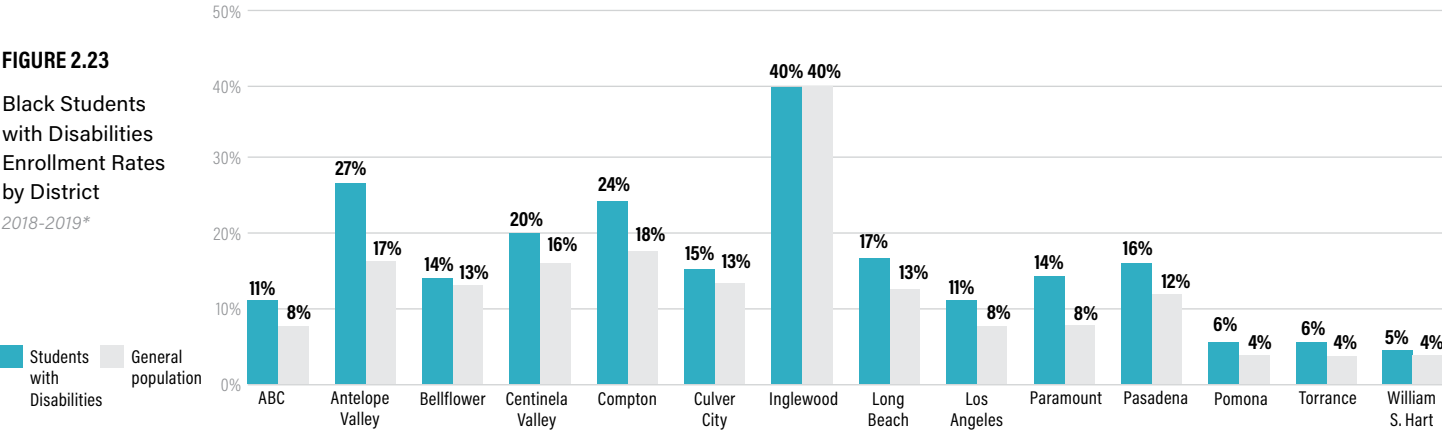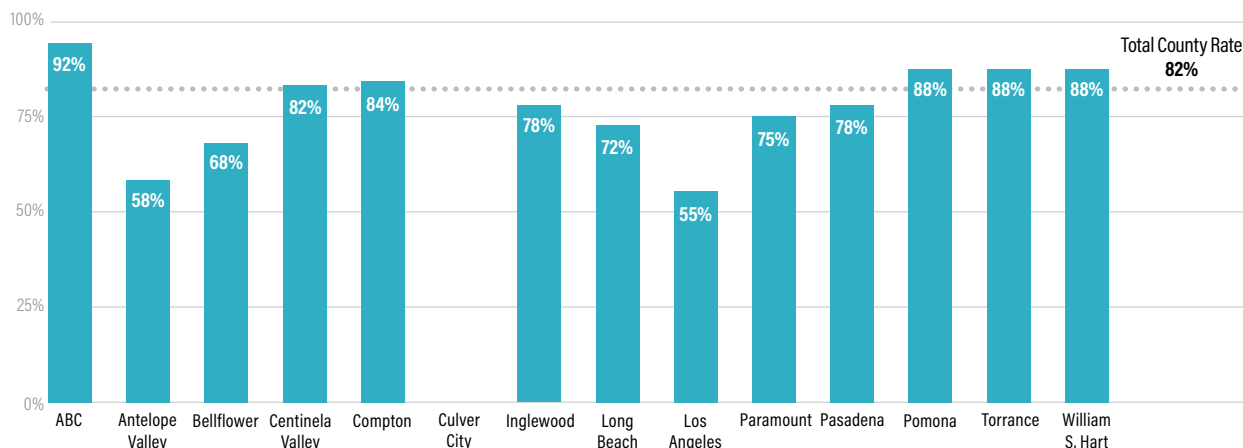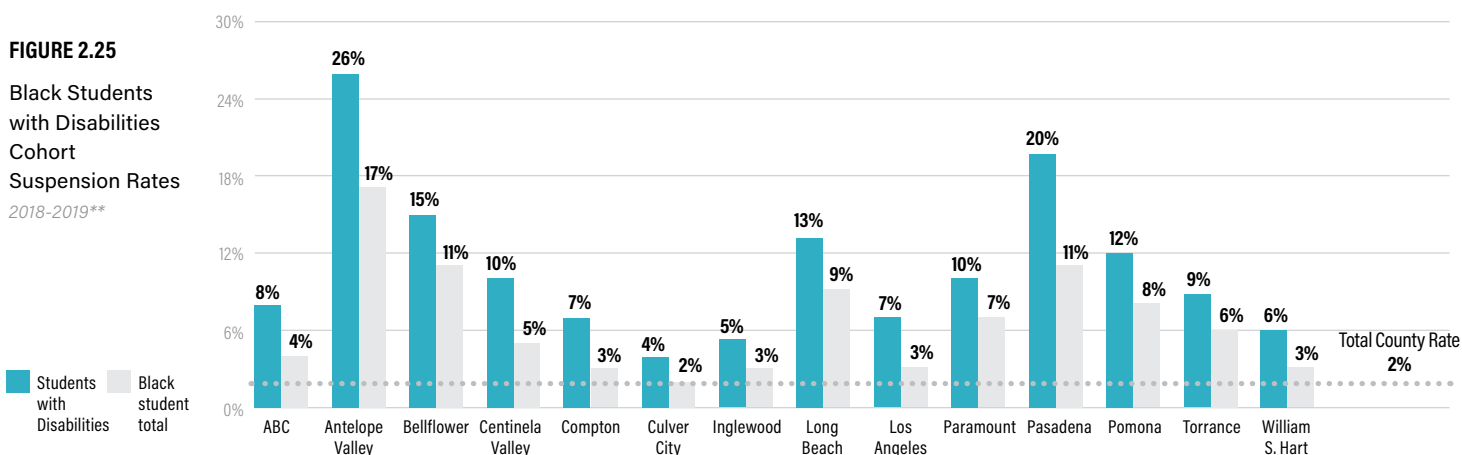
PROMISING
MODELS

Despite the challenges facing Black children in Los Angeles County, **there are examples that the evidence shows are making a difference.**

In this section, we identify promising schools and programs that are serving Black students well, describing some of the features and the practices that appear to contribute to their relative success. We highlight these schools and programs because they are demonstrating that in spite of structural disadvantages and a history of racism, exclusion, and discrimination that many Black children and families in Los Angeles County have, and continue to endure, they are helping Black students thrive. It is important to identify these bright spots so that we can understand what they are doing to serve and support Black students, how they are doing this work in the face of adversity, and to assess to what degree, if any, these efforts can be replicated across Los Angeles County.

IN THIS SECTION:

BALDWIN HILLS ELEMENTARY

BROTHERHOOD CRUSADE

COMMUNITY COALITION

KING DREW MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL

NINETY NINTH STREET ELEMENTARY

SOCIAL JUSTICE LEARNING INSTITUTE

WATTS LEARNING CENTER

WILDER'S PREPARATORY ACADEMY

BALDWIN HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

📍 BALDWIN HILLS, SOUTH CENTRAL LOS ANGELES

Baldwin Hills provides students with a **rich culturally responsive curriculum** along with **highly qualified and caring school personnel.** BHE's unique ability to **adapt to the needs of their students** serve as a model for effectively educating and servicing nondominant student groups.

CATEGORY

K-5 elementary school

MISSION

Baldwin Hills Elementary Pilot & Gifted Magnet School, a culturally and linguistically diverse community, is to work in partnership with the children, families and community we serve in order to provide a strong academic, ethical, and culturally responsive education with measurable results.

DEMOGRAPHICS

17% LATINX

77% BLACK

95% FRPL ELIGIBLE*

BHE's student body is predominantly low-income students of color (77% Black, 17% Latinx), but despite the dismal national trends around achievement for this demographic, BHE students consistently exceed state standards in both English and Mathematics. BHE credits its stellar academic outcomes to its rigorous culturally sound curriculum and strong school culture. In addition, BHE emphasizes the importance of identity and positive affirmations for students' success in school and beyond.

ACADEMIC PREPARATION & STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

BHE has had astounding academic growth over the past few years. After adopting a new curriculum in 2016 BHE has seen sizable growth in students' Mathematics (+27%) and English (+62%) standardized test scores. During the 2019-2020 school year, nearly all of the Black students at BHE exceeded state averages in both Mathematics and English. These monumental educational gains resulted in BHE receiving the 2020 California Distinguished School Award.

UNIQUE SCHOOL CULTURE

One thing that separates BHE from many other schools is the school's focus on student identity and character building. BHE takes pride in the fact that the entire school exterior décor, to curriculum, is reflective of the student body they serve. The curriculum at BHE is intended to engage students in rigorous academic content, while simultaneously developing their understanding of self and affirming the importance of students' rich cultural backgrounds. This innovative curriculum is supported by a strong school culture that emphasizes the importance of integrity and self-determination. Each student at BHE possess their own HEARt cards with each of the school virtues (Order, Harmony, Justice, Truth, Balance, Propriety, Righteousness), and are rewarded by teachers and administrators when they model said virtues. BHE's approach to educating and servicing their students is uniquely adapted to the needs of their students and is a driving force in their academic improvement.

BHE is being highlighted because they are an exemplar institution when it comes to servicing diverse student populations. BHE demonstrates the tremendous impact of responsive school policies and practices on historically underserved students. Several years ago, BHE reformed their school culture, curriculum, and practices in a way that was culturally responsive to their student body and it has had a considerable impact on students' educational experiences and outcomes. BHE's unique ability to adapt to the needs of their students serve as a model for effectively educating and servicing nondominant student groups *(California School Dashboard, 2020; Baldwin Hills Elementary School, 2021).*

*Free & Reduced-Price Lunch
https://www.caschooldashboard.org/ (2019)
http://www.baldwinhillselementaryschool.com/ (2020).

BROTHERHOOD CRUSADE

SOUTH CENTRAL LOS ANGELES

Focused on the improvement and growth of South Los Angeles, Brotherhood Crusade strives to **meet the needs of low-income, marginalized, and under-served residents.**

CATEGORY
Nonprofit organization

MISSION
To remove and/or help individuals overcome the barriers that deter their pursuit of success in life and facilitate opportunities for a better quality of life by effectuating improved health & wellness, facilitating academic success, promoting personal, social & economic growth, providing access to artistic excellence & cultural awareness, increasing financial literacy and building community agencies & institutions.

Brotherhood Crusade is a non-profit organization based in South Los Angeles that has been serving the community for 50 years. Its mission states that it is an organization that "has a history of building alliances with other organizations, corporations, and foundations of goodwill that are committed to and understand the tremendous need for helping our community and people grow and prosper".

ACADEMIC PREPARATION & STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Since the start of its Youth Development Program in 2007, the organization has launched a multitude of programs to serve young people in South Los Angeles. These programs provide support for youth through mentorship, gang reduction strategies, leadership and sports programs, teaching gardens, a youth council, youth resource center, restorative justice teen courts, as well as programs around financial literacy, business and community enrichment. Academic success and achievement is a primary focus of many of the resources offered through the Brotherhood Crusade. This is promoted through programs such as the March to 1000 and the SES, an intensive remedial education program; the BioFuture STEM Education Initiative, a hands-on experiential learning program to introduce youth to the field of STEM; as well as the Youth Source Center which supports the development of like skills, helps re-engage youth in schools, and provides internship and employment opportunities.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The work of the Brotherhood Crusade is expansive within Los Angeles as well as its surrounding communities. They collaborate with large corporate partners such as Chase, Comerica Bank, and Wells Fargo, along with foundation and government partners such as the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, Los Angeles Clippers Foundation, Target Foundation, California Community Foundation, the City of Long Beach, City of Los Angeles, City of Pasadena, and the State of California. These strategic partnerships have enabled them the ability to provide funding and support to many community organizations, such as Ability First, Community Coalition, Los Angeles NAACP, the James Foshay Learning Center, and the Tavis Smiley Foundation to name a few. These collaborative relationships have broadened the work of the organization and furthered their goals of creating thriving communities and improving the quality of life for residents.

Brotherhood Crusade is being highlighted because of its influential work within Los Angeles and surrounding communities to remove barriers for underserved residents in order to provide equitable access to resources. The work of this organization helps over 100,000 South Los Angeles residents annually. Brotherhood Crusade serves as a model for how organizations can create culturally relevant resources that uplift communities while providing its residents with the tools to improve their lives.

COMMUNITY COALITION

 SOUTH CENTRAL LOS ANGELES

Community Coalition has been a key organizing body for **closing local liquor stores, improving the food options in South Central,** as well as ensuring that all students in Los Angeles Unified School District receive **access to A-G college preparatory classes.**

CATEGORY

Nonprofit organization

MISSION

Community Coalition works to help transform the social and economic conditions in South LA that foster addiction, crime, violence and poverty by building a community institution that involves thousands in creating, influencing and changing public policy.

Community Coalition is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving the needs of Black and Latinx residents in south central Los Angeles. The grassroots organization was founded in 1990 to help transform social and economic conditions that foster addiction, crime, violence and poverty via a focus on changing public policy.

ACADEMIC PREPARATION & STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

While Community Coalition's primary function is organizing adult residents on pertinent community issues to change public policy, the organization has a youth organizing arm called South Central Youth Empowered thru Action Program (SCYEA). South Central Youth Empowered Thru Action Program is an after school program that works with five high schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District. SCYEA develops its youths' leadership skills and empowers them to push for policy changes in both their communities and their schools. In addition to teaching its participants about civic engagement and community organizing, SCYEA partners with local universities to provide students with academic tutoring, college application workshops, and college tours.

Community Coalition also partners with the Children Defense Fund (CDF) to host Freedom Schools during the summer months. For the past decade, Community Coalition has used the CDF national literacy program to improve the reading comprehension of 100 local youth through social justice oriented children's and youth adult fiction stories by authors of color.

We believe grassroots, non-profit organizations serve an important role in influencing policy changes throughout local communities while also directly developing youth academically, socially, and politically. Community Coalition is being highlighted because it serves as an excellent model for ways that local organizations can partner with and support schools and community members to further develop and empower youth and positively impact outcomes for families and the community at large.

Community Coalition, http://cocosouthla.org/.

"Community Coalition Celebrates 30 Years"

https://edsource.org/2015/la-unified-must-recommit-to-goal-of-college-for-all/79156

KING DREW
MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL

SOUTH CENTRAL LOS ANGELES

King Drew Medical Magnet High School serves as an excellent model for effectively serving students, their families, and the needs of the larger community by outstanding and rigorous instruction for students, creating a positive school culture and safe learning environments, and their partnerships with local health and community organizations.

CATEGORY

Comprehensive high school

MISSION

We engage our students in a rigorous program of academic study beginning with an emphasis on medicine and science. Students develop essential skills in critical thinking, scientific inquiry, effective communication, technology, and personal growth—forging multiple paths to success in a dynamic 21st century world.

DEMOGRAPHICS

51% LATINX

47% BLACK

85% FRPL ELIGIBLE*

Their mission focuses on preparing students for careers and college degrees in medicine and science by developing them academically and socially with skills that will allow them to matriculate successfully into the democratic process.

ACADEMIC PREPARATION & STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

During the 2018-2019 academic school year, King Drew had a 97% graduation rate for its senior class. Their A-G completion rates (78%) were impressive; yielding 221 UC acceptances, 509 CSU acceptances, and 327 acceptances into private and out of state institutions. Black students consistently meet and/or exceed the state average in English and Mathematics assessments (61% ELA; 25% Mathematics). King Drew is one of the top 20 schools in Los Angeles County to successfully prepare Black students for admission into UCLA *(Ed Data, 2018-2019).*

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

King Drew's ability to build effective partnerships with community organizations provides a model for how schools (who otherwise would be considered under-resourced) are able to support and meet the needs of their students and families. One partnership that is important to highlight is their Reaching Our at Risk Brothers (ROAR) program. This community partnership works closely with freshman and sophomore Black boys by providing mentoring, weekly field trips to top medical centers and organizations, and exposure to additional STEM, medical, and technical and medical career path professions.

Their holistic approach and model can inform similar schools and districts serving non-dominant students to learn, adopt, and apply some of their systems, which have been proven effective in working closely with families, closing educational gaps, and providing post-secondary options for students.

*Free & Reduced-Price Lunch

**http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/sd/filesc;

http://www.ed-data.org/school/Los-Angeles/Los-Angeles-Unified/King_Drew-Medical-Magnet-High (2018-2019 academic year)

NINETY-NINTH STREET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

📍 **WATTS, SOUTH CENTRAL LOS ANGELES**

Their mission and vision has been to build a **culturally-responsive community** that works to collaboratively **empower students with the tools to be independent, creative and critical thinkers** who can **become leaders and advocates** in the local and global community.

CATEGORY
Elementary school

MISSION
To make scholars college and career ready by:
- Supporting students' academic and social and emotional needs
- Providing students with a multi-tiered instructional program
- Enhancing their learning through arts and science
- Engaging parents to be partners in their learning
- Providing teachers with high-quality professional development

DEMOGRAPHICS
75% LATINX

22% BLACK

95% FRPL ELIGIBLE*

Ninety-Ninth Street is one of the top performing schools in Watts as it serves the needs of its predominantly Black (22%) and Latinx (75%) students, nearly all of whom qualify for Free or Reduced Price Lunch (95%).

ACADEMIC PREPARATION & STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Ninety-Ninth Street Elementary School has seen a consistent growth in their CAASPP ELA and Mathematics scores since the 2014-2015 academic school year. In spite of having access to fewer resources and serving one of the most high-need communities in California, Ninety-Ninth Street has still managed to score at or near the state average since 2017-2018, and has iteratively been improving learning outcomes based upon collectively interpreting data and actively listening to the concerns of the schooling community.

SOCIAL JUSTICE-DRIVEN LEADERSHIP BY BLACK & LATINX WOMEN

Ninety-Ninth Street is led by a Principal, Vice Principal and Instructional Coach who are Black women, as well as a Latinx woman who serves as the Title 1 and English Language Learner Coordinator, who have worked together to build a repertoire of pedagogies, curricula, structures and practices that center social justice and innovative models of instruction. The school incorporates student-led and small group teaching strategies that prioritize critical thinking and critical literacies, which notably address anti-Blackness and their declining population of Black students. The decision by leadership to be responsive to the knowledge, cultures, languages and concerns of Black and Latinx families in supporting student learning needs has led to a high morale and retention rate among teachers, who are also provided with weekly collaboration time to focus upon planning and sharing effective teaching approaches.

Ninety-Ninth Street Elementary School has valued and incorporated local community partners, parents/guardians and families in serving their students. Within schools serving poor and working-class Black and Latinx students, there is often the problematic deficit-based assumption that parents/guardians and families do not care and/or cannot offer much to the education of their children. The response has been the heightened implementation of "behavioral management" tactics and simplified banking models of instruction. Ninety-Ninth Street aims to deeply consider the social, political and material contexts of their school, and respond with a challenging and high-quality education that honors and sustains their students, families and communities. The result has been high student and parental/guardian engagement that is likely driving their increasing academic performance, which continues to defy predominant expectations of what is educationally possible with limited resources within communities hardest hit by systemic injustices *(Ed Data, 2019; Ninety-Ninth Street School, 2021).*

SOCIAL JUSTICE LEARNING INSTITUTE

⚲ INGLEWOOD

SJLI works to create social change and advance academic, food, environmental, and housing justice via **student empowerment and advocacy.** SJLI has been key in building partnerships that **foster college-prep, increase health awareness, and mobilize systemic change.**

CATEGORY

Nonprofit youth development program

MISSION

Dedicated to improving the education, health, and well-being of youth and communities of color by empowering them to enact social change through research, training, and community mobilization.

The Social Justice Learning Institute is being highlighted for its work with youth, schools and city officials to increase educational opportunities and health access through innovative wraparound community programs, initiatives, and projects. We believe that youth development, nonprofit programs like SJLI can serve as a model for ways in which organizations can build and maintain productive partnerships to facilitate the conditions that advance social change.

ACADEMIC PREPARATION & STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Social Justice Learning Institute specializes in culturally relevant learning, teaching, and curriculum development, which supports positive identity growth, increases academic competencies, and expands opportunities for civic participation. Since 2009, more than 500 students have graduated from its Urban Scholars program, a college-prep initiative that provides guidance counseling and exposure to university campuses. Urban Scholars programming also provides heritage-based education for sixteen partnering schools in Los Angeles, Antelope Valley, and Houston, Texas. Additionally, SJLI's Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) trains over 2000 community members annually across 30 sites, championing community engagement around nutrition and health.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

SJLI Urban Scholars program partners with the Houston chapter of My Brother's Keeper, an initiative launched during the Obama administration to help youth of color achieve academic and career success. The institute also partners with the Liberty Hill Foundation's Brothers, Sons, Selves Coalition, which works to improve outcomes for boys and young men of color by advocating for positive alternatives to school suspension and working to reduce the criminalization of communities of color, leads weekly field trips to top medical centers and organizations, and exposure to additional STEM, medical, and technical and medical career path professions.

https://sjli.org/

https://www.guidestar.org/profile/26-3413373

https://philanthropynewsdigest.org/npo-spotlight/social-justice-learning-institute

WATTS LEARNING CENTER

⚲ WATTS, SOUTH CENTRAL LOS ANGELES

By focusing on **building and sustaining strong relationships with students, families, and community members,** the Watts Learning Center has been able to leverage resources to serve the needs of the whole child. At the same time, it has created **opportunities for students to develop and nurture an identity of active citizenship and community leadership** *(CDE, 2019; Watts Learning Center, 2019).*

CATEGORY
Independent K-5 public elementary school

MISSION
The Watts Learning Center will build on the success of Head Start and other pre-school programs by creating a culture of learning in which all stakeholders—students, parents or guardians, faculty, and staff—have clearly defined roles and expectations.

DEMOGRAPHICS

397 STUDENTS

1% WHITE

54% LATINX

45% BLACK

27% ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

10% HAVE DISABILITIES

3% EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

96% FRPL ELIGIBLE*

To actualize their mission, WLC's culture is centered around the following essential question, "What is the meaning of a World Class Education?". With respect to increasing student achievement and developing intellectual curiosity, WLC approach to learning is summed up in the following:

> *"Our staff is engaged in continuous thinking and learning to reimagine and rethink education. We are engaged in understanding the meaning of a World Class Education. Based on this understanding, we are engaged in the process of making the 'Watts Learning Center Way.' Fundamental to the Watts Learning Center Way is the basic premise that every child in our schools is known and understood, valued and respected as an independent thinking person."*

ACADEMIC PREPARATION & STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

During the 2018-2019 academic school year, Mathematics proficiency scores at the Watts Learning Center exceeded district proficiency scores by 14.5 percentage points, with Black students at Watts Learning Center outperforming Black students in LAUSD by 19.4 percentage points. Overall, Mathematics scores at Watts Learning Center also exceeded the state average by 8 percentage points *(CAASPP, 2018-2019).*

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

One of the core values of the Watts Learning Center is community achievement and its education philosophy highlights parental involvement and volunteer services as critical factors for supporting and enhancing teaching and learning for students. The Watts Learning Center has dedicated itself to working alongside community members and key constituents to increase opportunities for students to engage in deeper learning while improving quality of life in the community. One avenue for accomplishing this is via a monthly Community Collaboratorium where community members, concerned citizens, and school leaders meet to discuss strategies and opportunities to create long-term benefits for children, families, and the community at large. Some of the community partners of the WLC Community Collaboratorium include: The Amanda Foundation, CSU Dominguez Hills School of Education, The County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation Ted Watkins Memorial Park, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health, Leadership for Urban Renewal Network, Los Angeles Housing Authority, National Action Network, Physicians for Social Responsibility, The Prudential Insurance Company of America Greater Los Angeles Financial Group, Watts Gang Task Force, Gangsters for Christ, and the Watts Labor Community Action Committee. The Watts Learning Center also has the Hope Comes to Watts partnership, an annual 3-week teaching and mentoring experience at WLC with aspiring educators from Hope College in Holland, Michigan.

*Free & Reduced-Price Lunch
https://caaspp-elpac.cde.ca.gov/caaspp/CompareReport?ps=true&lstTestYear=2019&lstTestType=B&lstGrade=13&lstGroup=1&lstSchoolType=A&lstCds1=19647336114912&lstCds2=19647330000000&lstCds3=00000000000000&lstFocus=CompareSelectBtn
Watts Learning Center Partnerships, Retrieved from: https://www.wattslearningcenter.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=369922&type=d&pREC_ID=832068

WILDER'S PREPARATORY ACADEMY

⚲ INGLEWOOD

Wilder's is being highlighted for its continuous trend of **adequately supporting the academic excellence of students of color** (particularly Black and Latinx students) **at some of the earliest points of the K-12 nexus.**

CATEGORY

K-5 public charter school

MISSION

Wilder's Preparatory Academy Charter School is dedicated to developing life-long learners; providing excellence in education for all students; and promoting the growth and development of productive citizens toward building and sustaining a humane, just, and global society. Our academic focus embraces a rigorous research-based college preparatory curriculum that supports effective teaching by the faculty and promotes strong economic, intellectual and pragmatic leadership in our students.

DEMOGRAPHICS

13% LATINX

84% BLACK

71% LOW INCOME

Wilder's services a racial and ethnically diverse population with Black and Latinx students comprising approximately 97% (84% Black and 13% Latinx) of the school's student demographic. Seventy-one percent of all students attending Wilder's come from low-income families.

ACADEMIC PREPARATION & STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Between the years of 2006-2013, Wilder's was a recipient of the Title I Academic Achievement Award, an award that recognizes schools that have demonstrated success in significantly closing the achievement gap between high and low-performing students. In the years of 2011 and 2013, Wilder's was one of the top 10 performing Charter schools in California by USC's Performance Dashboard, and in 2014 the school was named a California Distinguished School. During the 2018-2019 school year, 69% of students attending Wilder's met or exceeded the state standard on the ELA Smarter Balanced assessment. In terms of Mathematics performance, 63% of students met or exceeded the state standard *(CAASPP, 2018-2019)*.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Wilder's commitment to sustaining healthy community partnerships is perhaps best exemplified by the schools' Parent Corner, a collection of services, resources, and collaborative efforts easily accessible via the school's website. This includes a readily available review of Wilder's Smarter Balanced assessment, details for summer enrichment programs, and protocol/invitation of parent involvement in their child's learning experience.

Wilder's has proven itself a standout among public elementary schools not only within the Inglewood school district but California as well, with test scores far above state averages. Through arguably successful attempts at creating/executing culturally responsive or "appropriate" teaching practices and a commitment to individualized growth (as reflected in their small class size) as well as the excellence of all the entire student body, Wilder's continues to showcase the effectiveness of its' comprehensive approach and uncompromising belief in the abilities of its students.

School Profile: Wilder's Preparatory Academy Charter; California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, Test Results at a Glance

POLICY
RECOMMENDATIONS

Lawmakers at each level of government have a shared responsibility for the education, health and well-being of Black families throughout Los Angeles County and in the 14 districts highlighted.

Findings from our analysis and examination of county and district level educational, health, and community data provide a deeper understanding of how out-of-school factors working in combination with in-school factors contribute to the educational trajectory and health of Black students. This section of the report translates report findings to policymakers at the city, district, county, state and federal level to consider.

Policy recommendations are organized into three main themes: COVID-19 & reopening schools, in-school and out-of-school policies.

COVID-19 & REOPENING SCHOOLS

Recent analysis of statewide achievement data for English Language Arts and Mathematics across 18 districts serving 50,000 students for grades 4-12 shows **COVID learning loss has been significant, especially for low-income students** *(Pier et al., 2021).*

One could assume that some of these same patterns will apply to districts that serve large portions of Black students, requiring resources from lawmakers, collaborations and unique expertise to counter the negative academic impact of the virus for low-income Black students. Concrete policy steps can be taken as an immediate response to the current crisis.

CITIES

Ensure connectivity across cities so students and families have access to virtual support, resources and instruction.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Assess student well-being using universal screening strategies to support the use of targeted resources for students who are showing the most significant need for remediation including tiered support models during the school day, expanded learning time, tutoring, and year-round academic support.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Encourage sharing of resources and instructional models across all 80 districts to focus on universal, targeted, and supplemental support strategies.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Dedicate more funds to districts to supplement Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) resources, requiring clear articulation of evidence-based practices to support student learning and growth for Black students and families.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Require counties and districts to use funds to focus on addressing existing gaps, including the digital divide and student achievement disparities.

IN-SCHOOL POLICIES

A host of policy responses in-school (e.g. educator capacity, curriculum, course offerings) that bring a critical racial lens to education policy must be prioritized in ways that elevate Black student achievement across subject areas like English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science. Foundational to this shift to school-centered policies is a need to **ensure Black youth feel safe, valued, and welcome—all essential to cognitive, social, and emotional growth.**

FOCUS ON **ESSENTIAL SKILLS** & **COMPETENCIES** ACROSS SUBJECTS

California state standards are intended to cultivate a set of skills applicable to all subject areas including critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, communication and collaboration. These skills can be applied across content areas and when attained can help Black students to be better prepared for college and the workforce. Yet many of these essential skills are not being cultivated in schools for young Black people as evident in so few Black youth meeting or exceeding state standards. Again, schools cannot be the only institutions to shoulder the responsibility of Black student success and well-being. Cities, counties, the state and federal government have an integral role to play in supporting young people, especially young Black scholars.

CITIES

Encourage businesses and nonprofit leaders to offer **internships and work-based learning opportunities** that can strengthen student critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication and civic skills in applied settings.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Develop strategies with young people so they can help identify what type of academic, social and emotional support they need to succeed.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Establish common strategies and models for supporting school districts as they work to create engaging and personalized learning experiences, including universal screening strategies to frequently monitor and adjust instruction particularly in core subjects for Black students.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Strengthen the pipeline for more Black educators to enter the profession, a factor which has been shown to significantly improve achievement and college matriculation rates.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Increase Title I investments and encourage school systems to use Title I funds to address opportunity gaps for Black students.

HEALTHY, POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Compared to their peers, Black students are more likely to miss extended periods of school time, to be suspended, and less likely to graduate or be on track for college across school districts that serve 800 students or more in Los Angeles County. For Black students with disabilities or low-income Black students, these disparities are even more alarming. Establishing healthy, positive learning environments for Black youth is foundational to dismantling negative educational patterns.

CITIES

Examine city policies and policing patterns to ensure Black students and families are not being unfairly targeted, thus negatively impacting young people on school campuses.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Incorporate regular student surveys like Turnaround for Children's well-being index and stay abreast of California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) results to determine and respond to student social, emotional, physical and psychological health.

Engage relevant stakeholders and outside experts, if needed, in difficult discussions around underlying issues that may be contributing to patterns of disproportionality to implement the CA Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework to promote adult behavior changes.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Support Los Angeles County schools and districts to implement culturally responsive practices by using the California Multi-Tiered System of Support (CA MTSS) to support the needs of Black students' academic, behavioral, and social emotional needs within a tiered framework of support.

Expand Los Angeles County's community schools pilot across 15 high schools and districts to include feeder elementary schools that serve a higher proportion of Black students.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Incentivize schools, districts and states to support students, teachers and school leaders in making improvements to classroom and behavior management, especially where rates of disciplinary exclusion are high.

Increase federal support for the McKinney-Vento Act in California, where two out of three housing insecure young people attend schools with no federal aid. This can help to ensure that Black students experiencing homelessness are getting necessary education services.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL POLICIES

One common thread that has become clearer because of COVID is that out-of-school factors (neighborhood conditions, access to health care, dental care, etc.) have largely been ignored in education policy and social policies broadly. Income and racial inequality in Los Angeles County's Black communities is striking, requiring a **focus on the basic needs of families to address poverty and family, maternal and infant health in response to under investments where many expecting mothers and young families reside.**

STUDENTS' & FAMILIES' BASIC NEEDS

Two districts that serve the greatest number of Black students with the largest homeless student enrollment in the state are Los Angeles Unified (18,979) and Long Beach Unified (7,251) *(Bishop et al., 2020).* These figures paint a stark reality of not only the sheer numbers of students experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County, but also point to a need for supporting housing insecure Black youth. Unemployment numbers in Los Angeles County reveal that 599,000 residents have filed for unemployment, which could result in significant consequences for 558,000 children who live in households unlikely to be able to pay the rent, including Black families *(Blasi, 2020).* Many Black communities will benefit from policy remedies at all levels of government focused on meeting basic needs.

CITIES
Establish clear benchmarks for anti-poverty efforts carried out in coordination with nonprofit and county agencies.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS
Link families to community-based organizations, agencies and case workers who can help young peoples and families on a case-by-case basis.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
Leverage Measure J funds to target investments in these 14 communities to focus on youth development, job training, small business development and supportive housing services.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Encourage partnerships between education, housing and child welfare stakeholders & dedicate state community schools grants to Black communities.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
Prioritize federal housing vouchers, food stamps, cash grants, Medicaid, and tax credits which all have been found to boost student learning for financially struggling families.

FAMILY, MATERNAL & INFANT HEALTH

Low birth weights and high rates of asthma related hospital visits for Black families that reside in the districts included in this report reflect systemic challenges around family, maternal and infant health. While identifying the causes of racial/ethnic and economic status disparities in low birth weight and poor health for mothers can be difficult, a number of preventive policy actions can be undertaken.

CITIES

Encourage centralized and mobile clinics to screen for and address maternal and infant health issues.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Establish opportunities for community health clinics to come to school campuses to meet with and provide health care services to families and small children.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Work with medical providers to identify barriers to accessing maternal mental health services.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Invest in home visiting models that eliminate access challenges for expectant Black mothers.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Expand health care coverage for uninsured women throughout their lifespan, with a particular emphasis on their reproductive years, to ensure that every woman receives a basic level of coverage and has a medical home.

CONCLUSION

Although recent budget forecasts are promising, we suspect that in the years ahead the COVID-19 health crisis will bring cutbacks to education funding for some districts, as well as to other social and economic supports that children need both inside and outside of schools. **We cannot allow the most vulnerable communities to bear the brunt of these cutbacks.**

As the economy recovers, we hope that California and Los Angeles County will lead the way in developing a strong, just, and better post-COVID-19 education system and stronger communities in which every student can thrive *(Noguera et al., 2019).* We hope that progress in addressing these conditions can be monitored alongside well-designed interventions, as they are implemented over time. Further analysis is needed for measuring the scope and scale of the problems, monitoring progress, and for guiding the implementation of successful interventions.

We also believe that community-based organizations and schools must have access to this information so that they can fully participate in efforts for change. We will continue to assess the landscape of educational and other contextual factors that shape the ability of Black youth to make educational progress. Reopening schools after in many instances almost a year or more due to COVID-19 establishes a new urgency around

our work. While safety remains the number one priority, a more comprehensive approach will be needed to respond to the growing gaps between Black youth and many of their peers. To be clear, schools cannot be expected to do this alone. **The needs of Black youth in this moment require a comprehensive and urgent response that extends beyond the schoolhouse.**

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